

**The application of adult education principles in the National
Union of Educators' in-service training courses**

by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
TITLE PAGE	
THANKS	i
ABSTRACT	ii
1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. BACKGROUND TO PROBLEM AND STATEMENT OF PROBLEM	2
3. AIM OF STUDY	4
4. ASSUMPTIONS AND PRESUPPOSITIONS	4
5. LITERATURE REVIEW	
5.1 Introduction	4
5.2 The adult learner	5
5.3 How can adult learning be enhanced?	6
5.4 The utilisation of adult education principles and practices in the development and delivery of courses.	6
5.4.1 Needs assessment	7
5.4.2 Conducive learning environment	9
5.4.2.1 Respect develops sound relationships	10
5.4.3 Sequence, re-reinforcement and practice opportunities	11

5.4.4	Praxis	12
5.4.5	Ideas, feelings and action	13
5.4.6	Immediacy	13
5.4.7	Clear roles	14
5.4.8	Teamwork	14
5.4.9	Engagement	15
5.4.10	Accountability	16
5.5	Conclusion	16
6.	RESEARCH DESIGN	
6.1	Research paradigm and research methods	17
6.2	Sampling	18
6.3	Data collection methods	19
6.4	Data Analysis	22
6.5	Ethical Considerations	22
6.6	Provisions for ensuring reliability and validity	23
7.	DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF DATA	24
8.	FINDINGS	
8.1	Introduction	29
8.2	Discussion of findings	31
8.2.1	No formal needs assessment done	31
8.2.2	Mode of instruction	32
8.2.3	Learning environment	36
8.3	Summary	40
9.	RECOMMENDATIONS	40
10.	CONCLUSION	41
11.	REFERENCES	43

12. APPENDICES

- APPENDIX A LETTER OF PERMISSION
- APPENDIX B LETTER OF CONCENT FOR INTERVIEW AND
OBSERVATION
- APPENDIX C CONSENT FORM
- APPENDIX D EXTRACT OF INTERVIEW
- APPENDIX E EXTRACT OF OBSERVATIONS



ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this study was to establish whether adult education principles were being implemented in the development and the delivery of courses by the National Union of Educators. An additional reason was to establish whether these courses assisted teachers as adult learners to learn effectively and efficiently so that they could apply what they had learnt. The main finding of this study is that although some courses were successful, it was apparent that there was no clear plan to include adult education principles.

A qualitative research design was used to establish whether adult education principles were being implemented in the development and delivery of courses offered by the NUE. The methods of data collection that were employed were semi-structured interviews and detailed observation notes. The constant comparative method of data analysis was used to search for recurring themes and patterns.

The study revealed that there was no or very little evidence of a formal needs assessment done by the NUE, prior to any of the courses offered for the in-service-training of teachers. However, in spite of this some courses were successful. The success of these courses seemed to depend on the personality of the presenter, who used adult education principles instinctively or unwittingly.

The study concludes with a few recommendations: one of these is that a needs assessment needs to be conducted prior to the planning of any course. Additionally adult principles and practices should be incorporated into courses and the mode of instruction needs to be addressed.

OPSOMMING

Die hoofdoel van hierdie studie was om vas te stel of volwasseneonderrigbeginsels in die ontwikkeling en die beskikbaarstelling van kursusse deur die Nasionale Unie van Opvoeders (NUO) geïmplementeer word. 'n Bykomende faktor was om vas te stel of hierdie kursusse onderwyers as volwasse leerders help om effektief en doeltreffend te leer sodat hulle dit wat hulle geleer het, kan toepas. Die hoofbevinding van hierdie studie is dat hoewel sommige kursusse geslaagd was, dit duidelik is dat daar geen sigbare plan is om volwasseneonderrigbeginsels in te sluit nie.

'n Kwalitatiewe navorsingsontwerp is gebruik om te bepaal of volwasseneonderrigbeginsels geïmplementeer word in die ontwikkeling en beskikbaarstelling van kursusse wat deur die NUO aangebied word. Die metodes van die data-insameling wat gebruik is, was semigestruktureerde onderhoude en gedetailleerde waarnemingsnotas. Die konstante vergelykende metode van data-ontleding is gebruik om herhalende temas en patrone te soek.

Die studie het getoon dat daar geen of baie min bewyse van 'n formele behoeftebepaling deur die NUO is voordat die kursusse vir die indiensopleiding van onderwyers aangebied word. Ten spyte hiervan was sommige kursusse tog geslaagd. Die sukses van hierdie kursusse het klaarblyklik van die persoonlikheid van die aanbieder afgehang wat die volwasseneonderrigbeginsels instinktief of onbewustelik gebruik het.

Die studie sluit met enkele aanbevelings af, waarvan een is dat 'n behoeftebepaling gedoen moet word voordat enige kursus beplan word. Daarbenewens moet volwasseneonderrigbeginsels en praktyke onder die loep geneem word.

1. INTRODUCTION

“Winners must learn to relish change with the same enthusiasm and energy that we have resisted it in the past” Peters (in Eigel & Siegal 1991:3).

The above quotation by Tom Peters, a business writer, holds as much truth for education and the teaching profession as it does for the business world. Education in South Africa, has undergone a process of transformation and change, due to the implementation of a new curriculum, Curriculum 2005. The process of this transformation has caused much confusion and uncertainty amongst educators and has led to much resistance and opposition towards the new curriculum.

The research reported on in this essay focussed on establishing whether adult education principles were being implemented in the development and the delivery of courses delivered by the National Union of Educators, and whether these courses assisted educators as adult learners to learn effectively and efficiently so that they could apply what they learned. The first part of this essay commences with a background to the research problem under investigation, followed by the statement of the problem and the aim of the study. This is followed by a literature review, which draws on literature in adult and higher education focussing on adult education principles. Thereafter, I describe the research methodology used and the process of data analysis. Following this is a presentation of the findings as well as a discussion thereof. The essay concludes with a discussion of suggestions, which could contribute to the development of future training programmes by the NUE.

2. BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

As mentioned before, Curriculum 2005, has brought significant educational changes in South Africa. It is fundamentally different from the previous school curriculum, which was largely content-based, and educator driven. In contrast, Curriculum 2005 is outcomes-based, has a special emphasis on integration, and aims at redressing the inequalities of the past and is learner-centred.

As a result, South African educators as adult learners, need to keep abreast with developments and changes in education. Therefore, various organisations in Gauteng have offered courses pertaining to the new curriculum. However, much dissatisfaction and negativity has been expressed by those who have attended some of the courses. From personal experience and from speaking to fellow educators about the courses, most educators share the above sentiment.

This new curriculum requires that educators change their ways of thinking and doing, it requires that educators dispose of, or modify old ideas and be open to new ideas. However, as Thorpe (1993:146) says, “in many cases resistance to new ideas stems from their conflict with old beliefs that are inconsistent with them”. Furthermore, educators are not clear of what is expected of them and this is one of various factors that has contributed to the low morale and negativity present in the teaching profession. Educators have not been consulted as regards to their needs, it seems that educators are being treated as objects rather than decision makers in the learning process. It also seems that professionals in positions of power are planning courses based on their own perceptions of what educators need.

The National Union of Educators, a professional body, which aims at providing professional development for its members, has become aware of the current negative feeling of dissatisfaction expressed by its members, about the courses being offered (Interview with the NUE’s Chief Executive Officer – 5/4/2000). They have thus tried to address the issue. In an attempt to prepare their members

for the necessary changes, the NUE have introduced an on-going training programme, consisting of a series of courses, for the in-service-training of educators. The programme is made up of a series of courses presented by people who are experts in their particular field (interview with courses co-ordinator – 23/03/2000). These courses are aimed at equipping educators with the necessary information and skills needed for the successful implementation of the new curriculum.

However, in order to equip educators with the necessary skills and knowledge, I argue that courses need to be based on sound education practice. Much has been written in adult education about good teaching and training. Research on the teaching of adults emphasises the importance of taking the needs and expectations of learners into account when planning courses for them (Vella, 1994; Galleish, 1982; Wlodkowski, 1998). Furthermore, respecting adult learners is an important principle that recognises adults as decision-makers in a large part of their lives. It is thus argued that adult learners should as far as possible, make decisions on what and how they learn resulting in dialogue between educator and student for in Vella's (1993:3) words "adult learning is best achieved through dialogue".

Against the preceding background, the focus of this research was to establish whether adult education principles were being implemented in the development and delivery of courses by the National Union of Educators, and whether these courses assisted learners as adult educators to learn effectively and efficiently so that they could apply what they learned.

In the light of the above, the question that guided this research can be formulated as follows:

Does the in-service training offered by the National Union of Educators incorporate adult education principles?

3. AIM OF STUDY

In view of the abovementioned background and statement of the problem, the aim of this study was to establish whether the courses offered by the NUE incorporate adult education principles.

4. ASSUMPTIONS AND PRESUPPOSITIONS

In my position as a full time educator and as Deputy Principal, I regularly attend many courses offered by the NUE on various subjects and topics. I gained the impression at some of the courses, that adult education principles are not being employed in the planning and delivery of courses.

It seems to me that educators have not been part of the decision making process and that very little dialogue has taken place between the educators and the NUE. It also appears to me as mentioned before, that professionals in powerful positions are planning courses based on their own perceptions of what educators need. Furthermore, at many of the courses I have attended, the principle of immediacy seems to have been neglected as educators are not seeing the immediate usefulness of the new curriculum.

Prior to embarking on this study, it was thus my assumption that generally, courses being offered by the NUE, were not addressing educators needs and thus have contributed to the current uncertainty and negative feelings of dissatisfaction about the courses, which impacts on the educators morale and on their performance in the classroom.

5. LITERATURE REVIEW

5.1 Introduction

As mentioned before, the purpose of this research was to gain an understanding of

whether adult education principles were being implemented in the development and delivery of courses offered by the NUE. Consequently, this investigation, has been informed by literature in the realm of adult and higher education concentrating mainly on adult education principles as this serves as the theoretical framework for this study.

This section therefore, focuses firstly on a brief explanation of the concept “adult learner”. After this a discussion will follow on how adults learn effectively and how this knowledge is necessary and of great importance for the planning and delivery of courses or programmes for adults. I then move on to discuss the adult education principles and their importance. Throughout this review, I will argue why a knowledge of the above is important and necessary for contributing to the planning and presentation of adult education courses.

5.2 The adult learner

Much reference has been made throughout this review to the adult learner. I therefore deem it important to clarify who the adult learner is and why it is important for adult educators to have a knowledge of how adult learners learn effectively.

Authors in the field of adult education cannot agree on a definition of the adult learner. Rogers (in Tight 1996) expresses the difficulty of dealing with this concept. However most agree that the concept “adult” is not directly connected with age. Gravett (1997:2) provides an encompassing definition of the adult learner, by stating that an adult learners life is characterised by multiple roles, such as worker, employer, spouse and parent. This definition best describes the educators who were involved in this research.

The concept “adult learner” involves many dimensions. It is important for educators to bear this in mind when planning and designing courses for adults. Furthermore, adult educators need to be aware that the main life task of an adult

learner is no learning nor studying, but fulfilling multiple roles and “typically adding the role of learner to the other full-time occupations” (Merriam & Caffarella in Gravett, 1997:2).

