CHAPTER 8

EFFECTIVENESS

8.1. INTRODUCTION

After responding to the five questions of this study in the previous chapters, Chapter 8 concentrates on the interpretation of the CDEP’s effectiveness by using McAnany’s impact evaluation model in order to establish how the issues surrounding the CDEP’s delivery impact on the programme’s effectiveness.

McAnany’s (1975) programme impact evaluation model uses five criteria (effort, performance, adequacy, efficiency and process), is said to be very useful in pointing out factors that lead to programme success an/or failure (Perraton 2000, cited in Cookson 2000) and that in essence it is about programme quality (Cookson 2002), a theme recurring in South African education and training debates from the last decade of the nineteenth century (ANC 1994, DoE 1995, NCHE 1995, DoE 1996, CHE 2000 & 2004). The CHE (2004) in particular identified ODL quality criteria that are similar to McAnany’s (1975) and noted that these are “criteria for distance education which providers can use to develop and evaluate their own quality” (CHE 2004: 144). So, by interpreting the CDEP implementation using McAnany’s criteria, one is also addressing the requirements of South African and international policy with regard to effectiveness and quality in ODL.
The interpretation of the issues surrounding the CDEP delivery which follows covers both quantitative and quality related aspects of impact under each of the five McAnany (1975) criteria. The different dimensions of interpretation found within each of these five criteria present various layers of interpretation which cumulatively result in a comprehensive and multifaceted picture of the CDEP’s effectiveness, quality and overall impact.

8.2. EFFORT

Within the McAnany’s (1975) effort criterion there are five dimensions that need to be considered. Three of these dimensions, namely survival and/or institutionalisation, diffusion to other places and the number of people served by the programme fall within the quantitative aspects of programme delivery. The other two dimensions, ability to plan and clearly state objectives; quality of software (printed materials, audiovisual aid etc); management (including supervising groups and getting feedback from them) and financing fall within the quality related aspects.

8.2.1 Quantitative aspects

8.2.1.1 Survival and / or institutionalisation

Established in 1996 (the year of the signing the Memorandum of Agreement between SACHED-DETU and UNISA-ICE) and delivered in 1997 when the first cohort of learners was enrolled, the CDEP has survived for ten years (1997 – 2007). Survival is, according to McAnany (1975), “a key criterion that many projects do not meet”. The CDEP has not only survived but has institutionalised its provision in two crucial ways. It started as a non-formal programme within
UNISA’s ICE prior to the introduction of new requirements of the South African Qualifications Authority. When the SAQA regulations came into effect, the CDEP registered its provision according to these new requirements and became one of the recognised UNISA short learning programmes. This ensured that its provision continued under the new South African education dispensation. When the providers received feedback during the initial stages of this study that the level and coverage of the programme needed attention, they implemented strategies to address these issues. These have resulted in the recent endeavour by the providers and their partners to upgrade the CDEP and create a clear career path for distance education practitioners to progress from certificate to degree studies. One of the products of attempts to upgrade the CDEP is the introduction of the BA with specialisation in Open and Distance Learning (BA ODL) which enrolled its first learners in 2005. Like the CDEP, this degree programme has been developed collaboratively by UNISA and the DEASA member organisations and COL. The BA ODL is meant to articulate with the Masters in ODL being developed by NAPRODOLSA.

Initially the upgrade of the CDEP was meant to lead to an undergraduate diploma and the discontinuation of the certificate. With the decision to develop a BA ODL, entry requirements would have excluded some of the CDEP users. The DEASA September 2004 Regional Meeting recommended the continuation of the CDEP as an orientation programme for staff in member institutions and UNISA-ICE accepted the recommendation. This has resulted in the CDEP continuing to be provided alongside the BA ODL and serving as an alternative access programme to the BA ODL for learners without suitable university entry requirements.
From a survival and institutionalisation point of view, the continued existence of the CDEP, its influence on the development of the BA ODL matches its providers’ intention of producing a programme that will provide a foundation course for distance education practitioners and contribute to the development of a comprehensive distance education system in South Africa (SACHED-DETU 1994: 6). Its spread into other Southern Africa countries through the DEASA-COL collaboration demonstrates a wider delivery outreach than originally planned.

8.2.1.2 Diffusion

The CDEP began as a South African initiative catering for emerging needs of ODL institutions and practitioners in this country. During the course of its implementation it has grown to serve the needs of nine other countries in the southern Africa, as enumerated in the next paragraph. It has remained the only ODL practitioners training programme using distance education delivery methods in the DEASA member countries. The only other similar programme in Africa is that offered by the Open University of Tanzania which was also initiated in the late 1990s. Like the CDEP this latter programme was influenced by the UK based International Extension College (IEC) training programmes on ODL. The developers of both programmes are NGOs, namely SACHED-DETU and the South African Extension Unit (SAEU). The SAEU is a Tanzania based NGO which prior to South Africa’s new dispensation was providing educational programmes for South African exiles based in the frontline states of Southern Africa. Both these NGOs have had longstanding cooperation arrangements with the IEC. Staff members from both organisations were trained in ODL through the IEC short course for distance education practitioners and the Diploma and Masters in Distance Education offered by London University in collaboration with the IEC. The CDEP was, in fact, developed by SACHED with assistance from the IEC.
From its first year of delivery at UNISA-ICE in 1997 to date the CDEP has changed from being a South African only programme to a SADC region programme offered by UNISA-ICE in collaboration with DEASA and COL to DEASA member organisations in Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa (that is including ABEP, OLSET and SACTE), and Swaziland (and since 2004 in Zimbabwe when ZOU joined DEASA). After 2000, the programme was also used by learners in Kenya, Mauritius, Rwanda and Zambia through the COL sponsorship and private institutional support. While replication of the CDEP to other countries in terms of local institutional provision has not been achieved, its usage has grown from South Africa to other SADC countries and even wider than SADC, specifically in Kenya and Rwanda.

