

*THE INCORPORATION OF ADULT EDUCATION PRINCIPLES IN THE
TRAINING OF TEACHERS IN OUTCOMES BASED EDUCATION*

by

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ABSTRACT

Outcome Based Education (OBE) also referred to as curriculum 2005 has been implemented since 1998 in South Africa. Recent research done in OBE indicates that there are many varied reasons for the little progress in the implementation of OBE. Among the reasons and criticisms levelled against OBE is the training programme for teachers which is often said to be hurried and the complex terminology that is used in the workshops.

This is the third year since the inception of OBE and the retraining of teachers in South Africa, but results indicate that very little progress has been achieved. Teachers confess that they become more confused in the workshops and that the terminology used is complex to them. As a result they are unsure of whether they are implementing OBE successfully in their classrooms or not.

The focus of this study was on whether adult education principles had been incorporated in the training of teachers in OBE. Since teachers are adult learners it becomes important therefore that principles of adult education be incorporated in the training for effective teaching and learning to take place in these workshops.

This study was conducted with a sample of five clusters of schools undergoing OBE training in the Alberton district. The findings indicated that adult education principles were generally not employed in these OBE training workshops. Facilitators were not well trained on how to approach the teaching and learning of adults, thus there was confusion and little understanding of OBE by teachers.

The study concludes with a number of recommendations among which the training of facilitators on content and on the skills and knowledge of planning, organising and approaching adult teaching and learning are of importance.

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TOPIC: THE INCORPORATION OF ADULT EDUCATION PRINCIPLES IN THE TRAINING OF TEACHERS IN OUTCOMES BASED EDUCATION

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this research essay is to describe and interpret the use of adult education principles as manifested in the training of Katlehong teachers in Outcomes Based Education (OBE) by the Gauteng Department of Education. This essay commences with a background to the research culminating in the problem statement and aim of study. The researcher's assumptions and presuppositions follow. Thereafter a literature review on adult education principles and related concepts, which draws on adult education literature, is discussed. Following this are the research strategies and methodological choices as well as the process of data analysis employed. The essay concludes with the presentation and discussion of research findings and the possible implications for current and future teaching and learning practice in relation to OBE workshops.

2. ORIENTATION AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The new political dispensation in South Africa made the need for transformation in the education and training system inevitable. This resulted in the Government of National Unity, through its Department of Education, launching a new plan – curriculum 2005 in 1997. Curriculum 2005 was based from what is known as outcomes based education (OBE). Outcomes based education focuses on the skills, knowledge and attitudes that learners would have and be able to use at the end of schooling years.

As a result of this drastic change in education, the Department of Education has found itself undergoing major changes which have led among others to an increased need in training and staff development at all levels. For the successful implementation of

In this essay the following terms will be used interchangeable:

Workshop and training sessions

Adult educator, educator and facilitator

Learners, participants and teachers

Venue, classroom and setting

outcomes based education, a new teacher training education programme had to be introduced. The new programme had to include and cater for the in-service training of already serving teachers so that they would be able to adapt their teaching methods to the dictates of the new curriculum. The announcement made by the minister of education, that the new curriculum was to be introduced in January 1998, in all Grade one classes nationwide, triggered an important curriculum controversy. Intensive and sustained public debates and criticisms about OBE came from across racial and ideological spectrums. For example some of the criticisms came in the form of a National conference in May 1997 at the University of Durban Westville where a paper entitled “why OBE will fail” was presented (Jansen, 1999:10).

Recent research done on OBE in South Africa documents the present situation on the progress in implementation of OBE and curriculum 2005. These findings generally look at how effective it is, how participants are experiencing the program and if they are ready to implement it (Klu, 1997; Raboroko, 1998). The results of such research indicate that before success can be achieved in the implementation of OBE, a lot of ground has to be covered. Among the reasons and criticisms levelled against OBE is the training programme for teachers. This is the third year since the inception of OBE and the retraining of teachers in 1998 but very little progress has been achieved. Comments made by some of the teachers, that they are unsure whether they are implementing OBE in their classrooms or not, are evidence of this. Teachers also confess to being more confused about OBE when they come from their training workshops. They complain that the OBE terminology is complex and confusing to them. Summarised in the words of Van der Horst and McDonald (1997:16), the teachers’ comments on OBE mean that they are not able to translate the vaguely worded outcomes into practical teaching and learning activities due to the way in which OBE has been presented to them. I argue therefore that the only way of overcoming these problems of teachers will be through proper training.

My research essay topic has been prompted by different aspects. Firstly, this has been prompted by comments made by teachers undergoing OBE training and criticism generally levelled against OBE training, that it was not helpful and meaningful to teachers. Many reasons for this have been cited. Secondly, it has been influenced by recommendations made by Raboroko (1998) in his research – that stressed the importance and necessity for in-depth training of teachers. I feel that there is no appropriation of knowledge by teachers and little meaningful learning is taking place in these OBE workshops. I argue that this is due to the fact that characteristics of

teachers as adults are not considered when planning and implementing training for teachers in OBE. According to literature on adult learning (Gravett 1997; Merriam & Brockett 1997; Rogers 1992), for meaningful learning to take place and for adults to appropriate knowledge, the principles and methods relevant and applicable to adult education and learning should be applied in the teaching and training of adults.

Through this research I aimed to investigate the process by which OBE training is conducted. This study might therefore shed light on some issues and problems experienced by teachers undergoing OBE training conducted by the Department of Education and result in some useful recommendations for improving teacher training in OBE programmes and in other similar training programmes where adult learners are involved.

Based on the above aspects, the main research question guiding this research can be formulated as follows:

Does the present training of teachers in Outcomes Based Education incorporate principles of adult education?

3. AIM OF STUDY

The aim of this study is to investigate whether adult education principles are incorporated into OBE training courses presented by the Department of Education facilitators to teachers.

4. ASSUMPTIONS AND PRESUPPOSITIONS

As I, the researcher, am the primary tool of investigation in this study, the research reflects my values, beliefs and perspectives. I have my own convictions, own conceptual orientations as a member of a particular culture at a specific historical moment. It is therefore necessary that I make mention of any presuppositions and assumptions that I have concerning this topic so as to aim at increasing the reliability of the research and to reduce research bias.

In my opinion, as a trainer from a non-governmental organization, who is generally involved in training teachers in methodology and presentation of lessons in their classes, I got the impression that teachers are confused and frustrated by the training workshops on OBE. My assumptions were that the cause of the frustration is that the

OBE training workshops conducted by the Department of Education are often planned and implemented without taking into account the needs, experiences, knowledge, lives and circumstances of the learners (teachers). I also believed that the problem is compounded by the fact that the facilitators in OBE workshops have little or no knowledge of adult learning and development and that they are not trained as adult educators. I expected to find that the educators' view of teaching and learning as well as the methods used by them would not be in line with adult education theory and practice. Also that training methods and techniques employed do not draw upon the participating teachers' previous experiences, do not link concepts and practices and do not encourage reflection and dialogue. I further expected that facilitators would behave as expert purveyors of knowledge whilst learners are treated as passive recipients of knowledge. In addition I believed in the view that the way the content is presented does not prepare teachers to embrace OBE as they see it as "extra" work and something that is too difficult to understand.

Based on these assumptions, I assumed that the teachers (participants) attending these workshops would experience the training as boring, confusing and de-motivating because methods and techniques used do not allow for much appropriation of knowledge. My assumptions and presuppositions were influenced by my observations and conversations with teachers in the schools I work in.

5. LITERATURE REVIEW

5.1 Introduction

As already indicated, the purpose of this research essay was to investigate whether adult education principles were employed as observed in Outcomes Based Education (OBE) teacher training programmes. The focus of this literature review will therefore be on the importance of the use of adult education principles in the training and teaching of adults. These will be discussed in relation to their influence on the planning and exacting of training sessions of teachers as adult learners.

My argument in this literature review is that, if adult education principles were incorporated in outcomes based education (OBE) teacher training workshops, the motivation of participants in these workshops would be enhanced and meaningful learning would take place. As a result, the confusion and uncertainty that was alleged to be prevalent in the implementation of OBE at that moment could be eliminated.

To put forth my argument I shall explore various principles and perspectives underlying effective teaching and learning in adult education as reflected in the current research literature. Due to the fact that participants in the OBE workshops are professional teachers and arguably assumed to be adults, I find it essential to start with a brief discussion of the adult learner. This is followed by a discussion of adult education principles and their implications for educational practice. Lastly, I will conclude by revisiting my initial argument in the light of evidence from literature.

5.2 Adult learner

The concept adult learner is defined differently by different scholars depending on the research background and/or theoretical orientation of the authors (Gravett, 1997:9). Although there is no consensus among scholars as to the definition of the adult learner, three generalised characteristics are discussed in this essay, which distinguish the adult learner from other learners such as the child and the youth. These generalised characteristics are briefly discussed below.

The first generalised characteristic to be discussed is that learners are adults by definition. The status of adulthood is ascribed by society and the society expects adults to behave responsibly by taking charge of their own lives. This is what differentiates adult learners from children as learners. The concept adulthood includes a collection of norms and values and is therefore multifaceted. To Rogers (1993:24) the concept adult implies movement or progress towards the fulfilment of the individual's potential and increasing independence. Although adulthood is never fully achieved, aspects such as autonomy, responsibility and self-determination are generally perceived as significant attributes of adulthood (Gravett, 1997:9). This implies that the educational process should confirm and promote adulthood by nurturing and fostering these attributes.

The second generalised characteristic is that of adult learners bringing vast amounts of quality experience and knowledge with them into the educational situation. According to adult education literature (Jarvis et al 1998; Brookfield 1986), learners' existing knowledge and experience play a very important role in learning in that they serve as a base for the teaching and learning of adult learners. If their experience is ignored or devalued, adults feel that they are being rejected as persons since their life experience is linked intimately to their identity. The implications and ways in which

accumulated experience of adult learners can be utilized in adult learning, will be explored under adult education principles discussed later in this essay.

The third characteristic discussed is that adult learners are life world and life task oriented (Gravett 1997:13), therefore education has to be relevant to the life and tasks adult learners have to perform. The importance of relevance arises from the fact that there are many and complex reasons why adults participate in educational activities and therefore their learning orientation can be linked to the usefulness and the immediate needs in the world they live in and the tasks they perform. In other words, adult learners pursue education with a view of acquiring and extending knowledge, attitudes and skills for coping with life problems and tasks in their life world. This characteristic is related to the issue of a needs assessment that will also be discussed later in this essay.

Given the generalised characteristics of the adult learner discussed above, it is evident that for the teaching and learning of adults to be effective, the process of adult learning, teaching and training has to be compatible with these characteristics. This process will have to incorporate adult education principles as these are influenced by who adults are.



5.3 What are principles and why are they necessary?

Principles refer to the ideas guiding practice that derive their legitimacy from beliefs and values about human beings, society and education (Husen & Postlethwaite, 1994:117). Vella (1994:3) shares this opinion by defining a principle as the beginning of an action. The implication of these definitions thereof is that for success and effectiveness in adult education, adult education principles have to be employed as they provide recommendations and guidance for practice. Also, principles of adult education can be regarded as a basis for informing educators' first decisions of how to guide and foster adult education.

A number of researchers and writers in adult education literature have made an attempt to generalize principles of adult education in their quest to build a theory of learning that would aid practice of adult learning (Brookfield, 1996:26). For example Brundage and Mackeracher identify thirty-six principles, Drakenwald and Merriam a list of eight principles and James devised nine principles (Brookfield, 1996:26). Vella (1994) mentions and discusses her twelve interconnected principles and stresses the

importance of the use of adult learning principles by saying: “I am deeply concerned about the danger adult learners face when they are taught by people who do not honour these basic principles of adult learning” (1994:XVII).