5.3 How can adult learning be enhanced?

There are many models and views explaining how adults learn. According to Paulo Freire (in Jarvis 1995:83) learning cannot be a neutral process and he places emphasis on a two-way model of human interaction. Freire concentrates on the humanity of the learner and places great value on the human being. Gravett (1996:6) says that a “deep holistic approach to learning is imperative for conceptual change and the construction of active knowledge”. This deep holistic approach is characterised by “an active search for meaning” (Entwistle & Entwistle in Gravett 1996:4), and Ramsden (1992:43) refers to holistic as “preserving the structure, focussing on the whole in relation to the parts”.

The above viewpoints suggest that learning can therefore be enhanced by involving the learner in totality, or as Thorpe (1993:48) says by “thinking, feeling, perceiving and behaving”. Therefore, deep approaches are encouraged by teaching methods that foster active engagement with the new learning.

5.4 The utilisation of adult education principles and practices in the development and delivery of courses

I have combined Vella’s (1994:4) adult education principles and practices as well as Roger’s (1995:53) major factors and have come up with a list of major factors based on the above authors. I believe these major factors should be considered when planning courses for adult educators. These major factors would provide educators with a solid framework for planning teaching which aims at enhancing holistic and effective learning.

The principles, practices and major factors to be discussed are as follows:

- Needs assessment
- Safe environment, conducive to learning and non threatening
- Sound relationships between educator and learner
- Careful attention to sequence and re-enforcement
- Praxis; action with reflection, or learning by doing, practice opportunities
- Respect for learners as subjects of their own learning and empathy of educator
- Cognitive, affective and psychomotor aspects and presentation skills
- Immediacy of learning and motivation
- Teamwork/groupwork
- Engagement of learners in what they are doing and awareness of existing knowledge and attitudes
- Accountability: how do they know they know?

The twelve principles and practices and Rogers' main factors for effective teaching and learning, previously listed, will each be discussed in detail. References to other adult literature will be made to show the importance and necessity of using principles and practices when planning courses for adults.

5.4.1 Needs Assessment

Research on teaching adult learners emphasises the importance of taking the needs and experiences of learners into account when planning for them (Vella, 1994; Wodkowski, 1998; Galleish, 1982). According to Vella, a needs assessment, refers to "the participation of learners in naming what is to be learned" (Vella, 1994:3). Farqharon (1995:116) provides a similar definition when he says that it is a process of analysing and collecting information about the needs of individuals or groups.

It is imperative to do a needs assessment before embarking on the planning of any course, the reason being that adults study for different reasons, have different needs and experiences and with different expectations. Rogers (1971 : 10) says that the educator should be concerned with understanding the motives of the

learner. If an educator begins by identifying some of the reasons why each student is present, this will provide a valuable first point of contact and give the educator the necessary stimulus to engage in planning a course that will be meaningful to the learners. I argue thus, that it is important to firstly identify the needs of prospective learners, so that programmes are designed to narrow the gap of what is needed and what is desired by the learners.

Vella (1994:6) suggests another formulation of the needs assessment process. She refers to this as the WWW question. “Who needs what as defined by whom?” She emphasises the need to be clear about who the learners are, what they need and who will make these two determinations. Bearing this in mind, would assist educators plan courses for adults. Farqharson (1995 : 18) also says that an educator needs to know who the learners are, who will determine the needs and how the learning will be conducted. Following the above suggestions plan will provide an educator with valuable information that, although cannot guarantee success of a programme, will at least begin to address what learners need and expect.

However, a needs assessment cannot be done in an “ad hoc” way. A educator needs to be perceptive and listen to the learners to be aware of their needs. Both Vella and Freire emphasise the importance of listening. Freire refers to this as “thematic analysis” (Freire, 1994 : 25) a way of listening to the theories of a group, the issues that are vital to people. In many courses this does not happen. Professionals in positions of power often plan and design courses based on their own perceptions of what learners need. The presenters do not engage in dialogue with the learners and therefore are not able to listen, as a result there is likely to be a disaster. When this happens there is likely to be a “disastrous mismatch between the presenters and the learners’ motivation” (Farqharson, 1995 :19). A lack of consultation with the learners results in a monologic, one way approach, with learners being treated as objects rather than decision-makers in the learning process.

The question then is, how can one assess learning needs? There is a large body of

literature on strategies for assessing needs (Kemp, 1985; Knox, 1995; Cranton, 1992; Vella, 1994). Farquharson (1992) and Galleish (1982) both say that assessing needs can be done formally or informally depending on the context in which learning takes place.

Today, with advanced technology, data can be collected quickly and efficiently. E-mail, faxes and telephones can be used to contact and find out what the prospective learners need. Trainers or presenters could contact learners by any of the above methods and ask about the needs and expectations of a particular group. Presenters could even use written surveys as a means of information (regarding needs) collection. A needs assessment done at the outset of any course will give trainers/presenters a good indication of what a particular group needs and expects. The result in most cases will be a course that is accountable to the adult learners who know that they themselves were subjects of their own learning (Vella, 1994:4)

5.4.2 Environment conducive to learning

Creating a safe, non-threatening learning environment is of great importance for any learner. The creation of safety includes the personality of the presenter, the atmosphere in the room, the designing of small groups and appropriate learning tasks, as well as the challenge of learning new material in a stimulating, inviting and safe environment. Rogers (1992:35) says that the educator must remain ultimately responsible for the mood and atmosphere in the classroom. If the people feel “unsafe, unconnected and disrespected they are unlikely to be motivated to learn”. (Wlodkowski 1998:2). Contact needs to be made with the learners prior to the commencement of the course. The learners will feel safe in the knowledge that they have been consulted and therefore some of their needs will be addressed. Vella (1994:82) mentions that such contact creates a feeling of safety whereby learners trust the competence of the educator as well as the design.

Rogers (1992:105) uses an analogy of comparing a educator to a good host. “A good host will greet guests, introduce them to one another and see that no one is

left out ”. Educators should act, as the good hosts as this would create an environment that would be conducive to learning. Adult learners are often anxious in the new learning situations and it is the presenters task by employing some of the above methods to create a feeling of safety. Creating a safe environment also encompasses being perceptive to learners feelings. However understanding feelings does not mean neglecting the natural challenge of learning new concepts. Challenge is necessary. Vella (1995 :6) refers to Jung who states that learning needs to be challenging but safe. This implies that safety does not mean involving learners in easy tasks, but inviting and challenging them to voice their opinions, question objectives and become actively involved in the new learning. For some learners speaking in front of a large group may be intimidating and daunting. Learners need to feel safe and comfortable with their co-learners. Presenters should plan group work where learners are able to voice and share their opinion in small groups as this provides physical and social safety.

Acknowledging previous knowledge provides learners with a sense of safety and value. Learners bring with them, what Farquharson (1995 :48) calls “a rich storehouse of meaning”. It is therefore up to the educator to encourage learners to use their knowledge and motivate them to participate. However a non-judgemental environment is necessary for ensuring safety. Ridicule has a negative and destructive impact on leaning.

5.4.2.1 Respect develops sound relationships

Respect is a prerequisite for developing sound relationships. Respect is an important factor in any learning situation and needs to be borne in mind by every presenter planning a course or programme. Wlodkowski (1998 :60) says that without respect, “the only reason one does something for another is out of fear, obedience, ignorance, lust or love”. In order to avoid a loss of respect, presenters need to listen to learners’ hopes, fears and expectations. Presenters may not always be able to meet the learner’s expectations but, by listening, they are showing respect for learner’s feelings and that they are respected as subjects of their own learning. Showing respect, includes recognising that adults are decision-

makers in a large part of their lives.

Respect transcends culture. It is thus the task of the educator to find out how to show respect to the particular cultures present in the group. Showing respect to learners and respecting different cultures will be the first step to ensuring sound relationships. Developing sound relationships is imperative as it can encourage a learner to stretch and perform beyond expectations. A lack of respect by the presenter can be interpreted as an intolerance towards a particular culture and lead to what Vella (1994) calls the final “plop” where the group begins to question and doubt the relationship.

Sound relationships add to the feeling of safety. A sound relationship involves respect, dialogue, communication and listening in a non-judgemental environment. Daloz (in Farquharson 1995:53) puts it in a nutshell when he states that “teaching is most of all, a special kind of relationship”. Sound relationships can only be built on respect. Without respect there is no dialogue. Knowles (1980) agrees that respect is the prime factor in adult learning.

Respect includes recognising that adults have multiple roles to fulfil and they resist being treated as objects. It is thus argued that adult learners should as far as possible be involved in the decision making process on what and how they learn. Freire (1994) supports this statement as he is of the opinion that learners should be invited to be subjects of their own learning. Inviting learners to be subjects of their own learning not only shows respect, but impacts and informs the planning and delivery of courses and thus provides presenters with valuable information. Negativity and high drop out rates could, in many instances be avoided if learners felt respected.

5.4.3 Sequence, re-inforcement and practice opportunities

Sequence, re-inforcement and practice opportunities are interrelated with the principles and practices mentioned above. Learning tasks should move from

simple to more complex. Failing to do this, may result in learners absconding the course due to feelings of incompetence and anxiety. This often happens through fear of failure. When adults believe that the material is too difficult, they cannot learn. Re-inforcement of work often motivates and encourages learners to tackle what they thought they could not learn.

Re-inforcement is often overlooked as a principle of adult learning. Attitudes need to be respected. Learners need to engage in tasks that are interesting and diverse until they are learned. A presenter must ensure that courses carry adequate re-inforcement opportunities for the learners, to assist them with learning.

A course presenter needs to give learners time to practice what they have learned, and thus re-inforce the learning process. Practice opportunities will allow learners to do their own re-inforcement. Through this, the learners will know that they know. Jung (in Vella, 1994 : 87) emphasises the importance of the principle of re-inforcement when he teaches that, “the psyche knows no time and so every learning opportunity must have lots of re-inforcement tasks for the learners”.

5.4.4 Praxis

“Praxis is the Greek word that means action with reflection” (Vella 1994 : 11). It is an accepted fact among many educators that adults learn best by doing. Praxis, then is doing and reflecting on what has been done. Farqharson (1995 : 244) refers to praxis as “the capacity to blend action with reflection, creativity and a zest for ambiguity”. I agree with Farqharson that learning occurs when one blends action with reflection. Doing, without reflection often results in a mechanical action with little or no meaning. A number of other authors (Freire, 1994; Mezirow, 1991; Kolb, 1984) have highlighted the importance of reflection in learning.

Thus, when designing and planning courses, presenters need to make provision for praxis, that will allow for praxis to take place in the form of description, analysis, application, and then reflection and implementation. This will give learners an opportunity to practise new skills, ideas or attitudes and immediately reflect on

them. Learning will then not only be a consequence of their actions, but as a result of the reflection after their action.

5.4.5 Ideas, feelings and action

Vella (1994: 14) says that “learning with the mind, emotions and muscles, is a vital principle that is often neglected”. Many adult educators still see learning as only a cognitive process. In this regard, Campbell (in Vella, 1994 :186) reminds us that the brain thinks it is running the show but in fact it is merely a peripheral organ "second at best". Learning is multifaceted. It has to do with ideas, feelings and actions. These are interrelated and each impacts on the other. An educator must ensure that the course caters for not only the factual element but for ideas to be shared, feelings and opinions to be discussed and actions to be implemented. Adult educators therefore, need to consider all three facets.

5.4.6 Immediacy

Adult educator literature (Wlodkowski, 1986; Long, 1990; Vella, 1994) indicates that adults need to see the immediate usefulness and relevance of the new learning, as most adults do not have time to spare due to their multiple roles. Rogers (1992 :132) and Farqharon (1995 :64) both say that adult learners like to feel that what they are learning is useful and relevant in their daily lives. This results in meaningful and more rapid learning.

