ADULT LEARNER PERCEPTIONS OF ADULT BASIC EDUCATION AND TRAINING CURRICULUM IN A RURAL VILLAGE OF NORTH WEST PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA: CURRICULUM, CAREER ASPIRATIONS AND SOCIAL CHANGE ALIGNMENT

*Sizakele Danke and **Themba Ralph Mkhize

*danksm@unisa.ac.za

**University of South Africa

Corresponding author mkhizet@hotmail.com

ABSTRACT

This research sought to understand adult learner perceptions of the Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) curriculum in a rural village. Adult education in South Africa is still developing and there is a perception that the education system cannot meet the career aspirations of adult learners, reduce high illiteracy levels and unemployment and create social change. Critical emancipatory research was used to explore and interpret data gathered from an ABET centre in a rural village in the North West province, using thematic data analysis. The research found that ABET should be overhauled to ensure alignment between the curriculum, career advancement and sustainable empowerment of adult learners through effective teaching and learning. The findings suggested that continuing to provide ABET would play a critical role in bringing social change.

Keywords: Adult education, Adult Basic Education and Training, curriculum, critical emancipatory research, teaching and learning

DECLARATION: We hereby confirm that the article is our original work and has not been submitted elsewhere. All authors have approved the final article.

INTRODUCTION

Twenty-seven years after the formal end of apartheid, the South African government is still faced with the challenge of creating fundamental social change to deal with persisting inequalities, poverty and unemployment. Critical socio-political and structural changes accompanied by failed policy implementation in South Africa and Africa have created a high demand for effective teaching and learning in adult education (AE) that would bring empowerment and social change in the African context (Cedefop, 2010; Tawiah & Ngmenkpieo, 2018). According to Muodumogu (2012), a high literacy level is a catalyst for personality development, economic emancipation and social change. UNESCO has been instrumental in expanding the right to education to include adults and promoting the humanistic and emancipatory approach to AE (Elfert, 2015, 2018) which is favoured in this paper. The most common reasons adults cite for participating in adult learning are work or career-related (Dirkx, 2012). This paper reports on adult learners' perceptions of the ABET curriculum in a rural village in the North West province. In this paper, the terms 'ABET' and 'AE' are used interchangeably and viewed as one of the tools for eradicating poverty and acquiring

skills for sustainable development. In South Africa, ABET can play a crucial role in providing vocational skills and entrepreneurship programmes and a second chance for adults who failed or were unable to complete their secondary education due to unforeseen challenges (Mezirow, 2018; Lalendle, Msila & Matlabe, 2020). We believe that well-planned ABET can assist adult learners who have unfavourable learning experiences to join lifelong education programmes and take part in transformative learning opportunities. Some unfavourable learning experiences were caused by the social injustice systems of the past (Nelson Mandela Foundation, 2005; Masinire, 2020) and the limited transformational and emancipatory approach to ABET of the current administration.

BACKGROUND

In South Africa, the promise of a caring developmental state poised to deal with issues of poverty, unemployment and inequality is yet to be achieved (Madiya, 2021; Gumede, 2021) although it was well-articulated in 1994 and in the Constitution and National Development Plan (NDP) (RSA, 1996; NPC, 2011). Currently, numbers of unemployed, unskilled, illiterate adults living in poverty and surviving on the state's social grants in South Africa are exceptionally high (Stats SA, 2020). There is a distinct gap between policy and practice at grassroots level and a disjuncture between ABET policies, the socio-economic needs of adult learners and the needs of future employers (Matlabe, 2016, p,127; Daniels, 2020). The ABET curriculum does not link training and the acquisition of vocational skills with the world of work and job opportunities that are desperately needed by adult learners (Sefoka & Odeku, 2020; Addae, 2021).

Is there any alignment between education skills and employability that ABET programmes can address? A quality ABET curriculum is needed, designed to deal with the socio-economic ills the adult population is faced with and play a crucial role in providing adult learners with innovative skills, critical skills and entrepreneurship programmes that can change their lives and living conditions for the better (Lalendle, Msila & Matlabe, 2020). Internationally, it has been shown that AE has contributed meaningfully to improving the lives of adults (Roumell, Salajan & Todoran, 2020; Elfert & Walker, 2020). The NDP sees quality education at all levels including ABET as a catalyst for socio-economic transformation and access to employability (N PC, 2011). South Africa subscribes to the United Nations' 2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which highlight access to AE as important for human development. Furthermore, Agenda 2063 of the African Union (2015) implores African countries to acknowledge well-resourced education as important for human capital development and quality education. Sadly, despite the adoption of advanced legal instruments, South Africa has failed to use ABET as a tool to empower its citizens to access a better life through decent employment after training.

