Fulfilling Occupational Skills Requirements: The case of Adult and Community Education Training at Kyambogo University.

By

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Declaration

I Kulabako Mary declare that the content of this thesis is my original piece of work and has never been presented for any award of a degree in any University. Any other extra information used in this report by other scholars has been acknowledged.

Signature of Candidate ..... Date 17/01/2011

Approval by the Supervisors

We hereby certify that this research project titled "**Fulfilling Occupational Skills Requirements: The case of Adult and Community Education Training at Kyambogo University"** is an original work of **Kulabako Mary (2009/HD/009/MVP)**. It has been under our supervision and is now ready for submission to senate with our approval.

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Dedication

To my husband Joseph and children; Rebecca, Joseph and Joshua, the most beautiful of all life's gifts.

Acknowledgement

This Masters Thesis has been a collaborative endeavor of a number of people whose efforts cannot go unrecognized. I am greatly indebted to all the persons whose contributions have been very vital in this piece of work. It has been a pleasure working with each one of you and I am proud of what we have accomplished together.

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Abstract

The study was carried out in the Department of Adult and Community Education (ACE) at Kyambogo University to assess the occupational skills training provided by the Department for the graduates working in Kampala district. It was guided by three objectives: to examine the possible competence gaps in respect to practical performance of tasks by the graduates, examine the training curriculum provided by the Department of ACE and analyse the pedagogical approaches employed by the teaching staff during the training. The results from the study should have practical implications for both the department and curriculum developers to improve the curriculum, to produce graduates who might better meet the demands of the workplaces. The inquiry used a descriptive study design taking a qualitative approach based on a sample of 25 respondents comprised of the teaching staff, the graduates already working and undergraduates in their final year. These were selected using simple random and systematic sampling techniques. Data were collected using in-depth interviews, observation and documentary analysis. The main findings showed that graduates were not able to perform well during the practical tasks. One important reason to note for this situation is the fact that the training was basically theoretical even on aspects that should have (based on the researchers' well founded meaning) been practical. In terms of content in the curriculum, the department was giving quite an elaborate range of course units and a good number of them were found to be relevant to the work that the graduates were doing. The curriculum had however some shortcomings. The major component lacking in the curriculum was Information Communication Technology (ICT), and the graduates thought it was very vital, if they were to perform their work effectively. The common pedagogical approach used by the teaching staff during the teaching was lecture method. This was reported to be more theoretical even on practical aspects in the curriculum. Other approaches used, but on a small scale, were field placements during the recess terms, group tasks and discussions. The study concluded that ACE training programme at Kyambogo University was relevant to the activities the graduates participated in while at work. Although the content was relevant, the theoretical mode of teaching had its shortcomings in terms of equipping the graduates with relevant skills required by the labour market. The detachment of the theory from the practice cannot equip the graduates with the practical skills required of them to perform practical tasks. The study recommends that the department should adopt a more "hands-on" approach to teaching which can involve the learners practically so as to help them see the connections between the theory-based and the practice-based learning by moving, as learners, from practice to theory and back again.

List of Acronyms

ACE Adult and Community Education

DIT Directorate of Industrial Training

GTZ - German Agency for Technical Cooperation

ICT Information Communication Technology

ISCE International Standard Classification of Education

MGLSD - Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development

NOMA - NORAD's Program Master's Studies

NORAD - Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation

TVET Technical Vocational Education and Training

UGAPRIVI- Uganda Association of Private Vocational Institutions

UNESCO- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNEVOC- UNESCO's International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education Training

VET - Vocation Education and Training

WCRWC- Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children

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According to Lindgren (2006, p. 294), many social and behavioral scientists like Piaget, Homburg and Ericsson hold the view that an individual's cognitive and social development takes place through biological stages. In this light they have demonstrated the need for children's pedagogy. In view of this approach there is thus a need for a special 'adult's pedagogy' in order to compare how children and adults memorize. In support of Lindgren, Malcolm Knowles cited in Amutabi, Nafukho & Otunga (2005, p. 9) contends that many principles for learning as well as teaching methods have been developed for children. They further argue that teaching adults requires a different set of instructional strategies suitable for adults because of their special characteristics. The question is what are these strategies?

Adult education is understood differently by different people, and with even greater diversity at the international level. In a seminar on the topic 'adult education' in Norway (Lindgren, 2006, p. 295), it was agreed that there are different conceptions of adult education in different countries. The discussion reported by Lindgren seemed to conclude that there was a need to contextualize the term 'adult education'. Like in Finland and Germany where adult education has been institutionalized, Uganda too, has institutionalized adult education, one that is offered in institutions of higher learning like universities. This particular study focused on the institutionalized adult education offered at a university level, training professional adult and community educators.

The vocational teacher of Adult and Community Education - whether at Kyambogo University[3] or elsewhere, take up key vocational activities such as teaching, training, facilitating, managing, mentoring and research (Harris & Simons, 2004, p. 139). Adult educators have the responsibility for managing the content delivery and assessment processes; as well as the responsibility to develop curriculum materials and take the lead in entrepreneurial activity. To attain these skills and many more as demanded by the changes in the labour market, it calls for the 'special pedagogy' pointed out by Knowles (Amutabi, et al, 2005, p. 9).

As trainer of 'adult and community teachers/educators', ACE at Kyambogo University needs to embrace the basic principles of vocational pedagogy (learning by doing, learner-centered approach to teaching and learning, learning activities related to work-based learning, close cooperation between the person in a teaching position and the person in the learning position, and a close relationship of learning to working life). Just as Mjelde, (1995) asserts, the interplay of institutional and workplace learning will help to create insight among the learners into real activity and development of work (Mjelde, 1995, p. 133). Like Mjelde, Lindeman, (cited in Amutabi, et al 2005) emphasizes the value of teaching adults through situations rather than subjects. He noted that 'experience is the adult learners' living textbook' (p. 11). This experience should be tapped if adults are to learn, but this can only be done using appropriate pedagogical approaches.

[3] Adult and Community Education is one of the professional courses offered at Kyambogo University by the Department of Adult and Community Education. The graduates work with communities in areas of adult education and training with various organizations both private and public.

The principles mentioned above were fundamental to the NOMA masters two year programme. I have experienced the learning by doing, trying and failing and trying again with close supervision from both the mentors and the facilitators, rotating from workplaces to lecture room and writing mini-reports. Learning on this programme was based on activity – much of it cooperative, and this helped me to take note of the relationship between the theory learnt and the practice. The intention of the current investigation has been to examine the possibility of adopting this approach of learning and teaching across a wide spectrum of vocational trades.

From my experience as a trainer at ACE department there were a variety of courses offered. However, prior to this study, it was not clear whether the courses offered were commensurate to the demands of the labour market, or whether the training that went on had any connection with the labour market. From my four years experience while teaching at the department, curriculum development was undertaken without sufficient research or effective consultation with stakeholders from the economic sector and the infrastructure. Quite often, curricula in certain subject areas were internally developed with limited stakeholder consultations.

My experience, as a professional adult educator, further reveal that a lot of theory in various courses is emphasized at the expense of practice-based teaching/learning that has to do with the way skills and knowledge are actually used in working life. The aspects of learning by doing at ACE as advanced by Mjelde, (2006a) seem to be very minimal, let alone learning inductively from practice to theory. This scenario seems to be in accord with the argument given by Okello, (2009, pp. 27-28) who observed that,

graduates in most training institutions are usually taught "about" the subject matter, in lieu of being taught the skills required by an individual to work competently in the workplace in that particular field. Quite often, graduates seem to know a lot of theory about the different subject content in the curriculum, but when it comes to practice they have very little experience on which to build when faced with practical world, and this is even more when they arrive in the workplaces.

ACE department tends to take too long to revise curricula yet technological changes in workplaces take place rapidly. Apparently, there has been limited information as to whether there is a correlation between what is being taught and the occupational skills required of the graduates once they reach the workplace. Many times lecturers focus on the subject content within the curriculum while paying less attention to the specific human skill requirements that could enable students to function effectively outside the classroom such as teaching, mentoring and facilitation, administration/ management of projects, writing reports, and conducting workshops.

This practice greatly contradicts the views given by Lindeman (cited in Amutabi, et al, 2005, p. 11) who believes in teaching adults through situations rather than subjects. Concentrating on subject matter at the expense of other abilities of the students to practically perform tasks in the situations that they encounter is bound to bring about a mismatch between what the institutions are offering students and the actual occupation skills required in the workplaces. This can be avoided if the special attention is paid to the pedagogical principles of teaching/learning in the school environment and learning at the workplace.

Quite often learners were geared towards passing examinations and gaining better grades, they were seldom encouraged to master the knowledge and skills required of them in workplaces. This is probably not their fault, but rather, they are not being mentored towards competence in eventual jobs. In support of this position, Egau (2002, p. 20), confirms that the training is still dominated by examinations at all stages without adequate provision for assessment of other objectives of the curriculum, such as promotion of moral values, cooperative work relations and practical skills that are equally important in these areas. One may refer to this as real competence within a particular vocational skill/trade.

According to the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ), (2009),[4] the poor quality, old-fashioned teaching and learning system used in training institutions is often out of touch with the needs of the labour market. As trainers, we need to improve on our ways of handling the teaching and learning process if we are to maximize opportunities for learning. This is possible through following the principles of vocational pedagogy noted on pages 5 and 6 above.

1.1.3 Statement of the Problem

There is a belief among key actors in Uganda that low productivity in delivery of services, manufacturing and agricultural production is hindering competition among Ugandan enterprises of all sizes, whether they are engaged in local, regional or international markets due to limited skilled manpower (GTZ, 2009, p. 1; Ssempijja, 2010, p. 6). On the other hand, there are numerous private and public training

[4] GTZ. (2009). The Uganda Vocational Qualification Framework: Overview

institutions that provide professional training in Uganda with the aim of turning school leavers into productive persons in business and industry. According to Mulwana, a renowned local industrialist, there is no link between training institutions and the private sector, and this has resulted in high unemployment due to the mismatch between the private sector human capital needs and the academic training institutions' programmes (Ssempijja, 2010, p. 6). In line with Mulwana, UNESCO-UNEVOC (2007, p. 27) acknowledges that in Sub-Saharan Africa, VET programmes suffer from lack of a relevance due to curricula which are frequently outdated in terms of industry and economic needs. Furthermore, UNESCO-UNEVOC argues that even where there is a market demand for a certain trade/occupation, many professional graduates who have formally studied for that occupation find that the skills they have learned have not equipped them to meet the expectations of the workplaces. This may partly be a result of lack of the link between training institutions and industries as noted by Mulwana. By definition, VET is supposed to prepare participants or students to be effective participants in world of work. At the time of this study it was not empirically clear whether what was taught by the department of ACE at Kyambogo University, and how it was taught, met occupation skills required of the graduates at work. The present study therefore was intended to assess the ACE Training Programme vis-a-vis the occupational skills required of the graduates in the workplaces.

