QUALITY ASSURANCE IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN BUSINESS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ADULT LITERACY: AN EMPIRICAL SURVEY

By

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DECLARATION

I declare that the research titled "Quality Assurance in Education and Training Programmes in Business with special reference to adult literacy in south Africa" is my own work. I further declare that all the sources that have been used and quoted in this research, have been acknowledged.

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SIGNATURE   DATE

DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to my late beloved parents, Ngwangele Frans Fernando and Mhlabase Emmah Winnas Zitha (Malwane). They were both illiterates who amazingly supported me morally and even materially throughout my educational endeavours.

Their dream of seeing me, their only son and child, being a learned person was eventually realised through my hard work, their support and God's blessing.

The research is also dedicated to my beautiful children and my grandson for whom I wish and pray that they may become learned in the fields of their choice.

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ABSTRACT

Title of treatise: Quality assurance in education and training programmes in business with special reference to adult literacy: An Empirical Survey.

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The research question addressed in this research concerned the extent to which internally developed quality assurance processes are effective in the promotion and enhancement of quality in education and training programmes in business with special reference to adult literacy.

The aim of the research was to explore the presence of and the need for a possible implementation of effective quality assurance processes in education and training in business. It also aimed at seeking for answers to the following questions:

- Do education and training programmes in business have effective quality assurance processes in place for the promotion and enhancement of quality?

- Do education and training programmes in business embrace best practice principles for continuous quality improvement?

A literature review, interviews and questionnaires were the instruments employed for the collection of data. Through these research instruments, better insight into the concepts of 'quality' and 'quality assurance' was obtained.

From the literature review, it emerged that the implementation of best practice principles borrowed from industry in education and training programmes can play a crucial role in continuous improvement. In contrast, it emerged from the empirical investigation results that no effective quality assurance processes are applied in education and training in business in South Africa. Business appeared not to be taking a holistic approach to quality assurance and management was found to be ignoring important aspects, such as human resources development, partnership and/or similar issues that need attention if quality is to be holistically promoted and enhanced.

In conclusion, a few recommendations that could contribute to quality promotion and enhancement in education and training were made. These were the implementation of a market-related remuneration strategy or competency-based pay, a retention strategy, a quality assurance training programme, Total Quality Management, a Balanced Scorecard, recognition and incentive scheme, a performance appraisal system and the involvement of line managers and union representatives in the management of education and training programmes in business.

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KEY WORDS

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1. Quality

2. Quality assurance

3. Quality management

4. Quality control

5. Quality assessment

6. Quality audit

7. Quality promotion

8. Quality enhancement

9. Evaluation

10. Continuous improvement

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
ALI	Adult Learning Inspectorate
ANC	African National Congress
BSC	Balanced Scorecard
CCEA	Council, Curriculum, Examination and Assessment
DEETYA	Department of Employment, Education and Training and Youth Affairs
ETQAs	Education and Training Quality Assurers
ETDQAD	Education, Training and Development Quality Assurance Division
GATE	Global Alliance for Transitional Education
INQAAHE	International Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
ISO	International Organisations Standardisation
NDCN	National Open College
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NTB	National Training Board
OCR	Oxford and Cambridge and Royal Society of Arts
PDCA	Plan, Do, Check and Action
QCA	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authorities
SQA	Scottish Qualifications Authority
SSC	Sector Skills Councils
SSDA	Sector Skills Development Agency
TQM	Total Quality Management

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CHAPTER I: THEME ANALYSIS AND FORMULATION OF THE PROBLEM

1.1   GENERAL ORIENTATION TO THE RESEARCH

Although quality assurance has recently become one of the most debated issues in the education and training arena, both nationally and internationally, literature on research that has been conducted in quality assurance in education and training programmes in business with special reference to adult literacy in South Africa is very scarce, except in higher education. This is one of the factors that motivated the researcher to examine this area so as to make a valuable contribution to the existing body of knowledge in the field of education and training.

Quality assurance in education and training programmes, including adult literacy, currently occurs within the framework of the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) and the NQF in South Africa. Providers, though, do develop robust internal quality assurance processes that suit their situations. This leads to a change in the role of national bodies such as Education and Training Quality Authorities (ETQAs) and Sectoral Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) that seek to ensure that the standards set are satisfied and that excellence in education and training is achieved. Their role changes from one of direct implementation of quality assurance procedures to the external validation of institutional quality assurance processes.

In the area of quality assurance in education and training programmes, Education, Training and Development Quality Assurance Divisions SETAs (ETDQAD SETAs) have been put in place in terms of the Skills Development Act (No. 97 of 1998). They are mainly responsible for:

- "Ensuring that an effective quality assurance system and infrastructure are in place to provide support to organisations in implementing education and training; and

- Establishing and maintaining high levels of education and training, quality learning and assessment, within the new skills development environment (The Star Newspaper: 2003:20)."

However, there is no scientific evidence as yet that serves as concrete evidence to demonstrate that ETDQADs have been effective in the promotion and enhancement of quality in training programmes in business (Allias, 2003:333). On the other hand, SETAs and the other bodies associated with them that are charged with the task of assuring quality and establishing and maintaining high levels of education and training, could not deliver on their mandates as expected, partly because the expectation was tempered with by a lower levy in 2000/01 (*The Star* 2003:20). As delivery agents, it is unthinkable that the SETAs and bodies associated with them could have delivered on their mandates in the absence of adequate financial resources. The SETAs survive on the skills development levies obtained from different companies. One of the mandates in terms of which the SETAs are expected to deliver results, is the implementation of their sector skills plans by monitoring education and training in the sectors (Erasmus & Van Dyk:2003:38). It is for this reason that SETAs are designated as industry-based Education and Training Quality Assurers (Allias, 2003:331).

The Skills Development Amendment Bill that was passed in August 2003, giving the Minister of Labour power to act against poorly performing SETAs could be an indication that not everything is going right with the SETAs regarding their additional responsibility for assuring quality and establishing and maintaining high levels of education and training. Recent utterances of the Minister of Labour, Membathisi Mdladlana with regard to the amendments could also be a subtle indication confirming the researcher's reading of the situation.

He said, "The performance of the SETAs is not the same and some of them need a push. The amendments are also meant at ensuring the SETAs operate within a system of checks and balances. The central reason for the amendments are to give me the right to fix the problems that have arisen, so that the skills revolution can accelerate at pace without being drawn back by the negative publicity that the bad apples inevitably attract. So you will see in these amendments a new obligation on all SETAs to enter Service Level Agreements with the Department of Labour that clearly set out performance outcomes, and the Minister should take very clear steps if any SETA fails to meet its obligations in terms of these Agreements. For example, I shall have the power to instruct SETAs to

remedy a problem, and if they fail to do so, then this will itself constitute grounds for the take over of their administration" (*The Star*, 2003:19).

It is also documented that since they were established in March 2000 to provide skills training to workers, the unemployed and those in small business, the SETAs have not made a meaningful impact (Mail & Guardian, 2005:8). *The Mail & Guardian* (2005:8) and *Mpumalanga News* (2005:4) further reported that SETAs have been accused of

- poor performance;
- delaying the launching of the NQF, which aims to integrate education and training; and
- failure to spend more than R2 billion meant for skills development.

The purpose of this chapter is therefore to outline the research problem as well as the circumstances that triggered this research. The aims and objectives that informed and guided this research are captured in this chapter, and at the same time, the research methodology, the definition and clarification of terms as they are used in this research and the plan of the whole research project are discussed.

1.2   MOTIVATION FOR THE RESEARCH

Training programmes are normally put in place without anything organised to evaluate them in order to strengthen successes and eliminate failures. Laird (1985:265) adds that billions are spent to explore innovations and only a few dollars to see if they are worth anything. Although the claims are from old sources, they are still a reality. They imply that the focus is mainly on the implementation of training programmes and inadequate attention is paid to quality assurance practices, procedures and policies that assure that programmes are of high quality.

According to Fisher et al., (1993:403), evaluation of training is often done poorly or completely ignored. Evaluation, in this context, refers to the diligent investigation of programme characteristics and merits. Its purpose is to provide information on the effectiveness of projects so as to optimise their outcomes, efficiency and quality (Fink:1995:2). It is evident that evaluation is one of the tools used in the quality assurance

process for the promotion and enhancement of quality in education and training programmes. Evaluation is also closely related to quality assessment, which Morley (2003:17) defines as that process that involves auditing mechanisms and systems for quality management in every stage of the production process. The aim is to interrogate the regulatory mechanisms through which quality is assured and enhanced. Fisher (1993:403) claims that one reason for this state of affairs is that managers normally think that training will work. This statement is confirmed by Beardwell and Holden (1994:351), who remark that quality assurance in the training strategy is of utmost importance, but is the step that is often most neglected or least adequately carried out. This state of affairs triggers the question of whether there are effective assurance processes in place in education and training programmes in business to assure continuous improvement.

In the absence of effective quality assurance processes, education and training programmes are unlikely to be effective and be of good quality. For this reason, Rothwell and Kazanas (1994:465) stress that evaluation is a necessity in training programmes in the sense that

- "It sheds light on problems of all kinds, both those stemming from lack of individual knowledge or skill and from other causes;

- It makes people accountable for human resources development activities;

- It points out results of human resources development activities, demonstrating how well they are working; and

- It stimulates improvement generally, providing feedback which triggers additional plans and actions."

1.3   BRIEF MOTIVATION FOR DOING THE RESEARCH IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION MANAGEMENT

The adoption of the NQF, which is the framework for transforming education and training, brought with it the integration of education and training (Erasmus, 2003:21). This integration therefore demonstrates that education and training are inter-dependent and

closely related, hence, there is a thin line between the two concepts. It is therefore within the context of education and training that this research is conducted to establish the extent to which quality assurance processes are effective in promoting and enhancing quality in education and training programmes in business with special reference to adult literacy. According to Biech (1994:36) quality assurance processes are a series of steps that provide opportunities for continuous improvement and produce a result when combined. On the other hand, it is worth mentioning that the initiation and facilitation of the quality process is a management process (Flanagan, 2000:310).

1.4   CIRCUMSTANCES THAT TRIGGERED THIS RESEARCH

Having been involved in adult literacy in business as both a facilitator, adult basic education and training (ABET) co-ordinator and training and development manager, the researcher has noticed that the quality of the ABET programme is normally judged on the grounds such as how many learners have been taken through the programme at how low a unit cost. Normally, the focus is mainly on meeting targets and deadlines for political correctness. In his view, the researcher believes that preoccupation with the gathering of statistics or the provision of numbers is meant to feed only short-term bureaucratic demands. This sad state of affairs led to an escalation in the number of adult literacy certificates.

The worst part of it is that the learners found themselves being certificated and not learned, for they could not effectively demonstrate their newly acquired competencies in the practical field. Adult literacy programmes became a window-dressing exercise meant to mislead the present government, which strongly advocates the promotion of adult literacy. The government stance in this regard is confirmed by the constitution of the land that states that "everyone has the right to a basic education, including adult basic education and that everyone has the right to establish and maintain, at their own expense, independent educational institutions that maintain standards that are not inferior to standards at comparable public educational institutions" (The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996:14). In terms of adult literacy, this implies that all adults who did not have access to, or complete, formal education equivalent to the current free compulsory ten years of schooling, can exercise or demand this right (Meyer, 2002:246).

The gathered statistics are often measures that do not encourage any focus on long-term quality enhancement that compliments the objectives of the organisation. Barnett (1994; in Tam and Maureen: 1999:5) states that it is an illusion to believe that any attempt to measure the quality of an educational process by means of numerical performance indicators will be successful. Qualities and quantities are different kinds of entities and running them together is a grave mistake.

The above-mentioned approach, which encourages a situation in which information is forced into the learners without them being afforded an opportunity to participate actively has been despised by intellectuals throughout the years, for example Paulo Freire and others. This approach has been problematic throughout the years in the education and training arena. Critics argue that this approach, which encourages teachers to impose information on learners, suppresses their independent thinking and creativity to the extent that they memorise information without understanding and questioning. Through this approach, learners are subjected to a culture of silence. Theirs is just to learn in a parrot-like fashion. It becomes evident that this approach compromises the quality of both teaching and learning and undermines the dictates of the constitution of the land that educational institutions should maintain standards that are not inferior to standards at comparable public educational institutions (The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996:14).

In his capacity as a facilitator, ABET co-ordinator and training and development manager in industry, the researcher used to be vocal about the provision of quality adult literacy. Surprisingly enough, he could neither define nor describe quality in adult literacy. To define 'quality' or tell what it really is in the context of education and training is a challenge. As discussed in Chapter II of this research, 'quality' is an elusive concept that is extremely difficult to define and describe. In view of the elusiveness of the concept of quality, Vroeijenstijin (1992, in Tam & Maureen, 1996:6) concludes that one cannot speak of 'the quality', but one can speak of 'qualities'. It could therefore be assumed that the reason for this conclusion is the fact that education and training programmes are composed of a variety of stakeholders, each viewing quality from a particular perspective. It is important to differentiate between the quality requirements made by the learners, trainers or teachers.

Gaither (1998:5) stresses in support of this argument that the phenomenon of quality assurance is internal to the programme or institution, whereas accreditation, quality audit and assessment are generally carried out by external bodies. As a result, quality assurance should be initiated internally, maintained and enhanced through professional commitment and not through quality assurance legislation. Quality monitoring procedures that are imposed externally are more likely to be seen as regulations to be reluctantly complied with and evaded where possible. Quality is better assured if those who deliver education and training have a sense of ownership of the quality assurance procedures (Williams, 1990, in Tam & Maureen, 1999:6).

This research has also been stimulated by Professor Jansen's scepticism about government initiatives, which the researcher shares. Jansen (2000:86) is concerned about the existing distance between externally mandated policies and practices in South African education and training. He is understood to be referring to a situation where policies are continuously formulated without any implementation in the practical field. He further states that policies are just discourses (i.e. just words) that have nothing to do with everyday practices (i.e. realities) and they hardly reach the education and training environments precisely as they were proposed (Buenfil, 2001:1 quoted by Jansen, 2000:97).

This argument then triggers the following question: Do the providers of education and training, including the stakeholders in the adult literacy business know, understand and provide training and education exactly as dictated by the externally developed quality assurance-related initiatives such as SAQA, NQF and ETQAs that are meant to promote and enhance the quality of education and training? This research will seek to establish the reality regarding this question as well.

1.5   STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The background to this research reveals that quality assurance in training and education programmes in business is either ignored or not done at all. Managers normally assume that education and training will definitely work. In view of the scenario presented above, the thrust of this study will fall on the following question:

To what extent are internally developed quality assurance processes effective in the promotion and enhancement of quality in education and training programmes in business, with special reference to adult literacy in South Africa?

1.6 HYPOTHESIS

With regards to the research question presented above, it is postulated that the development of effective quality assurance processes and their effective implementation in education and training and programmes in business in South Africa can assist in achieving continuous improvement.

1.7 AIM OF THE RESEARCH

The general aim of the research was to explore the presence of and the possible need for the implementation of effective quality assurance processes in education and training in business with special reference to adult literacy. It also aimed at seeking for answers to the following research questions:

- Do education and training programmes in business have effective quality assurance processes in place for the promotion and enhancement of quality?
- Do education and training programmes in business embrace best practice principles for continuous quality improvement?

1.8 OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

This research sought to achieve the following objectives:

- To draw on international best practice principles in the area of quality assurance through the process of benchmarking.

- To assess whether there are effective quality assurance processes in education and training programmes in business in South Africa.

- To ascertain whether the stakeholders in the education and training business are familiar with quality assurance best practice principles and processes.

- To explore the involvement of stakeholders in quality assurance processes in education and training programmes in business.

- To conduct a needs assessment for quality assurance processes in education and training in business.

- To make guidelines for the implementation of effective quality assurance processes in education and training programmes in business.

1.9   RESEARCH APPROACH

This research was both quantitative and qualitative. An attempt was made by Leedy (1993) as quoted by De Vos (1998:15) to differentiate the two approaches by stating that:

- Qualitative research methods deal with data that are mainly verbal.

- Quantitative research methodologies deal with data that are mainly numerical.

For Mouton and Marais (1990:155-156), the quantitative approach entails an approach to research in the social sciences that is more formalised and explicitly controlled, with a range that is more exactly defined and which, in terms of the methods used, is relatively close to the physical sciences. Qualitative approaches, on the other hand, are viewed by these latter authors as those approaches in which the procedures are not strictly formalised.

The heterogeneous nature of the population studied necessitates the employment of a quantitative-qualitative approach for this research. For the collection of data, the research limited itself to a literature review, questionnaire and interview that were meant for the stakeholders in education and training programmes.

1.9.1   Review of related literature

Literature on the subject of quality assurance in training programmes in business with special reference to adult literacy and related fields was reviewed. This included books, abstracts, journals and newspapers. To stress the importance of the review of related literature, Borg and Gall (1989) assert that "the literature in any field forms the foundation upon which all future work must be built." In support of this statement, Tuckman (1978:313) contends that "the purpose of the literature review is to expand on the content and background of the study, to help further define the problem and provide an empirical basis for the subsequent development of hypotheses".

The above statements simply mean that the literature review is of great help with regard to the limitation and clear definition of the problem. The researcher is also exposed to the works of other authors on the subject, reviews them and at the same time learns from them.

A review of literature is an integral part of the research process that aims to contribute to a clearer understanding of the nature and meaning of the problem that has been identified. It provides substantially better insight into the dimensions and complexity of the problem (Mouton, 2001:87).

1.9.2   The questionnaire method

A closed-ended type of questionnaire was also used for the collection of data in this research. The purpose was to determine the feelings, beliefs and experiences of the respondents. A questionnaire is advantageous in the sense that it can be sent almost anywhere, a situation that is not practically possible with interviews. Each respondent receives the same set of questions phrased in precisely the same way. Good (1972:227) adds that, "as to uses and applications, the questionnaires extend the investigator's powers and techniques of observation".

The questionnaire was pilot-tested before being used in the main investigation. The reason for this was to ensure that errors of any nature were identified and corrected as soon as possible. De Vos (2002:177) stresses that no matter how effective the sampling or

analysis of the results is, ambiguous questions lead to non-comparable responses, leading questions lead to biased responses and vague questions lead to vague answers. Having effected the necessary corrections and made the modifications following the pilot test, the questionnaire can be used in the full sample. It is important to leave spaces on the questionnaire to accommodate the respondents' remarks, comments and/or evaluation of the questionnaire. This exercise gives the researcher a general impression of the feasibility of his/her questionnaire.

The above exposition demonstrates that the pilot test is a small-scale study administered before the actual collection of data can be conducted. The pilot test is not only helpful in identifying errors or ambiguities in the research tool being used, but it also makes it possible for the researcher to determine the feasibility of the research being conducted. The validity and reliability of the research instruments are dependent on it. It also determines how the design of the main study can be improved and discloses shortcomings or deficiencies in the research plan (Ural & Sekete, 1997:39; Bagwandeen, 1991:75 and Fraenkel & Wallen, 1990:479).

Isaac & Michael, (1993:33), Bagwandeen, 1991:75) and Huysamen, (1994:197) view the following as advantages of the pilot test:

- "It provides the researcher with unanticipated ideas, approaches and clues not foreseen prior to the main research. This leads to a reduction in the number of data gathering inconveniences owing to unforeseen problems unearthed in the pilot test that may be addressed in redesigning the main research.

- It may save time and money spent on research that could yield less than expected.

- It investigates the feasibility of the proposed project and flaws in the measurement procedures.

- In the pilot test, the researcher may try out a number of alternative measures and then select those that yield the best results for the main research."

The pre-test of the questionnaire revealed that the respondents understood some questions differently, and were consequently open to different interpretations that could have led to unreliable and misleading responses. With the assistance of professionals from the Department of Statistics who had guided the researcher in terms of the compilation of the questionnaire, some questions were rephrased and others eliminated. Furthermore, the pre-test also revealed attitudinal problems that the researcher encountered in the actual administration of the questionnaire. The respondents argued that

- the researchers exploited them because the research was not meant to benefit them at all; and

- they had numerous work engagements and so responding to the questionnaires and taking part in interviews was just a waste of their time.

These attitudinal problems enabled the researcher to work proactively on the strategies to be used to win the assistance, support and co-operation of the respondents when the questionnaire was administered to the actual respondents.

1.9.3   Interviews

Qualitative interviews as described by Rubin and Rubin (1995:31) were used. The model of qualitative interviewing puts emphasis on the relativism of culture, active participation in the interview and the importance of affording the respondents an opportunity to voice their views on the subject being investigated. Interviewing is the predominant mode of data or information collection in qualitative research (De Vos, 2000:292).

All the interviews were audio-taped after the respondents had granted permission. The information recorded was transcribed verbatim and the resulting text analysed. There was therefore no need to take extensive notes.

The interview questionnaire with structured questions was prepared for all the respondents, namely the training managers, trainers and ABET co-ordinators. Structured interviews are those that are arranged before the interview. They are short, direct and

require short responses. This type of interview is advantageous in the sense that it covers wide areas and large numbers of individuals.

An interview could be seen as any conversation in which the roles of interviewer and respondents continually change. It is an attempt by the researcher to acquire reliable and valid data. It must be noted that the data obtained from interviews represent attempts to either confirm or reject the hypothesis.

Owing to their flexibility, interviews allow the researcher to change the manner of questioning if the situation demands. Should the respondents' responses be ambiguous or unclear, questions may be simplified, rephrased or repeated. Inconsistent and vague responses can be questioned. Most importantly, personal information and information on attitudes, perceptions and beliefs are easily collected through interviews.

1.10   RESEARCH DESIGN

While Mouton (2001:55:94) regards a research design as a blueprint or detailed plan on how specific research is to be conducted, Babbie (1998:89) views it as a mechanism to address the planning of scientific inquiry.

For this research, the exploratory-descriptive design was used. The rationale behind the selection of this design was that no research was found to have been conducted on quality assurance in education and training in business with special reference to adult literacy in South Africa. It was therefore felt that it would be crucial to explore this area as well as possible and describe the collected data in an attempt to contribute to the body of existing knowledge in the field of quality assurance in education and training programmes in business in South Africa.

Grinnel (1998:22) remarks that descriptive designs are chosen if "less is already known, and so, our questions will be of a general descriptive nature". Researchers can select any one or any combination of research designs for their particular purpose, regardless of where the designs fit into any particular scheme. The classifications are of mainly academic and educational interest with a view to clear conceptualisation (Fouche & De Vos, 1998:123).

According to Mouton & Marais (1998:43), the best guarantee for the completion of exploratory research is the researcher's willingness to examine new ideas and suggestions and to be open to new stimuli. The researcher is advised though to guard against being influenced by his or her preconceived ideas or hypotheses with regard to the nature and direction of the research.

Mouton & Marais (1998:44) also state that the term description has developed into an umbrella term used in many different types of research. The noticeable common element in almost all these types of research is the researcher's goal to describe the existing phenomenon as accurately as possible. These two authors further stress that the most important consideration in descriptive studies is to collect accurate information or data on phenomena in the domain under investigation (Mouton & Marais, 1998:44).

1.11   DELIMITATION OF THE RESEARCH

Owing to time and financial constraints, the research included a sample drawn from industry, training managers, trainers, trainees and ABET co-ordinators in enterprises in only six out of nine South African provinces namely Mpumalanga, Limpopo, KwaZulu-Natal, Gauteng, the Eastern Cape and the Free State. Borg & Ball (1989:117) state that selecting a limited problem and treating it well is far better than attempting the study of a broad general problem and doing it poorly. It is hoped though that although being limited, this research will eventually reveal the real status of quality assurance processes in education and training programmes in business and make tangible recommendations in an attempt to make a contribution to the existing body of knowledge of quality assurance in training programmes.

1.12   LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

- Most respondents were not co-operative. They regarded being subjected to interviews and completing the questionnaires as a waste of their time to the extent that they were reluctant to assist.

- They did not see themselves benefiting from the research other than being exploited for the elevation of the researcher's status in the academic arena.

- Their management had to request them to assist and explained how the adult literacy programme was going to benefit from the research and how they as stakeholders were going to grow in terms of quality teaching. While some decided to subject themselves to these research instruments immediately, others chose to complete the questionnaires in their own time and then fax them through or courier them to the researcher. It was against this backdrop that the researcher had to leave them with money and envelopes to courier the questionnaires. It took some of them more than eight months to mail them. Quite a number of the questionnaires that were faxed were illegible and were destroyed. This therefore retarded the progress of the study. The supervisor was informed about these developments and she in return advised that the researcher should keep persuading the respondents while appreciating and understanding their dilemma.

- The variables on the resources found on page 5 of the questionnaire (i.e. V27 and V28) and management information system, also on page 5 (i.e. V29 and V30) were found by the statisticians not to be correlating. It is against this background that they were not analysed and interpreted in this research, but discarded.

- The following research instruments that could have also been effective in the collection of data were disregarded at the eleventh hour because of time and financial constraints:

Dialectic Method

Williams (1984:107) traces the origin of the concept 'dialectic' as follows: Dialectique: Old French, Dialiktite: Greek and Dialectica: Latin.

The direct translation of the concept 'dialectic' leads to the following meanings:

- The art of discussion and debate.
- The investigation of truth by discussion.

- The art of defining ideas.
- The method of determining the interrelation of ideas in the light of a single principle.
- Learning the truth of all things by disputation.

The purpose of using this method would have been to allow the researcher to engage in dialogue in order to discover the truth objectively. It is through this method that the researcher would have made an attempt to find the causes, truths and untruths about the problem being investigated after having stated it clearly and exactly. This approach could have assisted the researcher in obtaining additional data that could not be obtained through the questionnaires and interviews.

Phenomenological approach

The phenomenological approach was to be used in conjunction with the dialectic method, the rationale behind this being to gather as much reliable and valid data as possible. The phenomenological approach stems from the concept 'phenomenon'. 'Phenomenon' originates from the Greek word 'Phainomenon', which refers to

- what appears; or
- a visible manifestation or appearance.

'Phenomenology' is defined by Du Plooy and Klian (1981:36) as "a methodical revelation of the datum (appearance and phenomenon) as it is revealed in itself." The procedure in the phenomenological approach is based on facts and it reveals the essentials of the phenomenon.

Landman (1988:86) maintains that the task of phenomenology is to create propositions (statements) of scientific importance. This would therefore mean that the researcher would have to determine the important characteristics of the phenomenon without allowing himself or herself to be influenced by preconceived ideas. This implies that the researcher needs to study the phenomenon under investigation objectively. This research requires the researcher to make precise observations of the situation in which the problem has been identified. As a point of departure, the researcher should try to discover what is really taking place in the setting under investigation in a very unbiased manner.

In the book titled "Problems of Pedagogics", Van der Walt (1981:52) states that "the most important virtue of this method is the fact that it avoids any influence exerted by any external principle or knowledge upon the phenomenon investigated, and it also takes great pains to avoid the scientist's life-and-world view having any effect on the scientific work done by him". The purpose of this method is to enable the researcher to study the phenomenon objectively and to avoid allowing his or her personal convictions to have any influence on the problem being investigated. Having done so, the researcher is likely to reach valuable and valid conclusions about the phenomenon.

The phenomenological approach aims to understand and interpret the meaning that subjects give to their everyday lives. In an attempt to understand this, the researcher has to enter the subjects' 'life world' or 'life setting' (Sitz im Leben) and place himself or herself in the shoes of the subjects (De Vos, 2002:273). This is achieved through the researcher's interaction with the subjects and analysis of the conversations.

Observation

A period was going to be spent in a variety of training and education settings where the researcher would have interacted with the stakeholders and at the same time would have observed the manner in which training and education programmes were being managed and quality assurance measures were being implemented to promote and enhance quality in adult literacy. Comprehensive field notes would be documented throughout the period and broad questions would be posed, phrasing initial questions in an open way to hear what the various conversational partners thought about the problem before narrowing down the options for questioning.

The researcher would conduct his observation exercise by being a participant observer, the action that is normally referred to as "interactive observation". The purpose of using this method is to enable the researcher to view reality from the participants' perspective which is a heavy task considering the many roles played by the researcher in his or her attempt to gather data for the research. Furthermore, Bryman (2000:96) states that, for qualitative researchers, it is only by getting close to their subjects and becoming insiders that they can view the world as participants in that setting.

One other advantage of participant observation is that the researcher is afforded an opportunity to be on the site where everything is happening and to make field notes. The researcher could thus corroborate or dismiss the data.

Finally, all the senses are used in participant observation and the researcher should become an instrument that absorbs all sources of information (Neuman, 2000:361). This implies listening, seeing, inquiring, observing and writing up notes that are of paramount importance in participant observation.

The use of document study

In view of the fact that the population was large and diverse, document study was also considered. This simply means that the training policy documents and other related official documents pertaining to quality assurance and education and training, including adult literacy, which had been obtained, would be carefully studied, analysed, compared and evaluated. Official documents or non-personal documents, according to Bailey (1994:294), are documents that are compiled and maintained on a continuous basis.

The purpose of this approach is to enable the researcher to access the information he could not obtain by any other means or method. Many documents, such as policy documents, magazines, newspapers, etc, are normally written by skilled commentators and may be much more valuable than, for example, poorly written responses to mailed questionnaires.

According to De Vos (2002; 324), it is of the utmost importance to evaluate the authenticity or validity and reliability of documents. The reason for this is that the authors of documents sometimes harbour ulterior motives, such as seeking money or prestige.

Bailey (1994:318) stresses that the reliability of documents may be checked either by similar documents at two or more points in time (instrument reliability) or by comparing the results of two or more researchers or authors at the same points in time (analyst reliability). In view of the fact that the analysis of documents is often subjective, Bailey

(1994:319) proposes that more attention should be paid to the assessment of inter-analyst reliability than to the assessment of inter-document reliability.

1.13   POSSIBLE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

- The research's significance may be demonstrated by its unique contribution to scholarship in the field of training and education with regard to the development of culture of quality assurance, which is often ignored.

- This research may also assist in promoting and enhancing quality in education and training, including adult literacy.

- The findings of this research may assist, promote and enhance the quality of education and training in business, especially now that the labour market demands a competent workforce.

- It may provide lessons on quality and quality assurance from other networks and fields.

- It may provide a multiple perspective approach to quality and quality assurance, which may facilitate a search for common underlying principles.

- It may finally describe how quality and quality assurance principles borrowed from industry or the commercial world are being applied to education and training.

1.14   RESEARCH PROGRAMME

Chapter I
Theme analysis and
formulation of the problem.

Chapter II
The influence of quality
movement on quality
assurance in adult literacy
in South Africa.

Chapter III
International practices of
quality assurance and their
relevance to adult literacy
in South Africa.

Chapter IV
Quality assurance in adult
literacy.

Chapter V
Data gathering procedures
for the research.

Chapter VI
Presentation and analysis
of collected data.

Chapter VII
Findings and
recommendations.

1.15   OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

Chapter I: Theme analysis and formulation of the problem

In Chapter I, the theme of the study, statement of the problem, the aims and the significance of the study have been constructed. Chapter I seeks to provide a comprehensive background, context for the research, motivation for the research and the problem to be investigated, including the methods to be employed to collect data. This is meant to provide a clear picture of the research.

Chapter II: The dynamics of quality movement and their influence on adult literacy in South Africa

In Chapter II, the dynamics of quality movement and their influence on adult literacy are discussed. The purpose of this chapter is to show how the quality movement can influence contemporary thinking on adult literacy regarding insight into the concept of quality and the promotion and enhancement of the culture of quality. It further seeks to illustrate how best quality practices borrowed from industry can be adapted to adult literacy in South Africa.

Chapter III: International perspectives of quality and their relevance for South Africa

In Chapter III, the focus is placed on international trends regarding the development of a quality culture in adult literacy and their relevance to the South African situation. It is the purpose of this chapter to draw from international quality assurance experience. It also seeks to show how adult literacy in South Africa in particular and education and training in general can gain from lessons learned by other countries in the world so as to develop and enhance customised quality assurance in South Africa.

Chapter IV: Overview of training and quality assurance in adult literacy

In Chapter IV, adult literacy, which is the main focus of the study and quality assurance, are discussed in the context of training in general, because adult literacy is part of training. This chapter seeks to provide insight into training, the context within which quality assurance has also to be understood in this research.

Chapter V: Research methodology

In Chapter V, a detailed discussion of the qualitative research design is outlined. This chapter seeks to provide the research design, which is the plan for doing the research. In addition, it presents a detailed discussion of the methods to be employed in this research for the collection of data.

Chapter VI: Presentation and analysis of qualitative data

In Chapter VI, analysis and interpretation of the collected data is undertaken. This chapter seeks to analyse the collected data regarding the research problem and interpret it.

Chapter VII: Summary of findings and recommendations

In Chapter VII, a summary of the findings and recommendations is presented. The purpose of this chapter is therefore to make recommendations based on the findings and to provide some themes related to this research that warrant research.

1.16   DEFINITION AND CLARIFICATION OF TERMS

The following major concepts are used in this research: adult literacy, quality, quality assurance, training and learning. Hence, they warrant clarification to make the research more comprehensible and meaningful.