It is my belief that each educator has some philosophical assumptions about educational aspects and these determine which principles are upheld during teaching and learning, hence the debate around their universality. Although the universality of principles may be debatable, at least they all influence and guide the practice of adult educators on what approaches and methods to be employed. They accommodate different teaching preferences and styles when presenting information and also accommodate interaction between them. For the purpose of this review therefore I have chosen to discuss five adult education principles. These are needs assessment, active participation, praxis, experiential learning and engagement. The reason for choosing these five is that firstly I deem them to be relevant to my view of the learner, learning and the role of educator. Secondly, in my view, they are comprehensive and address the core features of the relationship between adult learning and adult characteristics. They also capture the gist of what is discussed as education principles by almost all the authors in the literature I consulted in the field of adult education.

Principles to be discussed in this literature review are based on factors named by Malcolm Knowles and his associates (Vella, 1994:34): First that new learning is related to adult learners’ experience, second that new learning has some immediate usefulness to them and lastly that what adults learn is what they do or discuss themselves. The individual discussion of these principles in this review does not imply that they are disconnected in practice. As Vella (1994:3) puts it principles are deeply connected. I am also of the opinion that no single set of principles can be used in guiding adult education in all possible situations because context and situation play such an important role, but that the combination of all or some of them could lead to the realisation of effective teaching as the goal of education. Following is a discussion of these principles for adult education.

5.4 Adult education principles

5.4.1 Needs assessment

Needs assessment is a basic principle of adult education, which honours the fact that while people may register for the same program, they come with different experiences

and different expectations (Vella, 1994:4). Paulo Freire (in Vella, 1994:5) refers to needs assessment as thematic analysis, a way of listening to the themes of a group, to the issues that are vital to the people concerned. Needs assessment is both a practice and a principle of adult education that gives learners a voice by so doing acknowledging their dignity. According to Vella (1994:5) the listening effort is what we call a needs assessment. Therefore the participation of learners in their learning begins with needs assessment to accommodate the different needs and expectations of learners participating in the program. In this way needs assessment becomes the first step in dialogue.

Traditionally, the curriculum is set before coming into contact with the learners and the teacher is seen as the one with all the knowledge who has to give it to the learners. From this set curriculum a question arises: Whose expectations and needs are the most important?

To stress the importance of needs assessment, Vella (1994:4) refers to Hutchinson's WWW question: WHO needs WHAT as defined by WHOM. 'Listening to them' is the operative phase in needs assessment, which can be done by sending questionnaires, faxes to learners, speaking on the phone before and during learning programmes. The listening to learners' wants and needs help to shape and plan a program that has immediate usefulness to learners. This complies with one of the general characteristics of adults mentioned earlier in this essay that what adults learn must be related to skills and knowledge useful to their everyday life. Literature on adult education (Vella, 1994:5) indicates the negative influence on learning if involvement of learners' needs and wants are omitted. Shor (1992: 14 & 17) explains that learners who dislike the content, process or roles set out for them will withdraw into passivity or silence in the class and become indifferent as they are bored. This could be one of the reasons for the high dropout rate among adult learners who find themselves in classes that do not address their needs.

As a means to eliminate the problem of neglecting learners' needs, educators need to know what adult learners know and what they think they need or want to know. As Brookfield (1996: 250) puts it: "as adult learners, these individuals have ideas about what the crucial problems and issues are in their lives". To achieve this, the use of constant dialogue is of necessity so as to reach some consensus among the expressed needs of stakeholders. Vella (1994:5) refers to needs assessment as to know how to hold the opposites. This means that the aim of needs assessment is for educators of

adults to focus also on learners' needs rather than only on specific content or a set-curriculum, which does not take learners' needs into cognisance. When this has been done, educators and learners have to work together to identify strengths upon which they can build to negotiate common goals and objectives. The central argument is that if needs assessment is done it helps us determine which objectives will take priority and the suitable approach to instruction. In addition what is learnt will be able to enhance and maintain learners' motivation and contribute to the completion of the course. In turn, adult learners will see themselves in a new role as being able to influence their own circumstances.

Needs assessment as a principle recognizes the fact that adult learners need to see the immediate usefulness of the skills and knowledge they are working to acquire. Sometimes there could be a number of diversified needs for a particular group as one of James's basic principles of adult education states (in Brookfield, 1996:38) that adults are a highly diversified group of individuals with widely different preferences, needs, backgrounds and skills. A needs assessment will help in prioritising and sequencing these needs according to urgency and degree of difficulty. This offers an immediate example of what is meant by a principle as the beginning of an action. The educator knows exactly where to begin teaching and what to start with because of this simple principle of needs assessment. This becomes relevant for the principle of immediacy, which states that learners need to see immediate results in relation to their needs. If needs assessment is not done, what happens is that the educator starts with a need that is supposed to be treated last and this could lead to learners becoming disappointed, de-motivated and dropping out of class as their immediate needs are not being met. This translation of the principle of needs assessment into practice shows how deeply intertwined Vella's twelve principles are.

Vella (1994:37) emphasizes the importance of distinguishing between the consultative voice of the learner and the deliberative voice of educator in dialogue. The educator has to listen to the consultative voice of the learner that makes suggestions that informs the programme, but the educator has to decide at the end what is to be taught and learned as long as learners' needs are taken into consideration. The consultative voice makes provision for adult learners to feel that their experience and opinions are valued in the planning of their own learning, while the deliberative voice of the educator will ensure an accountable programme. When learner's needs have been accommodated in the learning programme and learners have been told why they learn what is in their programme, their motivation to learn is enhanced. Also, programme

planners and educators will know how to approach the teaching and learning process, and which learners are to attend which course or session of learning. In summary, although the results of the needs assessment may not be absolute they should be able to meet at least some of the identified needs of learners.

In conclusion it is clear that the first and most obvious thing educators or programme planners need to do is to assess as accurately as possible the needs of the group. Unless teaching and learning efforts build upon needs assessment, efforts could be seen as irrelevant and a waste of time. Educators have to remember that the voluntary nature of participation by adult learners also means that such participation can easily be withdrawn if learners feel that the activity does not meet their needs, does not make any particular sense, or is conducted at a level that is incomprehensible to them (Brookfield, 1996: 11 – 12). It becomes important therefore for the adult educator to understand what underlies adult education and what factors can limit adults' learning and participation. This will help in meeting the needs of adult learners, which in turn should increase adult learners' responsibility and allow them to assume control of their learning. All this emerges in response to the fact that adults know their specific needs and on their own want to improve themselves or their society in this way directing themselves to learning.



5.4.2 Active participation

The principle of active participation means active involvement of learners in their learning. It also refers to the fact that although adults can learn by reading, listening and watching, they learn better if they are actively involved in the learning process. According to Shor (1992:17) active participation is the most important place to begin because learner involvement is low in traditional teaching and that action is essential to gain knowledge and develop intelligence. Further, Piaget (in Shor, 1992:17) insisted on the relation of action to knowing: “Knowledge is derived from action...to know an object is to act upon it and to transform it”. Active participation therefore implies minimizing lecture presentation methods and maximising trainee interaction and involvement in learning.

Research in education, management and social science shows over and over again that the most effective teaching and training takes place when participants are actively involved in learning and not as passive recipients of knowledge transmitted from above by “experts” (Brookfield, 1996:255). For the purpose of this essay I argue that

the principle of active participation be employed to maximize learning because in adult education adult learners are expected to take primary responsibility for their own learning. The same view is implied in Eburn–Cole (1992:1) that learners develop themselves by participating in decisions and activities that affect their well-being. Also, there is necessity for the establishment of an adult teacher relationship which should be participative and democratic, characterized by openness, mutual respect and equality, which would encourage learners to be actively involved in their learning.

Active involvement of learners supports the fact that education is not something done by teachers to learners for their own good but is something learners co-develop for themselves. This implies that in active participation therefore, the educator is not regarded as transmitter, depositor and possessor of all knowledge but as mediator, guide and facilitator in the learning process where the learner is actively involved in his or her learning. These words used to describe the role of educator imply the need for mutual inquiry with learners rather than educators trying to impose their own knowledge and experience on learners. Lee Andressen (in Barker & Wisker, 1998:89) supports this view when he says: “I have to be authentically their teacher, colleague, mentor and friend”.

Shor (1992:17) refers to active participation as the door to empowerment for learners. That is the reason why participation in class is needed to establish the interactive goals of learning, to shake learners out of their learned withdrawal that evolves in traditional schooling as learners spend thousands of hours hearing lecturers, instructions, rules, interpretations, information and announcements (Shor, 1992:20). These methods disable learners’ intellects in a process Shor (1992:20) refers to as *endullment*, the dulling of students’ minds as a result of their non-participation. Passive classrooms result in learners becoming non-participants, their learning habits wither inside the passive syllabus dominant in education. Shor contends that passiveness in class helps prepare learners for life in undemocratic institutions, that is why he compares non-participatory learning to the exclusion of ordinary people from policy making in society at large. For Dewey (in Shor, 1992: 18) participation is the point at which democracy and learning meet, a means for students to gain knowledge and develop as citizens who are responsible for their learning. Therefore if teachers as adult learners participate in the workshops, for example by demonstrations and discussions – what they learn will make sense and become meaningful.

What Shor implies and stresses here also applies to adult education, that facilitators have to empower learners by allowing them to actively participate in their learning. Learners are not to be passive but to be active and involved in their learning, to share in creating and discovering knowledge that they will use in future. Therefore facilitators have to create opportunities for adult learners to be actively involved in their learning. Teachers have to be empowered in their OBE training as they are expected to implement it in their daily lives.

Dewey (in Shor, 1992:18) symbolises non-participation to a slave – someone who carries out the intentions of another instead of taking part in making meaning, articulating purposes, carrying out plans and devaluating results. To avoid non-participation, methods such as discussion, role play, group work, co-operative and collaborative learning which are appropriate and compatible with active participation should be employed. These methods are significant and compatible with the view of active involvement of learners in that they ensure that learners are co-creators of knowledge instead of just empty jugs into which teachers pour information. As Rogers (1993:187) puts it: knowledge is not something to be dished out to learners but something all can share in creating and discovering which we will all view from our own particular perspective. This view is also informed by my belief in the constructivist view of learning that learning should be seen as an active process of constructing new knowledge by individuals and that knowledge cannot be taught but must be constructed by the learner. But such participation can easily be withdrawn if learners feel that an activity does not meet their needs or make any sense.

Shor (1992:20-21) emphasizes the fact that in every situation, be it at work, school, society – the lack of meaningful participation alienates people concerned and this alienation lowers their productivity. In education lower productivity refers to education that is meaningless to the learners so that they become de-motivated and drop out or perform badly as they are not treated as subjects of their own learning. Although Shor refers to formal education this is also true for adult education as learners lose interest in learning if they are not actively involved. Participation provides learners with active experience in class through which they develop knowledge that is reflective and based on understanding and not mere memorization. For the success of active participation, facilitators need to show respect for the adult learners as people, establish a climate in which opportunities for learners to examine problems from different perspectives can be created. This could be possible only if educators provide a safe learning environment that minimizes and avoids putting

learners in a situation where they will feel embarrassed when they participate. In fact, participatory classes should respect and rescue the curiosity of learners by allowing them to do things and solve problems for themselves and by themselves. The next principle to be discussed is praxis, which also stresses the importance of learner involvement.

5.4.3 Praxis

As discussed under the principle of active participation, various authors in adult education literature are in agreement that adult learners learn better when they are actively involved. Praxis is one of the principles that involves learners in their learning. Praxis is a Greek word that means action with reflection (Vella, 1992:11). Action means the actual doing and reflection means to think deeply, to consider seriously what has been learnt. For example if new knowledge or skill has been learnt through action or practice, learners have to reflect on what they have just done by analysing, looking at its application and implications to their situation. According to Vella (1994:12) this moves practice to praxis. The above example implies that exploration of new ideas, skills or bodies of knowledge do not take place in a vacuum but are set within the context of learners' past, current and future experience (Brookfield, 1996:15).

