Materials Development Training for ABET Workers

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Dedicated to
Jabu Radebe
1961 -- 1997

Active Voice Editor, visionary, comrade and friend:
You are missed.

Abstract

The aim of this study was to develop a high-quality, experience-based, accredited training course that would bring black literacy workers into the ABET materials writing field. The report begins by setting the context of ABET in South Africa, then describing the literature on a wide variety of materials development projects in South Africa and other developing countries, some of which can be used as models for the proposed course. Training courses in fields outside ABET also inform the study.

Through a combination of questionnaires and interviews, the study explores the needs of institutions concerned with ABET materials as well as the needs and skills of potential trainees. Ten specialists were interviewed: Seven were ABET practitioners representing a tertiary institution, NGOs and government and three were involved in educational publishing. They identified the need for relevant practical materials in all South African languages and learning areas, and said a training course should stress thinking skills, writing skills, visual literacy and a firm grasp of the process and economics of book production. Thirty eight potential trainees were contacted through questionnaires and focus groups. They were positive about the proposed course and alerted the researcher to logistical issues regarding finances and timing. All respondents said the course must be accredited in line with NQF requirements. The main tension that arose in the interviews was around priorities. While all the experts said training in the production of materials was important, it had to viewed as a luxury in light of extremely limited resources and urgent demands for delivery.

Finally a proposed course is described, consisting of a 12-module, part-time course lasting approximately one year.

Descriptors

Adult Basic Education and Training, Adult Education, Adult Literacy, Literacy Workers, Materials Development, South Africa, Training.

Declaration

I declare that this research report is my own work, written under the supervision of Jane Castle. It is submitted for the degree of Mater of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in any other university.

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Betsy M. E. Alkenbrack

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Abbreviations Used in the Report

ABE	Adult Basic Education
ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
ACCU	Asian Cultural Centre for UNESCO
AIDS	Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome
ANC	African National Congress
ATM	Action Training Model
BESA	Basic Education and Skills for Adults
CAE	Centre for Adult Education
CACE	Centre for Adult and Continuing Education
CBDP	Community-Based Development Project
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CDRA	Community Development Resource Association
CEP	Continuing Education Project
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
DET	Department of Education and Training (under former government)
DOE	Department of Education (present government)
DSE	Deutsche Stiftung fur Internationale Entwicklung (German Foundation for International Development)
EIC	Education Information Centre
ELP	English Literacy Project
ETD	Education Training and Development
ETDP	Education Training and Development Practitioner
ETQA	Education and Training Quality Assurer
GAD	Gender and Development
HRD	Human Resources Development
IEB	Independent Examinations Board
JET	Joint Education Trust
LGM	Learner-Generated Materials OR Locally-Generated Materials
MOEC	Ministry of Education and Culture, Nepal
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NLC	National Literacy Co-operation

NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NRP	New Readers Project
NSB	National Standards Body
NSF	National Stakeholders' Forum
NTB	National Training Board
OBE	Outcomes-Based Education
ODA	Overseas Development Agency (UK)
PROAP	Principle Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCO)
PROLIT	Project Literacy
REFLECT	Regenerating Freirian Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SANET	South African Newspaper Education Trust
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
TLU	Thousand Learner Unit
TOFA	Training Orientation and Field Action
TOPS	The Other Press Service
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UK	United Kingdom
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Science and Cultural Organisation
UNISA	University of South Africa
USA	United States of America
USWE	Use, Speak and Write English
ZCC	Zionist Christian Church

Contents

Chapter 1: Is There a Need for Black Materials Writers in ABET?

1.1 Statement of the Problem

We have teachers and we have learners. Our biggest problem is that we don't have appropriate materials and we don't have the skills to produce them. (Paul Moropane, Akanani Rural Development Association)

This comment from an literacy co-ordinator in the Northern Province points out the two problems this research project aims to address: the shortage of Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) materials and the shortage of black South African materials writers.

The shortage of quality learning materials that crippled ABET programmes in the early 90's has been alleviated in the past few years by increased activity in the commercial and non-profit sectors, encouraged by government and corporate attention to upgrading citizens and workers (described in section 1.6). Now the challenge in materials development is to provide materials that meet national standards as well as a broad range of needs and interests. National ABET standards are being established by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) with assessment procedures developed mainly by the Independent Examinations Board (IEB). The needs range from those of workers in industry and urban areas to unemployed rural communities. Adult learners need materials which are coherent, comprehensive and user-friendly, integrating education, training and development and preserving and promoting black cultures and traditions. They should cater for speakers of the eleven official languages, including the most marginalised ones. The eight learning areas identified as making up the ABET sub-levels 4 and 5 qualifications (described in section 1.6) also have implications for the development of content and subject specific course materials, over and above language learning materials.

Who will produce these materials? NGOs working in materials development are either stretched to the limit, or have closed due to lack of funds. Although I am not sure how many available writers the private sector can provide, it is safe to say there will be a need for more materials writers.

But a more fundamental question is: Who has control over the materials-development process? At the 1994 National Council of the National Literacy Co-operation (NLC), ABET practitioners called for more regional participation in the materials development process. They pointed out that most materials are developed in urban areas, and not all official languages are catered for.

South Africa is not a country where indigenous languages are dying out. Eleven languages have been enshrined in the constitution, so it is surprising that so little attention has been paid to the development of good first-language materials. But perhaps it is not so surprising, given that most materials writers are based in urban areas, and most of them are white.

This is both a political issue and an issue of quality. White urban-based writers do not have the same local knowledge, born of experience, that someone from a rural area has. In many cases, they do not know African languages, and may not consider ABET materials in African languages to be a priority. Black literacy teachers are familiar with the knowledge, needs and context of their learners. They can bring authenticity to the materials, and address needs that are not being met.

What black teachers may not have is an understanding of the materials production process, or the technical skills required to produce ABET learning materials. Many are now wishing to get involved in this creative work. This research could therefore contribute to the development of career paths for black teachers who have the potential to move into materials writing.

1.2 Research Aim:

The aim of this study is to develop a high-quality, experience-based, accredited training programme that will bring black literacy workers into the ABET materials writing field.

1.3 Research Questions:

1. What are the needs in the field? "The field" would include the government, publishers, ABET programmes, employers, NGOs and qualifications authorities.
2. What skills do materials writers need?
3. What are the requirements of SAQA and academic institutions?

4. What skills and experience do potential trainees have?
5. What are the needs of potential trainees?
6. How should the new skills be taught?
7. What training models (local and international) can be drawn on?

1.4 Rationale:

To increase the number of black ABET materials writers in a relatively short time, there needs to be a structured training programme with a strong practical component, and it should be recognised by the NQF in order to provide career paths. To date most South African materials writers have learned their craft on the job with very little formal training. This system produced good writers. But is may not be adequate to meet the demands of the field or the needs of prospective trainees.

For example, most materials writers have had some kind of tertiary education. This should not be a pre-requisite, but it does provide academic training and discipline that makes it easier to work on one's own without a trainer. Most literacy teachers do not have this discipline to fall back on. A training programme for this target group must acknowledge and build on the trainees' experience, and provide a lot of support and guidance.

Another problem with "learning by doing" is that the process sometimes gets sacrificed for the product. A trainer's main concern is the process of learning, and this should not be overshadowed by materials production. A writer/editor is concerned with the product, and does not always have time to pay attention to the learning process. A course would tap into the experience of both the materials developers and the trainers, but the needs of the trainees would be paramount.

1.5 Research Method:

The study uses a combination of interviews and questionnaires to obtain answers to these questions. The questionnaires were sent to 30 potential trainees, and ten experts in the field were interviewed. Following this, a focus group was conducted with eight potentials trainees. Data was collected in 1996 and 1997. The process is described in detail in Chapter 3.

1.6 Adult Basic Education and Training in South Africa: The Need, the Right, the Resources

> For those who have adopted the language of outcomes-based education set within the need for a ruthless drive to become internationally competitive in the global market place.... the language of education as a right - particularly for those who are old, rural and uncompetitive - does not come easily. (Aitchison, 1997:6)

For many years, literacy workers and activists quoted an illiteracy rate of 15 million South African adults. This was challenged by Harley, et al who, while acknowledging that the figure is useful for its shock value, bring the number down to 9 945 802. Of these, 47% are working and 20% are outside the workforce; the largest number living on subsistence (1996: 41-44).

Although the estimates of the number of illiterate adults have decreased, the need for literacy provision is still great. In its multi-year plan for ABET the government says it has learned two important lessons from apartheid: the importance of compulsory, good basic education for the young, and the importance of providing adult basic education "to redress discrimination and past inequalities, of such quality and relevance to equip people for full and active participation in social, economic and political life (Department of Education, 1997:2).

Section 29.(1) of South Africa's constitution states that "Everyone has the right... to a basic education, including adult basic education." (Aitchison, 1997:4). However, Aitchison points out that the central government has not taken the right to adult basic education seriously enough, giving three examples:

- In the national budget announced in Parliament on 12 March 1997, the allocation for ABE increased from R6 million to R13 million. But the ANC's Implementation Plan for Education and Training of 1994 says the minimum startup budget for ABE at the national level would be R132 million.

- In most provinces there are long lists of applications from schools to register as adult centres, with long waiting lists of learners. But the government will not register them because there is not enough money to pay the salaries of teachers and administrators for these centres.

- In a 1997 submission to Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the National Literacy Co-operation (NLC) urged an investigation into the fact that millions of South Africans were deliberately deprived of the right to a basic education during the apartheid years. But it is unlikely that the TRC will do much about the NLC submission because of the restrictive definition of "human rights abuse".

The problem is summed up well by Frost (1996)

> Several reasons explain the lack of follow-through in implementing ABE policy at ground level. The overwhelming amount of policy is not backed by a capacity to deliver. Traditionally, literacy provision in South Africa comprised small, local initiatives - a weak material base for the creation of a national ABE system. Divisive factions existed within the field. Linked to this, the government's budget allocation for ABE was minimal. Nor was the capacity of previous expertise in the field adequately tapped. (Frost 1996:15)

Tuchten and Nong (1996:29) give several reasons for the uncertain future of ABET. They point out that the national government has not been able to provide the resources anticipated or provide sufficient tax or other incentives for industrial ABET. The high expectations of the RDP have not been fulfilled, in spite of ABET being a "presidential lead project". Provincial departments treat ABET as the poor cousin of formal education. Funding to NGOs has been reduced and industry views ABET as an interim project for 3 - 5 years, with many employers (supported by high unemployment figures) admitting they will only hire people with 10 years of formal schooling.

Aitchison (1996:9-13) lays most of the blame at the government's feet. Some of the problematic areas he lists are the lack of political will, lack of capacity to plan, lack of recognition of the need to plan, uncertain funding, inadequate staffing and lack of bureaucratic skills in National Department of Education, lack of capacity and ability to use university and NGO resources, a weak resource base, and lack of imagination.

Aitchison's description of activities in the materials development field illustrates this weakness: He reports that between 1994 and 97 the only work in materials development was done by NGOs in co-operation with publishers. The reason for this inaction was the Department's

"inability to grasp the need for materials and the planning and logistics required to deliver." (1996:13).

1.6.1 Government Initiatives

The Government's multi-year plan (1997) paints quite a different picture. In its description of the development of a curriculum it lists the following achievements:

- The adoption of the *National Adult Basic Education and Training Framework: Interim Guidelines* (Department of Education, 1995) in September 1995, which provides "clear provisional standards and outcomes for learner achievement in two areas of learning."(Directorate of Eduction 1997:24). The areas are in the "fundamental" category, described below, and include Communications and Numeracy/ Mathematics. Drawn up by a working group of the national Stakeholder's Forum (NSF), the guidelines reaffirm proposals by the National Training Board, which in turn are influenced by COSATU's participatory research project, and confirm the view that ABET is a tool for national reconstruction and development and the basic foundation for lifelong learning (Harley, et al, 1996:176).

- The 1996 launch of the Ithuteng (Ready to Learn) Campaign, aimed at improving and increasing provision at ABET Levels 1 and 2. Fifty million rands was allocated for a target population of 10 000 learners per province. This provides an opportunity to test the learning outcomes and level appropriateness for the communication and numeracy curricula in the field.

- The process of refining guidelines and developing learning outcomes in the other two areas of learning: core/contextual and specialisation.

- The Department has driven a number of policy and planning processes, ensuring broad representation across sectors.

1.6.2 ABET Policy and Provision

Current estimates show that 335 481 adults attend ABET classes. Of these, the majority (41.7%) are in company-run classes, followed by state-run classes (28.5%) and NGOs (18.5%). The remainder study in parastatals, municipalities, religious organisations and "others" (Harley et al, 1996:61). But of more relevance to this study are the structures and rules that have been put in place, as a result of policy formation spearheaded by COSATU, the National Training Board and the government.

The government's multi-year plan describes the proposals for a new education system as "a transformation from prescriptive school-centred education to an integrated, outcomes-based, open and accessible lifelong learning approach to education and training for all" (1997:3)

The cornerstone of the transformation is outcomes-based-education (OBE). Instead of the former subject- or content-based education, the new system is based on outcomes, which are a set of measurable things a learner can do after a course of study or training. There are essential outcomes which are common to all subjects or areas of expertise, and specific outcomes for particular skills or contexts (EIC and IEB 1996:10). The focus in OBE is on demonstrating what is learned and what can be done at the end of a course, rather than on teacher activities and other inputs (Mahomed 1997:4).

Some organisations and individuals are critical of outcomes-based-education. Some are disappointed that the dream of "people's education" was never realised practically, and many organisations that did such effective literacy work during the apartheid years have collapsed. Others are worried about its practicability, given the low-skills base of the system, and with the inaccessible way it is presented.

1.6.3 Significant Players in ABET provision:

Tuchten and Nong (1996, p.6/7) describe eleven sub-groupings of ABET providers, including the state, the private sector, NGO/CBO (Non-Governmental Organisations and Community-Based Organisations), parastatal, religious organisations and universities. These providers offer a range of services from direct ABET provision to research, consulting, training,

evaluation, policy formation and standard-setting. Although the providers may not be involved in materials development, they influence the broader policy directions and resource allocation which form the context of ABET materials development. The main materials producers are commercial agencies and NGOs. Some of the most influential bodies in ABET, aside from the government, are described below.

The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA)

Established by an act of parliament in 1995, SAQA held its inaugural board meeting in August 1996 with representatives of national stakeholder bodies such as NGOs, trade unions, providers, business and industry. It is overseen by the Ministries of Education and Labour, with the Ministry of Education having legislative authority. SAQA's principle function is to develop a giant database which will eventually register qualifications in twelve fields of learning. SAQA will also oversee the organisations which develop standards (National Standard-setting Bodies - NSBs) and the bodies responsible for quality assurance (Education and Training Quality Assurers - ETQAs). SAQA will also ensure that unit standards are published which will describe the requirements for a particular areas of learning, including performance outcomes, assessment criteria and range statements. (Department of Education 1997; EIC and IEB, 1996)

> The NQF will close the gap which exists between education and training. At present education is still seen as the area where you gain knowledge. Training is seen as the area of learning where you gain skills. The NQF will join these two areas of learning which were previously separated. This is called integration. (EIC and IEB, 1996:6)

The Independent Examinations Board (IEB)

> The effect of these IEB exams on curriculum has been dramatic. Learners from both rural and urban contexts were eager to try the examinations and the most powerful funder in the field, the Joint Education Trust (JET), made the registration of learners for the examination a condition for project funding. (Harley, et al, 1996: 308)

The Independent Examinations Board is the major player in learner assessment. Although some provincial government departments, such as the Eastern Cape, have decided not to use the exams (personal communication) the majority of ABET programmes which choose to

engage in national examinations use the IEB. As Harley et al (1996) describe, the backwash effect has been significant: Although the IEB has insisted that it will not attempt to prescribe a curriculum, teachers, materials writers and publishers are designing courses to meet the competencies and outcomes set by the IEB.

Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)

Statistics show that 19% of existing ABET classes, 11% of teacher training and 2% of materials development are provided by NGOs (Harley et al, 1996:280), and the majority of ABET NGOs are affiliates of the National Literacy Co-operation, or the NLC. There are 130 affiliates (Bhola, 1996:6), nine provincial offices and a national head office.

The NLC has a love-hate relationship with the new ABET system. While it has made significant efforts to educate affiliates on the system by hosting provincial workshops to introduce standard-setting and unit standards, it has also been critical of "credentialling" (Bhola, 1996:18) and advocates theme-based materials. The organisation has been guided by Professor H.S. Bhola, who has run joint provincial workshops with the NLC and Department of Education Staff on Evaluation in 1996 (Bhola, 1996) and workshops on Training Orientation and Field Action (TOFA) in 1997 (NLC Correspondence).

The NLC has been quite critical of materials currently on the market, many of which are produced by their own affiliates. In an interview with *Masifundisane*, the NLC's Derek Peo described ABET materials as expensive and inappropriate:

> The availability of good materials, which develop integrated or specific learning area outcomes, is key to ensuring that educators have the confidence to teach beyond the requirements of an examination and are able to conduct valid internal assessments, which many have now realised to be an essential component of the teacher-learner encounter. (Peo, interviewed in Ryan, 1997:1)

The NLC plans to remedy this situation by setting up collaborative materials development programmes in each of the provinces to come up with "richer learning programmes which meet peoples' needs more broadly in an integrated way" and to initiate a capacity-building programme for ABET fieldworkers, trainers and project leaders in affiliates and NLC offices.

This has unfortunately become a very top-down process, because the NLC has put more resources into setting up its own administrative systems and programmes than into strengthening existing affiliate work and networking. At this time of funding cutbacks and forced closure, NGOs need all the support they can get. As Aitchison says,

> NGOs, and especially small NGOs and those working with those who have no political clout in society must not expect money or other resources to seek them out. Rural people should not expect community learning centres to mushroom. Unemployed people with limited skills should not expect businessmen seeking to become globally competitive to "waste" resources on them. As in many other countries of the world the underclass is in for an even rougher time. (Aitchison, 1996:14)

Workshops with NGOs in the past (described in chapter 2) showed that there is a great deal of interest and potential for community-based ABET practitioners to train as materials developers. However, there are few resources on a local level for producing those materials. If NGOs are to be involved in materials development training, there would need to be a sponsoring/co-ordinating body, such as the NLC, or a tertiary institution, as described below.

Tertiary Institutions

Harley et al (1996:454) describe three kinds of practitioner training courses: short courses of a week or two, long courses of six months or more, and ad hoc workshops on specific topics. Tertiary institutions (universities and technikons) are the main providers of the long courses. Fourteen institutions are engaged in adult education training: five are at the certificate level, two offer undergraduate diplomas, four post-graduate diplomas and two degree programmes at master's level.

Most of these courses are not specifically aimed at ABET practitioners. There are three exceptions: The USWE-Peninsula Technician 3-year diploma in ABE; the University of Natal's Department of Adult and Community Education's 1-year post-graduate diploma in ABE; and UNISA's 1-year ABET Practitioner Training Certificate. (Harley 1996, Steinberg 1995). The University of Natal diploma includes courses in Materials Development and Media and Resources in Adult Education (CAE 1996). These will be described in section 2.3.6.

These programmes are of particular relevance to this study because working with a tertiary institution could provide a course in materials development with national legitimacy, useful infrastructur and vital mechanisms for accreditation.

Industry

As described above, industry is the largest provider of ABET classes in South Africa. Frost (1996) points out that there are two kinds of pressure on industry to run literacy programmes: high political and economic expectations, placing a social responsibility on companies to educate illiterate workers, and a competitive international market.

> The gap between workplace demands and workforce skills was widening. Industry realised that before it could offer the skills training required to develop its workforce, and thus face the demands of an increasingly technological society and the pressure for world class performance, a basic education foundation needed to be in place. (Frost 1996:15)

Today, industry has a wide range of options when deciding which programme to offer its workers. But the choice was not always so wide. Commercial providers have been servicing industry since 1971, when *Communication in Industry* set up shop (Frost 1996:13). Through the eighties and early nineties others emerged, such as Genmin, Basic Education and Skills for Adults (BESA), Hough and Horne and Continuing Education Project (CEP) which was the first NGO to focus on industry. With increasing pressure to sell their services instead of relying on donors, other NGOs have entered the marketplace. In addition, many private consultants are available to advise on materials, provide teacher training and specialised services.