It appears paradoxical that bodies have to litigate for their rights in education in a democracy which states publicly that education is closely associated with the desirable goal of the country's economic growth (DBE, 2013; RSA, 2000). The assumption that education and economic growth are intimately related is well documented as a tenet of the neoclassical economics theory of growth (Bhorat, Cassim & Tseng, 2016). Hence, there is a need to ensure that skills learned in the ABET sector are aligned with this requirement. In short, we argue that the curriculum must be aligned to career aspirations and enable adult learners to access employment. Based on our understanding of AE and a literature review, we aimed to answer three research

questions:

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What are the adult learner perceptions of the ABET curriculum in a rural village?
- What is the relevance of curricula offered in ABET centres to the learners' aspirations and empowerment that leads to social change?
- How does the ABET curriculum contribute to employment opportunities and emancipation of adult learners exiting ABET level 4?

LITERATURE REVIEW

In reviewing the literature, we explored adult learner perceptions of the ABET curriculum in developed economies, developing economies and South Africa. Second, we explored the **r**elevance of curricula offered in ABET centres to the learners' aspirations and empowerment that leads to social change. Lastly, we examined the ABET curriculum's contribution to employment opportunities and emancipation of adult learners exiting the ABET system.

Adult learner perceptions of the Adult Basic Education and Training curriculum in rural spaces

Despite the heterogeneity of rural communities and localities, the most striking feature of rural communities is the developmental and emancipatory role of AE (Morakinyo & Chinaza, 2021; Cheung, 2021).

Adult rural learner perceptions in developed economies

According to Tuckett (2015), AE in many developed countries does not contribute meaningfully to social transformation for social justice, except in the Nordic countries. AE in developed countries is pushed to the margins of public educational systems with limited budgets, limited levels of professional staffing and scarcity of resources. The experience of living in a rural area impacts on adult learners' perceptions of AE. Astonishingly, the 2015 Education for All Global Monitoring Report (GMR) reports that "adult education in high-income countries appears to have mostly served those who completed secondary education rather than adults who lack basic skills" (UNESCO, 2015, p. 109). In developed countries adult learning is perceived as a necessary but not sufficient component of social change, and where the formal structures of AE can engage with external social forces it can play a constructive and dynamic role (Tuckett, 2015). In Europe, Adult Education and Training is perceived as a relevant strategy for social inclusion (European Commission, 2016). However, there is unequal participation in the AE curriculum.

Adult rural learner perceptions in developing economies

According to UNESCO (2020), the universe is home to 773 million illiterate adults, a high number of whom are women, and 258 million out-of-school children and youth (UNESCO, 2020). Ortiz-Ospina and Roser (2018) posit that great inequalities prevail in literacy levels between sub-Saharan Africa and the rest of the world. Africa has one of the lowest adult literacy rates in the world (UNESCO, 2020). Adult learners in Africa perceive ABET as having a role to play in reducing illiteracy and ensuring the growth and development of the continent and its people (Morakinyo & Chinaza, 2021). This means that the ABET curriculum is seen by adult learners as an empowerment tool for the marginalised and less educated, although the curriculum is limited in guaranteeing employability after training (Regmi, 2019). ABET education in Africa is perceived as an opportunity for

capacitated adult learners to escape marginalising rural conditions by securing better opportunities in semi-urban and urban areas (Masinire, 2020; Lalendle, Msila & Matlabe, 2020).