Bearing this in mind, presenters need to make the content of any course relevant by connecting the previous knowledge of the learners to new content and making this content applicable to their daily lives. Addressing immediacy then makes for high motivation. Without the principle of immediacy, a dullness and disinterest in the learning situation can occur. In many situations, the learners are indeed physically present, but there is no excitement about what they are learning. Immediacy is thus not an abstract principle, but one that needs to be put into practice and applied as soon as possible. Knowles (1980) re-iterates the importance of this principle as he indicates that relevance is the second most

important factor in effective adult learning.

5.4.7 Clear roles

The role of the educator and the learner within the learning and teaching situation needs to be clearly defined. In this regard both learners and educator have a role to play. Vella (1994:187) writes about a deliberative and consultative voice. Who decides what, when and how? The educators role is ultimately is to make final decisions but that should happen after dialogue with the learners about the learning situation has taken place. Therefore the learners themselves as adults need to participate in the learning and teaching process and be subjects of their own learning. They need to feel that their contribution is worthwhile and respected. On the other hand learners expect the educator to be an expert in their particular field and have what Shor (1994 :53) refers to as “ academic knowledge” in order to be able to guide learners in the learning process. However, an educator needs to avoid being seen by the learners as the unquestioning authority, the professor who cannot be challenged, as this results in a monological approach towards teaching. The educator needs to be aware of his/her role as co-learner, guide and mediator in the learning and teaching process. The learners need to be aware of their role too as active subjects of their own learning. Freire (in Gravett 1997:24) says that the educator and learners become “jointly responsible for the process in which they all grow”.

5.4.8 Teamwork

Teamwork according to Vella (1994:18) is both a “process and a principle” . Teams provide in the adult learning experience a quality of safety that is effective and helpful. The shared responsibility and safety in teams has proved to be effective in most learning situations and in any cultural setting. This is why educators should plan and organise learning tasks involving teamwork; teamwork enhances learning.

However, educators need to remember that teamwork is a social activity. Farquharson (1995:423) emphasises this fact when he reminds us that “learning is inherently social” It is thus important to invite learners to work with friends who they feel comfortable with as this creates safety for the shy learner or for the learner who is struggling with a difficult concept.

Tasks need to be designed in such a way that every team member gains as much as possible and is guaranteed some form of success. However, this does not imply that tasks need to be easy. Tasks need to be challenging and open to discussion where peers are willing to help one another and in the end are proud of their achievements as a team.

5.4.9 Engagement

Teamwork involves engagement by all the team members. Without engagement there is no learning. Engagement implies that through the learning tasks, learners are invited to “put themselves into the learning task to jump, so to speak, into the deep water”. (Vella, 1994 : 21). When learners are deeply engaged, working in groups, learning is enhanced. Learners need to be able to “do”. By “doing”; they are actively engaged in the learning process.

Authorities in adult education such as Knowles (1989), Mezirow (1991), Vella (1994), all show that people learn best by doing. It is therefore important for educators to plan courses indicating what learners will do, not as in most courses what the educator is going to do. The emphasis needs to be on the learners’ activities or what Vella uses with adult learners, learning tasks (an open question, put to a small group with the materials and resources they need to respond). These learning tasks require that the learners “do”, that they are engaged in the tasks and ensures that learners working in teams are engaged in the process of learning.

An educator’s job in adult education, is not to cover a syllabus or a particular programme, but rather to engage learners through stimulating learning tasks to

master new learning. If an educator ignores this and concentrates on what needs to be taught, it often results in what Rogers (1992: 123) warns against, a “top down” model that results often in an irrelevant, monological approach.

5.4.10 Accountability

Vella (1994 : 2) reminds us that “accountability is a synthesis principle, the result of using all the other principles as well as the beginning of an action”.

Accountability is therefore one of the most important principles in adult learning.

The design and planning of any course must be accountable to the learners. What was proposed to be taught, must be taught. To remain accountable, the educator must then do what he or she sets out to do. Learners must be aware of the content that is going to be covered, the skills that are intended to be gained and the attitudes to be taught. If an educator neglects this principle, it could impact negatively on all the other principles as accountability is interrelated with the principles of safety, respect and sound relationships.

5.5 Conclusion

In this section I drew from relevant literature, those issues that relate to the principles and practices of adult education. I have argued that in order to make adult courses meaningful and challenging, the adult educator needs to have a sound knowledge of adult learners and how adult learning can be enhanced. Furthermore, I have shown how effective learning and teaching can be achieved by incorporating adult education principles and practices in any adult education courses. For, without adult education principles and practices underlying courses for adults, the educator runs the risk of a monological approach where learners are merely physically present, being passive objects and not enthusiastic subjects of their own learning.

In conclusion, I argue that educators often do too much; organising content, subject matter, objectives and goals. It gives educators a sense of superiority, as educators often think that learning is dependent for its effectiveness on their activities rather than those of the learners. Hierarchical attitudes will not allow for the course to be designed to the benefit of the learners. The principles discussed previously hopefully dispel this myth. The role of the educator is that of planner, of organiser, of leader, of mediator and of co-learner in the learning process. Rogers (in Rogers 1995: 184) makes a strong point when she says that “teaching adults is not a question of selling anything, rather it is a matter of setting up a programme of activities, study and practice, establish the student participants to join in, they do the work and arrive at their goals”. Adult educators need to empower students to perform at their best. Shor (1992:10) says that “the students need a challenging education of high quality that empowers them as thinkers, communicators and citizens”.

6. RESEARCH DESIGN

6.1 Research paradigm and research methods

All research is conducted within a particular paradigm, which according to Maykut and Morehouse (1994: 4) is “a set of overarching and interconnected assumptions about the nature of reality”. Guba and Lincoln (1998 :195) define a paradigm as “the basic belief system or worldview” and represents a worldview that defines for its holder, the nature of the “world”, the individual’s place in it and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts. The researcher’s paradigm is thus the philosophical framework for the research, but also underpins and informs the methods by which the research is undertaken.

The research methods which I chose for this study, have thus arisen from my research paradigm and aim of this study. The aim of this research is to establish whether the courses run by the NUE incorporate adult education principles. The research has been conducted from an interpretative or constructivist paradigm, which assumes that “reality is not objective, but rather that there are multiple,

socially constructed realities (Guba & Lincoln, 1989 :84). Constructions are then what people “build” to try to make sense of their world. Constructions are thus unique, because they are an individual’s interpretation based mainly on experience. Educators attending the NUE courses, will therefore have different views on the courses due to their present and previous experiences. The researcher is part of the research process and therefore the result of any research is the residue of the interaction of the researcher and the participants.

Qualitative research methods are usually used by the researcher working from a constructivist paradigm. In qualitative research, the researcher “is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis” (Merriam 1998 :1), while Guba and Lincoln (1989 :149) refer to this as being the “human-as instrument”. Qualitative research also involves observation and fieldwork, which involves the researcher being physically present in the field of research and then being able to write a research report that is “richly descriptive” (Merriam, 1998 :7).

6.2 Sampling



Purposive sampling was used to select participants who would serve as “information rich cases” (Merriam 1998:61). “Information – rich’ cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research. Patton (1990:160) distinguishes between fifteen different types of purposive sampling. In this study I used maximum variation sampling in order to choose information rich cases. 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” or those “who’s study will illuminate the question under study “.

Maximum variation sampling allowed me to purposefully select a sample of course presenters, who where representative of the widest range of experience on the phenomenon under investigation (Maykut & Morehouse 1994:57) in order to

elucidate themes and patterns that cut across such a range of variation (Patton 1990:18)

I met with a course co-ordinator and asked her which presenters I should interview to provide me with information rich material. The co-ordinator is an experienced educator who plans the entire programme and knows each course presenter personally, and chooses people who are experts in their field (interview with course co-ordinator 23/03/2000). We then decided on a sample that cut across various differing courses addressing different topics. The length of each course was also considered and we decided on courses of varying time duration.

However, before commencing with the interviews, I approached the chief executive officer of the NUE and asked for permission to carry out this study. I explained my aim and intention and gave him a letter wherein I requested the required permission (Appendix A) to carry out this study. I also requested a copy of the programme of courses to be presented. The programme provided me with a list of names of course presenters, contact telephone numbers, the venue and time of each course, as well as the course topics. From this list and from the information obtained at the interview with the course co-ordinator I chose a sample of five course presenters whom I interviewed.

6.3 Data collection methods

Data collection was accomplished primarily through the medium of participant observation and semi-structured interviews. As the aim of this study was to establish whether courses offered by the NUE incorporate adult education principles, the participants and presenters actions and their words were very important. I used participant observation as a main source of data collection together with semi-structured interviews. An interview schedule using open-ended questions supported by probes and clarifying questions was used. I went into each course “to observe, to interview, to indwell” (Maykut & Morehouse 1994: 44).

I tried to gain perspective from a participant’s point of view. (Patton 1990: 207)

says that “in participant observation the researcher shares as intimately as possible in the life and activities of the setting under study. The purpose is to develop an insider’s view of what is happening”. The reason for using observation as my main form of data collection was that it provided knowledge of the context, as well as the behaviour of the participants and incidents that took place and I could thus record my observations. My observations were recorded in the form of field notes as described by Merriam (1998:104). Merriam mentions “the more complete the recording, the easier it is to analyse the data”. I made detailed notes on the setting of the venue, the number of participants present at each course, their response to the presenter and the general feeling of the participants during and after the course. During observations I used Taylor and Bogdan’s (in Merriam, 1998:105) suggestions for recalling data by paying particular attention and focussing on specific participants, interactions and activities, while trying to block out everything else. I also noted certain phrases and key words that would capture the essence of conversations and interactions. My comments were interwoven throughout the recording of my field observations, and are labelled “O.C.”. The use of Italics set them off from the observations ((Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:73). During breaks I mixed with the participants and tried to gain some information by means of informal interviews. This was noted in my observations. Substantive field notes were maintained and reviewed at the end of each course and interview. These notes were recorded as soon as possible after the observation sessions to improve detailed recalling and recording of what had taken place.

The interviews conducted with the presenter were semi-structured, making use of an interview schedule and open-ended questions, and supported by the use of probing, and clarifying questions. Patton (1990:324) says that, “good questions should at minimum be open-ended, neutral, singular and clear”. He adds “probes are used to deepen a response to a question”. The interviews were tape recorded and transcribed verbatim.

The following themes were addressed during each interview:

Background/context, planning preparing and designing courses, what presenters wanted to achieve.

Open-ended questions included the following:

- How did you go about about planning, designing and preparing for the course?
- What did you plan to give to the participants at the end of this course?

Probing and clarifying questions were posed when answers were not clear or when I needed an example to illustrate what the participant was saying and when I wanted to know more about the motivation for actions of thoughts.

I conducted all the interviews myself, thirty minutes prior to the beginning of each course. My pilot interview was held with Sarah, who was included in my final sample. I began by asking about Sarah's background and how she became involved with the NUE training programme. I did this to establish some rapport with Sarah as well as to allow me, as interviewer to be more at ease and to make Sarah feel likewise. However, this took a long time and I found that the issues I needed to deal with were not being addressed. After my pilot interview I was careful to focus the interviewee right from the start asking them to tell me about how they planned and prepared for the course. I needed to do this as I had limited time in which to interview the presenter prior to them commencing their course.

I found that most of the presenters were at ease and willing to tell me how they had gone about preparing for their particular course. However, I did discover some reluctance on the part of one presenter whom I contacted telephonically. She told me she would call me back but never did so. I then chose another presenter.