It can, thus, be concluded that there was a partial match between the CDEP’s delivery and the providers’ intention in the dimension of diffusion because replication to other countries, that is the second aspect of diffusion which involves not just delivery in other countries but the development of similar (replica or copy, Shorter Oxford English Dictionary 1986: 1798) programmes in other countries, has not been met. The recent discussions between UNISA-ICE and some of the DEASA member institutions about franchise type collaboration arrangements (UNISA-ICE 2006) could in future lead to replication but at this point these discussions are still in their initial stages to be regarded as achieving replication.

8.2.1.3 Number of people served

“Large-scale delivery” is not quantified in the collaboration agreement between the SACHED-DETU and UNISA-ICE. However, an indication of what UNISA-ICE envisaged is contained in one of ICE’s documents which states that “at least 100 learners are planned to be registered” in
the programme each year (ICE 1996). This figure was meant to cover all CDEP enrolments and not just DEASA members, however DEASA turned out to be the main user of the programme during this period.

From the enrolment numbers in Figure 6.1 it is clear that throughout the four year period, the CDEP DEASA total enrolment never reached the annual 100 learners envisaged in the providers’ plans. Neither was this envisaged number reached when DEASA and other enrolments from private organisations and individuals were combined. The DEASA enrolment of 177 for the four years represents 44% of the envisaged total enrolment of 400 for the period. Because, as indicated in the previous chapter, the CDEP was originally developed to address emerging South African needs, the South African organisations’ low enrolments (UNISA, TSA, OLSET, SACTE and ABEP) or no enrolments (SAIDE) implies that without the other DEASA member countries’ support, the programme would have failed dismally. The five South African organisations participating in the CDEP amounted to 61 (31%) learners over the four year period. That among these five South African organisations are the largest ODL providers in the SADC region, namely UNISA and TSA (which since 2004 have merged to form a single dedicated distance education university, the new UNISA) and that both these institutions had the largest numbers of staff employed in the target audience of the CDEP suggests lack of institutional commitment to ODL staff development and training and to the CDEP programme.

The only reason the programme has continued to exist even with such low annual enrolments is that the current UNISA acceptable minimum number of learners is 30 learners per course/module. Over the four year period, the total CDEP enrolment was never below this
figure. During the lowest DEASA enrolment, that is 23 learners in 1997, the total CDEP enrolment was in fact 52 learners as there were 29 learners enrolled as individuals or paid for by other organisations.

During the four year period under investigation 1997 – 2000, the enrolment situation suggests a mismatch between the CDEP plans and actual delivery in the effort dimension of the number of people served because the originators’ envisaged large scale delivery of at least 100 learners per year never materialised.

8.2.2 Quality related aspects

8.2.2.1 Ability to plan and clearly state objectives.

Chapter 5 on the CDEP Instructional System has demonstrated the ability of the originators of the CDEP, SACHED-DETU, to plan and define the objectives of the CDEP was strong and informed by national policy imperatives. SACHED documents on the origin, plans and programme development of the CDEP indicate that the CDEP was part of SACHED’s policy and strategic plans for influencing the transformation of ODL in South Africa by “building democratic education through quality education programmes, primarily for adults” (SACHED – DETU 1994: 3). The SACHED-DETU plans clearly state that the introduction of the CDEP was informed by research on its new role in the changing context of education in South African and of non-governmental organisations in the early 1990s. From this research DETU identified a niche area in training ODL practitioners which was based on the organisations’ experience and strengths in ODL. The needs of the target audience were also identified and the programme modified according to emerging needs identified during the piloting stage and learning materials
pre-testing internally within SACHED and with several external organisations in South Africa. Feedback from piloting and pre-testing in rural community based programmes, for example the SEPROF (Sekhukhuneland Educational Projects Forum), led to changing the audience and focussing the programme from serving community-based programmes to ODL programmes and practitioners. This feedback had indicated that ODL was not the main interest and focus of most community based organisations (SACHED-DETU 1994).

The collaborative approach adopted for the development and delivery of the CDEP, ensured reliable partnerships with established public institutions in South Africa and the SADC region and ensured the survival of the initiative in the face of the uncertain future faced by non-governmental organisations during the period of transition from apartheid to democracy. The CDEP is currently one of the only two SACHED programmes that have survived.

The partnership arrangement between SACHED and UNISA had clear lines of responsibilities, accountability and financial arrangements (SACHED/UNISA 1996). While UNISA-ICE was responsible for delivering the programme as part of its educational offerings, the agreement included a specific reference to the type and quality of learner support envisaged for the CDEP, namely that UNISA shall be responsible for:

The provision, after consultation with SACHED, of integrated learner support services, both at a distance and through face-to-face methods according to the principles of well-functioning distance education. (SACHED-UNISA 1997: 4).
The inclusion of this clause in the agreement shows that SACHED was determined to ensure well functioning ODL in the delivery of its programme at a time when though the UNISA ODL administrative and infrastructural capacity was renowned, its centralised and non-integrated learner support was a noted limitation (SAIDE 1994). It committed the partners to delivering the programme according to sound ODL practices.

From operational and planning perspectives, the planning and delivery arrangements of the CDEP aimed to assure the quality of the work performed. They suggested that the programme would in its delivery practice what it preached about ODL. These arrangements also show that the CDEP originators had the ability to plan and state the objectives of their programme.

The overall conclusion to be drawn is that the CDEP ability to plan and state objectives matched the requirement of this dimension of effort.

8.2.2.2 Quality of software.

The CDEP software, that is the programme learning materials, was regarded by participants as generally of high quality with well structured, learner friendly content covering the breadth of good practices in ODL (Figure 6.4) and as a result participants said that the programme had met their needs and reasons for enrolment in the programme (Figure 6.2).