1.1.4 Conceptual Framework

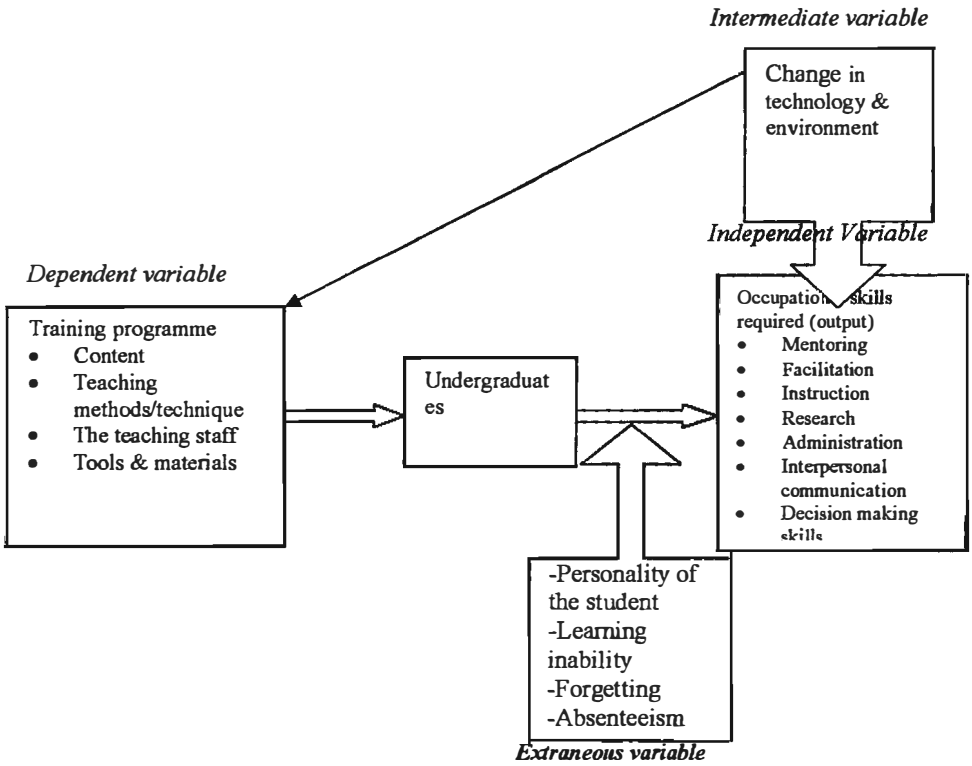


Figure 1. 1: Conceptual Framework

Explanation of the Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework illustrated in Figure 1.1, explains the different variables presupposed at the outset of the study and how they might influence one another. It has been drawn up based on the progressivism philosophical view of education. According to the progressivists, education should aim at producing individuals who will make a positive contribution to society (Amutabi, et al, 2005, p. 46). Progressivists like John Dewey stress an experiential, problem-solving approach to learning (Zinn, 2004, p. 47). In this case, adult and community education training

programme constitute a dependent variable[5]. It is comprised of the contents in the curriculum, the methods of teaching used, the availability of tools and materials and the profession of the teacher. This should aim at producing graduates who are productive members of society in various vocational fields like facilitation of programmes, mentoring adult learners, research in adult education areas, planning and managing trainings, managing, administering of projects, interpersonal communication skills, problem solving skills and decision making skills.

On the other hand, a training programme may be influenced by the socio-economic factors[6] such as globalization; rapid technological changes; scarcity of funds; low status for vocational subjects and donor conditionality. Because of these factors training programmes may fail to meet occupational skills requirements in the workplaces. This may create a mismatch between training and actual occupational skills requirements. Therefore, training institutions through research and collaboration with the labour market should design appropriate programmes that meet the demands of the labour market.

However, as much as the training may focus on producing graduates with relevant knowledge and skills, other extraneous variables[7] such as the personality of the student, absenteeism and general learning inability by the learners are bound to

[5] It is dependent on the occupational skills requirements in the workplaces such as facilitation, mentoring, planning and managing projects, carrying out research, preparing and conducting workshops to mention a few. It is also dependant on the developments and technological changes in the labour market.

[6] These intermediate variables keep work conditions in the labour market changing, and hence put a strain on the training programme. To counteract this, there is need for continuous research and review of curricula to make it effective in the face of changing demands of the labour market.

[7] These variables may interfere with the relationship between the training and the outcomes of the training.

interfere with the process of the training consequently interfering with the output. Although this has been my pre-conceived thought about the training, the present inquiry was open to any emerging issues from the data that was collected and helped to clarify the validity of this conception.

1.1.5 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this inquiry was to undertake an empirical case study to assess the training provided by the ACE Department at Kyambogo University with reference to occupational skills required of the graduates at work in Kampala district.

1.1.6 Specific Objectives of the Study

The study was guided by the following objectives:

- To identify the competence gaps faced by the graduates of ACE at Kyambogo University
- To examine the extent to which the content in the curriculum provided by the Department of ACE at Kyambogo University meets the skills requirements of the workplaces.
- To analyse the pedagogical approaches employed by the teaching staff during the University-based training in relation to skills required of the graduates in the workplaces.

1.1.7 Research Questions

- Is there a mismatch between ACE course of studies and occupational skills requirements in the workplaces?
- Does the content in the curriculum prepare graduates who are competent to meet the workplace skills requirements?
- What pedagogical approaches does the teaching staff of the Department of ACE at Kyambogo University employ for effective teaching and learning?

1.1.8 Scope of the Study

1.1.8.1 Geographical Scope

The scope of this study was limited to the Department of Adult and Community Education at Kyambogo University. The graduates who were already working were contacted individually following an earlier appointment made with each of them. These were mainly those working in Kampala district.

1.1.8.2 Content Scope

The present study was limited to the variables addressed in the objective of the study mentioned above. I examined the content in the curriculum and how this relates to knowledge and skills required of the graduates of adult and community education at work. I also took a look at the pedagogical approaches used in the teaching process by the teaching staff. In this case, I looked at the lecturer-learner interaction during the learning/teaching process, content delivery techniques; performance of tasks by the

students and students-students interactions during the learning process. The study tried to take account of the situation that existed in the period between 2005 and 2009.

1.1.9 Significance of the Study

- I am optimistic that the findings will be useful to the Department of Adult and Community Education at Kyambogo University in that it will act as a resource from which steps to improve the general curriculum may be taken.
- The results may also act as a resource for policy makers and implementers towards the improvement of adult education and training in Uganda.

1.1.10 Study Limitations

Like any other study, there was unexpected limitation to this study and was, that some respondents for example, had a busy schedule and this forced me to re-schedule my appointments with them from time to time, and sometimes led to time pressure that served to limit the interviews more than I would have desired.

1.1.11 Operational Definition of Concepts

Concepts and terminology used in this study have been used in different fora to mean and refer to different things. I would like to operationalize them here for the purpose of making them unambiguous, contextual and adaptable in this study. These are given based on my own understanding and the context in which I have used them.

Competence - The knowledge and ability needed to perform assigned tasks.

Occupation - refers to ones job or employment for which one is paid in order to earn a living.

Mismatch - refers to the hiatus or contradiction between expectations and reality.

Assessment: -Any systematic method of obtaining evidence from posing questions designed to draw inferences about the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and other characteristics of people for a specific purpose, or assessing one's own knowledge, skills and attitudes.

1.1.12 My Motivation for this study

i. My professional and academic interests in adult and community education and training have intrinsically motivated me to trace my own approach to teaching and improve it.

ii. My academic engagement with experiences as a student of vocational pedagogy has greatly inspired me to look upon the possibility of adopting the principles of vocational pedagogy in a wide spectrum of trades.

1.2 LITERATURE REVIEW

1.2.1 Introduction

This section of chapter one examines other people's views into the debates about learning, learning/teaching strategies, pedagogical approaches to teaching and how they influence learning; and their arguments towards improving the process of learning. It also presents literature in areas of training vis-à-vis occupational skills required of the graduates in the labour market.

1.2.2 Theories underpinning learning

Different views have been held by different scholars over the concept of learning. However, according to Mayes (2007, p. 2), there are distinct traditions in educational theory that derive from different perspectives about the nature of learning itself. He cites three traditions as;

- The **associationist** perspective (learning as skilled activity)[8]
- The **cognitive** perspective (learning as achieving understanding)[9]
- The **situative** perspective (learning as social practice).[10]

To Mayes, each of these theoretical frameworks can be characterized as providing a model of an ideal learner, choosing to focus its explanation on identifiable but particular aspects of learning behaviour. He believes that a learner is all of these at once. However, the lenses through which the learner is viewed at any particular point,

[8] The **associationist** tradition models the learner primarily as a set of skilled responses
[9] The **cognitive** approach as a constructor of meaning
[10] **Situative** strand pictures learners mainly as social agents

and thus the model adopted along with its associated pedagogical approach, will be determined at least partly by the nature of the intended learning outcomes and the way in which they are to be assessed (Mayes, 2007, p. 2). He contends that this description of the goals of a curriculum will convey underlying assumptions about the kind of behavior being brought into focus, i.e. skilled performance, deep understanding or effectiveness of practice. Arguably, right from the initial point of defining learning outcomes, an underlying model of the learner will emerge, a corresponding tradition of theory will be implied, and a pedagogical approach suggested.

In his argument about the cognitive perspective to learning, Mayes cites Piaget's work as highly significant particularly in his assumption that conceptual development occurs through activity rather by absorption of information ((Mayes, 2007, p. 2). In view of Piaget's approach, concepts should be treated as tools, to be understood through their use, rather than as self-contained entities to be delivered through instructions. As teachers, more so, those who believe in the philosophy of Piaget, we ought to think about our own ways of teaching, one that should help the learner construct his/her own knowledge, understand concepts and be able to use them in their day-to-day life.

