



# CHAPTER 1

## **Background rationale, problem statement, research question and aim of the investigation**

### **1.1 Introduction**

South Africa, like many other developing countries is faced with a vast number of illiterate citizens. Illiteracy among black adults in South Africa has reached levels unacceptable for development in the country. The problem of illiteracy prevents adults and youth from contributing effectively and meaningfully to the social, economic and political life of the new democratic South Africa. As a result of the political change in South Africa, there is a growing awareness of the need to provide adult basic education and training to everyone who has had very limited schooling because of socio-economic problems, attributable to the legacy of apartheid.

The aim of this chapter is to provide the background of this study which includes the discussion of the statistics of literacy in South Africa which serves as an introduction of illiteracy. The problem statement was also discussed. Furthermore the research question and aim of the investigation of the study was also mentioned. The study intends to investigate the information needs of the identified communities of Damonsville, (situated west of Brits and fifty kilometres from Pretoria) and Onverwacht (which lies ten kilometres north-east of Cullinan and thirty nine kilometres east of Pretoria) respectively and establish what the content of the materials used for current Adult Basic Education and training programmes are. Terminology used in the study was also clarified coupled with the abbreviations used and meanings provided in order to accelerate the understanding of the usage of thereof. Envisaged chapter allocations were made to introduce the reader to the rest of the information in the study.

The overwhelming majority of illiterate people throughout the world comprise those who are excluded from power, information and wealth (Lyster, 1992:15). Literacy is



therefore not merely a process of learning the skills of reading, writing and arithmetic; it also plays a role in the liberation and development of human beings (Harley, Aitchison, Lyster & Land, 1996:3). In South Africa the majority of illiterate adults are poor and black and reside in the rural areas. In 1998 out of the total population of South Africa, 12.1 million adults (aged 15 and older), had not had the benefit of their years of general education. This means 45 percent of all adults (Aitchison, 1999:144) are uneducated. As illustrated in the 1996 and 2001 statistical censuses in South Africa little has happened to change this situation. The following tables provide evidence to support this statement.

**Table 1.1: Level of schooling amongst black Africans aged 20 years and older according to gender (percentages) in South Africa done in 1996 (Statistics South Africa, 2004: 36).**

	Male	Female	Total
No schooling	20.8%	25.5%	46.3%
Incompleted primary schooling	19.6%	18.1%	37.7%
Completed primary schooling	8.0%	8.0%	16.0%
Incompleted secondary schooling	31.9%	31.1%	63%
Grade 12	12.4%	11.0%	23.4%
Higher Education	2.8%	3.1%	5.9%
Other	4.1%	3.1%	7.2%

**Table 1.2: Level of schooling amongst black Africans aged 20 years and older according to gender (percentages) in South Africa done in 2001 (Statistics South Africa, 2004:37).**

	Male	Female	Total
No schooling	19.3%	24.8%	44.1%
Incompleted primary schooling	19.5%	17.6%	37.1%
Completed primary schooling	7.1%	6.8%	13.9%
Incompleted secondary schooling	31.3%	29.6%	60.9%
Grade 12	17.9%	15.8%	33.7%
Higher Education	4.9%	5.4%	10.3%

**Table 1.3: Level of schooling amongst black Africans aged 20 years and older according to gender (percentages) in South Africa done in 2007 (Statistics South Africa, 2007: 34)**

	Male	Female	Total
No schooling	12.8%	20.5%	33.3%
Incomplete primary schooling	18.8%	16.5%	35.3%
Complete primary schooling	6.5%	7.3%	13.8%
Incomplete secondary schooling	40.9%	20.1%	60.0%
Grade 12	15.4%	17.1%	33.5%
Higher Education	4.0%	5.1%	9.1%

Tables 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 can be interpreted as follows:

The total percentage of black African males and females who have had no schooling in tables 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 respectively was 46.3% in 1996, as compared to a total of 44.1% in 2001 and 33.3% in 2007 which marked a 12.9% of the reduction of literacy. In 1996, 37.7% was the total percentage of both males and females who have had partial primary as compared to 37.1% in 2001 and 35.3 in 2007, which marked a 2, 5% reduction of literacy. Sixteen percent was the total of both male and female that have had complete primary in 1996 as compared to 13.9% in 2001 and 13.8 in 2007, which marked a 2.02% in reduction of literacy. In 1996, a total of 63.0% of both male and female had partial secondary as compared to 60.9% totalling both male and female in 2001 and 60.0% in 2007, which marked a 1.0% literacy reduction. In 1996, 23.4% of both male and female have had Grade 12, while in 2001 only 33.7% had Grade 12 and 33.5% in 2007, which marked 5.0%. In 1996 5.9% of both male and female were exposed to higher education, while 10.3% was the total number of both male and female that have had higher education in 2001 and 9.01 in 2007. As such, generalisation can be reached that indicates the reduction in literacy.