When learners put into practice a skill or knowledge learnt and in turn are invited to analyse the quality of their experience, this moves practice to praxis as mentioned above. This action with built in reflection implies that praxis is an ongoing process which we use in our daily lives all the time. As we do something we deeply think of its implications and then change it if necessary. This change implies improving the learners' situation or rejecting the knowledge and skills learnt if they do not satisfy the needs of the learner. This principle therefore demands that educators design, present and shape learning programs so that learners will be actively involved in what they are learning and then allowed an opportunity to examine, think deeply on what they are doing in teams as subjects of their own learning and decision makers from their own cultural perspectives. They would be immediately thinking deeply about how they are going to apply or implement skills or knowledge in their situations. According to Vella (1994:11) methods that can be employed to achieve this are inviting learners in a learning situation to give a description, analysis, application or the implications of the new learning. Such learning tasks are suitable to give learners a chance to practice new ideas, skills and to immediately reflect on them making

practice praxis. In this way learning is a result not only of their action but also of reflection after the action.

Another way of looking at praxis as a process is that it is a backward and forward movement or cycle of events where learners are in a position to do, reflect, decide, change and adopt a new way of doing. Brookfield (1996:10) supports this statement when he describes praxis as a principle where learners and facilitators are involved in a continual process of activity, reflection upon activity, collaborative analysis of activity, new activity, further reflection and collaborative analysis. Vella (1994:10) further describes praxis as a beautiful dance of inductive and deductive forms of learning. This implies that praxis does not always move in one direction, that is – from particular to general but can be from general to particular depending on the situation and skills or knowledge to be learnt. Brookfield (1996:15) emphasizes the fact that teachers of adults should allow more time for reflection by learners, a general atmosphere of flexibility, regard for learners and openness. The implication of this is that after learners have been actively involved in learning, time should be allocated for assessment, report backs, presentations – this would be time for tying things together and for learners to give own interpretations. This reflection time also refers to regular feedback on progress.

Action with reflection as a learning principle supports the idea that learning involves more than cognitive material and does not always require participants to do something in the sense of performing clearly observable acts. Exploring a wholly new way of interpreting one's work, personal relationships or political allegiances would be an example of an activity in this sense. In this way action with reflection helps to put things into perspective. Another example is of learners negotiating courses based on their prior experiential learning where they utilize the constructs that have already been established in their cognitive repertoires. If teaching and learning go on without giving learners a chance to reflect on their previous learning, learners can be found with a mass of cognitive matter like facts, data and information that may seem impossible to help students in their situations and performance of tasks or roles. This is what is referred to as non-reflective learning.

Jarvis, Holford and Griffin (1998:61) distinguish between non-reflective and reflective learning. Non-reflective learning is when learners memorize, remember, repeat and accept things as they are. It is similar to non-critical learning associated with Freire's banking approach (Shor, 1992:31) where educators treat learners minds

as empty accounts into which they make deposits of information. In other words non-reflective learning does not encourage creativity on the part of the learners. Reflective learning on the other hand is when learners think, analyse, reject or accept what has been learnt before. In this way reflection leads to redefining experience anew and considering the next step. It is associated with problem posing, creativity and encourages questioning.

Piaget insists on the relation of action to knowing: Knowledge is derived from action, to know an object is to act upon it and transform it (Shor, 1992: 17). The principle of praxis therefore implies active participation of learners as they will not accept information or knowledge dished out to them without questioning and analysing it. In this way they are still reflecting on previous knowledge and experience to make sense of it in order to accept or reject what is presented to them. It is important therefore for the educator to give learners an opportunity to reflect on what they have been taught. If this has happened, meaning and appropriation of knowledge has taken place. This would be possible only if a method like problem posing is used to enable learners to analyse and debate during the construction of knowledge and not repeat or memorize content or facts as they are.

Brookfield (1996:16) refers to praxis as observable when learners apply skills they have acquired in real life settings, reflect with other learners on their experience in these settings, and reapply these in other real settings. It becomes crucial therefore to know how learners' experiences can be used for effective teaching and learning of adult education.

5.4.4 Experiential learning

Various authors and scholars in the literature on adult education define experiential learning differently. For example, Jarvis et al (1998: 48) defines experiential learning as the process of creating and transforming experience into knowledge. Kolb (in Sutherland, 1997:82) refers to experiential learning as the process whereby knowledge is created through the transforming of experience. He identifies it as one of the important factors that determine effective adult learning. He further argues that it is through experience that individuals construct the meanings that in turn determine how they code new stimuli and information. This view is shared by Rogers (1993:26) who argues that learners see new material they encounter through the lenses of their experience and knowledge. And Mezirow (in Jarvis et al, 1988:47) also maintains

that transformative learning is about gaining new perspectives on experience itself. It becomes important and proper then that adult educators utilize learners' experience as a guiding principle in their role as educators when they plan programmes for adult learners.

Based on the foregoing definitions and explanation of experiential learning, I argue that this principle is compatible with one of the generalised characteristics of adults – that adults bring vast amounts of different quality experience and knowledge with them to the learning situation. The experience they bring can serve as a resource, introduction and foundation to new and further learning as it enables learners to see new material through the experience and knowledge they already have. Gravett (1997:22) identifies experience as central to learning, by stating that learning is a process of constructing meaning from information and experience filtered through the learners' existing knowledge, beliefs and feelings. This is also true for constructivists who believe that knowledge cannot be passed ready made from educator to learners but must be constructed by learners through use of their existing knowledge and experience.

The importance of experience to adult learning is in line with the views of Kolb (1984); Knowles (1984); Brookfield (1986) and Jarvis et al (1998), who argue that the importance of experiential learning considers that mature adults have much to offer to the educational process from their life experiences. Prudent practice therefore dictates that educators of adults shift emphasis away from a teacher or an examination board designing courses towards negotiating and designing courses based on the prior experiential learning utilizing the constructs that have already been established in learner's cognition. Prior knowledge and experience as intellectual factors help learners to build bridges between existing learning and decreases anxiety about new areas of learning. In other words the accumulated knowledge and experience result in distinct preferences for modes of learning and learning styles. I also know from experience as an adult learner that I learn better when new learning is related to my experience and prior knowledge.

Violation of the principle of experiential learning can result in adult learners blocking off any new learning presented to them. For example, if new knowledge and skills taught are contradictory to the learners' existing knowledge and skills, then learners may dismiss or reject them, and stick with what they know and can do. In such a case English (in Sutherland, 1997:198) advocates a "drip feed approach". This approach

means regular doses of input of learning content from educators so that adult learners have an opportunity to integrate new learning with their experience and existing concepts. Although some scholars argue that sometimes learners' experience can have a negative effect or be a hindrance to learning, this can be overcome by use of approaches to teaching that allow learners to examine their biases and open their minds to new content. This examination by learners encompasses the stage of critical reflection where learners evaluate their beliefs, attitudes and feelings and end up by confirming or rejecting their initial perspectives on the issues.

Methods recommended for upholding this principle include the use of analogies and common examples when instructing, allowing students to expose what they know about the subject before providing instruction and give students credit for what they know or are able to do. In this way learners' experiences and knowledge are used to make valuable contributions to the learning encounter and new material is presented in such a way that it does not conflict with existing knowledge. Association of new information with what the learner already knows leads to better memory, understanding of what is being learned as well as better utilization of information (Gravett, 1997: 22). Adult educators must always remember as adult educators that, to adults, their experience is who they are...so, in any situation if adults' experience is ignored or devalued, they perceive this as not just rejecting their experience, but rejecting them as persons (Knowles in Ebun-Cole, 1992:3). The implications of adults' great volume and quality of experience are that of a more heterogeneous background than a group of youth. These experiences make adults themselves rich resources for many kinds of learning, hence emphasis should be placed on experiential techniques such as problem solving, peer helping and learning tasks that tap the learners' experiences.

5.4.5 Engagement

The principle of engagement refers to learning as an active process where learners are fully engaged in their learning and action plans. According to Vella (1994:159) engagement is a principle that enables learners not only to take part in learning but also to practise learning as subjects of their own learning. She sees engagement as one of the major determinants of effective learning. This is evident in her statement that without engagement there is no learning. This is supported by Lewin's teachings (Vella, 1995:164), that people learn more when they are involved in the learning, doing what they are learning than when they are merely listening to someone talk

about it. This implies that learners be allowed to take an active role in all the stages of the process of learning. Vella (1994: 189) also stresses that the role of adult educators in adult education is not to cover a set of course material but to engage adult learners in effective and significant learning.

Another scholar who finds engagement to be of importance is Brookfield (1986:1) who argues that the extent to which adults are engaged in a free exchange of ideas, beliefs and practices is one gauge of whether a society is open, democratic and healthy. The engagement of learners is not only an indication that they are learning, it is how they learn. If learners are engaged in their learning they themselves decide what occurs in the learning event and how it occurs. When using the principle of engagement in teaching, the educator must design activities suitable for the inclusion of all learners and which are relevant to life and task situations of learners. Vella (1994:21) suggests the use of learning tasks when teaching adults. A learning task is an activity that helps learners to understand by following instructions to arrive at an answer. In the use of learning tasks she explains that learners are invited to put themselves in the learning task – “to jump, so to speak, into the deep water” by learning new content on their own. When that happens, learners derive extreme delight from the learning activity and deep meaningful learning takes place as a result. When learners are deeply engaged in their learning tasks in small groups or teams, it is often difficult to extricate them from the delight of that learning.

Learning tasks are used to structure the dialogue with and among learners where learners do something and not just become passive. Vella says if we accept that a learning task is an open question put to a small group with the material resources they need to respond, we know how to engage learners. This is true as far as Wlodkewski and Ginsberg (1995:167) are concerned, that engagement is a multifaceted concept and at its most basic level is a meaningful response to something on the part of the learner. There is attention paid by the learners to something happening, with the learners' awareness of the interaction. For example, engagement includes involvement as in experimenting, participation as in a project, engrossed as in acting out roles. The learner is active and might be searching, evaluating, constructing, creating or organizing some kind of learning material.

Critical to engagement are the voices of the learner and the educator in dialogue with one another (Wlodkewski & Ginsberg, 1995:168). Both are heard and their meanings are entwined as they define themselves as active authors of their worlds (Giroux &

McLaren in Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995:168). For the dialogic educator to help learners to actively engage in their learning, the first step should be to step out of the teaching spotlight and let learners take more responsibility for their own education. Another way of engaging learners could be through problem posing. Paulo Freire (in Jarvis et al, 1998:61) maintains a distinction between what he calls “banking education” and “problem posing education”. Where the banking approach encourages memorization with the educator as transmitter of knowledge, problem posing encourages and engages analysis and reflection by learners. In problem posing therefore, learners assume more active and interactive roles - in other words, they become engaged in constructing and making meaning for themselves by reflecting on their understanding. For example, when learners believe in why they are solving a problem or developing a project, their learning has a chance to attain deep personal significance as well as intellectual insight. This is in contrast to the traditional model where learners are only passive listeners waiting for information to be dished out to them. Though the use of engagement as a principle learners assume more active and interactive roles. Problem posing as a method is suitable for engagement as learners will be analysing and debating in constructing knowledge and not memorizing or repeating facts. Engagement increases the learners’ chances of learning in an engaging way that is relevant to their characteristic learner modes.

Through the use of the principle of engagement, learners experience education as something they do rather than as something done to them. Further, learners who make their education with the teacher have a chance to develop the critical thinking and democratic habits needed for active citizenship in society (Shor, 1992:85). This becomes true for teachers undergoing training as they are expected to go out to schools and implement OBE after training. Therefore the more opportunities learners have to engage in, the more they learn and become confident and self-reliant. This is supported by Knowles’s research (in Vella, 1995:165) that adults learn 20 percent of what they hear, 40 percent of what is heard and seen and 80 percent of what they do or discover for themselves.