In line with Mayes (2007), Chappell (2004, p. 3) argues that cognitivism is less concerned with promoting learners' overt performance by the manipulation of stimuli, rather it emphasizes the mental processing aspects of learning. Consequently, he further contends that the teaching process should involve the selection and use of pedagogical strategies that enable learners to develop cognitive strategies and abilities. The sorts of strategies, he suggests include framing, outlining, concept

workplace is determined by the functional needs of the production in the specific firm, while the curriculum in public schools of vocational and further training is decided by broader labour market needs and educational policy guidelines. He further contends that the increased specialization of production makes it difficult for public education and training programmes to offer relevant teaching content. It is not clear whether this applies to the training programme provided by ACE department at Kyambogo University.

To avoid a disconnection between training programme and the labour market demands, Jorgensen, further argues that the content of the education and training programmes must be constructed, not only in relation to the current needs of the enterprises, but also in relation to the participants' personal needs and the long-term needs of the labour market and the society (Jorgensen, 2008, pp. 186-187).

One of the aims of adult education as provided for by the MGLSD is the provision of vocational and technical education necessary for the acquisition of certain specific skills needed for the improvement of job performances. This requires an appropriate content. With this in place, the question is, are formal training institutions giving the learners the right content? Are the adult educators adequately equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to meet the goal? These and many more questions have been answered by this study.

According to Harris & Simons (2004, p. 144), in most formal adult education training institutions today, there has been more pressure on staff when determining whether a

student has achieved "competency" or not, despite questioning the validity of demonstrable outcomes.

In Australia (Harris & Simons, 2004), there has been a decreasing emphasis on adult educators as creators of curriculum and an increasing focus on them being receivers and interpreters of the wishes of industry with regard to training frameworks. These take the form of training packages that represent the current government's preference for "flexibility". It is not clear whether this form of arrangement is being done in Uganda. From my experience as a trainer at the department, curricula are designed by a few individual with limited and sometimes nonexistent awareness of the demands posed by the labour market/ industry. A supportive framework from government would aid training institutions to focus on enterprise-based, market-oriented training that is responsive to the needs of the workplaces to avoid the possibility of mismatches.

According to Harris & Simons (2004, pp. 143-144), the ability to deliver a certain amount of content is no longer the critical factor. Rather, the future of adult education is in developing a flexible, self-pacing, self-reliant, independent learner. To achieve this, there is need for an appropriate pedagogy at the point of training either in school or the workplace. They further argue that there is increased demand for adult educators to be effective communicators, to have up-to-date content knowledge and to have skills for classroom, workplace, and on-line delivery and assessment.

Developments in the use of new technology require adult educators to develop skills for training and assessment on-line, with demands for twenty-four- seven, that is, constant access by students. This has not been the case yet for most training

institutions, in Uganda, just like Australia. According to Rodrigue (2004), technological change is percolating both from above and below and can no longer be dismissed with ease. He argues that

> Society, and the educational system which is part of it, is being transformed by a Schumpeterian wave of IT innovations that have yet to find their role and potential in respective economic, social and educational structures (Rodrigue, 2004, p. 2).

In support of Harris & Simons, (2004) and Rodrigue, (2004), Okwakol (2009, pp. 3-4) agues that in the present age, there is a need to transform Uganda from an agriculture-based to a knowledge-based economy. For this to be achieved she believes that Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is the key to this transformation. Integrating ICT in academic instruction is therefore important for Universities. Like Okwakol, Rodrigue (2004, p. 1) argues that a well acknowledged trend underlines that the use of computer technology is becoming a central component in university education. He further asserts that educational technologies, when used properly, can contribute significantly and positively to a college education. Apparently, there are few universities that have taken up this venture partly because of the expenses involved in accessing computers for entire population of the university, but it can also be due to conservativism and a lack of innovativeness by the authorities. Universities need to catch up with the trend of computer revolution as a tool for training as well as part of the training package. Rodrigue acknowledges that the level of integration and use of IT as an educational tool remains surprisingly low. He explains that:

> By and large, higher education is still a lecture-based enterprise, with only a few faculty members experimenting with innovative

> new models. There are not many campus experimental learning environments to compare and evaluate (Rodrigue, 2004, p. 3)

According to Jorgensen (2008, p. 187), to take problems from the workplace and make them into teaching themes is a fruitful way of creating connections in relation to the content. In this way the teaching content is not derived from the academic curriculum, but from genuine problems that the employees experience as urgent and which bring with them into the educational programme. In view of this, Kyambogo University and ACE in particular needs to adopt similar approach in order to ensure development of relevant curriculum.

1.2.4 The pedagogical approaches employed during the teaching

According to Biggs (cited in Mayes 2007, p. 1), the task of good pedagogical design is one of ensuring that there are absolutely no inconsistencies between the curriculum we teach, the teaching methods we use, the learning environment we choose, and the assessment procedures we adopt. The crucial step, he argues, is to judge whether the learning and teaching processes adopted will really achieve the intended learning outcomes. He contends that for good pedagogical design, there is simply no escaping the need to adopt a theory of learning. According to Zinn (2004, p. 41), beliefs (philosophy) about education do provide some basis for selecting instructional content, establishing teaching/learning objectives, selecting instructional materials, interacting with learners and evaluating educational outcomes.

Many educationists/teachers adopt different pedagogical approaches either consciously or unconsciously, but in one way or another they have a bearing of a

given theory of learning and or a philosophy. According to Dewey (cited in Mjelde, 2006a, p. 96) the division in learning between practical and theoretical subjects makes the development of scientific and analytical thinking impossible. He believes in a holistic teaching which he argues must have its point of departure in the workshops (Mjelde, 2006a, p. 96). Workshop-based learning is skewed towards the situated theory of learning advanced by Lave & Wenger, (1991) and Mayes, (2007). To Dewey, learning should be 'by doing'. He asserts that any theory that stands opposed to practice is fruitless, and real scientific theory is located within practice and functions as impetus for expansion and provides direction towards new possibilities (Mjelde, 2006a, p. 97). Any theory that is not related to practice is bound to be rejected by the learners because it makes no meaning to them.

Dewey's argument of learning by doing is helpful to the learners. It helps them to understand better because they see the connections clearly. Wlodkoski, (2004, p. 147) supports the idea of helping learners to see meaning in what they are learning as vital. To him meaning draws out intrinsic motivation because it taps into one of our most fundamental reasons for being – a purposeful relationship to the world (p. 142). The criteria for developing a positive attitude among learners towards learning are personal relevance and choice (Wlodkowski, 2004, p. 148, see also Mjelde, 2006a,p. 191). People find learning relevant when it has personal and cultural meaning, allows for their perspectives and reflects their reality- situated (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Ideally, relevant learning evokes sincere curiosity, and as teachers we need to make this a reality as we teach. More examples from the learners day-to-day lives should be used from time to time, and sometimes training them from real life situations.

According to Mjelde, (2006a, p. 97), in Norway, vocational students and apprentices saw little or no relations between what they learned in the workshops/workplaces and in the classroom; and they chose to rebel against theory and anything else that seemed to have nothing to do with their reality. There is a possibility Ugandan students may be doing that as well. Efforts should be made by those in teaching positions to help learners to see reality in what they are learning.

According to Nilsson, (2008b, p.4) meaning is vital in the process of learning. Like Nilsson, Wlodkowski (2004, p. 148) argues that meaning implies that the experience or idea increasing in complexity is connected to an important goal or ultimate purpose such as survival or strong religious belief. Susan Langer (cited in Wlodkowski, 2004, p. 148) has posited that there is a human need to find significance in what they are learning. Wlodkowski, (2004) further contends that the criteria for enhancing meaning for learning are engagement and challenge. In engagement, the learner is active and may be searching, evaluating, constructing, creating or organizing some kind of material into new or better ideas, memories, skills, values, feelings, understandings, solutions or decisions(Piagetian theory of cognition Mayes, 2007, p. 2) . By challenge, the learner is involved in any opportunity for action that learners are able to respond to. A challenging learning experience according to Wlodkowski is an engaging format about a relevant problem, and this helps to intrinsically motivate learners because it increases a range of conscious connections.

As in Norway (Bergli, et al, 2997), there is need to adopt certain pedagogical principles so as to maximize learning. Some of these principles include tying the

learner's own observation and experiences to the learning process, and allowing each individual to learn by observing the practical consequences of his or her own choices (Bergli, et al (1997, p. 20). Lev Vygotsky (cited Mjelde, 2006a) supports this view. He argues that learning occurs through cooperation and incorporates cognition, perception and activity. To him, neither hand nor mind can accomplish much by itself, but activity is realized with tools and cooperation. This helps the learners to develop associations between the theory and practical aspects of the learning processes and bring about the 'zone of proximal development' (Vygostky[12] as cited in Mjelde, 2009, pp.7-8). Mjelde, (2006b, p. 125) too, asserts that 'if the learner has not experienced a certain life situation, his/her comprehension of the words that generalize experience remain incomplete until everyday life introduces experiences that give a greater depth of understanding to that particular generalizing word.' This process takes place in the most immediate zone of proximal development, in the necessary interplay between the learner's inductive experiences and the deductive, generalized, teacher-directed instruction.

The growth of Information technology has influenced the way in which workplaces are organized, In Australia, according to Young and Guile (cited in Harris & Simons, 2004, p. 138) new technologies have altered the temporal and spatial organization of work, the nature of manufacturing systems, the professional identity of employees and in-company human resource development. Within this context, governments have thought to re-align adult education and training systems to ensure that appropriate policy responses can be formulated - for example, the introduction of the competence-

[12] Lev Vygotsky defines it as a distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers.

based training. The training reforms in Australia have resulted in significant decentralization and the assertion of customer choice, but all increasingly regulated using centralized purchase/ provider agreements (Kell, Balatti, Hill, & Muspratt and Seddon (cited in Harris & Simons, 2004, p. 138). The question is what would happen if Uganda adopted similar reforms? This would contribute to developing appropriate programmes by training institutions vis-à-vis occupation skills requirements in workplaces.

