FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO DROP – OUT RATES AMONG ADULT LEARNERS IN THE MAHWELERENG DISTRICT

by

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the

MASTER'S DEGREE OF DEVELOPMENT

in the

**TURFLOOP GRADUATE SCHOOL OF LEADERSHIP,
FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCES AND LAW,
UNIVERSITY OF THE NORTH, SOUTH AFRICA**

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January 2003

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation hereby submitted to the University of the North for the degree of Masters of Development has not previously been submitted by me for degree at this or any other University, that it is my own work in design and in execution, and that all material contained therein has been duly acknowledged.

SIGNED: ....

DATE : ..13/07/2003.........

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the factors that contribute to drop-out rates among adult learners in the Mahwelereng District. Adult Basic Education and Training was chosen because it is regarded as the starting point for empowerment of illiterate people while being part of the development strategy for South Africa as well.

Since the researcher was working in the Faculty of Management Sciences and Law of the Turfloop Graduate School of Leadership, the focus of the research had to be in line with the objective of the above department, that is about development issues.

ABET is regarded as a developmental tool because it empowers illiterates in the acquisition of skills and knowledge that will ultimately improve their standard of living.

Data was collected from three ABET centers in the Mahwelereng district by means of observations and interviews. The respondents constituted thirty adult learners, nine educators and three center managers.

The data collected was analyzed and interpreted, whereupon conclusions were reached and recommendations on factors that contribute to drop-out rates and means to deal with drop-outs, were made. It is believed that the recommendations made will help to reduce the rate of drop-outs in Mahwelereng and the surrounding areas which experience similar problems.

PREFACE

This study is the report of the research that was conducted in the Mahwelereng district in the Limpopo Province. The research is about factors contributing to drop-out rates among adult learners in the Mahwelereng areas.

This research was conducted as part of the Master's Degree in Development (M. DEVS) at Turfloop Graduate School of Leadership (UNIN) of the Department of Management Sciences and Law.

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CHAPTER ONE
GENERAL ORIENTATION

1.1   INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Literacy instruction in the South African apartheid system with its authoritarian curricular demands, deficient language policy and inappropriate teaching contributed towards low reading skills in the country. Consequently, South Africa is known for an extremely high illiteracy rate compared to first-world countries which in turn resulted in a high number of school drop-outs (Hutton 1992:14). In addition, the Limpopo Province Report in South Africa's Reconstruction and Development Magazine (1986:6) as quoted by Rakoma (1999:2) indicates that out of a 61.4% illiteracy rate in South Africa, the Limpopo Province constituted 52% at that stage.

As may be expected, the Mahwelereng district in the Limpopo Province is seriously affected by the problem of illiteracy since it is a rural area. The district is also characterized by poverty, unemployment and a lack of proper housing, as well as a well-developed infrastructure (District Report on ABET Education 1999:5). The dire need for literacy is underpinned by the fact.

According to Rensburg (1997:2), a number of ABET activities have been initiated which are believed to be aimed at establishing the principles and practices of equity, redress, integration, partnership, sustainable use of resources, development, reconstruction, recognition of prior learning and cost-effectiveness. In the Mail and Guardian (2000:52), the Minister of Education Professor Kader Asmal announced the Tirišano project that was launched in South Africa. The main aim of this project is to establish South African National Literacy Initiative, thus giving priority to the alleviation of illiteracy. In support of the above initiative, a project called the South African National Literacy Initiative (SANLI) was launched on the 26th June

2000 at a Conference held at UNISA. This project had two objectives; first, to reduce the level of illiteracy and second to ensure broader participation of all South Africans in illiteracy campaigns. The project's targets are people with no schooling at all as well as those with some primary education. As one of the poorest provinces in South Africa, the Limpopo Province will benefit. In this regard the Mahwelereng district will benefit as well.

The researcher agrees with Rogers (1986:31) who states: "Whereas the illiterate people are regarded as the agents of the development process, drop-out rate serves as the resistance to change and the means to resist innovations and development". This simply implies that the level of national development can be raised if literacy levels are regarded as a capital investment, which has social and economic returns. Hence Gerwel (1993:69) mentions that illiterates rates are higher in rural areas in South Africa with more women illiterates in comparison to men. A moral problem is that the actual number of illiterate is still increasing in the country. This fact implies to Mahwelereng district where the adult learners are mostly women who are housewives, domestic workers who cannot read or write, the disadvantaged youth who could not continue with their studies, as well as a few illiterate men working in the department of Public Works, and other pensioners and some people who are unemployed (Mahwelereng District Statistics 1999:1-2)

While such important initiatives are undertaken, implemented and supported by the office of the President to reduce the levels of illiteracy, the problem of adult learners dropping out of ABET centres is experienced in the Mahwelereng district as well. From the thirty-four ABET centres in the Mahwelereng district the statistical information released in October 1999 indicated about 32% of the learners were dropping out of classes each quarter. The problem of drop-out thus seriously impacts on the programmes offered at these centers. Despite the fact educators keep on registering new students, the unacceptably high drop-out rate prevents them from achieving their goal of empowering adult learners to access and acquire basic skills in areas such as communicating and primary child care to improve the living

standard of the adult learners and community at large (Mahwelereng District Statistics 1999: 1-2).

The above background reinforces the importance of looking into mechanisms of solving the problem of drop-outs and that is what this study intends doing. Hutton (1992:32) is of the opinion that the failure of adult education to realize the dreams of adult learners results in the high drop-out rates among them because if the ABET programmes don't motivate adult learners, they will always drop out after some months when they realize that they cannot apply what they are taught at school outside the classroom situation.

The above conditions that can lead to demotivating adult learners are characteristic of the situation in the Mahwelereng district. Although there are limited follow-ups and support of the teachers and learners attend only twice a week for a few hours, one cannot simply conclude that these conditions have contributed to the problem of drop-outs that is experienced within the district without an incisive study into the nature of the problem itself.

In this regard Rood (1997:24) states that the purpose of empowering adult learners through basic education is to let them have access to information and to offer them programmes which will then motivate them by meeting their expectations such as for instance, obtaining first a better economic position and living conditions for productive activities, hygiene, health care, and second, social factors such as belonging somewhere through group formation, an increase in respect and self confidence (especially among women) and lastly the ideological factor of standing up for one's own right and the increase in safety for women in relation to aspects of gender. In addition, adult learners will be empowered and motivated when they are given responsibilities by having a say in the selection and designing of their learning programmes. Under such circumstances adult learners are likely not to drop out.

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Xumalo (2000:2) in her report, however says that drop-outs are there because learners have different interests. Some for example drop out because they realized that they have acquired that which they wanted to acquire. In studying factors leading to students who drop out, one should bear in mind that the expectations of ABET programme designers, policy makers and tutors may differ from the expectations of the learners which, if not taken into consideration, may lead to one to state that the adult learners have dropped out while they have not done so. This further emphasizes that adult learners should be clear about their expectations from ABET programmes.

Although various research studies have been conducted for example Rood (1997:26) and Xumalo (2000:3) on factors that contributed to drop-out rates among adult learners, little has been done about the investigation of the extent to which these factors impact on ABET programmes. The current study intends to do this, because for the aim of adult education to alleviate illiteracy as an aspect of empowerment and development strategy to be achieved, effective means to solve the practical problems that are experienced in adult education which result in drop-outs among adult learners, need to be taken into consideration.

1.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

From the background given, the following questions were raised:

- What are the factors that contribute to the drop-out rate of adult learners in Adult Basic Education and Training centres around Mahwelereng?

- How do the factors that contribute to the drop-out rate among adult learners impact on the education of adult learners?

- To what extent do these factors impact on ABET programmes?

1.3 THE AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study will be to:

- examine the factors that impact on the drop-out rate of adult learners.

- examine the extent to which these factors impact on the ABET programmes; and

- advise and enrich ABET policies, practitioners and development policy planners on the possible mechanisms that can be applied, to deal with the problems of adult learners dropping out of class.

1.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Since the purpose of this study is to investigate the perceptions of educators, adult learners and center managers concerning the factors that contribute to the drop-out rates among adult learners in the Mahwelereng district, the basic principles of qualitative research, data collection techniques, sampling, and data analysis will be discussed in this section.

1.4.1 Research methods

Research methods are strategies used to collect data. Hague and Jackson (1996:44) assert that research methodology concerns ways in which the required information will be collected, which presupposes understanding of the alternatives, and how and when each can be effectively used. However, the choice in research methods must be driven by the objectives and information requirements of the research project. Against the above background, the qualitative research method will be used in this study.

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1.4.1.1 Qualitative research method

According to Mouton and Marais (1990:153), the qualitative research approach is the approach that does not use statistics but the researcher makes use of case studies where findings are interpreted and contextualised within the social, cultural and historical background of those cases. In this instance the qualitative approach, which concentrates on the qualities of human behaviour, will be relevant because the study hopes to analyse the theoretical issues around drop-out rates among adult learners. Mouton and Marais (1990:156), interchangeably use four terms called field research, case study method, ethnographic research and interpretative approach to explain what the qualitative research approach entails.

Field research explains that the research takes place within the natural setting of the social actor. Ethnographic research indicates the predominantly descriptive nature of the qualitative research. In addition, interpretative research refers to the fact that the aim of the research is not to explain human behaviour in terms of universally valid laws, but rather, to understand and interpret the meanings and intentions that underlie every human action. Finally, the case study method indicates the contextual interests of qualitative research with the aim to understand the cases which are studied in depth. This study therefore, hopes to use two field research techniques, namely observation and interview to collect data.

1.4.1.2 Data collection

Data collection can be defined as the process through which the researcher obtains data. There are six ways to collect data, namely through observations, questionnaires, interviews, documents, tests and unobtrusive measures. Most researchers use a variation of one or more of these methods, depending on the strengths or limitations of each method. As already outlined for the purpose of this

study, the methods of observation and interview will be used to collect data in this instance (MacMillan & Schumacher 1993:30), as quoted by Rankapole (2000: 53).

a.   Observations

The observation technique may be defined as the process by which the researcher observes the behaviour of other people but hides the reality of being an observer in the presence of the people he is observing (Bless & Smith-Higson 1995:105). There are two types of observation, namely participant observation and non-participant observation. Participant observation is a technique where the observer is so actively involved in a situation being observed that he becomes an integral participant in the sense that he becomes a full member who observes but conceals his role as an observer conversely. Non-participant observation is the indirect interference with the observed because the observer observes and records results without interacting with the observed (Bless & Smith-Higson 1995:106).

For the purpose of making a qualitative analysis of the setting observed, the partially/direct participant observation will be used where data will be systematically and unobtrusively collected. The collection of data will involve activities such as looking, listening, enquiring and recording. A well-defined representative sample of individuals will be observed and will also be questioned at any stage of their performance for further clarification. The sample that will be used will be explained later. A tape recorder will be used to record data as the researcher will be moving from one ABET centre to the other to do this.

b.   Interviews

Interview is a direct way of obtaining data which involves direct personal contact with the participant who is asked questions and is expected to answer orally (Borg & Gall 1989:321).

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There are two types of interviews called structured and unstructured interview. The structured interview is the interview that consists of a structured set of questions that are used to compare answers from different groups interviewed. Such interview will make use of a pre-set standardised schedule of questions for all groups that are interviewed. An unstructured interview consists of questions that are developed during the course of the interview based on the answers from the previous questions (Pieters 1996:10). For the purpose of this research, the partially structured interview called focus group interview will be used to collect data.

The above method is chosen because it is used when the researcher wishes to conduct a more intensive study on a small sample. The focus interview can be defined as a kind of partially structured interview by a schedule of questions and topics that the researcher wishes to cover (Seaman 1987:290). The researcher will investigate in detail the explanations given by the respondents, and this will in turn help the researcher to discover new aspects on the issues around drop-out rates among adult learners. The researcher will ask the participants oral, structured and unstructured questions, observe their behaviours, as well as record their responses, while at the same time noting the features of the environment.

The group interview (discussion) approach will be used because most of the participants are adult learners who cannot read or write. Teachers and tutors will be interviewed separately using different questions. The tape recorder and assistants will be used to record data. The researcher will move from one ABET center to the other to conduct this face to face focus group interview. The next section of the study discusses the ways in which researcher will select participants to observe and interview.

1.4.2   Sampling

De Vos (1998:190) as quoted by Rankapole (2000:10), defines sampling as a means of taking any portion of a population or universe as a representative of that

population. It is that element of the population considered for actual inclusion in the study.

Best and Kahn (1993:13) assert that a sample is a small proportion of a population selected for observation and analysis. To Babbie (1992:197), as quoted by Rankapole (2000:55), a sample is a scientific endeavour whereby the researcher ensures that the sample is representative. That is the aggregate characteristics of the sample closely approximate those same characteristics in the population.

Bless and Smith-Higson (1995:84) note that sampling is when the research restricts its investigation to a small, but well chosen group of objects (persons) called a sample, representing a much wider group of population. On the basis of observing a sample the researcher generalises or infers properties of the whole and draw conclusion. A sample is summarised as a subject of the whole population which is actually investigated by the researcher and whose characteristics will be generalised to the entire population. For the purpose of this study simple random sampling will be used.

1.4.2.1   Simple random sampling

Simple random sampling is a sampling technique which provides equal opportunities for selection for each element of a population. Simple random sampling will be used because the elements selected for studying from population will be people with the same chance, likelihood or probability (sample) and results would likely be the same (Bless & Smith – Higson 1995:89).

People such as educators, learners and center managers will be selected randomly or by chance to serve as the research audiences. The researcher will randomly select ten adult learners, one center manager, three ABET tutors from each of three centres of Mahwelereng district. Similar questions will be given to learners, center managers and tutors respectively. There will be about forty-two (42) participants.