Naicker (1999:91) summarises section 29(1) of the constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, to argue that “everyone has the right to a basic education and to further education, which the state, through reasonable measures must make progressively available and accessible”. The right to basic education applies to children youths and adults. To the youth and adults education may be training programmes that may suit their needs. As a result adult basic education (ABE) programmes were designed to include the illiterate population of South Africa. In 1994 the new government established the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) which produced two reports that dealt directly with literacy and with ABE issues (Aitchison, 2001:147).

Adult education is for adults who are not enrolled in secondary school; who lack the educational foundation expected of a high school graduate; whose inability to speak, read, write and solve problems constitute a substantial impairment of their ability to obtain, retain and function on the job, in the family and society, commensurate with their real ability, to achieve their goals, and develop their knowledge and potential, and

thus are in need of programs to help eliminate such inability and raise their level of education and self sufficiency (Lynn and Jaffee, 2001:4; Merriam and Cafferella, 1998:16 and Oddi, 1987:110).

The 1994 change of government in South Africa under the new political dispensation brought another major shift of focus within the educational context. Prior to 1994 education in South Africa was mainly content-based. In a content-based syllabus the emphasis is exclusively on passing the final exam and this is based on the content learned rather than on the acquisition of a skill (Wiesen, 2001:72).

After 1994 a paradigm shift took place in education. Curriculum 2005 was introduced and changed the face of South African education from content-based to outcomes-based education. In the latter approach the main focus is on the acquisition of competencies. Competency involves the ability to do something rather than to know something (Spady and Schlebush, 1999:46).

Therefore when policy documents aimed at restructuring the adult basic education and training (ABET) programmes were formulated a similar shift was made from content-based education to outcomes-based education. In adult basic education and literacy training the focus was placed primarily on the acquisition of skills such as reading and writing. Hutton (1992:10) states that a person has to acquire the essential knowledge and skills which enable him to engage in activities such as amongst others, reading a stop sign, reading and signing of a hire purchases agreement, signing a pension pay-out form, reading a pamphlet or a letter from home in which literacy is required for effective functioning in his group and communities for development. According to Aitchison (1999:121), Wedepohl (1988:13), Caffarella (2001:28) and Aitchison (2003b: 48), it is important to produce literacy materials which can be used by participants in the literacy course. Learning materials for adult basic literacy programmes tend to concentrate mainly on competencies and content is often overlooked.

The question now arises whether the focus on outcomes-based education has not rendered the content of learning materials for basic literacy training inappropriate. Wedepohl (1988:10) takes up this argument when he maintains that several literacy

programmes do not concentrate on content, but focus on competencies alone. This offers no guarantee of the success of such literacy programmes within the communities they wish to serve.

According to Wedepohl (1988:15) “Literacy is not just teaching someone mechanical skills: how to understand marks on paper or how one writes them down. It can also help learners to contribute to a fuller understanding of their own situation and what they can do to change it”.

Information is fundamental to our existence and is used in a variety of context- as a commodity, as energy, as communication, as facts, as data, as knowledge (Prasad, 1992:3). The need for information could arise from the desire to fulfil physiological or cognitive needs. According to Prasad (1992:7) such needs could be expressed or unexpressed, present or immediate, or even future, differed or potential needs.

It has been indicated that information is necessary to survive and to make decisions (Prasad, 1992:3; Fairer-Wessels, 1989:7; Boon, 1992(b):63 and Courtright, 2005:6 and Aitchison, 2003: 126). Individuals need information for decision-making and problem solving so as to exist successfully. Decisions are based on knowledge (Vickery and Vickery, 1992:20; Wilson, 1997:552). People also need information to know in what ways they can influence what is happening in their own immediate environment as well as on local and national levels. Furthermore, Taylor (1986:100) suggests that decision-making is also required when making choices that affect the welfare of a family, a group, an organisation, a community and a nation.

Decision making requires information which is then used to identify the problems as identified by the communities, collect from the information through the use of questionnaires, process the information and analyse of the identified problems (Prasad, 1992:66). People need information for empowerment. As such, information needs of people must be addressed before they can be empowered via teaching of literacy skills.