In Norway (Bergli, et al. 1997), one of the major features of 'Reform 94' is the work-based component where all vocational streams students work with practical tasks in school workshops, canteens and beauty parlours. It includes the two years of apprenticeship training in enterprises - half the time training and half the time in production Bergli, et al. (1997, p. 19). This demonstrates a commitment to and trust in the apprenticeship system by the government. The Ugandan government could adopt this as a policy provision.

The important elements in the process of strengthening enterprise-based training in Norway include specific curriculum; pedagogical training of trainers, instructors and tutors; portfolios of evidence (documentation of performed tasks) and approval and supervision of apprenticeship enterprises. There are still poor working relationships between training institutions and enterprises, and no clear policy has been put in place yet by the government as far as management of training of students of field work is concerned.

According to Okello, (2009, p. 26), the nature of Ugandan education system is generally theoretical, even the courses that should be practical are taught theoretically. The reasons for this are probably limited technology, inadequate facilitation in terms of tools and materials; lack of practice among the teachers; the teachers who are teaching went through the same system of training and therefore have not been able to change; or the poor attitude towards the profession. He cited the Chinese philosopher who once said;

> If you tell me, I will listen.
> If you show me, I will see
> But if you let me experience, I will learn (Okello, 2009, p.26).

Are training institutions like Kyambogo University ACE department letting the students experience? Or it is simply telling the students? Is there actual learning taking place? This study was aimed at trying to answer these questions and they have been answered.

1.2.4.1 Teaching/ Learning strategies/Methods

The teaching/learning strategies are greatly influenced by the individual's orientation in as far as theories of learning are concerned. According to the constructivists' theory, learning involves the active construction of meaning by learners, which is context dependent, socially mediated and situated in the 'real-world' of the learner (Chapell, 2004). For that matter, many teachers and trainers use pedagogical strategies based on constructivist views of learning. Strategies such as small group work, discussion, debate, practical problem solving, the presentation of alternative perspectives, sharing of information, reflective practice, cognitive apprenticeships,

modeling, mentoring and coaching may be used. He argues that much of adult learning, experiential learning, problem and project-based approaches base teaching and learning practices on constructivist theory. To substantiate his argument further he explains that;

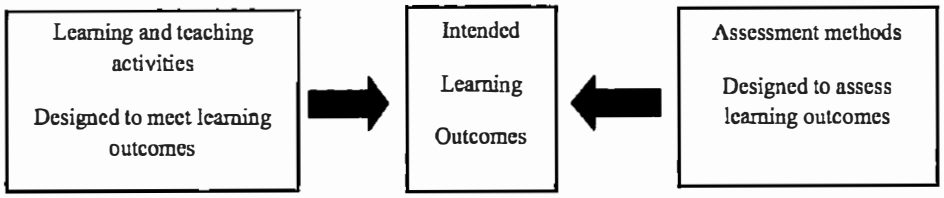
> Indeed the latest interest in situated learning, work-based learning and 'communities of practice' suggest that constructivism is now a major contributor to understanding pedagogical practice. Indeed it seems that constructivist theory has become the main source of understanding contemporary teaching and learning practices (p. 4).

According to Tyler, (cited in Biggs, 2001), "learning takes place through the active behavior of the student- it is what he does that he learns, not what the teacher does (p.2)". In support of Tyler, Shuell (cited in Biggs, 2001) elaborated further that:

> ....if students are to learn desired outcomes in a reasonably effective manner, then the teacher's fundamental task is to get students to engage in learning activities that are likely to result in their achieving those outcome. It is helpful to remember that what the student does is actually more important in determining what is learned than what the teacher does (2001, p.2).

According to Biggs (cited in Bookallil, Muldoon & Raeburn, 2009, p. 821), constructive alignment is an approach to learning in universities, which demands direct alignment of learning activities, assessment and students' outcomes. To him, the focus is on learning activities that leads to deep transformational learning as opposed to surface learning of facts and information (Walsh, 2007, cited in Muldoon & Raeburn, 2009, p. 821). Biggs further contends that if the delivery of instruction highlights this focus, the students are likely to be more actively engaged in the learning and teaching process.

Figure 1.2, illustrates the underlying principles of constructive alignment, adapted from Biggs (cited in Bookallil, et al. 2009). To them 'constructive' component suggests that students construct meaning through relevant and authentic learning activities. It implies that it is the responsibility of the teacher to act as the catalyst that facilitates the learning of the student through creating learning activities and assessment that are aligned with the learning outcomes, in such a way that students can construct meaning in a given learning event (Biggs; Shuell, cited in Bookallil, et al. 2009). The 'alignment' component refers to what the educator does (Bookallil, et al. 2009, p. 821). That is, the educator creates a learning environment that includes learning activities and assessment that facilitate the student achieving the desired learning outcomes.



Source: Bookallil, et al. (2009, p. 821)

Figure 1. 2: Aligning learning outcomes, activities and assessment

According to Galbraith 2002/2003, (2004, p. 3), "the mode and complexity of teaching and learning process are confined in the individuality and idiosyncrasies of those who take on the role of teacher and learner". He argues that the purpose of teaching should be to facilitate personal growth and development that impact the professional, social, and political aspects of learners. This is in line with the conceptual framework (see figure 1.1) which explains the link between training and

output. His argument is somewhat similar to that advanced by Mayes' (2007) on constructive (cognitive) and situative perspectives of learning. Like Mjelde (2002, 2006), they too believe in the fact that learning must be meaningful to the individual involved in the learning, and that it takes place through activity and cooperation.

Heimlich and Norland (cited in Galbraith, 2004) contend that "teaching is a skill and a gift, a talent and a technique" (p. 4). To them good teaching should be a balance of understanding oneself as a teacher and knowing how to develop learning encounters that are meaningful and useful in the promotion of personal and professional growth. They argue that it may be difficult to develop the above balance given the fact that most teachers of adults in the multitude of adult education programmes are experts in the content they teach, but usually have little preparation in the instructional process of helping adults learn. In view of Mayes' case, there is need to have adequate preparation involving the learners in construction of their learning encounters if they must find meaning (Biggs, 2003).

The most common teaching method used by the teaching staff at the University level is the lecture[13] method, probably this justifies why the teaching practitioners are called lecturers. It takes the form of what Freire (1972) referred to as the "banking concept" (p. 53), taking the teacher as a depositor, and the student as the bank, storing narrated knowledge of the depositor- until examination time when the knowledge must be withdrawn from the account. Lecturers ought to be partners with students in the exploration of critical thinking and critical attitudes. Lev Vygotsky (cited in

[13] A lecture method according to Farrah, (2004, p. 227) is a legitimate instructional method in which the teacher talks and the learner learn from the teachers' discourse. Although good in some situations, lecture may not be the best approach to teach motor technical skills or modify attitudes, besides, as a method, it is less interactive.

Mjelde, 2006a) criticizes traditional teaching from the point of view of his understanding of the great importance of interaction and cooperation (to increase the speed and the scope of cognition in comparison to non- interactive activity) in the process of learning (Mjelde, 2006b, p. 126). He argues that the learner's on-going performance in interaction with the teacher and fellow students is a far more precise index of learning than intelligence tests based upon a goal composed of pre-digested knowledge acquired by the individual.

According to Mjelde (2006a),

> in more recent theories of learning, major weight has been placed upon the basic nature of mutual or reciprocal effects in the learning process, one that occurs in the student's head while he/she is listening to a teacher or reading a book, but rather as something that is fundamentally mutual (pp. 78-79).

To her, learning is an internalization of a schema which integrates cognition with perception and activity. She further contends that schema are made meaningful by means of one doing something together with an 'expert' in such a manner that the learner gradually masters even more difficult parts of the tasks at hand.

Group/teamwork is one of the basic principles in vocational pedagogy. In support of teamwork, Wlodkowski (2004, p. 147) asserts that adults feel connected in a group when they share a common purpose and a sense of mutual care exists. He argues that people in the group care about each other as they pursue their joint goal. In a group, people feel included and are freer to risk mistakes where true learning involves (Mjelde, 2006a).

The norms we set as instructors and the strategies we use as we teach largely determine the quality of social exchange among the learners. These should be

supportive of equity, collaboration, and expression of each learner's perspectives, group tasks can be able to bring about this. In his argument about the human and task aspects of work, Nilsson (2008b, p. 3) explains the need to feel loved and involved if work/learning must take place. Everyone must have a feeling of being loved, accepted and needed for productive participation in a task. This is possible if we give group tasks to learners and encourage mutual cooperation and respect of one another. It will make sense if we set a tone in which learners can come together in friendly, caring and respectful ways.

Field work/placement

Field placements/field work or on-job education, called apprenticeships in other countries like Norway provides one of the practical approaches for equipping the learners with relevant practical skills. According to Egau, (2002, p. 20) industrial training forms an integral part of all the courses in Vocation Education and Training (VET). Unlike Norway (Bergli et al, 1997), where there is a clearly enacted policy[14] on apprenticeships, the aspect of industrial (internship/enterprise attachment) training in Uganda which is meant to help produce a well grounded graduate is more often not well organized or planned, partially on account of finances to facilitate students and lecturers to monitor and supervise the students while on placement. Consequently the trainees are more likely to come out of the training institutions when they are not well prepared for the world of work.

According to the Women Commissions for Refugee Women and Children (WCRWC) (2008, p. 22), there are no clear parameters and standards for apprenticeships to make

[14] The policy in Norway clearly spells out that the learner spends two years in school and another two in working life as an apprentice. This was after "*the reform 94*" (Mjelde, 2006a, p. 115). For Uganda, there is no clear policy on apprenticeship yet. Each institution has its own procedure on the same.

the experience valuable to both programme participants (students on training) and the industries/workplaces hosting the apprenticeships. The Commission points out the complaint raised by the business owners about the field practice as the period given is believed to be too small to benefit both the students and the owners of the enterprises that take them up for training. Training institutions need to establish strong working relationships with workplaces for direct job placement of the students. This will help students to relate their theoretical learning experiences to real work place experiences and consequently, the interplay between working life and education system will be made clear to the learners.

Sadly, however, according to UNESCO-UNEVOC (2007, p. 27), there is limited attention paid to the dynamics of this interplay in sub-Saharan Africa and this has limited the possibility of conceptualizing vocational/professional training for the benefit of peoples of the various countries. As a result, there has been an occurrence of skills mismatch: there are imbalances between the curriculum content, the teaching/learning methods and occupational skills requirements as the trained workforce does not meet industrial/workplace needs and the suitability of certain occupations in terms of the skills required.