1.4.3 Data analysis

Barley (1994:378) defines data analysis as the culmination of the long process of hypothesis formulation, instrument construction and data collection. The main aim of data analysis is to further the overall goal of understanding social phenomena. Data analysis has to do with statistical analysis of data through the process of description, explanation and prediction.

This research also intends to analyse data through interpretations, explanations of the results from observations and interviews conducted. Data obtained through interviews, assistants' records, researcher's records of observations and will be interpreted within the context of the background under which the questions were asked and observations were made and then followed by a general conclusion that will be reached on the basis of the whole population. Such analysis will help to provide the relevant theoretical information that will be used to make conclusions about drop-out rates among adult learners in the Mahwelereng district.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Theoretically, the study hopes to contribute to the debate on the extent to the impact of ABET programmes on the lives of adult learners which at present have a negative influence on the development strategies, that is the achievement of the main goal of ABET of reducing the level of illiteracy. This research then hopes to look into the mechanisms of how to deal with the problem of drop-out rates among adult learners and this will in any way be the means of contributing towards the upliftment of the economic status of South Africa and the world at large.

The practical implications of the study would be to contribute towards empowering ABET educators, learners and officials as practitioners, on how to deal with drop-outs among adult learners. Thus the data provided by the study will be used by the

ABET practitioners, planners and curriculum designers, policy makers to improve the existing ABET learning programmes and policies.

1.6 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

Concepts such as Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET), lifelong education (learning), adult learners, drop-out rate and ABET centres will be defined.

1.6.1 Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET)

For the better understanding of the adult basic education, one has to first define adult education, basic education and training as separate concepts. The concept education is broadly defined by Tight (1996:14) as organised and sustained instruction, designed to communicate a combination of knowledge, skills and understanding, valuable for all the activities of life.

Rogers (1986:17), as quoted by Tight (1996:61), in turn argues that adult education is the form of education that treats student (learner) participators as adults who are capable, experienced, responsible, mature and balanced.

UNESCO has broader and more modern conceptualization of adult education:- Adult education denotes the entire body of an organised process, whatever the content, level, method, whatever formal or informal, replaces initial education in schools, colleges and universities as well as in apprenticeship, whereby persons regarded as adults by the society to which they belong develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, improve their technical or professional qualifications or turn them in a new direction and bring about changes in their attitudes and behaviour in two-fold perspective of full personal development and participation in balanced and independent social, economic and cultural development (Tight 1996:62). The organisation for economic co-operation and development (1997:110) as quoted by Tight (1996:63) defines adult education as:

Any learning activity or programme deliberately designed by a providing agent to satisfy any learning need or interest that may be experienced at any stage in the life of a person who is over the statutory school leaving age and whose principal activity is no longer in education. It involves non-vocational, vocational, general, formal and informal studies as well as education with a collective social purpose.

Basic education may be defined as all forms of organized education and training including literacy instruction that meet the basic needs of learners. Basic education is one way of empowering people by opening avenues of communication that expand personal choice and control over one's environment and is necessary for acquisition of skills. Basic education further accesses people with information that equips them to cope better with work, family responsibilities and changes the image they have about themselves. It gives the disadvantaged people the tools they need to move from exclusion to full participation in their society (Fiskie 1997:17). As such, the concept training means the systematic acquisition of skills, rules, concepts or attitudes that result in improved performance. Training in a potentially wide scope can be defined as involving instruction and practice aimed at reaching a particular level of competence (Tight 1996:17).

In the National Multi-Year Implementation Plan of Rensburg(1997:10), the concept Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET), is defined as the general conceptual foundation towards lifelong learning and development, consisting of contexts. The above document further defines ABET, in the development context, as the foundation base which individuals require to improve their life changes, as well as the foundational income-generating or occupational skills which individuals need to improve their livelihood.

According to ABET Act No 1 of December 2000, ABET is defined as all learning and training programmes for adults from level one to level four, where level four is equivalent to grade nine in public schools or in the National Qualifications

Framework levels as contemplated in the South African Authority Act No 58 of 1995 (ABET Act 2000: 3).

For the proposed study, ABET refers to educating (teaching and guiding) adult learners to acquire knowledge and training them to acquire basic skills in writing, reading, numeracy as well as acquiring basic life skills such as in cooking, gardening, sewing and needlework (Mckay 1998: 5).

1.6.2   Lifelong education (Learning)

The concept lifelong education should be understood to have emerged as a result of the idea of internationalization of adult education and training. It involves international thinking, policy-making and co-operation in adult education (Tight 1996: 34). Fiskie (1997: 19) defines lifelong learning as the approach to adult learning, in the sense that it is like education that is given to alienated and unemployed adolescents and young adults, with little or no schooling, to provide them with basic education that is relevant to their immediate reality. It is a type of education and continuing education that spans the gap between the traditional distinction between initial education and continuing education, that is, it emphasizes that learning is meant for people of all ages. Due to the results of rapid changes that are currently occurring, there is an increased need for knowledge, skills and understanding while existing knowledge should be updated continuously. Hence, adult basic education should be considered as the most important component of lifelong education (Fiskie 1997: 20).

According to Tight (1996:35), lifelong learning is the education that argues for the rejection of a model of education which is confined to childhood, adolescence and early adulthood called Front-end model. Education here is portrayed as being available throughout life as needed and desired, for everyone. Lifelong education is a means of facilitating lifelong learning and would first be available for the whole lifespan of each individual and second, lead to systematic acquisition, renewal,

upgrading and completion of knowledge, skills and attitudes as well as being necessary in response to the constantly changing conditions of modern life. Ultimately, it would lead to achieve the goal for promoting the self-fulfillment of each individual and lastly acknowledge the contribution of all available educational influences: formal, non-formal and informal.

The function of education in lifelong learning is the preparation of individuals for the management of leading adult lives, the distribution of education throughout the individual lifespan, the educative function of the whole of ones life experience, and the identification of education as an integral part of life itself. Although the role of education is shifted from its dominant position in early life, to be combined with work and non-work in adult life, the fact remains that this kind of education also has severe, perhaps more, financial implications than the education of the youth (Tight 1996:37).

A diary compiled for ABET practitioners by the Department of Education (DoE) (1999:25) states that lifelong learning is the continuous process which stimulates and empowers individuals to acquire and apply the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to realize their full potential. It further states that ABET should adopt this process of lifelong learning in the sense that ABET should realize two objectives: first, of developing an interference between ABET levels one to four on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) with that required by Education and Training band so as to provide a learning path for Further Education and Training (FET) and second, of making provisions for skills and knowledge acquired by learners who could not continue with their earlier formal education.

In this instance ABET is positioned to incorporate literacy and numeracy into a broader programme that empowers adult learners obtain a General Education and Training Certificate (GETC). In this sense ABET is thus forming the basis for lifelong learning and development (DOE 1999: 26).

1.6.3 Adult learners

For one to understand who adult learners are, one should first have an understanding of the concept 'adult'.

In different countries the concept adult is understood in different ways. For example, in England an adult is merely defined in terms of age, since a person is generally assumed to become an adult at the age of eighteen when he/she gets the right to vote (Tight 1996:11). But in France the adults are usually defined as persons aged fifteen or older (Fiskie 1997:17).

Tight (1996:14), as quoted by Rakoma (1999:10), is of the opinion that the concept adult should not be directly connected to age but be related to factors like achieving physical maturity, being able to provide for oneself, moving away from ones parents, and exercising greater role in making ones own decisions and choices. In this sense adulthood is associated with full development and personal growth.

According to Rensburg (1997:10), the concept adult 'learners' thus refers to adults and out of school youth, aged fifteen years and above who have had no or inadequate schooling. The term adult learners includes first, disadvantaged women and youth who have been unable to access or complete primary schooling and who are unemployed, living in rural and squatter settlements, and second, the women and youth with special needs who live in prisons, shelters and on farms, who could not access or complete primary education and are aged between fifteen and thirty years.

This study then adopts the definition of Gerwel (1993:70), namely that adult learners are people who could hardly read, write and count. They are mostly women who are housewives and domestic workers, farmers and a few men who are unemployed, as well as a number of men who are employed in the nearby towns and farmers. Adult learners also include rural disadvantaged and unemployed

people who could not continue their schooling and are above fifteen years of age as well.

For the purpose of this study an adult learner is any person who is sixteen years and older (ABET Act 2000:1).

1.6.4   ABET centers

According to ABET Act No I of Dec (2000:1), the concept 'center' means a public or private center. In this study the concept 'ABET centres', refers to ordinary school building or other community buildings such as churches that are hosting ABET classes.

1.6.5.1   Drop-out rate

The concept 'drop-out' means to withdraw from conventional social activities or to withdraw from a course of instruction (Hornby 1983:268) while Mckay (1995:22) defines 'drop-out rate' as the number of people who leave school before completing matric, in other words these people drop out of the schooling system. For the proposed study 'drop-out rate' refers to the number of adult learners who for one or another reason discontinue with the attendance of ABET classes.

1.6   RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

CHAPTER ONE : This chapter provides the introduction and background, research questions, objectives, methodology, scope, significance, framework, and definition of concepts.

CHAPTER TWO : The literature review will be presented in this chapter.

CHAPTER THREE : This chapter deals with the empirical study.

CHAPTER FOUR : Conclusions and recommendations will be presented in this chapter.

CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   INTRODUCTION

Adult Basic Education and Training has an impact on the specific problems experienced by communities in the sense that it helps the people to acquire basic skills which in turn, leads to an improvement in their livelihood. ABET programmes help them to acquire different skills in practical areas such as planting, selling, communicating, reading and writing, arithmetic, how to care for their children, good nutrition and primary health care (Mckay 1995:19).

According to Gerwel (1993: 76), one of the problems experienced in adult education is the high drop-out rate of adult learners which aggravates the problem of illiteracy thereby adding an obstacle to the development strategy applied to strengthen the economy.   However, in the Mail and Guardian (2000:52), the Minister of Education, Prof. Kader Asmal reported about Tirišano project that was launched in South Africa aimed at the establishment of the South African National Literacy Initiative to give priority to alleviating adult illiteracy.

The purpose of studying different views of a number of authors about the drop-out rate among adult learners, is to examine the way in which different countries experienced this problem of dropping out from adult learner programmes and how these countries attempted (failed and succeeded) in solving such problem. This problem hinders the achievement of the objective of Adult Education, namely to alleviate adult illiteracy.

The information collected through this study will be combined with information that will be investigated in conducting research and this will first, serve as a possible solution towards the problem of drop-outs and second, it will be useful to practitioners and planners. The chances of success of this study are definitely

enhanced by the passing of the ABET Act on 5th December 2000. The Act intends to regulate all ABET activities in South Africa in order to provide for the establishment of ABET, to register private and public adult learning centres, and to promote quality in ABET as well as to provide transitional arrangements that redress the past discrimination and ensure representativity and equal access to ABET programmes (ABET Act, 2000:1-2). This Act also addresses the experienced need in ABET, namely to establish a co-ordinated ABET system that will promote programme based ABET.

In reviewing the opinions of different authors, this research will first, focus on a need for adult education programmes in South Africa and second, on the factors that contribute to the problems of adult learners who drop out of lessons and the possible solution to these problems.

2.2 A NEED FOR ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMMES IN SOUTH AFRICA

Many adults in South Africa and in most of the underdeveloped countries have little or no schooling and are constantly struggling with being functionally illiterate in a society that is dominated by literate people. In this regard Harley (1996:7) remarks: The apartheid legacy leaves half of South African population functionally illiterate since they do not have functional literacy skills to cope with the normal demands of a modern economy.

Adult Basic Education and Training was introduced to eradicate illiteracy because the National Education Policy Investigation (Gerwel 1993:5) reports that there are about fifteen (15) million people without basic schooling in South Africa. Breaking the back of illiteracy among the youth and adults through ABET programmes is one of the nine priorities which constitute the building blocks for enabling the development of a fully-functioning education and training that will drive South

Africa into the twenty first century and contribute to health and prosperity of the nation (Asmal 2000:4).

According to the ABET policy document of the Department Education (1997:22), the vision for ABET is "A literate South Africa within which all citizens have acquired basic education and training which enables effective participation in the socio-economic and political process and thereby contributing to reconstruction, development and social transformation of the country." In support of this vision Kader Asmal's opening report entitled "From ABET to business", states that there is the need to have a developmental approach to ABET.

This means that while ABET works towards the personal development of the individual, it is also critical for broader social, economic and cultural development. A developmental approach ensures that ABET will become central to the real needs of communities struggling for basic necessities like water, food, primary health care and housing. The key to achieving this link between ABET and socio-economic development is situated in achieving the practical links between ABET, skills and development, and the world of work. In other words, ABET should be linked to community-based public works programmes, spatial development initiatives and skills programmes. In this way the ABET programmes for workers will be linked to the work context of the learners (DoE 1999:27).

In addition the office of the South African national Minister of Education launched the national ministerial project, called South African National Literacy Initiatives (SANLI) which is a four-year literacy campaign, starting from the year 2001 to 2004. This project is the third priority in the corporate plan for Tirišano as the departmental and strategic plan and proposes to break the back of illiteracy amongst adults and the youth. Its targets are people with no schooling at all and those with some primary education, because according to the annual report of statistics South Africa of 1996, a huge number of South Africans were illiterate at that stage. The objective of this project is to ensure that two million adult learners will have

completed ABET level one programmes in 2004, rendering them competent in reading and writing their mother tongue, the language of the local economy and being numerant (SANLI Policy Document 2000:45).