The issues regarding the level of the CDEP being low for some learners or some learners needing a longer period of study than one year, that is from January to the following year’s January or May examinations and not from January to October, to complete the programme and the need for
internationalisation of the content discussed in Sub-section 7.3.2, are related to the quality of the software and indicate a mismatch between the plans and actual delivery in these aspects of the software. The issue regarding the need for internationalisation of the software, in particular, highlight that the mismatch has resulted from taking a programme developed for a South African audience and offering it regionally without the necessary amendment of the software. The later inclusion of the DEASA case studies book (Nonyongo & Ngengebule 1998) which contains ODL learner support case studies from all five DEASA member countries is said to have addressed this problem (Mosadi interview). But if the delivery of the programme continues and the enrolment numbers are large enough to ensure financial viability and sustainability, the intended revision should approach this mismatch from a broader perspective than merely including case studies as learners’ feedback has also included the need for more advanced exercises, and/or practical skills development in certain areas and the improvement of the quality of the audio cassettes. A decision on whether to continue using audio cassettes or the newer information and communications technologies like CDs would also have to be taken.

8.2.2.3 Management and administration

By the time the SACHED-UNISA partnership agreement became operational in 1997 and the CDEP delivery began, the leadership situation in SACHED had been adversely affected by staff turnover and financial difficulties. The remaining DETU staff had to share their responsibilities between servicing the CDEP partnership and the new partnership with UNISA on the development of two post-graduate degree level modules for the PGDDE. As a result, the SACHED-DETU responsibilities identified in the Memorandum of Agreement were adversely affected (UNISA-ICE 1998 & UNISA-ICE 2003) and led to a mismatch between intention and
delivery in the management and administration quality aspects of the dimension of effort. The specifics of the mismatch include:

- SACHED was unable to carry out their learner support commitments and was forced to assign these tasks to part-time contract staff members, who had limited authority to service the partnership effectively.

- During the last two years of the period under review, especially, SACHED was not able to pay the part-time contract staff concerned for the services rendered for the partnership as reported by Mosadi, one of the staff members involved, during an interview. Mosadi has continued, on a part-time basis, to be paid by UNISA-ICE to provide valuable support for the CDEP as tutor-marker as Pitso in Figure 6.10 has shown and also as second examiner. However, lack of SACHED payment of this staff member means that SACHED has reneged on some of its obligations.

- Financial difficulties also affected adversely SACHED’s marketing and support structures for the CDEP learners in South Africa. The SACHED plan had included marketing the programme during SACHED’s face-to-face training initiatives which were aimed to include support for trainees by SACHED fieldworkers (SACHED-DETU 1994). The fieldworkers’ responsibilities included monitoring of learners’ progress and provision of on-going learner support in local contexts including speedy delivery of learning materials by the fieldworkers. This fieldwork support was never implemented and learners in remote areas suffered. With this kind of support structure not in place, the envisaged large-scale delivery had to rely only on UNISA-ICE’s limited print-based marketing strategy and centralised learner support. UNISA-ICE’s marketing, on the other hand, targeted mainly DEASA as a regional ODL association and COL for
sponsorship of learners. The learner support services continued for the duration of this period to be offered from UNISA-ICE centrally and in one central venue at each of the countries participating in this programme, which for widely dispersed learners in the five countries of the CDEP delivery was very inadequate.

From the UNISA-ICE side, there was a change in the coordination of the CDEP in 1998. This change coincided with the emergence of the management and administration problems relating to the progressive decline in completion rates and resultant increase attrition rates and quality of support services offered by UNISA-ICE. This issue suggests that assigning the CDEP coordination responsibility in 1998 to someone who had not been part of the development and/or negotiations about the collaboration and programme delivery and perhaps without providing adequate orientation might have had a negative effect on the programme. It is also suggested by some of the tutors that this might have been caused by the experience of working according to the demands of the old UNISA system which encouraged the rigidity which was not in-line with the more open learning practices of the CDEP during the first year:

I do think that the initial rather formal UNISA-style approach to flexibility on behalf of the coordinator as regards assignment deadlines did have a discouraging effect especially on the more mature of our enrollees. This attitude did however, change with time and experience, and with perhaps some pressure from the HOD (Kipling, a CDEP tutor).
The progressive decline in completion rates and feedback about the poor quality of support noted by Pitso and other learners suggest that the change mentioned by Kipling might have come about too late for the 1998-2000 cohorts and might have discouraged some of the students who did not have other means of getting their problems known and addressed like Pitso.

Within the management and administration dimension, McAnany (1975) includes supervising groups and communicating and/or getting feedback from them. The comments from Pitso and other learners’ responses in the questionnaires about poor communication and unacceptable assignment turnaround time and in some cases non-return of assignments indicate that the CDEP supervision of individual learners and groups did not, as far as the management and administration dimension of the quality of effort is concerned, match the CDEP’s aim of delivering the programme according to the principles of well-functioning distance education which the UNISA-ICE/SACHED-DETU contract aimed to achieve.

The management and administration dimension as a whole, thus, registered more mismatches than matches.

8.2.2.4 Financing

Financial sustainability of programmes is one of the “vital elements” in producing effective programmes (McAnany 1975: 155). In response to Question 4 of this study, namely what problems are CDEP participants encountering in their application of CDEP ideas/practices/approaches in their jobs and how are DEASA member institutions assisting or hindering participants’ application attempts, lack of financial resources was one of the issues that
were mentioned as frustrating participants’ contributions and also leading to DEASA member
countries being unable to increase the number of staff enrolled in the CDEP. The financial
difficulties faced by SACHED in servicing the SACHED-DETU and UNISA-ICE agreement,
limited marketing and the virtual demise of SACHED are other examples of financial difficulties
experienced by the CDEP collaboration. The CDEP partnership has subsisted to date mainly due
to COL’s sponsorship, the provider’s capacity to deliver the programme through cross
subsidisation and the DEASA partners’ commitment to continuing the programme even with
such low numbers of enrolment. There are two main reasons for this. First, the feedback from
the users of the CDEP, namely, the learners, tutors and DEASA member organisations, was
overwhelmingly positive about the value of the programme and its contribution to ODL in the
region. The CDEP experience has made DEASA members more aware of the positive response
to the programme and the problems regarding low enrolments, throughput rates and financial
aspects and, hopefully, would seek alternative ways of financing the programme, especially
because of the DEASA decision that the programme should continue to be offered along side the
BA ODL. Some of the institutions like BOCODOL and UNISA have in fact used their own
resources to get more learners on the programme. Second, though the enrolment numbers were
low, UNISA-ICE, with its small staff complement and variety of course offerings, has been able
to sustain the CDEP through cross subsidisation because the CDEP is deemed to be a strategic
programme for a dedicated distance education institution.

