

Tutorial letter 501/3/2015

Working in ABET in the Workplace ABT1523

Department of Adult Basic Education

IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

This tutorial letter contains important information
about your module.

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UNIT 1: The workplace and the development of the economy

1.1 INTRODUCTION

There are millions of people throughout South Africa who are employed at various workplaces; these people are contributing to the development of South Africa's economy. However, some of these employees cannot read nor write simply because they did not get the opportunity to attend school (ie when they were children). Working with ABET in the workplace gives these adults the chance to acquire basic education while they are working. Employees who can read, write and calculate are more productive; to take one example: a literate adult can read instructions on how to operate dangerous machinery and thus help to protect his own and his co-workers' safety.

1.2 DIFFERENT KINDS OF WORKPLACES

People are employed in various kinds of workplaces. For example, there are large national companies such as Pick 'n Pay and Nampak, medium-sized companies such as Speedy Exhausts, small businesses such as cafés, and public sector enterprises such as local authorities, provincial or central government departments and state hospitals. Finally, in South Africa, there are private households that employ domestic workers and, of course, farms that employ agricultural labourers.

Apart from this, people work in many different sectors of the economy. Some are employed in the formal sector (e.g. industry and commercial enterprises such as manufacturing companies, hotels, banks, and mines). Note that those in the formal sector are obliged to pay taxes. Others work in the informal sector (in which case they often do not pay tax although, legally, they should). Street vendors and people who make or grow things at home (such as brooms or vegetables) are part of the informal sector.

In this module, we will look at how to set up ABET projects in large and medium-sized workplaces in the formal sector. We will be discussing the skills we need to negotiate an ABET project, and how to start a programme. We will look at questions such as the following:

KEY QUESTIONS

- (1) Why is ABET important for building a strong economy?
- (2) What do employees hope to gain from taking part in ABET programmes?
- (3) What do employers hope to gain from ABET programmes?
- (4) What needs to happen before a workplace ABET programme can begin?
- (5) How can we develop a plan of action for setting up a workplace ABET programme?
- (6) What role can ABET practitioners play in helping to set up, or improve, workplace ABET programmes

1.3 HOW MANY ADULTS IN THE WORKFORCE NEED ABET?

We need to understand why ABET is important in the workplace before we can really start planning to set up ABET programmes. The first thing we need to know is: how serious is the problem of illiteracy in South Africa, and how many employees do not really have even a basic education? Answers to these questions can help provide us with solid arguments in order to gain the support of employees and management in setting up programmes in the workplace.

Let us, for a moment, look more closely at the problem of illiteracy in the country as a whole and, more specifically, in industry. On the basis of research conducted by the University of Natal in 1995, as part of an Adult Basic Education Capacity Building Research Project, it was estimated that 5 268 200 adults between the ages of 15 and 65 did not have a Grade 7 level of education, and 9 945 802 adults did not have Grade 9.

ACTIVITY 1

In 1993, a research company called the Business Management Intelligence (BMI) conducted a study on illiteracy rates for the National Training Board. These figures (table 1) provide some information on how many employees in the formal economy lack a basic education. The figures also show which parts of the formal economy have the highest and lowest illiteracy rates.

Table 1:

Illiteracy rates by economic sector in the formal economy (per 1 000 people)

Economic sector	Total work force	Estimated number of illiterates	Illiteracy rate
Agriculture	1 000	850	85%
Mining	679	422	62%
Manufacturing	1 430	343	24%
Electricity	88	20	23%
Construction	460	135	29%
Trade	1 218	240	20%
Transport and communications	437	173	40%
Financial and business services	444	33	7%

Community and government	2 340	379	16%
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The BMI estimated the number of people who lack a basic education and who are working in various areas of the economy as follows (in table 2 we look at the whole economy, including the informal sector):

Table 2:

Illiteracy by economic activity (formal and informal)

Basic economic activity of individuals	Number of illiterates (in
Employed in the formal sector	2.5
Work in very small businesses in the informal sector (eg selling fruit and vegetables)	2.0
Domestic workers	0.3
Agricultural workers	0.7
Unemployed	2.0
Housewives	1.5
Subsistence living	2.0
Students, scholars, pre-school children	Not known
Retired people	1.5

ACTIVITY 2

Study the tables on the previous pages and then answer the questions that follow: we have given you some guidance on how to answer each question.

(1) Look at table 1, which deals with illiteracy rates by economic sector in the formal economy.

Then list the three sectors of the economy in the formal sector with the highest illiteracy rates; in other words, the largest proportion of employees who are illiterate. To answer this question, look at the third column and find the three largest percentages.

- (2) Take another look at table 1 then list the three sectors of the economy with the lowest illiteracy rates, or the smallest proportion of employees who are illiterate. To answer this question, look at the third column of the table and find the three lowest percentages.
- (3) Why do you think that the illiteracy rates are very high in some sectors of the economy and very low, or much lower, in other sectors?
- (4) Do most of the people who have not had a proper basic education work inside or outside the formal sector?

To answer this question, we need to look at table 2, which deals with illiteracy by economic activity (formal and informal). If you look at the top of the second column, you will see that all the figures are expressed in millions (note that this table does not give percentages and we do not, therefore refer to illiteracy rates). So, for example, the first figure (2.5) actually means 2.5 million. Then turn back to our definition of the formal sector on page 1. Decide which categories of workers listed fall outside the formal sector. Next look at the total number of illiterates for the categories of workers outside the formal sector. Add these up and work out the total and compare it with the number in the formal sector.

- (5) How many workers in the formal sector of the economy have not had a proper basic education?
To answer this question, we assume that illiteracy is a measure of a lack of basic education, and then identify which figure(s) refer(s) to the formal sector in table 2.
- (6) In which sector does your company fall? How many employees in your company do you think have less than a Grade 8 level of education (in other words, employees who have not had a basic education)?

Here are our answers to some of the above questions:

- The three largest numbers are 850 000 in agriculture, 422 000 in mining and 379 000 in the government sector. But to find the illiteracy rates you must take into account the total number of workers in each industry, so you must look at the percentages in the third column. The sectors with the highest illiteracy rates are therefore agriculture (85%), mining (62%), and transport and communications (40%).
- The three lowest numbers are 20 000 in electricity, 33 000 in financial and business and 135 000 in construction, but the lowest percentages are electricity (23%), financial and business services (7%) and community and government (16%). The sectors with the lowest illiteracy rates are therefore electricity, financial and business services and community and government.
- We think that illiteracy rates are higher in sectors where work has been organised using a large pool of workers doing so-called unskilled work, as is the case in mining and agriculture. Employees in sectors such as finance and electricity need higher levels of skill to cope with the work.
- We examined the total number of people outside the formal sector who have not had a basic education and saw that the total would be far higher than the 2.5 million employees in the formal sector who have not had a basic education.

Our answer to the question is, therefore, that there are far more employees outside the formal sector have not had a proper basic education than there are in the formal sector.

The level of education provided by ABET Level 1, in terms of the national ABET guidelines, is described in a booklet called the Interim Guidelines.

- Employees who have had between three and five years of schooling (between Grades 2 and
- 4) This is ABET Level 2 education in terms of the national ABET guidelines.
 - Those with between five and seven years of schooling (between Grades 4 and 7). This is below ABET Level 3 education in terms of the national ABET guidelines.
 - Those with between seven and nine years of schooling (between Grades 5 and 7). This may be below ABET Level 4 education in terms of the national ABET guidelines.

Although we know that many workers have furthered their own education and training outside the formal schooling system, these figures will give you a general idea of the education and training needs in your company in relation to each of the four ABET levels. Let's now look at what is being done about ABET in the formal economy.

1.4 WHAT KINDS OF ABET PROGRAMMES ARE OFFERED IN INDUSTRY?

Before we look at the kinds of programmes being offered in industry, let us remind ourselves of what we mean by ABET.

In September 1995, the National Department of Education published Interim Guidelines on a National ABET Framework. These guidelines define ABET as follows:

ABET is the basic (or general) education and training phase in the provision of lifelong learning, consisting of levels along a continuum of learning (ABET Levels 1, 2, 3, and 4) aimed at adults and youth with very little or no formal schooling The final exit point from ABET should be equivalent to the exit point from compulsory education.