While industry is a big ABET provider in South Africa, its contribution to education and training more broadly is not so significant on an international level. Most South African companies spend less than one half of a per cent of their total expenditure on in-service education and training, in contrast with European and North American firms which spend an average of six percent (NEPI 1992:14). This excludes parastatals, which spend 4%, and is biased towards large firms: 25% of small firms do no training at all, and 65% of all firms spend less than 2% on training (Department of Labour 1997:9). In its *Green Paper on Skills Development for Economic and Employment Growth in South Africa*, the Department of

Labour is critical of current ABET provision, pointing out that

> Adult Basic Education programmes frequently take place without sufficient link to the competencies required by the context within which adults are learning — from water projects, to housing and community policing. (Department of Labour 1997:10)

In spite of these criticisms, industry has potential as a partner in materials development training. Some companies, such as Eskom (the national electricity commission) and Ingwe mines sponsor innovative courses for their own ABET facilitators, and there is some pressure for big companies to make their facilities available to surrounding communities. Partnerships could involve industry sponsorship of a pilot materials development course for their facilitators, providing facilities or financial support for a training course.

Publishers

Beginning in 1994, NGOs were forced by their funders to go into partnership with commercial publishers (Aitchison, 1996; ELP, 1994). The rationale was that publishers would take on printing and distribution and in some cases production of ABET materials, easing the financial demands on donors. This has meant survival of NGO-developed courses, with mixed results in terms of quality. Commercial publishers have also initiated new ABET courses and developed easy readers for adults. This is described in more detail in chapter two.

Publishers are significant to this study because they have become the major, if not the only source of ABET materials in the country. The commercialisation of ABET materials threatens to increase the gap between employed and unemployed, urban and rural semi-educated and illiterate: Access to materials is limited to those who can pay or have sponsorship.

1.6.4 Education, Training and Development Practitioners (ETDP)

The ETDP Model, formulated by working groups in the National Training Board, identified three main areas of competence: Occupational or subject expertise, contextual understanding (practitioners should have some understanding of society, political and economic issues, and cope with the specific demands of the context in which they operate) and ETD skills, including

an understanding of the broader issues of education, training and development, the ability to manage a learning situation, and competence in different learning and teaching strategies. (Tuchten and Nong, 1996; Harley et al, 1996)

Depending on their level and experience, ETD practitioners would be expected to perform 10 key roles a as practitioner during the course of their work:

1. group learning facilitator
2. individual learning facilitator
3. assessor
4. needs analyst
5. learning experience designer
6. learning materials developer
7. manager
8. administrator
9. strategist
10. evaluator

Tuchten and Nong (1996) did a major consultation and research project to identify the capabilities of a good ETD Practitioner in the field of ABET. The aim of the project was to identify capabilities which distinguish an effective practitioner from an ineffective practitioner, rather than to distinguish between actual and ideal practitioners.

They focussed on the delivery of ABET rather than other activities such as policy and curriculum development, because delivery will provide by far the most employment opportunities for ABET practitioners. They estimated that few job opportunities will be available for "very senior practitioners" compared with tutors/facilitators (workshop documents). In their professional hierarchy, materials developers were put into the very senior practitioner level.

The draft standards prepared for ETD practitioners in 1997 (ABET National Stakeholders Forum, 1997) outline the need to evaluate, choose and use materials well. The next level of qualification requires and ability to develop materials. Unless black teachers are trained in these skills, they will be relegated to carrying out other people's ideas.

Materials development course developers will find several aspects of the ETDP model developed by Tuchton and Nong (1996) useful to consider. First of all, a good materials developer should be able to perform at least six of the roles listed above. Most ABET writers currently in the field have experience as teachers, and this would be ideal for trainees in a materials development course. In terms of National Qualifications Framework (NQF) levels, Tuchten and Nong place materials developers at the very senior levels of ABET practice (NQF Levels 6 and 7). The notion of materials developer as expert parallels hierarchies in other contexts between those who write and those who consume what is written, and is challenged by some of the respondents in this study. I would also include them at the intermediate levels (NQF Levels 5 and 6). Also, course developers will need to incorporate Recognition of Prior Learning, or RPL, into both the intake and assessment stages in a materials development course and take the urgent demand for accreditation seriously. Finally, although ABET educators are not the subject of this study, a similar process for developing capability statements can be used in developing a course and career path such as that proposed in this study for materials developers.

1.6.5 The Field's Receptiveness to a Training Course in ABET Materials Development

From this brief examination of ABET in South Africa, it is difficult to answer the question: Is the ABET scene ripe for a materials development training project in South Africa at this time? Would it support such a course?

At the time of writing, a certificate or a diploma programme in ABET materials writing does not exist, although the Centre for Adult Education at the University of Natal in Pietermaritzburg has a course within its Adult Educator Diploma. South Africans who have been working in the field without formal qualifications are calling for accreditation. If a training programme is set up, it must be linked to SAQA's requirements and provide certificates at the end. If training is going to lead to a career path, it should be recognised by the NQF.

According to Tuchten and Nong, the ABET field does not deserve it's reputation for lack of

cohesion and fragmentation. They found, during the course of their workshops, that practitioners are in touch with each other, and were enthusiastic about working together. So the substructure could be in place. And some of the organisations described above may serve as "homes" for a materials development course. But would such a course be a priority on this terrain? Specifically, would financial and other resources be available? This research will attempt to answer that question.

1.7 Organisation of the Remainder of the Study

In this introductory chapter, the reader was introduced to the research aims, questions, rationale and context of the study. Chapter two explores some of the national and international literature relevant to this study, especially regarding materials development and training. Chapter three describes the research design. The results of the research are described in Chapters four and five: Chapter four records the information gathered and chapter five describes a possible course in materials development. The report concludes with Chapter six, which provides conclusions and recommendations.

1.8 Conclusion

Materials development is a fluid and changing field, trying desperately to keep up with the extremely changeable field of ABET. There are many important debates about the roles and skills of educators and the extent to which experts drive the process. Writing materials is creative and innovative work, but teachers are often left out. This study will help to bring them back into the process.

Chapter Two: The Literature on ABET Materials Writing and Training

2.1 Introduction

Chapter One argued for the need for a training course in materials development, catering especially for previously marginalised ABET practitioners, then gave an overview of ABET in South Africa, including possible partners for materials development training. Such a course would enrich the base of materials available in South Africa (especially in African languages) and build capacity in black communities.

This literature review provides the opportunity to both strengthen the case and ask some critical questions which will inform the development of the training course. It describes the literature which has influenced the development of the training course for materials developers described in Chapter 5.

The first part of the chapter is a description of ABET materials at home and abroad: what they are and how they are developed, with some specific considerations that are relevant to the project. This is followed by more detailed descriptions of six projects, plus a table showing all the materials development projects in the literature. Most of the projects described in this literature review are in developing countries: Nine are in Asia, thirteen in Africa, including eight in South Africa, one in South America, two in North America, and two in the UK. Some of the projects in other developing countries are particularly useful, because they provide models for linking literacy materials to development issues similar to the ones faced by South Africans.

Because the aim of this study is to develop a training course, the final section of the chapter surveys some of the best practice in training and adult education. It draws not only on ABET but on training related to journalism, community development and corporate Human Resources Development (HRD).

2.2 Materials

Bhola (1983:2) says that writing for new literates is an example of "social writing". For him, this means two things: it requires the support of social policy and cannot be left to the market-

place, and it is a social process requiring interactions with policy-makers, planners, content specialists, editors, illustrators and learners. The materials development projects described in this chapter display various aspects of social writing, but most of them are made vulnerable by economic forces and policy changes (Rogers, 1994). This is especially evident in South Africa in 1997. As explained in Chapter One, lack of support from social policy has forced innovative non-profit materials development projects into partnerships with commercial publishers, cut-throat competition with sister organisations, and closure. This is not a favourable environment for this study.

The remainder of this section on materials discusses specific aspects of materials provision and development which are relevant to this study: target groups, purposes, providers, methods of development, language choice, gender issues, evaluation and needs assessment, visual literacy and cost-effectiveness.

2.2.1 Target Groups

The target groups of the materials projects in the literature are adults in literacy or post-literacy programmes, or those who read at that level. In South African terms, this means ABET Levels one to three, which bring a learner to the equivalent of a primary school education. Classes are conducted in either learners' home languages or in a regional language.

Although materials are produced for a wide variety of learners, a lot of the projects pay special attention to women in rural areas, because they make up two-thirds of illiterate adults world-wide, their education has been neglected traditionally and they are seen to play an important role in development (Archer and Cottingham, 1996; Rogers, 1994; PROAP, 1989).

2.2.2 Purposes

Literacy materials are designed to teach adults to read, write, communicate and do mathematics. But what other agendas are involved?

Almost all the materials produced in developing countries focus on development and social n[illegible]s, rather than reading for enjoyment. Many of these projects are sponsored by

UNESCO, which has championed functional literacy for decades. It is likely to promote reading for development (a rather instrumental approach compatible with functionalism) rather than reading for enjoyment. Here are examples from country reports at a UNESCO-sponsored Asian materials development workshop held in Nepal (ACCU /MOEC/PROAP, 1989:61-93):

- In India, materials are produced for rural women covering skills (eg tailoring, embroidery, etc), legal matters, socio-cultural problems (to help women to develop self-confidence, determination, self-help, and move away from passive acceptance), and modern technology.
- In Nepal, it was pointed out that materials should address social issues, but it was also recommended that they consider producing materials for entertainment.
- In Viet Nam, most materials focus on agricultural training and skills building.

The workshop participants went on to produce post-literacy materials for rural women which promoted health messages, such as keeping the kitchen clean and social messages relating to equality within the family.

Another example comes from the Bay of Bengal Project, which serves fisherpeople in the countries surrounding that body of water, producing technical leaflets on fish marketing and distribution, and comic books on participatory management of fisheries, which coincidentally are also used to develop literacy skills (Rogers 1994:31).

In his study of post-literacy materials Rogers (1994:3) found the following goals inspired the production of materials:

- to consolidate and if possible extend literacy skills in order to prevent relapse into illiteracy,
- to promote development messages and skills,
- to participate in political or social life as a critical citizen, alert consumer and aware voter.
- to promote independent learning
- to provide access to, or a second chance at, formal education.

South African organisations have produced their share of materials to promote development and social messages, such as political and health information, with voter education and AIDS being priorities in the last few years. (Lyster, 1995; NLC, 1996).

One purpose that gets little attention in the literature is reading for enjoyment. Easy-reading adult fiction books have been produced extensively in the north (Mace, 1995; Duffin, 1995; East End Literacy, 1986; McGrail, 1990) but none of the literature indicates that it is a priority in developing countries. In contrast, there has been a recent blossoming of enjoyable ABET readers in South Africa, with everything from biographies of popular local musicians (*Kippie Moeketsi*, Viva books, 1995) to love stories (*Take a Chance*, Viva Books, 1995) to detective mysteries (*Mandla Maseko, P.I.*, Sached Books, 1996). In addition to fun, these books and stories are produced with the aim of promoting a reading culture, developing language and literacy skills, and playing a role in developing indigenous languages. (Radebe and Alkenbrack, 1994; Archer and Cottingham, 1996).

In the 1980s, NGOs involved in the struggle against apartheid used literacy classes to educate adults about current political developments and to encourage participation, so the materials they produced tended to focus on political messages. Materials produced today represent an effort to meet a broader range of tastes in reading. In his study of the reading habits of a group of black workers in East Rand factories, French (1988) found that some workers enjoyed "pulp fiction" or cheaply produced novels with popular themes. He describes one of the readers:

> He finds cheap cafe-stall westerns absorbing, sees them as edifying and uplifting in various ways, and delights in his self-image as a discriminating reader of these works. Like the other participants, he describes the printed word as though it were an arena of unproblematic participation, easy access and great benefit for black people; there is no sense that it is a site either of alienation or of struggle. (French 1988:217)

For most of the participants in French's study the most important reasons for reading included:

- to know what is going on around you
- to know what is going on at home (for people far from home)
- to find out how people live in faraway places, be at home with otherness

- to understand history
- the generalised pursuit of knowledge and intelligence, "having a light"
- reading for status — being a somebody
- improving English. (French 1988:186)

The most read publications included newspapers, the Bible, magazines, love stories and mysteries (French 1988:241).

Is South Africa so different from other developing countries in its focus on reading for pleasure? There could be a difference between urban and rural orientation. Books for enjoyment have largely been initiated by urban-based NGOs and publishers, whereas at a series of materials development workshops conducted by ELP in 1991, rural literacy workers indicated that learners were interested in reading about life problems like migrant labour, illiteracy, poverty, transportation, township violence, taxi wars and stories about ordinary people. They also wanted functional materials like road signs and forms (Alkenbrack 1992:3).

Most of the literature indicates that the attitudes of literacy practitioners, rather than learners, determine subject choices. But is this a true reflection of learning or reading desires? Rogers (1994) found that many of the materials development projects he surveyed did very little needs assessment or research into audience interests. This is gone into in more detail in section 2.2.8.

It also may be the case that an improvement in reading level leads to exposure to a broader range of materials, and increased interest in reading for pleasure. Research in India shows that more advanced learners tend to request fiction, while beginners ask for basic information (Rogers 1994).

It could also be the case that we know about the fiction projects in South Africa, and the ones in other countries are simply undocumented. There are three reasons for this suspicion: Firstly, ABET workers are known for being innovative and responsive to interests of learners, but may not have the opportunity to present their work at international fora. Second, most of

the reports available are sponsored by development agencies such as Britain's Overseas Development Agency (ODA) and the United Nation Education, Science and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). Third, promotion and distribution of reading materials is a big problem for small publishers.

While the purposes described above reflect diversity in cultures and physical conditions, they also show a common commitment to the economic and social development of the poorest of the poor.

2.2.3 Providers

There are four broad categories of providers: the state (eg. State Resource Centres in India) local NGOs (Friends in Village Development in Bangladesh or Akanani Rural Development Association in South Africa), universities and international development agencies including UNESCO, ODA, Action Aid in the UK, and the German Foundation for International Development (DSE). South African religious institutions are not mentioned in this literature review, because few produce their own ABET materials.

2.2.4 The Process of Materials Development

This section presents a review of the different approaches to generating and editing text for ABET materials.

LGM: Learner-generated/Locally-generated Material

A lot of attention has been paid to LGM, which can mean either Locally-Generated Materials or Learner-Generated Materials (Fordham, 1995; Rogers, 1994; Bhola, 1983,1994). Such materials can be generated from oral history with individuals or groups (Lyster, 1995; Kyriacou, 1995), or from workshops with learners or with community groups (ELP, 1993; Watson, 1996).

Whether produced by learners or community members, LGM all have some things in common: they are planned, designed and sometimes written locally, in response to local needs. Rogers (1994:6) points out that LGM activities emerge in relation to literacy or development aims

rather than as journalistic or literary ventures, and argues that specialised post-literacy materials projects should only be supported when learners themselves are involved in production. Learner involvement ensures that materials will be culturally appropriate and it provides a major learning process for participants by building confidence, encouraging further learning and developing literacy skills (1994:49). Also notions of authorship, publishing and print materials are demystified through participation in the process. (Duffin 1995:94, Makue et al 1992:26)

Bhola (1994:99) is more critical of LGM, saying it is unreasonable to expect typical community-based literacy workers to produce materials when they tend to be unskilled and there is so much else to do. This points to the need to place materials development within a continuum of skills training: not to take resources away from the development of teaching skills, but to provide the next step in a career path.

Workshops, interviews and oral history techniques have been used to generate texts by several literacy providers in South Africa. These include ELP's production of two easy readers, *Hostel Life* and *I Told Myself I am Going to Learn* with literacy learners (Makue et al 1992), the English and Zulu easy readers produced by the Department of Adult and Community Education' s New Readers Project (NRP) in Durban (Lyster 1995) and Project Literacy's reader development project described in section 2.3.4 (Watson 1996).

Watson says the emphasis on "experientially-driven story generation workshops as a means to achieving relevant and authentic texts assumes that such stories are likely to capture local concerns, images, metaphors and ways of speaking which resonate with adult learners' personal life experiences" (1996:7). However Mace (1995:xi) and Duffin (1995:86) point out that stories written by learners are not always accessible to other learners because learners are more concerned with telling the story than with language level considerations.

Rogers' (1994:6) survey of materials showed that there is much rhetoric about participation in their development, but that this is not always real. There is often a conflict between the encouragement of local voices and the promotion of central messages. The literature shows

that learner participation can vary from helping to choose the topics, for example with the Jamia Millia Islamia in Delhi to participation in subject choice, writing, editing, book design and visuals. (eg. ELP books, Banda materials project).

The product can vary from being intended for local purposes only, such as the REFLECT project which uses only learner-generated materials (Addington, 1994; Archer and Cottingham, 1996; section 2.3.2) to some of the slick and commercially viable readers described in section 2.2.1.

Books written by/with technical experts:

There is often a need for technical information when materials deal with topics such as health, income-generation, or development. However, the experts who can provide this information do not always have the skills to write at a level appropriate to ABET learners. UNESCO solves this problem by bringing them in to writing workshops (Sasaoka 1990:3). In the Centre for Adult Education's New Readers Project, didactic topics such as human rights, AIDS and Voter Education were written by ABET staff in collaboration with experts (Lyster 1995).

Workshops with ABET workers:

Rogers (1994) and Bhola (1983) say writers' workshops with ABET workers, academics and sometimes learners are the most common way to generate materials in developing countries.

The workshops described vary from having a set format that is used in different countries and regions (Rogers 1994, ACCU 1989, Bhola 1983) to one-off workshops designed for a specific group of people (Alkenbrack 1996, Learn and Teach 1994). The international workshops are criticised by Rogers (1994:20) because they are prepared without detailed consideration of what is available in the local region, have a top-down approach, with subjects chosen by writers' groups based on what they believe to be interesting and useful. The texts are sometimes taken to readers for comment after drafting.

These workshops are not common in South Africa, where materials are usually written by individuals or small teams, and increasingly are initiated by commercial publishers. However,

here are three examples where the method has been used:

A two-week writers workshop sponsored by the Learn and Teach literacy NGO brought together participants from ABET NGOs, political groups and community organisations from all over South Africa to produce manuscripts for readers in different South African languages that would then be published by Learn and Teach. Teams were set up to write two manuscripts each. (Learn and Teach, 1994) The workshop resolved to form a network of Southern African materials writers. Sadly, no books have been published, and the network does not seem to have been formed. In fact, the sponsoring organisation has been forced to close down due to lack of funds.

Akanani Rural Development Association initiated a project in 1994 in which a full-time materials developer was recruited from overseas to develop materials in local languages and also to train Akanani tutors in basic materials development. Meeting once a fortnight, they participated in such materials production processes as writing, translating, editing, typing, layout, cutting and pasting (Addington, 1996).

English Literacy Project has facilitated a variety of materials production workshops: a residential workshop for learners to write stories about their experiences of racism (ELP, 1991), a series of workshops with NLC affiliates to produce learner writing (Alkenbrack, 1992), workshops to produce stories for Active Voice (ELP, 1995), and a writers' workshop with the NLC to produce materials on development themes (Alkenbrack, 1996).

Stories generated in Writing Circles:

This is an innovative approach described by Watson (1996). A reader was developed as a result of a workshop conducted by the Zanendaba Storytellers' Group at Akanani. Each participant contributed a sentence or two to a story, resulting in a cluster of disconnected ideas. Participant/writers had to work out the connections, and write a story.

DIY alternatives:

An unusual project described by Bhola (1994) was sponsored by the British Council in Kenya.

Literacy centres were provided with stencil-making machines, duplicators, lettering sets and other supplies. Centres produced their own materials to develop functional skills and publish community oral history.

Another example comes from Papua New Guinea, which is committed to teaching and reinforcing local languages ahead of national languages. However, resources do not allow for publication is all of the 869 local languages. The compromise is a project called Shell materials. A national office produces resource shells, such as posters, graded booklets and games in a national language. Along with those go blank shells, with the same format but with no text. Community literacy workers request resource shells on a certain topic, plus the required number of blank shells. They translate the text from the resource shell into the local language, type or write it onto stencils, print the text onto blank pages using silkscreen printers, and finally fold and collate the new books (Bhola 1994).

Community Publishing

Although community publishing does not necessarily involve ABET programmes, and is written for a wider audience, there are things that we can learn from that movement. Mace puts it like this:

> Participatory literacy education which engages learners in processes of making their reading and writing public.... represents a movement towards a democratisation of a previously elite medium of expression. It is in that sense that this literacy movement has converged with another, deriving from a similar democratic impulse: namely, that of community publishing -- a movement which extends to constituencies of people beyond those defined as literacy learners, who nevertheless share ....(because of other inequalities such as gender, race, disability, class or age) a similar experience of 'busy silence'. The same principles of decentralisation which guided the 'book voyage' (ITFL, 1991) is at the centre of the processes engaged in by groups of hitherto unpublished authors in writing and publishing autobiography, poetry and fiction in the community publishing movement. (1995: x)

Bond-Stewart (undated: 3) describes a community publishing project in Zimbabwe as producing development education books and media collectively and democratically with representatives of the client group involved at all stages with each book. The main focus was building intellectual and creative capabilities of village people. As participants develop more

skills they take increasing responsibility for the project.