If it is true that illiterate and semiliterate people are powerless and marginalised, it stands to reason that their information needs must be addressed in order to contribute to their empowerment via the teaching of the relevant content of literacy skills.

Marginalisation of the identified communities will be perpetuated if literacy programmes are based on materials developed by educators without prior consultation with the communities they intend teaching. Educators need to develop material of which the content is relevant and appropriate, for example content that addresses the information needs of the targeted learners.

The problem of defining what the terms “information” and “information needs” now arises because of the multiplicity of definitions attributed to these terms. The value of information, the reliability of the content, and the reliability of the source, are attributes that will be discussed when attempting to define the term “information”. On this basis, Penzhorn (2001:64) comes to the conclusion that information may be defined as everything that is all around us, and which influences our attitudes, emotions and thinking. Boon (1992b: 64) and Barosso & Morgan (2009:11), agrees with this view and states that the definition of information must be determined according to context since no universal, acceptable definition of information exists. Prasad (1992:1) elaborates on this and defines information as the recorded or communicated knowledge gained by man through experience, observation and experiment.

In establishing the nature of the content of the materials used, the contents of Curriculum 2005 and the South African Qualification Authority (SAQA) documents on adult basic education and training (ABET) programmes will serve as a background study and will provide the basis for a content analysis of the content and competencies of three level 1 literacy programmes, namely Project Literacy, Operation Upgrade of South Africa and the New Stimela Afrikaans ABET programme.

## **1.2 Research aim**

The research is aimed at addressing the information requirements of pre-literate communities of Damonsville and Onverwacht respectively and investigating the content of the selected Afrikaans literacy programmes in order to determine whether the contents of literacy programmes does suite the information needs of the pre-literate adult learners. Investigation is also done to determine which information could be used in ABET literacy programmes.



### **1.3. Research question**

The central research question may be formulated as follows:

What are the information needs of the Afrikaans pre-literate adult learners of both Damonsville and Onverwacht communities, and how can the content of adult literacy training material be tailored to match the information requirements of the identified communities?

The following four sub-questions will be investigated:

- What are the information requirements of outcomes-based ABET programmes of the predominantly Afrikaans preliterate communities in Damonsville and Onverwacht?
- What is the current content of selected Afrikaans literacy programmes?
- To what extent does the content of the selected Afrikaans literacy programmes match the information requirements of the predominantly Afrikaans preliterate communities of Onverwacht and Damonsville?
- How can the information requirements of preliterate communities be addressed in the content of a literacy programme?

### **1.4 Value of this research**

- The specific aim of this study is to provide a guideline on the appropriate content for an Afrikaans literacy programme based on a needs analysis conducted, with the hope of contributing to the development and improvement of information provision and, ultimately, to the empowerment of these communities.
- Information collected could be of use in the compilation of the suitable content for literacy programmes in South Africa and elsewhere.
- A concept lesson plan will be formulated. The lesson plan is only an example from which guidelines for a proposed method for design of literacy materials will be compiled.



## **1.5 Limitation of the study**

Only two Afrikaans communities were studied, based on their willingness to participate in the research. Hence it will not necessarily be possible to generalise the results to all Afrikaans-speaking disadvantaged communities (see par. 4.4 and 4.5).

Although the results of this study may not apply to all communities within South Africa, it is hoped, however, that it will be possible to use the findings of this study to provide guidelines for customised literacy programmes that will address the information needs of other illiterate or preliterate and marginalised communities in South Africa.

## **1.6 Research design and methodology applied during the investigation.**

### **1.6.1 Research approach applied during the investigation**

The methodology applied will only be dealt with very briefly in this chapter. The broad research approach is mainly quantitative (see chapter 5 in this regard), as well as qualitative with literature review and content analysis (see chapter 6 in this regard) as part thereof literature review, content analyses and information requirement research and acts as cross-reference to chapter 4 paragraphs 4.2.1 where the methodology is fully discussed. The study included qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques as suggested in Tashakkori and Teddie (2002:4), in order to increase the understanding of and insight into the information needs of the communities of Damonsville and Onverwacht respectively. The analysis of the content of the literacy material comprised both qualitative and quantitative analysis, as qualitative analysis deal with the forms and antecedents, while quantitative analysis deals with the data that are presented by means of exact figures gained from precise measurement (Berg, 1998: 224).