(In terms of the new education and training policy students in school will take 9 years, or from Grade 1 to Standard 7, to complete the first or compulsory phase of education. This phase is seen as the general or basic phase of education.)

Adult learners who want to complete their basic education will be able to enrol in classes at four levels – ABET Levels 1, 2, 3, and 4. At the end of ABET Level 4 or Standard 7, all learners who successfully complete their programmes will get a General Education Certificate.

1.5 WHY NATIONAL POLICY DOCUMENTS TALK ABOUT ABET AND NOT 'ABE' OR 'LITERACY'

Over the last few years many people from many different organisations all over the country have been discussing policies for adult education in South Africa. People have also been debating what is meant by the term 'literacy'. These discussions have been aimed at developing ideas about the skills and the kind of education that adults need in order to build a democratic society, to shape and develop economic policies, to start and strengthen development projects and to build an understanding of the world of science and technology. If we look at these needs, we can see that courses for adults who have not had access to education and training programmes in the past would need to teach more than reading and writing skills. Worthwhile courses for adults would need to cover a range of subject areas, such as literacy and mathematical skills, development studies, work-related studies, technical skills which could be used in the workplace, practical skills which could be used to generate an income, organisational skills and health skills. COSATU has proposed that we should talk about 'Adult Basic Education and Training' rather than just 'literacy' or 'Adult Basic Education'. The T reminds us that we are also talking about practical and theoretical skills.

The ABE part reminds us that we are talking about a wider general education and not just reading and writing. The Guidelines adopted by the Department of Education talk about 'ABET' because most of the major stakeholders in the country support the idea of linking education and training and teaching adults more than just reading and writing. The model was based on a belief that, in order to tackle the urgent problem of developing the potential of the people of South Africa, education and training must be linked.

1.6 WHO IS PROVIDING ABET PROGRAMMES IN INDUSTRY?

Even though most stakeholders in the country now agree that we need to link education and training programmes, most of the education and training programmes are still being organised separately by very different providers. In fact, in industry, education and training are still completely separate 'worlds'.

The Adult Basic Education part of the ABET programmes is offered by non-governmental, non-profit-making organisations (NGOs), commercial profit-making organisations, the state adult education centres, and by companies themselves. Many of the large national companies such as Eskom, Nampak, Gencor, PG Glass, and SAB run their own programmes, using materials which have been developed by government, NGOs or commercial providers. The practical side of the training part is offered mainly by private companies, industry training boards, and regional training centres. The theoretical side of the training part is offered by technical colleges and Technisa (a correspondence college).

1.7 WEAKNESSES OF ABET PROGRAMMES IN THE PAST

When the National Training Board investigated training in South Africa, it set up a working group to deal with adult basic education. The working group was made up of representatives from employers, the government, the trade unions, the universities, and various non-governmental organisations. They discussed the strengths and weaknesses of most of the ABE programmes that were being undertaken by industry at the time (mid-1990s). They all agreed that there were many weaknesses with the provision of ABE, which mainly arose from the fact that the old government never really saw ABE as a

priority. Instead, they focused on the weaknesses of the ABE programmes and made suggestions for policies that would overcome these weaknesses.

Here is a list of some of the weaknesses identified:

- (1) There were not enough funds available to organise ABET programmes on the scale required.
- (2) National standards for adult learner courses had not yet been set.
- (3) There were not enough venues for learning groups to meet, especially in rural areas. Existing venues that could have been used (eg schools and colleges) were underutilised.
- (4) National stakeholders and interest groups were not involved in making decisions about ABET programmes.
- (5) Clear proposals regarding progression for the training of Educator/Trainer/Development (ETD) practitioners had not yet been put forward.
- (6) Trade unions and workers were generally not involved in planning and managing ABET programmes in the workplace.
- (7) Large numbers of adults did not have any access to programmes, simply because there were no programmes in their area or, where there were programmes, the groups met at places and times that many people found inconvenient.
- (8) There were limited career opportunities for ETD practitioners.
- (9) There was no national structure to develop policy and co-ordinate the provision of ABET.
- (10) There were no agreed standards for the training of ETD practitioners.
- (11) There were no nationally accepted guidelines for the adult learner curriculum.
- (12) There was a high drop-out rate because the programmes did not meet learners' needs.
- (13) The participation of workers in ABET programmes was not linked to their career paths.
- (14) There were no nationally recognised certificates for adult learners completing ABET courses.
- (15) The state was not doing enough to ensure that ABET would be provided on a mass basis.
- (16) Most learners in ABET programmes were not learning work-related skills.
- (17) There was no paid leave provision for education and training, which made it difficult for workers to take part in classes.

ACTIVITY 3

In unit 2 of Module 3, we looked at some of the skills involved in problem solving. One of the important skills is organising information into categories, so that it is easier to come up with a solution for each group of related problems. Study the lists of weakness of ABET programmes above and see if you can organise these into different categories.

Here are some of our suggested categories:

- Problems relating to the process of setting up and managing ABET programmes
- Problems relating to the small number (the quantity) of learners participating in the programmes
- Problems relating to the quality of programmes

This is how we organised our list:

Problems relating to the process for setting up and managing ABET programmes
Numbers 4, 6 and 9 on the list.

Problems relating to the small number (the quantity) of learners participating in programmes

Numbers 1, 3, 4, 7, 15 and 17 on the list

Problems relating to the quality of ABET programmes

Numbers 2, 5, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 16 on the list

1.8 PUTTING ABET ON INDUSTRY'S AGENDA

Since the publication of the National Training Board's report, quite a lot of progress has been made in solving many of the problems identified in the report. Much of this progress is owing to the efforts of the trade unions, some employer organisations, the National Training Board, and the new government.

- A great many more employers now realise that we need to develop South Africa's human resources if we want to build a strong economy. Given this, many employers have implemented some form of ABET programmes, and some are starting to set up ABET committees involving all the stakeholders in the planning and management of ABET programmes.
- Stakeholders accept that there should be an integrated approach to education and training. Integrated programmes for adults need to integrate general education (including mathematics, literacy and subjects that focus on an understanding of society), with technical or work-based training, organisational skills and life skills.
- ABET was a presidential-led project within the RDP programme, and the national Education Department has set up a special section dealing with ABET. Provincial education departments have set up ABET structures involving different stakeholders.

1.9 WHY IS ABET IMPORTANT IN THE CHANGING WORK ENVIRONMENT?

In an interview with Mr Enver Motala the Deputy Director General for Policy and Administration in the Gauteng Department of Education, Mr Motala said that the "RDP stresses the need for the development of the human potential of South African society. The reconstruction and development of South Africa cannot succeed without a strategy for the rapid and large-scale improvement of the knowledge, skills and abilities of the population as a whole. ABET lies at the heart of the RDP."

Below, we have included summaries of points in various policy documents which suggest why the new government and other stakeholders believe that human resource development is essential to the development of South Africa.

ACTIVITY 4

Study the sections below, which summarise key points from the RDP White Paper (passed by the then new parliament in 1994), the National Training Board's report on a national training strategy, and COSATU's report on their Participatory Research Project. Then make notes of the important points.

Points from the RDP White Paper

The RDP calls for human resource development on a massive scale, in order to:

- provide the basis for employment growth
- build a democratic society
- overcome the legacy of illiteracy and low skills of the majority of South Africans
- support the introduction of more advanced technologies in the country
- overcome gender and racial inequalities in the workforce
- help people develop themselves and improve the quality of their lives
- achieve effective worker participation in decision-making

Points from the report of the National Training Board on the National Training Strategy Initiative

All the stakeholders who participated in writing the report said they wanted to develop the kind of education and training system which would:

- empower individuals
- improve the quality of life
- contribute towards development targets in the national economic plan through a National Qualifications Framework

Points from the COSATU report

- The South African economy needs to become more competitive to avoid retrenchments, closure of plants and to be able to export South African products.
- South Africa needs to upgrade the skills of workers so that they can get higher wages and improve their standard of living.
- Companies need to set up career paths so that workers can advance by being trained and by developing new skills.
- Workers need to perform a wider range of tasks in their jobs and be more involved in the planning of how work is organised and managed.
- ABET programmes should be seen as part of affirmative action because affirmative action is not about the promotion of a few individuals from the shop floor, but about workplace democracy that involves all workers.