The project had a small book team and a wide range of development workers who planned, researched, wrote, tested and distributed materials. The national books involved representatives from all 55 districts of Zimbabwe. There were also nine local book teams of development workers without much formal education, producing books and technical pamphlets.

2.2.5 Who does the writing?

The processes described above could include learners, facilitators, project co-ordinators, academics, subject specialists, technical experts, poets, novelists and community members. My main interest in this area is the extent to which people close to the target group are included in the process.

Most of the literature does not specify whether the participants come from an traditionally oppressed group, although this might be assumed if they are learners or community members. Bhola (1983,1994) seems to favour the engagement of experts, while Rogers criticises even the writers' workshops for having a very top-down approach (1994:20). His research showed that most learner involvement is with shaping the materials, or with pre- or post-testing. Only occasionally are materials entirely written by learners and local groups.

The project at Akanani is an example of a good effort at building capacity among ABET facilitators from within. However, Addington (1996:6) says a weakness of the project was that the tutors were expected to work on a voluntary basis, which limited the amount of time they could put into the project.

It seems that no matter how much grassroots involvement there is (learners, facilitators, local activists) there is always a need for skilled intermediaries, whether they be the national book team in Zimbabwe, the participation of international experts at the ATM workshops described in section 2.3.2, a local NGO that specialises in materials development, or an in-house editor. You can get the voice from the people, but someone needs to polish it up.

ABET Materials specialists can play the role of writing, editing and translating materials or facilitating writers' workshops. They may also need to provide help with writing in plain language, which is difficult even in one's own language. In a second language, it requires a lot of training and practice. Although materials specialists may be skilled in designing materials, they may not have the knowledge of local conditions or languages (Watson, 1995; Kyriacou, 1996). This points to the need for partnerships. However, tensions can arise when there is a difference of opinion about whose expertise is more important, and who has final control over the product.

2.2.6 Language choices

Watson (1996:15) reports on the problem of having a monolingual English-speaking facilitator at writer's workshops, and points out that this is a consequence of South Africa's apartheid language policy which discouraged whites from learning African languages.

The international literature reflects debates in the literacy world about whether to publish and teach in local, regional or international languages. There is little debate about the fact that adults learn initial literacy best in their own language (Fordham, 1995; Rogers, 1994; Bhola, 1994; Archer and Cottingham, 1996). But the question is, should learners move on to another language, and if so, when?

Fordham (1995) says the choice of which language to publish in depends on what tasks a community wants to achieve in the short term; what programmes they may want to move on to later; why people want literacy, which is related to where they live or work (for example, if they have lots of access to newspapers, English TV, etc); what materials are available; financial resources; national policy; and the status of the language in question.

It is disturbing when the speakers of a local or regional language internalise the attitude that their language has a low status. For example, research done by two ABET newspaper supplements, *Learn with Echo* and *Active Voice* showed that, though new readers might find their home language easier to read, they preferred to read a newspaper or magazine in English

(Rogers 1994, Radebe and Alkenbrack 1994). In Mozambique, where all adult literacy programmes were carried out in Portuguese, in the interests of national unity, learners were not even aware that it would be possible to read in one's own language (Marshall 1991:291).

Resistance to learning in one's own language can also be a sign of realism. When working with a community oral history project, Kyriacou (1995:175) was determined that the group would record people speaking in their mother tongue. But some people thought this was insulting as they had been learning and speaking English for a long time. Authors of the REFLECT approach recommend that choice of language be left up to the participants in a local literacy circle. This is possible, since there is no printed primer, but the facilitator would need to understand the language of the facilitator's manual. The authors also stress that language choices should be the subject of extensive prior consultation (Archer and Cottingham, 1996:27)

Another type of local language that should be considered is non-standard English. For example, Harris (1995) found it useful to use Jamaican English with learners in the UK. In South Africa, Watson (1996) supports the use of non-standard English, as it is more authentic and challenges the reader. An example would be Tsotsitaal, the urban township dialect that incorporates many of the locally spoken languages, or simply slang expressions, which have been quite effectively used in the Storyteller comics.

Publishing in local languages will promote them, and possibly diminish the terrifying threat that 50% of the world's languages will die when the current speakers die (Fordham, 1995:33; Archer and Cottingham, 1996:49).

It makes sense that, for beginner readers, language should be as close to the readers as possible. But as learners advance, they can be exposed to a greater variety of language, such as different dialects of English or Zulu. As Bhola says, "literacy should not doom the learner to a localite existence", but assist them to join the mainstream of politics and economy (1983B:214). Similarly, Archer and Cottingham point out: "We cannot justify imposing an unwritten language if participants are not interested and want to access the language of power" (1996:49).

" (1996:49).

In an ideal educational system, publishing would be encouraged in both local and international languages. However, in South Africa and many other countries, publishing is a commercial enterprise and thus dominated by constraints of the marketplace.

2.2.7 Gender Considerations

Archer and Cottingham (1996:16) point out that targeting literacy programmes at women is a relatively recent development, despite the fact that they form two-thirds of the world's adult illiterates. Policy-makers are becoming more interested, as they have come to realise the key role womens' literacy plays in national development.

Archer and Cottingham (1996:16) describe two approaches to literacy for women. One focuses on their Practical Gender Needs, which strengthen women in their performance of existing roles. The second is a focus on Strategic Gender Needs, which assist women to challenge traditional roles. Some programmes, including REFLECT, combine the two, starting with everyday problems and moving to challenging some of the causes of the problems if participants wish to do so. The combination of approaches recognises that women are subordinate to men in most societies, but that both men and women benefit from a more equitable balance in gender relations.

Rockhill (1993:166) says there is a strong feminist critique of the lifeskills orientation of most literacy programmes, and yet she also points out that women do most of the literacy-related tasks for the family. Interestingly, in the Latino community where she worked in the US, men related mostly to spoken English, while women related to the written word. She points out that this is related to the silencing of women and their confinement to domestic spheres.

Materials developers can learn from feminist educators in other parts of the world. Like them, we can provide positive yet realistic models of women, consider women's ways of learning and put women's issues and women's needs front and centre in the materials we write.

2.2.8 Evaluation and Needs Assessment

The importance of evaluation and needs assessment during the materials development process cannot be underestimated. As McGrail says:

> Using materials that are based on students' needs not only ensures a high level of interest and motivation but can also serve to reaffirm a student's culture and experience. Appropriateness, thus, is more than just language level; it is choosing and using materials that do not diminish the adult's experience or cultural self. (McGrail, 1994: 41)

But Rogers found that there were an amazing number of projects that overlooked this, paying lip-service to the audiences they were meant to reach:

> Except for Storyteller and *Learn with Echo* in South Africa, relatively little real attention is paid to the end-users beyond ensuring that the language and illustrations are culturally correct. International or national standardised languages are used in the workshops and materials may or may not be translated into local languages or adapted for local usages. (1994:2)

Similarly, at the PROAP regional writers workshop in Nepal, it was reported that, "by and large, needs are determined by professionals, with no needs-assessment or study of reading habits." (ACCU/PROAP, 1989: 93)

However, these writers may be overlooking the difficulty of getting useful feedback from low-level literacy learners and their facilitators. When she did reader surveys for the New Readers Project in Natal, Lyster (1995:3) found that consulting learners and facilitators was not very useful. New readers were not able to make suggestions without direct experience of what is possible and facilitators suggested familiar topics or said 'anything will be useful'.

In spite of this, the New Readers Project had a fairly detailed consultation process in book development: They produced a first draft of each book with no illustrations, and tested it with learners in three different settings. Then it was modified, illustrated and tested with learners again. Only then was the final draft prepared.

Rogers' report came out before the REFLECT approach hit the literacy world. Their "Mother Manual" (Archer and Cottingham 1996) stipulates that a community needs assessment is an integral part of any programme, because each facilitator's manual is developed locally, and

learning units are designed to address local issues and literacy needs. Also, learners are involved in all aspects of programme development, including decisions about what language will be used and who the facilitators will be.

Watson (1996: 26) describes the following process in getting input from learners:

1. Give the story out to learners to read ahead of time.
2. Reading aloud in class.
3. Learners identify difficult words and phrases after each page.
4. Facilitator provides definitions of above from the context of story.
5. Re-read the story.
6. Conduct a learner-led discussion on topics of interest, conflict and concern.

She found that learners were able to identify problem areas in the materials, but not to suggest changes. For her, this confirmed the necessity of a story consultant, as described in section 2.3.4.

2.2.9 Visual Literacy/Artwork

In ELP materials and elsewhere, visuals such as photos and illustrations provide three functions: to promote positive images of learners, as adults, workers, or learners; to assist them to make meaning from print; and to make the whole book more pleasing and accessible by cutting down the amount of print on a page. This is reinforced in the literature, but another issue arises, especially for rural ABET learners. That is that some learners need to be introduced to images and taught to interpret them, just like words.

Fordham (1995), Rogers(1994) and Archer/Cottingham (1996:15) caution that we must not assume that people without literacy skills will understand pictures or photos. This may be true of people in urban areas, but not necessarily villages. Where visual materials are locally generated using indigenous conventions comprehension is not a problem. But where imported, viewing/reading strategies will have to be learned, and need an intermediary.

Fordham (1995:81) explains that reading pictures involves understanding:

- that the marks on the paper represent something which is probably much larger than the image.
- that pictures tend to translate shape into two dimensions.
- that, while writing is read in a pre-determined direction, (right to left, left to right or top to bottom) pictures are read by looking at the whole image at once.

Village people gain their knowledge of things by handling, creating or looking at actual objects. So a picture that does not look exactly like what they know may not be recognised. For example, when IDASA researched their visuals for voter education in 1994, they found that rural people did not relate to a disembodied hand making an "x" on a ballot. The picture needed to include the whole person. On the other hand, the Storyteller Group found that urban readers who are familiar with TV, signs, and other visual messages, can understand their comic book styles (Rogers 1994:37).

Just as learners need training in reading visual information, facilitators need training in how to choose and design the visuals. Like the learners, they often have had limited experience with different kinds of publications, and have seldom been asked their opinion about how the design of a book affects its' usefulness. Developing these skills can take a long time (Alkenbrack, 1992:4).

2.2.10 Cost-effectiveness

Rogers (1994:25) found that LGM projects are especially susceptible to problems of sustainability, and most have distribution problems. This is also the experience of projects in South Africa. Between 1993 and 1996, publications such as *Speak!*, *Active Voice* and *Learn and Teach* were forced to close shop. As donor dollars became harder to come by, they tried to go the commercial route. But it was hard to convince advertisers to invest because their readership was relatively small and the readers' incomes were low. Rogers says that LGM materials can never be cheap unless their production quality is very low, which is unacceptable, and they will never be self-supporting. He urges countries to find a balance between large-scale campaigns and LGM approaches. National programmes should create a climate where LGM can flourish.

This does not bode well for LGM projects in South Africa, unless publishers could be persuaded of their commercial viability, or they could be linked to national outcomes. These prerequisites are likely to conflict with local needs and interests.

2.2.11 Lessons

The literature on materials has revealed a wide range of possibilities regarding the types of materials that can be produced, the processes and important considerations such as language choice, gender considerations, quality control, visual literacy and cost effectiveness. While it would be ideal to expose trainees to all types of materials and processes, there are practical issues that need to be considered.

For example, the type of materials we choose to produce as part of a training project must be useful in the real world, so we need to look at the needs and interests of the learners we choose as our target group, take account of national demands for standardisation, and find a balance between development goals and reading for pleasure. Also, it is clear from the literature that some kinds of materials are more complicated to produce than others, and may need to be tackled later in the training course or not at all, depending on skill level of the trainees.

Exposure to types of materials and processes will also be dependent on time and resources. It is clear that short, one-off workshops are not acceptable, yet there might not be time or money for extremely long courses. It is important for trainees to leave the course with hard skills and the confidence to go forward in the materials development field, so it may be more useful to give them lengthy experience to one or two kinds of materials than a smattering of all of them

The question of "Who does the writing?" gets us back to our central question of power relationships within the materials development process. The literature shows that approaches range from total control by learners and community members to total control by experts. The training course will need to find a balance between giving trainees real power and a meaningful learning experience, at the same time producing high-quality materials. In the process trainees should gain an appreciation of the importance of quality and the knowledge and skills that can

2.3 Case Studies

This section describes six projects which demonstrate practical applications of some of the themes described above. These particular case studies were chosen because they represent a range of contexts and approaches to materials development and capacity building.

The first three case studies are projects initiated by international development agencies, and applied in several different countries. They were chosen as potential models which combine materials development and capacity-building. The following three South African examples provide both useful models, and potential partners in a materials development training course.

One caution to the reader is that most of the descriptions are based on reports and evaluations produced by the projects themselves, so they may be less critical than evaluations conducted by external agents. For example, the report on *Active Voice* is largely based on the writer's personal experience with the project. An exception to this is a particularly useful report by Rogers (1994) which surveyed post-literacy materials throughout the developing world. Rogers was both critical and supportive of the projects he visited, resulting in balanced analytical descriptions.

To put these case studies in context, a table of all projects reviewed in this section is provided on the following page (Figure 2.1). This is followed by the case studies, and following that, section 2.3.7 provides lessons from the case studies.

Figure 2.1: All projects reviewed

Name and Place	Kind of Materials	How Produced	Training Included?
Tamil Nadu State Resource Centre Madras, INDIA.	Various	Workshops with experts and educators	Yes.
Learn with Echo, Centre for Adult Education, Pietermaritzburg, SA	ABET newspaper supplement in English and Zulu with lessons in communication, numeracy and development issues, plus a regular cartoon feature and a page for parents and children.	Developed by staff at the CAE in co-operation with a local newspaper.	trainee writers
Bay of Bengal Programme (BOBP) - Danida Literacy Programme, INDIA	Development-oriented literacy materials for fisherfolk. Also technical leaflets and a comic book.	Carefully planned, piloted and pre-tested. Composed by experienced communicator, subject matter explained by expert. Written in English, translated into literary Tamil and Telugu. Illustrations adapted for different cultural groups.	?
Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI), Delhi, INDIA	Primers, magazine, books, films, songs, plays, playing cards, and agricultural materials.	Subjects chosen with learners and educators. Written at university	yes
Chittoor Total Literacy Campaign:	Neo-literacy newspaper.	Produced by a local printer using computer powered by generator. Subjects come from different sources, including readers.	one training course attended
The Action Training Model: DSE Writing Workshops for Post-Literacy in KENYA, BOTSWANA, ZAMBIA.	various	see section 2.3.2	Yes.

PROAP: UNESCO principal regional office for Asia and the Pacific.	Carefully structured competency-based course and follow-up books.	see section 2.3.3	Yes
Banda Materials Production Project, INDIA	Newsletter for women in pump-maintenance programme.	Produced at workshops with neo literate women plus supervisor	Yes
Storytellers, Johannesburg, S.A.	Educational comics	Written by mixed teams of black and white writers and illustrators, with extensive research to record as many voices in local language forms. Workshops held in townships, with participants acting out themes.	trainee writers
Sharnet, Umgeni Nature Reserve, SA	Materials on disk which other organisations can rework to reflect own situation.	A networking organisation, encouraging resource development by teachers groups and local communities.	?
Friends in Village Development (FIVDB), Sylhet, BANGLADESH	Cultural materials for functional literacy.	National writing workshops for staff and submissions to competitions.	?
Mother's Reading Programme, NYC, USA	Autobiographies, family histories, etc.	Groups of Black, Hispanic, Chinese and Vietnamese women develop their own reading materials for use in literacy classes.	?
British Council project in Kenya	various	Materials made at literacy centres using stencil-making machines, duplicators, lettering sets and other supplies distributed by British Council.	?

Shell books, Papua New Guinea	1. Resource shells (posters, graded booklets and games in a national language). 2. Blank shells. Same thing, but with no text.	Community literacy worker requests resource shells on a certain topic, plus required number of blank shells. Text is translated from resource shell into local language, typed of written onto stencils, and printed onto blank shells using silk screen printers.	?
Active Voice	Bi-weekly newspaper for adults	see section 2.3.5	Yes
ELP Readers	Easy English readers, based on stories by learners or written by staff	produced in-house by ELP staff	no, but some trainee writers involved.
New Readers Project, Department of Adult and Community Education, University of Natal, Durban, SA.	Easy readers in many South African languages with both development themes and stories for enjoyment.	Produced by staff in close consultation with ABET teachers and other user groups.	?
Akanani Development Project, Shirley, Northern Province, SA	Course books and readers in English, Isitsonga and Xivenda.	Produced by a team consisting of a British co-operant and six local ABET facilitators	Yes, in the form of ongoing workshops and on-the-job training for the team of facilitators.
Easy Reading Association, Johannesburg, SA.	ERA sponsored a project to produce easy readers in African languages, with extra support given to marginalised languages, such as Isitsonga, Isindebele and Xivenda.	ERA's role is to promote easy readers for adults by raising funds, setting up partnerships with NGOs and publishers, and distributing the finished books.	?
REFLEC	see section 2.3.1	see section 2.3.1	
Project Literacy's readers: Pretoria, SA.	see section 2.3.4	see section 2.3.4	

2.3.1 REFLECT: Regenerating Freirian Literacy Through Empowering Community Techniques.

Organisation and location:
REFLECT was designed by the UK-based ACTIONAID. Pilots have been conducted in Uganda, El Salvador and Bangladesh. Some South African ABET workers have attended workshops and are planning to start the programme here.

Approach:
As the name indicates, REFLECT is based on the theories of Paulo Freire (1973), but also claims allegiance with Street's (1984) ideological model of literacy. It is concerned with issues in Gender and Development (GAD) and borrows activities designed for Participatory Rural Appraisal. It rejects the use of published materials, even the type developed by Freire, claiming that they are too prescriptive, reinforcing the banking approach to education.

Type of Materials:
The approach uses a variation on Freire's "codification", which they see as a way to help learners analyse their situation. The only printed material is a local facilitators' manual which gives guidelines on how each literacy circle can produce its own materials. Each unit starts with the construction of a graphic, such as a map, a chart, a flow diagram or a calendar. The process of constructing the graphic is more important than the finished product, because there is a lot of discussion, and facilitators are able to take a back seat. Participants construct the diagram on the ground, and it is later transferred to paper and copied into their books. This leads to the writing of single generative words, and finally meaningful texts by the learners.

Process of production:
The graphics and texts are produced by learners and their facilitator. It is believed that this method makes dialogue easier to facilitate for ordinary village people than the Freirian model which usually involves a picture and generative word.

The local facilitators manual is produced by a team of trainers who design the units for literacy circles as part of their training course after extensive community survey. In Uganda, the local language had never been written before, so part of the process was to write the language, with the help of speakers who were literate in other languages.

Comments:
This seems to be an exciting new development, and the pilot projects have had positive results in their evaluations. Addington (1996:6) is enthusiastic about the possibilities for its use in rural South Africa. Although the Mother Manual provides advice on adaptation to an urban situation, I think it would be difficult to make this work in the situations I am familiar with, because learners often come from diverse communities. But is that a problem, given that the majority of materials on the market at the moment tend to have an urban focus? My main concern is that this approach would require a fairly skilled facilitator, although the authors maintain that the facilitator's education level is not important, and a primary education is sufficient (page 66). It also requires a lot of work, with extensive community surveys, production of local manuals, development of additional reading materials and detailed monitoring and evaluation and facilitator training. Co-ordinators and Trainers would need to be extremely dedicated and skilled.

The Uganda situation, which used a local language, has its problems, in that one would indeed be "condemning learners to a localite existence" (Bhola 1993B: 214). REFLECT acknowledges this problem, and says that a lot of work needs to be done to develop additional reading materials such as newspapers, and involving the wider community in the process.

2.3.2 The Action Training Model (ATM)

Organisation and Location:
This approach to materials development was also initiated by an outside group, in this case the DSE from Germany. It was originated by Joseph Muller of DSE and H.S. Bhola (Rogers 1994:21). Applications in Kenya, Botswana and Zambia are reported on.

Approach:
Residential workshops on various aspects of materials production are conducted with staff, alternating with periods of time back at their projects to implement what they have learned.

Type of Materials:
Most of the materials coming out of the workshops were post-literacy. For example, the aim of the Botswana workshop was "to produce manuscripts on cultural and development themes." (DSE/ Botswana Ministry of Education: 1984).

Process of Production:
Participants in the workshops are usually literacy tutors, field staff, ministry officials, and sometimes technical experts. The process lasts for about a year. Participants are asked to do considerable preparation ahead of time. For example, in Botswana, participants were asked to survey learners, extension workers, local leaders, NGO's, etc. to find out what new readers should read to improve their understanding, reading and writing skills, knowledge, and get fully integrated into developing society and emerging literate environment (Bhola, 1993; Rogers, 1994)

Then the workshops begin. In Kenya, the process went like this: In the first workshop, participants were trained in manuscript production. Drafts were produced and taken home. Next, they received training in pre-testing, followed by testing of drafts in the field for 4 months. In the third workshop, they finalised the materials. The products were 10 booklets in KiSwahili.