Adult rural learner perceptions in South Africa

Nkambule et al. (2011, p.341) explain that rurality and rural education have been marginalised in South Africa. They further highlight that education in rural areas continues to be inadequate, partly due to the scattered geographic location of schools and different social backgrounds of learners, despite several interventions. According to the 1997 Rural Development Framework for South Africa (RSA,1997, p.1), rural areas are defined as dispersed populated areas in which people farm and rely on available indigenous resources. Hlalele (2012) explains that rural communities in South Africa may be characterised as having poor infrastructural development; a lack of basic services at school level, which includes proper sanitation, running water, electricity, libraries and laboratories; and schools that are often isolated from towns. The DoE (2005) states that the most striking feature of rural communities in South Africa is poverty. This paper uses the definition of rurality in the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act, No. 41 of 2003 (RSA, 2003) and the KwaZulu-Natal Traditional Leadership and Governance Act, No. 5 of 2005 (KwaZulu-Natal Legislature, 2005), adopted in many studies on rurality (Bhengu & Myende, 2015; Myende & Hlalele, 2018; Mkhize, 2018). These Acts define rurality as areas under the jurisdiction of *Amakhosi* (chiefs). For adult learners to benefit, the curricula offered at adult learning centres should meet the needs (Knowles, 1978) envisaged in the ABET Act (RSA, 2000). According to the Adult Basic Education Policy document (DOE, 1997, p. 8–9), ABET is the general conceptual foundation of lifelong learning and development, comprising knowledge, skills and attitudes required for social, economic and political participation and transformations that are applicable in a range of contexts. Therefore, ABET is perceived by adult learners to be misaligned with their desire for employability and access to better opportunities (Daniels, 2020). In line with the above argument, this paper amplifies the voices of ABET learners within a rural context.

Relevance of curricula offered in ABET centres to the learners' aspirations and empowerment that leads to social change

According to Tawiah and Ngmenkpieo (2018), the aim of ABET is to provide educationally disadvantaged individuals with the knowledge and skills to achieve socio-economic benefit. Toefy (2014, p.15) mourns, "the relics of oppression and segregation are strongly present in everyday South African life", and social exclusion remains "disconcertingly recalcitrant in contemporary South Africa" (Duncan, Stevens & Canham, 2014, p. 284). Hanemann (2015) affirms that ABET provides a critical vehicle that can be used to promote lifelong learning opportunities for all, emancipating the poor to meet their social and economic challenges. AE literature critiques traditional training approaches (Coulter & Mandell, 2018; Kinyota, Mwakabenga & Kavenuke, 2019) that confine adult learning to formal education settings and limit it to rational ways of knowing (Merriam, 2018). We found that scholars in AE propose a paradigm shift in adult learning to include andragogy (Knowles, 1980), which embraces multiple ways of knowing and doing (Waghid, Waghid & Waghid, 2018). The need for a paradigm shift echoes adult learning theories that position AE within whole-person learning, which includes the spiritual, biological, intellectual and emotional dimensions (Merriam, Caffarella

& Baumgartner, 2007) and therefore enables the alignment of the curriculum and career aspirations of adult learners.

The ABET curriculum's contribution to employment opportunities and emancipation of adult learners exiting the ABET system

The problem reported in this article has four important areas. First, the literature (Knowles, 1980; Dirkx, 2012; Lalendle, Msila & Matlabe, 2020) shows that AE policy-makers and practitioners in adult literacy and numeracy programmes are failing their learners. Second, Sondlo and Subotsky (2010, p.1) state that "[d]espite the good intentions and sustained efforts of progressive policy makers, researchers and practitioners, the performance and quality of South Africa's primary and secondary schools, into which band ABET falls according to SAQA's standards, remain substantially-sub-standard". Third, the General Education and Training band seems to be dysfunctional in many areas.

According to Spaull (2013), the Annual National Assessments reports reveal that South African education is poor when compared to that of other countries south of the Sahara. In fact, South Africa comes last, despite the fact that a substantial amount of money is channelled into improving education. Fourth, having learners who cannot meet the requirements of their grade level in schools creates challenges for ABET centres (Matlabe, 2016).

Learners who drop out of formal education join ABET centres to complete their schooling, which leaves limited time for or interest in the needs of the illiterate and innumerate. Another challenge stems from the way in which vocational skills are offered at ABET centres, which stunts the emancipatory and social change role of ABET (Freire, 1975; Akintolu & Uleanya, 2021). For example, adult learners in South Africa are not offered vocational skills; instead they learn school subjects which are designed for formal learning (Tawiah & Ngmenkpieo, 2018).