ACTIVITY 5

Drawing on these three paragraphs, list five reasons why ABET is now seen as important for the economy and in the workplace. Try to make sure that your list covers the main categories of reasons why ABET is important. Before you do this exercise, it might be useful to look at pages 45 to 46 in the study guide, which explains how to summarise information.

We would argue that ABET is important for the economy for the following reasons:

- Skills. It provides a basic foundation for upgrading employees' and workers' skills.
- Empowerment. It helps people to develop their full potential and improve the quality of their lives.
- Workplace democracy. It helps all employees and workers to become more involved in planning the organisation and management of work.
- Development it helps with projects that are designed to create employment.

- International competitiveness. It supports the introduction of more advanced technologies.

The points in italics are the general categories we thought of. Can you think of more categories?

1.10 WHAT DO WORKERS THINK OF ABET?

Let us look at the case of Zeblon Mthembu to see what workers of the factory floor think about ABET. While you read this story, try to think about the important points which we have raised in this unit about the role of ABET. Do the points we raised capture what ordinary workers on the ground think about ABET?

Case study

I'm Zeblon Mthembu. I work at RDP Manufacturing and they call me a yard assistant. It is my job to load trucks with our finished products. When the supervisor is not around, I cannot let our customers wait. Through my efforts I have managed to learn all the product codes, and learnt how to read invoices and delivery notes produced by our clerks in the office, even though my job does not require me to know these things. I don't even get higher wages when I do the supervisor's work.

My work involves doing the same thing over and over again, just loading what they tell me to. As my previous supervisor used to tell me: 'Don't think, just do what I tell you to do.' I thought I would be stuck in this job forever, or at least until I retire.

Recently our company started an ABET programme, and I have just enrolled for ABET Level 3. I am excited about the programme, because it takes into account what I already know, and I am now learning many new things – general and practical stuff related to my job and other jobs in the company. This is my first opportunity to study since I left school in Standard 4, ten years ago. When I started work, the only training I was given was a half-day induction course telling me about company rules, what I must and must not do, and so on.

I attend the ABET course during working hours – my union negotiated an agreement with management that, at any one time, one out of every ten of all the workers in the company will be given ABET or further training during working hours. I heard about this and many other things at a meeting called by the union, and my supervisor also told me about it when he made the practical arrangement for me to attend classes.

I have also heard about this affirmative action – I thought it was only to promote some black workers to management positions. But now I see that it is something for all workers. These new education and training programmes are part of it too. Also they say that affirmative action will mean that we workers will have a say in all issues affecting us, and that black workers will no longer live in hostels while other employees live in houses with their families. I'm hoping to get a better job within the company as a warehouse controller and earn more money.

I asked my friend Silas, who works at the factory down the road making car parts, if his factory is also going to provide ABET for the workers. Silas said: 'For sure! And what's more, all workers are getting paid more as they get more skills, like the artisans have all

along. If you take boiler-makers, electricians, fitters and turners, for example, they are well paid compared to most workers, they're on a specific grade in the industry, they get nationally recognised certificates once they have completed their apprenticeship and they do a particular range of work, for example installation, maintenance and repair. Not just a small thing over and over again.'

I asked him to tell me more about this new system. I thought he would know as he is a shop steward and usually is involved in negotiations.

We're introducing a new grading system. Our union wants to make the link clear between wages grade, skill and education/training. We believe that a restructured grading system, linked to skills, could bring up the pay of the low-paid workers, improve the standard of living for all workers, and lead to job creation in the industry. It will also mean that workers have more say over changes to the way the work is organised. We've just reached an agreement on how the number of grades will be reduced and what training modules workers will need to complete, or what skills workers will need to show they have, if they want to move from one grade to another. This will make it easier for workers to climb up the ladder as they get new skills or their existing skills are recognised. We have also negotiated an agreement that workers will be paid according to the skills they have as well as the jobs they do. And, of course, we negotiated a general wage increase.

ACTIVITY 6

Why did Zeblon feel that he would be stuck in the same job forever?

- Why did Zeblon enrol in the ABET class?
- What role did the union play in making it possible for Zeblon to join an ABET programme?
- Why does Zeblon say that ABET is part of affirmative action? Do you agree with him?
- If you are a worker in Silas's factory, would you get higher wages if you got new skills?
- In Silas's factory, how would workers climb the career path ladder?

Here are our own answers to these questions:

- Under apartheid it was very difficult for black workers to move out of low-skilled jobs, because they were blocked from getting more training because of their low levels of education, lack of funding and, of course, owing to entrenched racism.
- Zeblon enrolled in the ABET programme because he hoped that he would learn things that could help him get promotion.
- The union negotiated an agreement with management that a certain number of workers could participate in ABET classes at any one time during working hours. This made it much easier for workers to take part in the ABET programme.
- Zeblon says that ABET is part of affirmative action because it is aimed at upgrading the skills of all workers who didn't have access to education and training under apartheid. It is not only about promoting a few blacks to senior positions in the company.
- Silas told Zeblon that they are setting up a new grading system in their factory. The main aim of this grading system is to give workers with higher skills higher wages and to create clear career paths for workers.
- In Silas's factory, workers will be able to move upwards in the company if they can get new skills, or if all the skills which they have developed over years of working in the company are recognised.

1.11 CAN ABET PROGRAMMES ON THEIR OWN LEAD TO SOCIAL CHANGE?

In the words of some adult learners:

‘ABET is a weapon!’

‘ABET is a tool! It can help strengthen organisations on the ground by giving people the tools to actively participate in the activities of organisations involved in development.’

‘ABET is a bridge towards change! It helps to change power relations in society because it arms people with knowledge and skills. But it cannot bring about social change on its own. It should be part of development projects and community organisations struggling for social change.’

‘ABET means standing up for yourself.’

‘ABET means taking part in decision-making.’

‘ABET means a better chance of advancing in one’s career.’

As we can see from these remarks, ABET on its own cannot lead to major changes in the work- place. ABET is only a bridge, or a tool – it must be part of a number of strategies aimed at building democratic workplaces and getting rid of past inequalities.

ACTIVITY 7

Imagine that you have been asked to list five reasons why your company, or any other company, should start an ABET programme. What points would you make?

If there is already an ABET programme in your workplace, think about whether it is linked to any of the following: affirmative action, career paths, workplace democracy initiatives, or grading and pay. Write down a few points on how it is, or is not, linked to other strategies in your company.

UNIT 2: Negotiating ABET programmes

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, I focused on the need for ABET in the workplace. In this unit, we shall look at the negotiations that need to take place to 'pave the way', as it were, for Workplace ABET. Both employers and employee/worker groups must engage in negotiations to agree on programmes, conditions and modalities before an ABET programme can be implemented at any workplace.

2.2 WHY NEGOTIATE ABOUT ABET?

ACTIVITY 1

Study the following exchange of views:

'I will decide which Education Programme is right for you.'
'You don't decide for us. We want to be part of the decision.'

What can we learn from this exchange of views?

The first statement shows us that, in the past, employers usually made all the decisions about ABET programmes. The second statement, however, tells us that, today, employees and workers are demanding that they be involved in any decision-making about ABET programmes.

ACTIVITY 2

Read the three short stories on the following page. (We have called them 'scenarios'.) Make a list of what you think are the strengths and the weaknesses of the approach used in each scenario. Then choose the approach you feel is best and give three reasons for your choice.

SCENARIO 1

Leah Sibeko arrives at the company training centre. She appears to be less than enthusiastic about things.

On Friday her supervisor had told her to report there on Monday morning. When she asked "for what?", she was told that management has this new course for workers who need to be able to read and write in order to do their jobs more effectively. After work she went to her shop steward and asked him about this new programme. The shop steward told her that he had never heard of it.

SCENARIO 2

The ABET programme was up and running well. That is, until workers who completed the first course demanded that they should all get promotion. John Mazibuko, the ABET project manager, decided that, even though the union had in no way been involved up until then, the

union could possibly help to solve the problem. He invited the shop stewards to a meeting where he told them about the problem and explained why he thought consulting them could help.