## 1.6.2 Information requirement/needs assessment

The information needs assessment which is part of the curriculum design has the main focus on the following elements which are interrelated:

- Determining participants goals and experiences, i.e. why would the participants would want to attend ABET programme?
- Identifying participant preferences which includes the desire of the population
- Developing questionnaires/ survey instruments
- Studying community structure which includes the resources of the community
- Categorizing existing programmes through content analysis
- Establishing existing priorities (Dean, Murk and Prete, 2000:131)

For the purposes of this research the participants are predominantly Afrikaans, pre-literate disadvantaged communities of Damonsville and Onverwacht who were selected as case studies. These two communities can be considered as multiple case studies because they are explored as single entities or phenomena bounded by time and activity (a programme, event, process, institution, or social group) in order to collect detailed information by using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time (Leedy, 1997: 157 and Cooper, 2006:40). In this study, questionnaires were used as instruments to collect relevant data which consisted of activities that would be needed to be built into the tutorial materials. The information needs assessment included both qualitative and quantitative elements in order to increase understanding and insight (see Chapter 4).

The data were collected by using the following data collection methods (see par. 4.4.2).

### a) Unobtrusive observation

This mode of observation focuses on the examination or direct observation of people and their environment in their natural setting (Babbie, 2004 and Gray, 2009:150). In certain sense, all techniques of gathering information involve observation of some kind. The observation method compels the researcher to rely on seeing and hearing things and recording them rather than relying on participant's self-report responses to

questions. The researcher observed the geographical physical communal environment, for example schools, libraries, clinics, community centres and other available community services. This technique assisted the researcher in gaining an understanding of the environment and conveying a field site within the community, for example where they obtained certain information (Neuman, 2007: 54; Makanjoula, 2008:114). This technique also assisted the researcher to determine quality of infrastructure and environment. The data was collected by the researcher by taking notes on the field.

b) Pre-testing the questionnaire

Once a questionnaire was developed, each question and a questionnaire as a whole had to be evaluated rigorously before the final administration. In order to check question wording, to verify the functioning of the items included in the questionnaire, the questionnaire overall structure, layout and accompanying instructions, a pre-test was conducted with one person from Onverwacht community. According to De Vaus (2004: 200), the information gained from the pre-testing would then be used to revise questions where necessary so as to make questions much clearer to the researcher and the respondents.

c) Structured interviews

This technique focuses on the collection of data by means of interviews using questionnaires containing both close-ended and open-ended questions as data collection tool (Babbie, 2005:24; Babbie, 2004:314; Welman, Kruger and Mitchell, 2005:167). It proved to be particularly useful in cases where the community members were illiterate. This method assists a researcher to collect original data from the communities.

d) Analysis of the data collected

According to Babbie (2004:314) and Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005:168), the data collected by using close-ended questions are usually statistically analysed while a qualitative method of giving meanings to words is usually used to analyse open-ended

questions, interviews and observations. Data collected by using the responses to interviews using questionnaires and observation can be compared to enhance validity and reliability (Struwig and Stead, 2001:132). It can also be combined to present a comprehensive picture of the information needs of the community.

### **1.6.3 Content analysis of literacy material**

According to Babbie (2004:314) content analysis is “a study of recorded human communications for example books, speeches, letters, e-mail messages, bulletin boards, postings on the Internet, laws and constitutions as well as components or collections thereof”. Content analysis handles the “what” that is being communicated. (Discussion of content analysis is done in chapter 6 of this study).

Manifest content analysis as a technique to analyse the elements that are physically present and countable in the selected texts was used in this study (Berg, 2001:242; Neuman, 1997:271). Texts that can be analysed using the technique of content analysis consist of “anything which is written, visual or spoken that serves as a medium for communication, e.g. books, newspapers, magazines etc.” (Neuman, 2007:272). Literacy materials designed by Project Literacy, Operation Upgrade of South Africa and The New Stimela Afrikaans ABET Programme will comprise the texts analysed in this study (See complete analysis of the text in chapter 6).

