

## **Trained curricula developers benefit KZN FET Sector**

A final study of vocational educator training held recently in KwaZulu Natal has shown that the FET colleges can benefit substantially from a five-day programme that enables its employees to develop the practical competence to design curricula and learning programmes through actually doing it.

“The main purpose of the project was to ensure that trainees were equipped with the competence to design NQF-aligned education and training programmes, and develop appropriate training material to implement learning programmes in their FET Colleges,” explains Mark Orpen, CEO of Institute of People Development (IPD).

“Key issues for FET colleges today are their ability to respond to the market’s requirements and deliver employable learners. This requires a new mindset when compared to the system of churning out learners with specific qualifications that may or may not lead to employment. This transformation agenda in the FET sector is the driving force behind the training as the sector moves towards commercially centred thinking.

“With this in mind, the facilitators set very specific objectives for their own training and, through the intervention of IPD, most participants emerged with a basic competence in designing curricula, which enabled them to design programmes and develop materials more effectively. “

The programme enabled participants to:

- Identify the labour market needs.
- Establish the partnerships needed to design and deliver the programme.
- Identify and analyse the employment contexts within which learners will apply their competence.
- Identify or develop the qualification (or part qualification), which the programme will lead to.
- Map the possible progressions to related qualifications.
- Develop a set of course outlines, which will help learners to achieve the outcomes.
- Pilot the programme.
- Record the programme plan.
- Evaluate own performance.

“Task-teams drafted curricula for the programmes that they were developing and it is probable that these would be accepted by most ETQAs,” continues Orpen. “However, there was no history of using curricula (as opposed to syllabi) within FET institutions; it is now important to breathe life into these curricula by embedding procedures for programme design, delivery and evaluation in them. Through this process, the curricula should evolve into documents that become substantively useful to practitioners, not merely for programme approval purposes.

“The skills base that has been developed within KwaZulu Natal FET institutions through this programme can now be used to serve the province in at least three ways,” adds Orpen.

“First, it may be possible to spread the skills through participants sharing what they have learned with others in similar institutions. Second, it may be possible to constitute the participants as a materials development "unit" which provides specialised support to institutions whenever new programmes or materials are required. Third, it may be possible to have some combination of the first two options.

“An unanticipated outcome of the training was the development of four short training interventions. These were generated in an activity in which trainees ‘recycled’ what they had learned. Many of the participants said that the interventions were urgently required in their institutions and that they would use the programmes they had planned. The programmes developed included

- \* HIV/AIDS
- \* Workplace values
- \* Critical cross-field outcomes
- \* Introduction to learnerships (for management)

“Key to the whole question of this type of training is the needs analysis of the prospective trainee and IPD conducts two of these - The first is an organisational needs analysis and the second is those of the individual participants. These needs analyses are part of IPD's quality management system - a key mechanism for ensuring that we deliver what the client requires.

“Needs analyses play a crucial role not only in programme design, but also in quality management. Quality is measured against customer needs, therefore without a specification of these needs it is difficult to evaluate the quality of any programme. Needs analyses must be planned as part of the process of managing the quality of learning programmes, institutions and impact of learning in the sector.”

Having launched in February 2000, IPD has since established itself as a market leader in the provision of Education & Training Development (ETD) best practices. IPD has enabled hundreds of public and private sector ETD provider organisations in South Africa to further the goals of the NSDS. IPD uses hands-on, change management approaches that ensure transformation takes place on the shop floor, thus improving productivity and service across a range of workplace and provider environments.

“We at IPD believe it is important to note that programme design and materials development (beyond basic levels) is a specialised field. It is for this reason the company is regarded as a qualification specialisation within the ODETD practitioner field,” concludes Orpen.

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