Engagement implies a challenge. A challenge includes an opportunity for action that humans are able to respond to (Sikszentmihalyi in Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995: 168). In this manner a challenge may be seen as the available learning opportunity and engagement as the kind of action the learner takes in the situation. When adults teach and learn in one another’s company they find themselves engaging in a challenging, passionate and creative activity. A highly engaging activity is

intrinsically motivating and often leads to the experience of flow. According to Sikszenmihalyi (in Wlodkwoski & Ginsberg, 1995: 169) experience of flow is the feeling and concentration experienced with no more time to worry about what might happen next. This is due to the fact that learners are fully participating with all the skills that are necessary at that moment. Learners have flow experiences when engaged in meaningful learning, that is why it becomes difficult to let go. Engagement therefore requires some degree of skill or knowledge to cope with the activity at hand.

Engagement implies that the education practice must move beyond the traditional model of educators as purveyors of knowledge and learners as passive recipients. Learners should also be engaged in the construction of knowledge as this factor contributes in making an overwhelming difference in learner retention and success. As a means of encouraging engagement of learners, teaching should be conducted in an “atmosphere of mutual respect”. When respect prevails, learners feel safe, capable and accepted and can freely enter in meaningful discussions and relevant actions. Another factor that encourages and motivates engagement of learners is the feeling of success on skills or knowledge gained. When learners have experienced success they enjoy and become more involved in the learning activity. In this way engagement gets learners to stretch beyond themselves and grow in the knowledge, skill and attitudes they need.

5.4.6 CONCLUSION

As mentioned in this essay adult education is not in favour of the traditional teaching where the role of the educator is viewed as the transmitter, depositor and possessor of all knowledge. For the adult educator to effectively fulfil his/her roles, adult education principles should be observed. Adult education principles imply viewing learners as subjects of their own learning and that they must be actively involved in the learning process from stage one which is needs assessment, and also that their experience should not be overlooked or neglected.

Recent literature aligns itself with contemporary teaching methods that the role of adult educators is of mediator, guide and facilitator. Adult education principles therefore become the answer to need for mutual inquiry with learners rather than the educator trying to impose his/her own knowledge and experience on learners. In this way adult education principles lead to learning centeredness where the educator is a

resource for learning and also co-learner with learners actively involved in their learning.

Use of adult education principles shows that adult education is a collaborative, transactional encounter which respects learners' individuality and leads learners to assuming control of their learning. The educator therefore does not have to spoonfeed learners but simply facilitate learning. In my view principles are essential for establishing a group climate that would encourage problem solving and task interaction encourage involvement on the part of learners, and integrate theory with practice.

The adult education principles discussed in this essay suggest active involvement of learners in the learning and acquiring of skills they will need in the classrooms. It becomes important therefore that adult education principles be incorporated in the planning and exacting of training sessions of teachers as adults for meaningful learning.

In conclusion my experience and reflection on adult teaching and learning enabled me to see these principles – given a chance, working with adults anywhere.

6. RESEARCH STRATEGY AND METHODS

6.1 Research approach

A research approach is a plan for assembling, organising and integrating information (data) gathered. The research approach has its origin in the nature of the research problem which is to be investigated and reflects a series of major decisions to be made by the researcher in an attempt to discover the best strategy to answer the research question posed. In other words, the research approach to be taken in a study depends on the researcher's paradigm which determines how the problem is shaped, how the question is raised and by the end product desired. A paradigm is a basic set of beliefs, a set of assumptions that underpins and represents the position the researcher is willing to take. Guba and Lincoln (1998:195) define paradigm as the basic belief system that guides the investigator not only in choice of method but also in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways. Patton (1990:37) refers to paradigm as a world view, a way of breaking down the complexity of the real world.

Paradigm therefore represents a world view that defines for its holder the nature of the world.

A constructivist or interpretative paradigm has informed this research as the aim is to investigate the process by which OBE training is conducted by the Gauteng Department of Education with a view to gaining and understanding of whether adult education principles are being incorporated in such training. The constructivist paradigm rests on the assumption that reality is not objective but rather a multiple of socially constructed realities (Guba & Lincoln, 1989:84). Constructions represent the efforts of people to make sense of their situations. I agree with the constructivist paradigm's assumption that reality is constructed by individuals interacting with their social worlds (Sutherland, 1997:88-89).

Researchers working from a constructivist paradigm usually use qualitative research methods. The reason for utilising qualitative research methods in this essay is related to the purpose of this study which is to investigate and gain an in-depth understanding of whether adult education principles are employed in the OBE teacher training workshops. According to Maykut and Morehouse (1994:25) the aim of the qualitative researcher is to "indwell" in the situation i.e. to be at one with the persons under investigation and to reflect on the process. For this reason qualitative research methods – namely, participant observation and informal interviews were used as means of data collection.

The aim of this research also lends itself to the other aspects normally associated with qualitative research. The first of these is that the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. Secondly, qualitative research involves fieldwork which includes the researcher physically going into the field of research and presenting the products of the research in a richly descriptive report (Merriam, 1998: 7 – 8). Guba and Lincoln refer to this as being the "human as instrument".

Like Maykut and Morehouse (1994:26) I believe that a "person that is a human as instrument" is the only instrument which is flexible enough to capture the complexity and constantly changing situations which is the human experience. Only a human investigator has the ability to respond to situations immediately, to summarize or clarify a situation, respond and adapt to a situation in ways in which other instruments cannot. In short, the human instrument is responsive, adaptable and holistic.

6.2 Sampling

Sampling involves the selection of a research site, time, people and events (Burgess in Merriam, 1998:60). Samples are selected because they are of particular interest given the study's purpose (Patton, 1990:53). The sample for my research has been selected so as to find information-rich cases to illuminate the question under study which is whether adult learning principles are employed in the teaching and learning processes in an adult setting of OBE teacher training workshops. Patton (1990) differentiates between types of purposive sampling. As this study proceeds from an interpretative perspective, "purposive sampling" was used to select a sample which would serve as information-rich cases (Merriam, 1998:61; Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:45; Patton, 1990: 169 – 172). Patton (1990:164) describes these cases as "those cases from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the theme and purpose of research." With the help of a schedule outlining the training dates I made use of maximum variation sampling in order to choose such information-rich cases.

Maximum variation sampling therefore allowed me to purposely select a sample of clusters of schools, each cluster composed of eight schools, trained by different facilitators who were representative of the widest range of experience on the phenomenon under investigation (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994:57). This was done in order to elucidate important themes and patterns that cut across such a range or variations (Patton, 1990:182).

I began by procuring the necessary permission for the study to be conducted from the Research Department of the Gauteng Department of Education (see Appendix A). Once permission had been granted I then requested the training programme from one of the facilitators. This programme provided me with venues, time and phase teachers to be trained. Although I had initially planned to observe foundation phase training only, I ended up observing the intermediate phase too, to ensure that I had at least the experience of all training that was presently taking place in the Katlehong district schools. This sample also enabled me to observe training of teachers who were undergoing OBE training for the second or third time (foundation phase) and those who were being trained in OBE for the first time. The teachers who were being trained for the second or third time would have had a number of years of experience with OBE implementation and therefore would have more input and feedback of OBE in the workshops. In addition to these workshops a different facilitator in every cluster was observed and their approaches to handling the teaching and learning of

adults as far as the use of adult education principles was observed. I had initially planned to do six observations and I ended up only having done five. This was due to the fact that I found out that patterns and themes that were emerging from my observations were repeating themselves. I then ceased my observation as I had reached a point of redundancy (Guba and Lincoln, 1989:64).

6.3 Data collection

In this research I used participant observation as primary source of data collection coupled with informal interviews. Participant observation requires of the researcher to physically be in the natural setting where the phenomenon under study takes place. Lacey (in Bell, 1987:110) defines participant observation as the transfer of the whole person into an imaginative and emotional experience in which the field worker learns to live in and understand the world. I therefore went to the OBE workshops “to observe, to indwell...” (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:44).

The reasons for using observation as primary source of data collection are that observation provides knowledge of the context as well as specific behaviour and incidents which could be used as reference points for the study. I also wanted to observe participants interacting with their learning environment and to gain an “insider’s perspective”.

Using Taylor and Bodgan’s suggestions (in Merriam, 1998:105) for recalling data, I paid attention and blocked out everything else when observing, taking field notes on what has been seen, heard, without any interpretation (raw data). I also looked for key words and phrases that would capture the substance of conversations and interactions. The observations were recorded in field notes as described by Merriam (1998:104 – 106). The following aspects were observed and included in the field notes:

- The physical setting, if it was conducive for learning, how space was used and the sitting arrangements and how many participants.
- Role of facilitators and that of teachers (participants) in the workshop.
- Planned activities and interaction between facilitators and teachers, and teachers among themselves.
- Beginning and endings of activities.

- Scheduled and allocated time for each session.

The field notes were reviewed at the end of each on-site visit to improve detailed recalling and recording of what had taken place during observation. Field notes also included a diagram of the physical setting, direct quotations of what people said as well as my own comments about aspects observed. Although my comments are interwoven throughout the field notes, these are labelled “OC” and written in *italics* to differentiate them from notes on observation.

During and after training I tried to develop some rapport with the participants to gain more information by means of informal interviews. I used opportunities to converse with teachers as they arose, for example – targeting those teachers whom I noticed had dozed off during workshops and those that arrived late to the workshops. The aim was to obtain information about things that could not be observed directly, such as participants’ feelings and thoughts. This was also used as a means to shed light on past experiences precluding my presence.

6.4 Analysis of data

The purpose of data analysis is to understand more about the phenomenon we are investigating and to describe what we learn with a minimum of interpretation (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:126). The first thing I did before data analysis was to make sure that all field notes were typed so that they were in a readable form. I also coded each page of data as these come from different field notes and observations. For example, the first page (1) of field notes from observation (0) at Debruyn Primary School is coded 0/DPS-1. Once all the data pages had been coded to their sources I made photocopies of the field notes.

The field notes were analysed by means of the constant comparative method of analysis as described by Maykut and Morehouse (1994:126 – 144), for recurring themes and patterns. The process is discussed in detail in section 7.

6.5 Ethical considerations

As a result of the sensitive and controversial nature of the question under study, I was aware of the implications inherent in my disclosure of the information from observations I made. I was also aware of the impact this information could have on

the facilitators' and teachers' professional lives. It could carry both risks and benefits for them. Stake (in Merriam, 1998:214) refers to qualitative researchers as "guests in the private space of the world, whose manners should be good and their code of ethics strict". In that case my code of ethics was that: no revealing information obtained during the course of study would be discussed with anyone outside of the GDE research department and my supervisor and that I was going to keep this promise.

I obtained informed consent from everybody involved and tried to assess the change in behaviour caused by my presence (Merriam, 1998:215). I was aware of the fact that my presence on the site could cause changes in the normal behaviour of facilitators and learners or they might be embarrassed about something that was said or done. Therefore, I have tried to present the facts with as little distortion as possible and to be sensitive to the ethical implications of the research.

6.6 Provision of trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is a question that has to do with the extent to which the outcomes of a study can be trusted. This is supported by Maykut and Morehouse (1994:145) stating that trustworthiness asks the questions: "to what extent can people place confidence in the outcomes of the study? Do people believe what the researcher has reported"? Being able to trust research results is especially important to professionals in applied fields such as education in which practitioners intervene in people's lives.

For results of a research to be trustworthy, they have to possess two characteristics: validity and reliability. Merriam (1998:189) contends that "all research is concerned with producing valid and reliable knowledge in an ethical manner". Results of a research are trustworthy to the extent that there has been some accounting for their validity and reliability. Reliability traditionally refers to the extent to which research findings can be replicated. But Merraim (1998:206) argues that this notion seems to be somewhat a misfit when applied to qualitative research. In her explanation of reliability in qualitative research, she makes reference to the terms consistency and dependability as coined by Guba and Lincoln (1989). She feels that the issue of reliability therefore is not about getting the same findings but about "whether the results are consistent with data collected".