SCENARIO 3

Sweet Juice Company has been conducting literacy, numeracy and induction training for some time. At the beginning of the programme, the union put forward the demand that ABET training should be made available to all workers during working hours, and that the union and management should work together on the ABET project. After eight months of negotiations this was agreed, and the ABET committee, which involves all stakeholders, is already functioning well.

Here are some reasons why we feel that the third approach may be best:

- Because the workers were involved in shaping the programme when it first began, the programme is more likely to meet the needs of both the workers and the employer.
- Because the programme was negotiated by representatives of management and workers, it is more likely to be accepted by both parties.
- Working together can help to build a culture of rights and responsibilities in the workplace.
- Working together from the beginning on an ABET programme can improve industrial relations.

Until very recently, many employers set up ABET programmes in workplaces without involving either the unions or the workforce. All the important decisions about these programmes were made by employers: the employers decided what the aims of the programme were what course materials to use, when and where the classes would take place, who would teach in the classes and so on.

From the early 1990s, however, trade unions started arguing that they had the right to be involved in the planning and running of ABET programmes in the workplace. Unions argued that many ABET programmes had failed in the past because they hadn't really met the needs of the workers and so the drop-out rate in the programmes had been very high. This would only change if workers and employers jointly planned and managed the programmes. In spite of this, in many companies, the central role of workers and the unions in ABET programmes is still not accepted.

2.3 HOW TO NEGOTIATE FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF ABET PROGRAMMES

Below we have included some ideas on how to negotiate for the introduction of ABET programmes, drawing on the experiences of unions and employers who have negotiated for the introduction of these programmes.

2.4 NEGOTIATING FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF AN ABET PROGRAMME IN COMPANIES WHICH ALREADY HAVE A PROGRAMME

Even in those workplaces where an ABET programme is already in place, the programme will have to be changed in certain ways to be in line with the Interim Guidelines agreed by the National Department of Education.

ACTIVITY 3

Read the following case study and pick out five key problems that will need to be solved to make the programme more effective. Before you tackle this activity, you may want to re-read your notes on good and bad learning, and the section in Module 2 on how to choose good learning materials.

Case study

Ten years ago, the General Manager of United Bottle Packaging Company, Mr Botha, decided to introduce literacy for mineworkers as part of the company's social responsibility programme. The management was trying to get people from overseas to invest in the company, and so they were under pressure to show what they were doing to help workers

Literacy classes took place in the training centre after working hours. The training centre was very far from the hostel, which made it inconvenient for most workers to attend. Night- shift workers couldn't take part in the classes at all because classes only took place at night. It is not surprising that attendance at the classes was very poor – with different people attending each lesson and some people only attending once every few weeks.

Today, the same literacy classes are still being run.

The Human Resource Manager of United Bottle Packaging, Mr Dlamini, says: 'Why should we change something to fit in with the national system of ABET? As management, we are very happy with our present literacy programme because we find that the workers understand instructions much better. They are also more polite to the supervisors. They even know some words in English related to the work they do. Besides, we train the workers using the "show, tell and do method" in Fanakalo, so we don't see why workers need to learn things like maths, or to develop their communication and health and safety skills.'

There are still three classes running, all basic literacy (part of ABET Level 1). The company does not offer any ABET courses at a higher level. So there is no chance for the workers to progress any further than ABET Level 1.

The three facilitators are all ex-DET primary school teachers who have never been given any training in the principles of adult learning. Mr Botha and Mr Dlamini say: 'We are happy with our teachers. They taught children for a long time how to read and write, and we know that they use nice games and they give the workers sweets when they do good work. So we are sure that the workers like them.'

Until two months ago all the decisions about the literacy and training programme were taken by Mr Dlamini. When he had problems, he consulted Mr Botha. But like many other managers all over South Africa, Mr Dlamini started thinking that he should get the union involved in the programme because of the new South Africa. He called the shop stewards to a meeting to discuss the literacy programmes. The shop stewards had never taken part in union workshops on ABET because they were never allowed time off to go to union meetings. So they didn't know very much about the new national policies for ABET which their union had helped develop, and they signed an agreement saying that the literacy classes should continue in the same way, but that the shop stewards and management should meet regularly to discuss the programme whenever necessary.

Some of the key problems which we identified were the following:

- The course hasn't been changed or updated for more than ten years, and there is no commitment to fall in line with national policies.
- Workers only learn very basic reading and writing skills.
- The focus of the literacy course is very narrow.
- The training is limited to what workers need to know to do their jobs.
- The union has not been involved in planning and implementing the programme.
- The facilitators have not been trained to teach adults.

2.4.1 Collecting information about existing programmes in the company

ACTIVITY 4

Drawing on what you learned in other modules about effective learning materials and programmes, make a list of the questions you would ask when you are collecting information about a learning programme that is already being presented in your company (or another company).

Below, we have listed some things which we feel it would be useful to find out about. Perhaps you can think of others?

Company policy on education and training

- How does the programme fit into the company's overall human resource development strategy, including its affirmative action policy?
- What is the company's policy on education and training?
- What company targets have been set for education and training?
- What are the company's future plans for education and training?
- Are there clear career paths in the company?

17 Union policy on education and training

- What are the union's policies on education and training?
- According to the union, what should the aims of the company's ABET programme be?
- What kind of programme do the workers want?

Current status of programmes

- What education and training programmes are being run by the company?
- For whom are they being run?
- What learning materials are being used?
- Do the materials clearly tell the learners what they should be able to do, or what they should know, at the end of each unit or module?
- How do the materials compare with the outcomes for communication and numeracy at the four ABET levels? The new learning outcomes for the ABET levels, and the drafting of these outcomes, will become available over the next few years. You are advised to keep an eye on developments regarding ABET provision and accreditation. (You can get copies of A four year implementation plan for adult education and training: Provision and accreditation from the Department of Education.)

- Do the materials help develop broad skills such as planning, critical thinking, decision-making, civic participation and problem solving, as well as telling learners about learning strategies?
- Do the materials have units dealing with the three components that should be part of the curriculum? These components are:
 1. The fundamental component (communication, language, literacy, mathematics and mathematical sciences, human and social sciences, natural sciences, technology and economic management).
 2. The core or contextual component (for example, development studies, social studies, work studies, community studies).
 3. The technical or specialised component (for example, specialised workplace skills such as blasting or welding, or other kinds of skills and subjects such as literature, law, and health care).
- Does the programme fit in with the standards that have been agreed for the four ABET levels so that learners will be able to get nationally recognised certificates?
- What do the employees/workers feel about the classes? What problems do they have with the classes?

Who participates and who makes decisions?

- When and where do the classes meet?
- Who makes decisions about the programme?
- How do workers get to take part in the classes?
- What screening or pre-entry assessment is done and who does this?
- Are prior learning and experience assessed and recognised? If so, how?
- What obstacles are there to workers participating in ABET?

Educators, Trainers and Development Practitioners

- How were the practitioners selected? (That is, on what basis were the selection criteria and procedures?)
- What training did they get?
- What is their job description?
- What role do they play in the overall running of the programme?

2.5 SETTING UP NEW ABET PROGRAMMES IN THE WORKPLACE OR CHANGING EXISTING PROGRAMMES

In the next section we will look at some ideas on how to set up ABET programmes in the workplace. We will talk about how to change programmes that already exist, but are not jointly controlled by workers and management, or programmes that are not in line with the national policy framework for ABET.

ACTIVITY 5

Read the case study below carefully. Then list the steps that were followed in preparation for setting up an ABET programme.

Case study

I'm Tina Nduli, and for the last year I've been working as the ABET co-ordinator in a medium-sized canning factory. We now have a good ABET programme up and running. I'd like to share with you what has happened in my company to get us to this point.

At the time it all began I was working in another section. I heard that the Managing Director (MD) wanted to introduce some development programmes for workers. We were all talking about it, and wondered what the purpose of the programmes would be. Workers approached their shop stewards to find out more about it. The shop stewards reported that the MD said that she realised the urgent need for all workers to be able to read and write, and that the Human Resources Manager was looking for a programme that would suit the needs of the workers so that the company could endorse it. The MD said that she would welcome employees and workers' input.