## **1.7 The theoretical framework underpinning the investigation**

The theoretical framework is, according to Palamidessi and Feldman (2003:101), a collection of interrelated concepts, like a theory but not necessarily so well worked out. The essence of the theoretical framework will assist in analysing and rendering of the findings. A theoretical framework underpinning the investigation involves the inclusion of three aspects namely, curriculum development, instructional design and ABET which are interrelated and can best be diagrammatically represented as follows:

**Figure 1.1: Theoretical Framework**

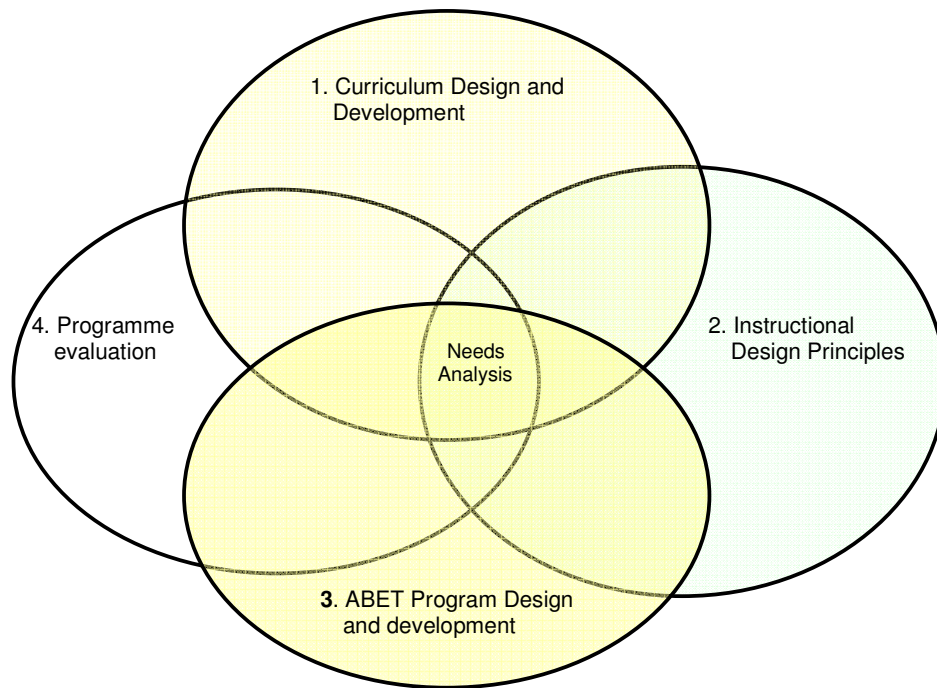


Figure 1.1 above depicts the curriculum design and development which involves the way the researchers conceptualize the curriculum and arrange its major components (subject matter or content, instructional methods and materials, learners` experience or activities) to provide direction and guidance as we develop curriculum based on students` needs or interest (Ornstein and Hunkins, 2004:18 and Palamidessi and Feldman, 2003:116). Great care should be given to creation of curricula because curriculum development is where the action is. According to Lovat and Smith (2003:89), activities include creating educational programmes that engage students in learning and empowering them to construct their own meaning and to realize certain educational goals. The success of curriculum development depends on the careful planning which involves thought of goals, content, instructional design, learning experiences, method, learners and society (South Africa, 2008: 79) ( see Chapter 3 (3.6.1) in this regard).

Furthermore, the second interrelated aspect which is Instructional design principles are enriching ways of approaching curriculum development. Suitable instructional approaches should be selected that would move the learner both in content knowledge

and in the learning process, towards the goals of the curriculum (Ornstein and Hunkins, 2004:89 and South Africa, 2008:225). Objectives of the curriculum should match the content to be learned and the learning activities necessary to learn the content. (See chapter 3 in this regard).

According to Dean et al. (2000:132), instructional design/programme design consists of the following components:

- Defining appropriate programme purposes
- Identifying programme desired learning outcomes
- Selecting appropriate learning activities based on the observed or expressed needs where enthusiasm and special sensitivity to the needs and interest of adult learners are important requisites for selection.

The third aspects, namely ABET programme design and development, are flexible, developmental and target at specific needs of particular audiences. According to Pinar (2010:55) learning takes many forms and occurs in many different settings from formal courses to various types of experiences in families, communities and workplace. All types of learning need to be recognized and needs need to be geared to meeting the needs of the learners.

Effective ABET programmes design depend on the successful curriculum development and instructional design based on thorough needs analysis where the information needs of learners are considered. (See Chapter 2 in this regard). In ABET, the learner is the centre of the learning process, preferably through the participatory approaches, existing competencies of learners, their prior knowledge, wisdom and values should be acknowledged and adequately used for further learning (Süssmuth, 2009:150). While starting with the real life situation of learners, adult learning provision often has the potential to meet their needs and initiate a sequence of learning experiences. Adult learning should be relevant.