However, the current situation of low numbers and not enough income generated from the
programme’s enrolment, demonstrate a mismatch between the intention to deliver a large scale
sustainable programme and the actual money generated from enrolments, which in 1978 and
2000, the highest and lowest enrolment years was R74 000 and R35 000 at R1 000 enrolment fees per student, see also Section 8.5 on CDEP efficiency. If the programme has to be sustained, the providers should, as suggested by CDEP participants, market the programme aggressively in all ODL institutions and not just DEASA members, address the mismatch in the quality of delivery aspects of communication, assignment turnaround time, learner support and improve the retention and completion rates of enrolled learners. The users, on the other hand, need to find alternative sources of financing enrolments as some organisations like BOCODOL and UNISA are already doing on a limited scale. UNISA, in particular, in its role as provider and user of the CDEP needs to include the CDEP as part of its official staff training strategy that can benefit from national skills levy.

The combined quantitative and qualitative dimensions present an overall picture of more mismatches than matches in McAnany’s effort criterion as survival and/or institutionalisation and ability to plan and state objectives were the only two dimensions that had matches whereas the other three dimensions (number of people served, management and administration and financing) had more mismatches and diffusion was a partial match.

8.3 PERFORMANCE

Performance according to McAnany’s (1975) is concerned with what has been accomplished in relation to the aims of the programme. He says that this is one of the difficult areas to assess because providers find it easier to prove statistically what has been done in terms of producing statistics of people enrolled, but often produce excuses when asked to explain what has been
accomplished. McAnany (1975) includes under performance the dimensions of learner motivation, integration in the community and professional development while Perraton (2000) suggests that successful completion of studies and examination performance are also part of this criterion.

8.3.1 Successful completion of studies and examination performance

A 60% course completion rate is, in comparison to much lower completion rates in ODL higher education programmes, regarded as favourable performance in ODL (Perraton 2004: 211). Much lower completion rates have been reported in Kember (1995: 24), and examples are the 1982 Athabasca University completion rate of 28.8% and 21% in the Venezuela distance education university. These completion rates are, however, for the institution’s total programme offerings and not just one programme as the CDEP. Case studies cited in the South African CHE Report (2004) note throughput rates of between 5% and 92% in selected ODL programmes in South Africa. Among these case studies, a one year diploma in Community Health Nursing has the highest cohort throughput rates of 78%, 86% and 92%, for the 2000, 2001 and 2002, cohorts respectively, which indicates a progressive improvement in throughput rates in contrast to the CDEP’s progressive decline. Research conducted by Raza (2004) cited in Perraton (2004) has noted completion rates of less than 5% in some of the degree courses at the Indira Gandhi National Open University. Perraton (2004) further mentioned that successful completion rates of 50% or more are being achieved in the open universities of industrialised countries but that:

… recent work shows that even the well established Asian open universities are getting disappointingly low graduation rates for first degree, but significantly
higher rates for certificate courses and for postgraduate qualifications. (Perraton 2004)

The CDEP’s cohort completion rate of 78,3% (1997), 70,3% (1998), 60,2% (1999) and 60% (2000) correlates with the higher graduation rates for certificate courses mentioned above. That the annual completion rates progressively dropped from the first cohort’s 78,3% to the fourth year’s 60% is, however, a matter of great concern, especially when compared with the above mentioned one year Community Health Nursing diploma case study cited in the CHE Report (2004 : 58 - 59) which had progressively increasing annual completion rates of between 78% and 92%. The collaboration arrangements between the providing institution, UNISA and DEASA member organisations that use the CDEP for staff development purposes should have facilitated even higher completion rates as it should have been easier to detect staff’s study problems, voice difficulties during the regular annual reporting sessions at the association’s regional meetings and jointly find solutions to these difficulties.

With regard to motivation, the completion rates of between 60% and 78,3% per cohort show that reasonable numbers of learners have remained motivated enough to complete their studies. Organisations have reported high motivation of staff and improvement in performance in Figure 6.3. This motivation was partly nurtured by the usefulness (Figures 6.3, 6.4, 6.5, 6.6 and 6.7) and quality aspects of the programme like the support received from tutor-markers like Mosadi in Figure 6.10. However, the situation could have been better with improved monitoring and follow-up support as suggested above.
The application of CDEP knowledge and skills in learners job contexts which have included introduction of new learner support services, conducting research, improvement in materials development, informed discourse on ODL and introduction of effective administration systems as Chapter 6 has argued, are all signals of the learners integration in the ODL community and the development of professionalism in their work. That most of the learners were at the time of this research still working in ODL organisations, and a few had been able to change jobs within the same organisation, is another indication of their integration in the ODL community within their countries. Only one learner had lost his job because of national policy demands. The interest of some of the learners in furthering their studies in adult and/or distance education suggests that the programme has indeed been able to “whet their appetite” (SACHED-DETU 1994: 4) to improve their open and distance learning qualifications and professional development. The new qualifications (BA ODL and Masters in Distance Education) being introduced in the region will also facilitate this quest.

The 60% and above completion rates, motivation of learners and integration in the ODL community indicate that the CDEP delivery match its aim of providing a well-functioning programme that will whet participants’ appetite for further study. However this match is dented by the progressive decline in completion rates and can therefore be regarded as a qualified match.