Once the presenters had been informed about the topic of my research and had verbally consented to be interviewed, they were each given a letter with the details

of my study (Appendix B) as well as a section in which they indicated their written permission for the interview to be conducted and tape recorded.

6.4 Data Analysis

As mentioned previously, the interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim. To protect the identity of the participants, each one was given a pseudonym. Once this was complete, I used the constant comparative method as put forth by Maykut & Morehouse (1994 : 126-144) to analyse the transcripts and field notes for recurring themes and patterns. This involved “rigorous analysis” (Maykut & Morehouse 1994:126). This 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 and the responses of the presenters, I was aware of the implications inherent in their disclosure of information to me as it could have an impact on their relationship with the NUE. Their openness was therefore, to an extent, associated with a certain degree of risk. For this reason, I chose a personal code of ethics based on Patton’s (1990 : 356) list of provisions for use during this research process. This included:

- * Promises and reciprocity – any promises made must be kept
- * Risk assessment – in what way will observing presenter and interviewing them put people at risk?
- * Confidentiality
- * Informed consent – on these grounds, I took the following steps to ensure an ethical study:
 - * I received informed written consent from each presenter before conducting interviews and being a participant-observer.
 - * Pseudonyms were given to presenters to protect their identities.
 - * I promised that once the study was complete, I would inform them hereof

- * All information received and observed is strictly confidential.
- * I committed myself to this code of ethics with every interviewee.

6.6 Provisions for ensuring reliability and validity

Merriam (1998:206) says that the traditional definition of reliability is the “extent of which the findings can be replicated”, however this does not apply in qualitative research. In her explanation of what constitutes reliability in qualitative research, she refers to the terms, consistency and dependability, as coined by Guba and Lincoln (1989). As such Merriam (1998:206) contends that in the case of qualitative studies, reliability in qualitative research refers to the dependability of the results or “whether the results are consistent with the data collected”.

According to Merriam (1998:199) the question of internal validity in qualitative studies, broaches two important issues. In her examination of internal validity she makes preference to the confidence or trust others have in the way with which the study has been conducted and the findings of the study. As reliability and internal validity are so intertwined in research, the following measures, which I, as human instrument, have undertaken in the course of this study, aim to ensuring that the study has both reliability and internal validity. I began by declaring and explaining my assumptions and presentations at the beginning of the study. Secondly, I tried to ensure that the inferences drawn from this study were consistent with the data collected by providing a clear “audit trail” (Guba and Lincoln 1989:243). This was achieved by providing a copy of the interview transcripts (Appendix D) for an example of an interview as well as the original observation notes (Appendix E). The unitised data and provisional categories (see table 7.2) were utilised in accordance with the constant comparative method of data analysis as set out by Maykut and Morehouse (1994:146). Furthermore, once I had completed the data analysis process and identified the categories and subcategories, I conducted “member checks” (Merriam, 1998:204) in an attempt to enhance the internal validity of this study. I consulted two of the participants on their credibility and the plausibility of the findings.

External validity, according to Guba and Lincoln (1989) is only possible if the study has internal validity. In qualitative research, external validity is of importance for the reader who, after reading the research, is in a position to decide what is appropriate and fitting for their own situation (Merriam 1998:211). To increase the external validity of the study, I have tried to provide in this research report, a “thick description”, of the research context, processes and outcomes making it possible for others to understand the context and therefore experience it vicariously (Guba & Lincoln 1989:260-264). To elucidate this description further, I will deal with the presentation of data in the next section.

7 DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF DATA

As previously mentioned in paragraph 6.3, the constant comparative method was used for data analysis. Merriam (1998 : 178) refers to data analysis as the “process of making sense out of data”. Silverman (2000: 152) adds by saying that analysis “illuminates the data”. The constant comparative method of analysis basically depends on the construction of categories or themes by “continuous comparison of bits of data with each other “ (Merriam 1998: 179), in other words there is a constant, deliberate search for recurring themes or patterns which appears in the data.

Merriam (1998: 180) emphasises an important part of the data analysis procedure, namely that the process of analysis must be done in conjunction with the data collection. This process for me, therefore started when I had completed my first interview and my first set of observations.

I began firstly by reading through the transcript of my first interview with Penny. I then proceeded to read my observation notes. The analysis of the two was done simultaneously. During the second re-reading of the interview and observation notes, I began by looking for “chunks” or “units of meaning” as described by Maykut and Morehouse (1994 : 128) and thus began the process of unitising the data. To separate one unit from the next, I drew a line across the page writing a word or a phrase, which contained the main data of the unit of meaning in the

margin alongside. Each unit of meaning in the transcript was then coded with reference to the page on the transcript. For example, the code T/P1 refers to the transcript (T) of the interview with Penny (P) page number one (1). To my question of how she went about planning/designing/preparing for the courses, Penny answered “I took the four main elements that are going to be included in the Economic and Management Sciences, namely Business Economics, Economics, Entrepreneurship and Financial Management and I tried to structure them so that they could see that they can be used in a group under the EMS heading as it were”. “Planning course content” was then written in the margin. These units of meaning were then cut out of the transcript and pasted into A5 size cards to facilitate further handling as suggested by Maykut and Morehouse (1998: 136). Thereafter these were transferred to my discovery sheet where I began the process of linking the emerging words, ideas and concepts to find recurring themes, which would then form the basis of the provisional coding categories. I proceeded in the same way with my observation notes. From my interview with Penny and after observing and making field notes during a four-hour course, eleven provisional categories emerged. Some of these are listed in Table 7.1 below.

Table 7.1

Some Provisional Categories from the interview with Penny and the observation notes

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * No formal needs assessment done as courses are planned according to what the NUE wants and presenters decide on the content. * Lecture method is mode of instruction predominant in some courses. * Active participation during courses leads to discussion, dialogue and reflection. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Evidence that course content is relevant and addresses the principle of immediacy. * Presenters are flexible and adaptable during courses. * A conducive learning environment is evident.
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After working through and having arrived at a list of provisional categories, I placed each coded unit of meaning under the respective provisional categories using the “look/feel-alike criteria” described by Maykut and Morehouse (1994 : 137). Throughout this process, I continually used the “look/feel-alike criteria” to compare the data cards with the provisional categories. When the data cards did not fit into a particular category, I place these in a separate folder or alternatively formed a new category.

When a provisional category contained approximately six to eight unitised data cards, I began writing a “rule of inclusion” which according to Maykut and Morehouse (1994 :139) “serve as a basis for including or excluding subsequent data cards in the category”. Lincoln and Guba (in Maykut & Morehouse 1994 :139) suggest writing the rule of inclusion in the form of a propositional statement, which conveys the meaning contained in the data cards collected under the category name. The rule of inclusion was then used as a basis for incorporating further data. The analysis of all the data I obtained from the interviews and the observation notes were analysed by the same process. I continued analysing in this way until there was no data left. Table 7.2 is an excerpt from a provisional category. It includes a rule of inclusion as well as direct quotes from the interviews or observations to make further exploration possible.

I systematically increased my understanding of the categories, which were beginning to form, by constantly checking and testing the categories in order to identify ambiguities and overlaps. Where necessary the rules of inclusion were refined and adjusted. At this point I had a number of propositional rule statements, which were the rules of inclusion for each of my categories. These were then compared to identify those that stood alone and those that had worthwhile corrections with others. These were written up as “outcome statements” (Maykut and Morehouse 1994:144) and formed the framework of the findings.

As suggested by Maykut and Morehouse (1994:157-158) the outcomes, were organised around the outcome statements, by prioritising them according to my focus of inquiry and their prominence in the data. The frequency with which the units of meaning and categories recurred was an indication of their importance. Excerpts or quotations which contributed significantly to each outcome statement were identified and selected for use in the next stage of the report. These findings will now be discussed.



Table 7.2

Excerpt from a provisional category (no formal needs assessment) including units of meaning and direct quotes from interviews and observations

	<u>Rule of inclusion:</u>
No formal needs assessment done.	Courses are planned, based on what the NUE sees as necessary and then course presenters decide on the appropriate course content.
NUE decides	T/5.2 Apparently the message from NUE is that educators asked for this
Individuals at NUE decide on course	T/2.2 Well, when Mary approached me she basically told me to work through the model.
Presenter decides on course content	T/2.1 I first researched the content and then decided on the content that I wanted to cover.
Instructed by NUE	T/1.4 I was told by the NUE that this was the course that was decided
Decision of course content made by presenter	T/3.1 What I did I picked out the key elements and then I'm going to speak about them
Course decided on by an individual	T/4.1 Mary picked on it because she said she thought it would be a topic that they would be interested in.
Mary decides on courses	T/M.1 I find the problem or need and then decided which courses need to be put out in the next term.

8 FINDINGS

8.1 Introduction

The aim of this study was to establish whether the courses offered by the NUE incorporated adult education principles. In this regard the questions asked during the interviews with the presenters and the detailed observations I made during the courses, enabled me as researcher to delve deeper and see whether adult principles were in fact being implemented by the NUE.

As mentioned before, the outcomes of the research were prioritised according to my focus of inquiry and their prominence in the data. Therefore, by the end of the data analysis process, I had identified a number of categories and subcategories. These served as a basis for the findings of this research and are listed in Table 8.1 below. In this section I discuss each major category and subcategories in the order in which they appear in the table. In my discussion of each finding, I draw on excerpts from the interviews and from notes from my observations, which illustrate or substantiate my discussion. The research literature from section 5.1 and other literature, which is pertinent to the study, is interwoven throughout the discussion. I then conclude with a summary of the findings.

Table 8.1

Categories and sub-categories with the outcome statements as derived from the process of the data analysis

Category and Sub-Category	Outcome Statement
<p>1. No formal needs assessment done</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">* NUE decides on courses to be presented.* Presenters decide on course content.* Presenters based content on existing documents i.e. syllabi, manuals as well as academic knowledge and personal assumptions.	<p>No adequate needs assessment is done to discover what educators really need. The NUE decides what courses to present based on the “grape vine” network. The course presenters then base their courses on what they assume educators need, on experience from previous courses and on available documents to support the course content.</p>

Category and Sub-Category	Outcome Statement
<p>2. Mode of instruction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Lecture method <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Passivity - Disinterest - Boredom - Top-bottom delivery * Active engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discussion, dialogue, reflection - Immediacy and relevancy addressed - Flexibility and adaptability during course - Students previous knowledge and immediate needs addressed 	<p>The lecture method was predominant in some courses whereby presenters were deliverers of knowledge to passive disinterested learners. However, in other courses learners were actively engaged in discussions, dialogue and reflection. Flexibility was apparent as learners previous knowledge was acknowledged and their immediate needs addressed.</p>
<p>3. Learning Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Conducive learning environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Safe, secure, warm relaxed atmosphere - Non-threatening - Humour - Feasibility of objectives - Small groups voice opinions - Affirmation * Non-conducive learning environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of interest/boredom <p>- Physical conditions unpleasant, e.g. cold room</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No communication - Students objects not subject of their own learning - Multiple roles of students ignored 	<p>Some presenters created a safe, relaxed learning environment where students felt respected. This encouraged creativity and spontaneity in dealing with the new learning material.</p> <p>However, in other courses it was apparent that learners were merely “empty vessels” waiting to be filled with knowledge. Learners were treated as objects resulting in a lack of interest and boredom.</p>

8.2 Discussion of findings

8.2.1 No formal needs assessment done

From the interviews and from the detailed observations made during the courses it was apparent that no formal needs assessment had been done to find out what educators really needed during their in-service training courses. As one participant, Jane said during her interview, *“I was told by the NUE that this was the courses that was needed.”* Literature on adult education however, emphasises the importance of a needs assessment before the commencement of any course. Both Vella (1993 : 3) and Rogers (1971 : 10) say that a needs assessment is imperative before the beginning of any course.