1.16.1 Adult literacy

According to Erasmus & Van Dyk (1996:205), there are many different understandings of adult literacy, ranging from concepts that embrace limited literacy and numeric skills only to concepts that incorporate life skills and skills for active participation in industry and society as a whole. In this study, the meaning of adult literacy is limited to the basic phase in the provision of lifelong learning, consisting of levels along a continuum of learning aimed at adults with very little or no formal schooling, below the equivalent of a compulsory school-leaving certificate (National Training Board, 1994:148). Adult literacy

includes a core of knowledge, skills, experiences and behaviours that form the basis of a general education to enable individuals to

- shape and develop economic policies, to build a democratic society and enhance job creation schemes;

- stimulate development initiatives and develop an understanding of the world of science and technology;

- develop their full potential and continue their lifelong education and training;

- participate actively in society as a whole as well as in service, commerce and industry;

- develop communication skills in a vernacular and English, subject to the language policy, develop numeric skills; and

- develop a critical understanding of the society in which people live.

1.16.2 Quality

'Quality' has become an international and controversial issue that is interpreted differently by different individuals and institutions or organisations. It has become a concept people confidently talk about when marketing or selling their products or services both in business and education and training environments. When faced with questions on its definition in that particular context, it then dawns on them that defining it is not as easy as talking about it.

This assertion implies that people normally assume that they know what quality is or is about, whereas they cannot convincingly say what it is. Badley (1993:23) views the concept of quality as one of those slippery and empty concepts that are confusing when people want to pick out a set of defining characteristics. Badley further compares it to a chimera, because it is a very complicated concept to comprehend. Because of its confusing nature, people tend to use the term loosely without knowing exactly what it is. It

is also stated in Badley's article, titled "Quality Debate in Higher Education", that quality is an essentially contested concept. Its contestedness comes from its being descriptively or cognitively weak and at the same time, emotively powerful. Its status is high, its prestige is great, its trouble-making and mystifying character is immense and yet it's meaning is elusive and vague (Badley, 1993:23). This would imply that the concept 'quality' may seem lofty, but it is practically difficult to tell what it really means.

The different connotations given to the concept in the corporate world confirm that quality is viewed from different perspectives and out of those perspectives different definitions emerge. The following definitions are commonly used in the corporate world:

- Conforms to specifications: A product or service that meets the design specifications is a quality product or service (Crosby, 1984 quoted by Gaither, 1998:8).

- Is fit for use: A product or service that satisfies the customer's expectations is a quality product or service (Guaspari, 1985 quoted by Gaither, 1998:8).

- Achieves its mission and goals: An organisation that achieves its goals is a quality organisation (Green, 1994 quoted by Gaither, 1998:8).

Within the ISO 9000 family of standards, the term 'quality' is used in the context of achieving sustained customer satisfaction through meeting customer needs and expectations, within an organisational environment committed to continual improvement of efficiency and effectiveness (Wholesale and Retail SETA Website). In this research, a quality programme is one that has processes in place that are used for continuous improvement of education and training programmes, and makes them more effective. Failure to implement these quality improvement processes could compromise the quality of education and training programmes. It is important to identify the discrepancies continuously and pro-actively and effect improvements timeously.

1.16.3   Quality assurance

Badley (1993:23) regards quality assurance in the education and training environment as simple and non-bureaucratic procedures that are meant to promote good teaching and good learning. He further maintains that it has nothing to do with quality assurance committees encouraging individuals - students/trainees and staff and managers. Badley's view of quality assurance is debatable, for, it confines quality assurance measures to only teaching and learning. If quality is to be achieved in a training and education programme, a holistic approach has to be adopted. This implies that quality assurance procedures should focus on all aspects of a training and education programme. The training and education programme is multi-faceted or multi-dimensional, which means that it is composed of a variety of important aspects that need to be fully attended to if the programme is to be of good quality.

A practical example is a situation where competent and well-trained trainers are expected to render quality service to their demotivated customers in a poorly resourced training environment. Quality learning in such an environment and with trainees in such a state is practically impossible until the morale of the trainees has been boosted and the environment has been adequately resourced. This is the reason why Deming advises that in an attempt to achieve world-class standards of quality, the focus should not solely be on the product, but on the processes, or else it will be difficult to establish what is working or not working in the system (Flanagan, 2000:210).

Quality assurance should put the emphasis on ownership, review, communication, good practice, staff development and reward. This evidently suggests ways in which the institution or programme can move away from the concerns about structure and performance indicators and the abstract notion of quality itself. The emphasis should instead be placed on promoting good teaching and learning (Badley, 1993:23).

According to Allias (2003:317), the South African notion of quality assurance as realised in the bulk of SAQA structures is that once skills, knowledge, attitudes and values have been defined by stakeholders, providers must deliver programmes according to them. Quality assurance is the technical process of evaluating the extent to which providers assist

learners in achieving these objectives; in other words quality assurance is underpinned by the idea of production to a standard.

This research adopts the definition of Gaither (1998:3), who views quality assurance as policies, attitudes, actions and procedures necessary to ensure that the quality of education and scholarship is maintained and enhanced. It includes checking that quality control mechanisms, processes, techniques and activities are in place, are being used and are effective. It requires actions internal to the institution or programme and may involve an external body or bodies. It includes course design, staff development and the collection and use of feedback from students/trainees and employees. Both external and internal professionals are involved in internal quality assurance processes that should be continuous, active and responsive. Effective quality assurance requires the use of external points of reference, both national and international.

1.16.4 Learning

Just like any other concept, learning is viewed differently depending on the school of thought one affiliates to. With regard to this concept, behaviourist theories are mainly concerned with the stimuli that immediately lead to learned behaviour. In short, they are concerned with the internal, organising processes of thought that lead to performance. Hence, they view learning as a process by which a particular stimulus, repeatedly associated with or conditioned by desirable or undesirable experiences, comes to evoke a particular response (Beardwell & Holden, 1995:290). In the same vein, Pfeiffer (1994:11), a behavioural theorist, sees learning as a change in behaviour as a result of experience or input.

In this research, the concept of learning is used to refer to the total change in the trainees in terms of competencies (i.e. skills, knowledge and attitude) that have been brought about by experiences in the teaching and learning environment.

1.16.5 Training

This concept is derived from the word 'train'. Its origin can be traced back to different languages. Webster's New International Dictionary (1928:218) gives the following definitions:

- Trainer: Old French.
- Trainer: French.
- Trahinare, trainare: Latin.

The above concept means
- to draw along;
- to draw by persuasion;
- to form by instruction, practice or guidance;
- to bring up, to educate, teach, lead or direct; or
- to prepare oneself for a particular service or performance.

The Dictionary of Psychology (1985:782) defines the concept of training as "a specific instructional programme or set of procedures designed to yield as an end product an organism capable of making some specific response/s or engaging in some complex skilled activity". The aforementioned definition embraces the modern usages of the concept. On the other hand, the Dictionary of Education (1982:273) defines training as "a process using a wide range of techniques to modify attitude, knowledge and skills so as to achieve effective performance in a particular task or set of tasks". The concept of training is further defined by De Cenzo and Robins (1994:255) as a learning experience in that it seeks a relatively permanent change in an individual that will improve his or her ability to perform the task.

It is conspicuous that training must be result orientated, it must focus on enhancing the specific skills and abilities required to perform the job, it must be measurable and it must make a real contribution to improving both goal achievement and the internal efficiency of the organisation. In this research, the concept 'training' is used to refer to a programme aimed at equipping

trainees with the necessary competencies that will enable them to perform their duties effectively in the workplace.

1.18 CONCLUSION

In Chapter I, the researcher exposed the research problem, the aims and objectives that informed and guided this research, the research methodology, the definition and clarification of terms as they are used in this research and the plan for the whole research project. Since the research problem is mainly related to quality and quality assurance in training programmes, Chapter II will therefore discuss and examine the difficult concept of quality and the influence of the quality movement on quality assurance in adult literacy in business in South Africa.

As a brief background to Chapter II, it is important to note that quality assurance mechanisms in essence seek to promote and enhance quality. This statement triggers the following question: What is meant by quality? It has become evident that the concept of quality is not an easy one to define or describe. Handy (quoted by Rhodes, 1994:Introduction) sees it as being hard to define and impossible to legislate, for quality, like truth, is an attitude of mind. Persig (quoted by Rhodes, 1994:Introduction) states that "quality … you know what it is, yet you don't know what it is. But that is self-contradictory. But some things are better than others, that is, they have more quality. But when you try to say what quality is, apart from the things that have it, it all goes poof! But if you can't say what quality is, how do you know what it is, or how do you know it even exists?" The meaning of quality could therefore be determined through direct personal experience with the underlying principles and practices in the work context. It could also be determined by viewing it from different perspectives. Chapter II of this research seeks to explore that possibility further.

CHAPTER II: THE ORIGINS OF QUALITY AND THE INFLUENCE OF THE QUALITY MOVEMENT ON QUALITY ASSURANCE IN ADULT LITERACY IN SOUTH AFRICA

2.1   INTRODUCTION

Chapter II seeks to examine the origins of quality and the reasons why it has become an essential theme in management thinking since the 1940s (Beckford, 1998:3). It further seeks to examine the philosophy of quality management that helped both Japanese and American companies to compete globally. This philosophy embodies principles that could be translated and applied to improve educational institutions and the system of education delivery (Holt, 1993:22; Blankstein, 1996:65; Weller & McElwee, 1997:201).

It is therefore the purpose of this chapter to show how the quality movement influences the management of adult literacy in business. The crucial contribution made by this quality movement in the principles that are at present used in management thinking in relation to customer satisfaction in education and training has prompted its selection.

2.2   BRIEF HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF QUALITY

It is essential to note that quality has been a priority especially in the commercial environment around the globe. Moreover, it has been at the top of educational policy makers' list of priorities, and improving quality is probably the most important task educational institutions are faced with today (Sallis, 1997:1). It is important to understand the history and philosophy of quality so as to be able to inform and influence the effective management of adult literacy in business.

After the Second World War the Western world continued to focus on productivity owing to the rise in consumer demand. With increasing economic success, companies always had a market for their products, hence they were not quality-conscious. In addition, consumer expectations of product longevity and reliability were relatively low compared with today, as was the technology of both the products and manufacturing process (Beckford, 1998, 3-4).

Today, organisations exist in a dynamic global village, which is technologically advanced, competitive and quality-conscious. For survival, organisations are inclined to deliver high quality products and services, which come into existence as a result of competent workers with a quality education and training background. This is therefore a clear indication that the long-term future of business and its ability to deliver quality services and products depends on effective human resources development.

Management writers have written extensively about the effective and possible ways of enhancing quality in programmes, projects and institutions. Surprisingly enough, managers in the education and training department have often ignored these alternative ways of assuring quality in training programmes (Fisher et al., 1993:403). One major reason for this, according to Fisher (Fisher et al., 1993:403), is the assumption made by managers that training will definitely work and succeed. Erasmus and Van Dyk (1996:157) caution that it is necessary to evaluate (i.e. to control quality) education and training in any enterprise, not only to determine whether the investment in training made by the enterprise is money well spent, but also to determine among other things, whether the individual has benefited from training. Bramley (1991:20) supports this view when he states that evaluation should be required of any organisational activity, which represents a significant investment of funds.

2.3   THE NOTION OF QUALITY

This research is centred on quality and the history of the concept of 'quality' alone does not help much in providing the meaning of the concept. This is the reason why it is imperative to examine it from a variety of perspectives so as to gain insight into it.

It will be practically difficult to understand the research question and the research itself with limited understanding of this central concept.

In an attempt to shed light on the concept of 'quality', the detailed discussion of the following will be discussed in detail:

- The controversial nature of the concept of 'quality'

- The notions of quality, namely, quality as exceptional or excellence, quality as perfection or consistency, quality as fitness for purpose, quality as value for money and quality as transformation.

2.3.1 The controversial nature of the concept of 'quality

As mentioned in Chapter I, the concept of quality is very controversial globally. The main cause of this controversy is that, it means different things to different individuals; indeed, the same persons may adopt different conceptualisations at different moments (Harvey & Green, 1993:9-34). The concept is also perceived by Harvey & Green (1993:9-34) as being relative to the stakeholders. It is relative to the user of the term and the circumstances in which it is involved. This view therefore triggers the following question: Whose quality? For example, to an industrialist, a high quality-training programme may be one that turns out workers with wide-ranging, flexible minds, readily able to acquire skills and adapt to new methods and needs and to government it may be one that produces a well-trained workforce. Controversial as it is, quality is at the top of the agendas of educational policy makers and improving quality is probably the most important, as mentioned earlier in this chapter.

According to Nightingale and O'Neil (1999:foreword), 'quality' is not a word people seem to find difficult, except when they are asked to define what they mean by it. Badley (1993:1) views the concept as one of those slippery and empty concepts that are confusing when people want to pick out a set of defining characteristics. He goes on to compare it to a chimera, because of its complicated nature. A chimera is an imaginary animal composed of the parts of different animals (Oxford School Dictionary, 2001:76).

Many philosophers that are quoted by Badley (1993:1) regard the concept of quality as an essentially contested one. Its contestedness comes from its being descriptively or cognitively weak. At the same time, it is emotively powerful. Its status is high, its prestige is great, its trouble-making and mystifying character is immense and yet its meaning is elusive and vague. This implies that although the concept of quality may seem to have an excellent image, it remains meaningless because of its ambiguity and abstraction; hence, there are competing and conflicting views about it. Quoted by Tam and Maureen (1999:1), Sallis best summarises the contested nature by providing the following contradictions:

- Quality is both a strategic and an operational concept.

- Quality is both a visionary and a practical idea.

- Quality is both an absolute and a relative concept. It can mean both 'high quality' and 'fitness for purpose'.

- Quality is about both people and systems.

- Quality has to be defined both by the institution and its customers. The views of each may be very different.

- Quality can be allied to both 'hard' and measurable standards as well as to 'soft' and more intangible standards about care, courtesy, concern and comparison.

- Quality cannot stand still. The definition is never static. Today's high quality may be tomorrow's poor quality.

- The different definitions attached to the concept in both the corporate and academic world further display its vagueness and controversial status. The following are commonly used definitions of 'quality':

  o Conforms to specifications: A product or service that meets the design specifications is a quality product or service (Crosby, 1984 quoted by Gaither, 1998:8).

  o Fit for use: A product or service that satisfies the customer's expectations is a quality product or service (Guaspari, 1985 quoted by Gaither, 1998:8).

  o Achievement of mission and goals (Green, 1994 quoted by Gaither, 1998:8).

  o Continuous improvement: An organisation or programme that creates a climate for constant improvement is a quality organisation or programme (Deming, 1986, quoted by Gaither, 1998:8).

  o Multifactor concept: Quality is a multifactor concept involving not only fitness for use, but also reliability, durability, aesthetics, etc (Garvin, 1988, quoted by Gaither, 1988:1-10).

It is interesting to note that the above does not tell exactly what quality is. The definitions are simplistic and not convincing enough. Quite a number of them tell about the perceptions of quality of the receiver of the product or service. None among the above 'hits straight on the nail' as to say what quality is. This confirms the ambiguity of the concept. It

can therefore be argued that these definitions say more about the receiver's expectations, rather than putting in clear terms exactly what quality means.

It is evident that there is no umbrella definition of quality. As has emerged in this section, the concept of quality is viewed from different paradigms hence different definitions. A paradigm, according to Babbie (2001:42) is the fundamental model or frame of reference one uses to organise observations and reasoning.

2.3.2   Quality as exceptional or excellence

Excellence is often confused with quality or high standards, especially in the academic and training environments. The exceptional view perceives quality as something special, distinctive, something that exceeds very high standards and passes a set of required standards (Harvey & Knight, 1996:1-2). Those that promote this view assume that their programmes are of high quality without bringing to the fore some evidence of benchmarks against which quality can be measured.

2.3.3   Quality as perfection or consistency

This notion views quality as a consistent or flawless outcome. The quality culture of ensuring that things are done right the first time is being promoted by this notion. Should there be quality problems, which emerge because things were not done right the first time, the causes of the problem are identified in the process and analysed so as to take corrective action. This notion proposes that the product or service should be judged by its consistency or in some cases, by its reliability (Carter, 1978; Garvin, 1988 as quoted by Harvey & Knight 1996:4).

2.3.4   Quality as fitness for purpose

This approach sees quality deriving its proper meaning from the purpose of the product or service. Juran defines quality as "fitness for purpose" and maintains that the basic quality mission is to develop programmes and services that meet the needs of the user (Arcaro, 1995:5). Deming (Arcaro, 1995:5) shares the same view because he believes that quality should be customer-driven, and the customer is the user of the product or service. This

assertion may imply that if particular activity is carried out according to the design, then the result is a quality product or service. Fitness for purpose has come about as an attempt to harness the drive for perfection. According to Moodie (1986b:1-8), 'fitness for purpose' may be misleading especially when issues of 'whose purpose' and 'how fitness is assessed' are brought forward.

In adult literacy, 'fitness for purpose' relates to the programme's objectives and the extent to which these are achieved. The programme should therefore demonstrate 'fitness for purpose' in the assessment of performance. Freeman (1993:2) argues that if quality is seen as ' fitness for purpose', then the purpose needs to be acceptable, and if it is 'customer satisfaction', what if the customers want what is not good for them or are victims of adversity or other pressures? Aspin, Chapman and Wilkinson (1994:1) advise that quality is a protean term (i.e. a term that appears in various forms or characters). It defies precise specification and is recalcitrant to the most persistent attempts to analyse it.

To think that one can find an essential, basic or uncontested account of the meaning of quality is to embark upon a search for that mythical beast, the chimera. Instead of continuing attempts to define the concept of quality, people should look at its use.

The real meaning of quality, just like that of beauty, time, religion and art, can never be discovered. The discussion about the definition of quality could be compared to a rope in which many fibres of widely varied colours, textures and lengths criss-cross and intertwine.

2.3.5 Quality as value for money

Quality in the context of 'value for money' is viewed in terms of return on investment. If the outcome can be achieved at a lower cost, or a better outcome can be achieved at the same cost, the customer has a quality product or service (Strydom et al., 1997:206).

The link between quality and value for money in countries such as Australia, Britain and Denmark has been overtly and controversially expressed in the methodologies adopted for funding teaching, which reward quality and penalise unsatisfactory provision (Harvey & Knight, 1996:7). This approach may be misleading, because it views the performance of any programme or institution from a single perspective, i.e. the financial perspective, and

ignore the rest. The complexity of management an organisation today requires that performance should be viewed in several areas simultaneously, namely customer, internal processes, innovation and learning and financial perspectives in order to have a balanced picture (Kaplan & Norton, 1992:72). This approach guards against developing and improving one area of the programme or organisation at the expense of others.

2.3.6   Quality as transformation

This notion views quality in terms of change. In the education and training sense, transformation simply refers to the empowerment of learners in totality since they are multifaceted beings. An illiterate worker enters the adult literacy programme with no knowledge or limited knowledge of reading, writing and counting. His or her participation in the programme allows him or her to acquire the skills of writing, reading and counting and this process implies transformation or change.

This notion of 'quality as transformation' can be also applied to those playing a role in adult literacy and do not understand their roles in quality enhancement. Learners who have gone through such a transformation process are better prepared for the world of work and are likely to make tangible contributions in a learning organisation.

The major feature of a learning organisation is that it integrates work and learning and inspires its people to seek quality, excellence and continuous improvement (Longworth & Davies, 1996:76). According to Meyer (2002:297), continuous improvement means change, and change is effected by acquiring and applying new knowledge, skills and values.

2.4   STANDARDS AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO QUALITY

Normally, the concepts of standards and quality are viewed as being synonymous, whereas they are interrelated. In simpler terms, standards lead to the realisation of quality. For example, it is practically impossible to attain a high quality product or service in the absence of high standards. Standards are defined by Strydom et al., (1996:206) as specified and usually measurable outcome indicators, which are used for comparative purposes.

In education and training, standards refer to

- academic standards;
- standard of competence; and
- service standards.

Like quality, the concept of standards is also controversial, and is often loosely used. These concepts (quality and standards) mean different things to different individuals and organisations and legislating them will be a grave mistake that may cause confusion in education and training. Brennan et al., (1997:9) advises that the dispute about terminology concerning standards is also a dispute about values, and the power of one interest group to impose its values on others. Quality and standards in adult literacy have already been legislated through SAQA and NQF in South Africa. In some quotas, it is believed that such legislation smacks of political contamination. In contrast, the proponents of legislation believe that extensive consultation with the relevant stakeholders was conducted and that they were involved in the formulation of these standards.

2.4.1   Academic standards

Academic standards are meant to measure ability to meet a specified level of academic attainment. In the teaching and learning environment (adult literacy included) this refers to the learners' ability to fulfil the requirements of the programme of study, in whatever way (Mosia, 2001:76). In this case, the learners are required to demonstrate the knowledge and understanding acquired in the teaching-learning situation.

Brennan, et al. (1997:115) remarks that academic standards should focus on the different stages of the educational process and the relationships between those stages such as inputs, processes and outputs. Educational inputs would normally refer to entry characteristics of learners as well as the quality of the teaching they receive. Mosia (2001:77) adds that educational process standards might relate to the learning experiences and progress made with the content and organisation of the curriculum. The educational output standards, on the other hand, will be defined by the inputs and processes, and determined by the knowledge, skills and/or understanding acquired by the

learners. However, Brennan (1997:114) notes that the debate about academic standards cannot be separated from broader debates about roles and responsibilities in quality assurance of institutions.

2.4.2   Standards of competence

Standards of competence measure specified levels of ability in a range of competencies. These skills may be portable and required by employers or skills required for orientation into a profession. Standards of competence may overlap with academic standards when high-level skills and abilities are identified as intrinsic to competence, as in professional education, where for example, reflection and critical ability may be an element in the attainment of an award (Harvey & Knight, 1996:16).

2.4.3   Service standards

According to Harvey in Strydom et al. (1996:208), service standards in higher education parallel consumer standards. This holds true with regard to adult literacy. Service standards are defined as measures devised to assess identified elements of the service or facilities provided. Such standards may include turnaround times for assessing the learners' work, maximum class sizes, availability of information on complaints procedures, etc. (Mosia, 2001:78).

2.5   QUALITY MOVEMENT

Four management writers have dominated the contemporary quality movement. Although they viewed quality from different perspectives, their philosophies, methods and tools have proved their usefulness and effectiveness in the practical environment. This claim is confirmed by the fact that having embraced these philosophies, Japanese and American companies became competitive (Holt, 1993:22; Blankstein, 1996:65; Weller & McElwee, 1997:201).

Reference will be made to the philosophies of Edwards Deming, Philip Crosby, Joseph Juran and Armand Feigenbaum. The rationale behind this is to link their crucial

contributions to quality assurance to adult literacy in business. These philosophies further provide more insight into the central theme of this research, which is 'quality'.

2.5.1 Edwards Deming

Edwards Deming devised a business philosophy known as Total Quality Management (TQM), which has been enthusiastically embraced worldwide. This philosophy helped to lift Japanese industry to achieve world-class standards of quality. TQM is based on the beliefs that change for the better occurs through dedication to continuous improvement and shared a constancy of purpose by everyone in the organisation (Flanagan, 2000:310).

Deming believes that the quality of the process influences the quality of a product or service. It must be noted that the initiation and facilitation of the quality process is a management responsibility. This could therefore suggest that poor management of the quality process results in a poor quality product or service and vice versa.

One of Deming's outstanding works was the formulation of his systematic approach to problem solving. This approach has come to be dubbed the Deming, Shewhart or PDCA cycle - Plan, Do, Check and Action. This cycle does not have boundaries, once it has been concluded successfully, it starts again. Shewhart views improvement as a continuous cyclical effort based on the PDCA model (Fields, 1993:31, Beckford, 1998:67, Mears, 1995:229).

Three beliefs can be derived from Deming's approach, the first being that management plays an important role in the quality process. It either leads to the realisation of a quality product or service or cause quality problems through poor management. The second is that quality improvement should be a continuous exercise. Finally, quality management should be systematically planned and must not be done on an ad hoc basis, as in many quality initiatives.

2.5.2 Phillip B. Crosby

This perspective sees quality as conformance to requirements. These requirements are determined by the needs of customers. The perspective also puts too much emphasis on

the fact that perfection is the standard that performance should strive for through continuous improvement and that performance without any defects is a possibility and a reality, which can be both achieved and measured. Crosby believes that "It is always cheaper to do it right first time". This notion cautions against the inspection of a product or service and the cost involved.

Since inspection is a costly exercise, Crosby advises that quality needs to be built into a product or service from the onset. This is an attempt to prevent errors and to avoid spending a lot of money on trying to rectify them (Crosby, 1996:8). Crosby does not believe in the existence of a quality problem. It can be assumed that he means that quality problems do not just occur, but come into existence as a result of poor management and neglecting to do right things from the beginning. Hence, he maintains that quality problems do not create themselves or exist as entities separate from the management process (Crosby, 1984:3). Management is the leading component in the strategic processes that enhances quality systems. Should anything go wrong, managers are liable in the same way as they are entitled to credit if there are no defects in performance.

Crosby also believes that 'the only performance measurement is the cost of quality.' According to him, the cost of quality is always a measurable item. For example, rework, warranty costs, rejects, etc, serve as principles used to measure performance. This belief confirms Logothetis' assertion that non-conformance is costly (Logothetis, 1992:85).

2.5.3   Joseph M. Juran

Juran views quality in terms of fitness for purpose (Bank, 1992:71). Bank suggests that this is a more useful definition than 'conformance to specification', in the sense that an unhealthy product or service could conform to all specifications but still be unsuitable for use.

He identifies the following as being very important in any quality programme:

- Identification of goals and policies for quality.
- Implementation of plans to meet the goals.
- Provision of resources to evaluate progress.
- Ensuring appropriate motivation.

All these aspects reveal that the emphasis of Juran's work on quality is on planning and organisational issues. All these are managerial functions. Juran's approach is perhaps better interpreted by Logothetis (1992:62), who states that quality does not happen by accident, it has to be planned. It is clear that Juran, just like Deming, believes that top management must lead the organisation with regard to quality enhancement (Downey, et al., 1994:14). While Juran's approach stresses the managerial functions of planning, control and improvement as essential for the enhancement of quality, he has a nine-step 'quality road map' that could serve as a valuable guide to achieve quality (Bendell, 1989:9).

JOSEPH M. JURAN

Step 1:   Identify who are the customers.

Step 2:   Determine the needs of those customers.

Step 3:   Translate those needs into language of the organisation.

Step 4:   Develop a product that can respond to those needs.

Step 5:   Optimise the product features so as to meet the organisational needs and those of customers.

Step 6:   Develop a process, which is able to produce the product.

Step 7:   Optimise the process.

Step 8:   Prove that process can produce the product under operating conditions.

Step 9:   Transfer the process to operations.

Fig. 2.1: The quality planning road map: Joseph M. Juran (Bechford, 1998:115)

2.5.4   Armand V Feigenbaum

Feigenbaum defines quality as 'best for customer use'. He believes that the fundamental aspect in quality improvement in the organisation is the involvement of all functions in the process and that quality should be built into the product or service. He further views quality control as: "An effective method for co-ordinating the quality maintenance and quality improvement efforts of the various groups in an organisation so as to enable production at the most economical levels which allow for full customer satisfaction" (Beckford, 1998:87).

Feigenbaum might be suggesting that quality problems could be avoided if quality issues could be attended to, long before the product or service is delivered. All the functions in the organisation should be involved in the process of assuring quality and taking corrective action where necessary. This collective process of assuring quality should be conducted from the beginning to the end when the product or service is delivered. Logothetis (1992:94) and Gilbert (1992:22) see Feigenbaum's approach as a simple way of managing a business organisation and an important force leading to organisational success and growth.

It has become evident that the concept of quality is viewed from different perspectives. What is interesting though, is the fact that these perspectives have the development of an integrated total quality system with continual drive for improvement as their ultimate goal. All these perspectives stress the idea that management has a crucial role to play in a quality programme.

These perspectives fit into the transformation of adult literacy in business in that management should take a lead in the initiation, facilitation and enhancement of quality assurance mechanisms. At the same time, it should empower those playing a role (i.e. training managers, trainers, functional managers, union representatives and trainees) and involve them in the quality assurance process. Quality assurance in adult literacy should not be the responsibility of one individual, but should involve all stakeholders.

Deming proposes that quality should not be associated with numerical targets. As stated in Chapter I, this has become a problem in training, where the quality of the programme is

measured according to the number of trainees who have been declared competent. From experience, this has not proved to be yielding good results, especially in business, for most workers can hardly demonstrate the competencies they claim to have acquired effectively in the workplace.

It is evident that quality assurance should be management-driven, because it is a managerial task, although it is the responsibility of all. Juran concurs with this assertion when he states that management should support quality planning, control and improvement and become involved in this process. In this process there should be a division of labour, which of course instils a sense of ownership in the individuals involved. While Deming states that constancy of purpose towards improvement and adopting the new philosophy of quality should be created, Crosby maintains that quality culture should be created. This is possible through the involvement, facilitation, initiation and commitment of management in quality assurance.

2.6   COMPARISON OF QUALITY PHILOSOPHIES

According to the researcher's assessment of these philosophies, there is no conflict among them, instead, they complement one another. Relevant quality assurance mechanisms advocated by these philosophies can be adopted and applied effectively to education and training or adult literacy programmes and turn them into quality programmes. However, it is emphasised in some quotas that 'quality' is a far more complex concept in education than it is in industry, and industrial quality assurance systems cannot easily be applied to education.

1. Deming's 14 points	2. Juran's 10 steps	3. Feigenbaum's 10 benchmarks	4. Crosby's 14 elements	5. SAQA's 14 elements
1.1 Create constancy of purpose to improve product and service.	2.1 Build awareness of the need and the opportunity for improvement.	3.1 Quality is a company-wide process.	4.1 Make it clear that management is committed to quality.	5.1 It must be designed and targeted at learners and directed at improving their attainment of the necessary standards.
1.2 Adopt new philosophy for new economic age by management learning responsibilities and taking leadership for change.	2.2 Set goals for improvement.	3.2 Quality is what the customer says it is.	4.2 Form quality improvement teams with senior representatives from each department.	5.2 Directly improve the quality of an institution's teaching and learning strategies. This means equally emphasising the outcome (output) of the educational experience as well as the process of attainment.
1.3 Cease dependence on inspection to achieve quality; eliminate the need for mass inspection by building quality into the product.	2.3 Organize to reach the goals (establish a quality council, identify problems, select projects, appoint teams, designate facilitators.	3.3 Quality and cost are a sum, not a difference.	4.3 Measure processes to determine where current and potential quality problems lie.	5.3 It must be flexible and be able to adapt to ever-changing demands and circumstances. This means moving away from rigid structures, procedures and bureaucracies and designing more responsive, manageable and creative strategies, which devolve quality management and quality assurance responsibilities to a variety of levels, particularly to practitioners.

1.4 End giving business on price, instead minimizes total cost and move towards single suppliers for items.	2.4 Give recognition.	3.4 Quality is an ethic.	4.4 Establish progress monitoring for the improvement process.	5.4 It must give all stakeholders a role in and a sense of ownership of the quality management process. This entails developing a participatory and inclusive management style and procedures as well as inculcating democratic and quality culture and practices.
1.5 Improve constantly and forever the system of production and service to improve quality and productivity and to decrease cost.	2.5 Communicate results.	3.5 Quality requires continuous improvement.	4.5 Train supervisors to carry out their part of the quality improvement programme actively.	5.5 It must involve learners directly and indirectly in the quality management process, creating a feedback loop and a working relationship between stakeholders at all levels and functions in the organisations.
1.6 Institute in-service-training.	2.6 Keep score.	3.6 Quality is the most effective, least capital-intensive route to productivity.	4.6 Hold a zero defects day to let everyone realise that there has been a change and to reaffirm management commitment.	5.6 It must develop a system of measurement that proves progress and not simply outcomes or procedures.
1.7 Institute leadership; supervision should be helping to do a better job; overhaul supervision of management and production workers.	2.7 Provide training.	3.7 Quality requires both individual and team zealots.	4.7 Evaluate the cost of quality and explain its use as a management tool.	5.7 It must create collaborative partnerships, both internal and external to the provider and the organisation.

1.8 Drive out fear so that all may work effectively for the organisation.	2.8 Carry out projects to solve problems.	3.8 Quality is a way of managing.	4.8 Raise the quality awareness and personal concern of all employees.	5.8 It must organise the diversity of delivery and teaching methods within institutions and providers. This entails creating quality systems which integrate standards, monitor and ensure equivalencies.
1.9 Break down barriers between departments; research, design, sales and production must work together to foresee problems in production and use.	2.9 Report progress.	3.9 Quality and innovation are mutually dependent.	4.9 Take action to correct problems identified through previous steps.	5.9 It must have an explicit purpose which is negotiated and agreed upon by stakeholders as well as being public and transparent.
1.10 Eliminate slogans, exhortations and numerical targets for the workforce, such as zero defects or new productivity levels. Such exhortations are divisive, as the bulk of the problems belong to the system and are beyond the power of the workforce.	2.10 Maintain momentum by making annual improvement part of the regular systems and processes of the company.	3.10 Quality is implemented through a total system connected with customers and suppliers.	4.10 Encourage individuals to establish improvement goals for themselves and their groups.	5.10 It must have internal capacity to follow up and improve on assessment and quality assurance results.
1.11 Eliminate quotas or work standards, and management by objectives or numerical goals; substitute leadership.			4.11 Encourage individuals to communicate to management the obstacles they face in attaining their improvement goals.	5.11 It must allow self-assessment, peer review and external meta-evaluation capacity.