Merraim (1998:199) distinguishes between internal and external validity. External validity is concerned with the extent to which the reader is able to decide what is

fitting for their own situation after reading the results. Internal validity on the other hand refers to the confidence that others have in the rigour with which the study has been conducted and the results thereof. Validity therefore contributes to the credibility of the results in that they make the study believable and convincing.

Patton (1989:461) says that the credibility of qualitative enquiry is especially dependent on the credibility of the researcher because he/she is the instrument of data collection and the centre of the analytic process. To this end I as an instrument of data collection have tried to make sure that the results are trustworthy and make sense. I undertook the following measures to enhance internal validity: I began by declaring and explaining my assumptions and presuppositions at the beginning of the study. I also tried to ensure that the inferences drawn from this study were consistent with data collected by progressively building up a clear, unambiguous audit trail. This I did by providing samples of original field notes, unitised data, provisional categories and the discovery sheet (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994: 146). I have also tried to describe in detail how data was collected, how categories were derived and how decisions were made through data analysis and presentation. The procedure for data collection and data analysis presented includes elements that increase the trustworthiness of ones' research findings. These according to Merriam (1998:200 – 218) are the requirements of providing and contributing to a clear audit trail in qualitative research.

An audit trail shows that the inferences drawn from this study are consistent with data collected. It also allows people to “walk” through my work from the beginning to the end of my research so that they understand the path I took and are thus able to judge the trustworthiness of my outcomes. Guba and Lincoln (in Merriam, 1998: 207) compare an audit trail to an independent judge who can authenticate the findings of a study by following the trail of the researcher. I also provided a rich, thick description of the study through which the reader after studying findings of research will be in a position to determine what is appropriate for his or her own situation.

Once I had completed identifying categories and data analysis, I conducted a peer examination by asking a colleague to walk through my audit trail and comment on the findings as they emerged.

7. ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF DATA

As previously mentioned, the constant comparative method was used for data analysis. I started the process by reviewing what the purpose of my study was. An important point about this method is that data analysis is done in conjunction with data collection, thus I immediately started my analysis with notes of my first observation once a copy and coding had been made. The aim of the simultaneous collection and analysis of data is to constantly compare a set of data from one incident with another incident in the same set of data or in another set (Merriam, 1998:159). This also helped me to write to myself about things to pursue, observe, and look for in my next observation or data collection activity. In other words the results from the early data analysis guided subsequent data collection efforts. These steps were followed and employed with all subsequent field notes.

As I read through the individual field notes I began to unitise the data as described by Maykut and Morehouse (1994:128). Unitising means identifying chunks or units of meaning. A unit of meaning is a potentially meaningful segment of data that reveals information relevant to the study. I separated one unit of meaning from the next by drawing a line across the page and writing a word or a phrase carrying the essence of the unit of meaning in the margin. I also indicated where the unit is located. The units of meaning identified were cut apart into data cards for easy manipulation. Each unit of meaning identified was able to stand by itself, i.e. was understandable without additional information and could be easily moved around with and under various categories (see table 7.1 for example of a unit of meaning). I labelled each data card on the blank side with the site of a particular observation.

The constant comparative method of analysing qualitative data combines inductive category coding with a simultaneous comparison of all units of meaning and subsequent grouping of similar units of meaning (categorisation). Each coded unit of meaning was placed under a provisional category according to the “look/feel-alike” criteria described by Maykut and Morehouse (1994: 139). As each new unit of meaning was selected for analysis, it was compared to all other units of meaning for any possible recurring concepts and themes and any ideas that overlap with one another. Then once prominent ideas were selected they were put together and served as provisional categories. Similar units of meaning that did not fit under any provisional category were put together to form a new category and tentatively named.

As I proceeded with analysis I began to see data cards that were clearly outside the important content of the study. I put these in a category labelled “miscellaneous” and these were reviewed again before the end for possible inclusion (Lincoln & Guba in Maykut & Morehouse, 1994: 139)

Once each provisional category contained approximately six unitised data cards I was in a position to draw up a rule of inclusion in the form of a propositional statement as suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985). A rule of inclusion is a statement that reflects the collective meaning contained in the units of meaning (data cards) within each category. A proposition is a general statement of fact grounded in the data (Taylor & Bogdan in Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:139) and that conveys the meaning that is contained in the data cards gathered together under a category name. The rule of inclusion then served as the basis for including or excluding subsequent data in a category. Categories also began to reveal what I was learning about the phenomenon under study and were a critical step in arriving at my research outcomes. Resultantly each data card was read to see whether it fitted the category rule or if it should be categorised elsewhere. Even rules for inclusion were adjusted, redefined where necessary, initial categories were changed, merged or omitted, and new categories generated and new relationships discovered (Goerts & Le Compte in Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:134).

From observations I made, approximately twenty provisional categories emerged which were ultimately reduced to three. These are listed in table 8.1 and are going to serve as basis for the discussions of my findings.

8. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

8.1 Introduction

The aim of this study was to find out if adult education principles are employed in the OBE teacher training workshops conducted by the Department of Education. In this regard, the observations of the OBE training workshops enabled me to get an insight into whether or not adult education principles were used.

By the end of the data analysis process, a number of categories and subcategories had been identified. These served as a basis for the findings of this research and are listed in table 8.1. In this section I discuss each main category with its subcategories in the

order in which they appear in the table. In the discussion of my findings I draw on extracts from the observations and informal interviews which illustrate or substantiate the discussion and intertwine this with the applicable research literature from section 5.1. I then conclude with a summary of the findings.

Table 8.1

Table of categories and subcategories and the outcomes statement from the process of data analysis.	
<i>Categories and Subcategories</i>	<i>Outcomes Statement</i>
1. Teaching and learning transaction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Methods and approaches used • Role played by facilitators and learners • Activities • Relationship between and amongst learners and facilitators 	<p>The use of adult education principles was violated and the experiences of learners were ignored. A monologic approach was used wherein facilitators regarded their roles as information givers and learners as passive recipients, which impacted negatively on the relationship between and among facilitators and learners.</p>
2. Time Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time constraints • Timing for workshops - Too much content within a short space of time - Teachers tired as they are straight from work - After lunch - Retirement 	<p>The time for workshops was not conducive for effective teaching and learning due to many responsibilities of learners as adults. A lot of content was delivered within a short space of time in the afternoons and this affected meaningful teaching and learning.</p>
3. Physical Environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Size and shape of the venue • Physical arrangement of the setting • Distance(proximity)between facilitator and participants • Location of setting • Number of participants 	<p>The physical setting chosen was not conducive for effective teaching and learning to take place. Things like noise level, obstructions caused by partition of the hall, arrangement of the hall and distance and position between facilitator and participants were not conducive for effective interaction and involvement.</p>

8.2 Teaching and learning transaction

The use of adult education principles was in my view violated in the OBE workshops. This resulted in the presentations of the subject matter becoming the weakest part in OBE workshops. The facilitators lacked skills and competencies as adult educators, thus effective teaching and learning, the relationships and roles between and among learners and facilitators were negatively affected. Most

facilitators did not establish how much the learners already knew about the content to be presented, they failed to use examples which participants could relate to and used mainly one-way communication which participants found boring.

Active participation and involvement of learners were lacking in these workshops. During my first observation the presenter of the workshop explained that he was a facilitator and therefore expected everybody to participate in the processes of the workshop. To my amazement the participants were hardly given a chance to talk, make presentations, let alone to ask questions. No activities were planned to allow learners to be actively involved in their learning. It is therefore regrettable that facilitators neglected the involvement of participants during the workshops. Literature on adult education (Brookfield 1996; Gravett 1997; Merriam & Brockett 1997) states that the role of the educator is that of facilitator, guide and mentor. However, according to the observations I made, the facilitators in these workshops saw learning as primarily the attainment of a body of knowledge or set of skills, as content or subject oriented and their role as that of disseminating and clarifying knowledge. Therefore the facilitator's role in the observations I made was that of authority, purveyor of information and knowledge. Learners were not actively involved and engaged in the construction of knowledge. No problems were posed that learners could discuss, no opportunity was given to answer questions, and or reflect on what had been done. They were just pumped with information.

The workshops were characterised by a teacher-centred approach with impersonal relationships prevailing. It was only facilitators who gave instructions, lectured and decided on what had to be done using their authoritative voice. Evidence hereof was that participants were not encouraged to ask questions as they were cut short and not allowed to discuss anything amongst themselves. For example, in one workshop a group did not understand an aspect that was presented and I asked them why they didn't ask the facilitator. They responded by telling me that they were afraid of being embarrassed by facilitators who would expose them to the group as people who do not listen. It was evident to me that a safe, inclusive and respectful learning environment was not created hence learners would not dare ask questions as there was a risk of suffering personal embarrassment. This increased the social distance that traditionally exists between facilitators and learners, which is less interactive and impersonal, where learners are passive and facilitators are authority figures who have to be listened to. Vella (1995:X1) reminds us that most educators teach in the same way as they were taught. It was evident in the workshops that facilitators were not made

aware that adult learners are treated differently from young learners. They used traditional methods where the teacher is regarded as purveyor of knowledge, no participation and experience of learners is recognised. I argue therefore that unless facilitators are trained as adult educators they will revert to their known frameworks.

Under the discussion on adult education principles I argued that approaches and methods used are influenced by the educators' views on certain aspects concerning education. During observation it was clear that the facilitators' view of knowledge was that it was something that can be possessed and given. That is why in the workshops learners were not actively involved in the construction of knowledge; instead facilitators used a monologic approach where they monopolised the teaching-learning situation through a one-way transmission of knowledge. This teacher-centred approach resulted in participants losing interest. They started dozing off and communicating amongst themselves in the absence of their involvement. Learners were expected to passively take in the information without asking any questions. There is evidence hereof in my field notes (O/DEB-2) in which I witnessed facilitators generally saying: *"Any questions?"* and *"do we understand"* and then immediately continued with training without giving the learners time to comment or ask questions. In fact, it was obvious that questions were not welcomed. For example, one participant asked: *"What if you discover late that a pupil has a problem?"* The facilitator answered, *"That shows that you were not doing your work"*. Instead of helping, the facilitator embarrassed the participant in front of the whole class. I saw this as a way of discouraging participants from asking questions. In fact the facilitators were not supportive at all to learners because when learners asked questions they were shown how ineffective they (learners) were. Learners were repeatedly referred to the policy document each time they asked questions. Hence learners learnt not to ask questions even if they did not understand. One participant vocalised her unwillingness to ask questions, despite the lack of understanding: *"Who? Me? Ask questions? These people don't like to be asked questions."* This was evidence that this learner already believed that asking questions in these workshops was not a good idea, they therefore sat and listened to the facilitator for the rest of the workshop.

There seems to be general consensus among authors in the field of adult education (Shor, 1992; Brookfield, 1990; Vella, 1990), that in order for learners to appropriate new knowledge they must be actively involved in the learning process. To some facilitators during workshops, active involvement of learners meant forcing learners

to do or say something. For example in one of the workshops I observed a facilitator pouncing upon and forcing participants to give answers, “*You, come, come (pointing at one teacher) and give a report on behalf of your group. Somebody from your group should talk*” (O/KAL-1). Active involvement does not imply forcing learners to participate, adult learners should be allowed to decide for themselves whether they want to participate or not. Facilitators have to maintain an inviting climate for learners to participate willingly and freely instead of ridiculing them.

Facilitators treated participants like pupils or as if they possessed no experience at all. They also seemed to regard learners as “empty vessels” who were without experience and knowledge waiting to be filled in. This was evident in that each time a new aspect was introduced, no questions were posed to find out if teachers have some knowledge of it. In one workshop, a facilitator made this remark to the participants: “*I know many of you don’t do this,*” (referring to an aspect he as the facilitator had just explained), assuming that teachers do not do it, without finding out if they do it or not. He took it for granted that the teachers would not do it as they did not possess any knowledge and experience according to his view of knowledge and learners. This is the type of treatment or behaviour that Freire criticizes in his book “*Pedagogy of the oppressed*” (1971); characteristic of the traditional education, which presents the world as a closed system belonging to a few who control the rest. Vella (1995: 4 – 5) further emphasizes that the micro world created in the training workshops should be shared, owned so to speak by all involved. If this happens between and among learners and facilitators the relation soon becomes that of mutual inquiry. But in the workshops the relationships were impersonal between and among facilitators and learners as a result of the authoritative role of the facilitators.