Hutton (1992:15) also agrees with the fact that there is a great need for ABET programmes. He is of the opinion that illiterate people are adults that are excluded from power, are hungry and vulnerable to illness. In underdeveloped countries such as South Africa and Asia, these illiterate people are characterised by indicators of poverty such as high infant mortality rates, lower life expectancy, high rates of malnutrition, poor health services, poor education provision, and a sparse communication system. These people need literacy to empower them, promote self-reliance, change their thought process, narrow the gap between the rich and the poor, and making individuals to be more confident, able and assertive. According to Rood (1997:14), ABET programmes are initiated to empower the marginalised adults. The concept 'empowerment' in this case means the ability to direct and control one's own life and resources. In this regard ABET programmes empower such adults and since they transform their cultural, social and economic environment in such a way that they are able to develop themselves according to their talents and needs. This idea will be thoroughly discussed later in this chapter.

2.3   FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO ADULT LEARNERS' DROP-OUT RATES AND THE POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

In studying the views of some authors, the researcher has realised that most of the authors agree on particular aspects which impact on the education of adults. These aspects include meeting the needs of an illiterate adult through the:

- integration of adult learning programmes with solving problems adults are experiencing;

- conditions or circumstances under which the adult learners find themselves;
- use of mother tongue as a medium of instruction;
- use of teachers, material, as resources for learning; and
- recognition of prior knowledge of adults and the involvement of adults in their own achievements.

Although the above aspects are discussed from the different dimensions, the authors generally agree that if they are taken into consideration, they serve as the motivational force for adult learners that are discouraged to such an extent that they don't end up withdrawing from class.

2.3.1   Integration of adult programmes to problem- solving

Mckay (1995:18) contends that the reason why adult learners drop out of school is because ABET programmes do not always meet real needs of adult learners. The skills in reading and writing are taught and acquired without being integrated with solving the problems experienced by adult learners in the social context, like training them in the skills that will help to generate income for the families because most adult learners are unemployed (Rood 1997:16). ABET programmes should help adult learners to acquire skills that will enable them to realise their potential.

That is, such programmes should help them in the following aspects: Teaching learners how to participate in the society, to become caring adults, to achieve appropriate living conditions and to deal with one's own responsibilities (Rood 1997:5). Rood (1997:16) further expantiates on the three aspects of empowerment called the economic, cultural, and the social and physical aspects of empowering adult learners. By the economic aspect of empowerment, he refers to the empowerment that is related to the work and labour which involves the aspect of care, since the people are able to work in order to obtain fair income for themselves and for the needs of their household. The cultural aspect of empowerment is related

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to values and beliefs, that is responsibility. Responsible people are aware of their legal rights and duties, and reflect critically on their own motivations, values and beliefs. Lastly, the social and physical aspect of empowerment is related to well-being and involves creating a safe environment in which the people are able to fulfill the security needs for food, shelter and health.

The above assertion simply means that the empowered people are able to direct and control their own lives in a caring, responsible and safe way. As a process of learning, adult basic education hence enables those who have not been able to complete their own empowerment triangle of care, responsibility and safety to do so.

Conducting needs analysis is the first step in the planning of any learning programme, because learning becomes more effective and learners feel motivated if they can see how what they learn can help them improve the quality of their lives. This is possible if adult learners are involved in the process of identifying their needs as well as in the process of prioritising, selecting needs and checking the relevance of the learning programme (Bock 1999:7-8).

Winberg (1995: 8) agrees with the above opinion by focusing on the fact that adult learners have clear and rational reasons why they want to learn. Then the facilitator should encourage them by asking them questions about what they expect from their studies. Watermeyer and Winberg (1996:35) note that Paul Freire's model called "Developing Generative Themes" should be applied in this case. In this model the so called self-directed learning is recommended as this model entails an approach where learners are encouraged to decide on the themes and topics they want to study. These themes and topics should be about important issues in the community, which are able to generate action with the community. Examples of such topics are topics such as a shortage of money, poor access to health care, poor access to transport, unemployment and the high crime rate. The

adult educator should create an environment in which learners feel free to talk about such issues.

The use of generative topics will help to motivate learners because they enjoy discussing issues that are relevant to their life situations and this in turn will help them to have an understanding of their problems, causes of those problems and how to deal with them. When learners are motivated to participate in this way, they are not likely to drop out from classes.

Moreover, Winberg (1997:15) argues that many literacy programmes are limited and disempowering which results into promoting the belief that literacy can make the dreams of adults come true to be shuttered once learners have sat for a couple of months through classes which do not even enable them to apply what they are reading and writing to anything outside the classroom. This situation often results in a high drop-out rate and costly research to determine why so many adult learners are unmotivated.

Winberg(1997:16) is convinced that it is crucial to recognise from the onset that much of what is said about what literacy programmes can achieve, originates from literate people whose ideas about the benefits and consequences of literacy are often radically different from the ideas which illiterate people hold about those literacy programmes.

It is then clear that analysing the needs of adult learners together with the learners themselves, is vital to ensure a good match between the learners' needs and the content of the learning programmes.

The researcher agrees with Hutton's (1992:32) expansion of his approach to literacy work, called functional approach.

She furthermore agrees with the views of UNESCO report as quoted by Rogers (1986:29), namely that "adult literacy should be linked to social and economic development focusing on present and future manpower needs. That is, literacy should not only lead to elementary general knowledge but to training for work, increased productivity and greater participation in civil life and an added understanding of the surrounding world." Rogers (1986:30) furthermore agrees with the following quotation and mentions that the level of national development will be raised if literacy levels are improved since literacy is a capital investment which has social and economic returns:

The failure of adult education to make the dreams of adults to come true, results into high drop-out rates. Adult education programmes do not motivate adults. They usually drop out after six months when they realize that they cannot apply what they are taught at school, outside the classroom situation (Hutton 1992:18).

It is a well known fact that the dropping-out of adult learners means that our country or the world will continuously experience illiteracy which will, in turn, slow down development. Hutton (1992:70-79), thus agrees with Rood (1997:16) that literacy programmes should be incorporated into and correlated with economic and social development plans. Literacy programmes should aid in achieving the main economic objectives of an increase in labour productivity, food production, industrialisation, social and professional mobility, the creation of new person-power and the diversification of the economy. He furthermore stresses that there is a need to apply a functional literacy approach in adult education in order to link it with needs in the real world, such as where adults are taught to fill in forms, to make grocery lists and so forth.

Harley (1996:10) mentions the institutional factors that contribute to the high illiteracy rate, such as a lack of food, facilities, teaching aids, staff, the curriculum being implemented by unqualified teachers who are not motivated, a lack of guidance, and irrelevant programmes. His current perspective on adult basic

education is that the society can benefit only from adult education programmes when the training offered is regarded as job-preparation: for demands made by the employer, the provision of marketable skills and by giving priority to offering courses that prepare trainees (adult learners) for immediate or near future employment. He argues that training is often costly and a mere wasted time because it usually starts with the provision of basic education followed by skill training.

Adult learners seem to be motivated by the usefulness of the material they study. The adult basic education programmes should therefore break away from the traditional subject matter curriculum of the elementary school and should be of the immediate use of learners so that they develop a positive attitude towards it and continue to value it (Brooke 1972:165).

Kidd (1973:36) agrees with Harley (1996:10) that adult education services should also consider vocational training and entrepreneurial education for adults because this will prepare adults for rapid societal and cultural change. He argues that since this will result in effective learning which responds to the problems experienced by adults, it will likely reduce the number of drop-outs (Jarvis & Peters 1983:251). To Harsley (1998:56), vocational training should mainly be concerned with helping adult learners to cope with and understand change, so that learners can use the knowledge they acquire to make choices and improve their lives in the areas of education and training.

Such training will also help learners to function as workers in jobs where they are required to acquire basic training needs such as being literate and numerate thereby aiding learners to become self-empowered.

In his research, Hargreavas (1980:96) indicated that the rate of drop-outs in London was relatively high because a large number of adult learners had limited social sight vocabulary, a history of failure, and were experiencing a sense of indignity due to

their lack of literacy in adult life. This problem was solved by the development of a partnership between the adult learners and their tutors as well as the formation of the group support learners which resulted in recruiting more learners. Other problems were nevertheless experienced as well. They included the irregular class attendance by learners, learners not being keen to do their work; and ineffective counselling of learners on the side of the tutors which contributed to learners dropping out of class. The learners, however requested that the teaching of literacy should be extended to include the acquisition of activities to meaningfully use numeracy, social skills, leisure times and interview techniques and that the literacy teaching should be an essential tool of vocational education and training as most of the learners were unemployed. Even though this was requested by the learners themselves, most of them mainly supported the programmes which were meant for unemployed men and women with inadequate literacy skills.

The researcher therefore agrees with the statement that the main objective of adult education is to eradicate illiteracy and to help and integrate illiterate adults to the life of the country with the aim of improving working conditions and job conditions and increasing their income (Compos 1986:26). In addition, Compos states that for literacy programmes to be conducted successfully, they should be sufficiently integrated into existing economic and occupational structures such as agriculture and industries which obviously involve job training (Compos 1986: 27).

To summarize, the adult education project that is implemented with the active participation of business undertakings in the work place of the learners concerned, which is valued by both the illiterate adults and the employers, has a greater chance of success, because it qualifies to be called a functional literacy project, since functional literacy is first characterised by having the purpose of social ethic lessons for the changing learner's social outlook and their attitude towards work while second, it emphasizes the practical techniques such as the use of new methods of agriculture which will result in the process of acquiring skills or enablement for

acquiring jobs. The above can therefore be summarized by the saying that literacy should be functional towards training and landing a job (Compos 1980:33).

2.3.2   Conditions and circumstances under which adult education takes place

Hutton (1992:79) indicates that the major discouraging factors that might result in learner drop-outs are that some of the adult learners are workers who come to classes being exhausted due to an excessively long day commuting to and from wearing work. Wearines makes it difficult for them to study at night or late in the afternoon. Other reasons are that they tend to shy away from tests and examination as they are afraid of failure. Moreover, those who are unemployed suffer from depression and anxiety more especially in rural areas where there are taboos against literacy. These factors discourage learners and lead to irregular class attendance, hence the high number of drop-outs.

The researcher also agrees with Hutton (1992:81), when he argues that the above problem can be solved when learning gives learners a sense of achievement and by encouraging them to develop pride and confidence in what they are learning. Brooke (1972:183-184) agrees with Hutton (1992:81), that the subject matter of adult learners should deal positively with the fears and doubts of these learners. The latter always have to wrestle with the following questions:

- Can I learn?
- Will I not appear stupid or ridiculous?
- Will I not feel out of place going to school at an old age?
- What are the people saying about me?

Learners with such fears need immediate tasks which they can execute successfully to allay their fears. Adult education programmes should therefore have a sense of respect, acceptance and recognition of their prior knowledge as well as

encouragement in such a way that tasks given to adult learners should be kept within their achievement levels.

The above ideas are fully agreed with since what encouraged the researcher to research on the drop-out rates among adult learners is that materials are written about adults drop-outs but only a few or none of them has seriously considered the factors that contributed to the problem of drop-outs and the means to deal with this problem, which are aspects that this study focused on.

The problem of the high drop-out of learners was also experienced at Hartfield in Los Angeles due to transportation difficulties, changes in working fields, volunteer defences as their country was involved in the Vietnam war which resulted in long working hours while many of the educators were more interested in defence than in teaching adults. But despise the above mentioned problems, most people were merely interested in adult programmes that offered courses in defence since they faced a war (Adult Education Journal (1943:16) as quoted by Compos (1996:20)). This journal however mentions that people are generally interested in courses that address the problems that directly affect them.

Factors such as work-related problems, illness and learning difficulties have always been obstacles in the way of achieving the goal of eradicating illiteracy as they cause drop-outs. The quotation from the UNESCO report (1996:31) as quoted by Compos (1986:13) underpins the above statement by noting:
Drop-out rates serve as the resistance to change and the means to resist innovations and development, where-as illiterates are regarded as the agents of the development process.

Peterson (1982:25) concurs that the major problems that hinder the achievement of major goals in adult education in Denmark are a lack of guidance, counselling and information about goals of adult education, a lack of material that is especially prepared for adult learners' activities in rural areas but being urban-biased thus

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neglecting rural villages, husbands that dislike and disapprove these programmes, adult education being marginalised, the fear of adult learners to be ridiculed, coupled with a lack of institutions to serve as centres of adult education. He sees the solution to these problems in the establishment of special centres for adult education where research, documentation and exchange of ideas will take place with the purpose to reduce and deal with these barriers.

Winberg (1995:14) expantiates on the barriers to adult learning by asserting that adult learners who decide to continue with their studies will experience problems that hold them back. These are usually family and financial problems, work responsibilities, a lack of confidence, not knowing how to learn, not knowing about learning strategies and a lack of experience in formal writing which aggravate the difficulties of learning. Mckay (1995:27) also focuses on barriers to learning by mentioning that adult educators should be aware of some blocks to learning that make it difficult for adult learners to learn. These blocks are categorized into blocks stemming from the environment, physiological, and psychological blocks. By blocks stemming from the environment, the author refers to a venue, that is not conducive to learning, since conditions in such a venue make learners to lose concentration and interest and thus stop coming to class. The physiological blocks are when adult learners are ill or have poor sight and hearing, while psychological blocks are the fear of humiliation and failure coupled with the learners' fear that people are laughing at them for attending classes as well as being afraid of being too old to learn. Lastly, severe difficulties are caused by adult learners' numerous other duties.

Mckay (1995:30) emphasises that adult educators should help the learners to deal with these difficulties. They should adopt mechanisms to deal with these problems such as trying by all means to enhance the confidence of the learners by making sure that the learners are comfortable and relaxed, creating a friendly atmosphere for learning, ensuring that every learner feels valued, and looking for experts to

advise them as well as referring the learners to the relevant institutions in the case where the educator cannot solve the problems together with the learners.