1.2.4.2 Assessment and Evaluation of the learning Process

According to Shepherd & Godwin (2004, p. 2), the cornerstone of developing successful educational, training, and certification materials is the effective use of assessments. Like Shepherd & Godwin, Biggs (2001), contend that assessment is

almost certainly the most important single component in the education system. He contends that,

> get assessment wrong and you get everything wrong. We therefore need to be clear about why we assess, what we assess, how we assess, and who is involved in the assessing (p. 5).

While elaborating on assessment, Biggs further asserts that the mode of assessment brings out the most likely kind of learning that is being assessed. For example, using a practicum as a mode of assessment implies that the kind of learning that is being assessed is application/use of practical skills.

In conjunction with Biggs' argument on the importance of assessment, Shepherd & Godwin (2004), too argues that it is critical to understand how people learn, what they have learned, and whether the knowledge is useful for their particular job. That is why he believes the cornerstone of developing successful educational, training, and certification materials is the effective use of assessments. He further contends that "while assessments used to consist of reams of paper upon which students filled in tiny boxes, now companies and educational institutions have a real opportunity to use technology not only to make assessments more widely available but also to make the process far more effective" (p.2). Institutions use assessments to guide people to powerful learning experiences; reduce learning curves; extend the forgetting curve; confirm skills, knowledge and attitudes; and motivate people by giving them a real sense of achievement (Shepherd & Godwin, 2004, p. 2).

Shepherd & Godwin further assert that assessment is any systematic method of obtaining evidence from posing questions to draw inferences about the knowledge,

skills, attitudes, and other characteristics of people for a specific purpose. They categorize the different styles of assessment as

i. Exam - a summative assessment used to measure a student's knowledge or skills for the purpose of documenting their current level of knowledge or skill.

ii. Test - a diagnostic assessment to measure a student's knowledge or skills for the purpose of informing the students or their teacher of their current level of knowledge or skill.

iii. Quiz - a formative assessment used to measure a student's knowledge or skills for the purpose of providing feedback to inform the student of his or her current level of knowledge or skill.

iv. Survey - a diagnostic or reaction assessment to measure the knowledge, skills, and/or attitudes of a group for the purpose of determining needs required to realize a defined purpose.

They further categorize the purpose of assessment as:

i. Diagnostic - an assessment that is primarily used to identify the needs and prior knowledge of participants for the purpose of directing them to the most appropriate learning experience.

ii. Formative - an assessment that has a primary objective of providing practice for search and retrieval from memory for a student and to provide prescriptive feedback (item, topic and/or assessment level).

iii. Needs - an assessment used to determine the knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes of a group to assist with gap analysis and courseware development. Gap analysis determines the variance between what a student knows and what they are required to know.

iv. Reaction - an assessment used to determine the satisfaction level with a learning or assessment experience. These assessments are often known as Level 1 evaluations (as per Dr. Donald Kirkpatrick), course evaluations, smile or happy sheets; they are completed at the end of a learning or certification experience.

v. Summative - an assessment, usually quantitative, whose primary purpose is to give a definitive grade and/or make a judgment about the participant's achievement, If this judgment verifies that the participant has met an established standard indicative of special expertise, the judgment may confer "certification."

The most common categories of assessment used in training institutions are formative and summative assessments.

According to Yates (2007) for vocational purposes, in the current Australian Qualification Framework, knowledge is observable competence. Students are assessed as 'competent' or 'not yet competent' - no grading is required (Yates, 2007, pp. 8-9). He further explains that for the certificate that counts for university entry, it is assumed that knowledge is something displayed in writing and language, and as

pointing to underlying hierarchy of intelligence, and assessed via examinations that are scored. From my personal experience, the views held by Yates are common scenarios in most formal training institutions in Uganda. Assessment is mainly examination oriented testing the intelligences of the learner, and little is tested of their ability to work effectively.

1.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.3.1 Introduction

This study focused on the training programme vis-à-vis occupational skills required of the graduates of ACE at Kyambogo University. In this chapter, an analysis of the study design, the study population, the sample population, and sample selection are presented as well as data collection procedure, data processing and analysis.

1.3.2 Study Design

The study was a descriptive case study using qualitative methods of data collection and analysis. It focused on the training programme vis-a-vis the skills required of the graduates in the workplace. I chose the descriptive design for this study because I was interested in understanding how the ACE training programme offered by the department of Adult and Community Education at Kyambogo University meet the skills requirement of the graduates in the workplace. I wanted to get people's opinions and ideas about the training provided and how it relates to the demands of the labour market. The study was also interested in understanding the mode of training that was used by the teaching staff to equip the learners with the necessary knowledge and skills. According to Kincheloe, (2003) a descriptive research is foregrounded in peoples' experience as it is lived, felt and undergone which implies that the social world can only be understood from the standpoint of the individuals perceiving it.

For that matter, I carried out fieldwork to collect data in order to get an in-depth understanding of the problem and make adequate qualitative interpretations. Just as

Mugenda & Mugenda (1999, p. 156) pointed out, this helped me to better understand the different behaviors of the respondents as they expressed their views and/or opinions on the subject of study.

Conceptually, qualitative research does not belong to a single discipline. However, in its various manifestations, it stresses the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied and the situational constraints that shape inquiry (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). It carefully analyses social episodes (Carr & Kemmis, 1985) and is concerned with interpretation, meaning and illumination (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000) as well as generation of knowledge that critiques. This particular study took this dimension to get a clear interpretation of people's opinion about the training provided by the ACE department.

1.3.3 Population of the Study

I used three population categories for this study. These were selected from among a) teaching staff at the department of ACE, b) the graduates and c) the final (third) -year continuing students.

The graduate: Ten graduates were selected under this category. These were both men and women and were the prime research participants. In the study I considered both sexes in order to get a balanced view of the nature of training and their experiences in the workplace. The reason for this particular focus was that in addition to the fact that they had completed their studies; they had also been in the field (workplace), experienced its reality and therefore had a better picture of what they went through.

The graduates were those who had completed the programme between the periods of 2005-2009 and were working in Kampala District.

The teaching staff: These were both men and women working at the department. Five of the teaching staff were selected randomly to take part in the study. Since they taught the students, they had information on the nature of teaching and could easily tell constraints they met during the teaching.

The final-year continuing students: these were both male and female, selected from the two programmes (day and Evening). Since they were in their final year, they had been exposed to field experiences while on field attachment/field work at the end of the second semester and could easily compare the two environments. They were therefore deemed to be well equipped with pertinent information regarding the training and how it relates to the demands of the workplaces.

1.3.4 Sample Size and Selection

Sampling is the selection of sample size from the study population. There are two types of sampling from which a researcher can choose. These are probability and non-probability sampling (Cohen *et al* 2000). In the former, 'the chances of members of the wider population being selected for the sample are known, whereas in the latter, the chances of members of wider population being selected for the sample are unknown' (*ibid*: 98). In this study, I chose probability sampling procedures. These were simple random sampling and systematic random sampling.

Table 1. 1: Summary of the Sample Size and Selection methods

Category of Population	Sample Size	Selection Method
Teaching Staff on the programme	5	Random Sampling technique
Former students already working	10	Simple Random sampling technique
Under graduates in the final year	10	Systematic Random sampling technique
Total	**25**	

1.3.5 Sampling Techniques

1.3.5.1 Simple Random Sampling

Simple random sampling technique was used to choose the teaching staff and graduates already working for the study. This gave every element in the population a known and equal chance to be selected (Sekaran, 2003, p. 270). Names of respondents were simply written on pieces of paper. They were folded and put in a container after which five and ten of each of the category respectively was chosen randomly. To get the graduates for random sampling, the names of those working in Kampala district, their locations and their telephone numbers were established from the department's records. Thereafter, the same procedure as that of choosing the staff was followed. I contacted those that had been chosen randomly on phone to fix appointments with each of them.

1.3.5.2 Systematic Random Sampling Technique

In choosing the undergraduate students, a systematic random sampling technique was used, using their attendance list. Out of 74 students attending the evening programme, every 7^{th} person on the list was picked as a sample for the study. The same approach was used for the day group.

1.3.6 Data Collection Methods

Data was obtained from both primary and secondary sources. I obtained primary data directly from the population of study, while secondary data was sourced from documents such as the curriculum at the department, the preliminary report on the evaluation of the programme that was taking place at the time, the programme brochure and time table. This was done using the following methods:

1.3.6.1 Observation

I observed five teaching/learning sessions in the lecture rooms using an observation checklist to study the pedagogical approaches used by the teachers and the students' response in respect to the different approaches. The main reason of using observation as a data collection tool was its inherent advantage of capturing some bits of information that would be difficult to pick using other methods especially data on non-verbal behaviour. These observations acted as common platform for me as I interviewed both the students and the staff. According to Sekaran (2003, p. 252), observation method aids observation of other environmental factors such as layout, workflow patterns, the closeness of the sitting arrangement, and the like. As a human

situation, my presence in the learning sessions could have impacted on the behaviour of both the learners and the teachers during the observation process. All the same this was seen to be the best method to indentify the non-verbal ques. In order to facilitate my memory, I kept a descriptive log of observations on a daily basis. These helped to guide and assess my progress, acted as a memory device and helped me to reframe and refocus questions wherever they appeared to be necessary.

1.3.6.2 In-depth, unstructured Interviews

Interviews with five students on each programme (day & evening) in their final year, 10 graduates and five teaching staff were held. These involved face-to-face interactions following appointments that I had made with them in advance. The purpose of fixing appointments, according to Mugenda & Mugenda (1999, p. 83), is to create maximum co-operation and friendliness with the respondents prior to the interviews. Interviews with the respondents dealt with the content and methods of the training at the university for the teaching staffs; and the skills gaps in relation to occupation skills required in the workplace, learning methods and the content in the curriculum for the continuing students and the graduates already working, respectively. The face-to-face interviews were of an advantage to me in that it did not only help me obtain non-verbal cues from the respondents, but also gave me an in-depth understanding of the situation. Besides, just as Sekaran (2003, p. 232) pointed out, I was able to adapt the questions as necessary, clarified doubts to the respondents and ensured that the responses were properly understood, by repeating or rephrasing the questions.