1.12 Remove barriers that rob people of their right to pride or workmanship; hourly workers, management and engineering; eliminate annual or merit ratings and management by objectives.			4.12 Recognise and appreciate those who participate.	5.12 It must be regular and cyclical. Quality management is not an event, but linked to continuing processes which seek enhancement and improvement.
1.13 Institute a vigorous education and self-improvement programme.			4.13 Establish quality councils to communicate on a regular basis.	5.13 It must result in a formal and documented analysis which is translated into a clear plan of action for which the institution is accountable.
1.14 Put everyone in the company to work to accomplish transformation.			4.14 Do it all over again to emphasise that the quality improvement programme never ends.	5.14 It must involve both horizontal and vertical audits, participation and accountability.

Fig. 2.2:   Quality assurance models: Kells (1995:18-25), Liston (1999:11-16), SAQA (2000:10-11), Van der Berghe (1996:10-13); Strydom & Van der Westhuizen (2001:86-91)

Comparison of different philosophies of quality as demonstrated has provided some insights that broaden understanding of the quality movement and how it influences the promotion and enhancement of quality in education and training programmes looking at best practice principles from different perspectives.

This comparison does not reveal any element of conflict among the philosophies of quality. Although they view the concept of quality from different perspectives, they all focus on process improvement so as to promote and enhance quality. It is believed though that quality could be promoted and enhanced in education and training programmes if best practices as advocated by any of these philosophies can be properly implemented and all the stakeholders buy into it. It stands to reason that if the stakeholders buy into anyone of these philosophies, there is possibility that there will be a strong sense of support of the implementation process by the stakeholders.

2.7   LESSONS LEARNT FROM A COMPARISON OF QUALITY PHILOSOPHIES

Quality philosophies as presented in this chapter demonstrate that they have the capability to inform and guide the performance of education and training programmes if they are properly implemented. Based on what they have to offer to education and training programmes in business, it can be concluded that quality philosophies have valuable lessons to offer, especially with regard to continuous quality improvement. The following are some of the lessons:

2.7.1   Quality assurance is customer-driven

It is imperative to assure quality in adult literacy by first identifying the clients to be served as well as their needs. The concept of clients in this situation is confined to trainees. This exercise enables management and other stakeholders to become acquainted with the current conditions and the status of the programme prior to planning for the future.

2.7.2   Quality assurance emphasises continuous improvement

Through assessment of the trainees' activities and performance, quality assurance should involve continuous checking on the quality of learning. This exercise enables the trainers to identify flaws and urgently improve the status quo or even effect changes when necessary. It is important to note that when learners fail to learn, waste piles up and work has to be redone. Discovering weaknesses in learners' performance in the final examinations is wasteful. It is therefore essential that continuous assessments are employed as formative evaluations that provide a continuous flow of information about what learners are learning in the process. This is a valuable lesson in the sense that it teaches the stakeholders in adult literacy not to rely on tests and examinations as the only quality assurance processes, as has become tradition and standard practice in most education and training programmes in South Africa. This claim is based on the researcher's observation and involvement in education and training environments, both in the public sector and industry.

2.7.3   Quality assurance concentrates on making processes better

The major process of any given adult literacy programme is learning. It is imperative that the trainers should have an insight into this process and take it upon themselves to improve and make it work better. In an attempt to make the process work better for the purpose of assuring quality, the aim should be to identify those processes and to enable the people who work in them to understand that work in relation to customer need. It is advisable that the trainers themselves should continuously be put through formal training in human learning processes if the quality of their teaching is to be taken to greater heights. Training, just like learning itself, is a life-long process and does not have any boundaries. Being influenced by the dynamic external environment, training needs of trainers also change to the extent that trainers will be required to undergo training continuously.

2.7.4 Quality assurance extends the mind-set

Trainers in adult literacy need to have background knowledge and an interest in their trainees. They must view them from a positive perspective and always be ready and prepared to assist them to learn. Regarding this opinion, Marchese (1991:4) stresses that the rhetoric of quality assurance calls for paradigm shifts, restructuring and dramatic change and that most educational practitioners deal with quality issues in timid ways.

2.7.5 Quality assurance involves feedback

Feedback in this case implies that the data collected by the trainers during the assessment of the trainees' activities and performance, should be shared with them. Feedback on the trainees' learning provides the trainers with information on the position of their teaching activity and at the same time exposes the trainees to the areas of learning that they need to improve. Lack of feedback is stressful and frustrating because it fails to keep the trainees informed about their progress in the education and training programme.

2.7.6 Quality assurance emphasises teamwork

The promotion and enhancement of quality in adult literacy is a collective effort. It is against this background that the trainers should operate as a team and use their expertise to complement one another for the good of the programme as a whole. Instead of competing with one another, team members should collaborate and co-operate with one another. The importance of each member and his or her contribution to continuous improvement should be recognised and appreciated.

2.7.7 Quality assurance requires a vision

Marchese (1991:6) maintain that unlike the lofty platitudes of mission statements, quality assurance gets everybody focussed on the right things to do. Trainers are advised to assess their own teaching activity continuously and to be sure that it results in the right things to be done. Assessing oneself is normally not easy, because one is likely to be subjective and in that way compromise the quality of the programme. This situation can be

averted if the trainers can be trained to carry this exercise and can be provided with appropriate guidelines.

2.8   QUALITY ASSURANCE INSTRUMENTS

This research is about quality assurance in education and training programmes in business. The quality assurance instruments mentioned below have been considered for inclusion, because they provide alternative ways and means that can be used in an effort to promote and enhance quality in education and training programmes. They are

- accreditation;
- programme review;
- ranking and rating studies;
- accountability and performance indicator reporting;
- TQM;
- the assessment-and-outcome movement;
- quality circles;
- management by objectives; and
- integrated quality framework.

2.8.1   Accreditation

Accreditation is a process through which the comparability and recognition of educational standards are promoted. It is used to raise norms and standards of educational activities to a level that will assure quality education. Accreditation also serves the purpose of confirming whether a discipline has achieved its goals as claimed (Strydom, 1993:85). In the USA and other countries, accreditation is normally used by non-governmental organisations as a form of quality assurance instrument. It is meant to improve the performance of any education and training. Gaither (1998:10) says that accreditation may take the form of an audit, in which external evaluators periodically examine evidence maintained by the programme or institution that demonstrates compliance with external standards of quality. In contrast, Massy (1996:[1]) stresses that it is a common phenomenon that once accreditation has taken place, an institution may relax and continue with its

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[1] Paper to the International Conference on Quality Assurance.

normal practice until the next cycle of accreditation. As a result, accreditation cannot achieve an improvement agenda that is assumed to be part of the certification activity.

In the USA, for example, accreditation was not wholeheartedly welcomed by most academics, because it was viewed as an exercise built on minimalist standards whose processes and activities are often hidden from public view (Gaither, 1998:10). Another attack on accreditation was triggered by its failure to address and prevent problems with both academic and administrative integrity. It is important to note that the criticism that has been levelled at accreditation serves as another form of quality assurance.

This implies that criticism in any situation is necessary and desirable, for it leads to the correction and improvement of whatever is perceived to be wrong.

2.8.2   Programme review

This instrument puts too much emphasis on self-study and external peer review at programme level. According to Gaither (1998:10), this instrument was viewed by most critics as a futile exercise that was meant to serve as busywork to occupy some administrators and has little relationship to resource allocation and other decisions.

It is worth mentioning that self-study can provide a subjective review of the programme. The possible reason for this is that the self-study exercise is carried out by individuals who are emotionally involved in the programme. The self-study exercise can only be successful if there are guidelines against which the programme should be assessed. In contrast, the external peer review can be objective in the sense that it is carried out by neutral and independent individuals who do not have any interest in the programme.

2.8.3   Ranking and rating studies

Ranking and rating are used to rank and rate programmes and institutions according to their performance and reputations. The proponents of this approach maintain that it is a useful instrument which helps consumers (i.e. learners) to make their choices with regard to the programmes and institutions they want to be enrolled in. In contrast, the media reports express a view that there is no tangible evidence that ranking and rating are used

in this way. The report poll (1995:1) further indicates that ranking and rating are used less frequently by learners and has less influence than most other sources of information and advice (Gaither: 1998).

2.8.4 Accountability and performance indicator reporting

The purpose of this approach is to establish trend lines of activity and achievement and mark progress and goals for learning and training. In the education and training environment, the commonly used indicators in accountability reports are enrolment trends, learners' performance in admission examinations, retention, pass rates and job placement rates.

The following quotation from Roger Peters (1994:18-19) registers concern about this approach: "Effective assessment requires a diligent search for bad news, which is more useful than good, but accountability encourages the opposite". Most programmes are reluctant to give bad news associated with their activities for fear of being denied funding. Roger Peters stresses that it is through bad news that the wrongs are corrected in any programme.

2.8.5 Total quality management

TQM was initially developed for the corporate world with a focus on manufacturing industries. It emphasises continuous improvement and the principle of customer satisfaction. It is a recent approach that could be adopted and adapted to a number of settings outside the corporate world, including educational institutions and the system of education delivery (Holt, 1993:22; Blankstein, 1996:65; Weller & McElwee, 1997:201).

In the academic arena, some individuals argue against the notion that learners are customers. Their argument is based on the fact that the academic and corporate worlds are completely different, and under no circumstances can the term be used to refer to learners. They argue, "We find it difficult in our work to identify with the language of the market place. We do not see our students as customers in the sense that they know what they want and can buy it from us" (Lomax, 1996:2). However, other academics are comfortable with the approach and maintain that it is suitable for improvement in the

admissions office, the business office, the facilities office, the campus security office and/ or any other administrative settings where 'customers' expect to derive satisfaction from the service rendered.

2.8.6   The assessment-and-outcome movement

This approach focuses mainly on results as opposed to the reputation and image of the training programme or institution. In order to evaluate the performance of both the programme and the learners, this approach seeks a number of forms of evidence. The assessment-and-outcome approach further demands that much should be known about learners upon exit and entry into a training programme (Gaither, 1998:10). Changes that have taken place with regard to their competencies should also be known.

2.8.7   Quality circles

Gerber, Nel & Van Dyk (1998:96) state that quality circles are a work team approach used in organisations to improve the quality of work life. When adopted and applied to education and training programmes, this approach could mean that the team composed of training managers, trainers, trainees, union representatives and supervisors in business will have to meet from time to time to discuss issues related to the performance and quality of the programme. As a collective, they will be able to identify existing problems in the programme and devise some means to address them.

According to the above-mentioned authors, a quality circle approach can only be a success if there are clear objectives: the programme must be supported by top management; the organisational culture must accommodate participative management and the trainees must know the objectives of the programme. The rationale behind participative management in this case is that management and trainers do not have all the solutions or answers to all existing problems in the education and training programmes. As a result, it is imperative for them to allow the relevant stakeholders to take part meaningfully in decision-making in the training programme.

When the programme is implemented for the first time, a section of enthusiastic and co-operative trainees or learners should be used to form the quality circle (Gerber, Nel & Van

Dyk, 1998:96). The participants must receive sufficient training and the programme must be introduced slowly, with gradual progression. In the same light, Meyer (2004:3070) remarks that quality circles are important, especially when it comes to the identification of problems and for this reason, they should be empowered to implement solutions where possible.

2.8.8 Management by objectives

This approach puts too much emphasis on participative management. It advocates the participation of the relevant stakeholders in decision-making. The approach further limits itself to three psychological principles, namely setting goals, feedback and participation.

Once the objectives of the programme are communicated to the trainees, the trainees will become aware of what they have to do and how well they have to do it (Gerber, Nel & Van Dyk, 1998:96). Feedback with regard to their individual performance and that of the programme as a whole will have to be given to them. In this fashion, the shortcomings of the programme are likely to be exposed to them. Through participation in decision-making, all the stakeholders are likely to contribute positively to quality improvement in the programme.

Management by objectives, according to Deming (Whitaker, V. in Mulligan, 1994:227) is dysfunctional. Instead, he advocates the use of TQM because of its holistic nature. TQM is not a fad, it is not the latest buzzword - it is a reality and societies that are bound up in this quality movement will have to adopt it.

2.8.9 Integrated quality framework

This approach recommends that workplace providers of education and training and others should integrate the quality framework in the training programme in their existing arrangements for reviewing progress and quality (http://www.Scotland.gov). It also proposes that it is necessary to build on the good practice framework to devise performance indicators that give evidence of the progress learners are making. Progress should be measured in relation to the benefits they are gaining from their learning, in

relation to growth in confidence, behaviour and attitude as well as applied skills in and outside the learning situation.

2.9   THE INFLUENCE OF THE QUALITY MOVEMENT ON QUALITY ASSURANCE IN ADULT LITERACY IN SOUTH AFRICA

Quality assurance with respect to adult literacy in South Africa occurs within the framework of the SAQA and the NQF. These two statutory bodies provide the framework for quality assurance across the education and training field, including adult literacy (Report of the National Committee on Further Education, 1997:44).

In order to promote and enhance quality in education and training, the transformation agenda in South Africa made sure that there was a single National Department of Education, a legislative framework in the form of the Education and Training Act of 1995, the South African Schools Act of 1996, the Further Education and Training Act of 1998, Curriculum 2005, the National Norms and Standards for School Funding Policy of 1998, the Integrated Quality Management System policy and a host of other related pieces of legislation. Be that as it may, some intellectuals in the academic arena, such as Molale (2204:6), doubt whether this impressive policy infrastructure does translate downwards into educational practice. Molale (2004:5) views this as a period of "policy mushrooming", since most of the policies seemed unconnected and contradictory.

Just like Molale, Jansen (2000:86) is sceptical about the making of education and training policy in South Africa. Jansen maintains that the making of education and training policy could be best described as a struggle for achievement of a broader political symbolism that marks the shift from apartheid to post-apartheid society. According to Jansen (2000:86-102), policy issues pertaining to education and training are politically driven and tend to lean against a particular political ideology. He further remarks that every single case of education and training policy-making demonstrates in different ways the preoccupation of the state with the settling of policy struggles in the political domain rather than in the realm of practice.

Jansen (2000:86-102) finally states that education and training policies hardly reach schools and other training environments exactly as they were proposed. This is therefore a

position that challenges the idea that policies are discourses (i.e. just words), which have nothing to do with everyday practice (i.e. reality). Rogan and Grayson (2001:2) add that in South Africa much attention has been focused on policy formulation without indicating how to translate such policy into measurable outcomes. All too often policy-makers and politicians are focused on the desired outcomes of educational change but neglect the contextual factors that influence implementation. The observations of these intellectuals suggest that there is a wide gap between policy and practice. According to Molale (2004:7) such observations draw attention to the dynamics of both policy development and implementation, as well as the capacity of the state to implement policies.

Spreen (2001:17), who shares almost the same line of thinking with Jansen with regard to policies, argues that his experience in educational reform has made him susceptible to the argument that when policies are put on paper with coherent logic, people are deluded into thinking fundamental change is taking place. He goes on to argue that observers of policy reform often do not take into account what it takes to truly alter the structure of society or its institutions, nor do they consider important distinctions made at ground level by those implementing the policies. Spreen's argument implies that well formulated policies are simply meaningless if they are not implemented effectively. The researcher concurs with both Jansen and Spreen's arguments. Having been involved in education and training in the apartheid and in the post-apartheid era both in business and the public sector, the researcher has witnessed a number of policies being formulated in an attempt to transform apartheid education and training that was said to be of poor quality. It was perceived as being of poor quality, among other reasons, because it was so highly input-driven, often by centrally written textbooks which openly pushed the narrow ideological agenda of the apartheid state (Allias, 2003:310). Costly forums, seminars and conferences were convened for the purpose of policy formulation and most of those policies were not translated into action and remained on paper in the archives of state departments.

When benchmarked against the quality philosophies of Edwards Deming, Phillip Crosby, Joseph Juran and Armand Feigenbaum, it has emerged that SAQA might have borrowed some best practice principles from these philosophies. Benchmarking, according to the Higher Education Quality Committee (2004:22), is a process by which a programme is evaluated and compared against internal and external, national and international reference points, for the purpose of accountability and improvement. Flanagan (2000:312) further

adds that benchmarking is the process of measuring against, and improving on, the products, the services and the practices of one's toughest competitors or those organisations regarded as leaders in a particular practice or business area. Its goal is to reinvent operations to achieve significantly better performance and is best accomplished as part of a restructuring or re-engineering process. Like the philosophies of quality, SAQA emphasises continuous improvement, stakeholder participation and customer satisfaction in the process of ensuring quality.

Despite the problems associated with policy implementation in South Africa, it must be acknowledged that the country has an impressive compendium of education policies that have been widely acclaimed throughout the world. However, it must be noted that good policies do not automatically result in good results (Molale, 2004:7).

2.10   CONCLUSION

This chapter has looked closely into the origin of the quality movement, the controversial nature of quality, notions of quality, standards, philosophies of quality, quality assurance, lessons learnt from the comparison of quality philosophies and the influence of the quality movement on quality assurance in adult literacy in business in South Africa. All these issues depend on an understanding of the research problem as well as the whole body of research.

It has become evident that quality is a very controversial and relative concept that needs to be improved from time to time. Its improvement is a collective effort, which means that all the stakeholders should continuously play a role in the enhancement of quality.

Much has been written in this chapter to demonstrate how the quality movement has assisted both Japanese and American companies to compete globally. However, this is no guarantee that this philosophy could help address quality-related issues in education and training in business, especially in the South African context. Should it be adopted, it will be advisable to first implement the best practices advocated by this philosophy in a smaller scale so as to see if they yield good results. This is likely to give an indication as whether the quality movement is

a viable option in an attempt to promote and enhance quality in education and training in business.

Chapter VI will therefore examine international approaches to quality and their relevance to education and training in business in South Africa. This exercise is important and relevant to the research, because it deals with an international benchmark. This is the process of analysing the information that enables reference points to be created, which can be used to promote change in the direction that is most likely to lead to improvement (Jackson, 2000:4).

CHAPTER III: INTERNATIONAL PRACTICES OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND THEIR RELEVANCE TO ADULT LITERACY IN SOUTH AFRICA

3.1   INTRODUCTION

While South Africa has become involved in the quality debate only recently, much work has been done in this area in most European countries and the USA (Appelby, 1999:53). This development illustrates that quality assurance is a global phenomenon as related in the previous chapters. It is against this backdrop that the purpose of this chapter is to

- demonstrate how training in general and adult literacy in particular in business can benefit from foreign quality assurance experiences to enhance the quality system in South Africa;

- highlight best quality assurance practices that could be modified and incorporated into the South African quality assurance system in education and training and make it more effective; and

- focus on the relevance of foreign quality assurance practices in education and training, to adult literacy in the South African situation.

This chapter will be able to draw from international experience through the process of benchmarking, which is defined as a process to facilitate the systematic comparison and evaluation of practice, process and performance to aid improvement and self-regulation (Jackson: 2000:6). This process involves analysing performance, practices and processes to obtain information that can be used for self-improvement (Alstete, 1995:20). The process of analysing information enables benchmarks (i.e. reference points) to be created, which can be used to promote change in the direction that is most likely to lead to improvement (Jackson, 2000:4).

Benchmarking originates from commerce and industry where it is a commonly used mechanism for self-evaluation and self-improvement. According to Jackson (2000:Cover page), benchmarking enables an organisation to compare itself with others, to identify its relative strengths and weaknesses, and improve its working practices accordingly. The

inference could therefore be that benchmarking could be promoted in education and training to support the regulation of standards and as a means to improve adult literacy and other types of learning.

The essential elements of benchmarking are that the practice is:

- **Continuous**

  Benchmarking should not be treated as a 'one-off'. It should be incorporated into the regular planning cycle of the organisation and influence the management of key processes.

- **Systematic**

  A consistent methodology should be adopted and followed by the organisation. In addition, processes should be in place to ensure that good practice is shared across the organisation.

- **Implementation**

  Benchmarking helps to identify the gaps that exist between current performance and the best practice performance that has been achieved but in order for improvement to occur, a set of actions must be implemented.

- **Best practice**

  It is not necessary to identify the absolutely best practice in the world in order for benchmarking to be successful. Good or superior practice is probably a more accurate phrase.

With the increasing emphasis on globalisation, coupled with the speed and complexity of the business environment, the realisation comes that human resource development departments that remain internally focused will not survive over the long term. As a result, it is crucial that human resource development departments should become actively involved in external benchmarking projects and networking in order to keep abreast of the latest developments in human resource development. The following guidelines can therefore be used to become actively involved in benchmarking projects:

- Set up a benchmarking team to plan benchmarking visits to other companies.

- Liase with companies that are known for best practices in human resource development.

- Participate actively in SAQA bodies and forums.

- Attend meetings and seminars of professional associations, such as the Institute for Organisation, Development and Transformation, South African Society for Quality and National Productivity Institute.

- Participate in benchmarking studies.

- Analyse all benchmarking data collected.

- Decide on action plans to improve human resource development performance.

- Implement improvement action plans.

- Continuously monitor and evaluate action plans.

3.2   INTERNATIONAL QUALITY ASSURANCE PRACTICES

Khan (2000:11) states that the increasing mobility of students, professionals and other work seekers across national and continental boundaries, combined with the increase in distance and on-line provision, underscores the need for global debate about the comparability and equivalence of educational provision and outcomes. This implies that people have become citizens of the world who can study and work wherever they want to in the world. In short, this is about the internationalisation of occupations and the transnational nature of education and training in the twenty-first century.

In view of the development cited above, the Australian Minister of Employment, Education and Youth affairs stressed the importance of international considerations in the implementation of a quality assurance system in December 1999 (Kemp, 1999:3). In the same vein, the German Adult Education Association has long been involved in the maintenance of international contacts and at the same time taking part in transnational co-operation (Annual Report: European Professional Contacts and International Exchange, 2001:1). The Mecklenburg-Western Pomeranian Land Association conducted an experience exchange with the Danish Abenraa Adult Education Centre on the theme 'Innovative Adult Education practices - Open Training and Distance Learning'. It also organised an exchange between American and German adult educators on questions of quality assurance in adult education and the design of evaluation instruments to guarantee

learning results (Annual Report: European Professional Contacts and International Exchange, 2001:1).

Such initiatives are meant to 'build bridges' and overcome barriers that can stand in the way of transnational co-operation. They also aim to improve the quality of education and training to the extent that these initiatives are internationally recognised and accepted. South Africa, as part of the global village, cannot afford not to become involved in such initiatives and developments.

3.2.1 Quality assurance practices from England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales

The quality practices from the first world countries mentioned above show how important external and independent bodies are in regulating the providers and their activities in an effort to guard against the lowering of standards in education and training programmes. Should the providers be at liberty to conduct education and training programmes unchecked and unguided, the quality of these is likely to be compromised because all providers will do as they please.

Among others, these bodies can conduct quality audits from time to time, monitor internal assessment, give support and advise providers on difficulties in meeting the required standards. In contrast, Mhlanga (2004:5) maintains that while input from external bodies is desirable and in fact necessary for development of quality assurance policies and practices for an institution, the role of the local staff should not be underestimated in the process. The institution should be responsible for developing its own quality assurance policies, taking into account its unique contextual factors without overlooking global trends and international standards.

Mhlanga (2004:6) also argues that external quality assurance bodies, especially state centrally controlled quality assurance systems, are managerialistic and are not necessarily an effective way of enhancing institutional quality. It is worse if they are too prescriptive and rigid and stifle creativity and flexibility in individual institutions. Being managerialistic, these external quality assurance bodies are likely to have what Harvey (1996:Paper presented at the 18th Annual EAIR Forum) refers to as a compliance culture.

However, Mhlanga (2004:6) acknowledges that is generally clear from literature that both systems (internal and external quality assurance systems) are desirable in one context and in fact should work to complement rather than to counter each other.

As demonstrated below, foreign quality assurance and awarding bodies from the first world have some best practices to offer regarding the promotion and enhancement of quality in education and training programmes in South Africa. This implies that no quality assurance system is complete. It is a continuing process that seeks continuous improvement towards perfection (Kaufman, 1993:55). As a result, borrowing best practices from other systems and adapting them can improve a particular system and reinforce its effectiveness. In this way, quality becomes a shared concept (Lomax, 1996:65).

3.2.1.1   International quality assurance agencies

The researcher believes that it would be shortsighted not to accept the view that education and training settings can and should learn from international best practices. In this regard, benchmarking can be used to promote and enhance the quality of education and training programmes. This is the reason why international quality assurance agencies in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Island are examined. These first world countries were chosen in the absence of relevant literature on quality assurance from other African states.

- **England:** The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) regulate all external qualifications in England. QCA works hand in hand with the Welsh, Scottish and Northern Ireland regulatory bodies to ensure that vocational qualifications remain aligned.

- **Scotland:** The Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) is responsible for accrediting and awarding qualifications in Scotland.

- **Northern Ireland:** The regulatory authority in Northern Ireland is the Council for Curriculum, Examination and Assessment (CCEA), which regulate external qualifications for students in full time education until the age of 19. National vocational qualifications remain the responsibility of the QCA.

- **Wales:** In Wales the regulatory authority is the Qualifications and Assessment Authority for Wales, which regulates all external qualifications. National vocational qualifications are the responsibility of the QCA (UK Further Education System: Quality Assurance-Education and Training: British Council). (http://www.britishcouncil.org./education/system/fe/fequality.htm:1-2).

3.2.1.2 Awarding bodies

Independent awarding bodies administer and award the qualifications in colleges and training centres. The QCA monitors and sets the ground rules but the awarding bodies are responsible for the quality of the centres (FE colleges, training centres and companies), which offer their qualification and implementation systems. These awarding bodies are independent and non-profit making and run on a commercial basis. There is a wide range of awarding bodies in the UK, such as Assessment and Alliance, Oxford and Cambridge and the Royal Society of Arts and the National Open College, which is a national awarding body.

3.2.1.3 The Adult Learning Inspectorate

In the UK, the Adult Learning Inspectorate has a remit to inspect all work-based training, adult education and prison education. In an attempt to avoid reliance on external inspection, as is the practice in the UK, it is advisable to build quality into the work process. This means that whoever takes part in the education and training programme should be empowered to be responsible for the quality of their work and in this fashion eliminate the need for external inspection (Bradley, 1993:49). This exercise aims at turning the stakeholders into quality inspectors of their own activities in the programme.

3.2.1.4   Sector Skills Councils

A new network of UK-wide Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) has been charged to lead the skills and productivity drive in industry or business sectors recognised by employers. They bring together employers, trade unions and professional bodies working with government to develop the skills that UK business needs. The Sector Skills Development Agency has been established to underpin the SSC network and promote effective funding between sectors.

An initiative similar to the above has been realised through the formulation of the National Skills Development Strategy which sets out certain priorities for skills development in South Africa (National Skills Development Strategy: 2000). Through skills development, companies, individuals and communities around the world, including South Africa, are reaping the benefits of investing in their people. Commitment to quality should be incorporated into any skills development programme to ensure that standards can be raised continually and that qualifications have national and international currency. To promote quality and monitor standards, the new SETAs, together with other professional bodies, have a statutory duty (Erasmus & Van Dyk, 2003:30).

It has become clear that in countries such as England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales, a wider choice is regarded as a crucial means of helping to improve quality and standards. This is reflected in the existence of a variety of independent awarding bodies in these countries whose major responsibility is to promote and enhance quality in education and training. It has also emerged that partnership among stakeholders plays a vital role in promoting quality. Quality depends upon a common passion for excellence, with everyone contributing to a common effort (Aspin, Chapman & Wilkinson, 1994:17).

3.2.2 Lessons on quality assurance to be learnt from foreign education and training institutions

In order to improve the performance of a system, and in this case, an education and training programme, 'profound knowledge' (Kaufman, 1993:9) or ideas from outside can be useful (Tumbull in Mulligan, 1994:27). Quality assurance is a continuing process that is

never complete. It seeks continuous improvement towards perfection. It is against this background that this part of the research examines critical success factors regarding quality assurance in other educational and training settings that can be adapted and applied to education and training programmes in South Africa, particularly adult literacy. According to Kaufman (1992b, 1992c, 1992d; 1993:25), critical success factors are those actions that must be taken to implement quality assurance successfully. The researcher adds that shortcomings of foreign quality assurance practices also matter, because they signal the pitfalls that need to be avoided at all cost in an effort to promote and enhance education and training quality. This implies that while South Africans should not implement the failures, they should learn from them so as to improve their own quality assurance practices.

3.2.2.1   Northview Elementary School

Northview Elementary School and Comer School Development Programme have successfully adapted continuous improvement concepts to education and training (Schmoker & Wilson, 1993:389-395). Their success is very significant for this research, because it gives an indication of how organisations can develop a quality culture with emphasis on continuous improvement.

Northview Elementary School is a school in Manhattan, Kansas, which serves a lower-middle-class community and has adopted Deming's philosophy of quality assurance. After effective implementation of this philosophy, fourth grade reading competency scores went from 59.5% to nearly 100%; sixth grade scores rose from 41.7% to 97.1%. Fourth and sixth grade mathematics scores went from 70.3% to 98.6% (Schmoker and Wilson, 1993:389-395).

The learners' performance in various subjects improved remarkably and this could be attributed to the following:

- The principal established a purposeful, democratic and collegial environment.
- There was insistence on regular team analysis of achievement data to isolate problems and promote improvement.

- Barriers between staff members were broken down through communication. The members of staff could collectively solve problems that required an understanding of interdependencies that affected everyone's efforts.
- Problems were identified collectively.

3.2.2.2   Comer School Development Programme

This programme came into existence in 1968 and was initiated by psychiatrist James Comer in collaboration with the Yale University Child Study Centre and the New Haven Public Schools (Schmoker & Wilson, 1993:389-395). The Comer School Development Programme also adapted and applied continuous improvement concepts successfully. The performance of the learners was improved through.

- addressing issues of relationships and trust and a sustaining democratic atmosphere. This situation encouraged both learners and teachers to work harder, smarter and more happily;
- involvement of staff and parents at every level of the school;
- problems and challenges being tackled through a process that resembles Deming's PDSA (Plan, Do, Study and Act) cycle;
- systematic identification of the school's goals; planning and regular assessment of effort and progress followed by carefully designed modification that resulted in improvement;
- promotion of continuous improvement;
- continual refining of measures;
- identification of problems and their correction;
- training and retraining of teachers;
- improvement of processes; and
- consensus decision making and collaboration between stakeholders.

3.2.3   Quality management systems: ISO 9000

No single quality assurance system can lead to perfect continuous improvement of an education and training programme. The reason for this is that each system has its own shortfalls and above all, it is not perfect and situations are dynamic and have to change

and adapt as well. It is against this backdrop that best practices are borrowed from other systems and adapted in an attempt to promote and enhance quality. Best practices borrowed from the ISO 9000 series could be adapted and applied to education and training as described in this section.

ISO 9000 is a deliberate transformation of the acronym for the International Organisation for Standardisation (IOS) (Lewis & Smith, 1994:274-275). This system came into being with the launch of the Technical Committee 176 in 1979 to deal with generic quality principles in response to the need for an international minimum standard for the way in which manufacturing companies establish quality control methods, not only to control product quality, but also to maintain its uniformity and predictability (Stewart et al, 1994, Rothery, 1993 as cited by Liston, 1997:117). In simpler terms, ISO 9000 refers to the literal meaning of 'isos', which is a shorter version of the Greek term for uniformity, equality or homogeneousness (Sprow, 1992:73).

Although the ISO 9000 series was meant for the manufacturing industry or the market place, it is increasingly being applied in the education and training environment. There are critics who are sceptical about similar quality assurance systems that have been borrowed from industry and the market place. They argue that their learners are not customers, for they know precisely what they want and can obtain whatever they want from them. These critics find it extremely difficult to identify with the language of the marketplace.

ISO 9001 could be used in the education and training environment in South Africa, because it offers some useful ideas and structures. According to Liston (1997:200), combined with the TQM system, the ISO 9001 could ensure that:

- the customers' needs and opinions are taken into account;
- a competitive strategy, including knowledge of the competition, is developed;
- the needs of the market are addressed;
- procedures (as simple as possible) to ensure quality performance are in place;
- performance measures are developed;
- processes are reviewed continuously to eliminate waste;
- effective communication is ensured; and
- evidence of continuous improvement is sought.

The elements identified by the integration of the ISO 9001 and the TQM intend to create a climate that encourages continuous improvement towards perfection. The ISO 9000 series and TQM are practical examples of quality assurance systems that could be value-adding if adopted and properly adapted to education and training. The world has changed and will continue to do so. There should therefore be no persistence in applying old paradigms, boundaries and outmoded rules to new realities (Aspin, Chapman & Wilkinson, 1994:24).

