

Abstract

This study focuses on the role of ABET programmes in the rural South African context in the Thohoyandou Area. The introduction of ABET has created much uncertainty among adult learners, centre managers and the facilitators. A qualitative research approach was followed and a case study design was adopted to look at a small group of participants. In addition, the following methods were used to collect data: structured interviews, focus group interviews and non-participant observation. The study discovered that participants have different views regarding the factors that influence their enrolment in ABET centres. Furthermore, the major reason to attend an ABET centre is to eradicate poverty and illiteracy.

Through ABET programmes, adult learners are taught to read, write, start projects such as sewing, gardening and juice making. This means that ABET programmes are empowering the people in South Africa. Participants included stakeholders affected by the introduction of the new curriculum of ABET. It was revealed in this study that in 1993 some three million South Africans were illiterate, and that around three million unemployed adults had inadequate basic schooling. In order to bridge this gap, the Ministry of Education introduced ABET as a force for social participation and economic development, providing an essential component of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). The establishment of these ABET programmes were expected to make more cost effective use of available educational facilities. However, ABET centres tend to have a substantial drop-out rate.

The consequences of illiteracy amongst adults are still reflected through the economy in the form of low productivity, poor quality of life of low-income households and communities, and in political and social instability. Furthermore, in 1999 there were over 23 million adults between the ages of 16 and 65 and beyond three million who never had access to basic learning.

In order to improve the role of ABET programmes in the rural South African context, the following recommendations set out below were suggested.

- This inquiry revealed that there is a shortage of facilities such as books, computers and sewing machines. I therefore recommend that the Department of Education should provide the facilities to all the centres.
- It also revealed that participants dropped out from ABET programmes because they thought that they are able to read and write sufficiently well. I recommend that adult learners should be told about the value of ABET programmes.
- The study revealed that adult learners dropout from the centre because there was no one to look after the children when they were in the centre. I recommend that ABET classes should be conducted on weekends, when most of the people who look after the children would be available.
- The study further revealed that participants dropout from ABET because they find employment far from their homes and the ABET centres. It is important for these participants to seek other ABET centres where they are working.



Dedication

This work is dedicated to my children:

Recent, Tovhowani and Cyril

For whom I feel the greatest affection and admiration.



Acknowledgements

I wish to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to my supervisor, Professor B. Smit, for her enthusiasm, constant encouragement, support and inspiration, as well as her guidance from the beginning of this work until the end. Without her assistance this work would have never been completed.

I also owe a great debt to my wife Lufuno Pauline Mbulaheni for the support and encouragement during the uncertainties of the past three years. Without her encouragement and support, not much would have been done.

My special word of appreciation is expressed to the Limpopo Department of Education for allowing me to conduct research at their ABET centres.

There are no adequate words to express my gratitude to my friends for many years, Mudau N. L. and Mathoni T.J. for their very great help and their persistent desire to know the progress of my work and finish.

Lastly, I also pay my special thanks to the Creator for giving me the power and courage to start this work.

Declaration

I, Takalani Edwin Nenzhelele, declare that the research in my Minor-Dissertation submitted in fulfillment of the degree M.ED in Curriculum Studies, entitled:

The role of ABET programmes in rural South African context,

is my original work and thought, and further that this Minor-Dissertation is submitted to the University of Johannesburg and has not been submitted to any other University.

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Researcher: T.E. Nenzhelele
(920070412)



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