1.3.6.3 Study of Documents

In this case, I looked at the curriculum document of the department, the preliminary report of the evaluation process which was on-going at the time, and the department Brochure. The latter, especially during fieldwork and the writing up periods, was also included while becoming familiar with some of the international debates and discussion around the chosen theme, as background material for my subsequent analysis and interpretation of data.

1.3.7 Data Collection Procedure

I obtained an introductory letter from the Post Graduate office at Kyambogo University which formally introduced me to the Department of Adult and Community Education in the same university. With the permission granted, I went ahead to collect the data.

1. 3.8. Data Processing and Analysis

Literature on qualitative approach to data analysis shows that although there are diverse approaches, they are recurring. According to Kane (1995, p. 245) analysis of qualitative data involves getting the information, reducing it, organizing it in various ways to help you to see patterns and relationships, drawing conclusions, and satisfying yourself and others that you have found what you think you have *(verifying)*. The entire process involves repetitive loops: what you learn in one stage may send onto the next stage or back to an earlier stage.

Data from in-depth interviews was recorded in the field notebooks. Hand-written notes were also taken during and after documentary analysis and observation sessions. The data was then processed in the Microsoft Word, corrected the grammar, and organized it in order to scrutinize unnecessary irregularities. Data was then arranged according to the research objectives by copying and pasting. It was read and re-read to identify similar themes and the possible sub-themes. This helped me to get the different viewpoints of the respondent about the topic of study. These very view points were very helpful in developing a coherent discussion based on each objective in the latter chapters (two, three and four). In some instances, the respondents' views were reported in a verbatim way.

Once this was done, I presented, interpreted and discussed the data qualitatively following each objective as represented by each chapter, in light of the current literature and discourse on the subject. Here the aim was to determine the adequacy of the information, its credibility, usefulness and consistency such that I could present it with confidence. In some cases, the views of the respondents were quoted in a verbatim way to bring out clearly their opinions. The verbatim quotations from the respective respondents are identified as follows: a) TSR – for Respondent Teaching Staff, b) CSR - for Continuing Students Respondent and c) GR – for Graduate Respondents. The numbering 1, 2, 3, 4…, was used to differentiate the source of the response following the order of the interview.

1.3.9. Data Quality Management

Getting reliable and valid data is one of the main aspirations of every researcher. To achieve this, triangulation techniques were used in order to gain confirmation or further qualification of data obtained from one source. Data on the same topic confirmed or qualified from other sources strengthened the findings of my study. The rationale for triangulation was to crosscheck and cross-breed information gathered from different categories of respondents. This involved the use of different methods of data collection such as in-depth interview, observation and documentary study; and collecting data from different sources. In some cases some of the respondents were interviewed more than once for purposes of validating and elaborating the information they had given earlier. This helped me ensure validity and reliability of my findings.

CHAPTER TWO

COMPETENCE GAPS FACED BY THE FRESH GRADUATES

2.1 Introduction

This chapter gives a presentation, interpretation and discussion of the study findings on objective one. Objective one sought to establish the competence gaps faced by the graduates of ACE at Kyambogo University vis-à-vis the skills required of them in the work places. The principle respondents on this particular objective were the graduates who were already working. However, the final year students who had been to the field for field attachment offered useful information that has been integrated to verify the validity of responses. The teaching staff were also interviewed. They too had a picture of what was happening in the workplaces. Results were obtained qualitatively using in-depth interviews with the respondents.

2.2 Respondents' Demographic Information

I interviewed ten (10) third year students in their final year, ten (10) graduates of ACE of the period between 2005 and 2009, and five (5) teaching staff in the department of ACE. Both genders were represented among the interviewees.

Table 2. 1: Age ranges of respondents (graduates and final year students)

Range	Frequency
20-29	15
30-39	5
40-49	0
50-59	0
60+	0
Total	**20**

From table 2.1, 15 of the respondents were within the age bracket of 20-29 and the rest of the respondents were within 30-39 years of age. The age brackets as portrayed by the table above indicated that the respondents were all adults less likely to be coaxed to take uninformed decisions.

The teaching staff interviewed had worked at the department for a period of three to five years and had taught quite a number of courses. Certain courses such as Sign Language and Braille required staff with specialized skills. Therefore, teachers in these course units taught them for a number of years. On the other hand, other courses had no specific lecturer. Whether courses were offered depended upon the availability of lecturers willing to take them on. Most of the lecturers were hired on part time[15] basis, and there was only one permanent fulltime staff member.

[15] This implies that these particular lecturers were working elsewhere, and only taught at the department as their second place of employment. They were paid per hour taught.

However, during the open-ended in-depth interviews with the graduates to ascertain how they had got the jobs in the workplaces they were working in, it was revealed that a good number of those employed had undergone interviews for the positions/jobs that they occupied after having seen the positions advertised in the news papers. Others found positions through internal posting of the available jobs. This implies that they were the right candidates with the right qualifications for the jobs. On the other hand, some of the other respondents noted that they had got the jobs through a relative or a friend who was working in the same organization. It was hard to establish whether those who got the jobs through relatives or friends met the required qualifications, since they did not undergo any interview.

Interesting to note on the above finding however is that, if and when a student knows that he/she has relatives in high offices, how much effort can such a student put to reading or fieldwork? This will definitely lead to relaxation of the student during the training, and consequently failure to master the skills and knowledge required of him/her in the workplace. The feeling that one has a well placed relative and an assurance of a job becomes an extraneous variable illustrated in figure 1.1 above. This affects the intended outcome from the training.

2.3 The Competence gaps faced by the graduates of ACE at Kyambogo University

Findings from all the respondents (graduates and final year students) revealed that they all had some practical performance related difficulties at their first job tasks (see text box 2.1 on page 61), until they had gained on job experience. This seems to imply that there was a problem at the point of training while at the university. However, a number of factors could be responsible for this scenario. Either the students did not pay close attention to what they were taught during the training (extraneous variable, see fig. 1.1 above); the curriculum in terms of content and methodology was obsolete (UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2007); or there were fast changes in the labour market that had not been catered for by the department as portrayed in the conceptual frame work in figure1.1 above. On the other hand, some respondents noted that Bachelor of Adult and Community Education was not their first choice course at the time of application for admission. They simply found that they had been admitted for the course that they did not have interest in the first place. This must have had an implication on their interest to study hard or pay attention during the training. This confirms the conception (extraneous variable) illustrated in figure 1.1 above.

Asked why they thought they had difficulties at their first practical-based job tasks, all of the respondents blamed it on the nature of training. They noted that the theory nature of training could not equip them with the practical skills that were heavily required in the labour market. My personal observation in the classroom sessions was in line with the views given by the respondents. Many aspects that should have been taught better practically were taught in theory. There was limited vocational

pedagogy, very limited learning by doing, using the hand, body and mind (Mjelde, 2006). Lecturers were seen laboring a lot to explain certain tasks to help the learners pick up and internalize the concepts. Sometimes they drew illustrations on the chalkboard in an attempt to make the concepts clear to the learners. However, had these very tasks been practically demonstrated by involving the students, they would have been able to understand them better.

When further probed as to why they thought they had such difficulties at their newly acquired job tasks, one of them noted:

> You know, many things were taught theoretically, for example tools for situational analysis, project planning and management, community educational methods and research methods, entrepreneurship skills development among others. It becomes very difficult to handle such tasks when assigned work without prior guidance by the senior supervisor. Sometimes they assume that since you are from the university you know and so they leave you not supervised, yet you do not know the practical bit (RG 6).

Findings from the teaching staff confirm the views given by the students. One of the respondents (teaching staff) noted:

> ....there is no way we are going to handle practical work within a one-hour or two-hour lecture. Some of the practical aspects require one to have the whole day in the field, how can I squeeze that in one or two hours? That is not possible!!!There is need to allocate more time for practical aspects (RTS 3).

A comment such as this, (see quotation above) implies that the lecturer(s) in question were aware that the course(s) taught had elements that required practical-based

approach. Doubtless they knew the goal of the curriculum, an issue highly supported by Mayes, (2007) – training individuals with practical skills for community work and research, and this should have helped to guide the choice of the learning activities, mode of delivery and mode of assessment. It appears that the lecturers simply ignored the practical elements.

Much as the lecturers could be blamed for choosing to explain practical components in the curriculum theoretically, I found out that the problem was equally with the timetable. Analyzing from the timetable, a double lecture took two hours, while a single lecture took one hour with limited time for breaks/rest, apart from the lunch break. Ideally the lecturers were left with no choice but to teach theoretically and fit into the time allocated for them in the timetable. However, if lecturers did identify some of the practical aspects within the course(s) that they taught, it was imperative that they liaised with the head of department or the staff in charge of timetable development to ensure that more hours were slated for the specific aspects, and probably less hours for shorter courses and those that were more theoretical. This however, is also greatly influenced by the individual lecturers' choice and ability to interpret the demands of the curriculum.

According to Zinn (2004, p. 41), irrespective of the choice of the method, adult educators should be able to make decisions and act according to what they believe to be appropriate, even when an education institution dictates or regulates certain aspects of the teaching process. To him, the individual educator may support, modify, reject, or conform to such mandates, based on personal beliefs and interpretations. In view of

the findings, the lecturer(s) in question did not take appropriate decisions as suggested by Zinn (2004).

Explaining practical components in the curriculum theoretically in class denies learners the opportunity to master the practical skills required of them in the labour market. This is bound to create a competence/skills gap. In line with this finding, Okello (2009, p. 26) called this a contradiction in VET. A situation where vocational courses that should be practical yet taught theoretically cannot equip practical skills needed in the labour market. This probably explains why graduates complained of the difficulties in performance at their first assigned practical tasks. Very few workplaces have budgets for re-training fresh graduates to cover up the skills' gaps at the time of recruitment. Many times employing agencies have resorted to seeking applicants with experience to avoid spending on re-training.

In support of the finding above, Grosjean (2006, p. 83) contend that employers today seek workers with high educational attainment and competences that are necessary for creating and processing knowledge and information – the 'raw materials' of the global economy. With limited skills, graduates are bound to find difficulties in performing tasks effectively, let alone finding jobs. That is why GTZ (2009) noted that the limited skilled manpower is limiting productivity and delivery of services. I am positive that this skills' gap can be eliminated if the training is oriented towards learning by doing from practice to theory and back again (Mjelde, 2006a), a pedagogical model heavily emphasized in vocational education.