2.3.3 The use of mothertongue as the main medium of instruction

Harley (1996:19) reports that according to adult teachers, it is more effective and faster for completely illiterate people to learn to read and write in their mother tongue and to master a second language at a later stage. Brooke (1972:175-177) agrees with this view and states that, many of the learners are unable to achieve success because of psychological problems, marital problems and a lack of the necessary vocabulary to understand the basic concepts. He mentions that the teachers should apply effective instructional procedures in such cases so that the learners do not drop out due to difficulties in understanding the relevancy of what they are expected to learn which may lead to demotivation.

In the article, entitled LITERATI by Khulile Africa in association with Hough and Horne (2001:2), which aims at upgrading the level of literacy of employees, it is stated that one of the objectives of adult lessons that they are aimed to be offered is to revise, revitalise and improve dissipated mother tongue reading and writing skills. As a literacy campaign LITERATI, bases its objective on the ABET principles that learners have the right to learn in the language of their choice and this right of choice should be available at all levels of the National Qualifications Framework.

The fact is, since most illiterate South Africans want to be literate in English as English is an international language, LITERATI advocates the so called transitional model which emphasises that English as the medium of instruction should not be effected prematurely, meaning that English as the medium of instruction should be effected after the learner has mastered or recoupled the mechanisms of reading and writing in his or her mother tongue, because if the above idea is not taken into

consideration, the results might be emotional blockings and negativism which will finally lead to learners dropping out of their lessons (Khulile Africa 2001:12).

In addition, Mckay and Murray (2000:18) argue that although more adults wish to learn English so that they can communicate easily at their workplace, it is important to start teaching adult learners to read in their mother tongue(L1) since those who are illiterate and semi-literate who can communicate in their mother tongue. If they start to learn reading in the language they already know and understand, they will learn at a much easier and faster pace. If they start reading in a second language (L2) and don't understand what they read, they will be demotivated to learn and discontinue with their lessons. The above authors summarises that "it is easier to start learning to read and write in our first language (L1) before learning to read and write in the second language (L2) (Mckay & Murray 2000:20)."

Finally the SANLI policy document (2000:3) supports the above ideas and that the project intends to focus on ABET level one, starting with mother tongue instruction and after learners have acquired basic reading and writing skills in this medium, the language of the local economy as chosen by learners will be studied.

2.3.4   The adult educators and material as the resources for adult learning

A lack of materials for study and shortage of qualified teachers and some equipments might likely cause the drop-outs of adult learners since many of the unqualified teachers fail to attend to different needs of adult learners in one class, because the learners in one class usually range from learners who can read newspapers, who merely need to improve their reading skills, to those who cannot write their names. The unqualified teacher can thus easily fall into the trap of using irrelevant material and that might result in learners not achieving to their ability, which discourages them to such an extent, that they end up dropping out of classes

(Hutton 1992:81). The conditions under which most adult education programmes operate in South Africa can contribute towards the high drop-out rates of learners as well. These conditions are that:

- the teachers' follow up and support are often limited;
- some teachers have less than a standard ten certificate;
- learners attend twice a week for a few hours;
- learners are frequently tired after a hard day's work and
- many learners have to use materials intended for school children.

Under these adverse conditions many teachers resort to drilling and correcting errors and teaching merely that which is easy. In this way they treat adult learners as little children at school (Hutton 1992:105).

ABET should adopt Bock's (1999:55-56) model called Participatory Material Development (PMD) which focuses on more than just identifying and taking into account the needs of learners at the beginning of the material development process. In this sense, learners and educators collaborate in the process of creating materials; hence the approach known as collaborative learner-educator material development should be used. Such an approach helps to meet the needs of learners, as well as building up their confidence and self-esteem and while simultaneously drawing on their own life experiences that are interesting to them. To conclude, Winberg and Mckinney (1998:14) emphatically state that the learning materials need to be adopted to suit adult learners.

According to Hely (1996:13), it will be convenient to integrate adult education with normal education in order to use the resources of schools such as teachers, methods, textbooks and equipment, but questions the fitness and suitability of these teachers, materials and methods to adult learners. He mentions that the teacher might not always be sensitive to the reactions and needs of adult learners and may continue to handle them like ordinary children at school. This, if not attended to, might

discourage adult learners to the extent that they drop out from the programmes. The author resultantly cites the example of Italy where the department employed ordinary school teachers to teach adults. Those teachers continued with the teaching of children in the elementary schools during the day and taught the adult learners in the afternoons, evenings and over weekends. The report illuminates that these school teachers successfully applied their skills and qualifications to these adult learners (Hely 1996:140).

It seems that such results from the study of using school teachers to teach adult learners is an exceptional case. On the contrary, the general feeling is that such practices result in adult learners being discouraged, because the school teachers often devote more efforts on teaching children at school than teaching adult learners because most of them are working as volunteers and are sometimes not remunerated for overtime. The purpose of this study is thus to investigate whether such problems exist at Mahwelereng adult centers, because if teachers come to class tired, they will not be confident and energetic in what they are teaching and this may result in learners in turn not valuing what is taught thereby losing interest in the classes. This will then condense in the problem of drop-out rates from class. Hely (1996:15) agrees with the researcher however, by emphasising that no major adult education can progress smoothly and rapidly if its implementation is entirely left to people who can spare only a few hours for adult literacy work out of busy life, devoted to other interests and responsibilities. Hely further stresses the need for the employment of full-time teachers with specialised knowledge of adult education who will perhaps guide and lead part–time workers to successfully carry out literacy programmes.

The SANLI policy document (2000:12) recommends the use of volunteer educators as the solution to effect effective adult learning programmes but emphasises that the volunteer educators need to be trained and developed in methods and curricula intended for teaching adults, so that they will be able to offer adult learners' curricula which involve basic first language literacy, conversational English and

Numeracy at ABET level one. Such educators should be able to encourage and motivate learners to maintain regular attendance of classes in order to complete the programme. According to this literacy campaign (project), no person whatsoever will be allowed to be an educator if he has not gone through this type of training.

SANLI strategy is very important and should not be practised in ABET level one programmes only, but should be adopted in other levels as well. In support of the SANLI strategy, Winberg (1997:39) alludes that in most adult educational practices, the learners and educators meet for only a few hours per week when learners are in the groups of different levels of competence but educators lack the necessary support, skills and experience to provide effective methods and materials while most of them don't have a full understanding of how and why adults learn. Winberg (1997:91) further argues that the use of teachers from the school system who are not trained to work with adults, is a practice that is totally against the needs and aspirations of adult learners and that might likely result in high drop-out rates among the learners. The author thus advocates for the application of effective literacy practice that depends on choosing well-trained educators who will ensure that learners' needs are met, and who are flexible enough to build on the learners' strength and experiences.

The characteristics and behaviors of the so called "effective teacher" for adult learning will be dealt with in detail in the following sub-heading about the involvement of adult learners in the teaching for the recognition of the prior learning of learners.

2.3.5 The involvement of adult learners in teaching, for the purpose of achievement and recognition of the prior knowledge of learners

This section will focus on the methods used to teach adults as well as ways in which adult learners actually learn.

In his model called adult learning transactional process, Galbraith (1991:3) refers to this model as the process that occurs when the facilitators and adult learners are engaged in an active, challenging, collaborative, and transforming educational process where there is interaction between the learner and the facilitator and among learners themselves. This process will lead to a few or no drop-outs of adult learners. This model is characterised by mutual respect, negotiation and collaborativeness while both the facilitator and the learners are full partners in experiencing learning and learn continuously in a mood of accepting criticism as means of learning.

The descriptive features of the transactional model of adult learning are collaboration, support, respect, freedom, equality, critical reflection, critical analysis, challenges and the free exchange of ideas. The facilitator should also be characterised by caring, trust, encouragement, self-confidence, informality, enthusiasm, responsiveness, the ability to create a conducive learning environment and possess understanding, flexibility, patience, humour, practicality, punctuality, warmth and love in order to support the emotional behavior of learners. Under such circumstances, the facilitator will succeed in helping the learners to work together to:

- create a positive attitude towards the learning situation;
- develop a positive self-concept;
- ensure responsiveness to the content;
- establish learners' expectations for success;
- build learner interest;
- develop learner involvement;
- increase the learners' awareness of progress, mastery, achievement and responsibility in learning;
- help learners to be aware of the positive changes their learning produced (Galbraith 1991:1).

The researcher fully agrees with Galbraith's(1991:5) idea of adopting what is called the transactional model of adult learning in adult education, because the new ABET policy document and newly designed learning programmes mention the importance of developing a good relationship between the facilitator and learners while the characteristics of such a relationship are the same as those of the transactional model.

It is also believed that adopting such a model will mean improving adult education and reducing drop-out rates. However, Harley (1996:10) presents the same idea from a different angle. He is of the view that many of the adult illiterates feel inadequate, are unable to learn and have low expectations of existence because they are experiencing constant failure. To prevent them from dropping out of school, their teacher should understand how adult learners generally perceive themselves to succeed in developing them through adult education programmes. The teacher should know the psychological worlds which have an impact on adult learners and effectively incorporate behavioral motivation and psychological approaches to motivate and support learners to alleviate their stress.

For effective adult education, Phillip (1988:36) stresses a relationship where learners and educators are regarded as equals (adults), where the teacher trusts and believes in learners' abilities and also respects learners, their language and culture as well as giving them the opportunity to decide what to learn. He views that learning in such a relationship would be meaningful, applicable to life situations, focus on learners' life-experiences and problems and recognise the prior learning of learners. In such a relationship learners will be independent, self-reliant, confident and unlikely to drop out of classes. This simply means that the learners will support programmes where they were or are involved in planning and designing them and not in programmes that are imposed on them without an analysis of their needs. The researcher therefore, agrees with Galbraith (1991:17-18) in his strategy referred to as instructional planning when the latter says that there is dire need for an

analysis approach to adult education. In other words, an approach in which the teacher identifies the gaps between the learners and current problems and proficiencies with such learners, while the learners are given the opportunity to share information as to why they are participating in adult education programmes, as well as what and how they want to learn. That is, learners select the projects, topics and assignments they want to study.

It is also believed that in adult learning the needs analysis approach can facilitate individual learning, which is not always possible due to limited time allocated to adult education programmes. Phillip (1988:37) furthermore mentions that one of the factors that contribute towards learners' drop-outs, is that educators are sometimes not aware of the way in which adult learners learn. However Xumalo (2000:1) sees the matter of how learners learn in a different way, although her argument still supports the above approaches. She regards the success of adult education as based on its ability to learn because learners do not learn in the same way, since some learn better in groups and others on their own or by listening to teachers' presentations. That is, learners should be given the opportunity to involve more that one sense in learning. This implies giving learners the chance to listen, see, touch and do it themselves. This method usually enables them to apply whatever they have learned in the daily life experience, hence this will motivate learners to love and value what is taught and at the same time reduce the high rate of learners dropping out of classes.

Rogers (1996:195) in turn, emphasises the views of the previous author by mentioning that adult learners learn better in small groups wherein the teacher should see to it that he persuades all members of each group to use their special knowledge to teach one another. He also mentions that bad relations between the teachers and learners, learner and learner and the failure on the part of the teacher to communicate with learners can lead to learners withdrawing from lessons and ultimately stop coming to class.

It is, therefore, understood that the method of teaching, the need analysis and the content of learning, cannot be divorced from the prior knowledge of adult learners. For effective adult learning, all these aspects should take into consideration the recognition of prior learning of learners. It is also believed that the prior knowledge of adults and their needs combined should form the foundation for the content of education. As such this study will to a lesser extent also investigate whether this was taken into consideration when choosing the material for adult education.

In this regard Bock (1999:68) favours the principle of adult learning that mentions that learners learn best when the content is relevant to their past experiences and when the learning process is relevant to their life experiences. Winberg (1997:95) agrees with the above author when he expatiates on Carl Rogers's model that is named learner-centred approach. This model is relevant in this case because it emphasises that the learners' experiences and opinions must be respected and that learners should develop the ability to take greater responsibility for the learning goals and methods.

In support of the learner-centred approach, Watermeyer and Winberg (1996:40) discuss Vogotsky's theory of learning, which is based on what he calls the task-based learning approach. The approach focuses on the involvement of learners in multiple and integrated activities such as problem posing, language usage, and team work. Here the emphasis is that the starting point should be the learners' knowledge and experience, thereby encouraging the learners to reflect critically on their experience and to acquire new skills and knowledge.

The ABET policy document of the Department of Education (1997:25) therefore, explains the recognition of prior learning (RPL) as the comparison of the previous learning and experience of the learner against the learning outcomes required for a specified qualification. In the diary for ABET practitioners of the ABET Directorate (1998:23), the recognition of prior learning is further explained as the knowledge acquired as the results of formal or non-formal training, work and life

experiences. It is also emphasised that the recognition of prior learning enables the education and training providers to assess the extent to which learners can demonstrate the competence and skills they have acquired formally and informally to meet the outcomes specified in the ABET unit standards and qualifications (DoE 1997:26).

Khulile Africa in association with Hough and Horne (2001:5) underlines the importance of the recognition of prior learning of learners. The outcomes-based education (OBE) is the approach that is recommended because it is based on the fact that adult learners are not like ordinary school children but focuses on the fact that adult learners are rich in experience because they already possess certain skills such as listening, speaking, vocabulary, memory, positive attitudes and life experiences skills. Adult education should therefore design an environment and resources which will assist learners to use their past experience so as to construct their own body of in-depth knowledge objects. In analyzing the need for special teachers and methods to guide adult learners, the following ideas will then be discussed in details:

Paul Freire's model as mentioned by Watermeyer & Winberg (1996:20-22), known as the liberating education, is regarded as being very helpful in teaching adult learners, since it emphasises the techniques, methods of teaching and facilitation that intend to liberate such learners, that can be implemented successfully in the environment which is characterized by a shared decision making and a democratic learner-teacher relationship. The model further recommends first, the so called facilitation approach which focuses on the changing role of the adult teacher, where adult teacher is no longer called teacher but is known as the facilitator who no longer stands in front of the classroom and speaks alone, but is another participant in the classroom. In this case the learners are liberated because they are free to disagree with the facilitator and share their own experiences. And second, Transformative education, which refers to the type of education that has power to transform a society by means of developing the ability of people to think and act for

themselves, to identify problems, to decide what to do to change situations and then to act upon those decisions. This type of education is characterised by participatory learning, content-based learning, critical learning, democratic learning, socialisation, multi-cultural learning and resource-oriented learning.