The workers met to discuss this proposal. At that meeting the workers said that they did not want to just give input on the programme. 'We are the ones who have really suffered from poor education. This programme is for us. And so we must help shape the programme, and not just give our input. In this way we can ensure that the programme meets the needs of the workers and really empowers workers to participate in training programmes and decision-making structures in the company.'

When the MD heard this she got very upset. 'We want to hear what the workers think, and we want to know what they want. But if management is paying for this programme, then we must make the decisions.'

This was the start of a long period of negotiations. We spent a few weeks arguing about what kind of programme the company needed. The union said that the workers have the right to a good basic education and training. They maintained that ABET programmes should equip learners to help shape and develop economic policies, participate in the running of industries, build a democratic society, and strengthen job creation projects.

But this was not exactly the kind of programme that management had in mind. Management said: 'Workers only need to read and write and do some arithmetic. At the same time, workers must learn to understand the culture of the company and develop pride in the company.' Eventually, Basie du Toit from the industry training board came to speak to the negotiation team. This was the first time that people in the company had ever heard of the National Training Board's investigation into a national training strategy for South Africa. Basie told them that, in the National Training Board meetings, unions and employers had agreed that ABET needs to be linked to a broader strategy of human resource development, restructuring the economy and building a democratic society.

After that everybody agreed that the vision for ABET in the company should include possible benefits for individual workers, for the company and for society as a whole.

But then another long round of negotiations took place about the principles which would form the framework within which the whole ABET programme would be developed. We got stuck on whether we should include a principle on the right to paid education and training leave. We argued and argued, and we just couldn't agree. Finally, we agreed to leave it to later negotiations. It took three months before we agreed on a set of principles for ABET and on the setting up of an ABET committee. One of the first things the committee did was to arrange meetings with each section of the company to talk about the new ABET programme that was being planned, and to get some feedback from everyone in the company. At the same time they agreed on the selection criteria that should be applied and the process that should be followed when filling the new post of ABET co-ordinator. I saw the internal advertisement and applied immediately. I was interviewed three weeks later and began my new job as co-

ordinator at the beginning of the following month. That's when the real planning work began. The committee decided to involve an outside NGO in order to help us with the challenging process which lay ahead. This proved to be very useful for us. From my interaction with ABET co-ordinators in other companies, I could tell that some of them already had the ability and experience to run ABET programmes within their company. All of us on the committee were then trained in how to conduct a needs analysis, and we decided on the methods to use to do our own needs analysis. Management provided a written report containing the information which they were able to give us, such as the profile of the workforce, what training was already provided, and so on. While we were busy carrying out the needs analysis with the workforce, we had a curriculum workshop. We looked at a whole lot of ABET materials and evaluated them in the light of the national interim guidelines for ABET.

We discussed the outcome of the needs analysis, and then did the following:

- We chose the materials we would use
- We identified the development work that would have to be done in order to integrate education and training effectively within the company.
- We identified the target group.
- We decided what languages the courses would have to be presented in, and at what level
- We agreed on the policy to be followed in the employment of ABET practitioners.
- We worked out the budget.
- We agreed on the selection procedure for appointing educators
- We continued to advertise what we were doing.

It was primarily my responsibility to ensure that decisions taken by the committee were implemented. These and other elements of the basic planning process took a few months. We also had several training sessions for the committee itself so that members of the committee knew how to do all the things mentioned above. The MD was beginning to ask: 'Is this ever going to get off the ground'? Some workers were also getting impatient.

What was somewhat controversial was whether the whole ABET programme would be offered during working hours, or whether workers would have to contribute some of their own time as well. After several heated meetings, and a march by workers at which they handed a memorandum to the MD, it was agreed that three quarters of the training time would be in company time and one quarter in the individual worker's own time. Only then could we do the final scheduling and really begin delivering the course.

Now we've got a team of excellent, well-trained ABET practitioners. They, as well as the learners themselves, have their representatives on the ABET committee. The first intake of seven groups of learners will be completing their courses and sitting for their final assessment shortly.

A sub-committee is busy preparing for the 'graduation ceremony', where successful learners will be presented with certificates for credits acquired and all learners will be presented with a T-shirt bearing the slogan 'Forward to lifelong learning'. Next year we're hoping to evaluate the whole programme and re-align the courses within the national framework

ACTIVITY 5 (CONTINUED)

In thinking about this exercise you might find it useful to imagine that you are in the position that Tina was in before the company started the ABET programme. Try to imagine the vision that Tina had of the kind of ABET programme she wanted to see in her company. Imagine that, in this company, half of the workers were completely illiterate, most of the supervisors were white, and the management didn't really see ABET as a priority. They just wanted to set up some kind of programme as quickly as possible so that they could tell the workers how much they were doing for them.

Try to fill in some points in the following two circles – the one circle should describe the current situation, while the other should describe your vision. Then try to list some of the steps that you would follow to reach your vision if you were in Tina's shoes.

These are the steps that we think were followed in Tina's company. Have we left out any steps?

- Collecting information.
- Discussing possible aims for ABET with key stakeholders.
- Formulating initial proposals for discussion between workers and management.
- Electing negotiating teams.
- Negotiating to set up an ABET programme.
- Reaching agreement.
- Training the ABET committees.

Let's look at each of these steps in more detail.

FORMULATION OF *VISION*

Where we want to be in the future

[Step 1]

[Step 1]

[Step 1]

(Step 1

Step 1

What steps do you need to take to get from where we are now to where we want to be

2.6 COLLECTING INFORMATION

- Think about who you would need to collect information from in your company. In other words, think about the key stakeholders that you would need to talk to.
- List the key stakeholders in your company in the first column of the table on the next page.
- Then think about what kind of information you believe should be collected from different stakeholders who would help in the planning process. (Read the list of possible questions on the next page for ideas.) List the broad topics in the second column of the table below.
- Next think about the methods you would use to collect the information you want. (To do this, you might want to begin by reading the sections on analysing needs and conducting surveys in any of the modules you have studied so far.) List the methods in the third column of the following table.

Stakeholders may include:

- Management – representatives of the Human Resources Department, education and training staff, and representatives from departments who have an interest in ABET
- Union or unions – shop stewards and union officials
- ABET practitioners
- ABET co-ordinators
- Learners
- Outside providers of services or consultants
- Community representatives

ACTIVITY 6

What stakeholder do you need to collect information from?	What information do you need to collect from each stakeholder group?	What method(s) will you use to collect the information?

2.7 DISCUSSING POSSIBLE ABET AIMS WITH STAKEHOLDERS

ACTIVITY 7

The main aim of these discussions should be to help your company formulate a policy for, and an approach to, ABET. Can you think of three questions that you could ask a group of workers and a group of supervisors to help focus these discussions? The questions should cover attitudes towards ABET and the possible role that ABET could play in the company.

Some possible questions:

- What changes are taking place in the workplace? (For example, has new equipment or new technology been introduced or have work practices changed?)
- What changes have you seen in your job over the last five years?
- What kinds of written materials do you use in your job?
- What problems do you have when you use those written materials?
- What skills do you feel you need for job advancement?

2.8 FORMULATING INITIAL PROPOSALS FOR DISCUSSION BETWEEN WORKERS AND MANAGEMENT

Before discussions about the introduction of an ABET programme start, it is a good idea for both the workers and management to draw up their own sets of proposals in which they state the issues they want to discuss. The proposal should be phrased in a way that will help get things going in the company.

Here is an example of an initial demand for negotiations which workers might table:

Under apartheid, millions of workers were denied their fundamental right to basic education. They were denied access to training and higher paid jobs. ABET programmes can help workers acquire the skills and knowledge needed to help shape and develop economic policies, run industries, build a democratic society, and strengthen job creation projects.

We believe that the company should provide ABET for all workers as part of an overall human resource development strategy. This will help build South Africa as a nation. We want management to support the setting up of an ABET programme in the company.