It seems that, NUE therefore decides on the courses to be presented by relying on the “grape vine” network. The course co-ordinator, Mary, often hears via educators what they are dissatisfied with and then decides on which courses to present. During her interview, she said, *“I listen to the teachers and their mutters, which are very loud and clear, I then find the problem or need and then decide which courses need to be put out in the next term”*. However, the needs are based primarily on her assumptions and not on any formal needs assessment.

Once the courses have been decided on, the course co-ordinator approaches the presenters who, in her words *“are experts in their field”* and asks them to present a course on a particular topic. It is then left up to the presenter to decide on what is to be covered during the course. One presenter, Tracy, said during her interview, *“I first researched the content, and decided on the content that I wanted to cover”*.

To assist with the content, presenters often use existing documents as a framework for their course. Some presenters made use of existing syllabi, while one presenter prepared a 31 page handout to *“speak around that”*. Another prepared a module to work from. One presenter, Julie found that academic knowledge was important to support her course content. She said, *“I don't reject theory. I have found it often affirmed what my instinct told me in the course of developing my own practice, and so I like to marry the theory and the practice if I can”*. Three presenters relied on their experiences of previous courses and based their courses on that. One

presenter, Sarie, said she had *“run training courses for teachers who are doing my research, so from the student input and from what’s worked in the past, I’ve based my courses on that”*. Louise, another presenter, said *“...from experience in training teachers, I know the other issues that I have to deal with...”*

From the above discussion, it is apparent that the participation of the educators in naming what is to be learned is not really taken into account. It seems that the NUE is, to a certain extent, aware of the educator’s needs but on a very limited scale. There is no “policy” in place that requires a formal needs assessment to be done to establish or identify what it is that educators really need in terms of courses to provide in-service training. In this regard we are reminded by Caffarella (1994 :33) that learners need to be involved in planning their programs. A needs assessment done prior to the courses, would address the educators’ needs and would involve them in the planning of the programme.

A needs assessment would be relatively easy to carry out by the NUE. The schools phone or fax NUE, advising them of who will be attending a particular course. NUE could give the names of all the participants to the course presenter and ask the presenter to contact a sample of the educators attending, to find out their needs. Based on this, the course presenter could then plan and design their course, incorporating and addressing educator’s needs.

8.2.2 Mode of instruction

What emerged during my analysis of the interviews and observations was in some cases ambiguous, concerning the mode of instruction during the courses.

During some courses, the lecture method was very predominant. However, during other courses there was active student involvement that lead to discussion, dialogue and reflection. This mode of instruction impacted on the atmosphere in the room and on how educators reacted towards the course.

Two courses in particular were basically presented to provide educators with background information to the new learning areas. During those courses, the lecture method was

predominant and, as Julie a presenter put it, she was simply going to use “ *the straight lecture method because there’s a tremendous amount of theory that has to be handled*”. Ramsden (1992 :156) reminds us that “lectures can be a useful way to introduce a new topic and to provide an overview of the relation between topics”. Ramsden also (1992 : 156) goes on to say that it is “ possible to give a traditional lecture well, to encourage the audience’s interest, to stimulate their thinking....”. However, this was not evident in courses, where presenters used the lecture method.

While the presenter lectured, the learners sat passively and seemingly listened. I noted in my observations that “*not much was going on, apart from presenter’s voice explaining, some participants were watching, others were looking around but all participants were sitting passively*”. In this course participants acted and looked disinterested. In another course I noted how a participant played with her nails and kept changing her posture in her chair. At the same course, two ladies at the back, “*chatted and laughed while the presenter spoke*”. I also noted during that course, that after the tea break, three participants left.

Signs of boredom were apparent during these two particular courses, and these were noted in my observations. During these courses participants fell asleep. I noted, “*one participant fell asleep while presenter was talking, every now and then he opened his eyes and tried to keep awake, but to no avail*”. And at another course, “*a participant put her arms on the table, rested her head and closed her eyes*”. Ramsden (1992 : 102) reminds us that, good teaching is wanting learners to find a subject enjoyable rather than dull. There was a considerable number of participants, who by their body language, suggested that the course was uninteresting and boring. I noted that, *some were looking out of the window and looked totally disinterested*”.

The above scenario could be due to the fact that the knowledge was being delivered from the “top-down” with the participants as passive recipients of information being transmitted. Rogers (1995:53) warns against this “top-down” model. It often results in an irrelevant monological approach. At the above mentioned courses, this was precisely what happened. Freire (1994 : 25) refers to this delivery of knowledge as the “filling of empty vessels” which according to him, should be avoided at all costs.

However, as mentioned before, in other courses, participants were actively involved and engaged in discussion, dialogue and reflection. Louise at the outset of her courses engaged the participants in dialogue and discussion. I noted in my observations that, *“participants were asked to sit in groups of four, preferably with people they did not know”*. They were then asked to talk to the person next to them and tell them what they knew about co-operative learning. The presenter then asked the pairs to note similarities and differences that they shared. I noted during this period that there was a *“busy, interactive noise in the room”* when I interviewed Louise, she said she was essentially going to use the experiential method with the participants. I asked why she was going to use this method she answered, *“because, I believe that it is only through doing and getting involved that they will understand what it is all about”*.

At another course, Penny, began the course by posing a question to the participants. *“What is writing?”*. Three participants started discussing. Another two participants engaged in discussion about the question. I also noted in my observation that there was a *“relaxed feeling amongst the participants and everyone seemed to be engaged and listening to the discussion”*. Penny also mentioned during her interview that she was aware that *“its not easy to change an educator’s practice, but perhaps to sow seeds”*. When I asked her to elaborate on this she answered, *“Well, by making them think about other ways, by well, reflecting on other ideas”*.

Sarie, during her interview indicated that she *“wasn’t just going to stand there and lecture”*. She wanted the participants to *“participate, interact and experience experiential learning and let them see how they can use it, in the classroom situation and why it’s more effective for learning*. I noted during her course that *“participants were now discussing the issues in their respective groups. They all seemed very interested. At one stage the discussion became “heated up” amongst two members of opposing groups”*. It was evident that Julie made use of the participant’s knowledge and experience to motivate them to tackle new learning material. Farquharson (1995: 53) refers to learners’ knowledge as a *“rich storehouse of meaning”* and says researchers should use this to motivate students to participate actively.

This was evident in Julie’s course.

Due to the active involvement of the learners the principle of immediacy and relevancy was

addressed. Three presenters indicated during their interviews that addressing immediacy was important because as Sarie said, *"I'm looking at what's going to work in a practical situation"*. Penny also said, *"they talk about how they think they might be able to implement this in the classroom"*. Louise also indicated why she thought addressing immediacy and relevancy was important, she said, *"you let them see how it can be used in the classroom situation and why it's more effective for learning"*. I also noted in my observations that Louise, *"linked the activity that they had just done to the classroom situation"*. Penny told them that this *"type of activity could be done in class with the learners"*. At another stage in my observations I noted that Louise *"related this activity to the classroom situation and asked participants to think about and discuss how they could put this into practice"*. This is an important principle of adult education as most adult literature (Wlodkowski, 1996; Long, 1990; Vella, 1994) indicates that adults need to see the immediate usefulness and relevance of the new learning. Adults then, like to feel that what they are learning is useful and relevant and they can put it into practice. It was apparent during the above mentioned courses and I noted in my observations that this led to *"meaningful and more rapid learning, by the participants"*.

The presenters of the above courses were to a certain extent flexible and able to adapt the new learning material to suit the needs of the participants. This seems to add to the feeling of safety, as participants felt free to voice their opinions and ask questions that they needed answered. Louise in particular, always made sure that she answered all questions and issues that were raised. During her interview she said she had adapted her courses because *"they said it was too much and so I tried to reduce it to the most important issues only"*. I also noted in my observations that the, *"presenter answered a question that a participant has asked at the beginning of the course"*. Sarie also indicated her flexible and adaptable approach during her interview. She said when she noticed that participants have issues that they wanted to deal with, she would address it by saying, *"alright this is what I was going to deal with, but I'm not going to deal with this anymore, let's deal with what we've got here"*.

Some presenters were flexible and acknowledged participants previous knowledge and incorporated this into their courses. Sarie's example above is a good indication of this. Louise during her interview said *"they came with a lot of knowledge, I capitalise on it and build on what they've got"*. It seemed that participants felt respected due to the presenters attitude, their participation and interest was a clear indication that mutual respect prevailed. I noted that,

“presenter spoke slowly and clearly. Everyone listened. It was already dark and no-one seemed to want to go home”. The participants felt safe and respected in this type of learning environment. This is important in adult education, as respect is a prime factor in every learning situation. In this situation, adult education principles were utilised effectively.

8.2.3 Learning environment

Once again, it was interesting to note how the learning environments differed according to particular courses. During some courses there was an environment conducive to learning which stimulated participants into active participation. These correlated with the courses where learners were actively involved. However, during other courses there were many indicators that the environment was not conducive for effective learning to take place. At these courses the learners remained passive.

Some presenters created a safe, relaxed learning environment where learners felt respected and thus contributed to the learning situation. The presenters ensured this by welcoming the educators, using humour during their sessions and maintaining eye contact with their audience. The learners' body language indicated that they felt at ease and were willing to contribute to the learning situation. Safety included the personality of the presenter, the atmosphere in the room, which ultimately impacted on how the participants responded. Rogers (1992 :19) reminds us that the educator must remain ultimately responsible for the mood and atmosphere in the classroom. This was clearly demonstrated during the courses I attended. Often the success of the courses depended significantly on the personality of the presenter. I noted in Louise's course, *“the atmosphere was very pleasant, room was sunny and warm”*. During Sarie's course I noted, *“there was much chatter amongst the participants as they discussed the cards, lot of smiles and a very relaxed happy atmosphere prevailed”*.

Presenters often, without planning for it, made use of humour, which added to an environment conducive to learning. During Louise's course I noted, *“this activity resulted in lot's of laughing from the various groups”*. And again when Louise said, *“people they were all false”*, I noted how participants, *“burst into laughter”*. During Louise's course, one particular activity required that each group report back in the form of story telling. This proved to be very successful as I noted that, *“while one group spoke everyone listened attentively”*. One

particular group presented an exceptionally funny story. At the end of the story I noted how, *“when they had finished the group gave them a spontaneous round of applause”*. I also noted that *“presenter laughed a lot at the various stories”*. All this helped create an environment conducive to learning.

The environment was non-judgemental and non-threatening. The presenter used the educators' contributions to add to the learning situation, she did not discard it but elaborated on it. To indicate a non-threatening environment, in one incident the presenter asked if there were any questions and a participant felt she could ask the presenter for her telephone number. This was due to the non-threatening environment that prevailed. I noted how participants felt they could ask the presenter any questions without fear of being ridiculed. Some were also willing to stay after the lecture and the presenter addressed issues that participants wanted to discuss.

Some presenters planned small group work and allowed participants to voice their opinions. In some courses this was done successfully. Three presenters used this technique and this involved all the participants in active engagement. I noted in Penny's course, *“how she moved from group to group and involved the participants in discussion”*. Sarie also used this when three groups had to debate a particular issue. This technique helped create a stimulating learning environment.