8.3.2 Attrition

Not all CDEP learners have successfully completed their studies. ODL providers often argue that attrition is not easy to determine because learners enrol in programmes for different purposes
than course completion or graduation and that some learners study only those sections of courses that serve their enrolment purposes (Summers 2003). But, there is general agreement that attrition in ODL is higher than in contact or face-to-face education. This agreement emanates from the extensive research on ODL drop-out in the 1970s and 80s which was said to be “seeking a simple remedy to reduce attrition rates to levels closer to those of full-time courses” and that “when a simple solution was not found this line of research seemed to become less fashionable” and high ODL drop-out rates now seem to have been accepted as inevitable (Kember 1995: 22).

However, identification of potential drop-outs at different stages of the learning cycle is crucial for determining when to provide the necessary support and/or getting the actual reasons for discontinuing studies. The Fritsch and Ströhlein’s (1989) classification of attrition into five categories is a very useful tool for assessing attrition in ODL because these stages coincide with the learning/study cycle right from enrolment and submitting no assignment to discontinuing studies after failure. These five categories are non-start, draw-back, drop-out, no show and exam failure.

Figure 8.1 provides a description of the Fritsch and Ströhlein’s (1989) five stages of attrition and also indicates the number of CDEP learners falling within each stage per cohort.

The CDEP non-start category had the highest number of learners (43%) over the four year period and the 1999 cohort with 11 non-start learners had the highest annual figure. Combined, the non-start and draw-back categories represent 65% of the attrition rate for the four year period 1997 – 2000. This means that most learners dropped out very early in their study cycle, after
submitting none or only one assignment. There were very few no show learners (3 or 5%) who completed the course requirements but did not sit for the examination, suggesting that though few there were, indeed, learners who were interested in acquiring the knowledge from the programme but not the actual qualification.

The 1997 cohort had no learners within the drop-out, no-show and exam failure categories, suggesting that once learners were identified as active they were followed up and encouraged to continue. In comparison, the 1998 cohort had the highest examination failure rate (5 learners) and among the 8 total failures for the four year period, 5 learners never attempted to re-sit the examination. From 1998 there was a change in the coordination of the programme as already

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<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>ENROLMENT YEAR</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-start</td>
<td>Learners who enrol, get study materials and do not complete even one assignment while not formally withdrawing from the course</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draw-back</td>
<td>Learners who enrol and send in one of the first assignments but then give up their studies.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drop-out</td>
<td>Learners who enrol and are active by sending in assignments more or less regularly, but do not complete the requirements to be admitted to the exams</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>No show</td>
<td>Learners who complete the course requirements to sit for the exam but do not show up for the exam</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam failure</td>
<td>Learners who sit for the exam but are unsuccessful and decide to discontinue</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Of total enrolment</td>
<td></td>
<td>21,7%</td>
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mentioned and it has been suggested that the mismatch in the management and administration dimension discussed earlier might have resulted from this change.

From the above, it is clear that by using the Fritsch and Ströhlein’s classification to analyse attrition rates, ODL institutions can identify potential drop-outs at different stages of the learning cycle. Early detection of potential drop-out candidates should then enable institutions to provide the necessary follow-up counselling and other learner support mechanisms. Early detection would also enable institutions to confirm the reason for discontinuing studies directly with the learners concerned. This should enable ODL institutions to substantiate, especially in the case of the drop-out and no show categories, whether, indeed, learners’ withdrawal from studies was because they had enrolled for non graduation purposes, as the CDEP 5% attrition falling within the no show category seems to confirm. A collaborative programme like the CDEP whose learners are employees of DEASA member organisations and which had very low enrolment numbers, getting this kind of information should be much easier than in other large scale and individual enrolment based programmes.

Although the CDEP attrition rates are relatively low (between 21% and 40%), the fact that 58 (43%) of the total attrition rates were non-starters who withdrew before submitting a single assignment and that the draw-back group of learners who submitted only one assignment constituted 22% of the total enrolment for this period, raises great concern. This suggests inadequate mechanisms for motivating and supporting learners during the course of their studies by providers, user organisations and tutors. Of course this applies to all categories of withdrawal, but in the case of these two categories: non-start and draw-back, institutions have
more time available for follow-up monitoring, counselling and motivating learners to continue with their studies and/or finding out the real reasons for drop-out. In the case of no-show learners, on the other hand, institutions come to know about withdrawal only during or after examinations and by then there is little that institutions can do except to encourage learners to return to their studies in subsequent years. The situation of the learners from the 2000 cohort who never returned to complete their studies after the first year is difficult to explain, but it also emphasises the need for learner follow-up after examinations to motivate them or determine reasons for drop-out. One of Cookson’s (2002) key questions on performance, “do patterns of institutional performance suggest institutional interventions to effect improved performance?”, seems not to have been heeded in the CDEP, especially from 1998 onwards as the pattern of increasing attrition emerged and continued till the most worrying 40% in 2000.

The interpretation of all these issues surrounding attrition indicates a mismatch between delivery and the CDEP plans of well-functioning ODL provision. Monitoring of teaching and learning progress by using the Fritsch and Ströhlein classification could have led to early detection of potential drop-out and introduction of remedial strategies at different stages of the learning process and/or finding out the real reasons for withdrawal and should be considered for future improvement of the CDEP performance.

The performance criterion as a whole can then be classified as a partial match because of the mismatch in attrition and qualified match (due to progressive decline) in successful completion of studies and examination performance.
8.4 ADEQUACY

The adequacy criterion seeks to establish the relevance of the performance to the problem being addressed which is a more difficult task because it is not merely about doing something to address a problem but importantly about the relevance of that action to the problem (McAnany 1975). Adequacy, thus, answers a follow-up question to performance which involves a comparison of successful learners with the total potential population needing the service. To gauge the adequacy of the CDEP, the number of successfully trained learners in ODL theory, skills and attitudes would need to be compared with the population of untrained practitioners falling within the total CDEP target audience. The CDEP enrolment numbers are low and the successful completion rates are between 60% and 78.3% which raises questions about the adequacy of the CDEP or in other words, the relevance of its action in addressing the problem incorporated in its plans and objectives. A comparison of the enrolment and completion figures with the total potential population of the CDEP will indicate the extent of the concern.