Comments:
This process is similar to UNESCO's PROAP model (see 2.3.4), but it depends on participants working in their own location. Trainees are sent by their organisations and the whole process is overseen by a committee which is representative of various stakeholder groups (Bhola 1983A). Such a system assumes that capacity exists in the home organisation to support the trainee and give him/her space to practice what was learned.

A problem identified in Kenya was that, while the DSE provides training, it does not support printing and production. The government did not follow-up by publishing the books. This could be due to lack of resources, but more likely due to lack of skilled, motivated staff to take it forward. In response to the government's poor performance, a pressure group was set up, the Kenya Adult Learners' Association (KALA) (Rogers 1994:29).

2.3.3 PROAP: UNESCO's Principal Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific.

Location:
Joint regional workshops are organised by PROAP and the host country, with up to fourteen countries from the Asia and Pacific region participating. Examples are given of workshops held in Japan and Nepal.

Approach:
The purpose of the workshops is to prepare literacy and follow-up books over a two-week period which can be used in all the participating countries.

Type of Materials:
PROAP produces a whole range of materials as part of a carefully-structured competency-based course which takes people from illiteracy through semi-literacy to newly acquired literacy (neo-literacy). Almost all materials, including initial primers, post-lit readers and training manuals, are prepared at workshops.

Process:
The example given here is a workshop in Nepal to produce post-literacy materials for rural women. It was a ten-day residential workshop. Workshops on different themes would be held in other host countries throughout the year. The topic was decided in advance. Each participant arrived with report on the literacy situation in her country. The process of materials development went like this: Three groups were formed (a booklet group, a poster and game group and an audio visual group). They went to different villages for field study, and identified and prioritised needs and problems using the New Participatory method. This an adaptation of Participatory Rural Appraisal.

Each group prepared and conducted a field survey, identified, analysed and prioritised needs and problems, analysed needs and problems, then selected themes to address priorities. They wrote drafts using a set format, then translated the draft into local languages and field tested the draft materials in the village where the initial survey was conducted. Revisions were made and the materials were ready to take back home. In addition to this, they field-tested and revised materials prepared in previous workshops.

National follow-up activities included national workshops like this one, and mass production of the materials for local use, sometimes with translation or adaptation.

Comments:
Feedback on the materials has not always been good. They have been criticised for lack of cultural sensitivity, too much stress on a graded approach, a top-down approach, heavy messages, inadequate needs assessment, and the fact that little is done to promote writing.

This is not surprising, considering the amount of work that is demanded of participants over the ten-day period. There seems to be more stress on preparing instruments for field-study than on taking time to develop quality materials. This demonstrates the conflict between meeting local needs and centrally-produced technical messages. (Rogers 1994). It is problematic to put so many resources into materials that aim to meet the needs of fourteen countries in such a short time. However, as a training and networking vehicle, it has potential as a model to learn from.

2.3.4 Project Literacy's Easy Readers

Organisation and Location:
Project Literacy is an NGO located in Pretoria, which works nationally. One aspect of their wide programme of work is materials production.

Approach and Materials:
Prolit embarked on a project to develop a series of easy-to-read books in all South African languages, generating stories with learner or community groups. In her 1996 report on the project, Watson explains:

> The emphasis on experientially-driven story generation workshops as a means to achieving relevant and authentic texts assumes that such stories are likely to capture local concerns, images, metaphors and ways of speaking which resonate with adult learners' personal life experiences. (Watson 1996:7)

Process of Production:
Prolit advertised for writers in a weekly newspaper. They choose writers based on sample writings submitted, looking for unstilted, free flowing expression, unpatronising tone, an ear for the spoken idiom of the English language in all its South African varieties, a sense of humour and a sense of narrative cohesion and story development (Watson 1996:7). There is no mention in Watson's report of choosing writers based on race group, but she does point out that advertising only in the Mail and Guardian was problematic, since it has a mostly white readership.(Watson 1996: 2,6)

Most of the processes described in section 2.2.4 were used to generate text for the readers. There was a strong emphasis on recording the voices of people close to the readership. Developing visuals was also a participatory process for some of the readers: Art workshops were held to create images for five of the readers. In some cases, the writer did picture research beforehand to serve as a guide to the artist.

During the editing process, there was a great deal of collaboration between editors and writers and between editors. in some cases, mentorships were set up. The stories were also evaluated by learner groups.

Comments:
In reporting on this project, Watson makes some observations and recommendations which are useful for this research. For example, she observed that it was useful to have group facilitators, in addition to writers, at the workshops. The writer can listen and observe, and later share ideas with the facilitator. But since it is important to use the language participants are most comfortable with facilitators should be familiar with those languages. Sometimes, having a monolingual facilitator was a problem

A co-authorship arrangement between a writer and a potential writer is recommended (p. 18) because it promotes a more diverse authorship, involves the 'subjects' in the production of the story, and develops writing talent. Watson confirms the problem described in section 2.2.5, where there was sometimes a conflict between editors, who know about accessible writing, and authors, who may have more knowledge of culture.

Some writers objected to giving the copyright to Prolit. As one writer said, it was disheartening when writers are treated like contract workers, with no benefits. (Watson 1996:21)

2.3.5 Active Voice

Organisation and Location:
Active Voice was a project of the English Literacy Project, an NGO in Johannesburg which specialises in materials production.

Type of Materials:
Active Voice was a four-page easy English ABET newspaper supplement distributed fortnightly through literacy classes and community newspapers. It contained information on current issues, communications and numeracy lessons and stories by learners and readers. An initiative to publish in African languages was abandoned when the project was forced to close down due to lack of funds.

Approach:
ELP has facilitated a variety of materials production workshops; for example, a residential workshop for learners to write stories about their experiences of racism (ELP 1991) and a series of workshops with NLC affiliates to produce learner writing (Alkenbrack, 1992).

In 1994 the *Active Voice* team initiated a project to produce editions of the newspaper in African languages, by working with ABET workers in rural areas. The purpose was two-fold: to begin to develop materials development capacity in areas that are normally limited to receiving books written in the city; and to help alleviate the shortage of ABET materials in African languages.

Process:
The workshops lasted two to five days. The training component was designed to introduce ABET facilitators to the basics of book production, clear language and design. The production component focused on writing and editing stories in African languages suitable for *Active Voice*. Final production was done at ELP offices, with drafts faxed to participants for approval. A pilot workshop was conducted with teachers at Akanani Rural Development Association in Northern Province. The result is *Rito Ra Vutlari*, a Tsonga edition.

Comments:
The main learning from this process was that short-term workshops are the tip of an iceberg. For true capacity-building to take place, a long, sustained process must be set in place. Also, as Addington (1996:3) points out, trainees must have financial support if they are to give the attention needed to produce materials and develop their skills.

The *Active Voice* experience is in keeping with Roger's finding that educational newspapers are usually short-lived and that LGM projects in general are vulnerable (1994: 4. 25). Compared to other projects, staying alive for ten years was an accomplishment.

2.3.6 The Centre for Adult Education's Diploma in Adult Education

Organisation and Location:
The University of Natal has two campuses, in Durban and Pietermaritzburg. The Durban campus has the Department of Adult and Community Education, and the Centre for Adult Education is in Pietermaritzburg. Both offer a Diploma in Adult Education. Here we examine two courses offered as part of the Diploma at the Centre for Adult Education.

Description of Course:
There are two courses relevant to this study: "Media and Resources in Adult Education" and "Materials Development". Both form part of the post-graduate Diploma in Adult Education. They are divided into units for home study as well as face-to-face sessions and tutor support. The first course is divided into eight units which introduce students to a wide range of materials, including print, audio-visual and computer-based, and gives a good grounding in theoretical and practical aspects of media, including use, selection, production and evaluation.

The Materials Development course goes more deeply into the theory and technology of materials writing. The curriculum consists of four units: a short introduction to the course, a lengthy unit on print materials, a short unit on videos, and a long unit on non-electronic participatory materials such as cards, posters and flexi flans. The topics in the print materials unit include: a detailed section on reading theory, the steps in print production, technological aspects of design and layout, writing considerations (including a theoretical and practical discussion of readability), illustrations and visual literacy, and evaluating print materials.

In both courses, assessment is based on several short and one long assignment as well as an open-book exam. Candidates are encouraged to produce their own materials and have the option of producing an audio-visual presentation for their long assignment.

Comments:
On first glance, it seems that this course is already meeting the need this study aims to address. However, a closer look shows that, because these are single courses within a wider range of skills developed by an adult educator, it does not provide as much practice as this study envisages. It would serve as an excellent introduction, along with practical experience in the classroom, to a materials development diploma or certificate. Trainees who have undergone this course would receive recognition of prior learning and would be given credit for some aspects of the training in a materials development course.

2.3.7 Lessons from the Case Studies

The case studies offer a variety of approaches to materials development. They include REFLECT's grassroots approach to learner-generated materials, Prolit's readers developed in community workshops and the learner newspaper, *Active Voice*. Training approaches vary from PROAP and ATM international collaborations on practical workshops to the CAE's sound theoretical and practical base. All have lessons to teach.

While I do not agree with REFLECT's rejection of published materials, their political content and approach to learner-generated materials offer exciting possibilities. Trainees would benefit from exposure to this approach, possibly finding ways to incorporate some REFLECT techniques and principles into more mainstream publishing. Prolit's approach also features community input, but the results are published readers. Their detailed documentation of the development process including problems and successes, has provided a rich source of ideas for process and content.

Although the *Active Voice* project is closed, a newspaper would provide an excellent vehicle for a beginning writer to practice her skills, because it comes out so regularly, and features short stories and lessons. Other newspapers, such as CAE's *Learn with Echo* or the NLC's *Tswelopele* could provide such a vehicle, or a new ABET newspaper could be launched as part of the training project.

The Action Training Model, which alternates workshops with on-the-job practice offers an ideal model for trainees employed in ABET organisations. PROAP's top-down approach is more problematic, because it is too rushed, producing highly graded materials which often lack relevance in the home countries. However, the idea of regional collaboration has distinct possibilities for Southern Africa. For example, a system of regular sharing of ABET materials, skills and training ideas through correspondence and workshops would be extremely valuable. The Diploma at CAE provides a useful model for curriculum content, particularly the attention paid to reading theory. It also provides the possibility of trainees who have general academic training in ABET, and want to specialise by participating in a course on materials development.

2.4. Training

This section identifies some of the best practice developed in training and adult education courses in different sectors. Through this exploration, I hope to answer the question: *What can be learned from the theory and experience in adult education, training and Human Resources Development (HRD) which can guide the development of a training course for black materials writiers?*

"Training" in this section refers specifically to training professionals, not ABET learners. This needs to be said because there is some confusion about terminology in the ABET field. When labelling the people who teach learners, companies often refer to "trainers", while most other sectors talk about facilitators, tutors, or teachers. Brinkerhoff (1987:10) says that Human Resources Development (HRD) is considered to be "training" when its primary purpose is to improve current job performance, as "education" when its primary purpose is to help personnel advance to a different job, or as "development" when it aims to strengthen the organisation through benefiting individuals of organisational units. According to this description, we are looking at development.

To begin, it is useful to look at overarching principles of adult education, and who better to give these than Malcolm Knowles (1983), one of the fathers of adult education. Knowles' ideas still hold weight today: he urges us to think of education not as the transmittal of what is known, but as a lifelong process of discovering knowledge, particularly in light of the fact that what we learn at 21 could be obsolete by the time we are 40. As a materials developer who got into the business before the days of desk-top publishing, I relate strongly to this statement. Knowles' assumptions of Andragogy (a term coined by Knowles which means teaching adults, as opposed to Pedagogy, which refers to children) have become second nature to many ABET practitioners, but it is still useful to be reminded of them for the purposes of the proposed materials development training course.

> These assumptions are that, as a person matures, 1) his self-concept moves from one of being a dependent personality toward one of being self-directed human being; 2) he accumulates a growing reservoir of experience that becomes an increasing resource for learning; 3) his readiness to learn becomes oriented increasingly to the developmental tasks of his social roles; and 4) his time and

perspective changes from one of postponed application of knowledge to immediacy of application, and accordingly his orientation toward learning shifts from one of subject-centredness to one of problem-centredness.(Knowles 1983:55)

2.4.1 Training Considerations

In deciding what kind of programme to offer, there are several things to consider. Brinkerhoff (1987:28) suggests asking the following questions: What kind of HRD might work best? Is design A better than design B? What is wrong with design C? Is the selected design good enough to implement? He also lists the following criteria for good programme design (1987:85):

1. The design must be clear and explicitly defined and communicated.
2. It must be theoretically sound.
3. It must be compatible with: the culture of the organisation, existing programmes and priorities, the trainees' educational level, values and expectations, work demands and personal practices.
4. It must be practical and cost-effective
5. It must be responsive to the needs of the organisation, the trainees and the field.
6. It must be superior to alternatives
7. It must be consistent with adult learning practices "Programme designs should reflect state-of-the-art practice when possible and should certainly avoid obsolete or outmoded methods (1987:89).
8. It must be legally and ethically sound.

To be consistent with adult learning principles, Ouane et al (1990:31) suggest that a training course must do the following:

- promote active participation in all aspects of training
- be based on participants' experience
- provide mutual learning opportunities through sharing
- emphasise learning how to learn
- involve learning by doing
- provide exposure to field situation

- integrate theory and practice
- provide a variety of methods
- encourage reflection on and systematisation and evaluation of training processes.
- be personally satisfying.

This is similar to Knowles (1983:62), who says the technological implications of his andragogical assumptions are that the following should be emphasised in adult education: techniques which tap adults' experience, experiential learning, practical applications, an "unfreezing" activity which encourages adults to look at themselves objectively and free their minds of pre-conceptions.

2.4.2 The Structure of a Training Course

In a 1994 survey done of training and capacity-building programmes in the Johannesburg area, Alkenbrack (1994) found two options that could be drawn on: The *Mail and Guardian's* Southern Africa Newspaper Education Trust (SANET) and The Other Press Service (TOPS) offered on-site training courses for journalists or media workers, while the Community-Based Development Programme (CBDP) offered a block release programme similar to Action Training Model (ATM) described above. In an effort to ensure commitment and support for the trainee when s/he came back to work, CBDP required that the organisation pay for the trainee's salary while he/she was attending the course, and also that an organisational representative keep in close contact with CBDP during the course and between sessions. This would help to alleviate the problem identified by ATM regarding supervising trainees in the field.

If support in the field does not exist, a straight course approach might be more effective. In some cases, the trainee will be the first person in an organisation to learn how to develop materials.

Another model to consider is distance education. Ouane et al (1990) say that face-to-face training is preferable, because it requires trainees to work as a team and with the trainer, but distance education is acceptable if it includes project work and tutoring sessions.

Forsyth and Stevens (1995) recommend open learning, which they distinguish from distance education this way: Distance Education is a type of open learning, a method of delivering the learning where the student is geographically distant from the teacher and has to work independently within a structure. Distance Education depends heavily on print-based learning materials, while open learning may use different media. It is the emphasis on learner-centredness which distinguishes open learning from Distance Education, which is often closed and formal.

Forsyth and Stevens (1995) go on to say that open learning is not an appropriate model for training in the following cases:

- when socialisation, change of attitude, meeting learners and interacting with other learners is important.
- when time to develop materials is not available (comparatively long)
- when there is low motivation
- when there is a small number of learners
- when there is a lack of skilled staff to produce the materials
- when there is a lack of money to start and maintain the development and production of learning material.
- when the subject matter changes quickly.

According to Forsyth and Stevens criteria, distance education or open learning would not be acceptable for a materials development course, at least in the early stages, where a lot of changes in the course may be needed, trainees need a lot of guidance and the numbers of learners are small.

A system which would be appropriate, however, is mentorship. This system was used by SANET, ELP and USWE (Alkenbrack, 1994) and will be pursued in this study.

Hunt (1994) advocates mentoring when the following are kept in mind:

- The trainee's goals must be linked to the organisation's goals.
- The mentor-protege pairs are matched carefully.
- Both mentor and protege are given training on how to work together.

- There is ongoing monitoring and evaluation.
- There is a fixed time frame.

Forsyth recommends the use of learning contracts: objectives and outcomes are negotiated, the time frame of the contract is agreed, and the expectations of the parties involved is spelt out.

All these considerations should be taken into account when planning the learning process. When it comes to designing a course, current South African policy favours the systematic collection of unit standards fitting together to make up qualifications. The following section describes a framework which could help to systematise the proposed materials development training course.

2.4.3 A Framework for Educational Objectives: Skills and Qualities of a Materials Developer

Gronlund (1995) and Carter (1985) both recommend using a framework to identify and write instructional objectives. Both draw on the *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives* (Bloom, et al., 1956, Krathwohl et al., 1964) which identifies three domains of educational outcomes: "Cognitive" (knowledge and intellectual abilities), "Affective" (concerned with interests, attitudes, values and methods of adjustment and "Psychomotor" (Gronlund, 1995, p.32). However, Carter adapts the taxonomy to produce a *Taxonomy of Objectives for Professional Education,* summarised in Figure 2.2, below. Drawing on the work of Romiszowski (1981) he breaks the "Cognitive" domain into the areas of "Knowledge" and "Skill".

Gronlund cautions against becoming a slave to any frame of reference:

> Such a classification system can help you obtain a balanced set of learning outcome, but there is no reason to write objectives for each category or to give each category equal emphasis. The nature and level of the learning will largely determine where the emphasis should be placed. (Gronlund, 1995:34)

This is sensible advice, especially in the adult education field where a great deal of flexibility is required. However, Carter's framework provides a useful overall picture of what would be required in a course, and it could be used use as a checklist for evaluating the course once it has been developed. Figure 2.3, below, expands on Carter's (1985) *Taxonomy of Objectives*

for Professional Development, by adding skills and qualities which are specific to materials writers.

Figure 2.2 Summary of a taxonomy of objectives for professional education (in Carter, 1985:146)

Personal Qualities	**Mental Characteristics** Openness Agility Imagination Creativity	**Attitudes and Values** Things Self People Groups Ideas	**Personal Characteristics** Integrity Initiative Industry Emotional resilience	**Spiritual Qualities** Appreciation Response	**Being**
Skill	**Mental Skills** Organisation Analysis Evaluation Synthesis	**Information Skills** Acquisition Recording Remembering Communicating	**Action Skills** Manual Organising Decision-making Problem-solving	**Social Skills** Co-operation Leadership Negotiation and persuasion Interviewing	**Doing**
Knowledge	**Factual Knowledge** Facts Structures Procedures Concepts Principles		**Experiential Knowledge** Experience Internalisation Generalisation Abstraction		**Knowing**
Cognitive					**Affective**

Figure 2.3 Professional Development Objectives: Additional Objectives for Materials Developers

Personal Qualities	**Mental Characteristics** Creativity Attention to detail Visual literacy	**Attitudes and Values** Confidence Respect (for all role-players in the MD process)	**Personal Characteristics**	**Spiritual Qualities** Appreciation of people Appreciation of text.	**Being**
Skill	**Mental Skills** Research and Evaluation Categorising Strategising	**Information Skills** Translation Writing Adapting Editing	**Action Skills** Computer literacy	**Social Skills** Consulting (with all user groups) Giving and receiving feedback responsibly	**Doing**
Knowledge	**Factual Knowledge** Educational issues Materials development processes Cost-effectiveness Finances of publishing, Legal issues and copyright		**Experiential knowledge** Familiarity with a wide variety of ma[illegible]s Tr[illegible]d error learning Experience with people Experience with text		**Knowing**
Cognitive					**Affective**

2.4.4 Preparing Course Materials for Training

This section refers to the materials used for training ABET workers, rather than the materials described in section 2.3, which are mainly for learners.

Forsythe et al (1995:76) provide the following questions to consider when developing training materials:

- What do you want to do? (pass on information, show examples, provide learners a chance to work through examples, provide hands-on experience?)

- What do you want the learners to do with the teaching materials (demonstrate their use of the new information, describe it in context, comment on it in an unfamiliar context, use their skills and knowledge to demonstrate their ability to apply it to novel situation?)

- What time, resources and costs are involved in preparing the materials?

Materials for the course in question should do everything mentioned in the first two points, with particular emphasis on practical examples and activities. Above all, they should serve as a model of relevant, well-designed materials that will inspire trainees. Like any training endeavour, time, resources and costs will be key issues, particularly because the trainees come from communities and organisations with limited resources.

Ouane et al (1990:87) observe that training materials used for large-scale delivery are usually produced centrally by specialists, but they should be flexible enough to permit adaptations to regional and local circumstances and to be amended when evaluation shows the need for change. Materials for this training course do not fit into the category of "large scale delivery", as they will be used by small groups of trainees. However, there will still be a need for extensive piloting during the first phase of the course.