3.2.4   Using a Total Quality Management system to manage an education and training programme

American companies were the primary producers for the whole world after the Second World War. For the mere reason that the environment in the USA was production-driven and consumption was high, American companies developed a complacent attitude to quality and productivity. Having failed to heed customers' call for quality, American companies lost many customers, for they resorted to buying better-quality foreign products, instead of American-made goods (Bradley, 1993:6).

American companies therefore found themselves having to compete with foreign companies, especially Japanese companies. As the competition became increasingly tough for the USA, American managers started looking for effective ways to maximise productivity. Deming, who is regarded as one of the quality 'gurus' or the father of TQM, trained the Japanese in quality. According to Reuven Frank, quoted by Michaelson (in Mulligan, 1994:3), Deming was a classic example of how successful people are often ignored at home. Deming was a prophet without honour in his own country, the USA. This brief background depicts the historical context within which TQM has to be understood and this informs current understanding of the concept. Although the philosophy of TQM springs from the world of business, it transcends the narrow commercial imperatives of increased productivity and profitability. It is a natural fit with the hopes and aspirations of educational leaders in their work to improve educational institutions and communities (Bonstinghl, 1992:4-9).

Edward Sallis (1993:34) describes TQM as "a philosophy of continuous improvement, which can provide any educational institution with a set of practical tools for meeting and

exceeding present and future customers' needs, wants and expectations". TQM is also seen as a value-based, information-driven management process through which the minds and talents of people at all levels are applied fully and creatively to the organisation's continuous improvement (Rhodes, 1992:76-80). Both definitions of TQM put emphasis on "continuous improvement" which is an attempt to assure quality in education and training programme. Bonstinghl (1992:4-9) states that TQM is based on the following four pillars:

- **The organisation must focus, first and foremost, on its suppliers and customers:** The teachers and the education and training environment are suppliers of effective learning tools amongst the other things, and learners are primary customers.

- **Everyone in the organisation must be dedicated to continuous improvement, personally and collectively:** This ethos is known as *'kaizen'* by the Japanese and refers to a society-wide covenant of mutual help in the process of getting better and better, day by day (Bonstinghl, 1992:4-9). Teachers should acknowledge the existence of multiple intelligences and potentials in each learner and ensure that learners develop their many intelligences and potentials more fully day by day.

- **The organisation must be viewed as a system and the work people do within the system must be seen as continuing processes:** The education and training programmes are systems and as a result, they have processes. The improvements made to these processes determine the quality of the resulting products. Continuous improvement of learning processes replaces the 'teach and test' way of instruction.

- **The success of TQM is the responsibility of top management:** Top management should champion TQM and be committed to it. Management should also ensure that TQM is part of the organisational culture. Failure to do this is likely to prevent TQM from being implemented.

Triibus, quoted by Lockwood (in Mulligan, 1994:33) sees TQM as holistic. To support his claim, he states that it is not only concerned with the education and training environment, but also with management of the environment and the roles of all the parties that are

involved. More importantly, insistence on quality is another unique feature of TQM. As a movement that is inclusive, TQM stipulates that quality improvement requires teamwork. The rationale behind this is that participation leads to commitment and ultimately to ownership of the process. If the participant feels that he or she owns the process, he or she will care about the quality (Michaelson, in Mulligan, 1994:5).

Participation instils a sense of pride in the participants in the sense that their voices count, their ideas are respected and they can make a difference. TQM is a philosophy of management that rejects a hierarchical or 'top-down' approach in favour of an approach in which all participants can and do contribute to enhancing the quality of the learning community (Rossmiller, in Mulligan 1994:31). Members of the team cannot automatically work together harmoniously and effectively, they need to be empowered to use their collective knowledge, to make collective judgements and take collective action to achieve education and training (Lozotte, 1993:22-30). For the purpose of empowering team members, the goals should be clearly stated or else the whole exercise would not be an act of empowerment.

In order to make teams function effectively, it is important to break down the barriers between or among members. Whatever is standing between or among members as obstacles should be addressed. Demming (Mulligan, 1994:168) advises that barriers can be broken down by problem-solving. One of the more persistent barriers that impedes quality in organisations is the practice of treating critics as enemies and isolating them from the inner circle. Critics should be considered as best friends, for their insights and observations often have the potential to inspire great change and improvement. The capacity to listen to and understand critics should be developed (Williams, 1994:236). Ben Franklin wrote that "The wise man (female and male) draws more advantage from his or her enemies than the fool from his or her friends" (Williams, in Mulligan, 1994:237). TQM is likely to transform education and training programmes into programmes where continuous improvement is the norm. It removes fear of committing mistakes. Whoever uses this management approach can easily identify the strengths and weaknesses of the programme and then try to correct the weaknesses.

Effective as TQM seems to be, it can go wrong owing to lack of leadership, middle management muddle, misunderstanding of participation and failure to include the customer.

- **Lack of leadership**: In many organisations, top management embarks on the application of TQM with limited knowledge of what total quality is all about. The problem becomes even worse when top management abdicates its responsibilities and delegates the fundamental duties to lower levels of management. This is a clear demonstration that top management only offers passive commitment to quality (Brigham, 1994:19).

- **Middle management muddle:** Disorder often occurs where middle managers and supervisors are sidelined in the planning and implementation of TQM. They are normally instructed to learn new behaviour, an exercise which is difficult in the absence of proper training. This exercise is contrary to the principle of TQM that advocates the institution in-service training (Kaufman, 1993:50). As a result, middle managers and supervisors become resistant to the change that TQM intends effecting.

- **Misunderstanding of participation:** Both managers and employees have to learn new roles and skills to be able to implement TQM. For this reason, they are taken through a training programme. Having completed training, they are often not afforded an opportunity to participate in the implementation of TQM for months or even years and this result in them having to be trained again. The initial investment made in them turns out to be a waste.

- **Failure to include the customer:** Many organisations pay too much attention to the improvement of internal processes at the expense of customers. No efforts are made to align these processes to the customers' needs. Often the fact that successful organisations direct their efforts to meet consumers' needs is ignored. Organisations should keep customers satisfied and provide added value: a continuous return on investment. Customers have to know that they are getting what they want and even something more (Kaufman, 1993:94). It is practices such as these that have resulted in TQM yielding limited success in some organisations.

However, TQM is opposed to both management by detection and management through prevention. Most institutions, such as institutions of education and training, businesses and state departments especially in the USA use mainly management by detection (Borgers, in Milligan 1994:111). Neither management by detection nor management through prevention is holistic in nature and they focus mainly on the output of a system - the results or product - then set standards to comply with the results.

Managers who embrace management by detection use the results to grant incentives to above average performers and penalise below average ones. The below average performers live in fear of being punished or not being rewarded. Fear reduces risk-taking and co-operation, elements that are very important in improving the quality of a product. Unrealistic and faked means are therefore adopted to produce the results that are demanded by management quickly. If there is improvement, it is not significant, and more often the results are poor (Mulligan, 1994:111).

Management by detection advocates mass-testing, extensive accreditation, visits, etc, as quality assurance measures. Deming regards these measures as having harmful effects on people by making them fear failure (Siu-Runyan & Heart, 1992:23-26 quoted by Mulligan: 1994). Deming admits though that fear is a motivator, but does not believe that it motivates towards constructive action. He gives an analogy that learning and risk-taking cannot take place in an atmosphere where people are afraid to ask questions, take a stand or make suggestions. The focus of management by detection is therefore on doing the work over and over again and recycling as corrections, not on improving the process. Since most organisations in the USA were traditionally characterised by management by detection, which was apparently wasteful and useless, the USA's economic performance could not surpass for example that of Japan and Germany, which had better systems.

Management by detection is based on the following false assumptions:

- Most defects in the system are caused by the participants. Borges, (in Mulligan, 1994:111) unfortunately does not accept this assumption, because he attributes 93 percent of defects to management. He maintains that members of management are the ones who control the factors that can eliminate most defects.

- Competition within the organisation improves productivity. This assumption is also refuted by Borges (in Mulligan, 1994:111), who believes that competition is useful in the world of sports. He believes that the education and training and work environments are not games with winners and losers (Borgers, in Mulligan, 1994:111). It cannot be used as a motivational tool either in the education and training environment or in the work-place. It does not encourage co-operation, whereas teamwork is essential if quality is to be obtained.

- People can be motivated by doing something to or for them. This assumption undermines the fact that people make their own choices according to what they believe to be quality.

3.2.5   The Balanced Scorecard

The Balanced Scorecard (BSC) is another management tool that can be used synergistically to support the development of particular improvement areas. It is a non-prescriptive framework that enables any type of organisation to customise it for its own use. It provides a framework for organisational self-reflection and learning as well as providing a pointer to what an organisation can do to improve its overall performance and the services it provides to its key stakeholders (Ferreira, 2003:136).

The BSC as a quality assurance tool is significant for this research because of its efforts to move away from traditional ways of measuring and improving quality. Traditionally, financial accounting measures such, as return on investment, were used to measure the performance of organisations or programmes and to provide signals for continuous improvement. Such measures were found to be misleading in the sense that they do not give a balanced picture of performance; instead, they view performance from one perspective, the financial perspective. It was against this background that the BSC was devised as a tool that provides a comprehensive view of the organisation or programme. Kaplan (1992:71) emphasises that the complexity of managing an organisation today requires that performance should be viewed in several areas simultaneously. Hence, the BSC requires that an undertaking should be looked at from the following four important perspectives:

- Customer perspective: How do customers see us?
- Internal perspective: What must we excel at?
- Innovation and learning perspective: Can we continue to improve and create value?
- Financial perspective: How do we look to shareholders?

Fig 3.1 below illustrates four very important perspectives that need attention in a vigorous attempt to effect continuous improvement in a system. Its flexibility confirms that it can be adapted to education and training and effectively create an environment that promotes quality.
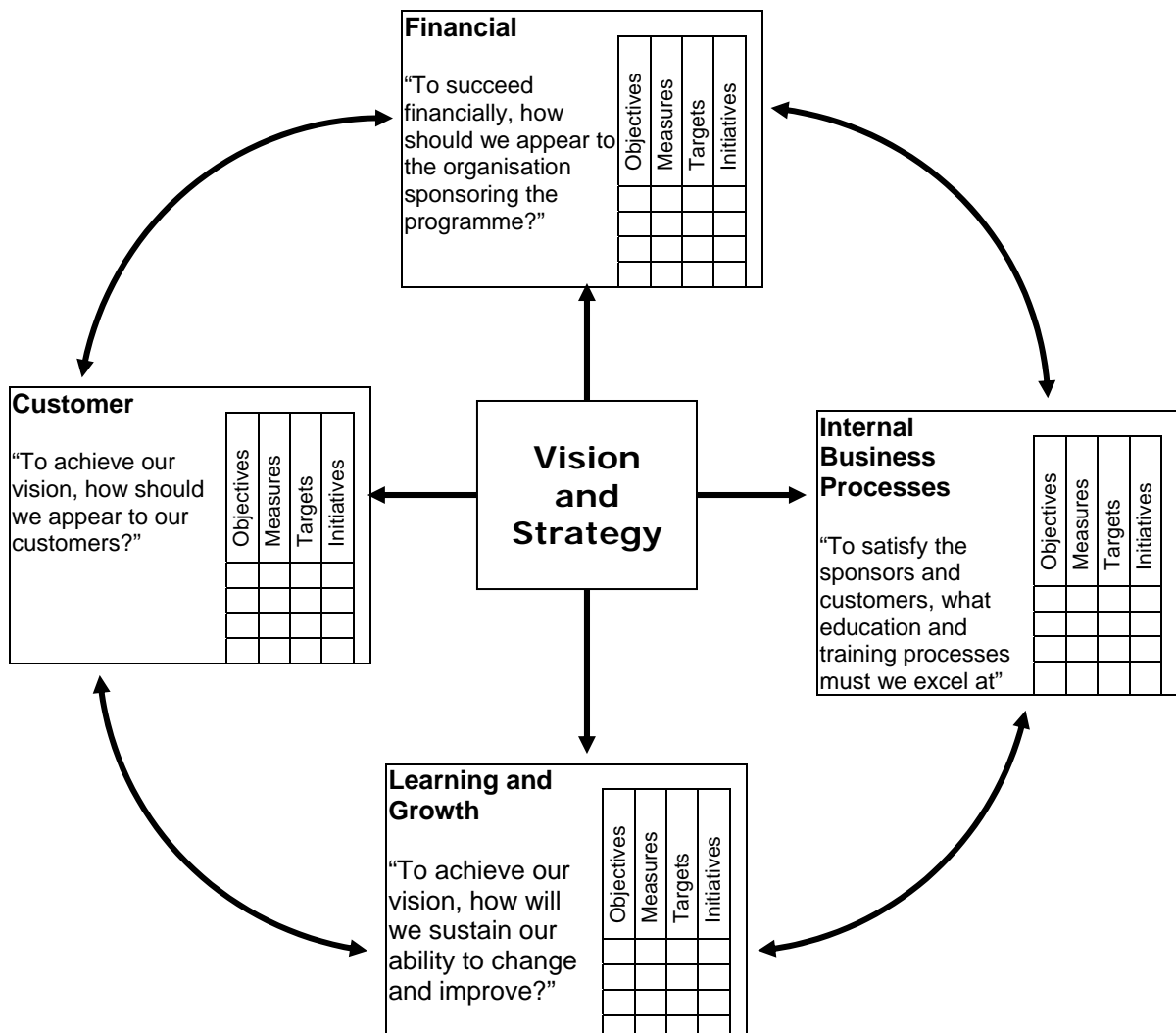
Fig. 3.1: A Balanced Scorecard (Kaplan: 1992:72)

Adult literacy, education and training programmes in general can benefit from adopting, customising and using this tool, as research has revealed that organisations that have used the BSC have

- become customer-oriented;
- improved the quality of their performance, service and product;
- emphasised teamwork; and
- encouraged managers not to improve the performance of one area at the expense of others.

3.2.5.1 Incorporation of a Balanced Scorecard into education and training

According to Kaplan and Norton (1992:71), the scorecard can track the key elements of an organisation's strategy, from continuous improvement and partnerships to teamwork. They further compare it to the dials in an airplane cockpit, for it gives managers complex information at a glance to react to pro-actively. In short, it means that the scorecard is capable of providing a fast but comprehensive view of the organisation and at the same time expose areas that require improvement. Kaplan & Norton (1992:73) confirm that organisations that have applied the BSC to their settings have

- become customer-oriented;
- improved the quality of their performance, service and product;
- emphasised teamwork; and
- encouraged managers not to improve the performance of one area at the expense of others.

Considering its balanced focus on different components of the system, the scorecard could enable management to realise that education and training programmes consist of interrelated and interdependent parts. This realisation could in return encourage them to work at aiming all these parts towards a vision of quality.

According to the researcher's analysis and interpretation of the BSC, even though it originates from the world of business, it transcends the narrow commercial imperatives of increased productivity and profitability. This is reflected in the gains it has provided to the

organisations that have applied it as mentioned above. Instead, it seeks to improve quality in the setting in which it is being applied. It could be concluded from documented evidence that the BSC, which was first applied in business, could be adapted for education and training.

3.3   INTERNATIONAL QUALITY ASSURANCE BODIES

The maintenance and enhancement of quality and endeavours to define the concept of 'quality' and measure it, have now become major issues for education and training globally. Since quality and quality assurance have become international issues, international quality assurance bodies have become a must. These international quality assurance bodies will make it possible for diverse nations to share information and continuously interact with one another on quality-related issues, especially now that education and training have become transnational. Among other bodies, there are the Global Alliance for Transitional Education (GATE) and the International Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (INQAAHE) (Conference on International Network of quality assurance agencies in higher education, 1997 & 1999). Education and training in South Africa could benefit from international best practices.

The above may not hold all the answers or solutions for quality improvement in education and training, adult literacy in particular, but does shed some new light on education and training management. However, McBurnie (2000:5) cautions that while transnational education brings about benefits, it also poses some vexing questions such as: How can one be sure that quality is maintained when the programme 'crosses the border' into another country? How appropriate is the content of the programme and the teaching methods?

It is neither the intention nor the responsibility of this research to try to provide answers or solutions to the above-mentioned questions. In passing, it will be recommended that exchanges and debates among international providers and stakeholders must take place. Relevant quality assurance measures will presumably emerge from these engagements.

3.3.1   GATE

GATE is a non-profit-generating alliance that was introduced in London in 1996 with participants from corporations, national associations, the professions, accrediting, licensing authorities and institutions of education internationally. It was founded to attend to quality assurance-related matters in educational programmes and services that cross national borders. GATE has programmes in place to address the needs of its customers in connecting with the

- development of principles of good practice and recognition of quality in international education and training;

- provision of access to global information on educational systems and institutions and transnational education; and

- exploration of current issues corporations face in international hiring and universities face in international admissions.

What emerges here is the fact that quality, nationally and internationally, is not the sole prerogative of management or the institution, but something to be negotiated with partners and stakeholders. This argument illustrates that quality is a shared concept (Lomax, 1996:65). It can therefore not be achieved by leaving it to managers and the so-called experts (Lomax, 1996:xv).

3.3.2   The IIZ/DVV (German Association)

This association provides support for continuing education in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Central and Eastern Europe. The IIZ/DVV also represents the GAEA on the European stage. In the past, the IIZ/DVV achieved the following:

- A seminar entitled ' Building Bridges and Overcoming Barriers' was conducted to give the participating organisations an opportunity to present their ideas and experiences and discuss the problems and difficulties encountered in connection

with the dissemination of their products and the transfer and marketing of innovative practice.

- The IIZ/DVV took an active part in the global debate on the international position of basic education in the follow-up to the World Education Forum in Dakar.

- In a joint effort together with the European Association for the Education of Adults, the IIZ/DVV staged a 'Learning Fair' giving European projects of co-operation that had been conducted successfully a platform to exhibit their results, discuss their positive and negative experiences, form new contacts and investigate possibilities for new co-operative efforts.

- In 2001, the IIZ/DVV received funds from the Cultural Affairs Department of the Foreign Office and financed the following activities among others:

  o The organisation and exchange between American and German adult educators on questions of quality assurance in adult education and the design of evaluation instruments to guarantee learning results.

  o The promotion of existing projects of co-operation, initiating new project partnerships and fostering networking among continuing education institutions and agents in the Baltic region and discussion between France and Spain on the possibility of cross-border co-operation and the communication difficulties that might arise from language differences (Annual Report: European Professional Contacts and International Exchange, 2001:1).

What emerges here is the promotion of the spirit of co-operation and partnership between the providers of education and training world-wide. Such transnational co-operation could address McBurnie's concerns about the maintenance of quality in transnational education and training and the appropriateness of the programme and the teaching methods (2000:5).

This section is significant for this research, simply because the providers of education and training could be exposed to foreign quality assurance practices that have had amazing successes and that could serve as examples for organisations in other countries. Some of these principles could be adopted and applied effectively for the improvement of local education and training programmes.

3.3.3   INQAAHE

Although the INQAAHE focuses mainly on higher education, there are best quality assurance practices that could be drawn from it and be generalised to education and training as a whole. In support of such a view, the ex-president of INQAAHE made the following remark at a conference held at the Kruger National Park in South Africa in 1997: "New developments are also regularly occurring in the field of quality assurance. The globalisation of the economy and the availability of powerful means of communication have given rise to new pre-occupations for the internalisation of standards in post-secondary education. The dissemination of Deming's idea in the industrial world that has led to the establishment of the ISO 9000 norms to all kinds of enterprises is likely to *influence our methods of assuring quality"* (INQAAHE, 1997). While the Network enables members to share information among themselves about the maintenance, evaluation and improvement of higher education, and to disseminate best quality assurance practices, it also enables members to

- establish links between quality assurance and accreditation bodies world-wide;
- obtain information about higher education systems of different countries;
- be better informed about qualifications and awards for the purpose of credit transfer;
- conduct research in higher education quality management; and
- evaluate and monitor developments in higher education (INQAAHE, 1997).

The network arranges conferences and publishes a newsletter in an attempt to achieve the above-mentioned purposes and to keep the members informed about quality-related issues in higher education (INQAAHE 5th Biennial Conference, 1998:71). There are significant elements that could be drawn from the INQAAHE and be incorporated into

education and training quality assurance bodies nationally and internationally and make them more effective, instead of re-inverting the wheel.

3.4   EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN SOUTH AFRICA

The South African national quality assurance system is in an embryonic stage. Quality assurance with respect to education and training programmes in South Africa takes place within the framework of SAQA and the NQF. These two important initiatives, according to which education and training qualifications are to be registered, are already operational. SAQA may establish ETQAs or bodies may apply to SAQA to be accredited as such, provided they meet certain criteria.

All ETQAs and providers are required by the ETQA regulations to put in place a quality management system that includes policies, procedures and review mechanisms for quality assurance (Fourie, 2000:50). While SAQA and the NQF are meant to transform the South African education and training system, some people view such policy initiatives as political symbolism (Jansen, 2000:94). It is further argued that these policies do not seem to be connected to any serious intention to change the practices of education and training on ground level.

Instead, there is over-investment in political symbolism at the expense of practical considerations, which largely explains the lack of change in South African education and training. Such an argument is presumably triggered by the tendency of government to remain pre-occupied with policy formulation and pay attention to implementation. This argument is supported by Human when he says, "Thinking is easy, acting is difficult, and to put one's thoughts into action is the most difficult thing in the world. We need to learn how to think and act simultaneously; how to become craftsmen who can combine the hand and the mind to create excellent organisations" (Human, 1991:313).

For this reason, some critics conclude that policies are just discourses that hardly reach the education and training environments exactly as they were proposed (Jansen, 2000:97). Getting the strategy right is only half the struggle; the best of plans do not ensure good implementation. Effective implementation involves the stakeholders, the improvement of processes linked to results and an enduring focus on the customer.

3.5 CONCLUSION

In this chapter a critical discussion of the international practices of quality assurance and their relevance to adult literacy was presented. The rest of the chapter focussed on the international quality assurance bodies and agencies and the lessons learnt from foreign education and training institutions regarding quality assurance. The rationale behind this exercise was to shed new light on international quality assurance principles in educational and training settings. A few lessons have been learnt from this chapter:

- There is no best way to achieve world-class quality. Each practice or tool has to combine technology, management skills, training and human resource policies to meet customer needs in unique and powerful ways.

- Benchmarking is one of the most important and effective tool that can be used to draw best practice principles from international education and training settings.

- Networking and sharing of information by international stakeholders empower them with competencies (knowledge, skills and attitude) that can be of assistance in an effort to promote and enhance the quality of a product or service.

- Quality is not merely a goal that needs to be achieved, but a sustained effort to improve a particular operation continuously.

- Education and training institutions can and should learn from the practices of the best non-educational enterprises.

- Internal self-evaluation and external review, conducted by independent specialists, if possible with international expertise, are crucial for promoting and enhancing quality. For this reason, Ferreira (2003:117) remarks that independent national bodies should be established and comparative standards of quality, recognised at international level, should be defined.

- The improvement of performance in a single area of the education and training programme should be avoided, and instead, a balanced and holistic approach should be adopted. The implication of this claim is that continuous improvement should focus on all aspects of education and training.

Experiences in European countries have also taught that if business is serious about promoting and enhancing quality in education and training programmes, it is duty-bound to invest in the development of a quality assurance system. Secondly, it has emerged that the role of external quality assurance bodies should not be under-estimated, since they provide a platform for information-sharing and also make it possible for individuals and organisations to interact on quality-related issues.

It is evident that international experiences in quality assurance could enrich attempts to promote and enhance the quality of education and training in business in South Africa. However, it will be rather simplistic to expect the stakeholders in education and training in business to embrace the best practices presented in this chapter without showing any signs of resistance and frustration. One reason for this attitude may be that they have become accustomed to executing their activities in a particular fashion over a long period of time and have become comfortable with the status quo. It is human nature to be suspicious of change. It therefore calls upon management to ensure that this change is properly managed. Management should therefore ensure that the stakeholders are convinced about the need to change and the need to embrace inherited best practice principles. The stakeholders should be involved in the whole process of change, be provided with the necessary implements and information so that they are able to play a meaningful role in the implementation of these best practices.

In the next chapter, quality assurance will be discussed in the context of education and training. Chapter IV is also relevant to this research, because it attempts to address both the research question and aim of this research.

CHAPTER IV: QUALITY ASSURANCE IN ADULT LITERACY

4.1   INTRODUCTION

The training and development of human resources in South African enterprises has been widely neglected over the past few decades (Erasmus & Van Dyk, 2003:46). The fruits reaped from not investing in human resources are low productivity, redundancy of older staff members, high staff turnover, fear of technological advancement and an illiterate workforce (Erasmus & Van Dyk, 1996:25). This argument suggests that well-trained and developed human resources in any enterprise play a valuable role in meeting the new challenges facing South African enterprises.

The training system in South Africa like those in many other countries, has been receiving severe criticism for lacking relevance to market demands. Many training systems globally have found themselves trapped in tradition and bureaucracy and unable to respond to the rapidly changing demands of business. This view is supported by the report of the National Committee of Further Education (1997:1), which advises that individuals must be enabled to develop the necessary life competencies that provide mechanisms and tools for engaging with all aspects of life, including work, the environment, politics, culture and relationships.

This chapter therefore seeks to

- provide insight into the status of training, including adult literacy in South Africa;
- examine quality assurance in adult literacy in South Africa;
- draw on the quality assurance experiences of Scotland; and
- examine possible tools for problem identification and quality improvement.

4.2   OVERVIEW OF TRAINING AND ADULT LITERACY IN SOUTH AFRICA

4.2.1   Training

In order to gain insight into the need for training and quality assurance in adult literacy, it is necessary to reflect on the historical development of training legislation in South Africa. The researcher assumes that this historical knowledge of training will shed more light on the current provision of education and training.

The first traces of South African training legislation are to be found as far back as the previous century, when the only acts that were referred to were 'master and servants'. During this era, the masters would train their servants informally. The training comprised instructions that the servants were expected to carry out (Van Dyk, Nel, Van Loedolff & Haasbroek, 1992:432).

In 1922 legislation to regulate training came into existence. The Apprenticeship Act no. 26 of 1922 was passed. The passing of this act led to the passing of quite a number of training laws over a period of almost 70 years. The year 1970 saw the Industrial Conciliation Amendment Act no. 21 of 1970, being passed. This act made it possible for industrial councils to be established. Where these councils existed, associations were formed whose main task was to establish training schemes and training funds. In 1981, the Manpower Act was passed and this was later followed by the National Manpower Commission and the National Training Board (NTB) (Van Dyk, Nel, Loedolff & Haasbroek, 1992:432-433).

The NTB's responsibility was to advise the Minister of Labour on matters of policy with regard to the provision of an adequate, trained pool of labour. It was charged with the task of establishing uniform and universally accepted standards with regard to inputs on the evaluation of training to promote the effectiveness and efficiency of training (Erasmus & Van Dyk, 1996:10).

In an attempt to experience economic growth and to ensure that its human resources were developed as effectively as possible, South Africa was bound to have a national training

programme. For this purpose, the NTB drew up a national training strategy for South Africa in 1991. Thereafter, a more representative and inclusive task group under the leadership of the NTB was formed in 1933. It had employers, unions, the state and education and training providers as the principal stakeholders.

The objectives of the national strategy drawn up by the NTB were to

- identify training problems;
- emphasise the importance of training in the restructuring of South Africa; and
- propose an integrated future approach to education and training (National Training Board, 1994:1).

The NTB with its national training programme led to the birth of the NQF. This framework has become an instrument that makes it possible to follow an integrated approach to education and training, to empower the individual and to develop a learning culture and applicable skills, as required by an educated and trained population in order to make a contribution to the country's economic welfare (Erasmus & Van Dyk, 2003:20). The NQF has also become a framework for transformation, of which the enhancement of the quality of education and training is an integral part (Implementing the National Qualifications Framework, 1999).

The adoption of the NQF was not possible without any controversies and misunderstandings. The fact that one of its major elements was the integration of education and training made some stakeholders a little uncomfortable, especially the Departments of Manpower (now known as the Department of Labour) and Education. While the proponents of the integration, mainly the African National Congress (ANC) argued that the integration was going to lead to the elevation of standards in the training world, the opposing parties argued that through integration, education was going to become narrow in focus and confined only to teaching.

Ultimately, consensus was reached on the basic matters related to the adoption of the integrated approach. However, it cannot be concluded that the debate on the adoption of this approach is over, because the fears of the opposing parties are still in existence. Parties that are opposed to the integration of education and training argue that education

and training are based on fundamentally different assumptions and that a 'one-size-fits-all' approach to the NQF is doomed to failure (Ensor, 2003:344). The debate may resurface, should the integrity of the opposing parties appear to be threatened.

The South African Qualifications Authority Act was passed in 1995 and gazetted. This act led to the establishment of ETQAs in 1998 and SETAs. The establishment of SAQA was a major step forward with regard to the setting of standards and the monitoring of the quality of education and training at all levels (Jacobs, 1999:8). While SAQA seeks to address the questions of quality and access in education and training, the ETQAs and SETAs have a responsibility to ensure that the standards set are enforced in a practical situation and to ensure as well the degree of excellence in education and training (Erasmus & Van Dyk, 2003:20-28).

While both SAQA and NQF have good intentions especially with regards to the transformation of education and training and the promotion and enhancement of quality, they have led to the creation of a large network of structures such as NSBs, Standard Generating Bodies (SGBs), ETQAs and SETAs. As a result, the system has become extremely big, complex and complicated.

It is worth mentioning that as yet, no feasibility studies have been conducted in South Africa to test the workability of the above national initiatives (Ensor, 2003:333). What is known though is that these structures are faced with a problem of implementation which emanates partly from the fact that they are insulated from serious criticism to the extent that many people have come to regard them as the only plausible way of achieving the objectives of the transformation of education and training and quality assurance (Allais, 2003:319). It is evident that the latest pieces of education and training legislation and developments seek to transform the South African education and training system to the extent that the education and training institutions and programmes can compare with the best in the world.

However, these good intentions are being nullified by the state's incapacity to implement the legislation, policies and interventions effectively. The discrepancy between policy and practice is a recurring theme in education policy studies, especially in developed countries where implementation enjoys considerable attention in literature. Molale (2004:1) adds that

there is therefore a greater burden on developing countries to ensure that policy implementation achieves its intended goals within education systems or, at the very least, to understand why noble goals are not achieved in practice.

4.2.1.1 The need for training in business

Business does not exist in a vacuum, but in a dynamic situation where it is exposed to external influences. In order to survive, it needs to be responsive to international trends, to political, economic and social changes. South African companies need versatile, well-trained and adaptable employees. Equipping people with the skills they need to cope in this type of environment is the crucial challenge facing training managers and other human resources practitioners (Erasmus & Van Dyk, 2003:cover page).

The above exposition discloses that training of employees is a matter that is non-negotiable. Talking now from the practical point of view, in his involvement in training and development in industry for many years, the researcher came to notice that some companies put their employees through meaningless training programmes. This is mere window-dressing aimed at political correctness, as the labour organisations and the Department of Labour are continuously putting too much pressure on businesses to have employees trained and developed. It is worth mentioning that this is a costly exercise for the company. It is, moreover, stressful, demoralising and frustrating to the employees, for the type of training received is irrelevant and cannot assist them to cope with realities in their areas of responsibility. It is crucial that companies should know exactly what the aims and need for training and development are so as to take an informed decision on the nature of training they have to put their employees through.

The following shed light on the aims and need for training in business:

- New technologies
  Globally, new technologies have become a force to be reckoned with, and this evolution of new technologies has come to have a bearing on business in the sense that they require technologically up-to-date workers to remain competitive and productive. Only knowledgeable workers with a quality education and training background can cope with the use of technological devices in the workplace and

use these effectively. In contrast, Marxists view the new technologies as disadvantaging the workers in the sense that they lead to disempowerment, deskilling, displacement and loss of full-time, permanent work. In their book titled "The jobless future" (1994:85), both Aronowitz and DiFazio disclose their discomfort with the technological revolution that is taking place in business. They argue that the new techno-culture in the workplace emerges on the ruins of the old, mechanical, industrial culture. From the perspective of the worker, whether in the factory or office, automatic production-computerisation is merely meant to dis-empower the workers.

Marxist critics further argued that technoculture has led to what they call technological unemployment and displacement. In order to qualify to operate these automated machines in industry, the workers are required to have specified qualifications, which the bulk of employees do not possess. The lack of such qualifications then leads to displacement. In the same vein, the critics do acknowledge that technoculture does create opportunities for well-paid jobs. However, their discomfort centres on the fact that this approach is elitist in nature, because the well-paid jobs are only created for a few individuals with attractive and relevant qualifications and this displaces the rest of the workers.

While capitalists maintain that technoculture contributes to skill enhancement and the creation of new jobs of high technology, critics such as Aronowitz & DiFazio (1994:91) argue that displacement is a continuous process, and all levels of workers, from unskilled to skilled ones, will be deskilled.