The CDEP documents described the target audience as “all those who work as tutors; counsellors; fieldworkers; community learning centre coordinators or facilitators; in formal and non-formal distance and open learning programmes.” These categories were then grouped into three: educators, administrators and fieldworkers (SACHED-DETU 1994: 3).

The actual job categories of CDEP participants over the four years were as presented in Figure 8.2.
Figure 8.2 shows that the CDEP enrolled learners match two of the broad categories of target audience mentioned in the CDEP documents, namely educators and administrators. Educators, that is, tutors and/or lecturers form the highest number of CDEP enrolments (68). Materials developers, audio broadcasting officers and research officers should be added to this group because these roles are part of teaching. The number of educators will then be higher, 80. The administrative staff consisting of 57 learners can also be grouped together with managers and student advisers as these functions are administrative in nature and this category total will then be 77. None of the CDEP learners mentioned fieldwork as their job category, because fieldworker may have described their jobs as administrative, so it can be assumed that this category would have been included in that of administrators or were among those in the unknown category of responses, that is, those who did not complete this section of the questionnaire.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job category</th>
<th>1997</th>
<th>1998</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tutors / Lecturers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials developers/ Editors</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Advisors/Counsellors</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio/Broadcasting Officers</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation and Research Officers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration/Secretarial Officers</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional/Area Coordinator/Manager</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not complete this section</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>23</strong></td>
<td><strong>74</strong></td>
<td><strong>45</strong></td>
<td><strong>35</strong></td>
<td><strong>177</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ODL programmes are involved in mass goals (McAnany 1995) or to put in the terms of the CDEP developers “large-scale delivery”, The CDEP, however, as has already been argued in 8.2.1.3, has not matched the providers’ aim because enrolment numbers never reached the proposed 100 per year and successful completion rates were between 60% and 78.3%.
Information on the total potential CDEP target population in the DEASA member organisations in all the three categories of audience was not available. But the adequacy of the programme can be gauged from the information available on tutors from two dedicated distance education organisations which are the main users of the CDEP, are located in two different countries and offer programmes at two different levels: secondary and tertiary.

In 1998, the year when the CDEP had the highest enrolment numbers (74) because COL had sponsored rural part-time tutors in South Africa and Namibia, the UNISA enrolment number was 25. The total number of part-time tutors employed by the UNISA Department of Student Support that year was 213 (UNISA-DSS 2000). CDEP enrolments, thus, represented 11,7% of the 1998 potential tutor target audience. In 2000 UNISA had no one enrolled on the CDEP though there were 219 part-time tutors and some of these tutors would have had no ODL staff development and training. In comparison NAMCOL had 890 (NAMCOL 2000) tutors employed in 2000 and the CDEP enrolments that year was 13, representing 1,5%.

Viewed from the angle of comparing the total number of CDEP enrolments in these two organisations for the four year period of this study with one year’s tutor population, the percentages are slightly better. The NAMCOL figure of 30 for the four years equals 3,3% of the 2000 tutor population, while the UNISA 37 enrolment is 16.8% of the 219 tutors employed in 2000. The combined 2000 NAMCOL and UNISA tutor population was 1109, so the total combined CDEP enrolment over the four year period of 67 represents 6%.
These figures demonstrate that the CDEP does not adequately address the problem incorporated in its plans and objectives (McAnany 1975) or there is a mismatch between delivery and the blueprint (Parlett & Hamilton 1975) in terms of relevance to the scale of the problem that the programme attempts to address. The inadequacy of the CDEP’s delivery to the problem of ODL tutor training confirms Kipling’s view, Figure 7.11, that organisations find it difficult to devote resources to training part-time staff. But it also shows that, though, Kipling thought this was a major problem in dual mode organisations, the problem exists in dedicated distance education institutions as well because both NAMCOL and UNISA fall within the latter group of ODL providers.

If information on the other staff categories like learning centre coordinators, assistant coordinators, administration officers and head office staff were available and considered, the mismatch between the relevance of the CDEP and the scale of the problem might have been even greater.

Cookson (2002: 6) includes another dimensions to the criterion of adequacy, namely whether the credentials of programmes enable learners to attain upward social and occupational mobility which is linked to whether ODL institutions are recognised as being on par with conventional contact institutions. At national level in DEASA member countries there is parity in the recognition of conventional contact and ODL institutions’ complete qualifications at the secondary (South African Matriculation with exemption or SADC countries’ General Certificate of Education with credit passes) and tertiary (degree) levels are recognised for admission (UNISA calendar 2006). However, short learning certificate programmes like the CDEP, enjoy
no such recognition and CDEP learners without the right university entry qualifications cannot access tertiary education. Neither are they able to facilitate transferability of credits and mobility of learners from one institution to another. The lack of recognition of the CDEP in monetary and/or job promotion terms in DEASA member countries is another indication that there is a mismatch between the CDEP plan and the actual delivery in the dimension of upwards social and occupational mobility of adequacy. It is in recognition of this limitation that the CDEP providers have begun the process of articulating the programme with emerging ODL qualifications like the BA ODL, getting it recognised as an undergraduate degree access programme and creating a career path for ODL practitioners stretching from certificate level to post-graduate qualifications in collaboration with other regional universities through the NAPRODOLSA initiative.

In terms of delivery, the CDEP, therefore, has mismatches in both dimensions of the adequacy criterion and the providers will need to speed up the envisaged remedial strategies of improving enrolments, completion rates, articulation of the programme with other qualifications and encouraging DEASA members to recognise the qualification in meaningful ways like recognition and reward of successful learners’ contributions to institutional provision.