Some presenters used affirmation and this also had a positive effect on the participants. I noted how Penny, *“really made the participants feel that what they were saying was worthwhile and important”*. And again, *“presenter listened attentively as each group spoke and nodded encouragingly”*. Louise also acknowledged participant's responses by, *“nodding her head and saying “yes”, yes”* as a participant spoke.

Feasibility of objectives also added to making the environment conducive to learning. Most of the presenters explained, at the outset of their course, what they intended to cover during the course of the afternoon. Louise, in particular, constantly kept the participants informed on the why and how of the new learning material. I noted how the *“presenter then explained how and why she was going to handle the material during the course of the afternoon”*. Three other presenters made known to the participants what they planned to do. I noted how one presenter *“introduced herself and explained to the group what she intended doing”*. Another presenter

“introduced herself and explained what she planned to achieve during the course of the afternoon”. Adult education literature (Vella, 1994 : 16) indicates the importance of making known to students the objectives of the course and what one proposes to teach. To remain accountable the educator then needs to do what he/she set out to do. In four of the courses I attended, I felt that the presenters achieved what they set out to achieve. However, some courses were not as successful as the ones described above, primarily due to a non-conducive learning environment. The content of the course, eg. Economic and Management Sciences, to a certain extent may have impacted on the environment that was created. Courses where the lecture method was predominant, generally failed to arouse the participants enthusiasm and interest, which impacted negatively on the learning environment. As mentioned before, the personality of the presenter affected the learning environment too.

During one course in particular, the physical conditions in the room failed to create an environment conducive to learning. The room was large and it was cold. The course was a four-hour course and the room seemed to have got colder as the morning progressed. I noticed how *“room was cold, people were complaining of cold feet and that they had been sitting for too long”*. And yet again, *“one teacher was obviously cold, she stopped writing and wrapped her hands in her jersey”*. Literature emphasises that if physical needs are not addressed, most people cannot concentrate on any other issues. In this particular course this was quite apparent.

Another reason which contributed to an environment not conducive to learning was the fact that participants were passive and merely listened to information being transmitted by the presenter. Some presenters asked questions but allowed no time for answers and merely proceeded. I noted how one presenter *“asked does it makes sense? Didn't wait for an answer and proceeded with the lecture”*. The general response of the participants I noted to be, *“body language of participants was expressive of how they were feeling. Some were yawning, some were leaning on the table, others were chatting amongst themselves, and a number of participants kept looking in the direction of where the tea was being prepared”*. Furthermore, it was already evident that during these courses learners needs were not being addressed. Farquharson (1995 : 119) says that a lack of consultation with the learners results in a monologic approach, with learners being treated as objects rather than decision-makers in the learning process. During two courses in particular, the approach was monologic and it was clear that students had not been consulted. I noted how one participant, clearly annoyed said,

“what you’ve given us in is the Matric syllabus, what do you want us to do?” Another instance that indicated that participants had not been consulted was, when one participant told the presenter that *“we are in the dark as this course and content is for High School teachers only”*. I also noted that *“some participants seemed dissatisfied with the content of the course”*.

An enormous amount of information was given to the participants while it seemed that the presenter assumed that everyone knew what she was talking about. The presenter had a set programme to cover and thus proceeded, *“at a very fast pace, with very little explanation and no time for questions or practice”*. There was very little communication between the participants and the presenter. I noted that, *“it was obvious that the presenter knew her subject well but her method of delivery was such that she assumed everyone present could follow and understand”*. This was a typical example of the presenter using what Shor (1994) calls, “academic knowledge”. However, the presenter in this case came across as the unquestioning authority presenting her academic knowledge. Vella (1995 : 74) says that many adult educators find it difficult to give up the “mantle of power as the professor”. This power is often a source of security for the monologic educator. This seemed to be the case as I noted that when one participant asked a question the presenter answered very quickly and said, *“I don’t want to go into too much details – just know that if you do this ...”*. I noted that participants were being treated as still unfortunately happens in many schools *“children in a school classroom with the teacher telling pupils what to do and passive pupils merely following instructions”*.

This indicates that participants were not, in this particular course, being treated as adult co-learners. At one stage the presenter said, *“good write it down and now this is what you will fill in on the worksheet number two”*. A further example of an environment not conducive to learning was evident when the presenter ignored the multiple roles of adult students. A participant from the North West province asked if the presenter could alter the order of the programme because, *“we left at 5:00 this morning and need to get home as we have other matters to attend to”*. The presenter answered by saying, *“I have work to cover and I need to get through it”*. The presenter’s response showed a lack of empathy and respect for the participants involved. All the examples added to an environment that was non-conducive to learning.

8.3 Summary

This section dealt with the findings that emerged from the data analysis process. I discussed in the three categories and their sub-categories in detail, namely no formal needs assessment done, mode of instruction and the learning environment. I drew on the applicable literature discussed in the literature review in order to support or substantiate my findings. In my discussion of each category, I included direct quotes of the participants and quoted from my observation notes to allow the reader to experience it vicariously (Guba & Lincoln, 1989 : 260-262).

9 RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, I would like to close with possible implications of this study for the in-service-training of educators offered by the NUE.

Having sat through courses offered by the NUE and made detailed observations, I gained the impression that some courses offered by the NUE are of benefit to educators. Overall, educators seem to be satisfied, but my research indicates that courses could be improved. Only a few courses equip educators with the necessary information and skills that they need. In this respect, there is still much that NUE can do in order to address some issues that have emerged from this research. Resultantly, I would like to offer a few recommendations, which I believe could assist this process.

- I believe that it is imperative to do a needs assessment prior to the planning of a course. Course presenters should be given a list of participants planning to attend the courses, and through ways mentioned earlier in this essay, contact a sample of the participants and find out their expectations and their needs. In this way the participants would be part of the planning process and thus become subjects of their own learning.
- Presenters should be made aware of adult education principles and practices and should then incorporate and plan courses accordingly. There is a vast amount of adult education literature on planning and preparing courses and a list of suitable books

should be made available to presenters as a source of reference.

- Another issue that needs to be addressed, is that of the mode of instruction. From some courses it was apparent that the presenters felt comfortable with the lecture method. However, the end result observed during observations, was much dissatisfaction amongst the participants primarily due to their passivity and inactivity. Part of the plan of action, mentioned above is that NUE needs to remind and brief presenters that learning occurs when adults “do”. Engagement in any learning situation results in meaningful learning. The presenter’s job in adult education is not to cover a particular syllabus or programme, but to present a programme based on addressing learners needs. Presenters need to be told that they need to plan and design courses indicating what the participants will do rather than what the presenter is going to do. The emphasis needs to be on what Vella (1994 : 34) uses with adult learners, the learning tasks, discussed earlier in this essay. These learning tasks or activities require engagement by the learners thus ensuring that learners “do”.



If NUE wants its focus to be on the “opportunity for professional growth through stimulating seminars, (NUE pamphlet) then it must begin by answering what Vella (1994: 4) calls the “WWW question – who are the learners, what are the needs, whom as definers?”.

10 CONCLUSION

The research reported in this essay focussed on the courses offered by the NUE for the in-service-training of educators. The essay began by examining the reason namely, to establish whether courses offered by NUE incorporated adult education principles, and to report on it, in order to possibly contribute to the development of future programmes offered by the NUE.

This study had found that there was no or very little evidence of a formal needs assessment done by the NUE prior to any of the courses offered for the in-service-training of educators. From the courses attended, it was apparent that there was no clear plan to

include adult education principles, which could assist educators as adult learners effectively and efficiently. Despite this, some courses were very successful. The success of these courses, as well as the enthusiasm and interest amongst the participants, seemed to depend on the personality of the presenter. Presenters who were successful in their delivery of the course material, used adult education principles instinctively or unwittingly.

In conclusion, I would like to express the belief that the courses presented by the NUE, seek to continually provide educators with information that is relevant and thus provides them with opportunities for professional growth. Sawyer (in Ramsden, 1994 : 38) reminds us that “one can learn imitation history – kings and dates, but not have the slightest idea of the motive behind it all....” I say, let all the NUE members understand and know the motives behind it all.



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APPENDIX A

13 April 2000

National Union of Educators
P.O. Box 1309
HOUGHTON
2041

Dear Mr Balt

Thank you for your letter granting me permission to do my research in Adult Education.

I agree to the conditions stipulated in your letter and will submit a copy of my research proposal to NUE, after agreement by the Faculty.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely



F. MORAIS
DEPUTY PRINCIPAL

APPENDIX B

10 May 2000

Dear Sir/Madam

I am currently busy with my Masters' Degree in Adult Education and Training at the Rand Afrikaans University. I am investigating the training offered by NUE and whether this training has the potential to assist educators with the implementation of the new curriculum.

I would like you to participate in my research study. As a Deputy Principal, I am interested in the in-service-training of teachers as it forms a vital aspect of a teacher's professional development. Attending courses and workshops is a way of keeping abreast with developments in education. I hope my findings will contribute positively to the training offered to teachers.

I would appreciate it if you could sign the consent form, indicating that you would participate in my research study.

Thanking you in anticipation.



FELIS MORAIS
DEPUTY PRINCIPAL
JEPPE HIGH PREPARATORY SCHOOL

APPENDIX C

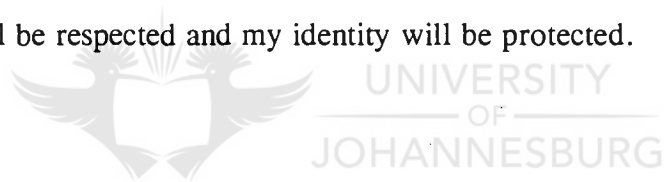
10 May 2000

CONSENT FORM

I Hereby agree to be part of the research study,
investigating the training offered by NUE.

I give my consent that information collected will be submitted to RAU and NUE in the
form of a research report.

Confidentiality will be respected and my identity will be protected.



Signature: Date:

APPENDIX D

EXTRACT OF INTERVIEW WITH COURSE PRESENTER OFFERING CO-OPERATIVE LEARNING COURSE – 07/06/2000 16:00-18:00

Code: R = Researcher
 L = Interviewee

Interview conducted at J.C.E. on 07/06/2000, half an hour prior to beginning of course.

R Thank you so much for allowing me to interview you and perhaps we can start by me asking you how you went about planning, designing and preparing for the course this afternoon?

L First of all, I've been teaching a lot of co-operative learning to my students and from that I've seen where quite a lot of problems are. In addition, I've run training courses for the teachers who are doing my research, so I've had the students input from the teachers, and from what I've got from those I've based the course on what the most important issues are. You see it's very tricky area it seems simple but it isn't. There's a lot of input, and the students found it very heavy, but I didn't think the adult learners would, and they did. They said there was too much, and so I tried to reduce it to the most important issues only, and hoped that from that, the teachers will get the most important things, but it's new, of all the courses I've run on this, and there have been lots, this is a slightly different way of doing it.

R When you talk about input, I'm not quite sure I understood it correctly. Will you please elaborate.

L My input, the students and the teachers found it too much and so they weren't able to digest it or internalise it and then try to implement it. So I've tried to simplify it without losing the main issues, but it's.... We'll see...

R So, do I understand you correctly when I say that you use the students feedback as well as the adult teachers feedback as a guide when you plan your course.

L Oh yes. That is why I've made changes. I've tried to making it simpler so that the teachers will benefit from the course.

R What type of methodologies are you planning to use with the adult learners this afternoon?

L Essentially experiential. I'm going to, they are going to work through activities and the we'll talk about what happened, then talk about how they think they might be able to implement those in their own classrooms.

R Why are you going to use mainly experiential methods with the adult learners?