Here is an example of an initial proposal that management might table for negotiations with the union:

We feel that the company needs to start an ABET programme to improve productivity and increase profits. We need workers who are functionally literate, who know how to work with numbers, who can solve problems and introduce new ideas for production.

The jobs of the future will engage the whole person and it will not be enough for the worker to have manual skills: he or she will also need a good basic education. We need a qualified workforce to keep up with technology. We believe that ABET programmes can help improve the performance, skills and efficiency of workers. ABET programmes can also help to develop, uplift and motivate the workforce.

ACTIVITY 8

- Study the two proposals and list the points on which you feel the employers and workers would agree.
- Then list the areas in which you think they would disagree.
- Can you think of other possible initial proposals to get ABET going in a company?
- How would you link the initial proposals to the problems identified during the survey of stakeholders (see 3.1 above)

We think the main difference between the two sets of proposals is that the workers want to learn things that than can help build a democratic society, not just things that will help improve productivity in the company, whereas the employers (or management) want an ABET programme that will, specifically, help improve productivity. We therefore think that the employers/management and the workers might disagree about what courses to use in the ABET programme. For example, employers might not want to include material covering civic education. However, we think that both the employers and the workers would agree on using materials covering mathematics and language and technical skills.

Some initial proposals to table for negotiations could include the following:

- The aims of the programme
- The link with other human resource programmes in the company
- The link with career paths and other company training
- How the programme is going to be planned and managed

What other issues can you think of?

We think that the survey of information collected from stakeholders about existing ABET programmes, their hopes and problems, could be organised into categories (e.g. problems, needs, hopes, differences between the programme and the national guidelines). These categories could then be tabled as separate topics for negotiations, or could be used by the parties involved to support their proposals.

2.9 ELECTING NEGOTIATING TEAMS

Workers and management will each need to elect a team who will be responsible, on their behalf, for the ABET negotiations. These teams may or may not be the same teams as the wage negotiation teams. The teams must prepare very carefully for their negotiations to ensure that they end up with a plan of action (for setting up an ABET programme) that has been properly thought through and that will not suffer from the weaknesses listed under 1.7 in unit 1.

2.10 NEGOTIATING TO SET UP AN ABET PROGRAMME

ACTIVITY 9

Think about some of the key issues that the negotiations teams will need to discuss. Below we have listed examples of issues which have been discussed in some ABET negotiations between unions and management in several companies. You might also want to study the earlier case study in section 3 to get some idea of the issues that should be discussed during negotiations. Once you have done this, you can make your own list of topics which you believe need to be discussed during negotiations.

Here are some typical examples of issues discussed during ABET negotiations between unions and management:

- How information about existing ABET programmes can be shared amongst all the parties involved.
- The need to carry out an evaluation of existing ABET programmes to find out if they are in line with the national policy framework's guidelines on certification and the curriculum.
- The requirement to conduct a needs analysis and skills audit in the company.
- How to choose new programmes or amend existing programmes in line with the national guidelines.
- Setting targets and priorities for the company.
- Agreeing on how to give workers access to ABET programmes.
- Assessing workers to determine their appropriate ABET level (the assessment should be based on the interim standards for the four ABET levels).
- Making arrangements for certification by provincial education departments for ABET Levels 1 to 3, and by the national Education Department for ABET Level 4.
- Agreeing on where and when the classes will be held.
- Agreeing on how the programme will be financed.
- Linking education and training.

2.11 DEVELOPING THE PRINCIPLES OF AN ABET PROGRAMME

In the past, unions and management negotiating ABET programmes spent a great deal of time negotiating the principles behind any ABET programme. This was because both sides agreed that it was necessary to first reach agreement on the principles which would govern the kind of ABET programme implemented in a company. The Department of Education has now published a set of principles which, they believe, should serve as a guide for all people wanting to set up ABET programmes. Learners wanting to get nationally recognised certificates will have to make sure that the programme in their company is in line with these national guidelines. Can you think of other principles that you might want to add?

2.12 ESTABLISHING THE ABET COMMITTEE

As we have seen, for ABET to function well and to make it possible for all stakeholders to take part in the planning and provision of access to ABET, committees should be established at all levels in the company.

Who are the stakeholders?

ACTIVITY 10

- List the stakeholders in Tina's company. Why do you think they are stakeholders? (Re-read the case study earlier in this unit.)
- Who do you think are the stakeholders in the ABET programme at your workplace?
- Who do you think should be represented in an ABET committee in your workplace?

Under 3.1 above, we suggested that stakeholders can include:

- Management, representatives of the Human Resources Department, education and training staff, and representatives from any department with an interest in ABET
- Union or unions – shop stewards and union officials
- ABET practitioners
- ABET co-ordinators
- Learners
- External service providers or consultants
- Community representatives from the surrounding community if classes are open to the wider community

Now we need to think about the possible functions of the ABET committee.

ACTIVITY 11

- List the functions the ABET committee performed in Tina's company. Do you think these are appropriate functions for the committee?
- List the functions you think an ABET committee could perform in your workplace. If you work in a national company or organisation with different operational centres, you will need to think which functions should be performed by the national or corporate committee, and which are more appropriately performed by the operational centre committees.

Example of ABET committees

This example is based on a national company with three kinds of ABET committees. The type and number of committees will obviously vary, depending on the nature of the company or workplace.

Corporate ABET steering committee

Who?

Union and management representatives.

Role?

- To collect and distribute information about the company nationally which the various committees throughout the country may need in order to carry out their responsibilities.
- To develop ABET policy for the company as a whole.
- To develop an implementation plan, and to set targets for ABET within the company.
- To develop guidelines on various issues relating to ABET in order to inform operating centres on the best practice to follow.
- To monitor the implementation of ABET within the company and to ensure that operational centres adhere to agreements made by the steering committee.
- To solve problems relating to ABET in the company as a whole as and when they arise.

27 ABET committees at operational centres

Who?

Management and the union should decide the exact composition of the committees, taking into account local circumstances (e.g. the size of the work-force) and other stakeholders, such as ABET practitioners, co-ordinators and learners.

Role?

- To set clear goals and targets for ABET at operational centre level.
- To popularise and market ABET within the operational centre.
- To budget for ABET at operational centre level.
- To share relevant information within the factory about the programme.
- To solve ABET-related problems as they arise within the operational centre.
- To ensure effective communication with both the corporate committee and the learning centre committees.
- To consider ways of linking with and assisting the community.

Learning Centre Committees

These are set up only if the operational centre committees decide that it is appropriate to have separate Learning Centre Committees.

Who?

At least the centre co-ordinator ('the Principal') and representatives of ABET practitioners, learners (e.g. one representative per class), management and unions.

Role?

The main role of these committees should be to ensure quality of service and to deal with daily issues at the learning centres.

2.13 REACHING AGREEMENT

ACTIVITY 12

Based on your experience and what you have learnt in this course, list what you think should go into a good ABET agreement.

An example of what an ABET agreement could include:

- (1) Preamble
- (2) Objectives of the agreement
- (3) Definition of ABET
- (4) Vision and mission statement
- (5) Aims of ABET programmes
- (6) Principles
- (7) Implementation process and some guidelines:
 - (a) Deciding which ABET committees are needed
 - (b) Funding and budgeting decisions
 - (c) Needs assessment
 - (d) Evaluation of existing ABET provision in the company

- (e) Decisions about infrastructure (e.g. where the classes will be held, who will pay for the stationery, and so on)
 - (f) Identifying the learners and deciding on access issues
 - (g) Appointing ABET practitioners and coordinators
 - (h) Deciding on the learning areas (the subject areas or curriculum)
 - (i) Assessment and recognition of prior learning
 - (j) Making arrangements for certification
 - (k) Designing the information systems
- (8) The processes involved in amending proposals and reaching agreement

2.14 TRAINING THE ABET COMMITTEES

Representatives on the ABET committees need to be trained if they are to carry out their role effectively. Staff training and the development of the committee should be seen as an important and ongoing process. More intensive training may be needed at the initial stages. To be successful, such training should be conducted during working hours and on full pay. ABET practitioners can help by providing training to committees on areas such as the following:

- Key aspects of the national policy framework for ABET
- The principles of adult learning
- Methods of conducting a needs analysis in the company
- How to manage ABET programmes
- Information on the national guidelines for the curriculum for adult learners (as agreed by the national Department of Education)
- Helping committees choose learning materials

ACTIVITY 13

- Re-read the case study earlier in the unit in section 3, and then describe how the committee in the case study prepared itself to play its role in the ABET programme.
- Look at the role of the corporate committee given in the example. What skills and knowledge areas do you think should be included in a training programme aimed at committee members to help them play their role effectively?
- Would a separate learning centre committee be useful in your workplace? If so, why?
- What role can ABET practitioners play in helping companies set up ABET programmes in workplaces?
- What role can ABET practitioners play in helping to build strong ABET committees?