2.4.5 Delivering the Course:

Forsyth et al(1995:99) provide the following considerations for delivering a course:

- recognise and prepare for any threat caused by the change
- develop time frames that are understood by the key players and stakeholders.
- develop strategies to make sure that support is sustained.
- conduct an induction programme that recognises the concerns of the key stakeholders and players.

This serves as a useful reminder that the proposed course could have some negative effects, such as unfilled expectations or competition. The most common threat is the loss of a newly-skilled employee to industry or government. This is difficult to prepare for. Another problem could be lack of employment in the field once the course is completed, which could be partly alleviated by paying careful attention to support systems after the course. All points are dependent on effective communication with stakeholders throughout the organisations. While this is a worthy goal, it is often hampered by lack of time or interest by decision-makers.

Another consideration is how to sequence the content of the course. Ouane et al (1990:71) recommend the following:

- place focus of training within context of adult education programme
- move from the known to unknown
- move from simple to complex ideas and skills
- present initial contents which are prerequisites for other concepts/skills and build links between two.
- move from concrete experience to general principles, and encourage questioning of principles which are going to be put in process.
- give practical examples and applications of learning acquired.
- establish a sequence in which each content unit motivates the learner to go on to the next unit.

Training work done in other aspects of ABET (for example, facilitator training, ABET communications and numeracy courses) confirms the importance of sound implementation of most of these principles. It will be important to bring in skilled trainers who have experience in developing and delivering such courses. One area of weakness is lack of time to allow trainees to fully integrate the skills they have learned.

2.4.6 Evaluation:

For a new course, evaluation is crucial, and significant resources will need to be allocated to that aspect. Both Meginson and Brinkerhoff provide advice on this from the corporate world which could be adapted to various training situations.

Megginson, et al (1993) describe the following leading concepts in HRD which would be useful to consider when evaluating a course:

- The learner takes responsibility for his/her own learning.
- The line management is involved in training.
- There is a focus on the development of the whole individual.
- Learning is linked with work.
- Focus on groups: the trainee is trained with the people he/she works with.
- There is a focus on company learning.
- Training is linked to strategy.

Most organisations strive to fulfill these principles, whether in industry or the community. Some South African industry ABET programmes have endeavoured to involve line management and link training to work, with varying results.

On a more practical level, Brinkerhoff (1987:27) provides a six-stage model for evaluation:

1. Evaluate needs and goals (Goals are established that will be worthwhile to the organisation).
2. Evaluate training design (A workable programme design is created)
3. Evaluate the operation (The programme design is implemented and made to work).
4. Evaluate learning (Trainees exit with the new Skills, Knowledge and Awareness (SKA); enough HRD has taken place).
5. Evaluate usage and endurance of learning (Trainees use the new SKA on the job or in their personal life; reactions to HRD are sustained).
6. Evaluate the pay-off to the organisation (The HRD has benefited the organisation; the original needs have sufficiently diminished).

To be really useful, evaluation must be a planning tool which benefits the course from the beginning, rather than a checklist at a post-mortem. It is therefore essential to build evaluation in from the beginning, and Brinkerhoff's detailed model will help to do that.

2.4.7 Follow-up

Most of the literature studied in this review (Brinkerhoff, 1987; Human, 1992; CDRA, 1995; Alkenbrack, 1994) points to the importance of support when trainees are back on the job. Arrangements for this must be ensured before any training is undertaken.

> Unless organisational capacity has been developed sufficiently to harness training and acquisition of new skills, training courses do not "take" and skills do not adhere. The organisation which does not know where it is going and why; which has a poorly developed sense of responsibility for itself; and which is inadequately structured, cannot make use of training courses and skill acquisition. (CDRA Annual Report 1994/95: 7)

In a business situation, this is ensured by bringing line management and other senior officials on board from the beginning (Megginson et al 1993, Brinkerhoff 1987, Forsyth et al 1995).

Similarly in the NGO/CBO sector, CDRA and CBDP insist that organisations be fully briefed on the process and agree to take some responsibility for implementing the new skills.

Also, in the case of courses that are not linked to companies or organisations, it is important to help trainees find relevant employment after the course is finished. Another approach would be to develop a voluntary mentorship or apprenticeship programme linked to NGO networks.

2.4.8 Ensuring Access and Participation:

CDRA (1995:2) says that while the Confucius development cliché about teaching a man to fish is laudable "it does not help to teach people to fish when they are denied equal access to the resource base." The trainees we are considering for this course are all in that category. While it may seem obvious to consider this when planning a course, some of the literature provides some useful considerations:

Ouane, et al (1990) say that in most developing countries, literacy work is a part-time or volunteer activity. Sometimes, but not always, tutors receive an honorarium for their work. They are often people who want to contribute to their community, often out of political or religious conviction. This is also mentioned by Archer and Cottingham (1996). Much of the international literature assumes that literacy is voluntary work. This discourages the development of a career path, making it inaccessible to people who need to work to support their families, and ultimately denies access to potentially talented practitioners. It could also be a contributor to the problem of practitioner drop-out. So a post-training support plan must be in place before the course starts.

Forsyth (1995:81) points out that many trainees have not had access to computers and that "technophobia" should be taken into account. When training writers it is important to decide how much technological information they really need. They must be computer-literate, and have an overview of the production process, but how much detail should we go into? In addition, Forsyth et al pose these questions on the use of technology:

- What instructional technology is needed to deliver the course?
- What difficulties could this cause you?

- What difficulties will it cause the learners?
- Will it detract from the learning experience?

While it may seem obvious, gender and cultural issues must be considered. Forsyth gives the following tips:

- Avoid bias in materials.
- Make role models representative.
- Consider options for time and place of courses that will make it accessible to everyone.
- Remember that males tend to dominate discussions. How will we handle this in class, and how does it affect choice of participants?
- Remember that not everyone has the same access to, or ability to get information (eg. people who have less ability in speaking English)
- If nothing else, make sure that your programme materials do not make access issues worse.

The literature on training has proved to be extremely useful, both as a reminder of enduring principles, and an introduction to cutting-edge ideas. The course described in chapter five of this study reflects these ideas and principles.

2.5 Conclusion:

CDRA (1995:6) has a useful description of capacity building which should help to inform the project. The first requirement is the development of a conceptual framework which reflects the organisation's understanding of the world. Secondly, an organisation needs to build confidence to act effectively and with impact. The organisation has a sense of purpose and does not lurch from one problem to another, but plans and implements a programme of action, which it can adapt to different situations. Third, once the aims and strategies are clear, it is possible to structure the organisation so that roles and functions are defined. The next step is the acquisition and growth of individual skills (this is where training comes in), and finally the acquisition of materials resources. The authors point out that the requirements are not entirely sequential. This is a useful framework for a capacity-building project, such as the one proposed in this study.

The international and local literature has provided useful information on the development of ABET materials and training. Of particular relevance to the study are the following points:

- The various ways to determine, and the importance of knowing the target group.
- The need to find a balance between nationally-determined educational or development goals, local needs, and personal interests. The best way to learn to read is with materials that are important to you, either because they help you solve your problems, prepare you for a job, or entertain you.
- Innovative approaches to materials development, such as learner-generated materials, community publishing, writers' circles or shell books.
- The need to build skills in clear language, for example when working with technical experts on development-oriented materials.
- The importance of details such as language choice, attention to gender issues, needs assessment, evaluation, visual literacy and cost-effectiveness.
- Exciting models for content and process provided by the case studies, and
- The grounding in principles and practices for training excellence in a wide range of fields.

Chapters Four and Five will show how the information is used to shape a materials development course. But before that, Chapter Three describes the research process that was used to gather information to supplement the literature review.

Chapter Three: Research Design

3.1 Introduction

Research Aim: to develop a high-quality, experience-based, accredited training programme that will bring black literacy workers into the ABET materials writing field.

This chapter presents the research design which was drawn up to address this aim. It includes sections on data collection, data analysis, presentation and steps to ensure validity. The research questions are reproduced below, linked to the relevant collection methods. The process is described graphically in Figure 3.1, below.

The research design is qualitative research in the sense that it will attempt to "gain insights from people which will enrich and illuminate our understanding of actions, concepts, events and practices" (Castle, 1994:1).

The research is also in line with Lather's (1986) description of research as praxis, in that it:

a) rejects the "value-free" orientation of positivist researchers.

b) is emancipatory in the sense that the results will be used to help literacy workers to improve their profession and the people they serve,

c) will attempt to develop theory that is open-ended, nondogmatic, informing and grounded in everyday life, and

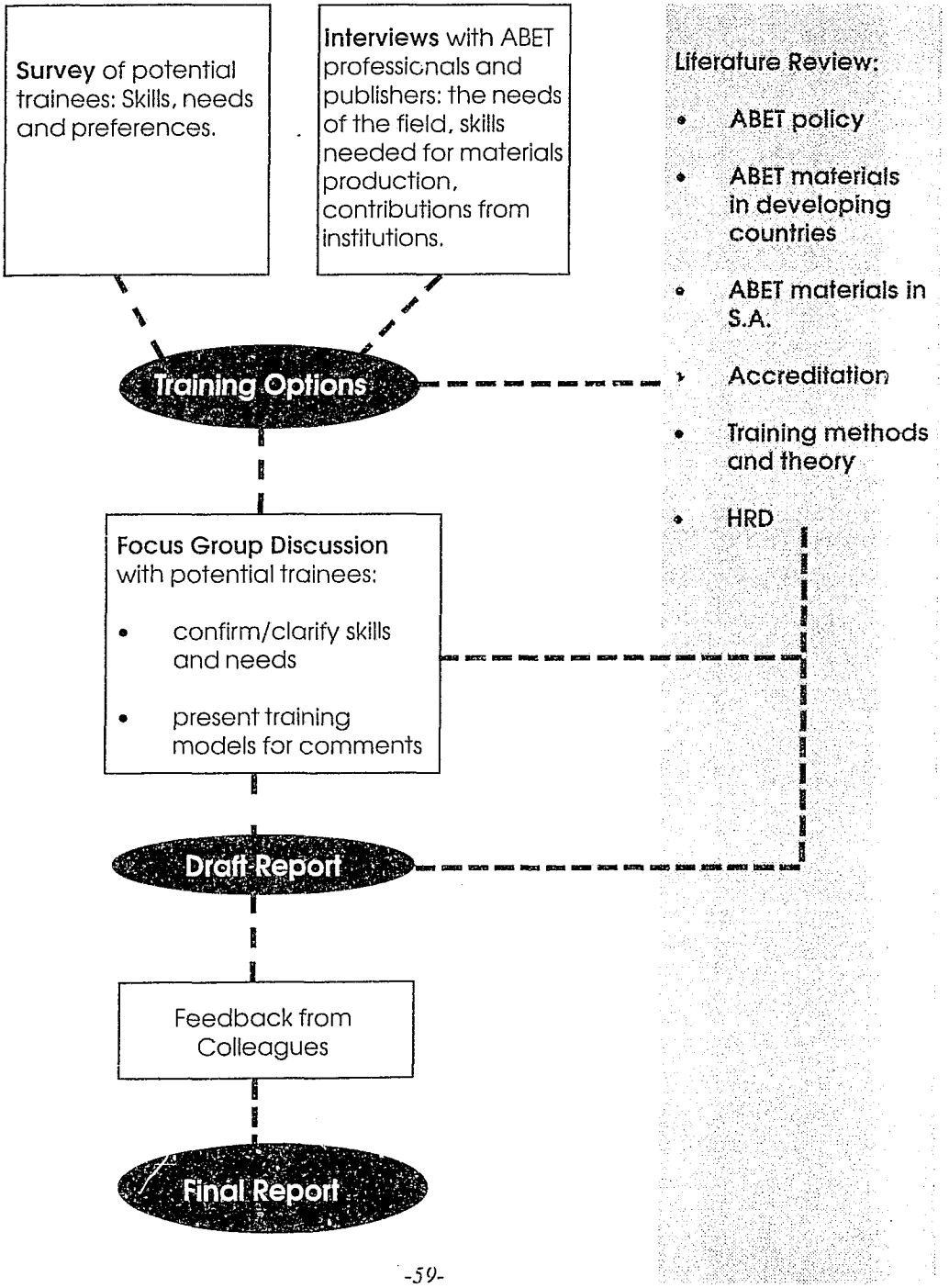
d) will approach potential trainees (who fit into the category of people Lather describes as dispossessed) with respect for their intellectual, political and personal capacities.

3.2 Data Collection

The research is designed as a small-scale survey incorporating questionnaires, interviews and focus group discussions. It is also a situational analysis which looks at needs from a number of perspectives, with the aim of establishing a focus and direction for the materials development training course. By using surveys, interviews and focus group discussions, the design applies a variation on methodological triangulation, which is described by Cohen and Manion (1989) as using either the same method on different occasions or different methods on the same object of study. In this research, different methods were used for different subjects of study: The

Figure 3.1

Research Design: Materials Development Training for ABET workers



questionnaires, interviews and literature review gathered different perspectives on the same topic, and the focus groups reflected on the results.

The first stage of data collection involved the survey of relevant literature which was presented in Chapter Two. This involved document analysis and interviews with selected experts in the field of ABET and publishing. Concurrently, questionnaires were sent to thirty potential trainees to investigate their situation.

Three groups of people were consulted in this study:

1) Professionals in the field of ABET.
2) Publishers.
3) Potential trainees.

Below is a description of the relevant research questions and methods used for each group of respondents.

3.2.1 ABET and Publishing Professionals:

Research Question	Method of Data Collection
1. What are the needs of the field? How important is materials development?	• Interviews with ten ABET and publishing professionals • Literature review
2. What skills do materials-producers need?	• Interviews with ABET and publishing professionals
3. What contributions are employers (commercial and NGOs) and ABET professionals willing to make? How important is affirmative action and capacity building to them?	• Interviews with ABET and publishing professionals

Information on policy, the National Qualifications Framework and materials development skills is available in the literature, but questions about the importance of materials development, needs and commitment on the part of employers and NGOs are not.

A general interview guide was used for the interviews, as described in Taylor and Bogdan (1984): there was a list of issues to be covered, but no set questions. This approach presumes that there is common information to be gained, but the interviewer can adapt the wording and sequence of questions to the specific respondents. Taylor and Bogdan say that this system increases the comprehensiveness of the data and makes data collection somewhat systematic for each respondent.

Interviews were conducted in the months of April and May of 1997, usually in the workplaces of the interviewees. The following people were interviewed:

- Phutuma Monyathi, co-ordinator, Adult Education Development and Resource Unit, Wits University.
- Derek Peo, Thousand Learner Unit Manager, National Literacy Co-operation (NLC)
- Phindi Sigodi, Training Co-ordinator, NLC.
- Jack Ngubeni, Director, NLC Mpumalanga
- Ephraim Homan, (position), NLC Northern Cape
- Phil Mnisi, Director, NLC Northwest Province.
- Emily Mnisi, (position) Gauteng Department of Education
- Paul Mremi, Marketing manager, Sached Books/MML
- Karin Griessol, Commissioning Editor, Viva Books
- Zann Hoad, Projects Manager, Jacana Educational Publishers

The interviews began with questions about the nature of materials development, including the respondents' personal experience of it and their beliefs about what skills are needed, then they moved to the type of training needed to produce good materials, then the potential contributions and priorities of the respondents' organisations, and finally the future of work in the field.

3.2.2 Potential Trainees:

Research Questions	Method of Data Collection
3. What experience and skills in materials development do potential trainees have?	• Survey of ± 30 ABET facilitators who have been, or wish to be, involved in materials development.
4. What are their needs?	• Focus group interview with potential trainees.

As shown in Figure 3.1, questionnaires were used in the initial data-gathering stage of the research. They provided a useful overall picture of the situation, drawing together individual and group needs and interests, forming a base for more in-depth discussion in focus groups and also forming a data base for planning courses.

Most writers on qualitative research do not include surveys in their descriptions of data collection methods. However, this position is in the context of a questionnaire survey which provides a superficial look at a vast number of people, giving an appearance of a scientific approach, which is not very helpful for adult educators. The situation in this research is different. I chose to use questionnaires for the following reasons:

- A questionnaire posted to respondents around the country can reach out to people who could not otherwise be contacted due to time and finances.

- The information gathered about and from individuals helped to develop practical options for training.

- Initial inquiries have shown that there is a lot of interest in materials development training so it was not difficult to persuade potential trainees to participate.

About thirty potential trainees were targeted. They formed a "purposive sample", which is described by Cohen and Manion (1989) and Maykut and Morehouse (1994), as a sample which is very specific, rather than random, seeking in-depth information rather than statistics. The number of respondents is not necessarily pre-determined, but is built up until the information sought is acquired.

According to Cohen and Manion (1989), it is important to define the following when designing a survey:

1) The exact p ɔose of the inquiry. Here the purpose is to determine the skills, experience and needs of potential trainees.

2) The population group(s) on which it will focus. In this case, the study focused on black ABET teachers employed by NLC member organisations, with some interest or involvement in materials development, but no formal training.

3) The resources which are available. In this study, the resources were personal, plus assistance in travel and resources from my employer in exchange for the use of the research in their work.

Both Ferber, et al (undated) and Cohen and Manion (1989) say it is important for a questionnaire to be very clear, attractive and easy to read. The questionnaire for this study went through many drafts and trials with five colleagues who are similar to the target group in order to ensure this. The questionnaire is attached in Appendix 1. The experts also warn that it might be necessary to follow up on respondents. As it turned out, this was not necessary, because I was able to make personal contact with most of the respondents through workshops.

There were 31 responses to the questionnaires. Respondents came from six provinces, and the gender breakdown was 20 men to 11 women. Twenty-eight respondents work in ABET and three in related fields (in-service educare trainer, gender co-ordinator and communications officer).

A copy of the questionnaire appears in appendix 1.

3.2.3 Focus Groups:

Focus Groups have been used extensively in market research (Semoko, 1994 and Morgan, 1988), and in a sense this is how they were used in this study. Having gathered the information on training models, demands and needs of the field, and personal/organisational needs, I developed a proposed training course. The focus group was asked to respond to my models, and hopefully develop new ones. The focus group also clarified questions that arose in the initial survey. Morgan (1988:35) confirms that it is possible to use focus groups as a follow-up method of data collection, especially when results are puzzling to researchers.

In spite of advice from Taylor and Bogdan that "the researcher probably never gains the depth of understanding that comes with one-to-one interviewing, I chose to use focus group discussions for the following reasons:

1) They are less time-consuming than one-to-one interviews, and fit in with other training activities.

2) Some of the potential trainees were more comfortable with group work than with individual interviews.

3) Some authorities say that the quality of information gained is often enhanced by group interaction. For example, Cohen and Manion (1989) say the potential for discussion in groups can yield a wider range of responses.

4) Cohen and Manion (1989) say a focus group is appropriate where a group has been working together for some time or has a common purpose. As it turned out, the focus group of potential trainees was conducted with a group of Adult Education certificate students who had been studying together for a year.

A summary of responses to questions asked in a focus group, as well as notes made by the researcher, is included in Appendix 2.

3.3 Data Analysis:

Information was collected on training models from as broad a field as possible, without making initial judgements about what would work or not work in South Africa. This information was then balanced against other information collected, through interviews and questionnaires, which put it in perspective. This information included:

1) Available resources: skills and experience of potential trainees; financial and professional capacity and infrastructure provided by government, commercial publishers, NGOs and institutions; commitment to capacity-building and affirmative action.

2) Requirements of accreditation bodies, employers, the ABET field, potential trainees, and institutions.

3) Constraints of finances, time, skill levels (of trainees and trainers) and organisational capacity.

The information was then presented to potential trainees and experts in the form of a proposed course. They were asked to discuss, prioritise and express preferences. This led to a final product.

3.4 Validity:

According to Cohen and Manion (1989:278), "Validation is achieved when others, particularly the subjects of the research, recognise its authenticity"

The purpose of this study was to gather and analyse information that could lead to the development of an effective training programme. So for me the most important issues regarding validity were:

1) Is the data accurate? and

2) Did I present as many viable options as possible, so that stakeholders could make informed choices?

To understand more about ensuring validity, I turned to Maxwell (1992) who explains that validity is not only about a particular method, but pertains to accounts or conclusions reached by using that method in a particular context for a particular purpose. (1992:284). Maxwell believes it is difficult to eliminate threats to validity in qualitative research, which is inductive and focuses on particulars rather than generalising to universals.

Others say there are always ways to boost validity in qualitative research. For example, Lather(1986) and Cohen and Manion (1989) say that validity is enhanced when the researcher submits findings to the scrutiny of the research participants. With this in mind, all respondents in the interviews received copies of their interview transcripts for comment. The ABET and publishing experts were invited to participate in focus groups. This was more difficult to achieve in the case of potential trainees. Because the original respondents to the questionnaires were spread out in several provinces, and resources were not available for transport, they were not invited to focus groups. Instead a completely different group of potential trainees participated.