8.5 EFFICIENCY

The efficiency criterion involves comparing inputs (effort) with outputs (performance) and also assessing this against available alternatives for addressing the problem at hand. McAnany (1975) notes that reliable data on performance and costs are essential requirements for providing evidence on programme efficiency.
The interpretation of the CDEP effort and performance above have demonstrated that substantial and reliable data is available on delivery of the programme to enable adequate interpretation of the two criteria. It can, therefore, be concluded that this dimension of efficiency matches the aims and objectives of the programme.

Costs are, therefore, the remaining dimension that needs interpretation to conclude an evaluation of the CDEP efficiency.

The CDEP is delivered through ODL which is regarded as efficient for providing access to education at relatively low costs. The alternative mode would be to deliver the CDEP through conventional contact methods. Providing the CDEP through full-time face-to-face contact methods is likely to be more costly for learners and their institutions. The cost factors would probably lead to even more limited participation and/or access to the programme because of the higher fees that would need to be charged for face-to-face contact provision. It would also involve additional costs for institutions in that practitioners would have to be away from their work stations for long periods. Offered by full-time or even part-time face-to-face contact sessions, the CDEP would require a minimum of four to six months’ study. CDEP learners are practitioners employed fulltime or part-time in ODL institutions and the current CDEP mode of delivery ensures that practitioners are not taken away from their workplaces while studying. Instead, while working and studying, they are able to apply the knowledge and skills acquired from the programme immediately in the workplace or in the words of one of the learners, one of the strengths of the CDEP is:
The fact that experience is gained as student and as practitioner – concurrent experience (questionnaire response from a CDEP learner)

However, while the CDEP costs for learners and their organisations may be cheaper, the costs for the providing institution of delivering the CDEP to low numbers of learners could not be inexpensive because:

The costs of teachers in traditional institutions are directly related to student numbers. Even more importantly, their magnitude is so great as to make all other aspects of variable costs relatively trivial. (For example, the cost of teachers’ salaries in schools in South Africa is around 80% of all costs. In higher education it is lower but not substantially so). Distance education therefore changes the production function of education by substituting cheaper management of learners’ learning for the expensive process of applying teacher time to it. This creates potential for lower costs per student, provided large numbers of learners can take the expensively designed course and that the resulting unit cost advantage is not eroded by the lower success rate that is likely to ensue (CHE 2004: 107).

The CDEP’s low enrolment numbers and progressive decline in successful completion of studies over the four year period, suggest that there is a mismatch in the CDEP delivery with regard to the costs dimension of the efficiency criterion because the CDEP, due to low numbers, has not benefited from the potential lower costs of ODL delivery. Its survival has been ensured through programme cross-subsidisation and ICE would need to find ways of increasing enrolment
numbers if the programme has to continue as recommended by DEASA members. The methods suggested by participants to increase enrolments include aggressive marketing that targets all ODL institutions and not just DEASA and also franchise-type of replication of the programme. DEASA members, on the other hand, would need to find ways of overcoming their financial resource limitations in order to continue to use the programme even without the COL sponsorship. Suggestions made include incorporating the enrolment fees in organisations’ annual staff development budgets and offering sponsorship in the form of bursaries or loans.

The overall conclusion is that in terms of efficiency, there is a partial match because only one of the two dimensions, availability of performance reliable data, was a match.

8.6 PROCESS

McAnany’s (1975) process criterion is concerned with whether and why a programme has succeeded or failed. Failure or success of a programme is determined from the description, analysis and interpretation of all the criteria. From the illuminative evaluation model used in this study it means interpreting the sum total of the matches and/or mismatches deduced from these criteria. The purpose of determining or interpreting process, that is whether a programme has succeeded or failed, is to help planners and project managers to improve their programmes (McAnany 1975: 159). It is not a “summing up of the value of a program in one or two words that can then assume disproportionate status” but an interpretation that does not “side-step issues of value and merit” and is based on “judgements of all kinds, from many different sources” (Parlett & Dearden 1977: 154) as has been done in the description and interpretation of the
CDEP in Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8 of this report. The value, merit or process criterion issues that have emerged from the CDEP delivery and which have been interpreted in this chapter through the tools of McAnany’s criteria and illuminative evaluation are summarised in Table 8.3 to show at a glance the dimensions where urgent decisions are required in the CDEP programme.

**Figure 8.3 CDEP and McAnany’s Process Criterion**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRITERIA</th>
<th>DIMENSIONS</th>
<th>MATCH/MISMATCH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. EFFORT</td>
<td>i) Survival/institutionalisation</td>
<td>Match</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ii) Diffusion</td>
<td>Partial match</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>iii) Number of people served</td>
<td>Mismatch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>iv) ability to plan and state</td>
<td>Match</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>v) management and admin</td>
<td>Mismatch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>vi) financing</td>
<td>mismatch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>More mismatches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. PERFORMANCE</td>
<td>i) Successful completion</td>
<td>Match (qualified)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ii) Attrition</td>
<td>Mismatch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>Partial match</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. ADEQUACY</td>
<td>i) relevance to scale problem addressed</td>
<td>Mismatch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ii) Upward social and occupational mobility</td>
<td>Mismatch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>Mismatch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. EFFICIENCY</td>
<td>i) Performance reliable data</td>
<td>Match</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ii) Costs</td>
<td>Mismatch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>Equal, that is partial match</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. PROCESS</td>
<td>Failure/success</td>
<td>More mismatches suggest need for urgent action to avoid failure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The preponderance of mismatches in the CDEP delivery suggests that urgent action needs to be taken to avoid potential failure of the CDEP. The two criteria indicating strong mismatches are effort and adequacy. The effort dimensions of number of people served, management and administration, financing are the ones that need urgent decisions to reverse the mismatches and also both dimensions of the adequacy criterion, that is relevance to the problem being addressed.
and upward social and occupational mobility, also need attention. The efficiency criterion was interpreted as “equal, that is partial match”, because the two dimensions were evenly weighted, one match and one mismatch showing that the issues needing to be addressed are not as many as in the other two criteria. In contrast the performance partial match is slightly different as the one dimension, successful completion, has a qualified match due to the fact that completion rates of 60% and above are good but the progressively declining nature of these rates shows that the situation is not improving but retrogressing.