UNIT 3: Problems and challenges in implementing ABET

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The various ways of negotiating ABET programmes with all stakeholders were discussed in unit 2. This current unit focuses on linking ABE to training. Historically, training employees and workers has been neglected by ABE and thus needs to be incorporated into basic education to provide employees and workers with the opportunity of acquiring new skills.

3.2 LINKING ABE WITH TRAINING

3.2.1 Putting the T into ABE programmes or putting ABE into training programmes

As we have already said, up until now training and ABE programmes have operated separately. We have outlined the reasons why most stakeholders agree that the two parts need to be linked together much more closely. Yet there are very few programmes where this is already happening. Below we give some examples from various organisations to show how education and training can be brought together in one programme. We hope that these examples will give you some idea of how you could go about linking ABE and training in your own organisation, or in organisations that you may work with. We have also discussed some of the potential problems and opportunities.

Case study: The Building Industries Federation of South Africa (BIFSA)

BIFSA realised that the levels of literacy demanded within the industry meant that the Federation needed to take some responsibility in helping people gain access to ABE. So they decided to start running ABE classes.

Unfortunately, their first programme was not successful and the trainees dropped out of the course. BIFSA realised that this was because the programme did not teach skills which were directly useful for employment. They then ran a second programme, where learners acquired building-related skills, including bricklaying, plastering and carpentry. During this programme learners still complained that they found the ABE component boring and that they could not understand why they had to take part in ABE classes.

BIFSA thought about the feedback they were getting and then developed a new model in response to trainees' concerns. This new model made provision for two weeks of literacy training. During the first week of the literacy class, learners would receive skills in reading and numeracy. In the second week they would use these skills, with the help of the trainer, and would work through the section of the training manual that would apply to the work that they would be doing in the following week. At the end of the second week, BIFSA hoped that the trainees would be able to read and understand the instructions in the manual.

This approach was used throughout the programme, and the workers were very enthusiastic about it. When BIFSA assessed the model, they realised that it was more

expensive than the model that they had originally used. However, they felt this model had worked very well and BIFSA, therefore, believed that the additional cost was justified.

Case Study: The Metal and Engineering Industries Education and Training Board (MEIETB)

The Metal and Engineering Industries Education and Training Board was restructured to make better provision for career paths and to ensure that workers have access to life-long learning. In 1991 they adopted a new constitution which specifically committed the industry to 'undertake and contribute to uplifting standards of education including, in particular, literacy and numeracy training'. The constitution went on to state that 'education and training should aim to impart broad based skills recognised according to industry wide standards that are transferable and provided flexibility within the industry and the economy as a whole'. Thus the MEIETB laid a basis for an integrated approach to education and training.

They did this because they realised that if you could teach workers the underlying generic skills, the workers would be in a position to transfer these skills to many other areas and thus be able to master new technologies.

The MEIETB project began to develop a model which made provision for workers to participate in programmes in three categories:

- (1) The fundamental component (communication and mathematics and, possibly, computer skills)
- (2) The core or contextual component (subjects which link the work of an individual worker to those of others – e.g. work studies)
- (3) The technical or specialised component (e.g. specific work-related skills)

They analysed the broad skills and knowledge which workers would need to have to perform jobs at the different levels of the grading system. They then linked these broad skills to the possible levels of the National Qualifications Framework. They thus tried to link the industry's skill needs with the broad or generic skills in the National Qualifications Framework. For example, at each level of the grading system workers are expected to take on higher levels of responsibility and this requires higher levels of skills. In the same way, broad or generic skills which form the basis of the standards of the NQF become increasingly complicated. For example, problem-solving skills are assessed very differently at Level 1 of the Qualifications Framework (Grade 8 Level) and at Level 8 of the Qualifications Framework (PhD level). The skills of an individual worker would be compared with the skills needed for each level of the grading system and each level of the Qualifications Framework. The worker would then be placed accordingly.

Unit standards would be developed using this approach. These unit standards would describe the elements (or broad skills) covering what workers should be able to do at a specific level (i.e. of the grading system). The unit standards would also specify the performance criteria and the range indicators that would be used for assessing skills (i.e. how skills would be assessed and under what conditions) for each of the three learning components (i.e. fundamental, core and specialisation) at each level of the Qualifications Framework. These different skills would be combined into a description of all the skills workers would need to have at each level of the National Qualifications Framework in order to get a full certificate for that level of the Qualifications Framework.

This rather complex approach is best illustrated by means of an example of a unit standard. This highlights the training requirement as well as the numeracy and communication skills that are required:

UNIT STANDARD

Key outcome:	Operate and monitor machine and/or process
Level	NQF 1 (MEIETB Grading Level?)
Credit	6
Elements	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Read and understand job sheets. 2. Operate machine. 3. Monitor process. 4. Unload machine.
Indicators of success/performance criteria	<p>1.1 Follow job sheets and instructions correctly.</p> <p>1.2 Check all guards for correct position and load machine.</p>
Underpinning knowledge	<p>1.3 Check coolant level and replace if necessary, etc.</p>
Abilities	
Range of applications	<p>Materials, process, quality, health and safety, interaction and management, care and maintenance.</p> <p>Able to communicate for purposes of joint operations of machines with peers in teams and with supervisors. Able to solve problems such as fault identification.</p> <p>This unit may be applied to a range of production machines. For example: extrusion machines, power saws, or any other individually operated machine. Work is performed in accordance with clear step instructions and procedures documented on job sheets or similar process instruction documents.</p>

Once standards have been established, relevant learning materials must be designed and educators and trainers trained.

In order to develop the training programme further, the following steps were followed:

1. All the industrial parties within the metal and engineering sectors were brought into the process.
2. The National Training Board was asked to facilitate a process to make it possible for all industry training boards and allied bodies, as well as technical colleges and regional centres, to co-operate with a view to generating national, portable standards and qualifications.
3. The MEIETB has also approached the Engineering Council and asked them to consider working with the MEIETB to explore ways to make it possible for workers from industry to progress into the tertiary education system.

Case study: The National Youth Service

The aim of the National Youth Service Project is to provide young people with access to education and training while these young people are providing the community with a service. The type of service that is provided depends on the needs of a particular community. All young people in the project participate in numeracy and communication courses (the fundamental component), life skills such as developing goals and time management (the core component) and education and training as it relates to their specific field of service (the specialisation component).

The fundamental component lasts for as long as the youth participate in the National Youth Service Project. This is usually between six months and two years. Most of the projects run for one year. The fundamental component is presented in a total of four hours per week in two sessions. The life skills component is presented over three week-ends. The presentation of the specialisation component differs depending of the particular skills and knowledge base required for the youth to carry out their particular service area. For example, youth who are working on a roads project will need to learn different skills from youth who are working in a nature reserve as tour guides.

An example of the way in which the specialisation component is presented can be seen in a project that was run in Hekpoort. The youth were involved in a school feeding scheme and were learning catering skills as their area of specialisation. As part of the course the fundamentals were reinforced in that youth had to plan and cost their menus, as well as read recipes. They were also required to participate in sessions about health, safety and nutrition, and for this they needed the skills that they were learning in the communication classes.

After the project was completed, many of the youth involved in it decided that they would like to start their own catering businesses. They then participated in a course to develop skills in starting and managing a small business. The communication and numeracy skills became very important as youth were required to develop business plans as well as work out what they would need to charge in order to make a profit.