Difficulty in performing practical-based tasks

In respect to practical aspects, the graduates already working and the final year continuing students observed that, there were a number of practical-based tasks they were not able to perform at all at the their newly acquired job tasks and places of placements/work, until after some time. Some of these tasks are indicated in the text box 2.1 below:

Text Box 2. 1: Practical Tasks that the students were not able to do

- Drawing strategic plans
- Conducting trainings and workshops
- Writing reports
- Writing minutes of meetings
- Writing project proposals
- Analyzing a situation using certain tools
- Writing concept papers
- Developing a training curriculum

From the Text Box 2.1, it appears that the graduates were faced with a multifaceted range of skills gaps. Further, from the responses during the interview, I learnt that, although some of the concepts and tasks noted in the text box were completely new to them, they had heard about a good number of them while at the university during the learning of theory. Findings from the programme document however indicated that there were summarized statements put in the curriculum content for every course unit without breaking down the details of each of them. It was up to the individual lecturer to interpret it and come up with detailed course content which they taught. It is possible that at the point of interpretation, some lecturers did not make correct interpretations as to whether some courses required a practical approach or not.

During one of the interview sessions that I held, one of the respondents (already working) said:

> I used to hear about organization of workshops during our time in class, it did not occur to me that it was something hard to organize and facilitate. It occurred to me when my boss asked me to organize one and make the activity plan to be followed. I did not know where to start from and how to go about it. This was the most trying time in my life, but somehow I managed to do it with the help of colleagues who had been there longer than me (R G 4).

Preparing a practical lesson on organization of a workshop does not require one to take students out of a classroom into a specials field. Students could be given a practical task of organizing a workshop among themselves, and the task would have been supervised and guided by the lecturer (expert). Students need to be trained using a hands-on approach – the learning by doing, failing and trying again (Mjelde, (2006a). This will help them to acquire relevant skill demanded by the labour market.

According to Grosjean (2006, p. 83) the combined forces of globalization and technological innovation have altered the nature of the labour market and profoundly affected who has access to professional employment and how work is carried out. Apart from the nature of training as pointed out by the findings, this could, probably be blamed for the difficulties that the graduates of adult and community education were facing. This supports the conceptual framework in figure 1.1 which explains that the changes in the labour market are bound to affect the training outcomes from training institutions. Grosjean, further argues that institutions of higher education are today faced with demands to provide educational strategies that will satisfy changing

labour-market demands; they must prepare young people with the skills needed in the professional workplaces of the knowledge economy (2006, p. 83). In light of this, ACE department need to improve on the mode of training if it is to equip the graduates with the practical skills required in the workplaces.

Judging from the findings, there is an increasing change in roles from the traditionally known roles of adult educators. From my personal experience as an adult educator, the roles initially included facilitating, mentoring or teaching. The increasing change of roles as shown by the findings (see text box 2.1) justify the argument given by Harris & Simons (2004) who observed that there is an increasing change in roles for adult educators. The roles/tasks shown in the text box require practical-based skills, and these have implication on the mode of training. Harris & Simons, contends that,

> the change in roles pose major challenges to adult educators/trainers in terms of nature of vocational teaching/learning that they need to promote, as well as the ways in which they might design teaching learning experiences to equip the workers for their emerging but uncertain roles (2004, p. 139).

The current curriculum as portrayed by the findings from the students does not seem to meet the current trend of the changing roles. The mode of training that was more theoretical (moralistic) and was heavily demanding if it was to meet the skills required of the graduates in the labour market. A more practical-based training is imperative at this point. Mayes, (2007), while arguing against the origin of the constructivist view, which emphasizes general conceptual understanding and thinking ability, contends that there is a rejection of moralistic teaching. His argument is based on strong evidence that moralistic/didactic teaching simply does not produce generic understanding. He asserts that, "teaching by telling does not work" (p. 6). He

advocates for constructivism based on learning by doing in really- world problem solving (Editors, 2004) where learners create knowledge and reflect on and talk about what they were doing and how their understanding was changing.

Findings further revealed that, the students were able to cope with the challenge through the help of senior colleagues who already had knowledge and experience of how to perform the tasks. Mjelde, (2006a) supports this finding. To her new comers are able to gain expert with support from the experts. However, some respondents noted that in some cases there was limited cooperation between the new employees with the senior staff. During one of the interview sessions I had, one of the respondents noted:

> I was very unlucky that I met colleagues who were very uncooperative. If you get cooperative colleagues at the new workplace you are lucky, because you can consult them to guide you. But, sometimes you find those who are uncooperative and they simply watch you go through difficulties and some of them derive pleasure out of it, wondering what you did at the university …… (GR 8)

However, there were instances of limited cooperation noted by the graduates. In such instances, the graduates missed the benefits of cooperation, and guidance from those who had had experience already, yet this should have been the core of the mode of learning, the learning that occurs in the course of interacting and cooperating with others as observed by Inglar, (2002, see also Mjelde, 2006b, p. 126; 2006a, p. 93).

Another aspect could have been the peripheral learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991): the experienced workers watched to see if the newcomer learns on the job, before taking them into the community of practice. There are various social relations and rites of passage to learn, and job-related social competence is part of the training that is also in short supply in the institutions of learning. Learners ought to know that learning to negotiate one's acceptance into the community of practice is never easy (Lave & Wenger, 1991). It is a downside to learning at work, as apprentices have found out down through history, as they are at the mercy of the master and for a long time cannot seem to do things in an acceptable way.

Cooperation ought to be upheld in either places of learning – training institution or workplace. The likely results out of lack of cooperation are limited opportunities for learning and difficulty in accomplishing tasks. The different abilities as pointed out by Inglar, (2002) can only be exploited through cooperation amongst the learners and their supervisors/teachers.

Some of the respondents (graduates) pointed out that they had been involved in some training at the place of work. The core competence areas targeted were designing a strategic plan, drawing activity plans, among other issues. However, it was discovered that the training targeted all the entire range of staff competences of the organization. This was a routine development in most workplaces to update workers' knowledge and skills. Lindgren (2006, p. 297) and Billet (2001) support this finding. According to Lindgren, this form of learning can be termed as work-based learning, one that is based on performance of work and it becomes a competence.

CHAPTER THREE

CONTENT IN THE CURRICULUM

3.1. Introduction

This chapter presents findings, interpretation and discussion in respect to objective two. Objective two was set to examine the quality of the content in the curriculum in relation to occupation skills requirement in the work place. The principle source of data for this objective was the programme document, the graduates, the continuing students and the teaching staff. Data was obtained using documentary analysis, in-depth interview with the respondents and observation. The findings under this chapter addresses the research question, does the content in the curriculum prepare graduates who are competent to meet the workplace skills requirements?

3.2 Adult and Community Education Training content in the Curriculum

From the documentary study, I found out that course content in the curriculum offered ranged from the core courses to courses that touched issues in the contemporary world. This implies that the department was trying to keep abreast with the changes in the labour market. The core courses mentioned were: Psychology of Adult Learning I and II, Community Development, Philosophical Foundations of Adult and Community Education, Sociological Foundations of Adult Education and Introduction to Adult Education. These form the foundation of Adult and Community Education Training Programme. Other courses offered included, Political Economy, Barriers to Learning and Development, Adult Education and Community Health, Curriculum

Theory and Development in Adult Education, Conflict and Community Based Disaster Management and Communication Skills for Adult Educators in the first year.

Second year courses were Introduction to Management in Adult Education, Development Issues for Adult and Community Education, Communication with Persons with Disability, Sign Language and Braille; Research Methods, Adult Education Provisions: Comparative Studies, Adult Literacy I, Introduction to Community Based Rehabilitation, Introduction to Mobility Rehabilitation, Gender and Adult Education, Workers Education and Practical Placement I at the end of second year.

Third year courses were: Environmental Education, Human Relations For Community Educators, Adult Literacy II, Project Planning and Management, Management of Micro Finance Projects, Adult Education Through Distance Learning, Community Education Methods and Adult Learning, Adult Education and Development in Uganda, Guidance and Counseling of Adult Learners; Human Rights, Democracy and Community Development, Research Project (elective), Entrepreneurship Skills Development (elective); and Practical Placement II. All these had time slots in the timetable during which the content stipulated in the curriculum would be completed. Time slots ranged from 45 contact hours for a three credit unit course and 60 contact hours for four credit unit courses. Practical placement I and II took a period of 75 hours each.

Observing from the number of courses offered by the department, it appears that apart from the core courses, the department was trying to pick on every aspect that they thought was relevant to be studied to supplement the core ones. While this is believed to be good, according to WCRWC (2008, p. 17), because of its advantage in enabling course participants to actively engage in assessing their own capabilities and responding to the changing job market, there is a probability that some courses were handled shallowly. On the other hand, Newell & Simon (cited in Billet, 2001) seem to disagree with this finding. They argue that, human memories may be powerful, but they are not particularly good at processing lots of knowledge simultaneously. If learners are confronted with a lot of courses to learn, they may not be able to assimilate all the knowledge expected of them. However relevant the courses may be, there is need for the department to handle what could be managed within a given timeframe, but handled adequately.

The graduates reported that they found the courses relevant and vital to their areas of specialization. While all the respondents acknowledged that most of the course content given during the training was relevant to and consistent with the tasks they were performing in the field, some (graduates and continuing students), also noted that some course material was completely irrelevant and they saw no reasons as to why such material was taught at all. Some of the courses noted to have been irrelevant to some respondents were; Workers Education, Political Economy, Adult Education Provisions: Comparative Studies, Philosophical Foundations of Adult Education and Braille. Some of them noted that they did not find these courses at all relevant. However, it was difficult to verify with employers of the graduates whether some of

of the two learning environments as observed by Jorgensen (2008, p. 186) – the school learning environment and the workplace. The question is, did the students get involved in constructing their learning (Biggs, 2001), and did they participate in the constructive alignment at any one moment? This ought to have removed the vagueness of the said courses as pointed out by the students. According to Ellegard, Engstrom, & Nilsson (1991; see also Biggs, cited in Bookallil et al, 2009);

> people's demands for a meaning in their work and relevance in the learning can be met when the individual can survey and control his work, and the finished product can be used i.e. is demanded by the market (Ellegard, et al, 1991, p. 32).