It has become clear that technoculture, according to the critical theorists, brings about changes in organisations with regard to employment patterns (part-time, casual, temporary, etc). This implies that those workers who are qualified to operate the automated machines are retained as core workers and the rest are displaced and become periphery workers who are only drawn in as casual or temporary workers when there is a need.

- The changing nature of work

  The nature of work has changed altogether. The business world is inclined to ensure that its workforce is composed of knowledgeable workers who do not merely perform duties mechanically without any knowledge of why they are doing it (Gee, 1996:26). Business people have also become aware that in the absence of such knowledgeable workers, they are unlikely to be competitive. Today, companies do not only compete in terms of the quality of their products or services, but also on the basis of how much learning and knowledge they can use to invent, produce, distribute and market their goods and services, as well as to vary and customise products and services innovatively.

  Schools are said to have failed to meet the changed demands of industry. This is reflected in workers' inability to use their newly-acquired skills effectively in a practical situation. Too many workers are ill equipped to handle even the most rudimentary literacy tasks (Drucker, 1993, quoted by Holland, 1998:22).

- Training and productivity

  Middleton (1993; 5) states that enterprises should invest in training mainly for higher profitability and productivity gains that may flow from better skilled workers. This implies that skilled workers are an asset in business because they use their skills to add value to their companies and make them competitive.

  Unskilled workers are more of a liability. They cost business a substantial amount of money through low productivity, workplace accidents and time spent on supervising them.

  Marxists flatly refute the above-mentioned notion that links training with productivity. They argue that inadequate capital investment, outdated technology and poor work conditions are the major causes of low productivity. In addition, unsafe working conditions and widespread use of toxic substances are also seen as causes of accidents and diseases at work.

- Skills shortage

South Africa has a poor skills profile as a result of the poor quality of general education for the majority of South Africans, the poor relevance of much publicly funded training and the low level of investment in training by firms (Van Dyk, Nel, Van Loedolff & Haasbroek, 1992:36). Compared to other middle income and advanced industrialised countries, South Africa faces specific shortages of professionals and craft and related trade workers (Report of the National Committee on Further Education, 1997). This could be attributed partly to the legacy of apartheid, which deprived the majority of the right to learn and be skilled and take control of their own lives. Whatever affects the macro-environment definitely affects business in one way or another. It could therefore be inferred that business also faces the problem of skills shortage, which could of course be combated by quality education and training.

- Global competition

Global competition has become increasingly fierce and the success of organisations in the international market depends largely on the ability of their workforces to perform effectively. According to Hunt and Jackson (1992:37) this would imply that there is a need for a better trained workforce at production, supervisory and managerial level. This workforce must be in possession of portable core skills, which can be changed and built on over a period of time. In the case of Britain, Cassels puts the blame for Britain's failure to compete squarely on the low levels of investment and commitment to training (Hunt & Jackson, 1992:37). The lesson that South Africa and business in particular can learn from Britain's experience is that training should become a strategic good, where a country's or organisation's ability to compete effectively in the global economy will depend largely on the skills of its people.

- Skills for the future

The following predictions are made on the future structure of employment:

  o Early retirement will be much more common.

o The bulk of new jobs will need people with higher-level skills (managers, professional technicians, etc.), not all of which can be created by traditional forms of higher education.

o Traditional job boundaries will break down, requiring people to become more flexible and able to diversify.

o Technological changes will affect every type of workplace and jobs at all levels. Information technologies will become increasingly integrated and as new developments gain momentum, managers will need to ensure that appropriate training is organised. Since traditional skills boundaries are breaking down, there will be a widespread need to broaden training at all levels. Workers will often need new as well as traditional skills to use new technologies effectively. Hence, there will be many job opportunities for those who can acquire new skills and job losses will be heaviest among the unskilled (Hunt & Jackson, 1992:39).

A common feature of all jobs will be the need for a solid grounding in basic competencies such as personal initiative, enterprise, numeracy, technological, business and environmental awareness and communication skills, including fluency in other languages.

4.2.2   Adult literacy

Erasmus (2003:1) remarks that a large percentage of South Africa's population is unskilled. Enterprises therefore have a responsibility to contribute to the effective training of their employees, thus countering national illiteracy. A major challenge faced by any enterprise is to train its employees in such a way that they have the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes to do their work successfully.

In order to shed more light on the rate of illiteracy in South Africa, Statistics South Africa (2000) published a report stating that approximately 30% of the country's economically active population is illiterate. Literacy programmes run by the private sector and government departments did not make any difference, since literacy levels remained low.

Erasmus (2003:6) discloses that an estimated six million people will have to undergo lower-level adult literacy programmes. This disclosure then triggers the following question: What is adult literacy? Adult literacy in the South African context is defined in broader terms as the education of and learning by adults aimed at assisting learners to fulfil their roles as educators, workers, citizens and parents (Van Dyk et al. 1993:137). Andragogics is the term used to describe the science of adult literacy (Erasmus, 2003:128).

The following quotations provide a clear understanding of the need for adult literacy in business:

- "Improving basic skills in the workplace is yet another way that the private sector can ensure that it remains competitive in the world economy" (Harman & Lerche, 1988:Introduction).

- "Millions of employees suffering from various degrees of illiteracy are costing their companies daily through low productivity, workplace accidents and supervisory time" US Business Council for effective literacy leaflet, Functional Literacy Hurts Business, 1988).

- "A successful economy needs the solid base of a literate and numerate workforce" (Wickert, 1989:39).

- "The real post industrial revolution is not a service revolution, but a cerebral one in which value is produced less by skilled hands than by skilled minds" (Drouin, 1990:52).

- "The business world, as part and parcel of massive global economic, technological and social change, now sees knowledge as its primary value" (Gee et al, 1996:5).

4.3   QUALITY ASSURANCE IN ADULT LITERACY IN SOUTH AFRICA

It is clear that education and training including adult literacy in South Africa must be a priority. In order to have quality and sustainable education, training and adult literacy, an effective quality assurance system must be in place. A quality assurance system is a

system designed to manage the continuous improvement of all processes in an organisation in order to meet customer expectations (Meyer, 2003:208). According to Biech (1994:36), a process is a series of steps that when combined produce a result. Every process has inputs that come from a supplier and outputs that go to a customer.

To meet the requirements of SAQA, according to Patrick (1997:47), training providers must document their quality assurance systems. The establishment of effective quality assurance systems is a prerequisite for the implementation of the NQF. The SAQA Act and the ETQA regulations provide the enabling and regulatory framework for implementing the quality assurance mechanisms required by the NQF. ETQAs must monitor and audit the processes through which learners receive formal recognition for achieving NQF qualifications and standards.

It is important to note that externally-mandated quality assurance policies are receiving a great deal of criticism because they only exist on paper. The state has failed to implement them. The number of SGBs, ETQAs, SETAs and corresponding evaluators and accreditors is daunting. In short, it means that the quality assurance system with its related bodies has become huge, complicated and not user-friendly.

SAQA (1994) gives the following guidelines for an effective quality assurance system:

- "It must be designed and targeted at learners and directed at improving their attainment of the necessary standards.

- It must seek to improve the quality of an institution's teaching and learning strategies directly. This means that the output of the educational and training experience and the process of attainment must be improved.

- It must be flexible and be able to adapt to ever-changing demands and circumstances. In short, this means that it must change with time and circumstances so as to remain relevant. Bureaucratic barriers that might retard change should be removed.

- It must give all stakeholders a role in and a sense of ownership over the quality management process. This is about participative management where all the stakeholders take part in the enhancement of quality.

- It must directly and indirectly involve learners in the quality management process, creating a 'feedback loop and a working relationship' between stakeholders at all levels and functions in the organisation.

- It must develop a system of measurement, which proves progress and not simply outcomes or procedures.

- It must create collaborative partnerships, both internal and external to the provider and organisation.

- It must organise the diversity of delivery and teaching methods within institutions and providers. This suggests that quality systems must be put in place that integrate standards and monitor and ensure equivalencies.

- It must have an explicit purpose, which is both negotiated and agreed upon by stakeholders as well as being public and transparent.

- It must have internal capacity to follow up and improve on assessment and quality assurance results.

- It must allow for self-assessment, peer review and an external meta-evaluation capacity.

- It must be regular and cyclical. Quality management is not an event, but linked to a continued process which seeks enhancement and improvement.

- It must result in formal and documented analysis, which is translated into a clear plan of action for which the institution is accountable.

- It must involve both horizontal and vertical audits, participation and accountability".

To realise its objective to enhance the quality of education and training further, SAQA accredits Education and Training Quality Assurance Bodies. These bodies are responsible for

- "the accreditation of providers for specific standards or qualifications registered on the NQF;

- the promotion of quality among providers;

- the evaluation of assessment and facilitation of moderation among providers;

- The registration of assessors for the specified registered standards of qualifications in terms of the criteria established for this purpose;

- the moderation of quality assurance on specific standards or qualifications for which one the recommendation of new standards or qualifications to National Standards Bodies for consideration, or modifications to existing standards or qualifications to National Standard Bodies for consideration;

- the maintenance of a data-base acceptable to SAQA; and

- the submission of reports to SAQA in accordance with its requirements".

4.4   SYNTHESIS

The above guidelines and the responsibilities of the ETQAs express the state's good intention to have an excellent quality assurance system in place. However, good intentions do not automatically translate into practice. Bruniquel (2003:16) believes that the system is simply too complicated and the acronyms (SAQA, NQF, SETAs, WSPs) are enough to put anyone off.

Externally mandated quality assurance systems are not popular with most intellectuals, because these are said to be managerialistic and demand too much paper work on the

part of staff to satisfy government requirements. It is therefore against this backdrop that they propose a quality assurance system that is contextual, internally-driven and based on the professional-artistry paradigm (Mhlanga, 2004:1-2).

It is unfortunate that government initiatives or policies do not normally filter down to the education and training programme, as claimed by intellectuals such as Jansen (2000:86). It is also unfortunate that bureaucracy is a stumbling block to dissemination of quality-related information. This is a clear illustration that businesses should develop their own robust quality assurance processes that suit their own situations and implement them effectively. Government initiatives and policies are normally of a general nature that takes time to reach the situations that they are intended to deal with. Waiting for them to reach the users may be likened to waiting for the last day of Messiah when He will come to save the living and the dead.

4.5   QUALITY ASSURANCE EXPERIENCES IN ADULT LITERACY FROM SCOTLAND

It was revealed in Chapter II that quality and quality assurance are international phenomena that have become a priority both in business and in the education and training arena. It is essential though to draw some quality assurance experiences and lessons from other parts of the world so as to enhance the development of quality assurance policies, practices and procedures in education and training in South African enterprises. For this research, a quality assurance system from Scotland was considered for examination, because it is believed that it illustrates best practice principles that can be drawn from this first world country.

The Scottish quality assurance system recommends that all education and training providers should be subjected to the same quality assurance processes based on the good practice framework. This framework, dubbed the 'development engine', should ensure that performance indicators are developed and at the same time take total responsibility for co-ordinating quality assurance of provision, including processes that apply to national training programmes (Scottish Executive: adult literacy and Numeracy in Scotland, 2002:1). It is also the responsibility of this framework to provide standards in:

- teaching and learning;
- management and co-ordination;
- policy and planning staffing and deployment of resources; and
- specialised and general guidance and support.

The Scottish quality assurance system reveals that it is necessary to build on a good practice framework to devise performance indicators that evidence the progress learners are making. The progress should be measured in relation to the benefits learners are gaining from their learning, in relation to growth in confidence, behaviours and attitudes, as well as applied skill in and outside the classroom.

In addition, this quality assurance system states that it is essential to monitor the reasons, positive and negative, why learners do not complete their individual learning plans. Some learners pause for legitimate personal reasons and may re-engage at a later stage. However, there are those who leave the programmes and who have no wish to return. Contributing factors may well be lack of sustained guidance and support, or dissatisfaction with the programme because it does not meet their aspirations or a style of teaching that makes learning inaccessible to them. The 'development engine' should examine this feedback and ensure that relevant lessons are learned.

This approach puts emphasis on both partnership and inspection. It advocates that the partners in adult literacy should inspect and review progress to inform continued development of strategy and to take full account of the progress. In this way, all providers will be subject to appropriate and equivalent quality assurance and improvement processes.

Volunteers and training practitioners are playing a key role in assisting with learning. They should be afforded sustained developmental opportunities in supporting, delivering and managing literacy and numeracy programmes. This exercise is important in that it creates a high quality professional level of service delivery and provides volunteers and practitioners with an opportunity to update their practice.

The Scottish adult literacy quality assurance system also advocates a sustained programme of research as opposed to a once-off, stand-alone project in consultation with learners in order to

- identify gaps in knowledge regarding the programme;
- develop new and useful concepts;
- develop research methods;
- take into account the reality of adults' lives; and
- identify weaknesses or contradictions in policy and strategy.

The data collected provide insights into the functioning of the programme and may trigger suggestions on what might be done to improve the effectiveness of the programme (Scottish Executive: adult literacy and Numeracy in Scotland, 2002:5).

Knowledge of best available practices do not provide all the answers. Much remains to be done, but research reveals that some things do tend to work better than others, and thus identifies places to begin the improvement journey (Lezotte, 1993:22-30). This improvement journey cannot be completed successfully in the absence of problem identification and quality improvement tools.

4.6   POSSIBLE PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION AND QUALITY IMPROVEMENT TOOLS FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Quality assurance embraces continuous improvement of any programme as the most important element. For the purpose of identifying programme-related problems and making some attempts to improve the programme continuously, a variety of quality improvement tools borrowed from industry could be applied to education and training. If properly applied, these tools can help identify where problems lie in the programme so that action can be taken to address them. These tools assist in indicating what is to be done with the data collected and what additional data need to be collected. In summary, the improvement tools make the process of continuous improvement work (Kellison quoted by Mulligan, 1994:235). In addition, information and numbers form the basis for problem-solving and activities in the process of continuous improvement. It is therefore essential to have a well-developed data-gathering and monitoring system. These tools play a crucial

role in the implementation of a quality assurance system by means of rational decision-making, based on facts and objective measurement (Meyer, 2003:307).

In the 1930s Deming worked with a statistician named Walter Shewhart to develop statistical control techniques that could be implemented in management processes. It was Deming's belief that a statistically controlled management process can provide the manager with an indication when to intervene in the process in an attempt to identify problems so as to address them (Arcaro, 1995:4).

4.6.1 Affinity diagram

This type of a diagram is the work of Kawakita Jiro and it is also known as the KJ method. Its purpose is to generate, organise and consolidate information about a complex issue or problem (QIP, Inc./PQ Systems, Inc', 1994:1). An improvement team or management team could be assisted by an affinity diagram to create its own system of thought about a very difficult issue or problem. Being flexible, an affinity diagram can be used at any stage in an improvement project when it needs to generate and organise a large amount of information. It is important to note that an affinity diagram expresses data in the form of language without quantifying it.

When drawing an affinity diagram, the following steps should be followed:

Choose a group leader:
- A group leader plays the role of leading the group through the steps to make the affinity diagram.

State the issue of problem
- The issue or problem to be addressed should be presented by the group.

- It is advisable to present the issue or problem in the form of a question (e.g. What are the barriers to the implementation of a total quality programme in our organisation?).

Brainstorm and record ideas

- Brainstorm ideas should be related to the identified issue or problem.

- Each member of the group should express ideas aloud.

- Ideas should be recorded in silence on index cards, slips of paper or sticky notes.

- There should be no verbal exchanges among team members.

- The brainstorming rules should be observed throughout the process, that is, prohibit criticism, give everyone an equal opportunity to express his or her ideas, strive for quantity over quality of ideas and encourage piggy-backing.

Move the cards into like piles

- The cards should be grouped in like piles by the team members. Cards that are alike are said to have 'mutual affinity'.

- Cards that do not seem to fit into any pile may be grouped into a miscellaneous pile.

Name each pile with a header card

- Through discussion, each pile of like cards should be named.

- The name of the card should be a short phrase, but not a single word. Single word names are likely to lose the meaning of the pile.

- The members should review the cards to see if any of them fit into one of the named piles.

Draw the affinity diagram

- The cards should be taped on flip chart paper to display them. Shown below is an example of an affinity diagram.

Methods to implement.	Who are the customers?	What is quality and how do one measure it?	Methods to sell quality management.
How does one do it?	Who are our customers?	What is quality about?	How does one transfer information from industry to education and training?
How does one implement it?	Are workers customers in the process?	How does one evaluate quality?	Where are the success stories?
How does one know when one achieved success?	Will workers as customers shape education and training?	What is the definition of quality?	What are the pros and cons?
What is the essential ingredient for implementation?		How does one use quality to one's advantage?	Where are the failures?
How do we incorporate quality management with current practice?		Is quality management about managing for quantity or quality of management?	How does one package quality management to sell to others?
Is quality management really applicable to education and training?			How does quality management add value?
Time involved and expected payoff	Does quality management apply to education and training?	How to change?	Miscellaneous
What is in it for me?	What does quality in education and training look like?	How does one motivate top management to "walk the talk"?	How does one get access to help and support?
What is the real payoff?	How does one measure quality in education and training?	How does one change mindsets?	What is new about the philosophy and tools that have been around?
What are the long-term effects?	What is the impact on the curriculum?	How does one get people in the organisation to use quality management?	
How does one pay for all this?	What impact will this have on learners?	How does one make a change without hurting morale?	
What is the life cycle?			

	What elements from quality management do not suit education and training?		
How long until one gets the results?	Is quality management really applicable to education and training?		
What is the impact on my job?			
How much time will it take?			
What is the dollar impact?			
What is the impact on my family?			

Fig. 4.1: The affinity diagram (QIP, Inc., & PQ Systems, Inc., 1994:1)

Discuss the piles

- The team should discuss the piles and the individual items in the piles and examine ways in which they relate to the problem.

- The piles are studied to gain a better understanding of the problem.

4.6.2   Cause-and-effect diagram

A cause-and-effect diagram provides a picture of a variety of elements that may contribute to a problem. This diagram looks like a fishbone with the problem defined as the "head". On the "bone" growing out of the "spine" one lists causes of problems. By identifying problem causes, one could start the process of problem-solving by brainstorming (Meyer, 2003:307). It was developed in 1943 by Professor Kaoru Ishikawa, president of the Musashi Institute of Technology in Tokyo. Because of the fact that it resembles the skeleton of a fish, it is also known as a fishbone diagram.

The cause-and-effect diagram serves the following purposes:

- It is used to identify possible causes of an identified problem.

- It is used by an improvement team to find special or common causes of variations and analyse causes.

The steps below must be followed when designing a cause and effect diagram:

Identify the problem

- The problem to be identified should be something specific and concrete. The problem (effect) is often in the form of a quality characteristic, which a team wants to improve or control.

- A problem statement should be narrowed down and be clear. If it is broad and vague, it is likely to cause the number of elements on the diagram to be large.

Record the problem statement

- The identified problem should be written on the far right of the paper. It is advisable to make use of a very large space, such as a chalkboard.

- A box should be drawn around the problem statement.

Draw and label the main bones

- The main bones of the diagram's skeleton should be drawn and labelled. The main bones represent the primary input or resource categories or casual factors.

- A box should be drawn around each heading.

Brainstorm for problem causes

- In this step, ideas are generated. Brainstorming is the free, inhibited generation of ideas, usually in a group setting (QIP, Inc./ PQ Systems, 1994:5). Only the causes of the problem, not solutions, should be identified.

Identify the most likely causes

- The causes, that are of course educated guesses, should be chosen and verified by the team.

- Since not all the causes in the diagram are necessarily closely related to the problem, the analysis should be narrowed to the most likely causes.

- The most likely causes should be identified by circling or even marking them with asterisks.

In figure 4.2, the fishbone cause-and-effect diagram illustrates that, what learners learn should not be attributed to an individual's performance. Instead, the focus should be on the whole system and ways to improve the outcome (i.e. learning process) should be sought.
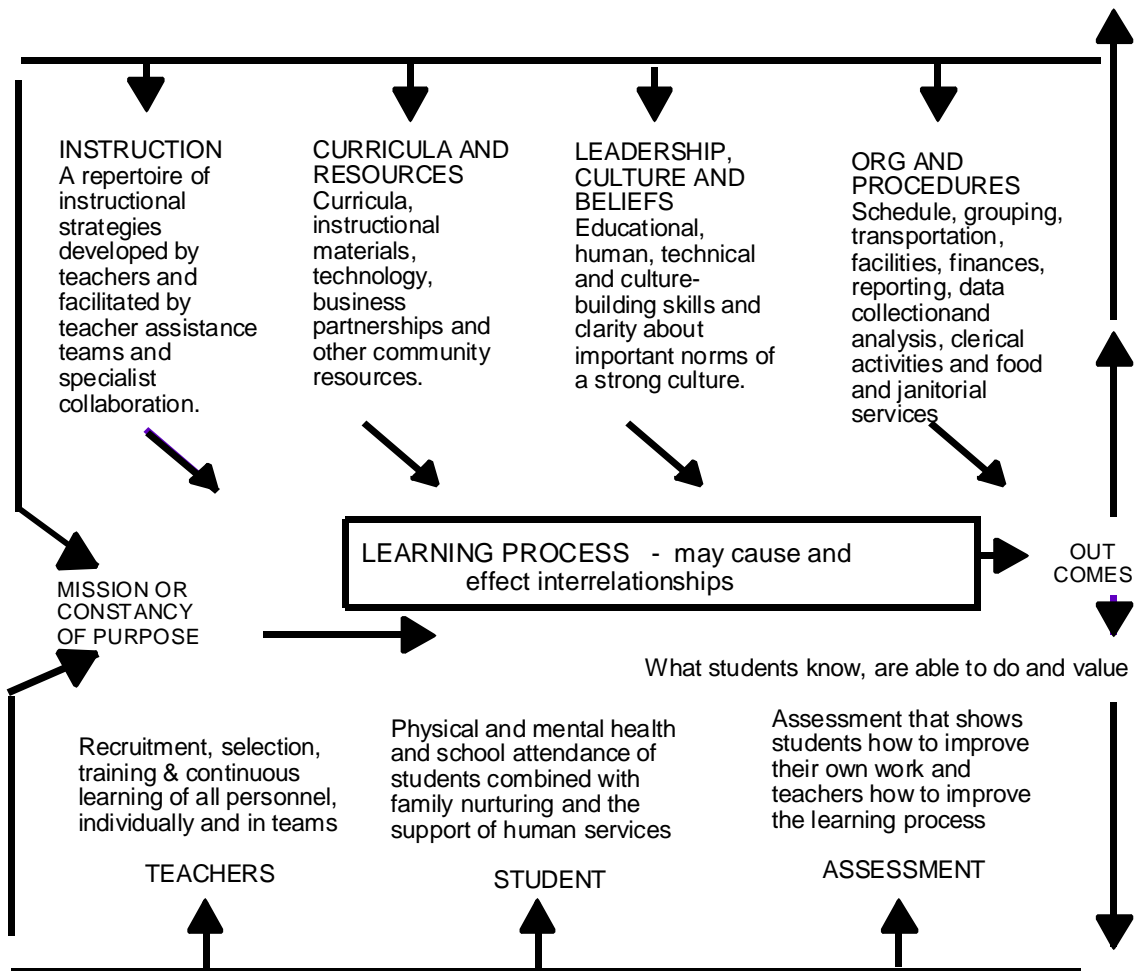
Fig. 4.2: Fishbone cause-and-effect diagram (Ann Dinsmoor & Karla DeLetis, 1994:179)

4.6.3 Force field analysis

Force field analysis was first used by Kurt Lewin as a problem-solving tool to help change occur during the Second World War. This tool as used by Lewin sees change as a struggle between forces (QIP, Inc./PQ, Inc., 1994:1). While driving forces are those existing forces that help change occur, restraining forces are those existing forces that prevent change from taking place. Force field analysis is therefore an exercise that aims to identify both the driving forces and restraining forces concerning a proposed change. It is used to discuss the forces that either encourage or discourage a change intervention. One should overcome forces in the organisation while increasing driving forces when implementing quality assurance (Meyer, 2003:308).

The purpose of force analysis is to

- encourage creative thinking by forcing an improvement team to think together about the aspects of the desired change; and

- encourage the team to agree on the priority of the forces. This agreement provides a starting point for action.

To use force field analysis successfully, the following steps should be adhered to:

Define the desired change or action

- Agree on a simple statement to describe the change to be made.

Brainstorm the driving forces

- Driving forces should be brainstormed first, because they are likely to be the most important source of ideas for an implementation plan.

Brainstorm the restraining forces

- Restraining forces are often opposites of driving forces. It is therefore essential to look at the driving forces so as to generate restraining forces.

Prioritise the driving forces

- Discuss the driving forces and determine their relative importance.
- Through consensus, prioritise the driving forces, focussing on their strengths.

Prioritise the restraining forces

- Discuss the restraining forces and determine their relative importance.
- Through consensus, prioritise the restraining forces, focussing on their strengths.

List of actions to be taken

- Generate possible actions that could be essential to effect change, and these action could be generated by:

    o discussing how to reduce, eliminate or reserve the effect of the important restraining forces. This is frequently done by taking advantage of any of the driving forces. However, sometimes unique activities must be generated and undertaken to deal with a specific, important restraining force; and

    o discussing how the high priority driving forces can be reinforced or used to smooth the path of change. Shown below is an example of force field analysis. Figure 4.3 illustrates how the improvement team composed of teachers has gone about implementing a weekly training session on how to integrate state test objectives into the curriculum.

Desired change

Force Field Analysis

Conduct a weekly training programme for teachers
Learn state Test Objectives Integration

Driving Forces (+)	**Restraining Forces (-)**

Consensus Ranking

The superintendent is very supportive

Everybody wants to improve instructions

Will improve state test score

Teachers are involved in decision making to influence in structure

Children need to know objectives

Teachers meet weekly already

Driving Forces

Principal is very supportive

Teachers understand objectives

Teachers willing to try

Teachers are reluctant to have data collectors in classrooms

Time to gather data

Heightened stress

Teachers have a set way of delivering lessons

Limited time to implement change

Teaching according to the test in not always good teaching

Restraining Forces

Action to be taken

Actions:

1. Let teachers know that their input is important, and that this is not a tool to evaluate their performance.

2. The principal will give a "pep talk" to teachers.

3. The trainer will show teachers how to take their regular lesson plans and add state test objectives.

Fig. 4.3: Force Field Analysis (QIP, Inc., and PQ Systems, Inc., 1994:2)

4.6.4   Nominal group technique

The nominal group technique (NGT) is a structured group process used to help make decisions. It is used to identify a course of action from the many alternatives after the root cause of the problem has been identified. NGT gives every team member an equal voice in decision-making. The members of the team are likely to be committed to a decision if they have a say in making it, and the decision tends to be of better quality.

It is the purpose of NGT to help the team make better decisions. When this technique is used, a group generates more unique ideas, a higher number of ideas and higher-quality

ideas. This is accomplished through a combination of verbal and non-verbal group interaction.

If NGT has to generate actions for improvement, the following steps should be followed:

State the defined area of opportunity (or problem)

- An area of opportunity should be identified with the help of other quality tools such as a cause-and-effect diagram and histogram.

- The area of opportunity should be communicated to the team members.

Silently generate action items

- Silently and independently, each member of the team should write down action items and suggest improvements.

- Ideas should be kept to a few words or short phrase.

- A time limit, which is normally five minutes, should be set.

State and record ideas

- In a round-robin fashion (going around the room) each team member should give one idea from his or her list.

- A group leader or facilitator should record the ideas on the flip chart as they are being given. The facilitator should guard against recording duplications.

- Everyone should be encouraged to add ideas to the list.

Discuss each item on the list

- Each item on the list should be discussed. The rationale here is to clarify each idea in case the wording is not clear. Arguments should not be entertained.

- The discussion should be facilitated by the group leader.

- The leader should read each idea aloud and ask if there are any questions requesting clarification or statements of agreement or disagreement.

Establish criteria for voting

- The team should establish a short list of criteria for choosing the most important items on the list. The criteria should be important to the goals of the project.

Conduct a preliminary vote

- Under the auspices of the group leader, a preliminary vote must be conducted.

  - Individuals should choose the items most important to them.
  - Put the cards in rank order.
  - Record the votes.
  - Discuss the results of the vote.

Shown below is an example of the NGT. It illustrates the list of action items developed by a team. Next to each item are the rankings that each item received. In this case the improvement tool was used by the improvement team to generate action to address the root cause of the problem of teachers with no knowledge of how to integrate state test objectives across the curriculum.

Ranking

3-3-2-3-2   1. Establish a weekly training programme
                  for teachers

 2 - 1.1   2. Set up a mentoring programme

3   3. Subscribe to professional journals for
                  teachers

3 - 1.1.1   4. Write a manual with examples of lesson
                  plans that integrate objectives

             5. Establish an expert in each building

2 - 1   6. Establish an expert at each grade level

             7. Train all new teachers to integrate
                  objectives

             8. Develop new lesson planning sheets
                  that include hints for integration of
                  test objectives

** item # 1 chosen as best action idea.

Action Item

Fig.4.4: Nominal group technique (QIP, Inc., and PQ Systems, Inc., 1994:2)

4.7   HOW THE PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION AND QUALITY IMPROVEMENT TOOLS RELATE TO THE RESEARCH STATEMENT

It is important to note that education and training programmes are normally engulfed in a variety of quality-related problems. These problems need to be addressed by means of relevant tools. For example, one cannot use examinations and tests to address the staff's low morale that may have a negative impact on the quality of education and training programmes. The researcher believes that no single tool is suitable to address all quality-related problems. It is evident that problem identification and quality improvement tools may play a crucial role in an attempt to promote and enhance quality in education and training programmes.

Most of the problem identifying and quality improvement tools might be foreign to most stakeholders in South Africa, but it is felt the sooner they learn about them and their

implementation, the better. Their insight into these tools may assist them in applying a holistic approach in their endeavour to promote and enhance quality.

4.8   CONCLUSION

It has emerged in this chapter that:

- The South African quality assurance endeavour with its good intentions has created a large network of structures, such as NSBs, SGBs, ETQAs and SETAs, and as a result, the system has become extremely huge, complex and complicated.
- There is a gap between policy and practice in South Africa. The government has failed to implement excellent quality assurance policies.
- Most South African intellectuals are in favour of internally driven quality assurance systems as opposed to externally mandated ones. Externally mandated quality assurance systems are seen as managerialistic and contaminated with a lot of paper to satisfy government requirements.
- Problem identification and quality improvement tools play a vital role in assisting the organisation to implement a quality assurance system based on facts and objective measurement.

A number of best practices, including the following, have been drawn from the Scottish quality assurance system:

- All education and training providers should be subjected to the same quality assurance processes based on the good practice framework.

- Performance indicators should be developed to signal whether the performance of the education and training programme is up to scratch or not.

- Counselling is important, for the learners are provided with the necessary support and guidance in terms of their learning.

- Stakeholders should inspect and review the progress of the education and training programme as partners.

- Volunteers and training practitioners should be trained continuously to deliver quality service.

- Continuing research should be conducted. The collected data will provide insight into the functioning of the programme and at the same time, the data will expose the stakeholders to best practice principles.

Comprehensively, this chapter demonstrates how important education and training are for the development of workers and the viability of business. Important as they are, education and training in business are likely to be a futile exercise if there are no effective quality mechanisms in place that are "owned" and implemented by committed stakeholders.

It is evident that the Scottish quality assurance system as demonstrated in Chapter IV offers a variety of best practices that have proved to be effective in the Scottish environment. However, the researcher does not buy into the view that all education and training providers should be subjected to the same quality assurance processes based on the good practice framework. This view is understood to suggest that quality assurance processes should be externally mandated and imposed on the providers of education and training. Should this be the case, the chances of service providers buying into these processes are very slim. It is natural for people either to reject or be suspicious of whatever is imposed on them. It could therefore be concluded that the service providers may not promote the quality assurance system to the stakeholders that they themselves, do not want to be associated with.

As demonstrated in Chapter II, best practices in terms of quality assurance are informed by quality philosophies. If providers of education and training are subjected to the same quality assurance processes without them being involved in decision-making, there researcher foresees some contradictions creeping in that may emanate from the stakeholders' affiliation or subscription to different quality philosophies. This state of affairs is likely to have the quality of education and training compromised in the sense that there is a strong likelihood that the energies of both the service providers and stakeholders will be directed at the contradictions. This is the exercise that is likely to keep the service providers and stakeholder pre-occupied to the detriment of the quality of education and

training that needs to be enhanced and promoted . The researcher believes in the maxim that is popularly used in his community which states that "do not do things for people, but do things with people or else they will either reject or become suspicious of them, no matter how good they may seem". In a nutshell, this maxim cautions against imposing issues or systems on others or situations, because this attitude may lead to negative consequences.