The power to make the CDEP succeed lies with all its participants: providers, tutors, learners and user organisations and identified ways of addressing the CDEP problems include aggressive marketing, addressing the management and administration problems and revision of the content.

8.6.1 Marketing
With aggressive marketing and commitment from all its participants, the CDEP has a potential to attract more participants. DEASA alone has 22 active member organisations amongst which are large dedicated distance education or dual-mode institutions like UNISA, UNAM, UNISWA BOCODOL and NAMCOL to name a few. Together these organisations employ many academics, part-time tutors and administrative staff who have little knowledge of ODL. If these organisations were serious about ODL staff development, the originally planned target number of 100 learners would long have been exceeded. The problem is that DEASA members tend to rely on the COL sponsorship and except for a few member institutions that also use their own resources to enrol staff, do not include enrolment on the CDEP in their budgets as part of staff
development and training. Kipling, the CDEP tutor and Namibian Director quoted in Chapter 7 has identified this as the crux of the matter:

**Figure 8.4: Kipling’s view on CDEP recognition and funding**

Kipling:

I believe the answer lies somewhere in terms of the actual translation of satisfaction by the institutions into recognition in career terms by those institutions for successful completers. This might have something to do with the inability of academic institutions in Southern Africa to recognise for promotional purposes anything other than academics degrees etc and therefore their unwillingness to invest in non-degree training. To some extent this is now being catered for by the upgrade to the BA/ODL, but I think the need to give recognition in career terms to the basic course would still be desirable and necessary if the CDEP as a certificate course is to survive, which as you know, I think it should. This was certainly a problem in getting my organisation’s funds for training devoted to the CDEP. Another reason was the difficulty of persuading non-dedicated institutions to devote training to part-time staff.

But his prediction of the BA ODL as a solution to this problem is unlikely to be correct as DEASA member organisations at the 2005 Lesotho meeting which this researcher attended made it clear that their decision to continue to support the CDEP is that it is of a shorter duration and cheaper and the COL sponsorship covers 75% of the costs which would not be available for degree programmes.

The providing organisation, in this case UNISA as a whole not just ICE, also needs to demonstrate its commitment to the CDEP by taking the lead in using it as a staff development and training programme. The recent discussions between ICE and the UNISA HRD on including the CDEP as one of the official training programmes, is a step in the right direction (UNISA-ICE 2006).
Marketing of the programme beyond DEASA member organisations and countries also needs attention. The recent extension of the usage to the CDEP to countries like Burundi, Kenya, Mauritius and Zambia, has increased the number of countries participating to a total of nine. This shows that with aggressive marketing the low enrolment numbers could be increased.

8.6.2 Addressing management and administration problems

Management and administration including supervision of groups and getting feedback are crucial dimensions of “the quality of work performed” (McAnany 1975: 155) in ODL programmes. The CDEP implementation as indicated in Section 8.2.2.3 has been of poor quality in important UNISA-ICE responsibilities like supervision of learners and timeous feedback. The availability of data on learner enrolments and throughput rates in other dimensions might be good but if supervision and feedback are poor, the chances of attracting more learners and retaining some of those who show signs of displeasure, are greatly diminished. The progressive decline of CDEP throughput rates over the four year period and the resultant progressive increase in attrition rates have been shown to coincide with a change in the supervisory staff. Poor performance in these dimensions, diminish what has been accomplished. A programme that aims to practice what it teaches in terms of well-functioning ODL cannot succeed when the contrary has been practiced. ICE management need to urgently ensure improvement of management and administration services so that the perceived improvement mentioned by Kipling becomes an everyday reality.

8.6.3 Revision of the content

The feedback received on the need for revision of the CDEP to address issues of level and South African bias, need urgent attention. This will ensure that the CDEP is up to date in terms of
ODL theory and practice and that all participating countries feel that the content addresses their needs and is contextually relevant. That UNISA-ICE has reported that this revision is in progress is an acceptable development but speeding up the process is urgent to ensure that the proposed aggressive marketing is for enrolment in a revised and up-to-date programme.

It is because of the identified weaknesses in the delivery of the CDEP that the paradoxes described in Section 7.4 have emerged with regard to the contrast between the high regard of the CDEP and actual enrolments and throughput rates, on the one hand, and between CDEP ideals and precepts and implementation practices regarding management, administration and related issues on the other. Addressing these issues will improve the quality of the CDEP and avoid unnecessary contradictions in a programme that is seen as a crucial contribution to improving the quality of ODL in the SADC region and which is supported by a major international ODL collaboration agency, COL and a regional association intending to grow even bigger within SADC.

8.7 CONCLUSION

The originators of the CDEP have produced a product that is highly regarded by its users and has proved its potential for large scale delivery within the southern Africa region. Some of the mismatches identified in this report can be easily addressed, for example changing the cover of the print materials, making sections of audio cassettes audible and addressing the issue of content bias. The latter has, indeed, already been partially addressed through additional case studies and if the envisaged revision of the CDEP is speeded up, this problem will be fully addressed.
The greatest challenge facing the CDEP is to address the two identified major mismatches concerned with low enrolment numbers and management and administration issues. Commitment from all CDEP members to the programme and their professed high regard for the programme need to be translated into providing resources for more staff members from the target audience of the CDEP to participate, ensuring that they are supported and monitored during the course of their studies, and that after successful completion there are clear benefits, recognition and reward for participants. The provider, as the largest ODL provider and a mega-university, needs to take the lead in this regard. The management and administration issue raised in this report make the CDEP operation contrary to its ideals of well-functioning distance education and the provider needs to ensure that it practices what it preaches. Only when these issues are addressed will the paradoxes emerging from the CDEP implementation be unravelled.