Lather (1986) is very critical of the attitude that those who are being researched might not be expected to understand the conclusions of the research. I agree. In the field of ABET, such research would be useless if it were not made widely available, and it is vital to consider the needs of South Africans who do not have an academic background when choosing the form of presentation.

Reason and Rowan (1981) say that, for research to be valid, it must be conducted collaboratively, with systematic use of feedback loops, going around the research cycle several times, seeking multiple viewpoints. This was only achieved to a limited extent for this study. My hope is that this report will lead to a long term project, in which the training course will be the subject of ongoing scrutiny and feedback, resulting in ongoing change and improvement.

Taking all of the above into account, the project was designed with the following features to ensure validity:

1) Triangulation of method and sources.
2) Focus groups provided space for participants to both verify and clarify responses to questions and course options.
3) Accurate notes were taken at interviews and focus groups (see Appendix Two for summary of a focus group meeting)
4) Interviewees were presented with a summary of the information they provided.
5) A draft report was circulated for comment among relevant ABET practitioners.

3.5 Presentation of Findings:

This research report will be adapted for various audiences, and possibly developed into a curriculum document towards the eventual development of a course. It will include the following:

- Rationale for the training
- Description of needs
- Description of models
- Outline of training programme
- Methods of evaluation and follow-up.

3.6 Conclusion:

This chapter has described the processes used in gathering information towards developing a course for materials developers. In spite of logistical difficulties, such as not being able to have a complete focus group with experts, the research process was a powerful lesson in systematising my personal academic development. In future, I would like to do research that focuses more on qualitative information gathering through focus groups and interviews, and possibly participant observation, leaving questionnaires to larger studies.

The results of the research process are presented in the next two chapters: In Chapter Four, I set out the information gained from the questionnaires, interviews and focus group. This is followed by a proposed course description, in Chapter Five.

Chapter 4: Results

4.1 Overview:

The previous chapters described the processes and products of ABET materials development and training and the research design for this study. This chapter reports on the results of the enquiry and how they will be used to develop a training course for ABET materials developers. Each section in the chapter deals with one of the relevant research questions, which are as follows:

1. What are the needs of the field?
2. What skills do materials writers need?
3. What skills and experience do potential trainees have?
4. What are the needs of potential trainees?
5. How should the new skills be taught?

In the text which follows, statements made by respondents are used to illustrate certain themes and to testify to the authenticity of the research. These statements appear in *italic* script.

4.2 What are the needs of the field?

> *Materials are marketed as reflecting the realities of the area they work in or relevant to the course. But this is not always true. For example, there is usually an urban bias. Some materials are adapted or translated. But that is often superficial. It misses the human/emotional factor.* (Phindi Sigodi, NLC, interview respondent)

Phindi Sigodi raises two issues that ABET workers are concerned about when dealing with written materials: academic relevance (does a topic fit the course, and does it promote nationally accepted outcomes) and regional relevance (including linguistic relevance). This section reports first on perceptions regarding the kinds of materials that are needed in the field, with a view to seeing how those needs might be addressed in a training course. The other perceived need investigated is for more black writers to engage in materials writing. What role can they play in improving materials in these areas? Can they help to meet the needs of

the field for more and better materials? Do respondents think an increase in the number of black writers can help to meet the needs of the field better?

4.2.1 What kind of materials are needed?

Materials currently in use:

The ABET practitioners who were interviewed indicated that they drew on materials listed in the NLC's *Catalogue of ABET Materials Available in South Africa* (NLC, 1996). They cited materials developed by South African NGOs, including Project Literacy, English Literacy Project, Operation Upgrade, ABE Services and Akanani. One respondent mentioned using the Centre for Adult Education's *Learn with Echo* newspaper and a few admitted that they still have old DET materials on their shelves. Two stated that they were guided by the IEB outcomes when choosing courses. This shows a wide range of preferences, and possibly different skill levels in choosing materials. Reasons for using these materials were given as:

- They are better than the old DET materials.
- They are easy for tutors to use.
- They meet needs of learners, as identified by tutors.
- They are practical, interesting, relevant and not too intimidating, and
- They meet the IEB outcomes.

An examination of these qualities again reveals a wide range of approaches. For example, the comparison with DET materials shows that the interviewee may or may not have had opportunities to use other materials. This is not the place to enter into a discussion about what makes materials easy for tutors to use or why that is important, or if tutor training and support are important considerations when choosing materials. The reference to IEB reinforces the strong "backwash effect" the IEB has had, described in Chapter Two.

Gaps and weaknesses in these materials:

Interviewees and questionnaire respondents said that materials are still needed at all levels, but there were different views on which should be prioritised. From Gauteng, there was a plea for materials at the lower levels. Karin Griessol found that, from discussions at presentations

and workshops, there is a perceived need for the most basic materials, and that many practitioners are critical of the materials available at Level 1. On the other hand, the Mpumalanga interviewee asked for Level Four materials.

There was a wide range of suggestions for the content of materials, from politics, ideological and historical information, foreign affairs, lifeskills, science and numeracy to small business development and materials promoting media literacy. There was one request for special materials for adults with learning problems. Phil Masia from the North West NLC, summed it up this way: *Materials must be underpinned by the ideological and philosophical goals of the new government, plus answer learners' questions.*

More specifically, Jack Ngubeni (Mpumalanga) suggests: *Start with farming and traditional practices, then move up to information about South Africa, the constitution, etc. Also include materials about sanitation and health.*

In some cases, these comments reveal a genuine lack of appropriate materials. For example, there is not much on foreign affairs at the appropriate level, and science material is only being developed now by some publishers. However, there is a lot of material on lifeskills, the media and farming that some interviewees were not aware of. This may indicate that interviewees were not doing their homework, or publishers were not doing their jobs.

Those who have been following developments in ABET policy were also anxious for more materials to cover the new learning areas such as contextual, technical, and specialisation subjects described in Chapter Two. But they were also aware that the NQF obliges a move away from subject orientations towards an outcomes-based system. This puts pressure on educators to teach in a different way, and means materials developers are scrambling to re-work courses to meet new requirements. Respondents felt these pressures, in spite of the fact that unit standards for the new learning areas were still not widely available.

Most respondents' understanding of materials focused on courses, although there was also an interest in more readers, newspapers and magazines for learners. In the Northern Cape, course

books are used almost exclusively at the beginning levels, and readers gradually phased in at Levels Three and Four.

Respondents to the questionnaires called for readers on the following topics: stories about daily problems (3), stories based on learners' experiences (2), stories about adult education (1) life skills (1) case studies (1), stories about other people (1), stories about other countries (1), newspapers/newsletters (6) and magazines (2). These are similar to the findings of French (1988) described in Chapter 2, in that there seems to be more interest in the real-life stories found in newspapers and magazines than in fiction. It could also be related to the relative cost and availability of newspapers and magazines compared to novels.

Appropriate materials

Those respondents with experience in rural areas all criticised current materials for their urban bias.

> *Most of the materials have a background of town life. They might be sensitive to the rural context, but they do not have rural origin. Most of our learners are semi-rural or rural. People want what they are used to. They are happy to hear about going to town, but they would be happier if the materials reflected their experiences.* (Jack Ngubeni)

Paul Mremi from Sached Books did reader surveys which indicated that learners are interested in readers by and about people in their own community and that reflect their culture. This echoes responses to the questionnaires, above, in which only two respondents asked for books about foreign countries and other people.

Cost:

The most wonderful materials in the world are of little value if learners and organisations cannot afford them, and this is a reality for many rural NGOs. The three NLC provincial directors all raised this as a serious issue. Paul Mremi points out that producing readers is a risky venture because most programmes do not buy them. This is particularly a problem in English communications courses, which require the learner to read a wide range of texts to truly master the language.

Content and Approach:

Comments on approach included advice about educational philosophy, urging materials developers to treat learners like adults, be respectful, moral, political and charismatic, and to draw on existing knowledge.

There was also a suggestion that materials developers come together to negotiate the meaning of the materials and ensure that they are underpinned by ideologies of redress and reconstruction.

Then there was advice about the new trends in materials and curricula. Derek Peo of the NLC described his organisation's proposal that educators move away from traditional courses and closer to integrated, modularised outcomes-based learning. This proposal is based on the perception that adults learn at different rates, rather than according to calendar-based school cycles. Achievements are noted in benchmarks, not years.

This is not new. Malcolm Knowles (1982) has always promoted this approach. What is new is that South African discourse is predominantly about international standards in the context of a global economy and about English as an international language. The drive for integrated, modularised, outcomes-based curricula and materials is derived more from the "needs" of workers (as perceived by management and unions) and organisational demands embedded in workplace education than in concerns for learning styles.

Materials should also be flexible enough to accommodate different delivery arrangements. For example, some programmes hold classes every day, others twice a week, and some companies release their workers for blocks of full-time study. Derek Peo says this variety of situations calls for course materials to be integrated and modular. It is up to the province, centre or institution to assemble a programme to meet the learning outcomes. He also points out that government and NGO ABET classes usually provide about 250 hours of learning time per year. Additional self-instruction modules and homework would help to increase the learning time.

The focus in the international literature on materials that promote development messages (described in Chapter 2) links with NLC's priority to produce content-based materials with

development themes, such as the educators newsletter, *Tswelopele*. The advantage of this focus is that it would provide the opportunity to write short stories and lessons which could be published in a newsletter or journal such as *Tswelopele.* This could be particularly interesting in light of the request for materials that are specific to the needs of local/regional areas. Likewise, the NLC's call for modularised, integrated chunks of materials is helpful, because it is easier for beginning writers to produce short pieces of writing than books or courses. Provincial directors expressed a need for more readers, which are also relatively easy to write.

Course books and materials that fit into the new learning areas described in Chapter Two will be more difficult to write, because they require specific subject knowledge. For this reason, they are not likely to be one of the products of this course. Course design and writing would ideally be learned on-the-job, with a team of experienced writers, or in a mentoring situation. Alternatively, course/curriculum design could be the basis of a more advanced course for writers with some experience.

In summary, practitioners in the ABET field are looking for materials that are practical, relevant, affordable and easy to use. They should address skills that are appropriate for local needs and in line with national requirements. When these needs are considered side by side with materials that are practical and useful to trainees, the result could be materials that meet a wide range of needs.

4.2.2 Is there a need for materials in African languages?

Most respondents endorsed the need for more materials in African languages. Phil Masia gave three reasons for his support:

> *It is our constitutional right (to be served or have access to the official language of our choice). Important documents such as the constitution and information about rights must be in all official languages. Also, it is easier to learn concepts in your own language. Also, concepts can vary from language to language. For example, there is no accurate English word for "ubuntu.". And development will happen faster if practical information is available in all languages: If we want to reconstruct the country, we cannot wait for people to learn English.*

There was some disagreement about which levels in African languages were needed. Most agreed that there is a lack of materials in African languages at the higher levels, because of the

tradition of teaching literacy in mother-tongue simply as a bridge to English, rather than as a language with its own value.

Provincial respondents expressed a need for materials in the languages spoken by a smaller number of South Africans, such as Venda, Sindebele and Siswati. Publishers acknowledge requests for these languages, but are concerned about the cost implications. Materials in Zulu, Sotho and Xhosa have lots of readers, but not Siswati or Venda. Paul Mremi said Sached Books is exploring partnerships with provincial governments that might make it possible. However, even a new project to publish Zulu materials has shown a low return on investment.

The ERA Initiative has launched a programme which will help to address this problem. They are subsidising publishers to publish readers in African languages, requiring that at least one of the languages be that of a linguistically-marginalised group. Viva Books took advantage of this to produce books in Isindebele, Setsonga, and Tshivenda, because they knew they could never make these pay without the subsidy.

Language is also linked to the subject matter of the materials. Most respondents agreed that science and technology should be taught in English, leading to ongoing learning and moving up the ladder, while social and development studies might lend themselves to other languages. Phil Masia disagrees with this. He believes that it would be easier to learn all subjects, including science, in the mother tongue, and pointed out that Science and Technology is not embedded in one language.

Zann Hoad from Jacana Publishers raised the question of whether materials should be developed initially in African languages or translated. Because the content of Jacana's environmental education materials is very technical, translation is the method they have chosen. While this option is probably the most practical, it can help to keep African languages in the marginalised role of being used only for poetry and cultural expression. However, it could also be argued that the time and money involved in developing technical vocabulary in African languages could be used to meet more pressing needs, such as educating, housing or feeding communities.

Derek Peo did not agree that materials in African languages was an urgent need. During nine provincial workshops conducted with NLC affiliates and government officials (see Chapter 2 and Dhola, 1996) Peo found that *there were far more urgent pleas, and English was the universal cry.* However, if the NLC's proposal for a more modularised, flexible approach to course materials with smaller chunks of learning is approved, there will be more space for local languages. He also believes that it should be possible to study up to Further Education Certificate (FEC) in all languages, and that it would be particularly important for trades: For example, *English should not be a barrier to getting your blasting certificate.*

Although there is a general desire for materials in African languages, there is little clarity about what sort of materials are needed or at what levels. Many respondents indicated an attitude that African language materials were of marginal nature, with the serious subjects being in English. Training people to write in African languages means that editors and trainers who are fluent in these languages must be available. It would also mean paying careful attention to trainee selection.

4.2.3 Is there a need for African writers?

There is a philosophical agreement that this is a good idea, although practical issues arise, which are described below. There are two possible reasons for supporting African writers: The first is to improve the materials, and the second to develop skills.

Improved materials

It is a common belief that white, urban writers cannot accurately reflect the culture and experience of black rural learners. Emily Mnisi from the Gauteng Department of Education expressed *a desperate need for courses in African languages that are designed and written by Africans. Current courses are designed by white people and do not reflect our culture.* Paul Mremi found that adult learners are interested in Sached's recently-produced readers about being a sangoma and the ZCC church, but they do not like the fact that these readers were written by white authors. They want authors from black communities. Viva Books has run into occasional criticisms of their Level 1 and 2 books in some areas for the same reasons.

Phindi Sigodi said the idea of bringing in more black writers is subsumed in democratic principles and liberation ideology. *Most provinces want ownership, and they want to take responsibility. They also want their realities to be reflected.*

Karin Griessel believes more black writers would be good for the field, because these writers are closer to the readership. *If you lose touch with readers, you've had it. However, there are other ways to keep in touch, such as through testing and trialing materials.* But she also expressed a common conviction that good quality materials are the first priority. *When we publish, we think of our readers first. We are not prepared to compromise on quality. For this reason, we are not interested in black authors just for the sake of the name.*

Derek Peo echoes this sentiment:

> *Our first responsibility is top-quality, tested materials as soon as possible and the need for good curriculum is essential. We do not have the luxury of waiting. We have raised expectations to such a level.... People will say "Bah, humbug!" Learners are tired of second rate education certificates which mean nothing. Materials are not good. We can launch impressive campaigns, but people will have deaf ears.*

At first glance, the last two respondents seem to be equating black writers with inferior quality materials. I do not believe this is the case. Rather, they are saying the development of the skills takes time which, for various reasons, is not available. This will be considered in more detail in the next section.

The development of skills

Ephraim Homan from the Northern Cape speaks for most provincial ABET practitioners when he says *It would build the capacity and skills in our province. At this point we are dependent on outsiders.*

Specific skills are described by some respondents, such as raising awareness and developing language skills (Emily Mnisi). Derek Peo says it makes sense from an Affirmative Action perspective, and that it would break the reputation for élitism that materials development field has. He and Phindi Sigodi lament the way in which materials development is locked into a smaller and smaller circle of professional writers and experts. This corroborates Roger's findings described in Chapter Two.

Practical Problems

While generally supportive of bringing in more grassroots writers, respondents also warned of problems. The first problem is time, as mentioned by Derek Peo, above. In the ideal world, materials development would be an ongoing process, but in the real world commercial and political pressures put demands on publishers to finish books as quickly as possible. So many materials developers do not believe they can afford to provide trainee writers with the time and mentoring they need. Another problem is financial resources. Peo points out that local writers are essential if materials are targeted at those communities, but not practical for a national market. Paul Mremi says there is a big need for books in African languages, but there is not enough money to train writers, editors and managers who can work in African languages.

Finally, there is the problem of skills. Phindi Sigodi gives the example of the Eastern Cape, whose provincial NLC want to revitalise their materials development unit, but lack a clear strategy. My discussions with provincial respondents backs this up. One actually admitted that he could not recommend any ABET practitioners from his province as potential materials developers.

The need for African writers is only partly determined by philosophical, political and development concerns. The economics of publishing and training are also important, and in these hard times, they will likely take precedence.

4.2.4 Is there a need for Affirmative Action or Capacity-Building?

> *We are not interested in empowering the formerly disadvantaged, but those who are disadvantaged now. This is the vast majority of South Africans.. The best way to help them is to provide excellent materials. That is our priority.*

Karin Griessel sums up the feelings of most respondents. The urgent need for materials puts demands on materials developers that supersede their political commitment to developing skills. Phindi Sigodi describes a similar situation at the NLC:

> *The reality is that there is a priority on getting the work done. NLC draws heavily on consultants, quick fixes. An Affirmative Action policy is on paper, but I am not sure how conscious we are of it. My understanding is that people from the communities we serve are involved, to go with our "learner-centred" jargon, and black people are working in organisations. But I do not want to be superficial or glorify the situation.*

For Phutuma Manyathi, there was frustration that Affirmative Action was implemented in his workplace without proper planning or consultation. *To me, Affirmative Action is identifying gaps and trying to plaster those cracks. It is also about asking the person what s/he wants. This did not happen.*

Interviewees understood capacity building as linked to Affirmative Action, but with a focus on organisations rather than individuals. An example is when an organisation holds workshops or training programmes to keep staff members in touch with developments in the field. The danger and frustration expressed by some is that the workshops can be irrelevant to their needs and interests. Capacity-building is not necessarily about formal accreditation. *It means to give people the skills to engage with issues and to learn,* says Phindi Sigodi. She pointed out that consultation and information provision information is vital.

Personal Experience with Affirmative Action:

While the interview respondents may not have participated in an officially labelled "Affirmative Action" programme, some feel they were affirmative action appointments, and some have experience with mentoring or training programmes geared towards improving their skills. What follows are reflections on their experience of this.

Phindi Sigodi:

In my organisation, I usually play a support role to Sheri. I should not just be receiving and responding, but feeding in and challenging. Sometimes I do not seize opportunities.

Phutuma Monyati:

I want to learn materials development. Affirmative Action would make sense if the CCE nurtured that. Instead they want to promote me to co-ordinator. So I was sent on a computer accounting course, which I am not interested in, and I told them that. It was a waste of a day. Then I was sent to RAU for an educational management course. But it had a very traditional approach to educational management, where the principal is the king. It didn't make sense. I quit after 3 out of five modules.

Paul Mremi:

Sached Trust had a policy, but there was a mind set against hiring black editors, because English is their second language. Very little has been done to empower black editors. I was the first one Sached hired. I think they hired me to go with the new dispensation. Sached hasn't grown since moving to MML.

When I was first hired, it was challenging. One of the directors who hired me was black. But when I was inside, I realised that I was the first black editor. Then we moved over to MML, there was no marketing department. I took it on because I was the only man, and more mobile. I really enjoy the travelling, and talking to people. Also, there is less homework than editing.

Affirmative Action is not an issue at Sached Books, but it is at MML. Most of the top positions are white. There is some effort, but it is not satisfactory. more needs to be done. We need more vocal people. The director of the Education division is himself the result of Affirmative Action, but he does not make Affirmative Action appointments. Affirmative Action appointees are given a lower status than whites.

But it is difficult to implement Affirmative Action when dealing with ABET materials. I was forced to hire a white sales rep because he was the only one with experience. Reps with experience in ordinary schools and MML have failed.

4.3 What skills do materials writers need?

4.3.1 The process of materials development:

All respondents involved in materials development were asked to describe the process used in their organisation to develop and publish learning materials. This helped to give a sense of what was involved, and what skills and qualities should be developed in order to work in the materials development field.

In some cases, the process is quite straight-forward. For example, with the Viva Books at Levels 1 and 2, authors submit manuscripts and the commissioning editor edits them to the level needed. She pointed out that it is quite difficult, for example, to write a good story in 500 words or less, which is what is required at Level 1. In some cases, writers are contracted to write specific stories. Here writers are chosen who have a reputation in the particular field, or who have produced good work in the past. The author submits a scenario before writing the story. The process is similar for Sached Books. They have a list of writers, editors, photographers and artists to draw on.

Viva's Level 3 books involve more people. Most of them are stories by well-known African writers adapted into easy English. Finding the right person to adapt the story is important. They are professional writers with a good feel for literature. They must keep the integrity of the story. They need good literary and English skills.