L Because, I believe that it only through doing and getting involved that they will understand what it's all about. The teachers will work through the kinds of activities that they will be giving their own learners, but hopefully in challenging and stimulating ways for them, because they must see what actually happens when you're in the situation, it will make it easier for them to design the activities that their learners need.

R Why were you asked to do this course?

L Apparently, the message from NUE is that teachers have asked for this, they don't really understand what it meant and they realised that they did need it to implement Curriculum 2005, that it will be important, whatever the curriculum is.

R What would you like the teachers to go away with at the end of this course? I know it's a two-part course and you're going to have a follow-up next week.

L Yes, that was because of the bulk of the content, for that very reason. I don't want to overload them. I'd like them to understand the basic principles, and to feel confident to try this for themselves. I know with co-operative learning once the teachers have tried it, and see how it works, they become very enthusiastic. It's quite frightening, because, it means that teachers have to let go entirely, in one sense, in another sense they are in total control, but in terms of the learning, they have to let go. Well, all of us, all teachers are control freaks (laughter).

R When the teachers are in the situation where they are experiencing what they are going to involve the learners in, how do you find their responses?

L They respond well generally, they want to try something new. I suspect, that some of the teachers coming here this afternoon, there are going to be a number who are going to resist, who are coming because they feel they have to, I think, I may be wrong.

R If you find that resistance, how do you address it?

L I hope that the way I've broken it down, that as I add it will make them feel more comfortable. Generally the problem is that the teachers feel insecure, not, well of course the bombarding they've had with this Curriculum 2005, it's brought so much negativity.

R So you have planned, in a way to make them feel more comfortable during the course?

L Well, I hope so. You can never tell whether that is the case, but from their response, you can get a feeling of how the course is going.

R Well, thank you so much for your time and I'm looking forward to attending your course. It certainly sounds interesting.

L Thank you. I do hope it goes well.

APPENDIX E

EXTRACT OF THE OBSERVATION NOTES FROM THE NUE COURSE – 27/5/2000
SATURDAY 08:30-12:30

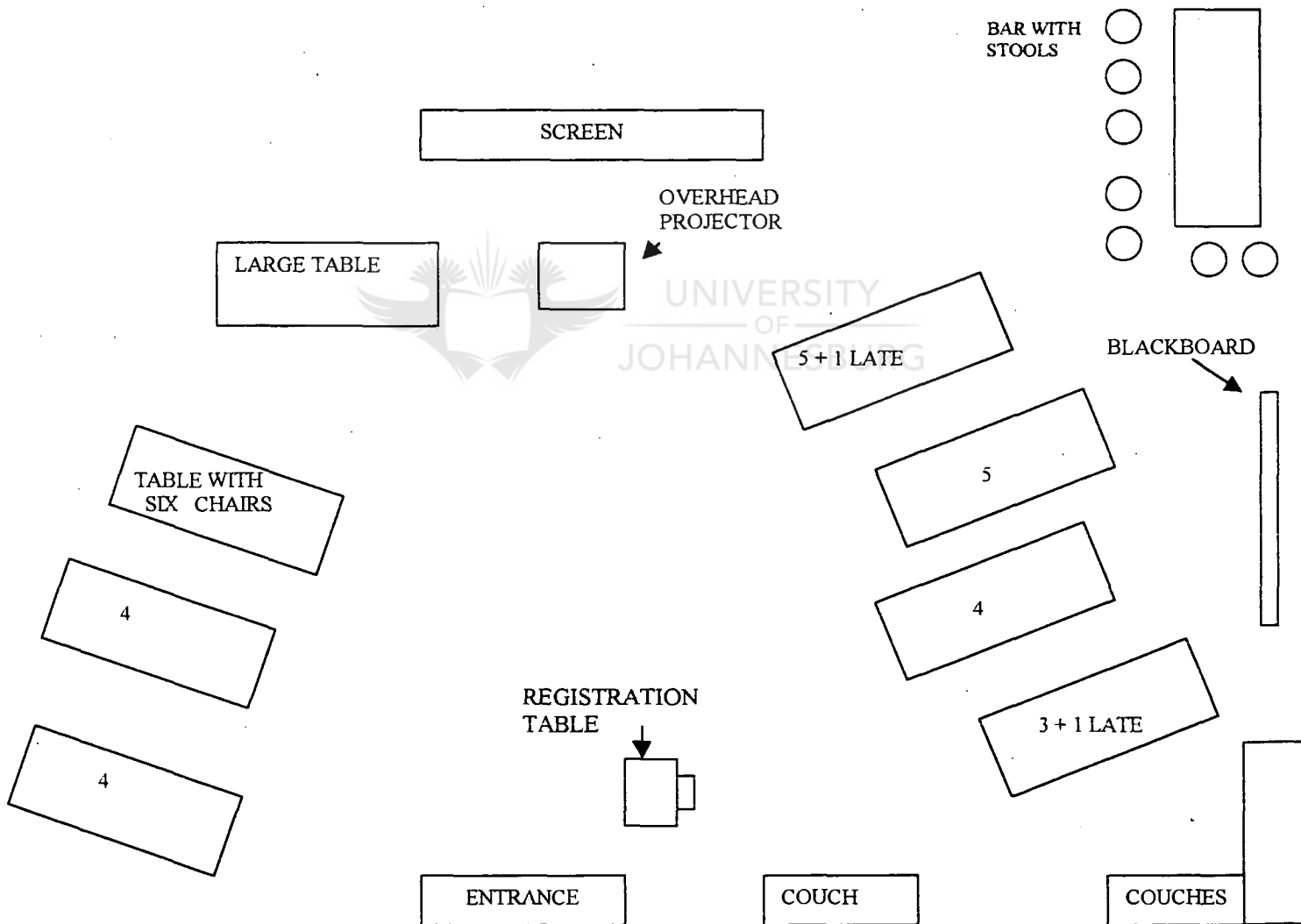
TOPIC: ECONOMIC LITERACY FOR EMS TEACHERS

O.C. Observer's Comments

VENUE: Reith Dining Hall at J.C.E. Teachers' Training Centre

SETTING: Large dining hall at women's residence of the Teachers' Training College.

There was an overhead projector, a screen, 7 tables – six chairs to each table, a blackboard, adequate lighting, room was not very warm.



Course was open to 40 participants but only 29 arrived. 27 female teachers and 2 males.

Course began at 08:40.

08:40 Presenter introduced herself and gave some background to the learning area Economic and Management Sciences. Presenter then asked participants if they had any background in Accounting or Business Economics. Participants indicated information by a show of hands. 8 participants had no knowledge of either of the above.

Presenter began presenting the course using the lecture method. Participants sat and proceeded to take notes. Presenter turned on the overhead projector and put up a transparency showing the 8 learning areas. Most participants wrote everything down, even though presenter told them that they had this document from the GICD.

Some teachers looked around while presenter spoke. Some teachers had the document with the information presenter was dealing with and just followed. Presenter put up another overhead transparency with the 8 specific outcomes for EMS. She read and explained what each S.O. meant. She told teachers that the 4 main areas she was going to address was: Business Economics, Accounting, Economics and Entrepreneurship (*O.C. presenter decided on the content to be presented at this course – evident that a needs analysis hasn't been done*).

Presenter then defined each area and explained what it involved. Presenter gave examples mentioning Anglo-American, Sappi, from there to the hawker – spoke about a multinational enterprise. Presenter went through this very quickly and spoke very quickly too. Presenter stood behind a large table with her arms folded. Not much movement as she spoke. Presenter then told participants what she planned to do. “We are going to look at each of the functions and how it impacts on the micro and macro”. “You’re going to have to do a bit of swotting up on the various functions – as you have only a vague idea of these of these functions (*O.C. – I don't know where she got this information from because no such question was put to the group*).

“We will start with administration”. Presenter went on to explain what administration covered. Participants were all busy writing what she was saying. 2 teachers sat and listened and did no writing. Some teachers couldn't keep up with the presenter so they looked at the notes of the person sitting next to them.

One teacher interrupted and asked the presenter if anything could be done about the fan from the overhead projector as there was a cold wind blowing and it was bothering her.

Presenter picked up the paper bin and placed it in front of the fan.

Presenter had a book and notes on the table and at times read directly from her notes, most of the time she maintained eye contact with the participants. However, participants were all busy writing what she was saying.

08:50 4 people were now only listening and no longer writing.

Presenter spoke about, “smart cards, leasing, clearing bank systems, merchant banks, commercial banks, security required from banks” (*O.C. I wonder if all the participants were able to understand the terminology and follow what presenter was saying*).

Presenter continued explaining, using lecture method, terms such as consumer, retailer, personal selling, sales promotion. She then put up another overhead transparency with a list of 8 items; e.g. administration, financial, marketing, production (*writing was poor on the transparency and not very legible O.C.*).

Presenter went through each item quickly and lectured on each one. Teachers continued to copy down what was on the transparency. One teacher was obviously cold, stopped writing and wrapped her hands in her jersey.

Presenter continued speaking quickly on the labour relations act, trade unionism and gave examples. She read part of the Act, paused and went on to explain. Presenter kept her arms folded. Very little movement. A cell phone rang, the participant switched it off.

(*O.C. presenter's voice quite monotonous at this stage*).

09:05 8 Participants were now listening. The rest were still writing as presenter spoke. One participant was rather restless, she kept moving in her chair and looking around. She yawned a few times. Presenter went on “the next function we look at, is the national enterprise”. Most participants wrote this down.

One participant was looking outside into the garden (*seemed to be disinterested in what was going on O.C.*)

09:10 Changed the overhead transparency. Notes on transparency were hand-written and writing was quite small. The headings were written in a different colour.

9:13 A participant arrived and registered her name and details at the door, where a representative from the union was seated. New participant joined the group.

One participant asked a question about the difference between a general manager and a company director. Presenter explained shareholders and shares (*I wonder if the participants understood about shareholders, if they didn't understand the first difference – the explanation was not very clear O.C.*)

9:17 The participant that was restless, kept moving, at one stage sat and closed her eyes. (*She looked very sleepy O.C.*)

Another cell phone rang. The participant whose cell phone had rung explained to the lady next to her that the reason her phone was on was because her young son was on his own.

Another participant started yawning.

9:20 (*O.C. One participant looked totally bored and disinterested. She kept fidgeting, closing her eyes and trying very hard to keep awake. By this stage quite a few of the participants seemed restless, some were rolling their heads, others were moving their feet. The first “sleepy” participant put her head down on the table. Many participants looked tired or disinterested.*)

Presenter moved from one concept to the other and lectured. Most of the time she kept her arms folded and proceeded to give participants loads of information.

(The “sleepy” lady was definitely asleep now. O.C.).

Presenter spoke about declining CBD due to urbanisation *(O.C. I wonder if all participants understood, especially use of abbreviations?)*.

One participant asked a question – presenter answered quickly – “yes, certainly they will do” – and continued lecturing – spoke about trade agreements *(Presenter used lots of jargon – again I wonder if all participants understood the terminology)*.

09:25 Another presenter arrived. Joined the group nearest the front. Presenter acknowledged his arrival by saying “have we got a chair for you”. Continued lecturing.

Presenter continued speaking about C/C, O.C, SABS, CSIR, Reserve Bank. Continued speaking about various ACTS and how these impact on business. *(O.C. I really think that from the look and expression as well as body language of many of the participants, a lot of them are not following and not understanding what presenter is talking about)*.

The “late comer” took out a note pad and proceeded to write while presenter spoke.

Presenter asked a question and immediately answered it herself, she allowed no time for any of the participants to attempt to answer.