The researcher agrees with Stefano (2004:25) who suggested that one of the most important challenges for materials developers in adult literacy is to tailor the contents of the materials to match the needs of the learners, which would include amongst



others, provision of materials that are easily understood and that motivating. Furthermore, UNESCO (2009:81) reports that programme content of ABET should include subjects matter and perspectives drawn form the learners` cultural traditions and programme restructuring should respect how learners organise time and space in their daily lives. Thus I argue that programmes for ABET have to devise ways to bring literacy into everyday life.

Furthermore, the fourth interrelated aspect which is programme evaluation which involves analysis of the learning content to determine whether the content makes meaning to the people, whether it is useful to them or the learning materials is based on what they already know. Dean et al. (2000:150), suggest that activities should be identified to determine whether strategies are taking place as planned and whether they are having a desired effect. If the answers are negative, immediate changes should be made to attain the desired goals.

Programme evaluation is according to Royse, Thyer and Padgett (2010:2),

“a social research method to systematically investigate the effectiveness of social intervention programmes in such a way that are adapted to educationally/politically environments and are designed to inform social action to improve social condition.”

It is argued that fundamental purpose of programme evaluation is to specify feasible practices that evaluators can use to construct knowledge of the value of programmes that can be used to solve the problems to which the programmes are relevant. Shadish, Cook and Leviton (1991:36) identified five components involved in the processes through which programmes and their components can be changed to improve programme performance as follows:

- The social programming which concern the nature of social programme and role in ssocial problems
- Knowledge component which is concerned with what count as acceptable knowledge about the object being evaluated
- The value component which concern the role that play in evaluation



- The use component which concerns how social science information can be used in social policy and programming
- The evaluation practice component which concerns the aspect the evaluators do as they practice their work/professions.

There exists an assumption that through programme evaluation, social problems solving can be improved by incremental improvements in the existing programmes, better design of new programmes or termination of bad programmes and replacing them with better ones (Berk and Rossi, 1999:15).

Dynamics of programme evaluation include three elements which could be outlined as follows:

- Internal programme structure and functioning which deals with how programmes are structured, what functions they fulfil and how they operate
- External constraints that shapes and constrain the programmes
- How social change occurs which outlines how the programmes change and how the change can contribute to social change (Royse, Thyer and Padgett, 2010:10; Rossi, Lipsey and Freeman, 2004:8).

Most common types of evaluation involve the following elements:

- Determining the criteria of merit usually from a needs assessment
- Using standards of merit frequently as a result of looking for appropriate comparison
- Determining the performance of the evaluand so as to compare it against these standards which are used to measure standards (Berk and Rossi, 1999:27).

For a successful programme evaluation to take place, important key evaluation checklist which can be applied are identified in Berk and Rossi (1999:22) and Shadish et al (1991:83) as follows:

- Description: Describe what is to be evaluated
- Client: who is commissioning the evaluation?
- Needs and values of the impacted and potential population



- Standards: Are there any pre-existing objectively validated standards of merit of worth to apply?
- Outcomes: What are the effects of the programme?
- Generalization to other people/places or version
- Comparison with alternative option
- Recommendations: These may or may not be requested, and may or may not follow from evaluation.

I argue that most societies require knowing if programmes are good or not. If materials evaluated are good, they must meet important needs that best match the information required by the users.

### **1.7.1 Curriculum design**

Curriculum embodies the planning and implementation of educational experiences through carefully orchestrated procedure made from understanding related things that truly matters to the adult learners' life (Mckernan, 2008:5). According to Barosso and Morgan (2009:16), Mckernan (2008:12), designing curriculum describes an educational process that includes the following:

- Planning of the theories involving the curriculum-making
- Developing the curriculum based on the research conducted about the learners' requirements
- Embracing the fact that there is a degree of intuition and critical judgement in the work of educators
- Presenting empirical evidence of the research done for the information required.

Furthermore, curriculum needs are to be seen as continuous educational experience, and roles played by educators in curriculum decisions, inquiry and improvement (Dean, Murk and Prete, 2000:134). ABET is one of the important sections of education because it deals with economically active illiterate and semi-literate people and therefore it remains a sector of education that is directly linked to development (French, 2003:3 and Rule, 2006). The curriculum of ABET should be learner-centred,

dynamic and change with time. Thus, the curriculum for ABET should pursue an outcomes-based education approach so as to alleviate illiteracy and under-education (see chapter three in this regard). According to Baatjies and Mathe (2004) and UNESCO (2008:52), in instructional design of ABET, the following aspects plays an important role:

- Purpose: What are the overall goals, purpose and scope of the programme that will increase the usefulness and impact of literacy?
- Needs: What are the needs of the learners in ABET?
- Flexible curriculum: Are the contents relevant to the learners in diverse context?
- Relevant language of instruction. Most learners develop mother tongue literacy skills first, to the point where they can write and write at a level equivalent to a newspaper because literacy is a language-based activity.