Jacana Educational Publishers have a very exacting process of text development. These environmental education materials involve highly technical content written by experts in the field. The books are then edited in-house. The message design comes from the audience, facilitated by Wits Rural Facility. Materials are then edited and sent back to the community and to experts, for comment. The experts comment on the content as well as on accessibility, length, and design.

Jacana also produces print materials for the popular health education TV drama, 'Soul City'. The process in this case is that Soul City staff provides a " message brief", including the raw content of what should be covered in the book. The information is approximately the right

length, but not in useable form. Then Jacana staff work for days and days as a team. The first draft is sent back to Soul City for approval of content.. Then Jacana does a draft design and ESL edit. The template design is very time-consuming. The first two drafts of the design are done by hand in house. The final design and style sheet is done on computer outside.

Book design and visuals:

Viva does page design and layout in-house, with two to four people involved in deciding where the illustrations should go, etc. The author can be involved in this if she/he is interested. At Sached, design work is contracted out. At Jacana, the design and text are developed at the same time. This is a very skilled process.

Piloting:

All the publishers I consulted pilot the materials before publishing. They have developed extensive networks of user groups, such as ABET classes, who are keen to try out new materials. At Viva Books, this is usually done by the writers. They go to literacy groups, and teachers look at the text, adaptation and illustrations. Viva has tested some books in schools, such as their Teachers Guide to *The Prophetess*. One writer tested her book with her own ABET class, then came back with changes.

Sached pilots almost all their materials, as well as doing market research in the form of questionnaires, attending relevant workshops, and asking people to write in. Pilots take about 6 to 12 months.

At Jacana, the pilot draft must look exactly like the real thing, with colour pictures, etc. For the Soul City books, piloting is done with focus groups co-ordinated by Soul City. For example, a Soul City pack is currently being piloted by NLC literacy groups in the Gauteng area. The importance of piloting was demonstrated by a book on AIDS. It had graphic pictures of putting on a condom and making love. People who looked at it said it was offensive, and they could not leave it around where their kids might see it, so Jacana had to make changes.

Piloting can be an empowering experience for ABET teachers and learners. To be asked for your opinion about something is to be given recognition. However, it also has it's drawbacks, as Phutuma Manyathi points out:

> *Materials developers send out questionnaires about materials as part of a pilot. But participants cannot relate to the questionnaires if they do not know what they are looking for. This is why there is often a low response rate to questionnaires. Materials selection, like materials development, is a skill that needs to be taught and practised.*

Materials Development Examples described by Respondents:

- *Just a Job* (Viva Books) was workshopped with the SA Metal Group learners in Cape Town by Patricia Baker. The learners made up a story, and the character of Wiseman. Pat Baker did an initial edit and sent it to Viva, where it was given a further edit, to get it down to 500 words. The workers did not see the story until after it was published.

- Abraham Phillips, an Afrikaans writer, went as far as Standard 4, then worked as a farm labourer. One of his stories is being developed as a Viva Book. He writes in incorrect Afrikaans, which needs a major edit, but his stories are wonderful. He knows his story will be edited.

- Viva Books is about to publish an autobiography by popular singer and former ABET learner, Nothembi Mkwebana. After Nothembi wrote her story in Isindebele, it was checked to get the general story line by a Zulu-speaking editor at Viva, then edited by Stimela Books.

- *Living with the Land* (Jacana): The issues to be covered were identified by a Kruger Park official who has been working in the field for 37 years. It was then researched by Wits Rural Facility with communities involved. Then it was edited and designed in-house, followed by the rigorous piloting described above.

- Emily Mnisi described a learner writing project that was conducted in the old DET system: Organisers watched a video developed at Lancaster University, which

promoted learner writing and explained how to do it, including how to put a book together. Then they were encouraged to try writing their own stories. Some of the organisers took the process into the classroom. This proved to be very empowering for the writers. *They are at the state where they don't believe they can design anything for others to read.* The organisers met regularly to discuss their experience. The materials got as far as the typing stage. Then the year ended and the people who were involved did not come back the following year. Unfortunately, the materials were not saved. Emily also developed materials for working with Deaf adults, where she combined her experience with that of educators who work with deaf children, and got DET support to run a project in one of the schools. The Leaders Handbook was informed by the project.

It seems that this kind of project was rather revolutionary for the DET, where practitioners have been kept in professional pigeon holes. *I was not allowed to develop materials. We were a different sub-directorate, and had no powers. To get around this, we called them readers.*

- Jack Ngubeni has developed some Zulu materials to help slow learners. The materials have never been published, but his wife uses them in the classroom. Jack believes level one is the most difficult level to teach and develop materials for. *You build up from what exists, using experience as an educator. You start by seeing how people struggle, then you see what will help them learn.*

It is difficult to describe what qualities take a project through to publication and distribution. A good story helps, but sometimes it takes an expert eye to find that diamond in the rough, so being at the right place at the right time also helps, as does having connections. From the experience of Sached and Viva, being a trusted writer who has performed well in the past can help to get you consideration for a particular job.

4.3.2 What skills and qualities does a writer/materials producer need?

Developing materials takes experience, thinking, time out there. It is difficult for an ordinary person in the classroom to write materials.(Karin Griessol)

There seems to be agreement that materials writers and editors learn most of their skills on the job, and that there is no shortcut to being a skilled materials developer. However, the specifics are less clear. Jacana and Viva recognise writing for an ABET audience as specialised, while MML does not. MML looks for editors who are able to correct language.

Some interviewees from the ABET field are under the impression that most materials developers have post-graduate degrees in linguistics, discourse analysis, text analysis, etc. In fact, of the interviewees involved in materials development, a far more common background is in teaching, either in the formal sector, in ABET or in both. One respondent listed this as a crucial pre-condition for good materials development.

The original research question for this section was "What skills and qualities do you look for when recruiting a writer?" This had to be abandoned. The publishers I talked to all choose their writer either from the story they have submitted or by past experience. If publisher want a story on a certain subject, they would choose someone who they knew could do the job. Or they solicit manuscripts and contract an editor they know can do the job.

In spite of this, they all had clear ideas about what skills and knowledge are needed to do the work. Here is a list of the skills most respondents thought should be included in a training course for writers.

Understanding materials development:

Some of the experts recommended that the course begin with an overview of the process of materials development and the field. Although, for an initial course, trainees would not be expected to gain skills in all aspects, s/he must understand where how tasks relate, and gain a critical appreciation of the strengths and weaknesses of different materials. Such an overview would include:

- Exposure to a wide variety of materials.
- Exposure to different methods and processes for developing materials.
- How ABET materials differ from materials for a wider readership.
- An overview of the whole process of materials development.

Research Skills:

Research skills were recommended by both experts and potential trainees. Gathering information regarding needs, levels and interests is a first step in any materials development process. Field-testing/piloting and evaluation are vital for quality control.

Consultation skills:

A materials developer needs to deal with a range of user groups and stakeholders, including learners, teachers, content experts, communities and publishers. Each group demands a different approach. Specific skills in this process include:

- Involving the grassroots in a meaningful way.
- Giving and receiving feedback to other writers.
- Identifying problems in materials.

Writing:

> *Black writers have a tendency to write in very difficult, convoluted and even archaic English. Perhaps it is because of lack of confidence. Even Sowetan writers assume a much higher reading level than their readers have. So it is very important to teach writers to write in clear accessible language. This is more difficult to write in than high-level English. It is a skill that can be learnt, but it takes a long time and it is arduous.* (Zann Hoad)

Most trainees would not enter the field if they did not have some natural ability in this area.

However, skills must be developed and improved, especially in relation to the specialised nature of ABET materials, and especially for writers working in their second or third language. Potential trainees expressed interest in developing these skills. Experts prioritised the following aspects of the writing process:

- Planning and organising the material
- Writing/adapting materials in language that is accessible to new readers
- Achieving an appropriate language style and tone
- Working with drafts

Improving existing materials:

These topics are all specifically applicable to educational materials development. They were identified by both potential trainees and experts:

- Editing
- Translation
- Adaptation for different audiences
- Re-writing in clear accessible language
- Creating educational activities to go with texts.

Visual literacy:

The design and visuals of an educational piece are integrally linked to the text, and plays an important role in making ABET materials understandable and alive. Two of the experts identified the importance of this topic, and potential trainees were particularly interested in learning to design books.

- Understanding the importance of visuals in ABET materials
- Creating, choosing and using appropriate visuals.
- Basic book and page design.

Practical Issues:

These issues were not identified by potential trainees, but were particularly important to one of the publishing experts, who often encounters writers with unrealistic expectations. A module dealing with the following issues would provide the trainee with an important base of understanding:

- cost-effectiveness and costing
- dealing with publishing
- the finances of publishing
- legal issues and copyright

4.4 What skills and experience do potential trainees have?

ABET Experience:

Over half of the 31 respondents to the questionnaire had worked in their present position in ABET for four years or more. They had also been trained in various ABET methodology courses, including Communications, Numeracy, Social Studies, Life Skills and Science.

Education:

The respondents' education level ranged from Standard Six (2) to tertiary education (9) with the largest number (14) having reached Standard Ten. Respondents had participated in a wide variety of courses and workshops, including ABET methodology, IEB courses, Voter Education, Theatre for Development, Agriculture and Computers.

Experience with Materials Production:

Twenty one respondents indicated that they had no experience of materials development, but they do have skills: 28 indicated that they have writing skills in 8 languages, 17 have research skills, 15 translation skills, 16 in course planning, 10 in materials assessment and 11 in field-testing. Smaller numbers (6 or less) have skills in photography, adaptation, art and desk-top publishing. Many of these skills are different from those listed by interviewees.

4.5 What are the needs of potential trainees?

4.5.1 Do they need training?

Judging by the enthusiastic affirmative response to the questionnaires, one would think that there are a lot of potential writers out there. Phutuma Manyathi gave a personal plea for this, in that he has been asking for guidance and does not know where to go. Phindi Sigodi has had requests from provincial NLC groups. Affiliates have said they want more ownership over materials, and to take more responsibility, but do not have a clear strategy. Emily Mnisi says such a training will raise black writers awareness of issues related to materials development and develop their inner voice.

Derek Peo was more sceptical:

> *I thought there had been a lot of efforts to develop skills through educative participation. The processes have always been done with the best of intentions, and they have been time consuming and expensive. The products were good, better than with other processes. PABET* (Progressive Adult Basic Education and Training, an NGO in Umtata) *tried to do some materials development. They came out with workbooks. Not wonderful, but useable. What has happened to that project? I think the problems were with post-project planning and support, and that they are not long-term.*

From Northern Cape, Ephraim Homan gave us an enthusiastic "yes" to materials development training in his province, because such a programme will build provincial capacity and lessen their reliance on outsiders.

4.5.2 What skills do materials writers need to learn?

> *I found that trainee teachers at Soweto Teachers College (after matric plus 3 years of teacher training) could not produce materials. Their creativity had been squashed. Also, people do not have good educational models to draw on, so they fall back on rote learning. This situation hasn't changed. So a training course should build up their creativity and confidence.* (Karin Griessol)

The questionnaire listed nineteen possible topics for a training course, and asked respondents to indicate preferences. Potential trainees chose the following content areas in their questionnaires: working with learner writing, book design, desk-top publishing and writing, editing and research skills. Participants in the trainee focus group added more global skills,

such as producing course books, stories and poems for adults, ..tifying levels, and understanding the publishing process. These choices represent both felt needs of potential trainees and perceptions of what is required in materials development. They must be balanced with expert opinions of what skills are needed to do the job.

In the next question, respondents were asked to choose the three most important topics. The highest number of choices went to Editing and Desk-top publishing, followed by Learner Writing and Research skills. In third place was "ABET methodologies" and "Choosing appropriate visuals".

It is difficult to know whether respondents chose these topics because they looked interesting or because they were a perceived need. However, it is clear that there is a big interest in the technological aspects of materials production. Although knowledge of technology is important, the choices do not link with skills mentioned above, such as creativity, research and visual literacy. It is also notable that there is only a little interest in writing in accessible language.

4.5.3 Logistical Needs:

Section 13 in the questionnaire asked for preferences regarding timing, location and recognition of training. Here are some of the findings:

- 19 respondents said the course must lead to a certificate or diploma. This was also mentioned in the interviews. The call for certification becomes even more urgent as the debates and requirements around the NQF cross the country.

- 16 respondents said they would eventually like to work full-time in materials development.

- 15 respondents prefer part-time training or study so that they can continue to work, and 14 said their organisation would be able to release them for part-time study.
- 12 respondents wanted training in their own community, but 12 were willing to go overseas for training.

These responses point to a need for a course leading to accreditation which is taught on a part-time basis. The dramatic variation in location preferences probably means some sort of block release system, because it would be practically impossible to run training courses in communities throughout the country.

4.6 How should the new skills be taught?

4.6.1 How did respondents learn their skills?

This question was asked of the respondents from publishers to shed some light on how writing and editing skills are developed. There were some surprises and one common theme: Everyone did most of their learning on the job.

Paul Mremi:

> *I came in as a school teacher (had been an English teacher at Barnato Park). I applied for the job at Sached Trust, through a newspaper advertisement. Then I learned by in-house training. The Publications manager took me through the basics of editing as we went along. I also went to PASA courses.*

Karin Griessel:

> *I taught for 4 years, then trained teachers for 15 years at Soweto College. We developed and tested our own materials there. I was also a volunteer teacher for USWE in Johannesburg for 5 years. My first work with Viva Books was a contract to write a teachers' guide to The Prophetess.*

Zann Hoad:

> *Jacana was my first job. I learned by doing, by trial and error. And we learned together. We consulted with people who know. We learned the process.*

4.6.2 How should the training course be organised?

All respondents had useful ideas on this, gained from personal experience in publishing, training or in ABET. Here is their advice:

1. Make clear choices about who will participate and what the entry requirements will be.

2. Decide on the purpose of your course. Is it to train fiction writers, script-writers of social drama for radio and TV, or worksheets for adult literacy? Do not make it too generalised. Hone skills for something specific.

3. Training needs to be step-by-step: Do not throw them in at the deep end. Start with a workshop by giving an overview of the whole process of materials development. Introduce them to important vocabulary. Then go back and teach them step by step, starting with the very concrete and building up.

4. The course should include producing a product. After you have had input on creativity, writing skills, etc. put together a publication, such as a set of worksheets to go with a reader, or a book on social history or culture. This would provide goal-oriented learning, and participants would know what happens to their work.

5. Recognise that this is long-term, dedicated training. Stick to small products, such as readers at first, and do not make unrealistic demands. Multi-skilling is all well and good up to a point - but maybe it is better to specialise with separate learning paths. You must not have unrealistic expectations about time frames.

6. When the trainee is on the job, assign full-time staff to support them. It would be useful to create a series of guidelines for in-service trainers and mentors, explaining how to monitor, support, give assignments, etc.

7. A training programme should be linked to the NQF, so that the trainees get a qualification.

4.6.3 What skills and information should be included?

Respondents stressed hard practical skills, including research skills (evaluating materials, field-testing and giving feedback) consulting effectively with learners, community groups, experts, and editorial committees, understanding and dealing with publishers (financing, royalty payments, dispelling unrealistic expectations) and. Lifeskills (marketing yourself, freelancing

and selling your services in preparation for jobs that are scarce). In this case, there was little mention of the details of materials development, excepts for one respondent, who mentioned "Making materials accessible and clear." These responses, based on years of personal experience, contrast with those of the potential trainees, who were more concerned with developing learner writing and desk-top publishing.

4.7 Conclusion

This process has helped me to define the needs and possibilities that can shape an effective materials development course. In the next chapter, that course described, based on the information collected.

But first, a major consideration should be whether there will be jobs for these materials developers when they finish the course. Tuchten and Nong (1996) place materials developers towards the thin end of the triangle in their predictions for future work in ABET. This was a concern for Derek Peo when he recommended a module on lifeskills for materials developers. The last word on this goes to publishers who may or may not be in the position to hire writers. Here is what their answer to the question "Will there be jobs for trained materials writers?"

Paul Mremi:

> *Publishers are not good employers. There will be a problem with setting salaries. Entry level is very low for desk editors under the guise of training. It is an advantage to publishers that there are no fully-trained editors.*

Zann Hoad:

> *Some organisations, such as Soul City, have clear objectives around training black writers. Also, educational drama might be a place where people can get work.*

Karin Griessol:

> *It depends: Are you working to improve teachers or to develop writers? There is work in ABET, but it is very difficult to sustain yourself as a writer.*

Chapter Five: A Proposed Training Course for ABET Materials Developers

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter reported on the results of the research project, specifically on information gathered for the research. This included an analysis of a questionnaire to potential trainees and interviews with experts in the fields of ABET and publishing.

Another outcome of the research is the development of a training course plan. This chapter draws on both literature and advice from respondents to propose learning outcomes and a structure for a course in materials development. The literature provided a broad overview of principles and models for both materials development and the training of materials developers. Respondents to interviews and questionnaires gave more specific ideas about what would work and what to prioritise when planning a materials development training course in South Africa.

5.2 Proposed Materials Development Course

The proposed course is one year in length, with a block-release format. Trainees will return to their workplace between modules, and will be required to complete assignments between blocks. There are fourteen modules all together. The modules are approximately equal in weight, although adjustments in time may need to be made to accommodate participants' different skill levels.

Pre-course training:

- Computer literacy and basic word-processing.(if necessary)
- English language upgrading and support (if necessary)

Module One: Introduction: The Course and The Context

Content:

- Overview of the course-structure and philosophy; introduction to course leaders, resource-people and other participants.
- Information on course requirements
- Team-building activities.
- The sociopolitical context of ABET materials development in South Africa.
- Links between adult education and materials writing.

Outcomes: (each trainee will .....)

- Understand the structure and requirements of the training course
- Demonstrate familiarity with the ABET context in South Africa
- Be familiar with a variety of ABET materials available.
- Appreciate the vast experience and resources that have been developed over the years of ABET.
- Complete a learning contract.

Assignment:

Complete a learning contract

Module Two: The steps in book production.

Content:

- Panel discussion on the basics of book production
- Hands-on demonstration of the different steps.

Outcomes:

- Understand the process of publication, from initial research to final production and see where smaller steps fit in.
- Describe the steps of book production
- Demonstrate familiarity with different methods of producing materials.
- Recognise the importance of quality control in book production.
- Recognise the differences between ABET materials and those written for a broader audience.

Assignment:

Report on a visit to a commercial or NGO publishing house.

Module Three: Towards a Strategy for Materials Selection: A Critical Look at ABET materials

Content:

- Overview of language development, reading theory and ABET methodologies.
- Description and identification of ABET Levels
- Examples of good and bad materials at a variety of levels.
- Classroom observation: materials in use.
- Critical Language Awareness
- Critical examination of various ABET materials.
- Materials selection practice.

Outcomes:

- Explain the role materials play in ABET learning
- Distinguish between good quality and poor quality materials.
- Articulate the elements that make for quality in materials.
- Categorise materials according to level.
- Make selections based on judgements of materials.

Assignment:

Write and present a critique of two sets of materials.

Module Four: Writing I: An introduction to writing educational materials

Content:

- Demonstrations and exercises to teach and reinforce the important elements of writing educational materials.

Outcomes:

- Demonstrate an understanding of strategies for good writing.
  - identify the elements that make up a piece of clear writing
  - evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of a piece of writing.
- Demonstrate skill in writing.

Assignment:

Write a one-page story with educational content, suitable for a newsletter.

Module Five: Research I: Needs Assessment

Content:

- Introduction to research design and methodology
- Needs assessment using the REFLECT/UNESCO adaptation of Participatory Rural Appraisal
- Field trip to conduct a mini-needs assessment.

Outcomes:

- Recognise and justify the importance of undertaking detailed qualitative research prior to a publishing project.
- Describe and discuss the principles and methods of basic qualitative research.
- Experience the PRA approach to needs assessment in materials development.
- Design and carry out a needs assessment.

Assignment:

Each trainee will research the ABET materials needs in their communities or workplaces.

Module Six: Writing II: Plain Language

Content:

- Presentations by plain language consultants in various fields (eg. legal)
- Workshop and practice writing materials accessible to adults with limited reading ability (ABET levels 1 to 3).

Outcomes:

- Recognise the importance of plain language in the South African context.
- Identify the most important principles for clear, accessible language
- Distinguish between materials that are written with and without these principles in mind.
- Critique materials that are not written in an accessible way
- Re-write pieces of writing in clear language.
- Produce a new piece of writing in clear language.
- Apply these principles to writing in African languages.

Assignment:

Re-write a short informational/practical text to accommodate adults at a Level 3 reading level.

Module Seven: Writers Workshops

Content:

- Presentations and Demonstrations on Learner writing and community publishing.
- Trainees assist in the planning of a two-day writers workshop for ABET learners (in advance)
- Co-facilitate the workshop
- Evaluate the workshop.