ABET in South Africa, by nature and design, targets previously disadvantaged, poor, illiterate and semi-literate adults who come predominately from poorly resourced backgrounds (DoE, 1996). In line with sections 22 and 29 (1) of the Constitution of South Africa, 1996, ABET programmes are designed to "educate" and "empower" the beneficiaries so that they are better able to read and write. They are also designed to "create job opportunities" or to better prepare the beneficiaries to be employed (RSA, 2000). This is in line with number three of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), which states that education is a human right and a catalyst for development and social change (United Nations, 2015). Therefore, AE can play a major role in reducing illiteracy, skills shortages, poverty, inequality, unemployment and dependence on social grants in South Africa (Umalusi, 2013; Stats SA, 2020). We argue that AE has an emancipatory role and the ability to improve lives and create social change among the majority of poor South Africans, where the gap between the rich and poor is one of the largest in the world. However, we maintain that transformative learning (Mezirow, 2018) in ABET programmes may only occur when relevant AE is aligned with the career advancement of learners, job placement and social change that empowers rural adult learners. We support the view that AE is essential for global civil society empowerment (Hoff & Hickling-Hudson, 2011).

For adult learners to benefit, the curricula offered at adult learning centres should meet the needs (Knowles, 1978) envisaged in the ABET Act (RSA, 2000). According to the Adult Basic Education Policy document (RSA,1997, p.8-9), ABET is the general conceptual foundation for lifelong learning and development,

comprising the knowledge, skills and attitudes required for social, economic and political participation and transformations that are applicable in a range of contexts. According to the South African Constitution, an adult is a person aged 16 and older. In this article, it means people who are 16 and older who missed opportunities to participate in any form of education. As discussed by Knowles, Holton and Swanson (2005, p. 40), adult learners are those whose intellectual aspirations are least likely to be aroused by the rigid, uncompromising requirements of authoritative, conventional institutions of learning.

According to SAQA Regulations ABET is expected to provide benefits to the society and economy of South Africa (RSA, 1996). However, we argue that in reality ABET learners are not contributing to the economy of South Africa because their chances of finding employment are always limited. Education and training determine one's prosperity in society (Ferrari, Cachia & Punie, 2009). People who are less educated, without relevant skills to meet the needs of employers (Cappelli, 2012) and without education and training, struggle to find work. Therefore, they are unable to meet their basic needs, such as food, shelter and decent living. People living in poverty are often illiterate, poor and trapped in inequality and the country's social ills.

ABET programmes, by nature, target people who lack education, skills and training as well as those who did not complete their secondary education (Daniels, 2020; Masinire, 2020). The community colleges were established in the hope that they would help adults who missed opportunities for various reasons such as poverty and lack of opportunities to study and complete their secondary education. We argue that adult learners should be provided with ongoing training skills that will lead to emancipatory learning opportunities, qualifications for lifelong learning and career opportunities that will empower their consciousness and change their social life for the better (Freire, 2021; RSA, 2000).

Providing vocational skills in ABET programmes could alleviate poverty (Branson, Culligan & Ingle, 2020) and should play a crucial role in equipping individuals with relevant skills and knowledge for the job market; it should also help individual ABET learners to participate in social, economic and technological innovation (Maclean, 2006, p.17). Curriculum plays a major role in teaching. South Africa after 1994 was characterised by dramatic changes in education and curricula. The aim of the new education curriculum was to redress the ills of the past and provide equal access to and quality of education (Addae, 2021; Gunda, 2021). This can only be achieved if the adult learning curriculum and career aspirations that lead to individual and community social change for a better life for rural adult learners are synchronised and aligned.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This research is underpinned by Critical Emancipatory Research (CER), which has its foundations in the critical theory paradigm. The critical theory epistemology in this study suggests that the researcher and the researched are presumed to be connected, with the values of the researcher "impacting the inquiry" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 110). Historically linked to critical theorists from the Frankfurt School, namely Horkheimer, Adorno and Marcuse, critical theory refined and tested Marxist underpinnings (Asghar, 2013). Horkheimer (1982, p. 244) states, "critical theory seeks human emancipation to liberate human beings from the circumstances that enslave them". Critical theory is favoured in this paper because, contrary to traditional theory that investigates and endorses the status quo, critical theory interrogates the status quo

and aims for a just and free world, which is what schools in rural contexts aspire to achieve. Power dynamics, class, race, economy and education are some issues of specific interest when it comes to critical theory. CER encompasses the principles of peace, emancipation and equal rights for all (McGregor, 2003). The research reported in this paper was conducted at an ABET centre in a rural context where the marginalisation of communities remains evident. The CER principles of equality, participation, social justice and human emancipation ensure that the marginalised voices of adult learners are acknowledged (Mahlomaholo, 2010).