The researcher would then summarise the design of a good literacy programme to be based on its accessibility, relevance, usefulness and that which would lead to learning outcomes that participants can put to use in their daily lives and for further learning. Furthermore, participants` existing knowledge and experience should serve as basis for the programme, with the possibility of applying new knowledge and skills directly in their lives.

## **1.8 Terminology**

### **1.8.1 Clarification of terms and concepts applicable to this study**

Clarification of terms gives the opportunity to the researcher to clarify his/her conceptual understanding of key terms employed in the study. In this study the following terms are discussed: For the purpose of this study the terms below will be defined as follows: *content-based education, competency-based education, literacy, literacy material, community, information needs, assessment, paradigm and paradigm shift.*

a) Content-based education

Content-based education places emphasis on covering a curriculum in which teachers teach a predetermined amount of content within each time period (Van der Horst and McDonald, 2009:9, Spady, 1997:3 and Du Toit and Du Toit, 2004:4). Content may be described as the subject matter, ideas, skills or substance of what is taught (Gunning, 2008:7; Alvermann, 2007:13, Van der Horst and McDonald, 2009:26).

b) Competency-based education

Competency-based education deals with learners' performance outcomes, and is defined as the demonstrated mastery of skills (Harley et al., 1996:116; Van der Horst and McDonald, 2009:12 and Spady, 1997:5). Clifford and Kersfoot (1992:185) and Du Toit and Du Toit (2004:7), state that competency-based education presents learning in a meaningful way to teachers and learners by stipulating very clearly what will be learnt and taught in terms of behavioural outcomes whose programmes appear to be systematic and well-organised.

c) Literacy

Hutton et al. (1996:53), Hinzen (2009:274), Ghose (2009:164), state that "literacy is tied up with people's intentions and purposes. It extends where necessary beyond reading to other languages and skills and to reading the world". Furthermore, Harley et al., (1996:30), Chopra (1993:21), Walters (2006:12), Bizare (2009:118) and Hildebrand (2009:199), defines the term "literacy" as "Literacy is not merely the process of acquiring the skills of reading, writing and arithmetic – it also plays a role in the liberation of humans and their full development. It is also not an end in itself, but a fundamental human right and constitutes the first stage of basic education". Torres (2003:3) and Blake and Blake (2002:15), Rogers (2009:190), argue that literacy is one of the most basic learning needs of children, young people and adults and it is at the very heart of basic education.

d) Literacy material

Wedepohl (1988:107); Scott-Goldman (2001:12); Burroughs (1992:10); Fredericks (1992:38) and Lyster (1992:5) defines literacy material as “Any available existing materials that can be adapted or translated, or if nothing is available anything that can be produced by learners themselves that they can use as reading material”.

e) Community

Community can be defined in many ways, depending on the interpretation assigned to it. Beeton (2006:4) suggest that the term community can be used by politicians, academics, religious leaders etc. “Any geographical location or neighbourhood definable by race, social unity, group of persons living in the same locality, or with common race, religion, pursuits, etc. not shared by those among whom they live, common character or identity, people sharing common practice, a body of common equal rights” (Kaniki, 2001:198; Cook, 1997:276 and Baker, 2003:83).

f) Information needs

The definition of “Information needs” has presented the researcher with problems of meaning. Wilson (1981:5) point out that information needs in user studies has presented problems, which leads to the conclusion that what is in fact meant by information needs in information behaviour. Information needs are said to change constantly with new relevant sensory inputs (Case, 2002:76; Killen, 2000:22). Information needs exist objectively, that is they are oriented towards reality, practice and task. It is the requirement, want or demand for information.” (Prasad, 1992:29; Kaniki, 1999:36).

