

NON-FORMAL ADULT LEARNING IN COMMUNITY COLLEGES

A PROPOSAL FOR

A DATABASE OF MATERIAL

PLUS

WORKSHOPS FOR EDUCATORS IN NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

AND THE USE OF ELECTRONIC MATERIAL

SANDRA LAND

ADULT AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION UNIT

DURBAN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

OCTOBER 2016

BACKGROUND

A perennial problem faced by adult and community educators is a lack of materials. In South Africa's state provided adult education system, workbooks have been supplied to learners attending classes in the Kha Ri Gude literacy campaign, which aimed to prepare learners for study at ABE level 1. Beyond this, educators are supplied only with the unit standards for each learning area, and must find or make up appropriate learning materials for themselves. In practice this usually means that educators use whatever materials they have access to from the schooling system that seem to them to be at a roughly appropriate level for their learners (Pillay, 2014).

According to the White Paper for Post School Education and Training (DHET, 2013) the South African Institute for Vocational and Continuing Education and Training (SAIVCET) will inter alia, provide a forum for the development of materials for use in TVET and Community Colleges. However, this institute is yet to be established, and currently there remains a crippling gap in terms of provision of materials in the adult education sector.

Against this background the lament from adult educators in state run adult learning centres and NGOs in the Pietermaritzburg area and KZN midlands about the abrupt end of The Witness's Learn with Echo newspaper learning supplement in 2014 was not surprising. For the last twenty five years, these educators who accessed this supplement knew that each week they could rely on four pages of accessible, interesting learning material that covered a range of subject with direct relevance to the lives of ordinary South African learners.

This learning material of this supplement was designed to achieve the following objectives:

- To affirm isiZulu as a language of learning;
- To model the application of literacy related skills to everyday tasks;
- To support the development of reading and writing skills in isiZulu and simple English using contexts appropriate to South African adult learners;
- To make available non-formal, ongoing education material across a range of areas.
- To stimulate and support of a culture of learning.

Examples of developed material that has long term relevance cover topics such as:

- Information and exercises to develop financial literacy;
- Health education, with particular attention to HIV and AIDS;
- Information and exercises to develop environmental awareness;
- Material designed to develop and support good parenting skills from early childhood to teenage years;
- Critical accounts of South African history;
- Social history, e.g. accounts of *izithakazelo* and history of Zulu surnames;
- Information and exercises to develop learners' understanding of democracy;
- Stories for enjoyment, and the development of literacy skills in isiZulu and English.

PURPOSE OF THIS PROPOSAL

This proposal describes a project to make the substantial amount of learning material published over the twenty five year lifespan of the Learn with Echo project widely, continuously and freely available, and especially to make it easily accessible to both lecturers and learners in Community Colleges.

As part of the Durban University of Technology (DUT), the Adult and Community Education Unit is very well placed to undertake work in this regard. DUT is committed to making learning practically available, and one of the stated objectives of the new unit is to work towards addressing the need amongst people with limited literacy and language skills for both formal and non-formal adult education. In order to work towards this objective, we would like to make educational material that is appropriate and interesting to South African adult learners as freely available as possible. One way of achieving this is through making print and electronic educational resources available to the Community Colleges and to any other adult and community education initiatives who may want to access it. This is in line with the suggestion in the White Paper (2013) that some South African learning support centres, including university campuses, could provide access to digital online materials, and that these materials could be open education resources (OER).

Much of the enormous amount of material published in Learn with Echo over the life span of the newspaper exists in electronic format, has long term relevance and, as is evidenced by the above list of examples of content, would be of interest and value to adult learners in the long term.

High costs of printing impact negatively on possibilities of reproducing this material in print form, especially since its core target group of adults with limited language and literacy skills are almost always marginalised and poorly resourced. On the other hand, initiatives to make material available digitally and to encourage the use of electronic devices in education are gaining momentum. Simultaneously there is rapidly widening general use of cell phones and other electronic devices that can be used to access digital material. Since Community Colleges will have internet access, they would have automatic access to this material if it was made available online, and they would be able to print their own copies, or make it available to their learners on screen.

PROPOSED WORK

In order to make material generated over the life span of the now defunct Learn with Echo newspaper supplement available in the long term, and to facilitate its use by adult educators, we propose that the Adult and Community Education Unit at DUT undertake the following work:

1. Select and, where necessary, edit and update previously published Learn with Echo material to ensure that it is currently relevant;
2. Create an indexed database of educational materials from those developed during the life span of the Learn with Echo project;
3. Make this material available electronically on the website of the Adult and Community Education Unit as free open education resource material to educators and the general public at no cost to them;
4. Ensure that Community Colleges have a direct electronic link to this database of educational materials;
5. Design workshops for Community College lecturers to give them practice in accessing the materials and adapting them where necessary for their learners and using them across a range of literacy levels;
6. Train facilitators to run these workshops;
7. Pilot these workshops with Community College lecturers in KZN.

OUTCOMES

The outcomes of this process would be

1. An indexed database of learning materials relating to locally relevant issues immediately available to Community College lecturers across South Africa.
2. Local Community College lecturers trained to access and use these materials in their classes;
3. A set of piloted workshops designed to enable adult and community educators to make the use of these materials.
4. Facilitators trained to run these workshops.

BUDGET

Item description	Rate	Amount
Selection of material and editing and updating for current relevance	90 days @R 2000 per day	180 000
Preparation of material in mobile and computer friendly digital format, with cross indexing for accessibility	30 days @ 2000 per day	60 000
Webpage design, set up, and maintenance for one year		250 000
Design of workshops	10 workshops @ R5000 each	50 000
Facilitator training	10 days @R2000 per day	20 000
Piloting of workshops	10 workshops @ R6000 each	60 000
Advertising of workshops		20 000
Delivery of workshops	10 workshops @ R3000 each	30 000
	Local travel	10 000
	Accommodation	10 000
	Venues	10 000
Management and administration of the project		30 000
Total		R730 000

REFERENCES

Pillay, A. (2014) *The Reading Development of Level 4 ABET Learners*. M Ed Thesis, UKZN.

Department of Higher Education and Training (2013). *White Paper for Post-School Education and Training; Building an Expanded, Effective and Integrated Post-School System*. Pretoria: Department of Higher Education and Training.