When the National Youth Service assessed the programme, they said the model was useful because it integrated education and training and made it possible for learners to use their skills. The main problem was that the learning material provided did not make the

links between the fundamental and specialisation components as well as it could have been done. The trainers lacked experience both as educators and in the hospitality industry, and this made it difficult for them to make these links.

The Hospitality Industry Training Board is now developing courses for the fundamental component, and these courses will help to integrate education and training. The Board believes that the course content should not only relate to the youths' specific career paths, but that more general life skills should also be covered, and that a balance should be struck between ABE for a specific career, and ABE as it relates to the broader aspects of life.

Case Study: Civil engineering

In the civil engineering industry, the links between the ABE and training have been made by building ABE into workers' career paths. This highlights the role of ABET programmes in industry, because ABET programmes can help people advance in the company they work for. The link between ABET and career paths helps to encourage workers to take part in ABE programmes, simply because workers who want to progress along a career path will need to take part in an ABET programme.

3.3 DEALING WITH PROBLEMS IN ABET PROGRAMMES

Whether an ABET programme is started from scratch, or whether some elements are already in place, problems will arise. As you saw in the previous section, an important role of the ABET committees is to solve problems relating to ABET.

Some problems may seem overwhelming and insoluble, which is why we suggest you use the steps outlined below when you are faced with a problem. We have given two examples of how you can use these steps to solve problems, simply because not one solution will work in all situations. Solutions need to be based on a detailed knowledge of the situation in a particular company.

An approach to problem-solving: Example 1

1. Formulating the problem

The ABET Committee is no longer holding meetings.

2. Analysing the problem

No one on the ABET Committee was given the responsibility of ensuring that the committee met regularly.

3. Generating possible solutions

- The Human Resources manager can be asked to call the meetings or appoint someone to do so.
- Any concerned committee representative can call all representatives to a meeting.
- Once the Committee does have a meeting, the responsibility of ensuring that meetings are held regularly can then be allocated and a schedule of meetings drawn up.

4. Selecting and planning

The Human Resources manager can be approached to call all Committee members to a meeting within, say, one week. At that meeting, a schedule can be drawn up and a specific person given the responsibility of sending out notices of meetings.

5. Implementing the solution

Meetings that have been called must be held.

6. Evaluating the solution

Decisions taken in the meeting have to be implemented and evaluated.

An approach to problem-solving: Example 2

1. IDENTIFY
Supervisors refusing to allow a learner to continue attending the ABET programme
2. INVESTIGATING
Finding out that a lack of communication has resulted in the supervisor feeling threatened by his subordinate who is now getting a better education and training.
3. IN A MEETING
The Committee can discuss the matter.
The Human Resources manager can overrule the supervisor and instruct him to release the learner. A marketing campaign can be organised.

ACTIVITY 1

- (1) The Committee discusses the matter and asks the Human Resources manager to meet the supervisor and persuade him to let the worker attend the ABET programme.
- (2) The Committee develops an overall marketing strategy to win the support of line management.
- (3) There is increased support for ABET by line management.
- (4) The supervisor releases the worker.

We have listed some problems which you may encounter when you implement ABET in your workplace, or when you help a company to set up a programme. We have also mentioned some possible solutions to these problems.

Can you think of other problems that you can add to our list?

Also, can you think of solutions to the problems that we have listed?

In thinking through solutions it might be useful to think about people or things that can help overcome the problem, or at least reduce the obstacles or barriers (look at the diagram below). You could also refer to the case study on pages 20 to 22 to see how similar problems were solved in Tina’s factory.

Possible problems and solutions

Problem	Solution
ABET committee does not hold meetings is dominated by management	
Management and workers are not managing to agree on how workers would be selected to take part in ABET.	
Lack of funds for ABET.	
Lack of support for you as an ABET practitioner.	
One learner is regularly absent.	
Workers demand to be promoted on completion of the course.	
Because workers do not have access to ABET during working hours, they don't want to join the classes. Management says workers must take part in classes in their own time.	
ABET is not integrated into the overall human resource development strategy.	

<p>One specific supervisor is refusing to allow a learner to continue attending the class. The learner has now missed two weeks of lessons.</p>	
<p>Management does not want to change the existing ABET programme to be in line with the new national policy framework for ABET.</p>	
<p>Learners say they are becoming demotivated, because there is not enough recognition and encouragement from the company.</p>	

3.4 GLOSSARY

access issues	how workers can join an ABET programme
affirmative action changing power relations	building workplace democracy and
apprenticeship	studying to be an artisan
BMI	Business Management Intelligence
career paths company	being able to move up a career ladder in the
civic education government	education about the structures of
civic participation	people's participation in decision-making about how communities are governed
commercial enterprise	an organisation which sells goods or services to the public commercial selling goods or services to the public controversial where there are very different views about a topic corporate committee a committee representing the whole of a national company(e.g. Eskom)
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
critical thinking	thinking about what you read or hear and deciding for yourself what you think
culture of rights and right to responsibilities	where it is accepted that key players have a participate in decision-making about a project and that these players must help to make the project work well
culture of the company	how the company is run
curriculum	description of a course of study
curriculum workshop	a workshop at which people discuss what kinds of things will be taught in a learning programme
development strategy	what kinds of things can be done to help develop the country or local community

development studies	the academic discipline that focuses on how to help build a strong economy and a democratic society
enterprise public	sector enterprise: government organisation
ETD practitioners	Educator/Trainer/Development practitioners
facilitators	people who help organise learning activities and events for others
financial and business services companies	banks, building societies or insurance
functionally literate	can read and write very simple sentences
generic	broad based
grade and grading system	the level of a job in the company
health skills	skills needed to stay healthy
human resource development	organising education and training programmes that develop employees' and workers' skills to their maximum potential
illiteracy	people who have not had a basic education or who have had less than four years of education
illiteracy rate	percentage of people who have had not a basic education
induction course	a course given to new workers when they start working in the company
industry	branch of trade or manufacture (where new products are made)
industry training board	a board consisting of representatives of employers and unions that helps with the monitoring and regulation of training in a particular industry
information systems infrastructure	place where information is kept things that are needed for learning to take place (e.g. venues for ABET classes, chairs, boards, materials, etc)

international competitiveness sell South	ability to compete with other countries and African products outside of South Africa
learning centres	a place where learners meet to discuss things they want to learn
learning strategies learn	the different ways in which learners can learn
lifelong learning	continuing with education and training for the rest of your life
mission statement	a document that describes the aims of an organisation or company
National Education Policy National Investigation	research which was conducted by the Education Coordinating Committee
National Policy Framework National government	policies that have been supported by the
National Qualifications Framework	a description of national qualification levels which links (NQF) all the different parts of the education and training system
National Training Board	a structure consisting of representatives from employers, unions, government, providers and community-based organisations to help monitor and regulate education and training across all industries
Needs analysis	finding out about potential learners' needs
NGO, nongovernmental organization government	an organisation that is separate from
nonprofits-making organization	an organisation that covers its costs through money from donations, or that charges just enough money to cover the costs of its services
operational centre	an individual factory or shop
organisational skills	skills needed to help build organisations
portable	skills which you can take with you wherever you go and use in different situations

pre-entry assessment	finding out what people are able to do before entering a course
preamble	an introduction to a document presidential led project priority projects which the President said should be organised as soon as possible after elections
prior learning	what adults have learned through life and work experiences and not through formal education
Private Sector Education Committee	a committee consisting of representatives of employers from different companies
profile	information that helps you understand the main points about a situation, community or workplace
scenario	a story
scheduling	organising time-tables for doing things
selection criteria	what kinds of things people look for before choosing people for a job or course etc.
skills audit	finding out about the levels of skills workers in a company have on the basis of agreed standards
stakeholders society	interest groups, organisations, or sectors in society
status	the position of something
target group	which group is being aimed at
technical skills	work-related skills, or skills that can help people earn some money (eg sewing or carpentry skills)
tertiary education	university or technikon education
training modules	learning materials designed to develop skills
unskilled work	work where workers mainly use their physical strength to do work rather than their thinking skills

White Paper	a document produced by the government which tells the country what the government is planning to do
work-related skills	skills used in work such as welding, plastering, plumbing, laying pipes etc.
workplace democracy	where workers and employers jointly decide how the company should be run

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