In my observations it was clear that learners were viewed as empty jugs to be filled with knowledge – yet adult education principles acknowledge and respect that adult learners come with experience and prior knowledge to the learning situation which could be used as the starting point of the teaching and learning transaction. Vella (1995: 5) explains that when a facilitator is not a listener but a teller, master and critic, learners can be reduced to dependency. This is exactly what happened in the workshops – the role of teachers was to listen and do whatever they were instructed to do. Learners were dependent on the facilitators. Kolb (in Sutherland, 1997:82) identifies experience as one of the important factors that determine effective learning.

It is unfortunate that facilitators ignored the importance of the role played by experience in effective adult education. The facilitators did not establish where the learners were nor give examples related to their life situations. All the content presented what was not associated with what adults already knew. In fact, facilitators did not even check whether the participants who were attending were the ones who were supposed to be there. This was obvious to me when one of the participants next to me remarked: *“They are treating life orientation and arts and culture in this workshop and yet I teach Human and Social Sciences, I wonder why the principal asked me to attend”*. The teacher, for fear of being embarrassed, did not make the facilitator aware that she was not supposed to be there. To me it was clear that this teacher was not going to be involved, gain anything, or even link what was to be done to what was done in the previous workshops. In addition the teacher’s statement portrays the kind of relationship that prevails between school management and staff. Even those teachers who were due for retirement attended the workshops.

Caine and Caine (in Gravett & Henning, 1998:68) point out that it is vital to start with learners’ current knowledge and life world as the brain is designed to perceive and generate patterns and resists having meaningless patterns imposed on it. Even in Caffarella’s interactive program planning model (1994:30) one of Boyle and Apps’ categories state that adult learners have a rich background of knowledge and experience that should be used in the learning process as a source on which to build.

In OBE training workshops, the teachers knowledge and experience were disregarded. Facilitators used their own examples, relevant to their own situations. In one instance, the facilitator showed participants new ways of teaching reading; without first ascertaining what methods participants were currently using. This would have helped participants to link what they know to the new ways of doing things. Kolb (in Sutherland, 1997: 82) argues that it is through experience that individuals construct the meanings that in turn determine how they code new stimuli and information. I argue therefore that if the experiences of participants were used in the OBE training as a bridge between new and old learning, the confusion experienced by participants could have been minimized. This is evident in the remark of one of the participants who confessed: *“The new terms used in OBE confuse me, they are too difficult. I will never understand this OBE”*. Another lack of learning that took place during workshops provides strong evidence that the crux of participation is action and relevancy to personal experience.

Furthermore workshops lacked a dialogic approach, where facilitators and learners would be involved in a process of continuous re-creation of knowledge and co-learning. Facilitators would come in, spoon-feed learners with content and not tailor it to the teachers' situation. At no time did the facilitator ask learners if and how they understood, for example, a new term, to reflect on how they have been doing things in relation to the new content. Learners were just told how to do things, no time was given for them to discuss and give their views. This is against the beliefs of authors in the field of adult education; that in order for learners to appropriate new knowledge they must be actively involved. Shor (1992: 17) states that the most important place to begin is participation, where people begin life as motivated learners not as passive beings. Vella (1995:16) suggests warm-ups at the beginning of the workshops for everybody's participation, engagement and involvement. The warm-up is based on the need of a group of adults to focus and to clear their heads of the manifold concerns and interests that they bring to the course. This could have been of help in the OBE workshops had it taken place as the participants seemed to be de-motivated and confused. The warm ups could have served as a spring board for dialogue in the teaching and learning transaction.

Teaching as dialogic mediation suggests that the educator directs the curriculum, but does this democratically with the involvement and participation of the learners. Dialogic mediation allows both learners and facilitator to communicate and exchange ideas. This is associated with the consultative and deliberative voices of learners and facilitators where learners are allowed to make suggestions and put forward their views although facilitator has to make a final decision. This is what Shor (1992) refers to as empowering education where the potential of the learners is drawn out by creating situations for persons to empower themselves. Although Shor refers to formal education, this is also true as far as the adult education situation of the teachers undergoing OBE training. Facilitators and teachers undergoing OBE training have to communicate, exchange ideas and construct knowledge together. Therefore if the dialogic mediation as a teaching method is used in class it could lead to self-discovery, critical thought and promote democracy. This method opposes the traditional approach where the teacher is viewed as the sole source of knowledge, whose task is to put or as Freire (1971) would have it "bank" the knowledge into the minds of learners. The contemporary approach emphasizes the interaction and active involvement between all concerned in the construction of knowledge. The methods used in these workshops did not allow for active involvement which would give learners a chance to assimilate information into personal knowledge.

There are several strategies that can be employed as means of inviting learners to be actively involved. Problem posing as advocated by Paulo Freire (in Jarvis et al, 1998:61) is one of the strategies. Through the use of problem posing learners can talk, listen, read, write and reflect on the problem. For these to happen, facilitators have to create a safe, inclusive and respectful learning environment which would engage and motivate learners to participate. Respect by both facilitators and learners for each other did not prevail in the workshops I observed. For example, in one instance mentioned earlier in this essay, the facilitator's remark to adult learners was: *"You see, you are like the learners you teach, if the answer is not in the book for you to see, you think it's wrong."* This could be one of the reasons why the learners were reluctant to give reports, for fear of being embarrassed. To me this was not an acceptable way of addressing adults, comparing them to pupils. I also witnessed a participant exchanging words with a facilitator regarding noise level in class. Both statements lacked respect. It was clear that the elements of interaction and respect were poor in the workshops and therefore active involvement of learners was negatively affected. This is true as far as Kurt Lewin's ninth principle (Vella, 1995:27) that the more supportive, accepting, and caring the social environment is, the freer a person is to experience the new behaviours, attitudes and ideas.

Lewin's seventh principle (in Vella, 1995:24) emphasises the fact that new skills learnt must be practised so as to be mastered. As mentioned above, adult education principles were neglected in these workshops and as a result thereof learners were not exposed to strategies or methods that would allow them to practise skills learnt. For example, under the principle of engagement, a suggestion on the use of learning tasks was made. Through learning tasks learners are given a chance to discuss, interpret, analyse, etc. as a means of using skills and knowledge gained. In this way, learners will be practising a skill and by so doing retention of what has been learnt through learning tasks is increased. In the OBE workshops as mentioned above the role of facilitator was to talk, lecture – transmit knowledge to learners. No chance or opportunity was given to learners to practice the skills, they sat there as passive listeners. To the facilitators it was time for them to deliver the content at hand to their recipients.

In adult education literature, working in groups has been found to be most effective because of greater efficiency of operation afforded by dealing with people collectively and because groups are the richer resources and motivators for learning. Although in

all the venues, desks were arranged in groups for the workshops, only two out of nine facilitators attempted group work. Teachers who were arranging furniture for the workshops did this because OBE suggests group work in class, therefore most teachers understood group work as meaning that people have to sit in groups. Even though furniture was arranged for group work, the facilitators' lack of use of adult learning principles did not make them change their approach to teaching. For example, one facilitator who tried discussion as an activity for group work did not seem to understand how to facilitate group work. In one instance, she began by saying that groups were to report to the whole big group. She ended up listening to the groups individually and the other groups were not part of the discussion. At the end of the process there was no sharing of ideas. In this way, the facilitators' lack of training skills resulted in them not ensuring effective guidance and assistance to enable learning. It is my assumption therefore that facilitators were not adequately trained, and their lack of self-confidence about their subject knowledge also influenced their approach to teaching. My view is that facilitators did not allow learners to ask questions in the workshops lest they, as facilitators, would expose their inefficiency in being unable to provide answers. As mentioned in this discussion for example, a general comment from facilitators to teachers was to consult their policy document each time they asked a question. Yet adult education literature says if the facilitator is not sure of the answer, or of a certain aspect, they should agree in class that they (facilitator and learners) will all go out and look for the answers or solution. Co-learning and co-development will be taking place by recognising and respecting the individuality of all concerned.

8.3 Time management

Time schedule and allocation refer to identifying appropriate length of time – when to start and end the workshop and the duration of each session of the workshop. From observations of all the workshops, I generally felt that the duration of the workshops per session was too short for the amount of information presented to the learners by facilitators. The time of the day scheduled for workshops also seemed strenuous for the teachers, as they were exhausted, coming from work (school). This is reflected in one of the participants' remarks, *"I wish these workshops could be scheduled for Saturdays or for during holidays, I am too tired to listen to anything now"* (O/DEB-3). Caffarella (1999: 157) stresses that it is important for programme planners and facilitators to make sure and take care of the fact that the times chosen for training fit into the participants' personal and job schedules as these are adult learners. This

point reiterates the importance of a needs assessment, using some of Vella's seven steps of planning – to establish who the learners are and what their situations are. The element of fatigue must be considered in all cases as it is doubtful that people who have just finished a hard day's work can concentrate very well and for long. That is why during observations I found that some of the learners were hardly in the workshop for an hour before they dozed off. This is associated with time schedules for the workshops. The OBE workshops by the Department of Education were scheduled to start at 14h00, when teachers are expected to have finished with their teaching at 13h00. Needless to say, adult learners attending the OBE workshops are full time teachers who have to attend in the afternoons whilst coming from work and are tired from the day's work.

This state of affairs was compounded by a lot of work covered within a short space of time. For example, in two of the workshops the content on three learning programmes (numeracy, literacy and life skills) was presented within 1 hour 45 minutes. This is what led to the confusion of teachers in these OBE workshops more especially that this limited duration of presentations minimized the involvement and active participation of learners in the creation and construction of knowledge for meaningful learning, as adults learn better by doing. Learners therefore found workshops to be strenuous with so much to learn at an awkward time (afternoon) when they were from work.

Another aspect directly linked to timing was that the teachers were being trained on what they were expected to implement the following year. Under my discussion on general characteristics of adult learners, it was stated that adults generally wish to apply newly acquired skills to their immediate circumstances. Their training on what they were not expected to immediately implement made me to wonder if by the following year teachers would still be in a position to remember when they presently confessed that they did not understand OBE. In fact, this was evidenced during one of the workshops where one facilitator tried to find out how much learners knew about what had already been presented by asking questions. The answers given by learners revealed that they did not understand although according to the facilitator this session was meant for recapping on what had been done the two previous days. One example hereof was in one incident where the facilitator asked this question; "*How many critical outcomes are there?*" And then participants (in chorus) said that there were seven. The facilitator said, "*No! They are twelve!*" The facilitator never tried to understand the problem of the participants or why they said seven. Instead she

went on to say to learners; “*Go to your policy document you will see where they come from*”. For the fact that teachers gave an incorrect answer to such an important issue was proof that they did not understand. In one instance I observed that teachers did not know what learning areas they teach. One teacher said; “*we teach everything – don’t know what that is*” (referring to life orientation as a learning area).

