

CPD for trainers

Professional development of high-level trainers strengthens academic credibility of the field.

Market research and analysis suggests a crucial shortage of high-level practitioners working in the field of skills development. In part, this reflects a wider shortage in the field of ETD practice (hence, for example, the Department of Education is providing the Advanced Certificate in Education for school leadership).

In part this also reflects how recently formal education and training targeted at skills development practitioners emerged in South Africa. The first higher education programs aimed at skills development practitioners really only emerged during the 1990's; for example, the South African Qualifications Authority only recently registered a National Certificate in Occupationally-directed Education, Training & Development (OD-ETD) Practices NQF 6.

The scale of qualification provision for high-level skills development practitioners, however, is currently totally inadequate given the huge number of practitioners in the field. Exacerbating this challenge is the argument for 'professionalising' skills development practitioners (through professional registration & accountability) assuring clients of sound, quality services that offer a return on investment; in an over traded and under resourced skills development market.

The field of OD-ETD practice itself lacks academic credibility at present, both in South Africa and throughout the Anglophone world. While schooling has been the subject of extensive research and has a substantial theoretical base on which to draw, the field of skills development by contrast is still relatively impoverished.

Many skills development practitioners & adult educators continue to view their professions as separate disciplines built on different bodies of knowledge, approaches and methodologies; preventing an open exchange of ideas and information regarding adult learning theory, curricula and programme design, learning and teaching methodologies.

Whilst skills programmes are generally designed and developed to benefit of the organisations that fund and coordinate them, adult education programmes are established to advance or increase knowledge, competence, or skills, where individual participants are the beneficiaries.

But adult educators & skills development practitioners are all in business of advancing skills, increasing knowledge and improving the behavior of adults, regardless of beneficiary. *Spurgeon, Moore. 1994.*

"Continuous professional development (CPD) for high-level skills development practitioners who themselves tend to be isolated from others working in the same field of practice, is

starting address the need for stronger leadership in training and development across South Africa" reports Mark Orpen, CEO of The Institute of People Development.

"We are bringing together top experts from the worlds of academic research and workplaces into dialogue with one another through a 'community of practice' may well bridge the divide between adult educators and skills development practitioners and significantly improve OD-ETD practices across the country."

This CPD programme for skills development practitioners is:

- Equipping leadership in skills development with high-level competences required to operate more effectively;
- Extending the body of research underpinning the field of OD-ETD practice in South Africa and abroad through rigorous interrogation of current skills development practices;
- Continuing the building of a community of expert practice through which practitioners engage with one another, share their experiences and reflect on how to improve existing skills development practices.

By training high-level skills development practitioners who conduct research in their field, the academic credibility of the field of practice is now being strengthened and contributions made to the development of a wider theoretical and empirical base on which practitioners are able to draw. This in turn will contribute to the professionalisation of the field.

The SERVICES SETA has now made a further 20 bursaries available in the Western Cape and 20 in KwaZulu Natal for eligible professional ETD practitioners. Please email your CV to mark.orpen@peopledev.co.za



Left to Right: Dr Fanie von Solms (Tutor), Dr Miemsie de Jager (Academic Head), Dr Melanie Bushney (Tutor), Mark Orpen (CEO of IPD)