Outcomes:

- Recognise the value of learner writing and grassroots publishing.
- Experience a writers's workshop.
  - report on the experience.
  - evaluate the workshop
- Reproduce the process in own community/workplace/learning group.

Assignment:

Plan and present a similar workshop in participant's own community or workplace. Prepare a three-page written or audio-visual report on the workshop.

Module Eight: Editing

Content:

- Demonstrations and practical exercises to teach editing skills.
- Practice editing own and each others' written material.
- Structured feedback sessions.

Outcomes:

- Analyse the strengths and weaknesses of a piece of writing.
- Suggest improvements
- Demonstrate attention to detail
- Give clear constructive feedback in written form.

Assignment:

Edit texts from writers' workshops

Module Nine: Visual Literacy and Basic Book design.

Content:

- Presentations and practical activities to demonstrate important principles of designing materials for new readers.
- Use texts developed at writers' workshops to produce mock-ups of readers.
- Observe the process of layout and design on the computer.

Outcomes:

- Understand the importance of visuals and clear design in materials for ABET learners.
- Understand how text and visuals go together.
- Choose appropriate visuals.
- Ensure that visuals are appropriate in terms of culture, geography, gender, class, etc.
- Design a clearly laid out mock-up draft of a page or booklet for new readers.

Assignment:

Create draft designs for materials developed in Module Seven

Module Ten: Research II: Field-testing and Piloting

Content:

- Workshop on piloting and field-testing.
- Field-trip: practice above in selected classrooms.

Outcomes:

- Recognise and show appreciation for the contribution that can be made by readers/learners/communities.
- Demonstrate listening skills
- Accurately reflect feedback from pilots
- Design and carry out a field test.

Assignment:

Pilot readers produced in Module Nine in own communities.

Module Eleven: Writing III: Creating challenging, readable materials.

Content:

- Exercises and demonstrations focusing on style and tone of writing.
- Developing educational materials to support text and build skills.

Outcomes:

- Distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate styles of writing for given situations.
- Demonstrate this understanding in a piece of writing.
- Be familiar with a variety of exercises and activities:
- State the purpose of each activity
- Choose activities appropriate to a given level, audience, and set of outcomes.
- Develop new activities for stated levels, audiences and outcomes.

Assignment:

Develop a set of worksheets and activities to accompany readers developed in Module Nine.

Module Twelve: Translation and Adaptation

- Content and outcomes to be developed in consultation with professional translators.

Module Thirteen: Quality Control

Content:

- Training and practice in proof-reading.
- Presentations and demonstrations of technical details that need to be checked in publishing.

Outcomes:

- Demonstrate ability to pay attention to detail.
- Understand importance of proof-reading.
- Demonstrate skill in proof-reading.

Assignment:

Complete a proof-reading exercise.

Conclusion: Wrap-up

Content:

- Practical issues
- Employment opportunities
- Course evaluation
- Trainee assessment and completion of Final Assignment

Outcomes:

- Be prepared to take training further in the workplace or in other employment opportunities.
- Provide effective input on the course evaluation
- Complete all assessment tasks.

Assignment:

To be devised by trainee in consultation with trainers and sponsoring organisation.

5. 3 Logistical Issues:

The following issues were identified in the research and need to be considered in the staging of the course:

5.3.1 Course Structure:

The research indicates that a common denominator of experienced ABET writers is experience both as educators and materials developers. Therefore the course structure should allow plenty of experiential learning. On-the-job training would be ideal. Failing that, the Action Training Model, described in Chapter Two of this study (Bhola, 1984, Rogers, 1994), an approach which advocates workshops interspersed with workplace assignments has been chosen.

One respondent advised that the course should be long enough to allow for skills development, and that we should not over-estimate the skill level of trainees. Specific types of materials should be produced by trainees during the course. We should start with small products.

5.3.2 Certification:

Both trainees and experts identified certification as an important factor in such a course. For this reason, the course would need to be certified by South African Qualifications Authority. Association with a tertiary institution is not necessary for certification, but beneficial for other reasons.

5.3.3 Financial Support:

Most potential trainees stated a preference for a combination of work and study. For this reason, the course has been designed on a "block release" basis. The original plan was to have one month blocks of study, followed by time in the workplace. The trainee focus group objected to such a lengthy block of study on the grounds that it would be difficult for parents to be away from home for so long and that employers would not release them. This may point to the need for employer training and support, as demonstrated in the CBDP courses (see chapter 2), and for careful selection of trainees who would be doing materials development in their workplaces.

Another concern in the focus group was the cost of the course. For the first course, it might be possible to get special funding through a developmental grant. With a focus on Locally Generated Materials (Rogers 1994, see Chapter Two), the programme might be particularly interesting to foreign donors.

5.3.4 Employment Opportunities?

Most potential trainees were concerned about whether there would be jobs in materials development when the course was finished. This question does not have a definite answer (see chapter 4). However, there definitely needs to be a lifeskills section, focusing on marketing one's skills and surviving as a freelance writer.

5.3.5 Trainee selection

South African experience indicates that trainee selection should be based on experience, writing samples, and possibly an entrance test. ABET experience should be an asset. Some respondents advised that selection should pay careful attention to gender balance. This is a

sensible suggestion, given the number of ABET practitioners who are women, and having a large number of women trainees would also help to gain support for the course from donors.

There is a call to build provincial capacity in all aspects of ABET (including materials development) in order to make rural areas less reliant on outside experts. This could mean either having representatives from each province on a central/national training committee, or holding courses in each province. One respondent recommended that a stakeholders committee be set up to oversee the course. This could be linked to the CBDP approach, which is to bring representatives from each trainee's agency into the process (see Chapter Two).

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter has drawn on advice from experts and potential trainees who participated in a survey, interviews and focus groups as well as local and international literature in the field of ABET, materials development and training. The resulting proposal for a training course should be viewed as a launching pad for discussion and further development. The next chapter will summarise some of the issues raised in the research and propose further work on the course.

Chapter Six: Discussion of the Results and Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

> In my experience, curriculum development is more akin to bonsai than carpentry. Courses of study are nurtured and grown, not precut, to be jointed and fixed together at some predetermined date. The process of defining what counts as valid, worthwhile knowledge is as much creative and organic as it is political. And it should not be rushed. (Yates, 1996:14)

This advice from Chris Yates confirms my experience with previous training projects. Most of them grew organically without cast-in-stone plans in place. But they were often too organic, in that trainers did not have the time or resources to plan and research thoroughly. So, when I set out on this project, I thought it would be very exciting to do that research by finding out what was happening in the world, and by talking to local experts and potential trainees. And it has indeed been an exciting process.

My research aim was to develop a high quality, experience-based, accredited training programme that would bring black literacy workers into the ABET materials writing field. I believe the plan described in the previous chapter, developed after a review of the literature and qualitative research, can do that. However, in an ABET context which is fluid and riddled with political forces, it remains to be seen whether the course will ever be implemented.

The p. esent chapter will discuss the research results, conclude and make recommendations for the futu're. It will begin by reflecting on tensions which came up in the interviews.

6.2 Discussion of the Results: Tensions that Arose in the Interviews

6.2.1 Delivering the Goods: People vs Product

This has been raised elsewhere in the report, but it bears repeating, because it was a big concern to respondents. Most of them are extremely well-meaning individuals, often with a political background, who really do want to open up the field to black writers. They welcomed the development of a training course, and were keen to participate through

workshops or internships if funding became available. But they all said their primary responsibility was to the end-user of their product.

There are two ways this focus on product can get in the way of a training course. The first is time.

> *"You must accept the fact that it will take a long time. Trainees need to develop hard skills and understand the dynamic process of the publishing world."* (Derek Peo)

Respondents at Viva and Jacana both pointed out that the very specialised nature of their work made trainee involvement difficult.

> *"The Jacana process is highly skilled, because the design is so closely linked to the text. We tried to train people to do it, but we were not successful. We did not have the capacity, both money or people, to give the trainees the attention they needed. They need 24-hour support. A bigger publisher might be able to do it."* (Zann Hoad)

Bigger publishers have additional financial resources, and that is the other problem. Any kind of training is expensive, but materials development particularly so. It needs equipment, paper, skilled trainers (who are probably busy working on materials) the very expensive publishing process and mistakes. They need to be made as part of a learning process.

6.2.2 Meaningful participation vs. window dressing:

ABET practitioners often comment on the unsatisfactory nature of one-off workshops or consultations. In rural writers' workshops, grassroots participants provide writers with content and legitimacy. In return, they usually get credited and might even learn something. But they do not necessarily leave the workshop with skills to go forward, or have a say over the final product.

Some respondents pointed out that it is difficult to decide what degree of educative participation is desirable. For example, at some point editorial decisions need to be made, and trainees do not always have the skills to make them. The usual procedure is to develop the rough content with people on the ground, then go away and polish it up on your own. Participants sometimes see the almost final product, and sometimes get a chance to comment on it. Is this meaningful participation?

> *"ECALP developed two training modules dedicated to using Learn with Echo in their teaching. This worked very well. But when the course books were produced, it was the organisation and its employees that benefited. The result is not necessarily tokenism, but the power relations did not change. Educators stayed educators."* (Derek Peo)

The issue here is not what materials get produced, but who develops them and how. Traditionally, educators are relatively low on the ABET hierarchy, while materials developers and trainers are higher up. Refer to Chapter 1 for more discussion on this issue. And white people have traditionally congregated in the upper rungs of the ladder. This needs to change from both ends. An educator should have the option of developing and progressing in his/her chosen field, whether it be as a facilitator, materials developer or manager.

6.2.3 Shifting (or not budging) power relationships

Some would argue that this is more than just a tension: It pervades all our work and life in South Africa. It came up in several ways through the interviews. The most predominant themes were materials development as an élitist activity, and resentment against white led activities and institutions.

There was concern among ABET practitioners that materials development is locked into a smaller and smaller circle, dominated by experts. Yet at the same time, there was recognition that not everyone can do the work. Derek Peo believes that the circle will be even tighter with the increasing demand for materials that meet levels, outcomes and learning areas described in government policy (DOE, 1997):

> *You are going to have it in the hands of experts who will make sure outcomes are covered, support facilitators, etc. It will likely be white-led. So ABET facilitators will do readers and worksheets, nothing more. If you want black writers, it will take 3-4 years.*

The reality is that materials development is largely a white-led activity, and there is some resentment of this. Emily Mnisi believes there is a strong feeling against partnerships with NGOs because most decision-makers in NGOs are white. She feels that even materials in African languages are obviously written/designed by whites and do not reflect African culture. I did not get agreement from other interviewees on this, although Paul Mreni admitted that

the writers and editors list that Sached/MML draws on is mostly white. To get a balance, they try to draw on black photographers and artists.

It is interesting to note that photographers are often trained in the media. This is rare for ABET workers, who usually come from teaching. However, the idea of a placement within and educational media project is interesting, and will be explored further in 6.3

In terms of training, there was a criticism that materials development seems to be placed at the same level of expertise as research, which is associated with a post-graduate level of education. Some interviewees thought it should be available at earlier stages.

I support the introduction of materials development at an early stage, even if it is simply an exposure to the process and participation in writers' workshops or piloting teams. However, there are more sophisticated forms of materials development which demand higher levels of expertise. For this, there should be a thorough professional training, as there is for research.

Two questions beg discussion here:

1) Who should do the training? There are different possibilities for this, including tertiary institutions, publishers, consultants and NGOs. I believe a partnership between various groups would be ideal.

2) How should the training be done? The course described in Chapter 5 combines different approaches, and I believe it would be the most practical and effective at this point in time, but there are many others.

6.3 Variations and Extensions on the Course

The course proposed in this report is only one possibility, and one would hope it is only the beginning of a career path in materials development. The following are some ideas for variations and extentions on the basic course:

1) A course with a different time frame, designed to meet the needs of trainees who cannot fit into the full-time block format. For example, a distance education model

could be developed in collaboration with UNISA, or, at the other extreme, a full-time one-year course could be developed.

2) Apprenticeships could be arranged with publishing houses, newspapers or publishing NGO's. These could be run concurrently with a training programme or as a follow-up. It should be a requirement for accreditation, with an assessment procedure built in to the programme.

3) Specialisations could follow the basic course. Some possibilities include:

- educational media
- ABET course development
- subject specialisations
- language specialisations
- editing

4) Another way to follow-up would be to provide a higher qualification, with the requisite higher complexity of skills.

5) It is also possible that this course or part of the course could serve as a more advanced level of the courses offered by the University of Natal, USWE/Peninsula Technikon or UNISA described in Chapter Two. These courses provide certificates or diplomas in ABET Practice. This could take trainees to another level.

6) In co-operation with broader publishing training programmes, such as PASA or the Institute for the Advancement of Journalism, a course could be developed as an ABET specialisation within a more general writer development course.

7) The course could be piloted in one of the provinces. The aim would be to develop a materials development team to serve the needs of learners and providers in that province. Another possible long-term product would be to develop capacity in materials development training. This is in keeping with the NLC's plans for provincial writing projects, described in Chapter Two.

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8) A course to train trainers of materials writers could be developed.

6.5 The Way Forward

If a training course in materials development is to get off the ground, the following steps need to be taken:

1) Secure funding for the project.
2) Appoint a management committee of interested, representative and hard-working stakeholders to direct the project.
3) Set up a partnership with a relevant tertiary institution that will provide the course with a home, logistical support, and accreditation.
4) Appoint staff and resource people. Decisions need to be made about whether to use full-time staff or contract people for specialty modules, or both.
4) Advertise for students and devise a system of selection. Decide on selection criteria (skills? education level? geographical representation? language? gender?)
5) Develop a course plan and an evaluation plan.
6) Work out logistics: accommodation and transport for students, support services, course dates, etc.

6.6 Conclusion

The materials development training course described in this study is based on an extensive literature review and consultations with a range of practitioners in ABET training and publishing. It reflects current thinking in the field, expressed needs of potential trainees and the creativity and experience of local and international practitioners. It is also in harmony with the principles of adult education and outcomes-based education.

It may happen that political and economic forces will conspire against the development of the proposed course. For example, in times of limited resources, the decision might be made to favour levels of education other than ABET, other professional sectors within ABET, or simply to produce materials quickly without a time-consuming capacity-building component. For example, as I write, the Ministry of Education is holding discussions with interested parties for a campaign to eliminate illiteracy within eighteen months. Aside from the dubious

pedagogical logic of such a campaign, it does not leave a lot of space for inclusivity or capacity-building around materials selection and development.

I hope that that decision-makers see the value of a high-quality, experience-based course for materials developers, and that they support it. If so, this report will provide a useful starting point for planning and development. I also hope I will be here when that happens, because I would love to be part of such a course.

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Appendices

Appendices

Appendix 1: Questionnaire: Training in ABET Materials Development

Appendix 2: Summary Notes on a Focus Group Meeting

Appendix 1:

Questionnaire:
Training in ABET Materials Development

This questionnaire is for ABET teachers and co-ordinators who have an interest in materials development. We want to know what you are doing in materials development now, what skills you have and what kind of training or support you need to make it easier for you to develop materials . Thank you for answering the questions.

A. Information about you:

1. Name: _____

2. Organisation/Address: _____

   _____

   _____

3. Your job: _____

4. How long have you worked in that organisation?

   _____

5. Have you had other jobs in ABET or literacy? Yes / No

   Please list: _____

   _____

   _____

B. Information about your education and experience:

6. What level of education do you have?

   _____

7. Please list any training courses or workshops you have attended:

8. Please tick the subjects you specialise in: (☑)

☐ Communication in Mother-tongue (African languages or Afrikaans)

☐ Communication in English

☐ Communication in Afrikaans

☐ Numeracy

☐ Lifeskills

☐ Social Studies

☐ Science and Technology

☐ Other. Please describe: _____

_____

_____

9. Have you produced any materials for ABET? ☐ Yes ☐ No
In what language(s)? _____

_____

10. Please tick the kind of materials you have worked on:

☐ Worksheets ☐ Learner stories

☐ Your own stories ☐ Readers

☐ Workbooks ☐ Magazine or newspaper articles

☐ Newsletters ☐ Educational Newspaper supplements

☐ Training Manuals ☐ Other: _____

_____

11. Please tick the skills you have:

☐ Writing. What Language(s)?_____

_____

☐ Research ☐ Editing ☐ Translation

☐ Adaptation ☐ Drawing/Artwork ☐ Photography

☐ Planning a book or course ☐ Materials assessment

☐ Field-testing materials ☐ Desk Top Publishing

☐ Other: _____

_____

_____

C. Your suggestions for training:

12. a) Here are some possible topics for a course on materials development. Please tick the areas you need training in.

☐ The ABET Context (information on national policy, etc.)

☐ ABET methodologies and language development

☐ Principles and foundations of Adult Education

☐ Introduction to copyright and legal requirements

☐ Research skills: audience, content, appropriate language and language level

☐ Writing: planning and structuring your writing

☐ Writing in clear accessible language

☐ Writing exercises and worksheets

☐ Translation

☐ Adapting materials for different audiences (eg. urban to rural)

Suggestions for training, continued:

☐ Learner Writing (helping learners to write stories; editing and selecting learner stories)

☐ Field-testing and giving feedback

☐ Proofreading (checking for mistakes)

☐ Editing

☐ Basic book design and production (page design, making materials visually accessible, understanding the steps in book production)

☐ Choosing and developing appropriate visuals (photos, drawings, charts, etc.) to support the text and to present information.

☐ Desk-top publishing using a computer

b) Please list <u>three</u> things from the list above that you are most interested in learning.

_____

_____

c) What other things do you need to learn?

_____

_____

_____

13. Your preferences for timing, location, and recognition: Please tick the statements that are <u>true for you.</u>

☐ I prefer part-time training or study so that I can continue to work

☐ I prefer full-time study for up to six months.

☐ I prefer full-time study for up to one year.

☐ I want to study by correspondence.

☐ I want to get training in my own community.

Preferences, continued:

☐ I want to get training in my own province.

☐ I am willing to go to another place in South Africa for training.

☐ I am willing to go overseas for training.

☐ My organisation can release me for part-time training or study.

☐ My organisation can release me for full-time training or study.

☐ My organisation can provide financial support while I am studying.

☐ I want to work full-time in materials development.

☐ I just want to develop materials for my own learners and project.

☐ The course or training programme must lead to a certificate or diploma.

Comments: _____

Appendix 2: Summary Notes of comments and answers to questions asked in Focus Group

Focus Group: Further training in Materials Development

Adult Education Development Resource Unit
Certificate in Adult Education Course
20/5/ 1997

Questions are reproduced in Bold letters,
with answers and notes below in regular letters.

1. **Now that you have had an overview of materials development, what else do you want to learn?**

- how to write a book - ABET books, course books, books for lower levels.
- how to write poems for adults
- how to identify levels
  how to publish

2. **If you took another course in materials development, what would be your purpose?**

2 To become a full-time materials developer.
- so that we can develop capacity in our province and not depend on outsiders.
- to learn to develop and market materials.

4 To develop materials for your participants as part of your job.
- MD for our training department - not to go outside.
- to do it part-time as part of health training. Add more inovative materials.
- MD within our department. But we need the proer skills. Our problem is that we have lots of info, but no money to develop and publish.

____ Other (Please describe)

3. **How do you prefer to study?**

____ **Full-time**

____ **Part-time**

____ **Block release:** all preferred this one, but possibly less often than the present course (one week every month). Preferred once every three months, but with lots of assignments in between, and more practice.

____ Correspondence

Why do you prefer this? Better for our jobs and our families.

4. Read the description of a possible one-year course in materials development, (attached) then answer these questions:

4.1 Would you like to take this course? Why or why not?

- yes (all participants).

4.2 How can the course be improved:

- **What content is missing?**
- business plan and fundraising
- **What content should be left out?** - none
- **Should the structure be different?**

- Yes. 4-week blocks are too much for parents and our employers might not agree, because MD is not part of our job. (so should it only be for people who are committed to MD?). Prefer one week/month.

- One participant suggested the course stretch over two years, both to allow more time for skills development and time to develop better books. This got mixed response. the option of completing in a year should be available for those who are able. Most others preferred one year.

4.3 Is there anything you do not understand about the course?

Questions:

- When will it be offered and how will we find out?
- How much will it cost? Many people are excluded by courses that are expensive.
- What will this course lead to (what jobs, etc.)?
- Could some modules be skipped if we already know the content?
- What is meant by "trainees will perform projects in their workplace"?
- Do the assignments have to be workplace-based?
- How will we be examined?

4.4 Other comments on the course.

5. How much time per week could you spend on assignments between full-time blocks?

- 4-6 hours
- 2 assignments/month
- 20 hours/week
- 2 hours/day x 5 days, plus 4 hours on Sunday
  (but this is difficult with a small baby)

6. Other comments on materials development training:

- no answers