Coupled with the problem of time schedule was the timing of OBE workshops. Through informal conversation with some of the teachers I found out that there were those teachers who were retiring at the end of the year (2000) and the end of April 2001. These teachers felt that their attending the workshops was a futile exercise as they were not going to implement the training received. One teacher who arrived late to the workshop and was not even going to pretend to be taking notes said, “*I am not going to use all this OBE as I’m due for retirement in six months, I don’t know why I was forced to come*”. What this teacher said could be related to the “why” of Vella’s seven steps which answers the reason why a particular course is taken. This problem takes us back to the importance of adult education principles of needs assessment, (*who needs what as defined by whom*) immediacy and relevance, that whatever is taught must be relevant and serve the immediate needs of the learners. This is in line with one of the general characteristics of adult learners that adult learners are life and task oriented. They are motivated to learn only if what is taught is relevant to their situation and will serve their immediate needs. Also in adult education literature it is mentioned that adult learners become motivated and learn better if what is presented to them is what they need. A needs assessment would have established that some of the participants were about to leave teaching for retirement and therefore did not have to attend, as they were just an addition to the statistics of educators trained in OBE even if they were not going to be its implementors. In this way relevant teachers could have been the target group so that the training was perceived as a positive experience by those who need it and were to implement it.

From my experience as an adult educator I believe that workshops should not be so short that too little will be accomplished, nor so long that participants become fatigued. I gathered that what made the situation worse in the OBE workshops was the amount of work all the facilitators tried to cover within a short space of time. As mentioned above, it was common that more than one learning programme was presented in one session. I argue that workshops should not tackle such a big chunk at once as this could lead to confusion and difficult in understanding, as one teacher

even remarked in one of the workshops, *“There’s too much to know, this is confusing, I hardly understand what we did yesterday”*.

The presentations or sessions seem not to be properly structured, as there were no clear breaks or demarcations to show the end of one session or the beginning of the next programme or session. Facilitators would generally just continue and get to the next session with no break before moving to the next part of the training. In my view facilitators did not give learners a chance to actively participate, ask questions and discuss because they were rushing to finish the content as there was too much to cover. They seemed more intent on covering content than being concerned about whether teachers as learners understood and were capable of implementing OBE in their classes. From observations I would argue that this was due to the pressure of time especially on the part of the facilitators who were pressured and were expected to have delivered at a specific time: *“I’ll take one answer to avoid repetition so as to save time as there is still more work to cover”*. These facilitators were rushing the training of the foundation phase classes as they had to start with the intermediate phase immediately. In my view by so doing the Department of Education facilitators or planners of OBE were aiming at proving the former Minister of Education, Prof. S.M.E. Bengu’s statement correct that “schools are prepared for implementation of OBE”. In my view facilitators or program planners should plan shorter and more focused sessions for better results. I argue therefore that one learning programme for the afternoon workshops which would last for two hours is proper. I found these workshops a fairly intense learning experience, especially for the afternoons.

In two of the workshops, facilitators tried to establish prior knowledge on the content to be presented. But unfortunately not enough time was given for learners to respond and I believe this was due to time constraints. For example, in one of the workshops, the facilitator asked questions and allowed only one participant to give an answer for every question. The facilitator justified this by saying, *“I won’t waste time by getting more answers”*. He went on to explain and gave his answer to the questions posed. If facilitators had listened to more responses or answers from participants as a way of engaging learners, I believe they would have been in a position to assess the understanding of participants and adjust time and presentations to the levels of knowledge and experiences of learners instead of rushing on with explanations. In this way needs of the participants could have been identified or addressed within the workshops. In their rushing with presentation and explanation of content I wondered if facilitators had asked themselves these questions: What does the Department of

Education hope or want to achieve with these workshops? What is it that facilitators want to achieve in the workshops? These questions direct us back to Vella's seven steps of planning-that we must direct our activities to what we want to achieve.

There was no doubt that the schedules of the workshops infringed on the private lives of the participants. The negative impact of this was that some teachers refused to attend workshops or gave excuses e.g. going to the doctor, attending a meeting at a child's school, etc. From conversations with teachers and principals I gathered that teachers were not enthusiastic about attending workshops as they claimed that these were a waste of time. In that case principals had to force teachers to attend. This was also as per instruction by the Department of Education. This resulted in conflicts at schools between individual teachers and the management of these schools.

All the problems cited here do not imply that the workshops should not take place, but simply that they might have been presented, structured and planned differently to address the teachers needs and experiences appropriately so that all who were involved could have perceived attendance at OBE workshops as a positive experience.

8.4 The physical setting

The social climate conducive to learning is affected by the physical setting and everything that happens during the course of the activity. According to Gravett (1997:29) the physical learning climate is concerned with ergonomics – the interaction of people with their physical and spatial environment. Knowles (1980:223) sees both the physical and psychological environments as qualities of an environment that facilitate learning. It is regrettable therefore that although the OBE facilitators from the Department of Education had chosen township school halls as training venues for easy accessibility and transport convenience for teachers attending, these turned out unsuitable for the establishment of an environment conducive to effective teaching and learning. To elucidate on this latter statement I will start by naming the aspects that contributed to the unsuitability of the venues and then discuss how each impacted on the obstruction of meaningful teaching and learning in the workshops.

The size, shape and plan of the halls, overcrowding, proximity between facilitator and participants, location of the setting and physical arrangements of the hall contributed to the unsuitability of the venues. The emphasis and advantage of easy accessibility

of the venues to learners is also emphasized by Caffarella (1994:212), but much as this is the case, the venues chosen seemed to be unfavourable or problematic. Firstly all the training venues with the exception of one were located in the centre of the townships surrounded by houses, shops and sometimes halls and churches. A lot of different noises e.g. school children outside the classrooms, moving cars, people, barking dogs distracted participants and disturbed the process of learning. This high noise level was compounded by poor ventilation in these halls which warranted that all windows be opened. As a result, this increased the noise level which distracted learners who had a problem in concentrating and being engaged in the workshops.

Coupled with this problem of noise level was that the townships are known for being notorious for criminal activities like car hijacking and thefts. As a result many of the participants seemed to be gripped by feelings of insecurity, and became jumpy each time a car was heard starting outside. It was obvious that their thoughts were that their cars could be stolen, more so because schools were deserted and everybody else had gone home by that time. The choice of a venue that creates feelings of insecurity for participants violates the principle of needs assessment. The choice of these venues suggests that needs assessment was not done properly, because one of the basic needs of adult learners is a comfortable safe and secure learning environment as Vella (1995:25) states: we need an environment that feels safe for all.

Other aspects that affected the learning environment were the shape, plan and size of the venues. All the halls with the exception of one were made up of two adjoining traditional classrooms divided by a partition (see appendix C for diagram). This resulted in a long and narrow-shaped hall. These aspects affected the arrangement of the hall, the proximity of and the accommodation of the big numbers of participants who attended the workshops. The big number of learners in attendance resulted in tables being arranged up to the far end of the long and narrow hall. This contributed to the problem of proximity between facilitator and learners who were far at the back (10 – 15 metres) and the inaudibility of the facilitator's voice. This meant that the more participants per session the further away some groups were from the facilitator. The problem of proximity was also compounded by the position of the facilitators that depicted the traditional classroom arrangement with the facilitator standing in front of the class. To such situations Caffarella (1994:212) has this to say to adult educators: “overcrowded and oversized rooms should be avoided, ideal room structure is square, watch out for narrow rooms and posts (partitions) in the wrong places”.

The number of learners directly affected their sitting position in the venues and the level of learning. In all observations there were more than sixty participants. Knowles (1980:223) states that although facilitators have limited control over physical settings, sometimes they can improve on the typical custodians' notion of a good climate and physical arrangements of the venue. For example, to avoid the obstruction caused by partition or posts, the inaudible voice of the facilitator to the groups at the back and minimal movement as a result of overcrowding, facilitators could have reduced the number of participants attending each session. This could have made it possible for facilitators to arrange chairs for example, in a circle, semi-circle where the facilitator is part of the group or is at the centre for more interaction for the purpose of stimulating dialogue for active participation of all concerned. Also, if facilitators had done a needs assessment they could have brought along microphones to help with the audibility of voice. What is important is a manageable group of learners within reach. Knowles (1984:163) supports these arrangements by stating that the ideal situation for adult educators is for participants and resource people to be on one level, with nobody looking down upon others or looking at the back of another. This type of arrangement also has a psychological effect in that it is supportive and caring and makes learners feel safe and unthreatened. The participants see the facilitator as a fellow human being and facilitators do not see themselves as figures of control. In this way impersonal relations between facilitators and learners are reduced.

In my view the shape of the halls did not bother the facilitators as most of the teaching took place through teacher-centred monologues where learners sat passively facing the front and listening. This type of arrangement minimized dialogue and active participation of the participants. It was also my impression that facilitators too often took for granted the physical setting without realising the many simple things they could have done to improve the impact it had on the social climate of their activity. For example, in a venue where a proper hall was used (in a suburban school) furniture was not arranged in advance. As participants arrived they had to pick chairs for themselves from a corner where these were packed. There was also a problem of noise as the floor of the venue was wooden and this disturbed the training as many teachers arrived late to the workshop. Although the hall was too big for training purposes, this could have been a better venue than the other four if it was properly arranged because chairs and tables were of the right size for adults. This was unlike in one of the township school halls where one participant seated next to me remarked, *“these chairs are small and uncomfortable, I don't think I'll manage to concentrate*

for two hours". This statement supports the fact that the venue was not suitable for facilitating learning for adults. As Knowles suggests, venues must be with comfortable chairs, large and soft enough for adult bodies. James (in Brookfield, 1996:58) also mentions that a comfortable environment is a key to successful learning. Even Hammonds and Collins (in Gravett, 1997:30) also warn that given the lack of resources in many educational institutions, facilitator may need to arrive and prepare the learning venue well in advance. Caffarella (1994:209) supports the issue of comfortable supportive environment by stating that facilities and on site events should be co-ordinated. This was not the case in the observations I made of OBE workshops. Unfavourable physical circumstances in an educational setting can impede learning as seen in the incident of the small chairs used for adults mentioned in the incident above. Therefore facilitators during planning and needs assessment should try to get or create a physical environment that is comfortable, conducive to learning and in quiet surroundings.

8.5 Summary of findings

The analysis of the findings supports my assumptions and presuppositions about the use of adult education principles in the OBE training of teachers. The findings from this study, although limited in scope and depth indicate that the use of adult education principles was neglected. Many of the aspects that could have affected the training of teachers positively were ignored. These are the physical setting conducive to learning, time management and use of methods and approaches that take experiences of learners into cognisance and allow active involvement of learners in their learning. Facilitators concentrated on the delivery of a lot of content within a set time in the workshops. Indeed the facilitators were dominating, generally focussing on content not realising that "content is only as important as the learners' interaction with it" (Wlodkwski & Ginsberg, 1995:173). As a result, instead of empowering participants to cope with the new OBE curriculum, these workshops were in fact disempowering. Use of adult education principles, which allows learners to be independent was neglected.

9. CONCLUSION

The results of the study have shown that unless the department of education embarks on the incorporation of adult education principles in their OBE training, the chances are slim that meaningful learning will take place. Also that OBE implementation will

reach the success desired only if facilitators are trained effectively in the use of adult education principles. The study has also shown that many of the assumptions and presuppositions with which I entered the study have in fact been confirmed.

The facilitators who presented the OBE workshops lacked adequate knowledge and understanding of adult education principles. This was evident in the way in which they approached and presented the workshops. It is most regrettable that training methods and techniques used in the workshops did not draw upon the teachers' previous experiences, link concepts and practices, encourage action with reflection and allow the transfer of knowledge from one situation to another. The importance of implementing adult education principles cannot be overemphasized in teaching adults as this could lead to empowering learners rather than a disempowering them. Another aspect from my view was that the training that the Department of Education facilitators attended seemed to be content oriented and did not include approaches that involve participants as part of the construction of knowledge. Hence almost all the nine facilitators that I observed were transmitting and depositing knowledge to learners. Through participant involvement learners learn not only concepts and principles but self direction, responsibility and social communication-bearing in mind that all these opportunities were denied in the teacher centred instruction of the OBE workshops. These opportunities are related to all the principles discussed under literature review which encourage active involvement of all participants. These emphasize and fit well with the catch up phrase "I hear and I forget, I see and I remember, I do and I understand"-which has been widely quoted as justification for practical work (Woolnough & Allsop in Raboroko, 1998:46).