g) Assessment

Assessment is a strategy for measuring knowledge, behaviour or performance, values or attitudes (Van der Horst and McDonald, 1997:170; Kellerman, 1987: viii; Killen, 2000:22; Dervin and Nillan, 1986:6; Boon, 1992b:65). Baker (2003:30) defines the term “assessment” as a process of determining the nature, causes, progression and

prognosis of a problem and the personalities in different situations. Davies (2005:18) states “assessment encompasses the true does as well as the showing of how things are done”. (See chapter 2 and 3 where the term is used)

h) Paradigm and Paradigm shift

A “paradigm” is the fundamental perspective of “how we view and perceive our world and what we allow ourselves to see as true, or desirable, when shaped and endorsed, which helps us understand, interpret, behave and make sense of what we do and experience” (Davies, 2005:18, Spady, 1997:1, Naicker, 1999:92). Furthermore, Barker (2003:312) defines “paradigm” as a model of pattern containing a set of legitimate assumptions and a design for collecting and interpreting data. On the other hand, Law (2006:43) and Baker (2003:30) argue that “paradigm” should be viewed as “a whole package that includes law-like generalisation, implicit assumption, instrumental and embodied habits, working models and a general and more or less implicit world-view”.

Naicker (1999:92) defines “paradigm” as “a framework for identifying, explaining and solving problems”, and “paradigm shift” as “a radical change in the way one views the world”. According to Barker (2003:312), paradigm shift is a process of reconceptualising about some model, pattern, or perception, leading to significant changes or reinvention. The two terms are used in this study to indicate the shift from the old educational approach to the outcomes-based education.

### 1.8.2 Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Meaning
ABE	Adult basic education
ABET	Adult basic education and training
ATM	Automatic teller machine
CEPD	Centre for Education Policy Development
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions

DoE	Department of Education
ETD	Education training and development
ETDP	Education training and development practice (or practitioner)
FET	Further Education and Training
GETC	General Education and Training Certificate
JET	Joint Education Trust
NCFE	National Committee on Further Education
NEPI	National Education Policy Investigation
NGOs	Non-governmental organisations
NTB	National Training Board
NQF	National Qualification Framework
OBE	Outcomes-based education
SACABE	South African Committee on Adult Basic Education
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority

## 1.9 Chapter allocations

This section covers the delimitation of different chapters that was included in the study as follows:

- **Chapter One** covers the introduction to the study, the research problem, the general aim and objectives and the outline of the study.
- In **Chapter Two** some general principles with regard to literacy and adult basic education are discussed with special reference to the definition of the term “Literacy” as well as the characteristics of Adult Basic Education and Training in South Africa. Inclusion of lifelong learning is also taken into consideration in this chapter.
- **Chapter Three** gives an overview of content-based, competency-based and outcomes-based education practices. Different definitions and descriptions of how content, competency and the competencies addressed in literacy



programmes are presented by different writers are also discussed. Reference was made to the OBE policy instituted after 1994 and its influence on ABET. Furthermore, investigation of information needs of communities of Damonsville and Onverwacht is introduced. This included a literature review in which the importance of information in a developing context, with specific reference to literacy training was discussed.

- **Chapter Four** gives a description of the research methodology used to investigate the information needs of the two selected cases.
- The results as well as the analysis of the results of data collected from questionnaires are discussed in **Chapter Five**.
- **Chapter Six** identifies and discusses the analyses of the content of the literacy material/programmes, namely, Project Literacy- *Kommunikeer in Afrikaans: Aanganame kennis*, level 1, module 1 (1996); Operation Upgrade of South Africa- *Afrikaanse lees- en skryfkursus vir volwassenes*, Books 1, 2 and 3 for level 1 (1993) and The New Stimela Afrikaans ABET programme-*Woeker met woorde*, Book 1 level 1 (1997). This discussion includes a description of the research design.
- The two sets of findings namely the findings of information needs of communities of Damonsville and Onverwacht and the findings of contents of literacy materials as discussed and interpreted in Chapters three and four are compared in **Chapter Seven** and conclusions drawn about the findings thereof.
- **Chapter Eight** discusses the design of the learning programme in the context of the findings of the investigation and contains two concept lesson plans based on the conclusions reached in Chapter Five.
- Concluding remarks based on the extent to which the research questions were answered was presented in **Chapter Nine** as well as recommendations for

guidelines according to which literacy materials may be designed by taking into account the information needs of the target population.

## **1.10 Summary**

In this chapter an overview of the status regarding literacy in South Africa was discussed as part of the background rationale for the aim of this study. Furthermore the major shift brought about by the change in focus of education in South Africa since 1994 from predominantly content-based education to competency based education/OBE/Curriculum 2005 is raised.

The idea of the research plan was outlined. It was followed by the identification and definition of terms and abbreviations which were used in this study. The chapters envisaged are outlined. This was meant to provide a global picture of the research.