In an attempt to improve quality on continuous basis, the Scottish quality assurance system advocates that continuous research should be conducted. It is further cited that the collected data will provide insight into the functioning of the programme which is of course crucial. This therefore triggers a question if in the South African context the stakeholders in adult literacy in business are skilled in conducting research, considering that research is a specialised field. Based on his experiences in education and training, the researcher claims that the non-governmental organisations and other institutions of learning that train adult trainers or practitioners do not offer any course in research at this stage to the participants, particularly at undergraduate level. It is against this backdrop that the researcher thinks that it would be of benefit to the education and training programmes if the organizations and/ or institutions of learning that have the training of adult trainers or practitioners as their responsibility, could consider offering a basic and compulsory course in research. This would imply that any education and training programme in business would eventually have among its stakeholders some individuals that are experienced and knowledgeable about research. These individuals would have acquired skills and practical experience through engaging in research whilst training. Their skills and experience will be put to better use in efforts to enhance and promote quality in education and training.

Finally, this chapter is relevant to this research, because it relates both to the research questions and aims. It touches on issues that have to do with the promotion and enhancement of quality in education and training programmes in business, as demonstrated above.

The next chapter is about the research method and techniques employed to collect data for the research. These research methods and techniques facilitated the scientific gathering of data.

CHAPTER V: DATA-GATHERING PROCEDURES FOR THE RESEARCH

5.1   INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the data-gathering for this research. Its focal points include the research design employed, the sampling procedure used in the selection of business enterprises whose adult literacy programmes will be studied and the pilot study, as well as the construction and administration of the instruments used in the research.

The required data will be collected predominantly through questionnaires and interviews. This will be an exercise meant to complement the literature review and not to duplicate the knowledge already presented in the previous chapters on quality assurance in training programmes in business with special reference to adult literacy. This approach is based on the idea that "until you have learned what others have done in your area, you cannot develop a research project that will contribute to furthering knowledge in your field" (Johnson, 1994:186).

5.2   RESEARCH APPROACH

The quantitative-qualitative approach was adopted in this research. Leedy (1993), as quoted by De Vos (1998:15) has tried to provide a clear distinction between quantitative and qualitative approaches in research. He views the quantitative approach as dealing with data that are principally numerical and the qualitative approach as dealing with data that are principally verbal. It is one of the main purposes of a quantitative approach to discover, in general, how many and what kinds of people in the sample have a particular characteristic. The aim is to infer a characteristic or a relationship between variables, to a parent population (Van Heerden, 2002:107).

As opposed to a quantitative approach, a qualitative approach is based on fieldwork. Normally, it is written in narrative story form. This approach was therefore regarded as suitable for this research and used because it deals with descriptions of people and situations, explanations of knowledge and behaviour, interpretations of theories and assumptions and evaluations of practices and policies. Furthermore, it accommodates

what Burgess (1984:22) refers to as "multiple strategies" in the collection of data, which guarantees the reliability and validity of data collected. What also makes this approach significant is the fact that the researcher is not a distant, objective observer; instead, he or she uses himself or herself as a tool in his or her own investigation.

While both approaches are subject to criticism that they are theoretical and data-driven, Brennen (1997:8) remarks that it is perhaps not so paradoxical when considering the extent to which there is an overlap in their respective logics of enquiry. This remark could mean that there is no conflict between the two approaches; instead, they complement each other. As a result, researchers ought to be flexible and use a combination of approaches that are appropriate to the research problem under investigation.

The rationale behind the adoption of the quantitative-qualitative approach was that the population to be studied had heterogeneous peculiarities that called for triangulation. Triangulation refers to the situation where the researcher seeks to use several different types of sources that can provide insights into the events or relationships (Erlandson et al, 1993:115). Neuman (2000, 124-125) sheds further light on the concept of triangulation by using the following analogy: "Surveyors and sailors measure distances between objects by making observations from multiple positions. By observing something from different angles or viewpoints, they get a fix on its true location*". The most important aspect of triangulation is that the data collected from a variety of sources should converge on the same set of findings. For the purpose of collecting data for this research from different sources, different research tools or instruments namely, the review of Erlandson et al., (1993:115) literature, questionnaires and interviews were employed.

5.3   RESEARCH DESIGN

According to Babbie (1998:89), a research design addresses the planning of scientific inquiry designing a strategy for finding out something. A research design could also be seen as a blueprint or detailed plan on how a specific study is to be conducted.

The exploratory-descriptive design was used in this to do research on adult literacy in South Africa. The exploratory design is very significant, because it leads to the gaining of new insights into a specific phenomenon (Fouche & De Vos, 1998 research). The rationale

behind this is that the researcher could not find any research that has ever been conducted in quality assurance in education and training programmes in business with special reference to adult literacy. In order to gain new insights, the researcher must be willing to examine new ideas and to be open to new stimuli (Mouton & Marais, 1988:43). Researchers are advised though to guard against being influenced by their own preconceived ideas or assumptions about the nature and direction of the research. In addition, the descriptive designs are elected, for if "less is already known (so) our questions will be of a general nature (Grinnel, 1998:221). The nature of this research therefore provides a good reason for using a combination of research designs.

5.4   RESEARCH PROCEDURE AND STRATEGY

To start off, the researcher conducted an extensive literature study on quality assurance as applied in other settings such as universities. This was prompted by the fact that literature and research on quality assurance in education and training programmes in business with special reference to adult literacy was found to be scarce. A review of literature is an integral part of the research process that aims to contribute to a clearer understanding of the nature and meaning of the problem that has been identified. It provides substantially better insight into the dimensions and complexity of the problem (Mouton, 2001:87). To collect data relevant to the research, journals, books and the Internet have been used. Information has also been solicited from completed theses and dissertations kept by the Academic Information Centre of the University of Pretoria.

In order to complement the literature study, the researcher designed a questionnaire that was distributed to stakeholders involved in adult literacy programmes in business, namely, Training Managers, ABET Co-ordinators and Trainees in different companies in six South African provinces (i.e. Mpumalanga, Limpopo, KwaZulu-Natal, Gauteng, Free State and Eastern Cape). Literature on quality assurance was used to identify key variables for the study and these were used in the design of the instrument. Apart from the distribution of questionnaires, interviews were conducted with respondents. It is evident that different research tools or instruments were employed in an attempt to collect reliable and valid data.

Prior to implementing the main research, the research instruments or tools were first pilot-tested. The purpose of this exercise was to improve the success and effectiveness of the investigation (De Vos, 2002:215). In order to confirm De Vos' statement, Strydom (1998:182) states that a study of specific entities implies that the researcher should expose a few cases to exactly the same procedures as planned for the main investigation, in order to modify the existing instrument. Rubin (1998:272) further suggests that the researcher should "try the items out with actual subjects from the target population, then rewrite and edit again all items that cause confusion, annoyance and boredom".

5.5   POPULATION AND SAMPLING

The research population consisted of the stakeholders in adult literacy programmes in business drawn from different companies in six provinces in South Africa. This included training managers, ABET co-ordinators and trainers. According to Huysamen (1994:37) the population encompasses the total collection of members, cases or elements about which the researcher wishes to draw conclusions. Fraenkel & Wallen (1990:68) state that the population is the group to whom the researcher would like to generalise the results of the study.

However, owing to a variety of constraints that included financial and time constraints, the unavailability of facilities and the amount of assistance required for gathering and analysing data, it became impossible and impractical to study quality assurance in training programmes in all business enterprises and provinces with special reference to all adult literacy programmes. The process of sampling, therefore, made it possible to draw valid generalisations on the basis of careful observation and analysis of variables of a relatively small proportion of the population (Mofokeng, 2002:326). The researcher made sure that the sample was representative of the whole group from which it was taken. McBurney (2001:248) sees a sample as the totality of persons, events, organisation units or case records with which the research problem is concerned. According to QIP, Inc. and PQ Systems, Inc. (1994:1), sampling is the tool that guides the quantitative study of a system. In order to make the definition of sampling even clearer, they use the following analogy: "A sample, is a subset of the population collected to make an estimate of the population being studied …"

For the selection of business entities from which the sample would be drawn, the purposing method was used. The purposing method implies that the business entities were deliberately selected from geo-economic backgrounds. The sample included those playing a role, namely, training managers, ABET co-ordinators and trainers.

5.6   RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS EMPLOYED

Questionnaires and interviews were used to collect the relevant data. The research initially intended using additional instruments such as document studies, the dialectic method and observation for the purpose of collecting reliable and valid data. This was prompted by the researcher's conviction that no single research instrument or tool is perfect. Because of financial and time constraints, these instruments were therefore discarded.

5.6.1   The questionnaires

Isaac and Michael (1993:128) state that questionnaires describe the nature of current conditions, identify problems in existing situations and assess needs or goals in order to analyse trends. They further contend that questionnaires also describe what exists in terms of particular contexts.

In this research, a questionnaire based on the research objectives as well as suggestions in the literature on quality assurance was developed. The questionnaire is significant for this research because

- it facilitates obtaining facts about current conditions and practice and making inquiries concerning attitudes and opinions;

- it is an extremely effective way of collecting data from a large number of people, relatively cheaply and in a relatively short time by a single person;

- it allows the researcher access to samples that might be hard to reach in person or by telephone; and

- it permits time to give thoughtful answers to the questions.

In this research the questionnaire sought to elicit out reactions from stakeholders involved in adult literacy programmes in business to specific questions relating to quality assurance. The use of questionnaires in this research was finally one of the appropriate ways of obtaining data about the perceptions of adult literacy programme stakeholders regarding quality assurance.

5.6.1.1   Construction of the questionnaire

Section A of the questionnaire was structured with the aim of obtaining biographical information from the respondents. Biographical information is the information that provides an account of who the respondents are. This biographical data were used to draw conclusions and make further recommendations. The section solicited the following information:

- Name of organisation to which the respondent was attached.
- Name of the province in which the organisation was located.
- Position of the respondent in the organisation.
- Respondent's age and gender.
- Professional qualifications.
- Further study.
- Experience in adult literacy.
- Highest academic qualification.
- Nature of appointment (e.g. full-time, temporary or contract).
- Number of learners in class.

Section B aimed to gather data on the processes that are in place to guarantee the smooth running of education and training programmes in business.

Section C of the questionnaire aimed to gather data on the quality assurance systems used for continuous improvement, their effectiveness, the improvement tools used to identify problems and effect improvements, and the role of the respondents in the promotion and enhancement of quality.

5.6.1.2   <u>The pilot study</u>

According to Vos (2002:215), the purpose of the pilot study is to improve the success and effectiveness of the investigation. It is a small-scale study administered before conducting an actual study (Mofokeng, 2002:336). As mentioned earlier on in this chapter, prior to implementing in the main research, the research instruments or tools will be pilot-tested. The pilot study guarantees the validity and reliability of the research instruments or tools. It is also clearly documented that it determines how the design of the main research can be improved and reveals defects in the research plan (Ural and Sekete, 1997:39; Bagwandeen, 1991:75; Fraenkel & Wallen, 1990:479).

The pilot-testing of the research instruments or tools is advantageous in the sense that

- it may save the researcher time and financial cost on research that could yield less than expected;

- it investigates the feasibility of the proposed project and detects flaws in the measurement procedures;

- it provides the researcher with unanticipated ideas, approaches and clues not foreseen prior to the main study. As a result, it reduces the number of data-gathering problems due to unforeseen problems identified in the pilot study, which may be resolved in redesigning the main study; and

- the researcher may try out a number of alternative measures and then

- select those that yield the best results for the main study (Isaac & Michael, 1993:34; Bagwandeen, 1991:76; Huysamen, 1994:197).

The pilot study was conducted at the Community adult literacy Centre in Nelspruit (Mpumalanga). A convenience sample of respondents was selected. The rationale behind using convenience sampling in this situation was to elicit a speedy and high response rate.

Conducting a pilot study was not smooth sailing. In the first place, the respondents were reluctant to subject themselves to the interview process and the completion of the questionnaire. They felt that they were being exploited to elevate someone else's status in the academic arena. They regarded the research as a waste of their time because they were not going to benefit in any way from it. It was only after the intervention of the principal of the local Adult Centre that they agreed to take part in the research. A few problems regarding the wording of some questions surfaced. It was also discovered that the level of English of some of the respondents was so low that they could not understand some questions on the questionnaire or in the interview. The researcher is fortunately multi-lingual and he did the translations. These problems were dealt with in a positive spirit by the researcher, because they alerted him to the kind of attitude he was likely to be confronted with when collecting data from the actual respondents. The problems encountered prompted the researcher to revise the questionnaire and interview schedule in order to rephrase and simplify some questions and discard others.

Regarding pilot-testing, Cohen & Manion (1985:103) remark that a questionnaire should be clear, unambiguous and uniformly workable. It should engage professional interests, encourage co-operation and elicit answers as close as possible to the truth. Even though this remark is from an old source, obviously it provides valuable advice to the researcher.

5.6.1.3   The administration of the questionnaires

The researcher personally visited adult literacy centres and administered the questionnaires. This rationale was to expedite the process of data-gathering. The researcher took leave from work specifically for this purpose. As anticipated, the attitudinal problems encountered during pilot testing were again encountered. Management immediately intervened to defuse the situation. The researcher communicated the anticipated problems regarding the data-collecting exercise to management on arrival at all the centres. Some respondents indicated that they were going to attend to the questionnaires during their leisure time and thereafter courier or fax them through to the researcher, but they did not have a problem in taking part in the interviews. The researcher had to leave them with money to have the completed questionnaires couriered or faxed to him. This state of affairs retarded the progress because some completed questionnaires were only sent to the researcher after a period of about eight months. In addition, some of

the faxed questionnaires were illegible, which forced the researcher to disregard them. Unfortunately, the respondents could not be coerced to regard the exercise as a matter of urgency. The researcher had to keep on persuading them, as advised by the academic supervisor.

Prior to visiting the centres, a covering letter with the following information was sent to both company management and the respondents:

- A brief explanation of who the researcher is.
- The purpose of the questionnaire.
- A motivation for conducting the research.
- An explanation of why their co-operation was required.
- An assurance of confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents and their organisations.

5.6.2   The interviews

5.6.2.1   Introduction

Having completed the questionnaires, the respondents were given a 30-minute break before being requested to take part in the interviews. Interviewing is the predominant mode of data collection in research (De Vos, 2000:292) and interviews are generally used to complement questionnaires. An interview is described as an oral questionnaire, during which the interviewee provides the required information verbally face-to-face rather than writing down the responses (Bagwandeen, 1991:81).

Structured interviews are significant for this research because they

- make it possible to determine and maintain sound relations with the respondents or at least determine when relations have not been established;
- permit probing in order to obtain more complete data;
- permit greater depth; and
- supply devices for ensuring the effectiveness of the interaction between the interviewees and the interviewers.

Interviews, however, have disadvantages as well. Among others, the researcher would like to mention a few as an indication that interviews are not complete and perfect

- The interviews may be expensive in terms of time and money.
- They may be open to manipulation and bias of the interviewer.
- They may be vulnerable to personality conflicts.
- They may be difficult to summarise.
- The population validity of the results obtained may be highly suspect because it is limited to a few individuals.
- They may intimidate or annoy respondents with racial, ethnic or socio-economic backgrounds different from that of the interviewer (Ural & Sekete, 1997:48; Huysamen, 1994:151 and Kruger, 1999:164).

The interviews are flexible in the sense that questions can be repeated, simplified and even rephrased, should the responses from the interviewees be ambiguous or unclear. The interviewer is also at liberty to change the manner of questioning if the situation demands this.

In order to obtain as much information as possible about quality assurance processes in adult literacy in business in South Africa, the respondents were requested to answer the following two open-ended questions:

- Broadly tell me about quality assurance measures applicable in your adult literacy programme and the benefits thereof.

- What type of problem identification and quality improvement tools do you use in your programme to identify problems and improve quality continuously?

(Before the above question was asked, a brief description of quality improvement tools and their importance in education and training programmes was provided to the respondents. The rationale behind this was to make them understand the question better and provide honest answers).

5.6.2.2   Constructing and administering the interview questionnaires

This research made use of unstructured interviews, the reason being that they allow the interviewer and interviewees greater flexibility. According to Welman & Kruger (1999:166), the interviewer using unstructured interviews is at liberty to introduce new material, which has not been arranged before, provided the consent of the interviewees has been obtained. The unstructured interviews held with training managers, ABET co-ordinators and trainers afforded the researcher the opportunity to formulate probing questions.

5.6.2.3   Recording interviews

All interviews and responses were audiotaped with the permission of the respondents. To complement the data on the tape, extensive notes were taken. The recorded information was transcribed verbatim and the resulting text analysed and interpreted. Bagwandeen (1991:84) confirms that tape-recording and note-taking are the usual methods for preserving the information collected in an interview. He adds that tape-recording is the most precise method of gathering data.

5.7   RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY OF DATA

5.7.1   Introduction

Gibson & Mitchell (1990:233) contend that 'reliability' represents the consistency with which a test will obtain the same results from the same population on different occasions. They continue to define "validity" as a degree to which an instrument measures what it claims to measures or is used to measure.

In this research, the reliability and validity of data were established through the application of the following methods: triangulation, respondent validation and trail.

5.7.2   Triangulation

Triangulation was achieved by carefully administering questionnaires and interviews to parties involved in adult literacy in different settings, spaces and at different times. The

questionnaires and interviews complemented the review of related literature. In order to justify the use of triangulation in this research, Erandson & Kerlinger (1983:138-139) and Cohen & Marion (1995:260) state that a multi-method approach is vital when the researcher wants a holistic view on a particular subject.

5.7.3   Respondent validation

According to Delamont (1992:158) respondent validation means checking with participants to see if they recognise the validity of the analysis being developed and it forms part of qualitative studies. During and after the data analysis, the researcher approached the respondents to verify whether the analysis represented their responses to both the questionnaire and the interview questions.

The validity of data was also increased by means of probing and clarifying perceptions and experiences of the adult literacy stakeholders during interviews. On the other hand, the data obtained was validated by means of quantitative measures.

5.7.4   Data trail

In order to allow other researchers to interrogate the research findings, a copy of the research will be kept in the Academic Information Centre of the University of Pretoria so that it can be accessible.

5.8   TREATMENT AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

The researcher compared the different responses. This comparison yielded important information that he hopes will be a contribution to the existing body of knowledge in quality assurance in education and training programmes in business with special reference to adult literacy. The comparison provided valuable information for drawing conclusions, making recommendations and providing areas for further research.

The collected data were analysed and interpreted. According to Hitchcock & Hughes (1989:43), analysis is what the researcher does with the data in order to develop explanations of events so that theories and generalisation about the causes, reasons and

processes of any piece of social behaviour can be formulated. The rationale behind the analysis is to have the collected data well organised and summarised.

5.9   CONCLUSION

In this chapter, different methods that were employed to gather the required data were discussed. A review of literature, questionnaires and unstructured interviews as presented in this chapter assisted the researcher to gain insight into quality assurance in education and training programmes in business with special reference to adult literacy in South Africa.

The use of the multi-method approach sought to obtain information that enabled the researcher to make sense of quality assurance in adult literacy programmes in particular, from the perspective of the stakeholders.

The next chapter will discuss the treatment of the collected data, analysis and interpretation of data and finally the development, synthesis and synchronisation of conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER VI: PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF COLLECTED DATA

6.1   INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a detailed analysis of the responses to the questionnaire regarding quality assurance in education and training programmes in business with special reference to adult literacy. Analysis, as Hitchcock & Hughes (1989:43) put it, is what the researcher does with the data in order to develop explanations of events so that theories and generalisation about the causes, reasons and processes of any piece of social behaviour can be formulated.

6.2   THE QUESTIONNAIRE: AN ANALYSIS OF RESPONSES

An analysis of responses is presented in such a manner that responses are directed to questions as they appear chronologically in the questionnaires and interviews, as indicated below:

Section A

Biographical information

This is information that describes the respondents. The knowledge of the respondents' attributes makes it possible for the researcher to draw informed conclusions and assumptions and to make recommendations on their involvement in adult literacy.

- Qualifications

The largest portion of respondents have a three-year teachers' diploma (36.21%) obtained from teachers colleges and others have Grade 12 (also 36.21%) without any adult education certificate or diploma. The perception may be that they have not been trained to teach adults, but pupils in a formal teaching-learning situation. The methods of adult literacy differ completely from traditional school education. As a result, their approach to adult literacy may lead to conflict, frustration and even drop-outs and ultimately compromise the quality of the programme. The possible cause of this could be that they might be tempted to treat adult learners like pupils. From experience, the researcher

knows that adult learners resent a situation in which their adulthood and dignity seem to be threatened or undermined.

- Age

The respondents were asked to provide their ages, but no one did this. The possible reason for this attitude may be that nowadays in our country, it has become standard practice that someone's age has become a sensitive issue. Whenever people are requested to provide their age, they normally think that the intention is to discriminate against them on the basis of their age and as a result they feel offended. Be that as it may, it is important to state also that if they are young and employed on contract as most of them are (54.10%), they will leave for greener pastures should opportunities present themselves.

- Class size

51% of the respondents have classes composed of fewer than 100 learners. It is evident that 49% respondents have classes composed of more than 100 learners. If the number of learners is very big, it becomes very difficult for the trainer to give individual attention; hence the quality of education and training is compromised.

- Gender

Most respondents are males (56.90%). This is a true reflection of our society, which is mainly male-dominated. More females should be recruited to set the demographics right and they are likely to bring with them different competencies (skills, knowledge and attitudes) that will contribute to quality improvement and enhancement.

Secondly, it is mentioned (Table 6.2, section 6.2.2) that the majority of respondents (low = 36.73%, moderate = 38.78%) report that they are not well remunerated and are contract workers. There is a possibility that a number of them will consider resigning, should better opportunities become available. In order to counteract this situation, more females should be recruited. One of the findings of the Kelly 2003 Human Capital Satisfaction Survey was that women were far more likely to accept lower salaries than men in all fields. The

assumption regarding this finding, is that women might be motivated by more than money and expect rewards far beyond cash in the bank (Burton, 2003:2).

If the problem of gender representation is not addressed, another possibility is that the adult literacy programmes may be male-dominated in terms of decision-making. The few females involved in the programme may feel intimidated. This attitude may eventually hamper teamwork and partnership among the stakeholders, which is crucial for quality promotion and enhancement in education and training programmes.

Social transactions between trainers of different sexes can lead to power struggles, intimidation and sexual harassment. These social transactions should be properly managed and there should be a strong support system for all those involved.

- Employment

The majority of trainers (54.10%) are employed on contract. The implication is that companies may not invest in them in terms of further training and in addition, their loyalty and commitment are questionable. Should they secure permanent employment elsewhere, the possibility that they will resign and leave the trainees without a trainer for a long period of time are great. This would be to the detriment of the quality of education and training programmes.

Section B:

Adult Literacy in Business

- Purpose

The purpose of this section is to gather data on the provision of adult literacy in business.

- Question

How would you rate yourself and the other adult literacy-related factors on the following items at present?

Table 6.1: Professional competencies

The purpose of the question on professional competencies is to determine if the stakeholders in business do have the skills, knowledge and attitude that enable them to promote and enhance the quality of adult literacy.

6.1.1   Knowledge and understanding of subject matter

Code	Frequency	Percentage
1 = Low	-	-
2 = Moderate	6	9.84
3 = High	55	90.16
Total	61	100

It is demonstrated here that the majority of stakeholders (90.16%) involved in the provision of adult literacy in business do have the required knowledge and understanding of the subject matter to be imparted to the adult learners. Mastery of the subject matter contributes to effective learning. Learning is defined in this research in Chapter I as a relatively permanent or lasting change in a behavioural tendency, which is a result of specific experiences or repetition of an experience and is practically impossible without good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter on the part of those playing a role, especially the trainers who are directly involved with the adult learners.

6.1.2   Insight into the methods for teaching adult learners

Code	Frequency	Percentage
1 = Low	-	-
2 = Moderate	10	16.39
3 = High	51	83.61
Total	61	100

The scenario that is painted here is that most of those involved (83.61%) in adult literacy in business have an insight into the methods for teaching adults. It must be noted that sub-table 6.1.2, which is about teaching methods, complements sub-table 6.1.1, which reflects

knowledge and understanding of the subject in the sense that the subject matter cannot be transferred effectively to adult learners without the application of an appropriate teaching method. This argument is justified by Flanagan (2000:342), who states that the success of learning, depends largely upon the effectiveness of the training method and the ability of the manager or his or her delegate to instruct the worker in that new skill.

6.1.3   Ability to make adult learners feel comfortable in a learning-teaching situation

Code	Frequency	Percentage
1 = Low	-	-
2 = Moderate	2	3.28
3 = High	59	96.72
Total	61	100

Most respondents (96.72%) reported that they do have the ability to make adult learners feel comfortable in the learning-teaching situation. This implies that they have the ability to create a climate that is conducive to adult literacy by using relevant methods that are opposed to traditional school education methods.

According to literature on the subject, the adult learner brings a great deal of quality experience to the learning situation. This means that learners themselves are sources of information that can be used by the trainer (for example in group discussions and simulations) (Erasmus, 2003:122). Exposing them to traditional school education methods will be an underestimation of their status as adults and that may make them uncomfortable in the learning situation.

6.1.4 Ability to make adult learners learn

Code	Frequency	Percentage
1 = Low	-	-
2 = Moderate	3	4.92
3 = High	58	95.08
Total	61	100

It has emerged that most respondents (95.08%) do have the ability to make adult learners learn. When these responses are looked into in conjunction with the responses provided in Sub-table 6.2.1, their responses to this become questionable. In order to be effective in making adult learners learn, one must have been trained in Andragogy. It is indicated in Sub-table 6.2.1 that only a limited number of respondents (44.23%) affirm that all the trainers are trained in Andragogy. This therefore suggests that the bulk of trainers have never been taken through Andragogy. It can be concluded that they do not have the theoretical background to making adult learners learn. Effective practice is informed by theory.

6.1.5 Good knowledge of the programme goal or course goals

Code	Frequency	Percentage
1 = Low	-	-
2 = Moderate	8	13.79
3 = High	50	86.21
Total	58	100

The majority of respondents in the field of adult literacy in business (86.21%) have a good knowledge of the programme goal or course goals. This links well with Sub-table 6.1.2, because the course goals guide the respondents through the process of choosing appropriate approaches or teaching methods that will be vital to achieve those goals. According to Erasmus (2003:168) the course goals are crucial, for the whole process of training and learning depends on their accuracy.

6.1.6 Teaching for transfer - ensuring that classroom teaching is appropriate for implementation in the environment

Code	Frequency	Percentage
1 = Low	-	-
2 = Moderate	16	26.67
3 = High	44	73.33
Total	60	100

It is noted from Sub-table 6.1.6 that most trainers (73.33%) teach for transfer to ensure that classroom teaching is appropriate for implementation in the environment. The possible explanation for this might be the fact that the stakeholders have identified the learning needs of adult learners and know exactly what type of information they have to transfer to them in the teaching and learning situation and how to do this (i.e. approach). If trainees are incapable of transferring and applying the newly acquired competencies in a practical situation, the quality of the education and training programmes that they have graduated from is questionable. The return on investment will not be realised, implying that the education and training programme is of poor quality.

6.1.7 Familiarity with legislation and current developments that influence the provision of adult literacy

Code	Frequency	Percentage
1 = Low	3	5.08
2 = Moderate	20	33.90
3 = High	36	61.02
Total	59	100

The majority of responses (61.02%) gave an indication that those involved in adult literacy in business are familiar with legislation and current developments that influence the provision of adult literacy. This is commendable in the sense that stakeholders are provided with crucial market information on education and training requirements and quality control over education and training programmes. However, it is mentioned in Chapter IV that the legislation and current developments that influence the effective provision of adult literacy and whose responsibility it is to transform education and training so that these can compare with the best in the world, can hardly be implemented in education and training programmes. It is felt that that the good intentions of this legislation and current developments are nullified by the state's incapacity to implement them.

Other problems critics mentioned were discussed in Chapter IV centre and concern the complexity and bureaucracy of the accreditation process. These intertwined problems are the following:

- The accreditation of training materials too often takes so long that the materials are no longer relevant for trainers or clients after being accredited.

- An associated issue is the necessity for trainers to keep their staff and materials 'in the race'- that is, constantly evolving in keeping with clients' needs, a process which runs counter to an involved bureaucratic approval system.

- SETA quality control mechanisms, while very important for a national skills development framework, do not take enough notice of specific client briefs and changing requirements.

- The accreditation process does not provide for the ways in which many training providers work as close business partners with their clients in training initiatives. The client ultimately does not have enough input into the process. A key indicator of this is that they pay the skills levy, but have no say over how the money is used (Viviers & Harris, 2003:18).

6.1.8 Classroom management

Code	Frequency	Percentage
1 = Low	1	1.64
2 = Moderate	6	9.84
3 = High	54	88.52
Total	61	100

In 88.52% of cases, responses affirm that the stakeholders are skilled in classroom management. This implies that in their classroom management activities, they constantly co-ordinate all activities to ensure that the programme goals and objectives are reached in an efficient and effective manner. Co-ordination, according to literature, refers to the harmonisation of all activities of a concern so as to facilitate its working and success.

Conclusion

The respondents are also managers in their own right. They manage learners and resources. Their ability to manage in the classroom situation may emanate from the fact that 36.21% of trainers are professionally trained teachers with three-years teachers' diplomas. Any student teacher is required to do an Educational Management course at

either college or university. The rest might have acquired managerial skills through involvement in management or practical experience.

Table 6.2: Human resource development

The purpose of Table 6.2 is to determine the extent of capacity-building coupled with the motivation of those involved to deliver quality service.

6.2.1 All trainers are trained in Andragogy (i.e. education of adults)

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage
1 = Low	8	15.38
2 = Moderate	21	40.38
3 = High	23	44.23
Total	52	100

A limited number of responses (44.23%) affirm that the trainers are trained in Andragogy. This therefore implies that the bulk of trainers have never had exposure to the theory of adult literacy. According to the literature, theory is crucial because it signifies a set of formal propositions that explain how something operates.

Flinders & Mills, (1993:xii). Kidd (1973:127) further asserts that, without any theory, activities may be aimless and as wasteful as attempts to find one's way without a street map in a city one is visiting for the first time.

6.2.2 The remuneration of trainers

Code	Frequency	Percentage
1 = Low	18	36.73
2 = Moderate	19	38.78
3 = High	12	24.49
Total	49	100

It is reported here that the majority of respondents (low=36.73%; moderate: 38.78%) are not being remunerated well. This is likely to have a negative impact on their performance

and naturally decreases motivation to the detriment of the adult literacy programme. This state of affairs is confirmed by Silbiger (2004:110) when he says that if the company does not reward superior performance, that leads to discontent. Financial reward is one of the most powerful means to motivate individuals, especially in South Africa where the cost of living has become high.

6.2.3 Attendance of seminars, conferences and workshops on adult literacy by adults

Code	Frequency	Percentage
1 = Low	9	17.65
2 = Moderate	29	56.86
3 = High	13	25.49
Total	51	100

It is evident from the above table that management is not fully committed to sending those involved to seminars, conferences and workshops on adult literacy. This could be perceived as management's failure to have its staff empowered so as to be able to deliver quality service to their clients. In contrast, the literature reviewed states that the ingredients to improve performance include empowerment (Guimaraes 1996:20). Flanagan (2000:134) urges that full advantage be taken of the opportunities offered by seminars, conferences and workshops to keep up to date. These are acknowledged forms of training, information-gathering and networking.

6.2.4 Arrangements for staff appraisal

Code	Frequency	Percentage
1 = Low	20	40.00
2 = Moderate	18	36.00
3 = High	12	24.00
Total	50	100

The responses to this question demonstrate that only a small number of respondents (24%) affirm that arrangements are made for staff appraisal. This situation needs to be

improved to ensure that staff are appraised from time to time to identify gaps in their performance and have these addressed.

6.2.5 The accreditation of trainers by SAQA

Code	Frequency	Percentage
1 = Low	15	29.41
2 = Moderate	20	39.22
3 = High	16	31.37
Total	51	100

According to the responses, 31.37% of trainers are accredited by SAQA. This is an indication that most trainers are not accredited by SAQA. Their credibility and competencies are therefore questionable. A possible reason for this might be the fact that the accreditation process itself is expensive, according to Bruniquel (2003:16). Bruniquel further regards the system of accreditation as bureaucratic, complicated and academic and believes that the training industry is strangled by red tape.

Conclusion

Central to quality promotion and enhancement is the human element, without which quality adult literacy is practically impossible. It is the human element in the form of a training manager, ABET co-ordinator and trainers that initiates quality assurance measures and ensures that these measures are implemented properly. To be able to do this effectively, this human element needs to be developed, remunerated well for retention purposes to increase the level of job satisfaction, appraised appropriately and accredited by a recognised statutory body.

All the other aspects of adult literacy are dependent on this human element, whose other role is to manage trainees so that they too, can make a contribution to quality promotion and enhancement. The human element is an indispensable aspect of adult literacy. If the human element is ignored, quality and efficiency will suffer (Silbiger, 2004:111).

Table 6.3: Networking and partnership

The purpose of Table 6.3 is to determine the extent to which stakeholders involved in adult literacy in business engage in a process that exposes them to new ideas and new ways of looking at things and that could advance their career prospects.