METHODOLOGY

A qualitative case study informed our research approach. We used this method to gain a rich description of the experiences of adult learners as they engage with ABET curriculum at a learning centre (Merriam, 2009). We used CER to explore and interpret data gathered from an ABET centre in a rural village in North West province. This province was chosen because of its rural context, absence of heavy industries and accessibility to the researcher. Fourteen research participants (learners) were purposely sampled, using entry and exit levels as a criterion. Data were analysed by qualitative examination and interpretation of the learners' focus group interviews. The themes which emerged from the data were derived from the research questions by clustering the responses from learners at level 1 and level 4. According to Hesse-Bieber and Leavy (2011), the importance of thematic data analysis is that the subjective meanings and social reality of research participants are conveyed in the research report.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

According to Bless, Higson-Smith and Kagee (2006), following research ethics assists in avoiding research pitfalls and misuse; it also promotes the accountability of researchers, who must be guided by and respect ethics. Permission to conduct the study was granted by the University of South Africa's ethical clearance committee in the College of Education. Approval to conduct the research was also obtained from the Department of Education in North West, and the cooperation of the local AE department and senior officials was sought.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Four significant themes emerged from the data responding to the research question on the relevance of curricula offered at ABET centres to the learners' aspirations and social change, and the second question on the contribution of the ABET curriculum to employment opportunities and emancipation of adult learners exiting ABET level 4. Employing CER as an interpretive lens, we report the findings in the following order: Dissonance between rural adult learner aspirations and curriculum; Disjuncture between policy and practical implementation of ABET education; Limited understanding of adult learning concepts; and Curriculum limited to career advancement and sustainable social change.

Dissonance between rural adult learner aspirations and curriculum

The data suggests that there is dissonance between the ABET curriculum and learner aspirations, as shown in the responses below:

> *I like coming to the centre. It has opened up my brains. When I go to a fruits and vegetable shop, I can read the road and board signs (P2)*

> *I have learnt how to write my name and read the bible, but I like working with hands. At home I have a kraal and cattle. I wish they could teach us how to look after*

our cattle and garden (P5)

There seems to be no alignment and resonance between learner aspirations and the AE curriculum. Knowles (1978, p. 5) states, "If learning is to be revivified, quickened so as to become once more an adventure, we shall have need of new concepts, new motives, new methods; we shall need to experiment with the qualitative aspects of education". We argue that the AE curriculum should advance learners' aspirations and free them from rural poverty and marginalisation. Horkheimer (1982, p. 244) states, "critical theory seeks human emancipation to liberate human beings from the circumstances that enslave them". Therefore, the AE curriculum should seek to emancipate rural adult learners and advance their career aspirations, enabling social change in rural areas of South Africa.

Disjuncture between policy and practical implementation of ABET education

All participants highlighted a disjuncture between policy and the practical implementation of ABET education. The question on the skills and jobs that learners want to do after completing their ABET level 4 resulted in the following responses:

We learn Setswana, English and Maths only (P9)

They don't offer us skills that we do with our own hands (P8)

Setswana (P14)

Maths, Setswana and English (P2)

Read English and do Maths (P10)

I can read and speak Setswana but I have not mastered English (P7)

I am trying to learn Setswana and English but I have not mastered them (P13)

This indicates that ABET learners study school subjects and that training in skills has been removed from the curriculum. Research has proven that the learning paths of adult learners cannot follow those of children (Daniels, 2020; Masinire, 2020). As people age, it becomes difficult for them to master learning that is based on using cognitive skills because their memory is not as good as it used to be (Merriam, 2018); hence the high failure rates at ABET centres. There is a disjuncture between formal school subjects and the needs and aspirations of the learners at ABET centres. Adult education studies (Daniels, 2020; Lalendle, Msila & Matlabe, 2020; Freire, 2021) suggest that the current ABET system is failing adult learners in terms of career advancement and improving livelihoods. Therefore, the goal of CER (Patton, 2002; Nkoane, 2012) in this study was also to raise the consciousness of adult learners by enabling them to identify the potential they and their communities have to bring personal and social change in their lives.