(O.C. Truly a lecture method, participants were passive, inactive, appeared to be listening and taking down notes).

Presenter continued speaking, took off an overhead transparency and put up another one. She then mentioned the titles of two books that would be of benefit to have. The “late comer” stopped writing when the new overhead transparency went up.

One participant, who had not been writing asked a question. She seemed quite annoyed and said “what you’ve given us is the Matric syllabus, what do you want us to do?” Presenter started explaining. *(I don’t think she answered the question O.C.)*.

The rest of the participants stopped writing and started whispering and muttering amongst themselves.

Another participant, interrupted the presenter and voiced her opinion. She asked the group to indicate by a show of hands how many present taught Grade 7. ± 10 teachers put up their hands. She then told the presenter that they were in the dark as this course and the content was for High Schools teachers (*I think some teachers present were obviously thinking they were attending the wrong course O.C.*). Presenter answered the question by saying that the course was being presented to give teachers background knowledge. She then used a personal example of what worked for her in her school.

The participant that had asked the question didn't look happy, but everyone sat and listened. By this stage most participants had stopped writing and were, seemingly listening.

09:40 (An hour later). The participant that had asked the question, asked another question. At this point another participant, who had taken no notes butted in and took it upon herself to answer the participant – while she was still talking the presenter, took over again. There was a certain amount of noise – as the participants were talking amongst themselves (*some seemed dissatisfied at the content of the course. It seemed to me that this was not why they had attended the course O.C.*)

Presenter continued by saying “let's carry on, and she put up another overhead transparency. (*Again not a very legible one – in cursive handwriting O.C.*)

Presenter showed some books available, held them up for a little while only. Picked up a copy of the Financial Times, read the contents, most participants made notes of the title with the exception of the participant who sounded annoyed previously – she just sat and listened. Another participant asked a question.

At this point another participant asked a question. Presenter answered by re-assuring her that she would be fine “if you just follow this” and pointed at the overhead transparency

(O.C. quite frankly, I don't think this was an appropriate answer – it seemed more of an evasion).

While she was re-assuring the participant, there was much talking and muttering amongst the rest. The lady that was “annoyed” then addressed the “questioning” participant and told her that she could get good notes from Unisa that would answer her question and would thus help her.

The presenter stood and listened.

09:50 Presenter informed the group that there would be a 5 minute break then they would move onto a “hands on” approach.

At this, one participant asked whether presenter could address the last part of the lecture first and do the “hands on” at the end “so that those of us that don't teach grade 8 can go home early, or is it too much to ask?” Presenter explained that everyone needed to stay, as information was relevant for the entire group.

Presenter told participants to exchange telephone numbers so they could contact each other.

About half the participants got up and left to get some tea. The rest stayed in their groups. Most conversation revolved around the feeling of incompetence in this new learning area. Some voiced their dissatisfaction with the course – amongst themselves.

The rest of the participants were having tea. Many moved to stand in the sun, as the temperature in the “lecture room” seemed to have got colder. Presenter spoke to 2 participants whom she knew. Rest of participants made “small talk” amongst themselves.

10:00 After tea, presenter moved to a blackboard at the side of the room and proceeded to start writing – participants walked in.

Presenter then handed out 2 hand-written worksheets to each participant and proceeded with the lecture. She then read from notes *(O.C. it was apparent that the presenter knew her subject well but her method of delivery was such that she assumed everyone present could follow and understand)*. Presenter mentioned certain levels. One participant asked what the levels meant. Presenter said, “just phone the GICD – they will give you the documents.

At this, some participants explained what needed to be done in order to obtain these documents. 3 participants said they were in the dark, they didn't know what the rest were talking about. One participant volunteered to give her telephone number and advise them of where they could get help. While this was going on, presenter just stood and listened.

Presenter continued with lecture. She then said, "now take this down" and proceeded to dictate – most participants wrote with the exception of 5. Participants listened while she explained about ledgers and journals – then said, "when people speak about these just know that they're books – where you keep accounting transactions". (*O.C. it seemed that presenter was just assuming that everyone knew what she was talking about, e.g. omus equity*).

Presenter then gave a problem to all the participants. Asked all to look at worksheet No. 1. She then explained what was on the worksheet. Everyone followed. Asked a closed question, answered it herself. Some participants nodded – others just looked.

She then said, "on worksheet No. 1 write this next to No. 1. Asked a question. One participant answered. She then said, good, write this under assets – everyone wrote. Another question – no answer – so presenter said, "when we buy it has an..." she waited for an answer. Someone gave the answer, she acknowledged and said, "now write it under the expense column".

Presenter proceeded in the same manner asking a question, waiting for and answer, now write it down – and everyone did as they were told.

Presenter read from the worksheet and then said, "Just write the word sales (*she went very quickly – no time for questions O.C.*)

Some participants did not write. Sat and listened. Another two were talking amongst themselves. (*O.C. an enormous amount of factual information was being given to participants*).

Presenter then said, “Now turn to the blackboard, “ and proceeded with the “chalk and talk” method. Participants turned their chairs in order to see the blackboard. Asked a question, someone answered, said “good” – write it on the board and said, “now this is what you fill in on worksheet No. 2”. *(O.C. I got the feeling of being in a school classroom with the teacher telling the pupils what to do and passive pupils merely following, it reminded me of what Freire calls, “filling of empty vessels”)*.

Presenter – “Now I’m not going to write it down, you are – go ahead write it down.” Right. Lets look at the next one, just write rent expense. Right. Let’s continue. Some participants stopped writing at this point. *(O.C. I don’t know whether they couldn’t follow or whether they knew how to balance a general ledger)*. One participant asked a question, presenter answered very quickly – “right let’s move on”. (No time for discussion allowed). Continued – “I don’t want to go into too much details – just know that” Asked closed questions like “You kept a record, didn’t you?” Some participants nodded – she continued.

(O.C. “hands on” approach seems to be the fact that a question is asked, someone answers, presenter says “good” – “write it down” and continues).

One participant was not able to follow, the lady next to her was explaining. A formula was given – some wrote it down. Five participants sat with arms folded or hands in pockets. Two participants were laughing amongst each other. Lady continued explaining to the participant who wasn’t following.

(O.C. it seems that for Accounting teaching this was basic information – which obviously resulted in talking and boredom. For teachers who had no accounting background – the pace was too fast, very little explanation and no time for questions or practice).

(O.C. the participants from North West Province – wanted to go home – they said they had left at 5:00 in the morning – had other things to attend to – multiple roles of adults. Presenter seemed unaffected by their request – she had work to cover and needed to get through it).

Overhead transparency. Participants wrote information down. “Okay, everyone finished, now we move to our balance sheet account”.

(Pace of speech was very quick as well as of lecture O.C.)

Handed out a worksheet. Asked one-word answers. Asked a question – no one answered. Presenter answered it herself and continued. Asked another question and proceeded the same way.

The lady that was explaining to the participant not following looked very bored. She was a Matric Accounting and Business Economics teacher. She sat and looked. Did not write any notes *(O.C this was obviously very basic information for her – body language was expressive of how she was feeling. Leaning on table with one hand, looking around – occasionally explaining to lady who was not following).*

Presenter asked, “does that make sense?” Didn’t wait for an answer – continued with the lecture.

Another participant was explaining to another lady that was not able to follow. Presenter saw this, was aware of it, but continued with lecture.

A question was asked. Presenter answered with a question. This resulted in much talking amongst participants. *(O.C. presenter didn’t answer the question, as a result the “Matric” teacher stood up, body language – was forceful)*

Butted in while presenter was talking and said, “let me explain”. She then proceeded to explain talking across the room – presenter kept quiet and listened. Every now and then nodded in acknowledgement. The Matric teacher ignored the presenter, walked toward the overhead transparency and explained to the teacher who had asked the question. She told the participant who had asked the question that the reasoning was excellent. (Everyone looked “revived” and awake while she explained.

This teacher was quite a dynamic speaker – powerful voice – good body language – she moved around – came to the middle of the room and spoke – she got everyone’s attention. It was like a breath of fresh air!).

She went back to her seat, presenter continued with the “chalk and talk” method.

10:55 Tea break announced. Talking amongst participants. *(O.C. it is quite obvious that participants are tired – body language, moving in chairs, talking to each other/ Looking in direction of where the tea is to be served.)*

Presenter continued after tea break was announced. The matric teacher butted in again and both the presenter and her were talking at the same time. Teacher that had asked the question spoke to matric teacher and ignored what presenter was saying. Someone else asked a question. The presenter said, “let’s not get to that yet”. Talking amongst participants again. Presenter continued talking but no one was writing at this stage. Two teachers close to me, were discussing the finances involved in a choir tour going to Australia.

(O.C. these two teachers were totally disinterested in lecture and were pursuing their own interests!).

11:00 *(O.C. I got the feeling that by this stage participants had had enough – the sleepy lady was falling asleep again, others were looking up at the ceiling. People were expecting tea- presenter carried on. “I’ve given you examples, work through these yourself. Okay when we get back, we are going to address entrepreneurship).*

11:15 Tea. During tea, 3 participants stayed in their group. Matric teacher joined them and was explaining. Another participant joined in. During tea most conversation was about the lecture. Most were saying it was only background knowledge.

11:25 Course resumed. Three people left. The participant who had asked the questions plus another two. Began lecture on entrepreneurship. Some were writing. Most were just sitting.

(O.C. room was cold. People weren't comfortable, complaining of cold feet, sitting for too long).

Presenter was now reading from notes – standing behind table with her hands folded.

(O.C. Some teachers looked totally disinterested, one was looking through her diary, one was sitting back, legs folded looking at the ceiling. All participants were sitting passively. Continued to lecture – spoke very quickly – seemed to be rushing through what she had prepared for the course. Some participants looked at their watches).

Presenter continued reading and lecturing, gave large amounts of information, names of magazines, journals – most listened, some participants took note, especially when she dealt with the Business Plan. *(One teacher fiddled with her nails O.C.)*

When presenter spoke about more practical aspects e.g. examples of how people became entrepreneur's participants were more alert and showed some interest.

Continued with overhead transparency and explaining economics. One participant complained she couldn't see *(O.C. overhead transparency was of a poor quality)*

Presenter handed out notes. Explained notes and said "think about this in your own minds". *(No time for discussion O.C.)* Continued with lecture.

12:05 One participant left. Presenter continued explaining terms on worksheet *(O.C. totally unnecessary as explanation was provided. Presenter moved from behind the table, was using her hands, somehow seemed more enthusiastic about this part of the lecture).*

12:10 Another participant left.

Presenter asked – "Any questions" A brief pause. Continued. People started packing up while presenter was talking. She again asked "Any questions". No response from participants. *(O.C. It had been a long lecture and I got the feeling everyone wanted to go home).*

Presenter thanks everyone for attending. Asked participants to complete questionnaire. People completed questionnaire and left. 4 participants thanked presenter for a good course.

(O.C. As we were leaving, the presenter told me that she was surprised that people thanked her for the course, because she didn't quite feel that they were enjoying it. She told me she had shortened the course because she said that if the participants had not followed the Accounting section of the course, how would they follow the bar graphs and line graphs that she had prepared. Therefore, she just left them out. She told me that she had presented the same content at another course and had a far more positive response.)

COMMENT

I was able to make notes as things were happening because I was a participant observer in a College residential lounge where presenter presented a course to adult teachers. Teachers were taking notes. I was able to note the time when things actually happened (Maykut & Morehouse 1997 : 77) and thus it was possible to keep a detailed on-going record. I was able to record on the spot sights and sounds.



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