6.3.1 The adult literacy programme is run in partnership with stakeholders (i.e. training managers, ABET co-ordinators and trainers)

Code	Frequency	Percentage
1 = Low	6	11.76
2 = Moderate	22	43.14
3 = High	23	45.10
Total	51	100

6.3.2 Contact, collaboration and co-operation among stakeholders regarding the provision of adult literacy

Code	Frequency	Percentage
1 = Low	4	7.84
2 = Moderate	29	56.86
3 = High	18	35.29
Total	51	100

According to Flanagan (2004:24), networking and partnerships are rewarding in the sense that individuals learn from an increasing range of contacts with whom they can share ideas, advice and strategies. It is therefore important to note that the responses in Table 6.3 demonstrate that partnerships, contact, collaboration and co-operation among stakeholders regarding the provision of adult literacy are not highly valued in adult literacy programmes in business.

Conclusion

Quality assurance is about partnerships and teamwork, elements that are essential for the promotion and enhancement of quality in education and training programmes. The Scottish approach to quality assurance in adult literacy, for example, puts emphasis on partnership and advocates that partners should review progress to inform continuing development of strategy to take full account of the progress (Scottish Executive: Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland, 2002:1). Teamwork, on the other hand, is essential in an endeavour to improve quality. This claim is supported by Lewis (1993:20) and Lo & Seally (1996:21), who all believe that quality improvement will only be successful when all people across vertical and horizontal levels are involved in making it happen.

Table 6.4: Leadership

The purpose of Table 6.4 is to determine the extent to which management is giving general guidance and support to the stakeholders and to trainers in particular.

6.4.1   Management's commitment to adult literacy

Code	Frequency	Percentage
1 = Low	4	7.69
2 = Moderate	18	34.62
3 = High	30	57.69
Total	52	100

A considerable number of respondents (57.69%) reported that management is committed to adult literacy in business. This attitude is commendable, because managers, as pointed out by Erasmus (2003:222) are responsible for providing direction. Their commitment will therefore encourage others to fulfil this responsibility.

6.4.2   Management's support to trainers to deliver quality training

Code	Frequency	Percentage
1 = Low	4	7.69
2 = Moderate	16	30.77
3 = High	32	61.54
Total	52	100

Most respondents (61.54%) reported that management does support trainers to deliver quality education and training. This confirms Deming's claim that top management must lead the organisation with regard to quality enhancement (Downey, et al., 1994:14). It is stated in Chapter II that the initiation and facilitation of the quality process is a management responsibility. It will therefore be unthinkable not support the initiative. In Chapter III, it is mentioned that the success of quality management is the responsibility of management. Management should champion quality assurance and be committed to it.

6.4.3   Management's recognition and appreciation of staff performance from time to time

Code	Frequency	Percentage
1 = Low	7	13.46
2 = Moderate	24	46.15
3 = High	21	40.38
Total	52	100

The largest group of respondents (46.15%) reported that management recognises and appreciates staff performance to a moderate extent from time to time. This state of affairs signals that management still needs to do much to motivate staff through recognition and appreciation of their performance. Fred Hertzberg (quoted by Silbiger, 2004:110) states that motivation will be enhanced by maximising the motivators or satisfiers on the job and minimising the dissatisfiers. In this case, for example, an award can be a satisfier.

It is therefore advisable to plan and implement recognition schemes carefully, because these could be key motivators in getting staff members to raise and sustain their levels of performance. The following are some of these schemes:

- Annual performance awards.
- Service awards.
- Monthly awards to top performers at different levels of the adult literacy programme.
- Incentive bonuses, etc.

6.4.4   Management's communication of training policy to trainers

Code	Frequency	Percentage
1 = Low	3	5.77
2 = Moderate	27	51.92
3 = High	22	42.31
Total	52	100

A limited number of respondents (42.31%) reported that management does communicate the training policy to the trainers. It is therefore evident that management needs to improve in this area. A programme to improve communication can be carefully designed and implemented. Some initiatives that can be developed and implemented involve

- effectively managed notice-boards;
- knowledge operations centres; and
- management by 'walk-about', etc.

It is worth mentioning that the success of training and development efforts in companies is theoretically based on the company's official training and development policy, which will have as its basis the company's particular philosophy. It is therefore important for the trainers and other stakeholders to be exposed to the policy. Furthermore, this policy informs their activities and gives general guidance to the conduct of affairs (Erasmus, 2004:80).

6.4.5 **Management's communication of legislation and current developments that have an impact on the provision of adult literacy**

Code	Frequency	Percentage
1 = Low	8	16.00
2 = Moderate	19	38.00
3 = High	23	46.00
Total	50	100

A limited number of respondents (46%) reported that management does not communicate legislation and current developments that have an impact on the provision of adult literacy. The possible reason for this might be embedded in Jansen's claim that education and training policies hardly reach schools and other training environments exactly as they were proposed. Policies are just discourses (i.e. just words), which have nothing to do with everyday practices (i.e. reality) (Jansen, 2000:86-102). If this claim is true, it can be inferred that management is also not aware of the existence of some of these policies, for they never reach the managers.

Conclusion

It must be noted that management is responsible for planning, guiding, controlling and organising most of the activities in adult literacy. If these responsibilities are not fulfilled, the quality of adult literacy is likely to be compromised.

Table 6.5: Recruitment and placement of trainees

The purpose of Table 6.5 is to determine if prior learning is considered in the recruitment of learners and also to determine the extent to which the learners receive general support in the adult literacy programme.

6.5.1 Prior learning of the trainees is taken into consideration before they are placed in the appropriate training groups.

Code	Frequency	Percentage
1 = Low	2	3.85
2 = Moderate	10	19.23
3 = High	40	76.92
Total	52	100

Most respondents (76.92%) reported that prior learning of the trainees is taken into consideration for placement in the appropriate training group. This is good practice because what the trainees know forms the basis for future learning.

Recognition of prior learning (RPL) refers to practices developed within education and training to identify and recognise adults' previous learning. The broad principle is that previous learning acquired informally, non-formally, experientially or formally can and should be recognized and given currency within formal education and training frameworks. RPL is a way to address the historical lack of opportunities for disadvantaged adults to help them gain access to qualifications.

6.5.2 Guidance is given to the trainees for the purpose of retention, completion and progression

Code	Frequency	Percentage
1 = Low	3	5.77
2 = Moderate	20	38.46
3 = High	29	55.77
Total	52	100

A reasonable number of respondents (55.77) reported that guidance is given to trainees. This practice is good for the purposes of retention, progression and completion. If they are not properly guided, they are likely to be stressed, frustrated and demoralised to such an extent that they may even drop out of adult literacy. It emerges from the literature review that there are trainees who leave the adult literacy programmes and who have no wish to

return. The contributing factors may be lack of sustained guidance and support, dissatisfaction with the programme, because it does not meet their aspirations or a style of teaching that makes learning inaccessible to them (Scottish Executive: Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland, 2002:1).

6.5.3 Psychological and social counselling services are provided for troubled trainees

Code	Frequency	Percentage
1 = Low	20	38.46
2 = Moderate	16	30.77
3 = High	16	30.77
Total	52	100

A limited number of respondents (30.77%) reported that psychological and social counselling services are provided for troubled trainees. The possible reason for this might be the availability of the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) in companies. As a matter of principle most companies have implemented the EAP as a means for the company to communicate its willingness to provide for and protect employees with personal problems (Googins & Godfrey, 1987:109).

6.5.4 Guidance on what to expect in the adult literacy programme is offered to the trainees before entry

Code	Frequency	Percentage
1 = Low	6	11.54
2 = Moderate	18	34.62
3 = High	28	53.85
Total	52	100

The majority of the respondents (53.85%) reported that guidance on what to expect in the adult literacy programme is offered to the trainees before entry. This approach serves as an ice-breaker so that the trainees can acclimatise to the new situation within a very short time and learn effectively.

6.5.5 Counselling on follow-up training is available

Code	Frequency	Percentage
1 = Low	18	34.62
2 = Moderate	20	38.46
3 = High	14	26.92
Total	52	100

A very low number of respondents (26.92%) report that counselling on follow-up training is available. This might signal the absence of an After-Care Programme in most adult literacy programmes in business. The after-care programme is crucial, for it is a mechanism to assist employees to apply their newly acquired competencies in the workplace. It is advisable for line management, labour and trainees to conduct the after-care programme as a collective. The data collected in the process can be used to influence and inform the improvement of the quality of the future adult literacy programme.

Conclusion

The adults that are recruited and placed in the adult literacy Programme enter the programme being in possession of prior learning and at the same time have a variety of problems such as marriage problems, financial problems, etc, that may have a negative impact on their performance. It is therefore important to place them in the appropriate training according to their level of learning and to provide counselling and guidance to them, depending on the nature of their problems.

Section C: Quality Assurance Systems

The purpose of this section is to gather data on the quality assurance systems used for continuous improvement, their effectiveness, the improvement tools used to identify problems and effect improvements and the role of the people who are involved in the promotion and enhancement of quality.

Table 6.6: Quality assurance initiatives

The purpose of Table 6.6 is to determine the stakeholders' level of understanding of the national initiatives that have to do with the promotion and enhancement of quality.

Question: How clear is your understanding of the following national initiatives concerning quality promotion and enhancement of adult literacy?

6.6.1 The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA)

Code	Frequency	Percentage
1 = Very unclear	1	1.85
2 = Somewhat unclear	2	3.70
3 = Clear	15	27.78
4 = Rather clear	7	12.96
5 = Very clear	29	53.70
Total	54	100

6.6.2 The National Qualifications Framework (NQF)

Code	Frequency	Percentage
1 = Very unclear	1	1.85
2 = Somewhat unclear	2	3.70
3 = Clear	13	24.07
4 = Somewhat clear	7	12.96
5 = Very clear	31	57.41
Total	54	100

6.6.3   Education and Training Quality Assurers (ETQAs)

Code	Frequency	Percentage
1 = Very unclear	5	9.26
2 = Somewhat unclear	6	11.11
3 = Clear	12	22.22
4 = Somewhat clear	7	12.96
5 = Very clear	24	44.44
Total	54	100

6.6.4   Standards Generating Bodies (SGBs)

Code	Frequency	Percentage
1 = Very unclear	3	5.56
2 = Somewhat unclear	5	9.26
3 = Clear	11	20.37
4 = Somewhat clear	8	14.81
5 = Very clear	27	50.00
Total	54	100

6.6.5   There are quality assurance policies, practices and procedures in place in your adult literacy programme

Code	Frequency	Percentage
1 = Yes	34	64.15
2 = No	11	20.75
3 = Uncertain	8	15.09
Total	53	100

6.6.6   A particular quality assurance model is used to promote and enhance quality

Code	Frequency	Percentage
1 = Yes	40	75.47
2 = No	8	15.09
3 = Uncertain	5	9.43
Total	53	100

6.6.7   How effective is the quality assurance model used?

Code	Frequency	Percentage
1 = Not effective	6	11.76
2 = Average	27	52.94
3 = Effective	18	35.29
Total	51	100

Most of the respondents reported that they understood the national initiatives that were mentioned. This is essential because it is these national initiatives that inform the attempts to promote and enhance quality in training programmes.

The majority (64.14%) of respondents also reported that there are quality policies, procedures and practices in their adult literacy programmes. These are crucial because they provide general direction to the programme, the direction leading to the promotion and enhancement of quality.

Most of the respondents (75.47%) reported that a particular form of quality assurance is used in their adult literacy programmes and 52.94% reported that the effectiveness of this is merely average. It is crucial to first pilot every model in smaller scale and see if it yields good results.

Table 6.7: Quality improvement tools

The purpose of Table 6.7 is to determine the frequency with which different quality improvement tools are used to identify programme-related problems

6.7.1 How frequently do you use quality improvement tools to identify programme-related problems and address them?

Code	Frequency	Percentage
1 = Never	4	8.00
2 = Rarely	9	18.00
3 = Sometimes	16	32.00
4 = Seldom	6	12.00
5 = Always	15	30.00
Total	50	100

The largest group of respondents (32%) reported that quality improvement tools are used sometimes. What emerges here is that quality improvement tools in adult literacy in business are not taken seriously and that their importance is overlooked. Quality improvement tools cannot be undermined, because they make the process of continuous improvement work (Kellison quoted by Mulligan, 1994:235). To support Kellison's assertion, Crosby is quoted in Chapter II of this thesis as saying that the processes should be measured to determine where current and potential quality problems lie. This remark is crucial in the sense that it clearly suggests that something needs to happen after the current and potential quality problems have been identified, and that is where the quality improvement tools come in.

6.7.2 How frequently do you use the following improvement tools?

6.7.2.1 Affinity diagram

Code	Frequency	Percentage
1 = Never	17	36.96
2 = Rarely	5	10.87
3 = Sometimes	14	30.43
4 = Seldom	4	8.70
5 = Always	6	13.o4
Total	46	100

6.7.2.2   Cause and effect diagram

Code	Frequency	Percentage
1 = Never	16	32.65
2 = Rarely	7	14.29
3 = Sometimes	10	20.41
4 = Seldom	4	8.16
5 = Always	12	24.48
Total	49	100

6.7.2.3   Flow chart

Code	Frequency	Percentage
1 = Never	14	28.57
2 = Rarely	2	4.08
3 = Sometimes	12	24.49
4 = Seldom	5	10.20
5 = Always	16	32.65
Total		100

6.7.2.4   Check sheet

Code	Frequency	Percentage
1 = Never	16	33.33
2 = Rarely	1	2.08
3 = Sometimes	8	16.67
4 = Seldom	5	10.42
5 = Always	18	37.50
Total	48	100

6.7.2.5   Run chart

Code	Frequency	Percentage
1 = Never	19	41.30
2 = Rarely	5	10.87
3 = Sometimes	7	15.22
4 = Seldom	7	15.22
5 = Always	8	17.39
Total	46	100

6.7.2.6   Relations diagram

Code	Frequency	Percentage
1 = Never	17	35.42
2 = Rarely	4	8.33
3 = Sometimes	9	18.75
4 = Seldom	7	14.58
5 = Always	11	22.92
Total	48	100

6.7.2.7   Pareto diagram

Code	Frequency	Percentage
1 = Never	18	41.86
2 = Rarely	5	11.63
3 = Sometimes	11	25.58
4 = Seldom	3	6.98
5 = Always	6	13.95
Total	43	100

6.7.2.8   Nominal group technique

Code	Frequency	Percentage
1 = Never	16	34.78
2 = Rarely	2	4.35
3 = Sometimes	6	13.04
4 = Seldom	9	19.57
5 = Always	13	28.26
Total	46	100

6.7.2.9   Histogram

Code	Frequency	Percentage
1 = Never	19	40.43
2 = Rarely	4	8.51
3 = Sometimes	10	21.28
4 = Seldom	6	12.77
5 = Always	8	17.02
Total	47	100

6.7.2.10   Force field analysis

Code	Frequency	Percentage
1 = Never	19	44.19
2 = Rarely	5	11.63
3 = Sometimes	11	25.58
4 = Seldom	3	6.98
5 = Always	5	11.63
Total	43	100

6.7.2.11 Operational diagram

Code	Frequency	Percentage
1 = Never	18	39.13
2 = Rarely	7	15.22
3 = Sometimes	9	19.57
4 = Seldom	7	15.22
5 = Always	5	10.87
Total	43	100

6.7.2.12 Sampling

Code	Frequency	Percentage
1 = Never	16	34.04
2 = Rarely	3	6.38
3 = Sometimes	11	23.40
4 = Seldom	3	6.38
5 = Always	14	29.79
Total	47	100

6.7.2.13 Scatter diagram

Code	Frequency	Percentage
1 = Never	22	48.89
2 = Rarely	5	11.11
3 = Sometimes	10	22.22
4 = Seldom	3	6.67
5 = Always	5	11.11
Total	45	100

6.7.2.14   Systematic diagram

Code	Frequency	Percentage
1 = Never	20	43.48
2 = Rarely	3	6.52
3 = Sometimes	9	19.57
4 = Seldom	3	6.52
5 = Always	11	23.91
Total	46	100

6.7.2.15   Variables charts

Code	Frequency	Percentage
1 = Never	16	34.04
2 = Rarely	3	6.38
3 = Sometimes	8	17.02
4 = Seldom	9	19.15
5 = Always	11	23.40
Total	47	100

6.7.2.16   Attributes charts

Code	Frequency	Percentage
1 = Never	18	38.30
2 = Rarely	7	14.89
3 = Sometimes	9	19.15
4 = Seldom	7	14.89
5 = Always	6	12.77
Total	47	100

6.7.2.17   Chart interpretation

Code	Frequency	Percentage
1 = Never	17	35.42
2 = Rarely	3	6.25
3 = Sometimes	8	16.67
4 = Seldom	3	6.25
5 = Always	17	35.42
Total	48	100

When one looks at the responses in the above sub-table, it becomes evident that the quality improvement tool used most often is the check sheet. The possible reason for this might be the fact that it is a very simple and quick way to keep track of students (or trainees), books and supplies (Arcaro, 1995:132).

The majority of respondents as presented in the sub-tables have never used the rest of the quality improvement tools. It is possible that they do not even know what they look like. It is therefore essential to have insight into a variety of problem identification and quality improvement tools and to be able to use these, because they address different aspects of an adult literacy programme with the aim to promote and enhance quality.

It is stated in Chapter IV that quality improvement tools make the process of continuous improvement work (Kellison quoted by Mulligan, 1994:235). It is further stated that these tools play a crucial role in the implementation of a quality assurance system by means of rational decision-making, based on facts and objective measurements (Meyer, 2003:307).

Conclusion

No single quality improvement tool can address all problems. The adult literacy programme is always inundated with problems of varying nature, hence appropriate tools should be used to address specific problems.

In Chapter II of this thesis it is stated that Crosby, one of the 'quality gurus' does not believe in the existence of a quality problem. He advises that quality needs to be built into a product or service from the onset. This exercise is crucial, because it prevents errors

from occurring. This exercise is also money-saving, because rectifying errors may be costly. Crosby's argument demonstrates that there will be no need to apply quality improvement tools if quality is built into the service from the beginning.

Table 6.8: Essential elements in the promotion and enhancement of quality

The purpose of Table 6.8 is to establish how the essential elements in the promotion and enhancement of quality are being viewed by the respondents.

Question: In your role as a training manager, ABET co-ordinator or facilitator, how important do you find the following aspects in the promotion and enhancement of quality in adult literacy?

6.8.1 Top Management

Code	Frequency	Percentage
1 = Very important	51	86.44
2 = Important	4	6.78
3 = Not important	1	1.69
4 = Not sure	3	5.08
Total	59	100

6.8.2 Communication among role-players

Code	Frequency	Percentage
1 = Very important	46	77.97
2 = Important	11	18.64
3 = Not important	-	-
4 = Not sure	2	3.39
Total	59	100

6.8.3 Teamwork

Code	Frequency	Percentage
1 = Very important	51	85.00
2 = Important	6	10.00
3 = Not important	1	1.67
4 = Not sure	2	3.33
Total	60	100

6.8.4 Partnership

Code	Frequency	Percentage
1 = Very important	46	76.67
2 = Important	10	16.67
3 = Not important	2	3.33
4 = Not sure	2	3.33
Total	60	100

6.8.5 Clarification of roles

Code	Frequency	Percentage
1=Very important	47	78.33
2=Important	10	16.67
3=Not important	-	-
4=Not sure	3	5.00
Total	60	100

6.8.6 Training of participants

Code	Frequency	Percentage
1=Very important	47	79.66
2=Important	8	13.56
3=Not important	2	3.39
4=Not sure	2	3.39
Total	59	100

6.8.7 Continuous improvement

Code	Frequency	Percentage
1=Very important	45	76.27
2=Important	12	20.34
3=Not important	-	-
4=Not sure	2	3.39
5=Always	-	-
Total	59	100

6.8.8 Incentives for staff members

Code	Frequency	Percentage
1=Very important	40	66.67
2=Important	15	25.00
3=Not important	1	1.67
4=Not sure	4	6.67
Total	60	100

6.8.9 Planning

Code	Frequency	Percentage
1=Very important	52	86.67
2=Important	4	6.67
3=Not important	-	-
4=Not sure	4	6.67
Total	60	100

6.8.10 Counselling services

Code	Frequency	Percentage
1=Very important	35	58.33
2=Important	18	30.00
3=Not important	5	8.33
4=Not sure	2	3.33
Total	60	100

6.8.11 Motivation

Code	Frequency	Percentage
1=Very important	54	90.00
2=Important	3	5.00
3=Not important	1	1.67
4=Not sure	2	3.33
Total	60	100

6.8.12 Infrastructure

Code	Frequency	Percentage
1=Very important	48	81.36
2=Important	9	15.25
3=Not important	-	-
4=Not sure	2	3.39
Total	59	100

6.8.13 Benchmarking

Code	Frequency	Percentage
1=Very important	35	59.32
2=Important	16	27.12
3=Not important	3	5.08
4=Not sure	5	8.47
Total	59	100

The majority of responses as presented in the above tables demonstrate that the respondents confirm that the following elements are all essential for the holistic promotion and enhancement of quality in adult literacy as shown by the literature review in this thesis. These elements are

- top management;
- teamwork and training;
- benchmarking;
- continuous improvement;
- communication;
- incentives for staff members; and
- partnerships.

Top Management and Planning

In Chapter II it is stated that the initiation and facilitation of the quality process is a management responsibility. This assertion demonstrates that management has a crucial role to play in the promotion and enhancement of quality in education and training programmes in business. Management has to take the lead and provide direction to the other stakeholders (Downey et al., 1994:14).

Teamwork and Training

Neither management nor the other stakeholders alone in education and training programmes, as stated in Chapter II, have all the solutions or answers to all problems in the education and training programmes. In view of this, it is crucial that all stakeholders should operate as a collective or team. In Chapter III, Deming is quoted as saying that quality assurance requires teamwork, and the rationale behind this is that participation leads to commitment and ultimately to ownership of the process. This participation instils a sense of pride in the participants in the sense that their voices count, their ideas are respected and they can make a difference. Members of the team, as stated in Chapter III, cannot automatically work harmoniously with one another unless they are empowered to use their collective knowledge, to make collective judgements and take collective action to improve the quality of education and training. On the other hand, Gerber, Nel & Van Dyk (2998:96) propose the use of quality circles. This is a work team approach used to improve the quality of work life. In the same light, Meyer (2004:307), further remarks that quality circles are important, especially when it comes to the identification of problems. For this reason, he proposes that they need to be empowered to implement solutions where possible.

Benchmarking

Benchmarking, according to Flanagan (2000:312) is the process of measuring against, and improving on, the products, the services and the practices of those organisations regarded as leaders in a particular field. It is important because its goal is to reinvent operations to achieve significantly better performance.

Continuous improvement

Edwards Deming, quoted in Chapter II of this thesis believes that change for the better occurs through dedication to continuous improvement and shared constancy of purpose among everyone in the organisation (Flanagan, 2000:310). Deming emphasises that an organisation that creates a favourable climate for constant improvement is a quality organisation (Deming, 1986, quoted by Gaither, 1998:8).

Communication

Crosby is quoted in Chapter II as stating that individuals should be encouraged to communicate to management the obstacles they face in attaining their improvement goals. The researcher differs slightly from Crosby's remark, because it suggests that communication should be one-way. Since those who are involved in education and training programmes operate as a collective or team, it is important that communication should be a two-way system.

Incentives for staff members and motivation

Both Juran and Feigenbaum (quality gurus) are quoted in Chapter II as saying that those who participate in the process of continuous quality improvement should be recognised and appreciated. This is a very important form of extrinsic motivation that is likely to play a dominant role in always keeping stakeholders willing to go the extra mile. This recognition and appreciation can be expressed in many ways, such as giving incentives.

Partnerships

It is stated in Chapter IV that an effective quality assurance system must create collaborative partnerships, both internal and external to the provider and organisation. This exercise assists in making stakeholders learn best practices from one another as well as from external partners.

Conclusion

If quality has to be promoted and enhanced in adult literacy, a variety of essential aspects that form part of the programme need to be considered. Each of these elements is crucial and can play a vital role in promoting and enhancing quality in education and training programmes in business.

Table 6.9: Participation

The purpose of Table 6.9 is to determine the frequency of the stakeholders' involvement in the promotion and enhancement of quality in adult literacy.

Question: What is the participation of those playing a role in quality promotion and enhancement exercises?

6.9.1   Those playing a role collaborate and work as a team to promote and enhance quality

Code	Percentage	Percentage
1 = Never	6	10.53
2 = Rarely	8	14.04
3 = Sometimes	19	33.33
4 = Always	24	42.11
Total	57	100

The largest group of respondents (42.11%) reported that stakeholders collaborate and work as a team to promote and enhance quality. This is supported by literature that states that the role that these participants play in quality improvement and quality is crucial in the enhancement of customer satisfaction (Barry, 1991:5; Lewis, 1993:33; Weller & McElwee, 1997:209). Teamwork makes the participants feel that they own the process, and as a result they will care about its quality (Michaelson in Mulligan, 1994:5).

6.9.2 The stakeholders are dedicated to continuous improvement

Code	Frequency	Percentage
1=Never	6	10.53
2=Rarely	11	19.30
3=Sometimes	15	26.32
4=Always	25	43.86
Total	57	100

Most respondents (43.86%) reported that the stakeholders are dedicated to continuous improvement. The possible reason might be that they view the responsibility of continuous improvement in adult literacy as not the preserve of management only. The literature also justifies this approach by stating that everyone in the organization must be dedicated to continuous improvement personally and collectively (Bonstinghl, 1992:4-9).

6.9.3 The stakeholders are involved at every level of the adult literacy programme

Code	Frequency	Percentage
1 = Never	10	17.54
2 = Rarely	7	12.28
3 = Sometimes	16	28.07
4 = Always	24	42.11
Total	57	100

The largest group of respondents (42.11%) revealed that the stakeholders are involved at every level of the adult literacy programme. This is crucial because they possess different types of expertise that they can use to complement one another's activities to promote and enhance the quality of the programme at every level.

6.9.4 The stakeholders are empowered to use their collective knowledge to make collective judgements and take collective action to improve adult literacy

Code	Frequency	Percentage
1 = Never	6	10.53
2 = Rarely	8	14.04
3 = Sometimes	19	33.33
4 = Always	24	42.11
Total	57	100

Most respondents (42.11%) reported that the participants are empowered to use their collective knowledge to make collective judgements and take collective action to effect the improvement of adult literacy. This is justified by Lozotte, 1993:22-30) who states that members of the team cannot automatically work together harmoniously and effectively. They need to be empowered to use their collective knowledge, to make collective judgements and take collective action to enhance education and training.

Conclusion

Teamwork plays a very important role in the promotion and enhancement of quality in adult literacy. This implies that those playing a role should collaborate, get involved at every level of the programme, be committed to continuous improvement and act collectively in taking steps to address problems that may undermine the quality of adult literacy.

6.10   INTERVIEW RESULTS

The majority of respondents (70.10%), only mentioned homework, tests and examinations that they use to identify the weaknesses and strengths of the adult learners in terms of their training when they were asked to tell about quality assurance measures applicable in their adult literacy programme and the benefits thereof in broad terms.

When they were asked about the problem identification and quality improvement tools that they use to identify problems and improve quality continuously, the majority of respondents

(85%) mentioned only one tool and that was the check sheet. The possible explanation for this is that it is simple and easy to use.

6.11   SYNTHESIS OF COLLECTED DATA

In terms of the research question and objectives, it emerged in this research that the quality processes in adult literacy in business are not effective, for they are not holistic in approach. There are a number of areas that still need attention and improvement, as reported above.

The hypothesis has been tested by means of both the literature review and the findings obtained through the questionnaire and interviews that were found to be true. The hypothesis is as follows: The development of effective quality assurance processes and their effective implementation in training and education programmes in business can assist in continuous improvement and turn them into quality programmes.

This chapter finally demonstrates that the following research objectives have been achieved:

- To draw on international best practice principles.
- To assess whether there are effective quality assurance processes in place in education and training programmes in business in South Africa.
- To ascertain whether the stakeholders are familiar with quality assurance best practice processes.
- To explore the involvement of stakeholders in quality assurance processes in education and training programmes in business.
- To conduct a needs assessment for quality assurance processes in education and training programmes in business.
- To provide guidelines for the implementation of effective quality assurance processes in education and training programmes in business.

CHAPTER VII: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1   INTRODUCTION

This chapter reflects the significance of this research and is mainly based on the research findings presented in Chapter VI. These findings were arrived at through the literature review, questionnaire and interviews that were conducted by the researcher.

Chapter VII further seeks to

- provide possible answers to the research question;
- demonstrate whether the research aims and objectives have been achieved;
- draw conclusions and make recommendations; and
- provide possible further research themes.

The findings made in this research are an endeavour to provide answers to the following research question:

To what extent are internally developed quality assurance processes effective in the promotion and enhancement of quality in education and training programmes in business with special reference to adult literacy in South Africa?

Emanating from the above research question is the hypothesis that reads thus:

The development of effective quality assurance processes and their effective implementation in education and training programmes in business can assist in continuous improvement efforts.

In order to find possible answers to the research question, the following research was done:

Quality assurance in education and training programmes in business with special reference to adult literacy.

As is clearly stated in Chapter I, the research was partly motivated by the fact that evaluation in education and training programmes in business is often done poorly or completely ignored (Fisher et al., 1993:403). Evaluation, in this context, refers to the diligent investigation of programme characteristics and merits. Its purpose is to provide information on the effectiveness of projects so as to optimise the outcomes, efficiency and quality (Fink, 1995:2). It is evident from this brief exposition that evaluation is one of the measures used in the quality assurance process for the promotion and enhancement of quality in education and training programmes.

Evaluation is also closely related to quality assessment, which Morley (2003:17) sees as that process that involves auditing mechanisms and systems for quality management in every stage of the production process. The aim thereof is to interrogate the regulatory mechanisms through which quality is assured. The claim made by Fisher is supported by Beardwell & Holden (1994:351), who both remark that quality assurance in the education and training strategy is crucial, but is often completely neglected or least carried out inadequately.

This research was informed and guided by the following aim and objectives:

Aim

The general aim of the research as expressed in Chapter I was to explore the presence of and the need for possible implementation of effective quality assurance processes in education and training programmes in business with special reference to adult literacy in South Africa. It also aimed at seeking answers to the following questions:

- Do education and training programmes in business have effective quality assurance processes in place to promote and enhance quality?

- Do education and training programmes in business embrace best practice principles for continuous quality improvement?

Objectives

The objectives that the research sought to achieve as presented in Chapter I are as follows:

- To draw on international best practice principles in the area of quality assurance through the process of benchmarking.

- To assess whether there are effective quality assurance processes in education and training programmes in business in South Africa.

- To ascertain whether those playing a role in education and training programmes in business are familiar with quality assurance best practice principles and processes.

- To explore the involvement of stakeholders in quality assurance processes in education and training in business.

- To conduct a needs assessment for quality assurance processes in education and training programmes in business.

- To provide recommendations for quality assurance processes in education and training in business.

7.2   OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH

In Chapter I the idea and motivation for the research were presented. It was followed by the identification and articulation of the research question, hypothesis, aim and objectives of the research. A general indication of the research design, approach and the outline of the rest of the research was also presented. Finally, a definition and clarification of terms as they are used in the research was provided. This was meant to provide a global picture of the research.

The essence of Chapter I was to

- demonstrate how the decision on the topic was made;

- articulate the importance and relevance of the topic chosen;

- articulate the research question, overall aim and objectives of the research;

- present an indication of the research design, plan of the research and the methodology followed in addressing the research question;

- discuss briefly how the research was going to unfold; and

- indicate the main topics that were going to be discussed in the following chapters.

Chapters II, III and IV presented a discussion of pertinent literature studied and analysed by the researcher. The purpose of this chapter was to show how other ideas, thinking and theories influence contemporary thinking in education and training regarding quality assurance

The essence of this exercise was to

- review the existing scholarship or body of knowledge to see how other scholars conducted similar research; and

- learn from other scholars or researchers how they theorised and conceptualised pertinent issues, what they found empirically, what instrumentation they used and to what effect.

Chapter V provides information about the issues of measurement, sample design, sampling methods, data collection methods, fieldwork practice, data capturing and data editing in scientific research. The essence of this chapter was to

- discuss the instruments used in the measurement of the key variables of the research;

- explain the sample design, the sampling technique and the criteria used in the choice of sample size;

- provide full details of the data collection process, including gaining access to the respondents, data collection techniques and procedures used; and

- describe procedures used in capturing and editing data to minimise mistakes.

Chapter VI discusses the presentation of results and concluding interpretations. The purpose of the chapter was to provide a detailed analysis of the responses to the questionnaire and interviews regarding quality assurance in education and training programmes in business with special reference to adult literacy. Analysis in this case means what the researcher does with the data in order to develop explanations of events so that theories and generalisation about the causes, reasons and processes of any instance of social behaviour can be developed (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1989:43).

The essence of this chapter was to

- describe the main results that were obtained;

- discuss the main trends and patterns in the data with reference to the research question; and

- interpret the main findings and highlight the main results, positive and negative.