Limited understanding of adult learning concepts

We found that learners have a limited understanding of the concepts of the adult learning curriculum and cannot delineate between skills and adult learning subjects. For example, when questioned about the skills they had acquired at the adult learning centre, respondents said:

Read in English and do Maths (P1)

I can read and speak Setswana but I have not mastered English (P2)

I am trying to learn Setswana and English but I have not mastered them (P4)

Here there are no skills (P3)

There is nothing (P12)

Here we are not given any skills (P6)

These responses indicate that the current curriculum and its mode of delivery are irrelevant and ineffective in changing the social and personal lives of adult

learners. Wyatt (2011, p.14–15) argues that the policy-makers, AE practitioners and universities that offer AE "need to identify adult learners, their individual learning preferences and then develop strategies for instruction that will build on the adult learners' strengths". This strategy will also assist in identifying and dealing with obstacles to effective learning (Kiely, Sandmann & Truluck, 2004; Masinire, 2020). Barriers to learning and participating in the learning process can limit success (Rogers & Horrocks, 2010; Lalendle, Msila & Matlabe, 2020).

Curriculum limited to career advancement and sustainable social change

One of the important aims of any training and empowerment programme, including ABET, is to advance the career aspirations of learners and create sustainable social change in their lives. However, this study found an apparent misalignment between this aim and the ABET curriculum. For example, the question about the jobs that the adult learners want to do after completing ABET level 4 (learners' career aspirations) yielded the following responses:

… cleaning jobs (P3)
cooking in restaurants (P7)
tourism (P5)
cleaning (P2)
I want to work in the offices (P1)
... I will try to find employment and work for someone else (P4)

Learners on the lower levels (ABET levels 1 to 3) aspire to do low-skilled jobs such as cleaning, while learners on ABET level 4 dream about focused careers such as tourism and cooking. However, it is important to indicate that the learners were not given any vocational skills.

Revising education curricula in South Africa during the post-apartheid era led to unintended consequences for the ABET curriculum. The curriculum-makers fail to credit adult learners with the enormous amount of knowledge, skills and expertise they bring to their classrooms. The plethora of epistemologies, paradigms and philosophies that are fundamental for teaching adult learners are ignored and the 'banking' system of learning is favoured. ABET learners are expected to deposit the knowledge they get from their facilitators in "their empty heads", record it, store it, retrieve it and recall it during examinations (Freire, 1972). Memorising and recalling information are promoted and not transferability and applicability of knowledge and skills. Research has shown that adult learners have difficulty recalling information for examination purposes (Brookfield, 2018; Sandlin, Wright & Clark, 2013).

The failure of the current ABET curriculum to conform to the principles of adult learning, as explained by Freire (1972), Mezirow (2018) and Knowles (1980), can be considered the major reason for the high failure rate and absenteeism at ABET learning centres. Lalendle, Msila and Matlabe (2020) explain that ABET is part of Adult education, but adult education has more to offer in developing the marginalised and improve lives. We concur that the curriculum for AE in South Africa should contribute to career development, social change and the emancipation of rural poor adult learners.

STUDY LIMITATIONS

Research was conducted at one ABET centre in a rural context, which makes it difficult to apply the findings to other contexts. The intention of this study was not to generalise findings, and our findings may be applied to AE centres with similar characteristics, context and qualities.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The aim of this research was to

investigate the relevance of the curriculum offered at ABET centres in meeting the needs of adult learners and whether it is aligned with career aspirations and sustainable social change in the lives of rural adult learners**.** The failure of ABET policies can be linked to the lack of understanding and concern of policy-makers, government and other stakeholders about what AE is. It is also due to a failure to realise that AE is a specialised field with its own theories, philosophies and paradigms. In addition, poor implementation of AE policies at learning centres can be attributed to the low level of education of the centre managers and facilitators. Using underqualified staff has a ripple effect and dramatically affects the teaching and learning that should be taking place.

The importance of ensuring that ABET offers empowering, transformative learning (Mezirow, 2018) and improved life for rural adult learners cannot be overemphasised. It is recommended that in future AE provides vocational skills and entrepreneurial programmes. Furthermore, partnerships should be established between ABET centres and Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs), Departments of Education, business, the Department of Labour, the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Health. It is further recommended that the prescribed model of teaching in AE be reviewed to ensure that it meets the triple challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality faced by South Africa and the rest of Africa.

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