To further clarify on the liberating education model, Paul Freire identified his second model for adult learning which he named the alternative approach to learning. In this model the concept tutor is used to refer to an adult educator. The approach focuses on the point that learners and tutors should be aware of the fact that the primary purpose of education is to help people gain the knowledge, skills and awareness necessary to satisfy their needs. In this case most of the talking is done by the learners, while the tutor is responsible for asking questions that should provoke the learners to talk about their lives and their needs as well as prioritising those needs. Another important element of the approach is that it revolves around real life situations of women and poor people as targets of development and is also linked to important developmental issues such as health education, legal rights, co-operatives, unemployment and small businesses that would be likely to arouse more interest in the attendance of classes by learners (Winberg 1997:84).

Watermeyer and Winberg (1996:50) are of the opinion that in any effective adult learning situations, the facilitation approach is regarded as the best participatory approach whereby the teacher / tutor as the facilitator is responsible for managing the learners to learn by working with them in a group. The facilitator is also responsible for asking for information, opinions, facts, and ideas by means of questions as well as providing ideas and suggestions, thereby helping the group to share relevant experiences by talking about his own experience.

Finally, Hely (1996:15-16) indicates the importance of the implementation of adult education programmes that should be coupled with monitoring and evaluation. Most researchers have overlooked this point. This raises the question of the need for thorough research into whether there is proper monitoring of adult education

programmes and the impact of the presence and absence of effective monitoring and evaluation of implemented ABET programmes and projects on drop-outs.

The author furthermore emphasises the need for in-service training especially for supervisors and inspectors, who carry out direct responsibility of implementing, organising, administrating and supervising ABET programmes. The officials should select potential literacy teachers and train them in teaching methods so that such teachers would in turn be able to conduct day-to-day inspection to advise teachers relating the problems they encounter when teaching adults. Ultimately some kind of devices should be invented such as remedial programmes so that the problems generally experienced do not in the end cause drop-outs (Hely 1996:17).

The above idea is sound and would be an effective means to solve the problems experienced in adult education that result into learners dropping out of school. But the other dimension is whether this would be possible in practical situations since there are no special institutions, and well-qualified teachers in ABET while school buildings are used after school to host adult learners. In addition adult classes start after inspectors (officials) have knocked off from their duties, while the above strategy would be effective with their support.

2.4 SUMMARY

All the factors that have contributed to the high drop-out rate of adult learners are closely interrelated and inseparable that is, one factor involves the other. This is the reason why authors tend to use them interchangeably, but approached from different dimensions. This chapter, however, at least gives one a clear picture of what drop-outs in adult education mean and involve, and how one can deal with them. It has revealed that there are numerous problems in adult education that end up discouraging learners from class attendance. These problems need to be identified and be dealt with as soon as they are identified for the sake of achieving the goal of adult education, namely to eradicate illiteracy. This study will thus

focus on such problems and make some recommendations about the possible ways in which to solve these problems.

CHAPTER THREE
EMPIRICAL STUDY

3.1   INTRODUCTION

The theoretical aspects of qualitative research methods of observations and interviews were fully discussed in Chapter One. In this chapter the researcher will focus on the way in which this study is designed, the methods, that were used to collect data, the procedures followed in sampling and lastly the way in which the data was analyzed. An analysis of the data will then be given. The data will resultantly be analyzed.

3.2   RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Macmillan and Schumacher (1993:157) as quoted by Rankapole (2000:49) define research design as a plan of selecting subjects, research sites, data collection procedures to answer questions posed by the researcher. According to De Vos (1998:152), research design is the recipe or blueprint for the investigation which provides a guideline according to which a selection can be made of which data collection methods will be most appropriate to the researcher, the researcher's goal and to the selected design. This idea explains the fact that the research design shows which individuals will be studied, and when, where and under which circumstances, the study will take place, while design denotes a plan of ways in which objectives are to be attained and the information obtained.

The research design therefore gives direction to sampling procedures, level of measurements, frequency of measurement and data collection methods (Hague & Jackson 1996:76). For the purpose of this study data collection methods, sampling and data analysis will be discussed respectively. As already outlined in Chapter One, research methods are strategies to collect data. Based on the discussions from

Chapter One the researcher used qualitative research methods to collect data for this study.

3.2.1   Qualitative research methods

The meaning of qualitative research methods was fully explored in Chapter One. The researcher used field research. That is, the researcher moved from one ABET center to the other in order to collect data around issues concerning factors that contribute to drop-out rates among adult learners in the Mahwelereng district. Two field research techniques called observation and interview were used.

3.2.2   Data collection

It is already stated that the researcher used the qualitative methods of interview and observation to collect data, and the ways in which these two methods were used to collect data, will now be discussed.

3.2.2.1   Observations

The theoretical aspects of the technique of observation was explored in Chapter One. The researcher used this method as the first stage for data collection. The researcher moved from one ABET center to the other in order to observe the environment, documents such as attendance registers. In doing so the researcher aimed at introducing herself to the center manager, educators and learners, so that they would feel relaxed by the time the researcher would start conducting interviews. In such a relaxed atmosphere the respondents would be more inclined to provide more detailed information, and when relationship or rapport had been established between the researcher and respondents. All the data collected by means of observation was recorded in writing and participants were clarified why that data was written down, namely to be used during data analysis.

3.2.2.2   Interviews

This section will focus on how the researcher used interviews to collect data. Forty-two respondents were interviewed from three centers in the Mahwelereng district in the Western Region of the Limpopo Province.

The first category of stakeholders the researcher interviewed was composed of three center managers while each center manager represented three ABET centers respectively. In this group face-to-face interviews were conducted. Wedepohl (1988:60) views a face-to-face interview as having the advantage of facilitating the interviewer's establishment of rapport with respondents which, in turn, often elicits more detailed and longer answers by the respondents.

According to Mckillip (1987:71), as quoted by Rakoma (1999:50), "face-to-face interviews allow for an in-depth person to person exchange of ideas between persons and is also regarded as the most appropriate of all survey methods for impaired or otherwise marginal members of the society." The second category of stakeholders was nine educators who were interviewed in three groups, each consisting of three members. Each group represented one center. Focus group interviews were used in this respect. According to Rakoma (1999:58) focus group interviews consist of a small group discussion designed to obtain an in-depth qualitative information.

This method was chosen because it is flexible since the respondents are able to deliberate, ask questions and respond to comments made by other respondents as well. Dates for the interviews were arranged before the researcher was doing her observations. Lastly, thirty learners, who constituted the third category, were interviewed in three groups of ten members each. Similar questions were asked in Sepedi because these learners were mostly Sepedi speaking people who could not write or read English, in fact, they could hardly understand English. Here the focus group interview was also used as well.

In conducting interviews with all three stakeholder categories, the researcher adopted Wedepohl's (1998:60) four principles of undertaking research as quoted by Rakoma (1999:50) of first, telling the people what the survey is about. In this instance the researcher started with a brief introduction of who she was, what she was doing and what the purpose of the research was. This aimed at making the respondents feel at ease and to develop trust in the researcher.

Second, the principle of getting to know each other was adopted where the researcher gave the respondents the opportunity to introduce themselves to one another. This resulted in letting the respondents feel at home and relaxed.

Third, the researcher requested the respondents to allow her permission to keep a record of all proceedings in writing and using a tape-recorder before asking them questions. The researcher also clarified the purpose for those records, namely to aid her in the final data analysis. This was done to avoid suspicion on the part of the respondents as some might have encountered fear that the information would be taken somewhere to penalize them in future.

Lastly, stress was laid on the principle of confidentiality. The researcher emphatically assured the participants that the information they provided would be treated as strictly confidential.

In all categories of participants structured and unstructured questions were asked orally, while the researcher was as flexible as possible. This resulted in follow-up questions being asked when respondents did not understand the question and the researcher then rephrased the question.

Most questions were open-ended questions about the factors that contribute to drop-out rates, among adult learners in the Mahwelereng district and how to deal with

these drop-outs. The participants answered questions orally while the proceedings of the interviews were tape-recorded.

The interviews concluded with the researcher thanking all participants for their time and the valuable information they had provided.

3.2.3 Sampling

In Chapter One the concept 'sampling' was defined and discussed. In this section the procedures of sampling as used by the researcher will be explored.

Mahwelereng district has thirty-four ABET centers. Three centers called Raphela, Maaka-Maleka and Makhutjisha were chosen for the purpose of this study because the researcher regarded them as representative of all centers, more so since the problems experienced in these centers are same as in most of centers in Mahwelereng district. The results obtained from these three centers were resultantly interpreted and generalized to apply to all ABET centers in the district.

To recapitulate one center manager, three educators and ten learners were chosen from each of the three centers. As already outlined in Chapter One, the researcher chose the participants randomly using simple random sampling technique because the participants selected were people with the same chance, likelihood or probability so that similar results would likely be produced.

3.2.4 Data analysis

The data recorded was analyzed through interpretations and explanations of the results from observations made and interviews conducted. A general conclusion was reached about the factors that contribute to drop-out rates among adult learners regarding all ABET centers in the Mahwelereng district, which in turn, may be further generalized to involve ABET centers in the Limpopo Province and the entire

South Africa because similar problems are generally experienced at most of these centers.

3.2.4.1   Data presentation, analysis and interpretation

In this section the researcher will present the data from observations and interviews conducted. The section focuses on interpreting and analyzing the obtained data from the respondents as well the researcher's observations. Before presenting the data it should be clear that three groups of stakeholders were interviewed from three centers at Mahwelereng. The data of the various groups of stakeholders will be presented in sequence, namely the center managers, second the educators and lastly the learners. Moreover, the data was compared according to themes while inclusions were made.

a.   Observations

In interacting with the center managers, educators and learners, it was observed that the adult educators and learners in general were enjoying ABET lessons while simultaneously understanding the importance of these programmes. Some of them, nevertheless admitted that they were experiencing problems with large numbers of learners dropping out of the programmes due to reasons that will be discussed in detail in the presentation of the interviews and their responses later in this chapter.

The researcher viewed a number of documents in the centers such as attendance registers, time registers, timetables, written work, lesson plans, learning programmes, records as well as the specific environment.

The attendance registers revealed that more women than men attended these ABET classes; many of the learners regularly absented themselves from classes while the number of learners was decreasing. An observation of specimen from written work of students showed that these learners were given enough written work, but there

was a problem with the number of educators. This problem was compounded by a lack of books for teaching adult learners. They were thus compelled to use books that are usually prescribed for kids so that these materials tended to bore those adult learners.

The environment for learning was observed as not being generally comfortable, in the sense that the adult learners had to use the small chairs designed for school children which prevented them form feeling comfortable and relaxed. In addition, the adult learners were only given a few classrooms to use and had no access to other school facilities. Despite these factors that impacted negatively on the ABET programmes the learners were eager to continue with their lessons. These factors will be further clarified in presenting interviews.

b.   Interviews

In this study responses to the interviews will be classified in the form of a number of important themes. All the stakeholders nevertheless, agreed that there are dropouts in ABET centers. The responses from three categories of stakeholders will be presented. Category One stakeholders will represent the center managers; category two will be educators with category three being the learners.

CATEGORY ONE STAKEHOLDERS

As already outlined, this group consisted of three center managers from three centers in the Mahwelereng district. The acronym CM will be used in the presentation of precepts from center managers.

1. **ABET PROGRAMMES ARE IMPROVING THE LIVES OF LEARNERS**

The following responses were elicited when the researcher stated that ABET programmes that are offered are improving the lives of people and that ABET learners enjoyed attending and still wanted to continue with lessons.

CM I "Most of the learners who come to the center are not able to read and write their names, but can now help their children with homeworks."

CM II "Learners say that they are now nominated to be secretaries for community women clubs since they can read and write now. They are able to fill out bank forms on their own and understand road signs."

CM III "They say they are happy because they are able to read information on posters."

2. **DROP-OUTS AMONG ADULT LEARNERS ARE A PROBLEM**

CM I "When we recruit they come to classes in big numbers but as time goes on they do drop out due to shifts at works, work transfers, and a lack of transport."

"Some learners say that because the lessons start late it is not safe for them as women to walk at night and they therefore discontinued with classes."

CM II	"If we had our own accommodation, the problem of transport and learners being afraid to attend at night will be solved, because learners are mostly women who feel that they are not safe to attend late in the evening."

CM III	"We do have more new learners that are dropping out of classes almost every month."

3. LIMITED TIME FOR ATTENDANCE OF LESSONS CONTRIBUTES TO DROP-OUT RATES

Since the learners attend for only six hours per week, educators are often unable to finish the learning programmes. When they teach faster the adult learners are left behind because they are slow in grasping the learning content. They then tend to become discouraged from continuing with the classes. Sometimes if they don't understand the work, they are afraid to write exams and they drop out.

CM I	"…their numbers have decreased because the operational times for centers is too short per week and when learners fall back they discontinue."

CM II	"The time is too limited for each learning area."

4. THE LACK OF RESOURCES IMPACTS NEGATIVELY ON LEARNERS' PROGRESS

There is a generally a lack of manpower and materials for learning. The few educators use books for kids to teach adults and adult learners are sometimes bored by such materials.