Chapter VII provides a summary and discussion of significant points. The interpretation of results in terms of literature review, questionnaire and interviews is done in this chapter. The significance of the results and recommendations is finally provided. In short, this chapter mirrors the significance of the research.

The essence of this chapter was to

- discuss the main findings that were obtained in the research, drawing together the results obtained in previous chapters;

- show the connections between the results of the empirical investigation and the literature reviewed in Chapters II, III and IV;

- show the relevance and value of the research; and

- provide recommendations and further research themes to be investigated.

7.3   MAIN FINDINGS EMERGING FROM THE RESEARCH

The main findings emerging from both the literature review and empirical investigation will now be discussed. The empirical data of this research were obtained through questionnaires and interviews. It is important to note that this will give an indication of whether the general aim and objectives of the research as presented in Chapters I and II have been achieved or not. Moreover, the hypothesis will be tested against the findings.

7.3.1   Findings emerging from the literature review

Findings emerging from Chapter I

- The concept of quality is confusing and difficult to describe (Bradley, 1993:23). It is, therefore viewed from different perspectives by different individuals, hence different philosophies of quality (Crosby, 1984; Guaspari, 1985; Green, 1994 quoted by Gaither, 1998:8). This implies that there is no umbrella definition of quality, as it is determined by the needs and expectations of the customers.

- Quality assurance in education and training programmes is of utmost importance, but is very often neglected or carried out inadequately (Beardwell & Holden, 1994:351). According to the literature studied and analysed, one reason for this is

that managers normally assume that education and training will work unchecked (Fisher, 1993:403).

- National quality assurance initiatives have not proved to be effective. The SETAs and the other bodies associated with them, whose responsibility is to assure quality and to establish and maintain high levels of education and training, could not deliver on their mandates as expected (*The Star*, 2003:20). They have been accused, among others, of poor performance (*Mail & Guardian*, 2005:8; *Mpumalanga News*, 2005:4).

Findings emerging from Chapter II

- The initiation and facilitation of quality improvement processes is the responsibility of management (Holt, 1993:22; Blankstein, 1996:65; Weller & McElwee, 1997:201).

- Quality does not occur by accident, but is planned (Logothetis, 1992:62).

- There will be no quality problems if quality is built into the product or service from the onset (Crosby, 1996:8).

- Quality processes do not create themselves or exist as separate entities from management processes (Crosby, 1984:3).

- Quality assurance emphasises continuous improvement, concentrates on making processes better, extends the mindset, involves feedback, emphasises teamwork and requires a vision.

Findings emerging from Chapter III

- Quality depends upon a common passion for excellence, with everyone contributing to a common effort (Aspin, Chapman & Wilkinson, 1994:17).

- Quality improvement requires teamwork (Triibus quoted by Lockwood in Mulligan, 1994:33).

- Internal processes should not be improved at the expense of customers (Kaufman, 1994:94).

- There is no best way to achieve world-class quality (Hodgetts, 1993:6)

- Benchmarking is an important process in quality assurance, because it is about analysing the information that enables reference points to be created, which can be used to promote change in the direction that is most likely to lead to improvement (Jackson, 2000:4).

Findings emerging from Chapter IV

- It is essential to monitor reasons, positive or negative, why learners do not complete their individual learning plans (Scottish Executive: Adult Literacy and Numeracy, 2002:1).

- Stakeholders play a key role in assisting with learning. They should be afforded continued developmental opportunities in supporting, delivering and managing literacy and numeracy programmes (Scottish Executive: Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland, 2001:1).

- Knowledge of the best available quality assurance practices does not provide all the answers (Lozotte, 1993:22-30).

- There should be a sustained programme of research, as opposed to a once-off, stand-alone project, in consultation with the learners in order to identify gaps in knowledge regarding the programme, develop new and useful concepts, develop research methods, take into account the reality of the adults' lives and identify weaknesses or contradictions in policy and strategy (Scottish Executive: Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland, 2000:5).

- Problem identification and quality improvement tools make the process of continuous improvement work and play a crucial role in the implementation of a

quality assurance system by means of rational decision-making, based on facts and objective measurement (Kellison quoted by Mulligan, 1994:235).

7.3.2   Findings emerging from the empirical investigation

Questionnaire

<u>Biographical Information</u>

- Most respondents were males (56.90%).

- The majority of respondents (51%) had classes composed of fewer than 100 learners.

- No respondent was prepared to provide his/her age on the questionnaire.

- The largest group of respondents (36.21%) consisted of qualified teachers with three-year teachers' diplomas.

Table 6.1: Professional Competencies

- The majority of the respondents (90.16%) had the required knowledge and understanding of the subject matter to be imparted to the adult learners.

- The majority of the respondents (83.61%) had insight into the teaching methods for teaching adults.

- Most respondents (96.72%) reported that they had the ability to make adults learners feel comfortable in a learning-teaching situation.

- The majority of the respondents (95.08%) reported that they possessed the ability to make adult learners learn.

- The majority of the respondents reported having good knowledge of the programme goals.

- Most of the respondents (73.33%) reported that they taught for transfer to ensure that classroom teaching is appropriate for implementation in the environment.

- The majority of responses (61.02%0 gave an indication that the respondents were familiar with the legislation and current developments that have an impact on the provision of adult literacy.

- The majority of responses (88.52) affirmed that the respondents were skilled in classroom management.

Table 6.2: Human resource development

- A limited number of responses (44.23%) affirmed that the respondents were trained in Andragogy.

- The majority of respondents (low=36.73%; moderate=38.78%) reported that they were not offered market related remuneration.

- A very limited number of the respondents (25.49%) reported that the stakeholders attended seminars, conferences and workshops on adult literacy.

- Only a limited number of respondents (31.37%) reported that they were accredited by SAQA.

Table 6.3: Networking and Partnership

- The largest group of respondents (45.10%) reported that the adult literacy programme was not run in partnership with stakeholders (training managers, ABET co-ordinators and trainers).

- A limited number of respondents (35.29%) reported that there is contact, collaboration and co-operation among stakeholders regarding the provision of adult literacy.

Table 6.4: Leadership

- The majority of the respondents (57.69%) indicated that management was committed to adult literacy.

- The majority of the respondents (61.54%) reported that management supported trainers to deliver quality training.

- A limited number of the respondents (40.38%) reported that management recognised and appreciated staff performance from time to time.

- A limited number of respondents (42.31%) reported that management communicated the training policy to the trainers.

- A limited number of respondents (46%) reported that management communicated legislation and current developments that have an impact on the provision of adult literacy.

Table 6.5: Recruitment and placement of trainees and support

- Most respondents (76.92%) reported that prior learning of the trainees was taken into consideration for placement in the appropriate training group.

- Most respondents (55.77%) reported that guidance is given to the trainees for the purpose of retention, completion and progression.

- A limited number of the respondents (30.77%) reported that psychological and social counselling services were provided for troubled trainees.

- The majority of the respondents (53.85%) reported that guidance on what to expect in an adult literacy programme was offered to the trainees before entry.

- A very low number of the respondents (26.92%) reported that there was counselling on follow-up training.

Table 6.6: National quality assurance initiatives

- The majority of the respondents (53.70%) reported that they were very clearly informed about the SAQA.

- The majority of the respondents (57.41%) reported that they had a very clear understanding of the NQF.

- The largest group of the respondents (44.44%) reported that they had very clear ideas about the ETQAs.

- Half of the respondents (50%) reported that they had very clear ideas about the SGBs.

- The majority of the respondents (64.14%) reported that there were quality assurance policies, practices and procedures in place in their adult literacy programmes.

- The majority of the respondents (75.47%) affirmed that there was a particular quality assurance model used to promote and enhance quality in their adult literacy programmes.

- The majority of respondents (52.94%) reported that the effectiveness of the quality assurance used was average.

Table 6.7: Problem identification and quality improvement tools

- The majority of the respondents (37.50%) reported that the check sheet was always used as problem identification and quality improvement tool. Comparatively speaking, the check sheet was the problem identification and quality improvement tool used most often.

Table 6.8: Essential elements in the promotion and enhancement of quality

- The majority of the respondents (86.44%) reported that top management was very important in the promotion and enhancement of quality in adult literacy.

- Most of the respondents (77.97%) said that communication among stakeholders was very important in the promotion and enhancement of quality in adult literacy.

- The majority of the respondents (85%) reported that teamwork is very important in the promotion and enhancement of quality in adult literacy.

- The majority of the respondents (76.67%) reported that partnership was very important in the promotion and enhancement of quality in adult literacy.

- Most of the respondents (78.33%) reported that the clarification of roles was very important in the promotion and enhancement of quality in adult literacy.

- The training of participants was reported by most respondents (79.66%) to be very important in the promotion and enhancement of quality in adult literacy.

- The majority of the respondents (76.27) reported that continuous improvement was very important in the promotion and enhancement of the quality of adult literacy.

- Most of the respondents (66.67%) reported that incentives for staff members were very important in the promotion and enhancement of quality in adult literacy.

- The majority of the respondents (86.67%) reported that planning is very important in the promotion and enhancement of quality in adult literacy.

- The majority of the respondents (58.33%) reported that counselling services were very important in the promotion and enhancement of quality in adult literacy.

- It was reported by most respondents (90%) that motivation is very important in the promotion and enhancement of quality in adult literacy.

- The majority of the respondents (81.36%) reported that infrastructure was very important in the promotion and enhancement of quality in adult literacy.

- Most of the respondents (59.32%) reported that benchmarking was very important in the promotion and enhancement of quality in adult literacy.

Table 6.9: Participation

- The largest single group of respondents (42.11%) reported that the stakeholders collaborate and work as a team to promote and enhance quality.

- Most of the respondents (43.86%) reported that the stakeholders were dedicated to continuous improvement.

- It was reported by the largest single group of respondents (42.11%) that the stakeholders were involved at every level of the adult literacy programme.

- The largest single group of respondents (42.11%) reported that the stakeholders were empowered to use their collective knowledge to make collective judgements and take collective steps to improve adult literacy

7.3.3 Synergy between the findings from the literature review and empirical investigation

In Chapter I it was revealed that quality assurance in education and training programmes is of utmost importance, but is very often neglected or carried out inadequately (Beardwell & Holden, 1994:351). This is an unfortunate state of affairs that may compromise the quality of education and training programmes in business.

The implication of this revelation is that there are no effective quality assurance processes in place in education and training programmes in business. The possible reason for this is thought to be that most training managers who are supposed to be initiating quality assurance processes and ensuring that these are implemented effectively are not schooled in the philosophy of quality and quality assurance and do not realise its importance. It is therefore unthinkable to expect individuals to implement processes effectively when they do not have a theoretical background in the field. This is tantamount to expecting a blind person to lead another blind one which may lead to chaos. It is the belief of the researcher that meaningful practice on the ground is better if it is informed by theory. To confirm the researcher's belief, Flinders & Mills (1993:xii) state that "without any theory, activities may be aimless and wasteful, as the early wanderings of the explorers in North America, or one's attempts to find one's way without a street map around a city he or she is visiting for the first time".

It emerged from the empirical investigation results that a limited number of respondents (25.49%) reported that the stakeholders attend seminars, conferences and workshops on adult literacy. These are the interventions that are supposed to be empowering and schooling stakeholders, including managers themselves, about adult literacy and its management, so that they can be effective and efficient in the performance of their duties to meet the needs and expectations of their customers. From the results of the empirical investigation, it becomes evident that these interventions are not taken seriously by management, which is supposed to be championing the quality assurance processes.

The researcher's experience and involvement in adult literacy in business for many years taught him that adult literacy is normally underrated by management. In the boardrooms

much is said about it being one of the companies' top priorities and a business imperative. In reality, they normally do nothing to ensure the promotion and enhancement of its quality. The illiterate workers are just put through it in order to comply with the government requirements or to be politically correct. This attitude might be responsible for the lack of effective quality assurance processes in adult literacy in business in South Africa.

In contrast, the results of empirical investigation indicate that management is committed to quality assurance (see Table 6.4). It must be noted though, that commitment that is not reflected in action on ground level is a futile exercise that will not do the education and training programme any good in terms of quality promotion and enhancement. It is therefore crucial to translate commitment into action in an attempt to promote and enhance quality, because confusing commitment and implementation will be a grave mistake. Commitment is merely an attitude that only becomes a reality through actions that are directed at promoting and enhancing the quality of education and training programmes in business, otherwise it is just a myth.

While the trainees are customers to those playing a role in the education and training programme, the researcher views these trainers as customers of management as well. Management has to see to it that their needs and expectations are satisfied so that they can be motivated to deliver quality service. With regard to the issue of those playing a role being customers themselves, there are quite a number of contradictions that make management's commitment to quality improvement processes questionable, as revealed by the empirical investigation results.   In order to provide clarity on this issue, the discussion will be limited to the following three contradictions:

- A limited number of the respondents (25.49%) indicated that the stakeholders attended seminars, conferences and workshops on adult literacy. It is important to note that as the driver of quality assurance processes, management has to ensure that those playing a role are empowered, but this is not happening.

- A limited number of respondents (24%) reported that there were arrangements for staff appraisal. One therefore wonders how do trainers become aware of the shortfalls in their performance that may make them fail to deliver quality service to their customers, if not addressed.

- A limited number of respondents (42.31%) reported that management communicated the training policy to the trainers. A training policy is supposed to clarify certain aspects of education and training programmes in business and prescribe an outline for consistent and coherent behaviour by staff and management.

In Chapter II, it became evident that the quality movement had a great influence on education and training programmes in terms of quality improvement processes. Different quality philosophies that emanated from the quality movement had a variety of best practice principles to offer, as demonstrated by the comparison in Chapter III, section 2.5. These philosophies also provide a clear indication that there is no single quality assurance system that provides all the answers or solutions. There are therefore best practice principles that can be drawn from each quality assurance philosophy that can be integrated and applied. Moreover, some best practices advocated by these philosophies, such as teamwork, partnership, training of those playing a role, continuous improvement, planning and similar issues are confirmed to be very important in the promotion and enhancement of quality in adult literacy, as revealed in the results of the empirical investigation (see Table 6.8). However, it is emphasised in some circles that quality is a far more complex concept in education and training than it is in industry, and as a result, industrial quality assurance systems cannot easily be applied to education and training (Vroeijenstijn, 2001:40).

The results of the interviews revealed that 70% of the respondents mentioned homework, tests and examinations as the only quality assurance measures used in their adult literacy programmes. This approach is too simplistic and unlikely to promote and enhance quality in education and training programmes in business. It is against this backdrop that the researcher believes that the quality assurance systems inherited from industry can easily be applied to education and training, provided they are modified and appropriately aligned to education and training programmes. In the absence of any effective quality assurance systems that have been developed by educationists or academics for education and training, there is no choice other than to continue borrowing best practice principles from industry. There is evidence in Chapter III, in sections 3.2.2.1 and 3.2.2.2, of academic

institutions that have successfully and effectively applied best practice principles from Deming's philosophy of quality.

It has emerged from Chapter III that South Africa has only recently been involved in the quality debate, while much has already been done in this area in most European countries, Australia and the United States (Smith, Amstrong & Brown, 1999:9; Appelby, 1999:53). This implies that best practice principles can be drawn from international experiences. This could be achieved through the process of benchmarking, which is defined in this chapter as the process of analysing information that enables benchmarks (reference points) to be created, which can be used to promote change in the direction that is most likely to lead to improvement (Jackson, 2000:4). It is evident that it will be a waste of time, energy and resources to try reinventing the wheel while there are winning quality improvement models on the international stage that can be borrowed, modified to suit a particular situation and applied appropriately.

It has emerged in Chapter IV that externally mandated quality processes are not popular, because they are said to be managerialistic and demand too much paper work from staff in order to satisfy government requirements. For this reason, quality assurance processes that are contextual, internally-driven and based on the professional artistry paradigm are advocated (Mhlanga, 2004:1-2). It could be concluded that the staff can hardly have adequate opportunity to implement quality assurance processes effectively as long as much of their time is spent on preparing the paperwork meant for the consumption of the bureaucratic system. Effective and quality service is unlikely from a paper-contaminated system. Too much paperwork forms a barrier and at the same time retards progress in terms of quality improvement in education and training programmes.

It was also revealed in Chapter IV that it is crucial to use problem identification and quality improvement tools, because they play a vital role in the implementation of the quality assurance system by means of rational decision-making, based on facts and objective measurement (Meyer, 2003:307). It emerged in the interviews that the majority of respondents (85%) had limited insight into the problem of identification and quality improvement tools. For example, when they were asked about the problem identification and quality improvement tools used to identify problems that may compromise the quality of adult literacy, they only mentioned the check sheet. Even the results of the empirical

investigation revealed that the check sheet was the problem identification and quality improvement tool used most often (see Table 6.7; section 6.7.2.4). The empirical investigation has revealed that the respondents are not familiar with other tools, let alone implementing them (see Table 6.7 in Chapter VI). Without the implementation of problem identification and quality improvement tools, the quality improvement process will not be effective. The real status of the education and training programme in terms of quality will be misleading and unreliable and continuous improvement will be difficult to implement. These tools should be seen as catalysts for change because they make continuous improvement work. Continuous improvement, on the other hand, is about change or transformation as expressed in Chapter II, section 2.3.6. It also plays a crucial role in the implementation of a quality assurance system by means of rational decision-making, based on facts and objective measurement (Kellison quoted by Mulligan, 1994:235; Meyer, 2003:207).

The empirical investigation results revealed that most respondents are male. This situation may give rise to a number of contradictions if not properly managed. The problems could include sexual harassment, intimidation, discrimination and similar issues. Such contradictions could become areas of concern that could need urgent attention to the detriment of the quality of education and training programmes in business.

Although the majority of respondents failed to provide their ages, it is assumed that most of them are young, in their twenties, especially the trainers. The reasoning for this assumption is that they might have graduated from colleges and universities in recent years and found themselves unemployed, since there is currently mass unemployment in South Africa. Unlike many old people who have been around for quite some time and have amassed wealth, young people will naturally look for enough money to realise their dreams, for example getting married and starting a family, purchasing property or furthering studies on a part-time basis. They need to have enough money to realise all these dreams. It will therefore be naïve to think that they will not leave if better opportunities present themselves, considering the fact that they are not well remunerated. Their departure is likely to affect the overall performance of education and training programmes in business negatively.

According to the Kelly 2003 Human Capital Satisfaction Survey, pay is not the only motivator of improved performance, but other factors such as a culture where managers acknowledge a job well done create employee satisfaction (Burton, 2003:2). It could be added that a satisfied and happy employee is productive and will always be motivated to go the extra mile in the performance of his or her duties. However, the researcher's involvement in adult literacy over a number of years taught him that the economic background of trainers dictate whether money is the most important motivator or not. Through observation he has found that money was the most important motivator, especially for those trainers who come from the working class and/or poverty-stricken families.

Through empirical investigation, it has been found that the largest group of respondents (36.21%) are educated and have a three-year teachers' diploma and that 38.78% of respondents state that they are remunerated moderately. The likelihood that other countries such as Australia, the USA, the Middle East and other African and European countries, may poach them is great. It is public knowledge that South African professionals such as teachers, nurses, doctors and engineers are sought after globally. The South African media have also made it public knowledge that professionals are leaving the country partly because of affirmative action and mass unemployment. There are agencies that help in this regard. Disgruntled professionals can easily leave for other countries. The emigration of trainers in this case could be detrimental to the performance of education and training programmes in South Africa.

7.4   RECOMMENDATIONS

It is evident from the empirical investigation that there are no effective quality assurance processes in education and training programmes in business with special reference to adult literacy in South Africa to promote and enhance quality. However, the literature reviewed in Chapters II, III and IV has made it possible for researchers to have a better understanding of the concept of quality, international best practice principles, lessons from other settings and problem identification and quality improvement tools. In the process, the importance, need and relevance of quality assurance processes for education and training programmes were identified.

7.4.1 Market-related remuneration or competency-based pay for adult literacy trainers

The results of the empirical investigation reveal that only a limited number of respondents (24.49%) report that trainers were comfortable with their remuneration. It is evident that the majority (70.51%) do not agree.

Adult literacy trainers should be paid market-related salaries for good performance. This exercise may provide them with job satisfaction that is likely to translate into them becoming happy, loyal and committed to the programme. The researcher believes that market-related salaries are also likely to bring trainers happiness and develop in them a feeling of ownership to the extent that they are likely to make tireless efforts to take the programme to greater heights. It is important to note that the role of trainers is crucial in the sense that they make education and training a reality.

Silbiger (2004:110) concurs that if superior performance is not rewarded, discontent emerges. In view of the fact that the cost of leaving in South Africa is too high, many individuals, especially those at the bottom of the corporate ladder, find themselves having serious financial problems. This hampers their performance and the quality of education and training programmes. This is the justification for a monetary reward for superior performance as opposed to other forms of rewards.

Business should also consider basing the trainers' pay on their knowledge of the training content and skills (Competencies). According to McMeekin (2003:75), this exercise may involve factors such as their command of the subject area or areas, training methods and skills they use in educating and training. In addition, relevant abilities, such as techniques for using technology to enrich training and certain management-related abilities that they can apply to the benefit of the education and training programme, should be considered.

7.4.2 Retention strategy

It has emerged from the empirical investigation that the majority of respondents (54.10%) are employed on contract. The implication of this employment contract is that investing in such workers will not make any business sense, since this exercise will not guarantee a

return on investment. In a practical situation, contract workers normally leave as soon as they are given permanent employment elsewhere. It is human nature to seek job security. In order to address this challenge, an effective retention strategy needs to be developed.

The most popular intervention to address this challenge is known as a retention strategy. Ways and means should be devised to have the talent (i.e. best employees) better rewarded and to afford them career growth opportunities. If this strategy can be implemented appropriately, the programme's intellectual capital that plays a vital role in the promotion and enhancement of quality can be retained.

According to an article written by John Mason (http://www.dstress.com), some recently conducted research lists the following top ten strategies:

- Treat your employees like you treat your most valuable client.
- Get your employees to "fall in love" with your organisation.
- Put the right person into the right job.
- Get the input of employee committees.
- Leadership must be deeply committed to retention.
- Recognition, in various forms, is a powerful retention strategy.
- Know the trends in benefit packages.
- The "Fun Factor" is very important to many employees.
- Money is important but it is not the only reason people stay with an organisation. If the compensation plan is in the top 20-30% of the business, then money will not be the reason why people leave.
- Strong retention strategies become strong recruiting advantages.

Employees today are no longer inclined to stay at one company for the duration of their careers. The most talented professionals are often courted by other businesses and the effects of turnover can be costly. The time and money it takes to recruit, rehire and retain can quickly cut into the business' bottom line (http://www.officeteam.com/ot/Retention). In order to avert such a situation, a comprehensive retention strategy needs to be designed and implemented.

7.4.3   Quality assurance training programme

It emerged from the results of the empirical investigation that there are no effective quality assurance processes in education and training programmes in business with special reference to adult literacy in South Africa. In order to address this challenge, the stakeholders should be taken through a well-designed quality assurance training programme. This training programme will equip them with the necessary competencies to be able to promote and enhance quality in adult literacy. Furthermore, they will be exposed to a variety of quality improvement tools that they can use at different levels of the programme to identify problems that have a negative impact on the quality and performance of the programme rather than relying only on check sheets, tests and examinations for problem identification. Meyer (2004:307) is quoted in Chapter II in section 2.5.4 as saying that the participants in the quality improvement process should receive sufficient training. He further states that the training programme must be introduced slowly and with progression.

7.4.4   The adoption and customisation of Total Quality Management

TQM originates from the manufacturing industry in the USA. Through this management system Deming assisted in turning Japanese and American companies around. It was later adopted and adapted to education and training, where it was also effective. TQM is a philosophy of continuous improvement, which can provide any adult literacy programme with a set of practical tools for meeting and exceeding present and future learners' needs, wants and expectations. It is stressed in Chapter II in section 2.5 that TQM emphasises continuous improvement and can be implemented in a number of settings outside the corporate environment, including educational institutions and the system of education delivery (Holt, 1993:22; Blankstein, 1996:65; Weller & McElwee, 1997:201).

7.4.5   Implementation of a BSC in education and training programmes in business

Chapter IV reveals that research has shown that organisations that have used the BSC have

- become customer-oriented;

- improved the quality of their performance, service and product;

- emphasised teamwork; and

- encouraged managers not to improve the performance of one area at the expense of others.

According to Kaplan & Norton (1992:71), the importance of the BSC is reflected in its ability to provide complex information at a glance to react pro-actively. It also allows fast but comprehensive viewing of the organisation, at the same time exposing areas that require improvement (Kaplan & Norton, 1992:71).

7.4.6   Recognition and incentives

The empirical investigation results show that most respondents (46.15%) reported that management recognises and appreciates the performance of stakeholders to a moderate extent. This implies that management still needs to do much in order to motivate stakeholders through recognition and appreciation (see Table 6.4, section 6.4.3). Fred Hertzberg (quoted by Silbiger, 2004:110) states that motivation will be enhanced by maximising the motivators or satisfiers on the job and minimising the dissatisfiers.

Excellent service, creativity and an attitude of going the extra mile in the performance of duties should be recognised and rewarded. Incentives can vary from a gift to cash, depending on what the training department can afford. Recognition and incentives help boost the morale of stakeholders. Both Crosby and Feigenbaum stress in Chapter II in section 2.6 that the participants in the quality improvement process must be recognised and appreciated.

7.4.7   Performance appraisal for the stakeholders

The results of the empirical investigation reveal that only a small number of respondents (24%) affirm that arrangements are made by management for staff appraisal in education and training programmes in business (see Table 6.2, section 6.2.4). In order to address this situation, management needs to implement a performance appraisal system and ensure that all those involved are consistently appraised. It is a management system that is designed to assess the performance of an individual in the workplace. Its aim is to

identify the gaps between the performance and the set standards. Should there be gaps, immediate action is taken to address them. Based on his experience as a manager in the public sector, the researcher maintains that the effectiveness of the performance management system encourages good performers to stay, because they are

- rewarded for their worth;
- provided with feedback on how they perform and the direction of their careers;
- able to contribute to the success of the programme by providing feedback to management on any pertinent programme-related issues.

7.4.8   Line management and union involvement

The researcher believes that line managers and union representatives play a very important role in any education and training programme in business. Through their interaction with the learners who are in the process of learning and those that have gone back to the workplace on completion of their programme, they are in a good position to provide management with meaningful inputs, concerns and criticism from the learners. These inputs can be a meaningful contribution to the improvement of education and training programmes in business. In Chapter III, it is stated that one of the more persistent barriers that impedes quality in organisations is the practice of treating critics as enemies and isolating them from the inner circle. Critics should be considered as best friends, because their insights and observations often have the potential to instigate great change and improvement. The capacity to listen to and understand critics should be developed (Williams, 1994:236 in Mulligan 1992).

Line managers have a major responsibility for educating, training and developing their staff and improving the performance of their departments. It is therefore believed that involving them in quality improvement processes can intensify learner motivation; they are better positioned to identify gaps in performance, expectations and needs of employees that could be addressed by education and training programmes in business.

7.5   SUGGESTIONS FOR POSSIBLE FUTURE RESEARCH

In Chapter III in section 3.2.3 it is mentioned that there are critics in the education and training environment that are not comfortable with the application of industry-based quality assurance systems in education and training. They argue that their learners are not customers, because they know precisely what they want and can obtain whatever they want from them. They generally find it difficult to identify with the use of the language of the market-place in quality improvement processes in education and training. Their concerns warrant empirical investigation so as to dig deep into the root causes, the theoretical framework that backs and informs their concerns and finally, their recommendations.

Further research needs to be conducted into the effects of contract adult literacy trainers on the quality of adult literacy in business. It emerged in Chapter VI in section 6.3 that most trainers (54.10%) are appointed on contract.

This research advocates the to ensure the promotion and enhancement of quality in education and training programmes in business, a holistic approach to quality assurance should be adopted. This intention is reflected in the questions that were posed to the respondents during the empirical investigation (see questionnaire). In this attempt, continuous improvement should not be confined to only teaching and learning, but should focus on the other supportive aspects such as recruitment, selection and placement, the development of stakeholders, performance management, counselling, staff retention and reward structures. It is important for research to be conducted to find out how these processes that are widely used in industry can be adapted to education and training programmes.

Lastly, it emerged from the results of the empirical investigation in Table 6.2, section 6.2.3 that trainers in adult literacy in business are not empowered to play a crucial role in the quality improvement processes. The ways and means to address this problem need to be investigated as well.

7.6   CONCLUSION

The research makes an attempt to establish the extent to which internally-developed quality assurance processes are effective in the promotion and enhancement of quality in education and training programmes in business with special reference to adult literacy in South Africa. This research problem was initially investigated through a literature review, and then an empirical investigation.

It emerged from the literature review that quality assurance is the responsibility of all those who play a role, who should be involved in the process at all levels. It is against this background that quality assurance encourages partnership, collaboration and teamwork. It is therefore evident that quality assurance is a collective responsibility of all stakeholders who should work harmoniously to take the education and training programmes to greater heights in terms of quality improvement.

The literature reviewed showed that it is essential for education and training programmes to have internally developed quality assurance processes that are not only learner-centred, but are also holistic in nature, as opposed to externally mandated quality assurance processes. It means that these processes should be directed at satisfying the needs, wants and expectations of the learners and at the same time, at the promotion and enhancement of the quality of the other aspects that constitute the education and training programme. Externally mandated quality assurance processes are regarded as managerialistic and contaminated with paperwork to comply with government requirements.

It further emerged from the literature review that the national quality assurance initiatives are also contaminated with a variety of problems, with the implementation problem being the significant one. For example, the NQF was established as an emblem and an instrument of the single national high-quality education and training system that democratic South Africa aspired to create (Departments of Education and Labour, 2002:5). There is much debate among different schools of thought regarding implementation problems. According to the Departments of Education and Labour (2000:43) problems are becoming increasingly evident. These include the time taken to register standards and qualifications, the complexity of the systems and a general feeling of alienation from the

proliferation of jargon and the burgeoning bureaucracy. Much energy has been spent trying to work out the relationships of each structure of the system; the more structures that are involved, the greater the amount of time needed to negotiate solutions (Parker, 2001). In addition, SAQA had generated about 258 qualifications by August 2002, but few learners in South Africa have yet been confronted with these SAQA-generated and registered qualifications. This exercise implies that the time-consuming and costly processes have generated qualifications that have populated a framework, but have not, as yet, been significantly used (Allais, 2003:309).

The Mail and Guardian newspaper (2003:3) recently reported that there is a 90% drop-out rate at SETAs. SETAs are also industry-based quality assurers. This unfortunate state of affairs is attributed squarely to the fact that companies are bogged down by red tape. Under such circumstances, it is unthinkable for the SETAs to perform the function of assuring quality in education and training effectively.

7.7   CLOSING STATEMENT

The purpose of this closing statement is to present the contributions made by the research to the existing body of knowledge with regard to quality assurance in education and training programmes in business in South Africa. Furthermore, it seeks to present new ideas that can be applied to education and training programmes in an endeavour to promote and enhance quality.

Firstly, the contribution made by this research to the entire quality assurance field is the proof that industry-based quality assurance processes can also be effective in quality improvement efforts in adult literacy if customised and implemented appropriately. There is documented evidence, as shown in Chapters II, III and IV that these quality assurance processes are flexible and can be adapted to any situation and yield excellent results. Moreover, they have best practice principles to offer.

Secondly, the research advocates a holistic approach to quality assurance that focuses on the key elements of education and training programmes, from recruitment through to the development of stakeholders, performance management, counselling, staff retention and reward structure. The implication of this is that, for quality to be promoted and enhanced,

the focus should not be on teaching and learning only. Other aspects that are supportive of effective teaching and learning need to be of good quality as well. Should these be ignored, the quality of teaching and learning is likely to be affected negatively.

The research further advocates the proper management of gender issues in the practical situation. If these issues are taken for granted, gender stereotyping and other related problems may emerge and ultimately bring education and training programmes into disrepute and in that fashion compromise quality improvement efforts. The focus and attention will be channelled to the contradictions created by the gender stereotypes, at the expense of education and training programmes. This should be viewed as a caution not to allow education and training programmes to be dominated by a particular gender because that can lead to serious contradictions.

The literature reviewed in Chapters II, III and IV reveal that the trainees or learners are customers whose needs have to be satisfied. However, the researcher believes that they are not the only customers in education and training programmes. The trainers are customers as well, whose needs should be satisfied by management so that they can be motivated to serve their customers with distinction and contribute to the improvement and enhancement of quality.

Finally, the researcher would like to contribute to the findings of both the Kelly 2003 Human Capital Satisfaction Survey and that of Price Waterhouse Coopers regarding the reasons why people leave employment and are not motivated to perform. It is stated that people leave because of lack of recognition, limited learning, development opportunities, the climate or culture within which they have to work or simply because of poor leadership (People Dynamics, 2003). According to the survey conducted by Kelly in 2003, pay is not the only motivator of improved performance. Through his involvement in adult literacy, the researcher learned that pay is the most important motivator, especially if the stakeholders are young, black and from working class or poverty-stricken families. This is due to the legacy of apartheid. This is therefore an area that needs to be explored even further.

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