

Quality first in training

According to Mark Orpen, CEO of Institute of People Development (IPD), the new National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) has placed enormous emphasis on quality – as delivered by training providers. This quality is to be measured in long-term successes not just in statistics as to who enrolled and who achieved competency.

“This is going to put pressure on training providers to establish quality management systems (QMS) that can measure outcomes in the long-term. At IPD, we feel that a co-operative approach across the industry would be far more effective than an exclusive approach, as the estimated training needs of the country increases in line with the targets set by the NSDS goals for 2010.

“As an example, IPD uses a framework that outlines the general functions of an occupational learning process by clustering eight roles with relevant functions:

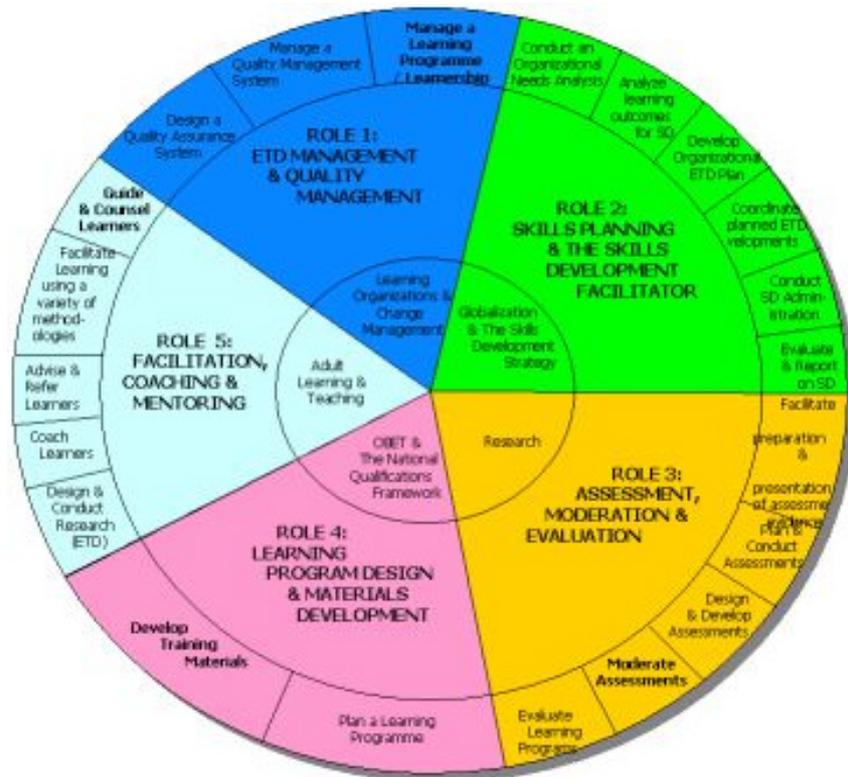
-  Needs analysis & skills planning - Planning the skills required; securing the resources
-  Quality management, Project management & Training management - Developing a training business plan; Designing the systems, policies and procedures; Outsourcing in a learnership environment
-  Learning programme design & materials development - Design programs; develop the materials
-  Staff development - Appoint/select/appraise/train staff to deliver
-  Co-ordination - Select and contract learners
-  Facilitate learning - Coach, mentor and facilitate
-  Assessment Management – Assess; Moderate; Evaluate
-  Co-ordination - Administrative

“These functions require providers to have both the competence to deliver these as well as the capabilities (or systems and tools) to support the process. Learning and tools development then takes place through targeted interventions to develop the capabilities and the capacity of the participants.

“We call this action-learning or training with production and ensure that the systems and tools developed have measurement criteria by which quality management systems can be applied in each case. The learning is clustered into the five habits of highly effective providers:

-  Role 1: Needs Analysis & Skills Planning
-  Role 2: Learning Program Design & Materials Development
-  Role 3: Facilitation, Coaching & Mentoring
-  Role 4: Assessment, Moderation & Evaluation
-  Role 5: Quality Management & ETD Administration

(See diagram overleaf)



It is then possible to assess the learning on six levels of quality and start to measure and analyse results.

- ✚ Level 1 – Has it met the learner’s expectations? *Learners complete course evaluation forms*
- ✚ Level 2 – How successful is the learner? *Assessors and moderators complete assessment reports and further questionnaires*
- ✚ Level 3 – Is the learner transferring his/her knowledge to action? *Supervisor/learner complete questionnaires*
- ✚ Level 4 – Has the service or production provided by the learner increased measurably? *Manager/learner completes questionnaire providing production statistics*
- ✚ Level 5 – Can the impact of this increased productivity be measured across the company? *Manager/Skills Development Committee reports on impact*
- ✚ Level 6 – Has the learner’s increased skill influenced the social or community in which he or she lives? *Training manager reports progress on NSDS/NQF Impact Indicators*

“A multi-variable analysis of these results will produce emerging patterns that lead to gap analysis. For instance, if 30% of learners are not passing, what are the patterns that are influencing this? If only 30% of the skills are being transferred, then what are the patterns that are influencing this and so on. The results of this kind of analysis can be fed back into the training system to produce desired results.

“SETAs are being tasked to monitor providers at a systems level and that will require providers to measure quality at all these six levels. In essence, a QMS is not a file to go in the cupboard; it is living document that must underpin the entire industry’s way of thinking, if private training providers are to meet the NSDS requirements,” concludes Orpen.