CM I   "Learning areas are introduced in the centers without learning materials."

CM II   "Educators are few, if the department can increase the number of posts..."

5. THE SKILLS IN READING AND WRITING SHOULD BE INTEGRATED WITH INCOME-GENERATING SKILLS

Since most of the adult learners are unemployed they should acquire income-generating skills so that they are able to start their own businesses for profit and to support their families. Though there is the problem of man-power learning areas like Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMME) and Applied Agriculture and Agricultural Technology (AAAT) should be part of the ABET programmes.

CM I   "Some learners were able to start their own small business..."

CM II   "Learners say they intend cultivating their own gardens at home so that they can sell the products."

6. WORKING CONDITIONS OF TEACHERS CONTRIBUTE TO DROP-OUT RATES AMONG LEARNERS

Since the working conditions of the educators are not generally good, educators get their salaries by filling in claim forms, which are sometimes delayed, and since they are not contracted and are often not sure of their status. Moreover, such educators are not entitled to the benefits such as leave, a housing subsidy, a car allowance and medical aid benefits other educators in formal schools get. This lack of benefits causes the migration of educators from ABET centers to better jobs thereby letting their learners frequently having to face new teachers.

These learners often find it hard to adjust to the different teachers' teaching styles. The learners resultantly, frequently fail tests and assignments and since adult learners are sensitive to failure they often stop attending.

CM I   "Almost all of the educators are not trained in methods for teaching adults. Some educators have to teach learning areas in which they did not specialize due to a lack of man-power and sometimes migrate to better jobs in other sectors."

CM II   "Learners drop out because of the inability of new educators to motivate them and understand them."

CM III   "Educators use old methods of teaching but combine them with Outcomes-Based Education."

The table below indicates how the data presented were common to all the respondents. (A tick [√] is used to indicate a common view amongst stakeholders).

THEME	CM I	CM II	CM III
Importance of ABET programmes	√	√	√
Presence of drop-outs	√	√	√
Limited time for attending	√	√	√
Lack of resources	√	√	√
Income generating skills	√	√	√
Conditions of teachers	√	√	√

TABLE 3.1: CATEGORY ONE STAKEHOLDERS'GRID

CATEGORY TWO STAKEHOLDERS

This group consisted of nine educators, namely, three educators from each center. The acronyms ED I, ED II will be used to represent Educator No. I and No. II and those following.

1. ABET PROGRAMMES ARE IMPROVING THE LIVES OF LEARNERS

ED I   "The learners say they enjoy these programmes because they no longer have to use a cross (x), but are able to append their signatures, while also being able to read instructions and road signs on their own. They say they are able to use ATM machines."

ED II   "They are able to sell and calculate their profits, they can also start their own business to generate income to support their own families."

ED III   "Projects like sewing and cooking help such learners to sew clothes and cook food for members of their families."

ED IV   "They say they can now speak and write English and are able to communicate at work, while some have been promoted at work."

2. DROP-OUTS AMONG ADULT LEARNERS ARE A PROBLEM

Most of the educators agreed with the center managers that they do experience the problem of adult learners dropping out from classes. Mechanisms should thus be put in place to deal with this problem.

ED I	"Many learners dropped out."
ED II	"Some learners said that they could no longer come to classes because their husbands had stopped them."
ED III	"Since most of the learners are domestic workers their bosses sometimes don't release them and they can no longer cope with the work and are therefore discouraged from attending."
ED IV	"Some dropped out because of the reasons like ill health, looking after children, thinking they are too old to continue attending and while some went to attend other community projects such as sewing and art projects..."
ED V	"Some of the learners dropped out because of a lack of equipment at the center. They actually started to drop out when they realized that there were no machines and stoves to use for sewing and baking as they explained that they basically wanted to acquire skills in baking, cooking and sewing."
ED VI	"Learners are scared to write examinations. When the time-table is released for the exams, many learners no longer attend classes because they say they are afraid that they are going to fail the exams because they have already failed a number of tests, assignments and projects."

3. THE LIMITED TIME FOR ATTENDANCE OF LESSONS CONTRIBUTES TO DROP-OUTS

The stakeholders in this group claimed that too little time was available for

coping with the amount of work. They asserted that centers are expected to function for a period of six hours per week, and since adult learners turned to grasp the learning content slowly, the educators are unable to finish their learning programmes. These factors often cause the learners to ultimately fail their tests and assignments. They are then discouraged and stop attending classes.

ED I   "We start too late and the time is too limited, so learners fall behind and they no longer attend."

ED II   "The time is too limited for each learning area. The scope is too much for the limited time."

ED III   "The centers opened very late and learners could not cope with the work."

ED IV   "Some learners are only given two hours' time off per week to attend classes they are, therefore, left behind."

ED V   "We don't have enough time to counsel and to support learners with learning problems and they end up dropping out."

ED VI   "The maximum of time allocated per educator per learning area each week is too limited."

ED VII   "The number of learners decreased because they take time to understand and forget easily and changing subjects also needs enough time, so the learners were confused because we don't have time for individual teaching."

4.   **THE LACK OF RESOURCES IMPACTS NEGATIVELY ON LEARNERS' PROGRESS**

ED I   "Because of a lack of study materials we combine the old method of teaching with Outcomes-Based Education."

ED II   "As learning materials are not supplied, we cannot teach according to the learning programmes supplied."

               "We should be trained on how to teach adults and be given learning programmes and books as soon as the centers open."

ED III   "We are understaffed. One educator has to teach about four learning areas per week so; we cannot follow and complete the given learning programmes. Some learners want to be taught basic Venda and Tsonga but there are no books and educators to meet their needs. Such learners often discontinue their studies since they are only taught English and other learning areas."

5.   **SKILLS IN READING AND WRITING SHOULD BE INTEGRATED WITH INCOME-GENERATING SKILLS**

Educators claim that most of their learners are women who are domestic workers; while some are support staff at work and others are housewives. Such people need skills in reading, writing and how to start small businesses to generate extra income.

ED I   "Learners say they need to learn how to read and write as well as acquire the necessary skills to starting their own small businesses."

ED II	"Some learners explained that they are now able to calculate profit unlike before they come to the ABET classes."

ED III	"We did not have learning programmes in agriculture, small, medium and micro enterprises, as we did not offer them. Learners basically needed to acquire skills in agriculture and small business."

ED IV	"Some of the learners are selling their products on the streets and in spaza shops to earn an income, since they are now interested in income generating skills."

6. WORKING CONDITIONS OF TEACHERS CONTRIBUTE TO DROP-OUTS AMONG ADULT LEARNERS

ABET educators are underpaid since they get their salaries by means of a claiming process which delays their payments. Moreover, there is a constant migration of ABET educators from ABET sectors to the formal school sections or to jobs with better salaries. This retards the learners' progress because such educators are replaced and such replacement tends to confuse learners as learners frequently cannot adjust quickly to the methods used by new educators and they drop out. The educators are often unemployed qualified teachers who feel that they earn too little.

ED I	"We want to be permanently employed, we don't want to get a salary through filling out claim forms but want to get our salaries like other teachers at the formal school. In addition, we also want to enjoy benefits like medical aid subsidy, housing and car allowance, and leave."

ED II	"We are not trained in the methods to teach adults but still need more workshops so that we are sure of what we are teaching."

ED III   "As we did not even sign a contract with our employers, we are not sure of our position."

ED IV   "As we earn such low salaries, we are forced to look for some part-time jobs which is a heavy workload on our side."

The following table indicates how the educators agreed on the issues discussed above. A cross(x) will be used to indicate an agreement.

ITEMS	ED I	ED II	ED III	ED IV	ED V
Importance of ABET programmes	X	X	X	X	X
Presence of drop-outs	X	X	X	X	X
Limited time for attendance	X	X	X	X	X
Lack of resources	X	X	X	X	X
Income generating skills	X	X	X	X	X
Condition of educators	X	X	X	X	X

TABLE 3.2:   CATEGORY TWO STAKEHOLDERS' GRID

CATEGORY THREE STAKEHOLDERS

This group consisted of three groups of ten learners each from three centers in Mahwelereng area. The acronym LN will be used to represent each learner.

1. ABET PROGRAMMES ARE IMPROVING THE LIVES OF LEARNERS

The learners agreed among themselves that their lives were changed by the ABET programmes they were attending. Despite the problems that these ABET learners were experiencing, they still regarded the ABET programmes as very important in their lives.

LN I   "Re oketša tsebo." (We increase our knowledge).

"Le gona go kgona go ngwala, gore wena ka bo wena o kgone go itebelela mola le mola, ka gona go kgona go ngwala le go bala, o tlogele go hlwa o ra ngwana o re mpontšhe mola le mola. O itirele ka bo wena."(So that a person is able to write, so that you can read here and there on your own, no longer asking children to read and write for you. To do it on your own…)

LN II   "Go kgotsofala gona re a kgotsofala ka dithuto. Bohlokwa bja tšona dithuto tše ke gore le dipankeng ge ba re saena, o kgona go saena. Le gore matšatši a re kgona go bolela le makgowa ka English, re humana mešomo." (We are satisfied with these lessons. The importance of these lessons is that you are able to append your signature in banks when requested while being able to communicate with white people in English and to get employment.)"

LN III   "Re nyaka go tšwela pele ka gore re nyaka setifikeiti, mohlomongwe re humane mebereko." (We want to continue because we want to have a certificate; sometimes we might even get employment).

LN IV   "Re kgone go ngwala le go bala." (In order to be able to write and read).

"Re kgone go tlatša diforomo tša panka, le kua pankeng o swanetše ke go botša motho gore a mpontšhe mo ke saenago". (So that we are able to fill out bank forms because we are supposed to ask a person to show us where to sign).

"Re kgone go bolela le makgowa re hlatlošwe." (So that we are able to communicate with white people and get promotion.)

LN V   "Re ya ipshina, re bolela Sepedi le go se ngwala, re be re sa kgone". (We enjoy, we speak and write Northern Sotho, we could not do this before.)

"Re kgona go bolelanyana English, re be re sa kgone, mara ge motho a bolela re ya mo kwa." (We are able to speak English a little bit, we could not, but now if a person speaks we are able to understand him.)

2.   DROP-OUTS AMONG ADULT LEARNERS ARE A PROBLEM

LN I   "Ba bangwe ka mebereko, o humana ba berekela kgole, yena a fišegela go tsena sekolo, bangwe o humana e le gore o ngwadišitse mo sekolong, mabaka a mošomo a mo romela kgole namile a sa kgona. Yo mongwe o humana e le gore o na le motswadi, bjale motswadi a sepele, o humane a lla ka bana. Ge o re ke eng o sa tle sekolong, o re bana ga ba na motho yo a šalago le bona." (Some people are working far away but they would like to attend, some you will find that they enlisted their names to attend, but have been

transferred far away so they no longer come. You find another person having a parent to look after her children, but when the parent leaves the family, if you ask her why she is no longer attending, she will say there is no person to look after the children.)

LN II   "Ke mmereko, tšatši le lengwe mmereko e ba o montši bjale ba palelwa ke go tla, ba napa ba lesitše." (Because of work, one day people are overloaded and they do not come to school and no longer come.)

LN III   "O humana e le gore rena bao re šomago ka sepetlela ge o tšhaiša ka iri ya bohlano, o swanetše go boela mošomong gore o tšhaiše ka iri ya bošupa, ga re sa kgona, re a lapa re bolawa ke maoto. Ke ka fao batho ba bantši ba sa hlwego ba etla sekolong". (You find that hospital employees are expected to go back to work at five o'clock, when their lesson ends, to be able to knock off from work at seven o'clock. We cannot cope, our legs are too painful that is why so many people stop attending classes.)

LN IV   "Ba bangwe bare re kgona go ngwala, re kgona go bala, re sa yela eng sekolong." (Some people say we can write, we can read and what more do we want?)

LN V   "Ba bangwe ba šoma ka go šuthelelana, ga ba sa kgona go tla". (Some work on shifts and can no longer come.)

3. LIMITED TIME FOR ATTENDANCE OF LESSONS CONTRIBUTES TO DROP-OUT RATES AMONG LEARNERS

LN I "Ee go ipshina gona re a ipshina, le ge e le gore re thoma llata, be ntše re ba botša gore ba bitše sepeketere, re nyaka go bolela le yena, re swane le bana ba ba nyane re bule ka pela, go swana le ngwaga o re butše llata." (We do enjoy, even if our lessons start late, we wanted the inspector to be called so that we could talk to him to open earlier like school children, like this year we re-opened very late.)

LN II "Re ipshina ka Sepedi ka gore re a se kwešiša, ke gore Engeliši yona e no ba bothata. Nako yengwe ga re kwešiše gore bareng le Maths o re fa mathata. Mara re bona gore ge re ka thoma ka pela batho ba bangwe ba tlo re ba a šoma". (We do enjoy Northern Sotho, because we understand it. You know, English is very difficult sometimes we don't understand and even Mathematics too. But we believe that if we can start earlier we will understand. Time is too little. The problem is, if we start earlier other people will say, we are working.)

LN III "Ba re okeletše nako, re okeletšwe nako." (Let them increase our time.)

LN IV "Ge go be go kgonega re be re ka tsena ka iri ya bohlano, ba bangwe ba tla llata, re a ba emela." (If possible we would start at five o'clock, some people come late we wait for them.)

LN V "Re tlogetše sekolo kgale bjale ga re sware ka pela, re hloka nako e ntši." (We left school long ago, for this reason we don't grasp the content quickly, we need more time.)

LN VI	"Go bolelwa le ba bagolo kua mošomong ba re fe nako, ka gore ba re fa diiri tše pedi ka letšatši mo bekeng." (We went to our seniors at work, to give us more time, because they give us two hours per day per week.)