The outcome of the training workshops was that participants should be able to understand what curriculum 2005 is all about and how to implement it. The training was supposed to socialize educators into critical thought, instead it socialized them into dependence and passive habits, waiting to be told what to do and what things mean. Learners were not given a chance to participate, examine the content, argue and share their different values and perceptions with facilitators in an exciting learning encounter. As seen from the observation notes and the discussion of findings it was clear that minimal effective teaching and learning took place. In my view this was due to the fact that facilitators were not effectively if at all trained as adult educators.

The interest about curriculum 2005 seemed to be generally on the implementation in the classrooms (pupils) and not in the training of teachers. From research done in

South Africa on OBE, it is generally mentioned that teachers are not well prepared for implementation. The observations I made revealed that even facilitators, the people training teachers in OBE are also not fully prepared and ready for what they are doing. In summary, facilitators did not have proper and enough training and the necessary knowledge and information required for teaching adults. To this end I have made some recommendations which I hope will be of use to the training in OBE.

10 RECOMMENDATIONS

The fact that the findings from this study indicate that the use of adult education principles in the OBE workshops was violated is not encouraging. The first recommendation I would like to make is that the Gauteng Department of Education should employ or use as OBE facilitators people who have been trained as adult educators. Teachers who are trained to teach non-adults cannot automatically become adult educators without proper training.

The second recommendation is that the Department of Education must embark on in-depth training in a more meaningful way for its facilitators. Undergoing intensive training cannot be underestimated so that facilitators familiarize themselves with ways of teaching and approaching adults. Lastly, the most prominent concerns as far as the findings of the study, viz: physical setting, teaching and learning transaction and time management should be looked into with more seriousness as these are sure to impact on the implementation and the future of OBE in teaching and learning as a whole. But these would be easily solved if facilitators are trained as these are part and parcel of the adult education principles. All these recommendations imply that the planning, organisation and training of OBE implementors need a closer look and amendments.

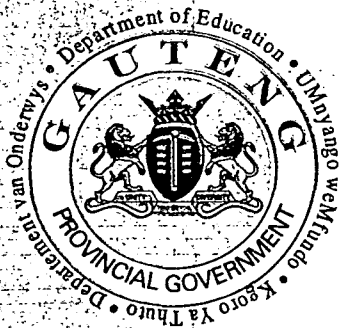
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Researchers Particulars:

Magalela Ntombentsha Veronica

Institution: RAU

Student No: 9905561

I.D: 540128 0745 089

Date: 4 July 2000

Dear Magalela N V

Request to conduct a study

Topic: **“THE INCORPORATION OF ADULT EDUCATION PRINCIPLES IN:
THE TRAINING OF EDUCATORS IN / OUTCOME-BASED
EDUCATION”**

Approval is hereby granted that you may conduct a study / administer a questionnaire to Gauteng schools. Approval is with effect from 7 February 2000.

District(s) where the study shall be conducted:

Permission is subject to the following conditions, and may be withdrawn if these conditions are not met:

1. The District Director concerned is to be informed that you have received permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct your research in the specified GDE school/ district / region.
2. Please show this letter to the school principal and the chairperson of the School Governing Body (SGB) as proof that you have received the Department's consent to carry out the research.
3. A letter / document which sets out a brief summary of your intended research should please be made available to the principal of the school concerned.
4. Please obtain the goodwill and co-operation of the principal, chairperson of the SGB, learners and educators involved. Persons who offer their co-operation will receive no special benefit from the Department, while those who prefer not to participate will not be penalised in any way.

5. You must conduct your research after school hours, and the normal school programme should be interrupted as little as possible. The principal must be consulted as to the times when you may carry out your research.
6. You must obtain the consent of parents to involve their children in your research. This is the researcher's responsibility.
7. You are responsible for supplying your own research resources, such as Stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes and telephone costs.
8. The names of the school, learners and educators may not appear in your dissertation without their consent.
9. Please supply the Department via the Research Unit with a bound copy of the report. You may also be requested to give a short presentation on your findings.
10. Please supply the Director in whose district the school (s) is/are located with a brief summary of your findings.

PLEASE ACKNOWLEDGE RECEIPT OF THIS LETTER IN WRITING AT YOUR EARLIEST CONVINIENCE.

The Department wishes you well with this project and looks forward to hearing from you in due course.

Regards



Dr. Lekhotla Mafisa
Research Unit.

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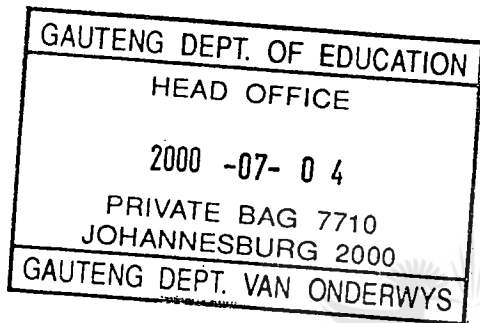
M. Magalela
Magalela N V
Researcher

04/07/2000
Date

Schools to be subjects of study

All are primary schools

1. Ukhanyiso
2. Ntuthuko
3. Cathula
4. Ntokozo
5. Thembaletu
6. Khumalo
7. Nokulunga
8. Vumbeni
9. Thulisa



UNIVERSITY
OF
JOHANNESBURG

OBSERVATION OF GRADE 4 TEACHER' OBE WORKSHOP

VENUE: KALOSSIE SCHOOL HALL
DATE: 20 September 2000
TIME: 14H00 - 16H00

PARTICIPANTS: 85 (Different races – Black, White, Coloured, and Indians)

CODES: P – Participants (Given numbers to differentiate them)
F – Facilitators (Given numbers to differentiate them)
OC – Observer's Comment

- Physical Setting

It is a proper school hall in a suburb school with a stage, curtain open with high windows. The furniture (chairs and tables) is packed on the sides, as participants come in they arrange their setting arrangement (pick up chair and table or patch yourself to people who are already at a table). (OC) This resulted in some groups overcrowded as people sat at tables where their friends are seated even though a table had enough people already. Also tables were put anyhow (no arrangement) as a result people, more especially facilitators could not move freely in between the tables. (OC) The noise level was high because the floor was wooden and late arrival by some participants who had to pick up chairs and tables when the training was in progress made it worse. The hall was too big more so that the furniture was not properly arranged. The voices sounded muffled when people talked. The facilitator was in front with groups far at the back about 10 meters away from him/her.

- Planned program – Implementation, activities and formal interactions.

The workshops started at 14h10 whilst more teachers were arriving. F1 started by giving groups tasks written on index cards and read what teachers are to do and that one person from each group had to report. (OC - *It would have been much better if instructions were also included in the index cards so that latecomers could read the instruction and not rely on other members of the group to explain the instructions.*) There is a lot of noise (*not sure whether it's the discussion of the task*). F1 says: "I will have to talk about discipline if this goes on". In the group I am in I ask what the facilitator expects us to do. I get different answers. One teacher says: "I wish she could explain what she wants" I say, "Why don't you tell her (F1) to come and help/explain". P1, What? These people, (meaning facilitators) don't want to be asked questions, they embarrass you in front of everyone". I ask, "How do they expect you to understand/know what they are teaching?" "I don't know," says the teacher. F1 "Which group is going to report first?" No response. "Okay you (pointing at a group) you go on first – who is going to be your reporter?" "We didn't know that we had to have a reporter" replied group 3. F1 didn't respond to group 3. She went on. (OC - *was this response due to the unclear instruction or teachers didn't know what*

to report on?). F1 pointing at a teacher in group 3. “You, come in front and report”. After reading what was on the card the teacher stopped. F1 “Go on put it where it belongs”. The teacher stood there, showing that she didn’t know what was being implied, but F1 insisted (OC - *Maybe F1 should have asked the members of that group to help the teacher instead it became a one-man show as a result the teacher felt embarrassed*). The teacher just put it on the 1st chart she came across (OC - *I think she was just doing it as she was forced to do so*) whilst this is happening, teachers are talking amongst themselves, as they don’t hear the reporter (s) from other groups. F1 raises her voice: “Do you (meaning all the groups) think she is correct by fitting it there” – no response.

Instead of following this up F1 moves to the next group until all groups have reported following the same procedure. (OC - *Group too big in a hall – reporters not audible enough*). F1 “You see, you are like the children you teach, if it is not in the book, you think it’s wrong” (there were giggles) (OC - *I thought this was embarrassing but seemingly teachers were used to this type of behaviour/treatment.*)

(14h30) F1 “That was very fast – I’ll take you through it (OC - *I wondered what*). She asks a question: “How many critical outcomes do we have? Teachers said 7. F1 “No!” They are twelve, go to your policy document you will see where they come from. She goes on to explain the 66 specific outcomes. (OC - *Was it not better to deal with one thing at a time viz-critical outcomes, more so that it seemed that teachers had a problem with that?*”) Same thing happened with the discussion on learning areas. F1 continues “we combine life orientation and arts and culture” – she explained all terms theoretically (OC - *I thought it was going to be better off if it was done practically with teachers participating maybe by answering some questions leading to the combination*). I asked the delegate seated next to me – “how do we combine the two”. She said she doesn’t understand either. F1 continues – “Do you think its wise to plan with Grade 5’s although they’ve not been trained? No response (OC - *I don’t know whether this is due to the fact that teacher were not sure themselves if they had the confidence to show or guide Grade 5 teachers or they were not used to answering questions.*)

F1 “I thin it’s wise to plan with them”. (OC - *The facilitator could have explained the reason.*)

F1 “Who is doing life orientation? Arts & Culture? (OC - *Teachers were not sure of their learning areas*) – one whispered, “we teach everything – don’t know what it is” There was no response to the question.

(15h05) F1 You have to tell learners outcomes (OC - *And yet she did not tell us hers*). Workshop was on L.O but explanation and discussion is on processes e.g. assessment, recording, port folios – Planning, content, etc. of LO not discussed as this is a new learning area.

F1 “What is the difference between port folio and profile? She tells them, not waiting for teachers to respond. (OC - *Explains theoretically no involvement of teachers or discussion with them*)

15h15 – F1 “I’ll now hand over to my colleague.”

F2 “Arts & culture and life orientation had no place in the past curriculum – Why?” She goes on to explain no values, attitudes were taught – no marks were allocated for these. But now it is very important. She goes on to explain – “When teaching these you can’t wait for GDE – Start with whatever you’ve got – we teach you skills to develop your own programme organisers – go to the policy and create your own. One teacher said “that’s impossible if we don’t understand the terms.” F2 “You’ll have to work hard and understand them”. *(OC - Was she (facilitator) not supposed to find out what the problem was, and discuss it together until it was clear?)*

F2 reads the rationale of LO to the delegates *(OC - Not even uses the transparencies for teachers to read for themselves and make sense of what is said.)*

F2 “Let’s look at planning” She writes a phase organiser on the chalkboard *(OC - Maybe she should have asked teachers to give those from previous knowledge and experience, and asks them to integrate outcomes to programme organizer)*. She does not check if this was done thoroughly in the groups, instead she asks if they understand. In unison the teachers say “Yes!” The facilitator moves on to the next topic i.e. she explains how to do planning *(OC - She could have done it practically with the teachers)*.

F2 then instructs the groups to give SO’s for both LO and Arts & Culture to choose assessment criteria which combines them *(OC- Teachers in my group have a problem but they don’t ask questions)*.

Each small group is told that it will have to report to the whole group. But this does not happen as it is time to go home. By 15h30 teachers had already started leaving the workshop with no apology given to facilitator.

F2 “We have run out of time, report to each other at school and see if it makes sense. Otherwise this will be discussed in our next meeting. I asked from my group when was the next meeting to be held. The date was not yet set. I asked if facilitators do come to schools to observe implementation and give guidance and support. I was told that they do not do that. Instead they sit in the office and ask teachers to bring the planning of lesson and then discuss that. The class was dismissed at 15h55.