LN VII	"Re swanetše gore re dule fase le bommeme ba re hlalosetše, re fiwe dipuku gore ge re fihla gae re ipalele ka gore nako mo sekolong ke ye nyane." (We should sit down with these teachers to explain for us and be given books to read on our own at home because at school the time is too little.)

4. THE LACK OF RESOURCES IMPACTS NEGATIVELY ON LEARNERS' PROGRESS

The learners agreed that they didn't have enough teaching material and complained about the limited time given to them while the teachers were also understaffed as well.

LN I	"Ba re romele dipuku nako e sa le gona, ke gore re gogile boima ngwaga wo. Batho bona e be e le ba bantši le gona ba nyamišwa ke go thoma sekolo llata, go na bjale ge re tlo ngwala batho ga ba sa tla." (They should send us books in time, that is why we struggled this year. There were more people and they were discouraged by the lessons that started late, and now we are about to write and people are no longer coming.)

LN II	"Ge re ka hwetša dipuku tša Afrikaans le English, le tša go bala le go ngwala." (If we could have books for Afrikaans and English as well as those reading and exercise books.)

LN III   "Re hloka dipuku tša go bala. Re di fiwe." (We don't have books to read. If we could be given them.)

LN IV   "Re hloka dipuku tša go ipalela gae." (We don't have books to study on our own at home.)

LN V   "Re hloka dipuku le barutiši ga ba nene." (We don't have books and our teachers are few.)

5. SKILLS IN WRITING AND READING SHOULD BE INTEGRATED WITH INCOME-GENERATING SKILLS

LN I   "Ge be go kgonega, ba re rute dikhompshutha, go apea le mošomo wa diatla." (If it was possible we need to be taught computer study, cooking and handwork.)

LN II   "Re nyaka go raga kgwele ya maoto le ya diatla, re kgone go šomiša metšhene mešomong." (We would like to play football and netball and be able to operate machines at work.)

    "Temo e bohlokwa ka gore re ka kgona go itemela gomme re rekiše merogo." (Agriculture is important because we can cultivate and sell vegetables.)

LN III   "Re duma go okeletšwa dithuto tša go swana le woodwork le catering." (We wish to be taught skills in woodwork and catering.)

    "Dithuto tše di re thuša ka bokamoso, gore re thome dikgwebo tša rena bjale ka ge ba bangwe ba thomile le go tseba go apea le tša matsogo." (These lessons will help us in future so that we can start

our own businesses, as others have already started and are able to cook and do handwork.)

LN IV   "Re rutiwe khompshutha, go ngwala ka motšhene le bokgabiso." (We should be taught computer skills, typing and art.)

LN V   "Ba re rute go laola dikgwebo tša rena, go roka le tše dingwe." (They should teach us how to manage our own businesses, to sew and other things.)

Agreement of learners is shown in the table where a dot(.) will be used to indicate an agreement

ITEM	LN 1	LN 2	LN 3	LN 4	LN 5	LN 6
Importance of ABET programmes	•	•	•	•	•	•
Presence of drop-outs	•	•	•	•	•	•
Limited time for attendance	•	•	•	•	•	•
Lack of resources	•	•	•	•	•	•
Income-generating skills	•	•	•	•	•	•

TABLE 3.3: CATEGORY THREE STAKEHOLDERS' GRID

3.3   SUMMARY

In this section of the study the responses of the stakeholders about factors that contribute to drop-outs among adult learners and the extent to which these factors impact on ABET programmes have been presented.

The responses clearly indicate that despite the negative impact that these factors have on ABET programmes, adult learners still want to continue with ABET lessons, because the latter play a very important role in their lives. It is therefore of vital importance to take into consideration how to deal with the problem of adult learners dropping out of ABET centers. This will be considered in the next chapter where some recommendations will be made.

CHAPTER FOUR
SUMMARY OF IMPORTANT FINDINGS AND
RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1   INTRODUCTION

The factors that contribute to drop-out rates among adults learners were discussed in Chapter Three. The discussions were based on the views of the respondents and the researcher's observations. In this chapter the summary of important findings will be presented and recommendations will be made which will be based on both the important findings from the interviews conducted and the views expressed by different authors as cited in the literature review. Thereafter some conclusions will be given.

4.2   SUMMARY OF IMPORTANT FINDINGS

4.2.1   ABET programmes improve the lives of adult learners

All the stakeholders agreed that the programmes offered by different ABET centres improve the lives of ABET learners. In this study the ABET learners were mostly women who were working as domestic workers, support staff at firms, in the Department of Health and Welfare and in the Department Public Works. Some learners were employed as farm labourers. Almost all of these learners could not read and write properly, the ABET programmes had helped them because they said that they could now read and write their names, could use ATM machines, were able to fill out bank and post office forms, help their children with their homework or were able to read the weather forecast on TV.

Some learners said that after acquiring skills in reading and writing they were promoted at work. Some of the ABET learners were housewives, who are spending

most of their time looking after their children and selling vegetables and clothes on the streets. They mentioned that the ABET programmes had improved their condition of life because they were able to use skills they had acquired to calculate their profit and their small business had resultantly improved. Despite the fact that there is a problem of adult learners dropping out from classes, most of the learners were ready to continue with ABET lessons.

4.2.2 The need to integrate ABET programmes with income-generating skills

As already outlined, adult learners are mostly unemployed or those who are employed but are earning low income for survival of their families, so they need extra income. The learners clearly indicated that their main aim in attending ABET lessons was to obtain employment.

It is therefore important for ABET programmes to empower adult learners in skills geared at generating extra income to support their families. The stakeholders agreed that the skills in Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises would be extremely helpful because our country is experiencing a serious problem with unemployment, where you find that even people with qualifications cannot get employment. The acquisition of certain skills to start their own sustainable small businesses is therefore necessary so that they are able employ other members of the community. The learners indicated that they need skills in Agriculture so that they would be able to cultivate their own vegetable gardens in order to sell vegetables and to support their families. Other skills that learners wanted to acquire were skills in computer literacy, cooking and sewing. The educators emphasised that most of the learners stopped attending to join other community project that were offering the above skills.

4.2.3 The need to increase the operational times for ABET classes

The operational times for ABET classes is officially six hours per week. The stakeholders, however, agreed that this time was insufficient for adult learners to acquire what they were supposed to acquire. The educators, on the other hand, alluded to the fact that adult learners tended to grasp the learning content slowly while such a limited time thus made it impossible for them to explain to the learners and to do repetition because they were supposed to teach according to learning programmes that prescribed that they were supposed to finish at the end of the year for summative assessment. The educators stated that when they were teaching slowly enough to adjust to the pace of learners, they would not finish the learning programme and learners fail at the end of the year but when they would teach faster according to the learning programmes supplied, the learners would fall behind and they fail the assignments and tests given. The educators expressed their concern because they realized that such failures would discourage adult learners because they are generally afraid of failure and often discontinuing attending classes.

The recommendation was forwarded henceforth that it would be better if the teaching time could be substantially increased for all ABET programmes.

4.2.4 Conditions of service of ABET educators, contribute to drop-out rates among adult learners

Most of the educators and centre managers indicated that their conditions of service needed to be improved since ABET educators are generally unemployed qualified educators who were trained in methods of teaching school children in the formal school system and they were merely recruited to assist in ABET centres. The educators thus complained that they are not sure of their status as teachers because they had never signed any contract of appointment. They had to fill in claim forms

to be paid their salaries. These forms sometimes delay their salaries. These teachers were resultantly looking for jobs with better salaries.

It may thus be conceded that currently educators are often migrating from ABET to formal schools and other positions that offer better salaries. This increases the problems experienced by learners at the centres because they are always faced with new educators. While they are still trying to adjust to the teaching style of one teacher, another newly appointed teacher comes with his/her teaching style and adult learners are thus confused and cannot understand the new teacher. This failure to understand discourages learners to such an extent that they drop out from lessons. The suggestion for employment of ABET educators on full-time basis was thus made, but the question will be whether this would be easy to implement because learners and educators are still using buildings after school.

4.2.5 Better Training of ABET educators

As already indicated, ABET educators are trained in methods of teaching children of formal schooling. The educators questioned in this study agreed that they need special training in methods designed for the purpose of teaching adults. They should know how to handle adult learners because their lack of knowledge of the needs of adult learners and how they learn might in one way or another contribute to the high drop-out rate among adult learners.

4.2.6 Insufficient study materials also contribute to drop-out rates among adult learners

The stakeholders in this study emphasized that they did not have enough study materials, since the educators did not have relevant books to teach the adult learners. This is bound to create serious problems for inexperienced educators who currently have to use books prescribed for children to teach adult learners because

in most cases such materials do not capture the interest of adult learners. Once they loose interest in their lessons, they stop attending classes.

4.2.7 Summary of factors contributing to the drop-out rates among adult learners in the Mahwelereng district

These factors can be classified into the following six categories: the factors stemming from the employment of learners, transport, family matters, illness, transfers and other factors which still need thorough investigation to come to a definite conclusion.

4.2.7.1 Factors stemming from employment:

- Some landed new jobs.
- They were exposed to working overtime.
- They were exposed to work problems.
- They were submitted to work transfers.
- Sold vegetables at the markets until late.
- Did not have time to come to ABET lessons due to tiredness after work.
- Shifts at work.
- Knock-off late at work.
- Started a new business which is demanding more time.
- As traditional healers, some were too busy with customers.
- Looking for the job.
- Worked with bricks and were always tired after work.

4.2.7.2 Factors stemming from transport:

- Lack of transport.
- Due to unemployment, a lack of money to pay for transport.

- Travel long distance to and from work.
- Afraid to move around alone after classes.
- Living far away from ABET centre.

4.2.7.3   Factors stemming from family matters:

- Death of a child.
- Husband passed away.
- Pregnancy.
- Family problems.
- Stopped by husband.
- Family matters
- Adult learners passed away (two cases).
- Could not concentrate due to family problems.
- Divorced and was forced to go back to parent's house.
- Daughter passed away, having her mother to observe traditional customs of not mixing with many people.
- Demands of the workload at home.
- Brother's death.
- Looking after children, grandchildren, parents, and mothers in-laws.
- Harvesting.
- Helping in initiation school.

4.2.7.4   Factors stemming from sickness:

- Ill-health.
- Mental illness.
- Eye impairment.
- Accouchment leave.
- Treatment of tuberculosis.

- Husband's sickness.
- Injured through accident.
- Looking after sick parents(father and mother).
- Disability.
- Still receiving traditional medication.

4.2.7.5   Factors stemming from transfers:

- Got new accomodation far away from the centre.
- Transferred to the other village.
- Married far away from the centre.
- Settled in a new house far away from the centre.
- Transferred to the new job far away from the centre.
- Transferred to the new job where they always work until late.
- Transferred to another centre.

4.2.7.6   Other factors:

- Too old to attend.
- Don't want to attend with older people.
- Don't want to attend with younger people.
- Don't have hope for passing ABET lessons.
- Not motivated to attend because the students don't understand the work.
- Not interested in ABET lessons because of previous failure.
- Financial problems.
- Arrested.
- Attending another sewing project in town.
- Attending the Art project.
- Attending sewing project in the same location where students are promised to be awarded certificates after six weeks.

- Insufficient equipment: The learners started to drop out when they realised that there were no equipments such as machines and stove to sew and bake as the students indicated that they primarily wanted to acquire skills in baking, cooking and sewing.

- Placed in level three and after placement tests they were taken back to level two.

- Wanted to be placed in level four and there was no level four offered at those centres.

- After writing placement tests, never returned to attend the classes.

- Afraid to write tests because are scared of failing tests.

4.3   RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of literature review as well as the findings already outlined above, the researcher hereby wishes to advance the following recommendations:

4.3.1   The need to integrate ABET programmes with income-generating skills

Adult learners are mostly women and only a few men. The women are mainly housewives, domestic workers and farm labourers. Since they earn little money, they need income-generating skills to support their families. They clearly indicated that the money they were earning was not enough for their survival. ABET programmes should thus be restructured to empower adult learners with the essential knowledge of how to start small businesses, how to sustain their businesses to generate more jobs because our country is experiencing an unacceptably high unemployment rate which impacts negatively on its economy and skills in Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises and Agriculture which are linked to important development issues such as health education, nutrition and unemployment. Small businesses will always arouse interest in adult learners to attend classes.

4.3.2 Conditions and circumstances under which adult education takes place need to be improved

From reviewing the literature, studying the findings obtained from the interviews as well as the researcher's own observations, it is clear that the conditions, such as the operational times of the centres, the lack of resources, environment and conditions of services of educators impact negatively on the attendance of classes by learners. Most ABET centres operate late in the afternoons or early in the evenings. Most educators and learners indicated that this inconveniences them in one way or the other, like in cases where learners don't have evening transport to attend and feel insecure to walk to classes at night as well.

The operational time of six hours per week was also regarded as insufficient to complete the given learning programmes. Another moot point is that the learning environment under which adult lessons are conducted was often regarded as not conducive for learning because adult learners are hosted by formal schools where the following problems were reported to be experienced: first, only a few classrooms were allocated to them and they resultantly did not have access to some of the facilities at schools, and second, chairs and tables used by the adult learners were not comfortable enough because they were meant for small children not for adults. Lastly, the migration of ABET educators from ABET centres to other sectors such as formal schools, due to temporary part-time appointments, as well as the generally low salary levels, impacted negatively on learners' progress which results in many of the learners dropping out from lessons.

Based on the conditions mentioned above another recommendation is, therefore, that there is dire need for establishment of special centres for adult education where educators are appointed on full-time basis. This will enable such centers to accommodate two sessions for attendance where one session will be in the morning

for the learners who are working. The above is recommended because the results will be undoubtedly reducing the drop- out rates among adults.

However, it should be done bearing in mind that the implementation thereof has significant financial implications. It will then be better if unused buildings in the community be given to the ABET sector for the attendance of classes.

4.3.3 Availability of sufficient resources will improve ABET centres

All stakeholders interviewed agreed that they were experiencing the problem of a lack of resource in their centres. Many centres reported that they were handicapped by a shortage of educators and study materials. Sometimes centres didn't have enough money to buy necessities because the governing bodies of the centres were not yet being functional, that is they were not yet empowered to raise funds for their centres. The new ABET Act, however will empower the governing bodies of the centres to lobby more funds for ABET centres. This will be possible if members of governing bodies of the centres are trained in aspects such as drawing up a business plan and constitution for the centres, which also still needs more attention and to should be thoroughly researched.

4.3.4 Better training of ABET educators

The needs to employ ABET educators on a full- time basis was already discussed in this study. This can be taken even further to say that the educators should have specialised knowledge in adult education. That is, they should have knowledge of how adults learn and what they would like to learn. It is however, clear that as long as most adult educators are underqualified in methods of teaching adults, drop-out rates among adult learners will not be reduced because such educators are obviously unable to contextualise the materials for children to suit adults or to interpret adult learners' learning materials.

While the researcher tends to agree with the view of utilising resources from formal schools such as educators, buildings, textbooks and equipments used in ABET centres, the fitness and suitability of materials and educators to suit the needs of adult learners is doubtful because educators, for example may not be aware of adult learners' reactions and needs, and still handle them as ordinary school children since they have been trained to teach children. The solution will be to retrain these educators in methods and materials to teach adult learners, which also involves funds.

Training educators in methods of teaching adults means that teachers will be able to analyse the needs of adult learners which is a moot respect in implementing any adult education programme, because adult learners unlike children, are rich in experience as they already possess skills like listening, speaking, vocabulary, memory, positive attitudes and the life experiences. The adult learners, therefore, need to be involved in selecting the projects, topics, assignments and subjects (learning areas), they would like to study. In a way this will help to ascertain their prior knowledge. The above idea then indicates the need for further research to investigate if the prior knowledge of adult learners has been duly recognised.

4.4   CONCLUSION

The recommendations highlighted in this study have far-reaching financial implications which is a problem to our government because most of the ABET centres belong to the state: being Public Adult Learning Centres (PALCs). But since breaking the back of illiteracy is the second priority of the Minister of Education, Kader Asmal, it means that coming to governmental budgeting, adult education should be given first priority because for development to take place, the eradication of illiteracy should be the starting point since illiteracy has bad consequences for the whole South African economy. Mechanisms to reduce the drop-out rates among adult learners in the existing ABET centers should be put in place. This will in a way serve as the solution to the problem of drop-outs in the

Mahwelereng district and surrounding areas as well as in communities that are experiencing the same problems in the entire South Africa.

The recommendations outlined above supplement one another and all have financial implications. However, taking them into consideration means improving adult education programmes, thereby curbing the problem of drop-outs and reducing the level of illiteracy, as well as improving the lives of the South African population in general. If the illiteracy rate can be curbed in our country then development in the true sense of the concept will be taking place.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A : A COPY OF AN INTERVIEW WITH CENTRE MANAGER

INTERVIEW WITH CENTRE MANAGER

Thank you for your time and efforts to talk to me. I am doing research on the drop-out rates among adult learners in the Mahwelereng district.

The purpose of the interview is to get your opinions on and suggestions about factors that are contributing to the high drop-out rates among adult learners. Your ideas and suggestions will be used to improve on the existing ABET programmes. The information you provide will be treated with strict confidentiality.

1. When did the center start operating?

....

2. How did the center start operating?

....

....

3. Which learning areas are offered by your center?

....

....

4. (a) Were learners involved in deciding about the learning areas offered at this centre?

....

(b) If yes, how?

....

5. How do you think ABET programmes at your center meet the needs of adult learners?

....

....

6. (a) Do the learners enjoy the content of the learning material?

....

(b) If yes, give reasons for your answer.

....

7. What are the challenges that educators at your center are facing?

....

....

8. What are the practical difficulties the learners experience in attending the lessons?

....

....

9. How do you think these difficulties can be dealt with?

....

....

10. (a) Does your centre support the learners with learning problems?

....

(b) If yes, how?

....

....

11. (a) Are the learners involved in solving their own learning problems?

....

(b) If yes, how?

....

....

12.   Do you experience a problem with learners dropping out
       from your center?

....

....

13. If yes, what are the factors that contribute to the problem of the high drop-out rate among adult learners?

....

....

14. How do you deal with the problem of drop-outs at your center ?

....

....

15. What do you think should be done to solve this problem?

....

....

16. (a) Are learners involved in solving the problem of drop-outs?

....

....

(b) If yes, how?

....

....

17. (a) Do you think you succeeded in solving this problem?

....

(b) If yes, give reasons,

....

....

(c) If no, give reasons,

....

....

18.   What do you think should be done to deal with the problem of drop-outs?

....

....

19.(a)   How many workshops did the educators attend since the

beginning of the year?

....

....

    (b) Did your educators receive any special training in teaching adult learners?

....

20. (a) Does your centre have a functional governing body?

....

    (b) If yes, give reasons, for your answer

....

    (c) If no, give reasons, for your answer

....

....

21. (a) Is the governing body involved in determining the learning needs of its learners?

....

    (b) If yes, how?

....

22. (a) Does the center governing body support the learners with solving their learning problems?

....

(b) If yes, how?

....

Thank you.

APPENDIX B: COPY OF AN INTERVIEW WITH EDUCATORS

INTERVIEW WITH EDUCATORS

Thank you for your time and efforts to talk to me. I am conducting a study on the drop-out rates among adult learners at Mahwelereng district as part of my M.DEV studies at the Turfloop Graduate School of Leadership at Edupark in Pietersburg.

The purpose of the interview is to get your opinions on and suggestions about factors that are contributing to the high drop-out rate among adult learners.

Your ideas and suggestions will be used to improve the existing ABET programmes. The information you provide will be treated with strict confidentiality.

1.   How many adult learners do you have per level at your center?

....

....

2.   How many Adult learners did you have at your center during the first and
        second quarters?

....

....

3. (a) Has the number increased or decreased?

....

    (b) Give reasons for your answer

....

4. (a) Do your learners regularly absent themselves from attending lessons?

....

    (b) If yes, why?

....

....

    (c) If no, why?

....

....

5. (a) Are learners motivated to attend lessons?

....

(b) If yes, give reasons for your answer.

....

....

(c) If no, give reasons for your answer.

....

....

6. Are you experiencing a problem with adult learners dropping out from your center?

....

....

7. If yes, how many adult learners have dropped out from the center since the beginning of this year?

....

....

8.   What do you think are the causes from these drop-outs?

....

....

9.   Please elaborate on the practical difficulties that are experienced by learners in attending classes.

....

....

10.   How did you help learners in solving these problems?

....

....

11. (a) Did you succeed in solving these problems?

....

    (b) If yes, how?

....

....

©If no, how?

....

....

12. (a) Do the learners at your center enjoy the ABET programmes that are
        offered?

....

   (b) If yes, why?

....

....

   © If no, why?

....

....

13.   How do you think ABET programmes meet the needs of   learners?

....

....

14.   What other skills in addition to reading and writing are offered at your center?

....

....

15. What other projects does your center have?

....

....

16.   How do you think ABET programmes improve the lives of your learners in particular?

....

....

17. Do you enjoy teaching at this center?

....

....

18. What practical problems do you experience in teaching learners?

....

....

19. What are the factors that contribute to these difficulties?

....

....

20. How can these difficulties be dealt with?

....

....

21. What do you think are the challenges you face as educators?

....

....

22. How do you think these challenges can be dealt with?

....

23. What methods of teaching do you use?

....

....

24. (a) Do you think learners benefit from and enjoy these methods?

....

    (b) If yes, why?

....

....

    (c) If no, why?

....

....

25. (a) Do you have enough and suitable learning materials at your center?

....

    (b) If yes, why?

....

....

    (a)   If no, why?

....

....

26. (a) Do you involve learners in deciding about the programmes and learning materials to be used at your center?

....

    (b)If yes, how?

....

....

    (c) If no, how?

....

....

27. Which languages are used as the medium of instruction at your centre?

....

....

28. (a) Do the learners enjoy and understand those languages that are used as the medium of institution?

....

....

(b) If yes, why?

....

....

© If no, why?

....

....

Thank you.

APPENDIX C : COPY OF AN INTERVIEW WITH LEARNERS

INTERVIEW WITH LEARNERS

Thank you for your time and efforts to talk to me. I am conducting a study on the drop-out rates among adult learners at Mahwelereng district as part of my M.DEV studies at the Turfloop Graduate School of Leadership at Edupark in Pietersburg.

The purpose of the interview is to get your opinions on and suggestions about factors that are contributing to the high drop-out rates among adult learners.

Your ideas and suggestions will be used to improve the existing ABET programmes.The information you provide will be treated with strict confidentiality.

THOBELA

Ke leboga maitapišo a lena le nako ye le mphilego ya go tlo boledišana le lena.

Ke dira dinyakišišo ka baithuti bao ba kgaotšago go tšwela pele ka dithuto tša ABET mo tikologong ya Mahwelereng mo dithutong tša ka tša Mastase mo Edupark Pietersburg.

Morero wa kopano ye ke go tlo botšiša dipotšišo go hwetša dikgopolo tša lena mabapi le mathata a o re kopanago le wona mo dithutong tša ABET le ka mo re ka rarollang mathata ao ka gona go kaonafatša dithuto tše.

Dikakanyo le dikgopolo tša lena e tlo ba sephiri.

1. What motivated you to attend ABET classes at this center?

   Ke eng seo se go hlohleleditšego go tsenela dithuto tša ABET mo sekolong se?

   ....

   ....

2. At which level are you?

   Naa o tsena level efe?

   ....

   ....

3. Which learning areas do you study?

   Naa ke dithuto tše dife tšeo o ithutago tšona?

   ....

   ....

4. Do you attend at night or during the day?

Naa dithuto tša lena di tsena bošego goba mosegare?

....

....

5. Do you enjoy attending ABET lessons? Give reasons for your answer.

Naa o ipshina ka dithuto tša ABET? Efa mabaka.

....

....

6. How do you think ABET programmes are important to your life? Elaborate.

A o gopola gore dithuto tša ABET di go hola ka eng? Bolela ka botlalo.

....

....

7. What aspects of the ABET programmes offered at your center do you think are very important?

Ke dife tša dithuto tša ABET o gopolago gore di bohlokwa kudu?

....

....

8. What do you think is missing from the ABET programmes offered at your centre?

Naa o gopola gore ke eng seo se hlokegago dithutong tša ABET mo sekolong sa lena?

....

....

9. What do you think should be added to improve ABET programmes on offer at your ABET centre?

Naa o gopola gore go ka tsentšhwang go kaonafatša dithuto tša ABET?

....

....

10. What are the practical problems that you experience in attending classes? Give examples.

A go na le mathata ao a le paledišago go tsenela dithuto? Efa mehlala.

....

....

11. How can these problems be solved?

Naa mathata a a ka rarollwa bjang?

....

....

12. Do you know of other learners who dropped out from ABET programmes?

Na go na le baithuti ba o ba tsebago bao ba kgaoditšego go tsenela dithuto tša ABET?

....

....

13. What do you think were their reasons for dropping out?

Na o gopola gore mabaka a bona ago kgaotša go tsenela dithuto ke afe?

....

....

14. (a) Do you intend to continue attending ABET classes?

Naa o ikemišeditše go tšwela pele go tsenela dithuto tša ABET?

....

(b) Give reasons for your answer.

Faa mabaka a gago.

....

....

15. How are lessons offered at your centre satisfying your needs?

Naa dithuto mo sekolong sa geno di phethagatša bjang dinyakwa tša gago?

....

16. How do you think ABET programmes are going to be helpful in your future?

A o gopola gore dithuto tše di tlo hola bokamoso bja gago bjang?

....

....

17. Do your community know about the ABET programmes that are offered at your centre?

Naa setšhaba se tseba ka ga dithuto tša ABET mo sekolong sa geno?

....

....

18. What do the people in your community say about these programmes? Give examples.

Naa batho ba geno ba tšea bjang dithuto tša ABET? Faa mehlala.

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....

19. Do your community value ABET programmes offered at your centre?

   Naa setšhaba sa geno se tseba bohlokwa bja dithuto tša ABET?

   ....

   ....

20. What do the people you are living with, say about your attendance of ABET classes?

   Naa batho bao o phelago le bona ba reng ka wena, ge o tsenela dithuto tša ABET?

   ....

   ....

21. How do you think ABET programmes contribute to the community?

   Naa o bona o ka re dithuto tša ABET di hola setšhaba ka eng?

   ....

   ....

22. How can the existing ABET programme be improved?

Naa dithuto tša ABET di ka kaonafatšwa bjang?

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Thank you (Ke ya leboga)

APPENDIX D

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABET	:	Adult Basic Education and Training
CGBs	:	Center Governing Bodies
CM	:	Center Manager
DoE	:	Department of Education
Dr	:	Doctor
ED	:	Educator
FET	:	Further Education and Training
GETC	:	General Education and Training Certificate
L1	:	First Language (Mother Tongue)
L2	:	Second Language
LN	:	Learner
NQF	:	National Qualifications Framework
OBE	:	Outcomes-Based Education
PALCs	:	Public Adult Learning Centers
PMD	:	Participatory Material Development
Prof.	:	Professor
RPL	:	Recognition of Prior Learning
SANLI	:	South Africa National Literacy Initiatives
SMME	:	Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises
UNESCO	:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNIN	:	University of the North