The study findings indicated the contrary to the views advanced by Ellegard, et al, 1991; Biggs, 2003 and Bookallil, et al, 2009. Students' need for meaning was not met, because they were not involved in constructive alignment of the learning activities.

According to Nilsson (cited in Mjelde, 2005), in order to understand what it is that creates good learning situations for students, and to understand how teaching problems arise and change for teachers, and how progress occur, one must study how this is distributed and transformed in the practice of the everyday lives of the teachers and students. In light of this, if the students were not able to see the relevance of some of the content, this means that it was not transformed in the practice of their everyday lives. While talking about what makes a good teacher of the adults, Galbraith (2004, p. 5) points out many general characteristics, but what I am interested in here is the fact that a good teacher relates the theory to the practice; being more concerned about learners than other things; and being open to a variety of teaching strategies. Mjelde (2006a) too agrees to the pedagogy that relates the theory to the practice. She

commends learning that takes place from practice to theory and reflectively back again to practice.

However, when asked whether they (students) had been involved in the process of curriculum development to ascertain their involvement in the planning of their learning, the majority of the respondents (graduates) reported that they had never been consulted at all, while others (teaching staff) had once taken part in the review of the curriculum. They asserted that much as they took part in the review, the exercise was marred by limited time for consultation with all the stakeholders, such as employing agencies, senior students and specialist facilitators. It was discovered that the purpose of the review was an answer to the request made by the National Council for Higher Education (NICHE) so as to make curriculum meet the required standards (Kyambogo University, 2010)[16]. Very many stakeholders such as students, employers were not consulted during the review process.

Failure to involve the stakeholders in the curriculum review process is bound to bring about a disconnection between the content and the demands of the labour market. This is contrary to Jorgensen view who suggests that there should be a connection between the two learning environments - the school and the workplace learning environments (Jorgensen, 2008, p. 186). Less of this is bound to bring about a mismatch. Stakeholders such as employing agencies, senior students who had graduated from the department, the teaching staff, and the continuing students should have been in position to contribute positively in the process of curriculum review. Employing agencies have the right information of what is happening in the labour market in terms

[16] Reviewed Bachelor of Adult and Community Education. Kampala, Uganda

of knowledge and skills required of the graduates. For instance, they know the right technology that is required in the market. They would help the department to develop a demand-driven curriculum. The connection is only possible if there was close collaboration between the university and the employing agencies and the involvement of the learners in the constructive alignment of the learning activities, assessment and the outcomes (Bookallil et al, 2009). Apparently this connection has not been established, yet it is reckoned to be very crucial.

Both the graduates and teaching staff agreed that there were some elements still lacking in the curriculum. Some of these were simple elements of the law, yet communities were from time-to-time faced with social conflicts that they (graduates) were bound to, at any one moment help in resolving. The other concern noted was Information, Communication Technology (ICT). They all argued that in the era of globalization and improved information technology, it was embarrassing to find a graduate who did not know how to use the computer as a working tool, more so the basic packages like Microsoft Word (MS), use of the internet, Power Point presentations, Access and XL. Some of them shared with me their most embarrassing moments, when for instance, they were given a few lines of the reports at their agency of placement/workplace to type out on the computer. They were embarrassed to report that they had never touched a computer mouse or even switched on a computer. This finding is in conformity with that of Rodrigue, (2004, p. 2) when he pointed out that Information Technology (IT) is still very low at universities.

Okwakol (2009, pp. 3-4) also emphasizes the need for ICT in universities. Harris and Simmons (2004) also talks about the need for ICT when they emphasize the need for

CHAPTER FOUR

PEDAGOGICAL APPROACHES USED BY THE TEACHING STAFF

4.1 Introduction

This chapter gives a presentation, interpretations and discussion of findings in respect to objective three. Objective three was set to analyse the pedagogical approaches used by the teaching staff during the teaching at the University in relation to skills required of the graduates in the workplaces. The principle sources of data on this objective were the teaching staff, the graduates and the final year continuing students. Findings under this chapter address research question three which stated: what pedagogical approaches does the teaching staff of the Department of ACE at Kyambogo University employ for effective teaching and learning? Data was basically obtained through interviews and observation.

4.2. The pedagogical approaches employed during the teaching

Findings from the face to face interviews with all the respondents in respect to pedagogical approaches revealed that the approaches used in the teaching were both theoretical and practical. Theory took a period of fifteen weeks per semester making a total of 30 weeks in one academic year, and 90 weeks in a three year programme for every course unit. Apart from the short practical aspects within the class, there were the practical field placements in workplaces and it took the period of ten weeks at the end of the second year and another ten at the end of the third year giving a total of twenty weeks only. There was no field work/placement in the first year.

field. The theory was in most times a subject completely independent of practice and practical implementation. This finding is contrary to the assertion put forward by John Dewey (cited in Mjelde, 2006a) in which he accentuates the need to have the theory taught in relation to the practice.

In my analysis of the programme document, some of the objectives of adult and community education training programme were to train adult educators who were to use the knowledge and skills acquired to enhance adult education in communities, and demonstrate ability to research on community needs. This necessitated that learners acquire practical skills in the knowledge areas cited in the objectives. According to Mayes (2007) the expected learning outcomes should be able to help determine the pedagogical model adopted by the teacher. Teaching theory that may not be related to or totally separated from the practice as revealed by the findings cannot equip practical skills relevant for work and do research on community needs. There is need to view learning from the perspectives of situated learning, one that enhances the connection between the world of work and the training, one that has meaning from the perspectives of the learners, and one in which the learner is involved in making meaning of the new knowledge while reviewing the old knowledge.

From the interviews with the students it was further realized that lecture method was the most preferred and most frequently used by the teaching staff. This was justified by the teaching staff as the easiest to organize and deliver but, some of the students noted:

staff was more of academic learning –the learning transaction that was cognitive (information) transfer (Farrah, 2004, p. 228), and very few skills could be built in the learners. Considering the objectives of the curriculum, that was creating skills for work and research on community needs, a lecture method could not have been appropriate method. This is in conjunction with Farrah, (2004, see also McKeachie; Verner & Dickinson, cited in Farrah, 2004) who supports this argument by acknowledging that lecture method is not the best approach to teach technical motor skills or modify attitudes. Just as the findings revealed, this can be very demoralizing to the learners, because they see no meaning in what they are learning. Thus, it is no wonder that some students said they saw no reasons why some courses were even taught at all.

Grosjean, (2006); see also Mjelde 2006) further points out that learning become important when the students are confronted with real life problems and must engage in finding ways of improving the situation. On the contrary, the findings revealed that, because of the dominance of the lecture method, learners were not involved in confronting real- life situations. Lecturers and/or teachers need to ensure that theory is translated into practice involving the learners themselves so that the learner can see the usefulness and participate in what they are learning in real life situations.

The lecture method is one of the traditional approaches to teaching (Hyman cited in Farrah, 2004) and such a method is far less interactive. There is limited cooperation between the teacher and the learner and among the learners themselves. It brings about what Freire (1972) referred to as a 'banking concept' (P. 53). In a situation

where learners were passive participants in a learning process, they cannot see meaning in what they are learning. This view is supported by Wlodkowski, (2004), who contends that learners find learning relevant when it has personal and reflects their reality.

Lev Vygotsky, further supported by Mjelde (2006b, p. 126) criticizes traditional teaching (lecture method) due to lack of interaction and cooperation in the process of learning. In the circumstances where learners were not involved in determining what they were supposed to learn, yet this is one of the principles of andragogy[18], a foundation of adult education leaves a lot of question unanswered. In such a contradicting situation, learners were bound to lose interest in the learning process and consequently, failure to master the relevant knowledge and skills required in the labour market.

In line with Vygotsky, Mjelde, (2005, p. 56), argues that learning is made meaningful by means of one doing something together with an "expert" in such a manner that the learner gradually masters even more difficult parts of the tasks at hand. Gradually the learner becomes more capable of carrying out more complex tasks until he/she no longer requires the assistance of the expert. Contrary to the views of Mjelde, (2005), the study showed that the teaching staff did not have the time to apply more effective teaching methods. Study findings from the teaching staff indicated that most of the teaching staff members were on part-time employment. In such a situation, there was a possibility that some of the staff were actually too busy to make adequate preparation for the lectures, let alone supervise the learning process, or even update

[18] This is defined by Amutabi, et al, 2005 as "the art and science of helping adults to learn in which the teacher facilitates the learning process" p. 2.

their notes. Part-time staff may have no time to vary teaching methods. They are indebted to pay allegiance to authorities in their workplaces and may have no time for the students. The likely results are skills and knowledge mismatch. A much more interactive approach is important in this case. There is need to find a mechanism of ensuring active participation of both the teaching staff and the students in the learning process.

A lecture method may not allow the learners to master the complex tasks independently. There is need for an interactive strategy that encourages dialogue, a dialogue between teacher and the students, and among the students (Mjelde, 2006a). More interactive methods are required if the learners are to find meaning in what they are learning, and be able to translate it in the practical situations in the workplace. Short of this may result into learners' difficulty in performing tasks at places of work.

Further findings from interviews with the students and the graduates revealed that some lecturers simply dictated notes to student and the students simply wrote as dictated. Limited efforts were made to explain what was being given. Some of the students wondered whether some of the lecturers in question actually knew what they were talking about. Some of the respondents were quoted as saying;

> Some lecturers are usually very defensive when they are asked to explain the notes they give. To make matters worse, some simply send handouts and expect the students to read them and understand, but sometimes the handouts are very strange to understand..... (CSR 1).

While it was discovered from the interview with the teaching staff that dictation of notes was done to help the students when and wherever there was a scarcity of text-books, it was evident that some students were not happy with this situation. They noted that this was simply spoon-feeding the students as in the Paulo Freire , (1972) illustration mentioned above, and it encouraged laziness and lack of innovation and critical inquiry on the part of the students. Some students were said to have a habit of dodging lectures because they knew they could always obtain the lecture notes from colleagues and copy them. Considering these findings, one wonders whether the lecturer(s) in question knew the objectives of the curriculum. If the lecturers knew them, it should have helped them to determine appropriate pedagogical approaches such as demonstration, practice and positive feedback as suggested by Chapell, (2004, p. 3).

The practice of dictating notes for the learners is bound to create dependence of the learner on the lecturer. It also encourages rote learning. In such circumstances, learners cannot become independent learners or explore learning situations on their own. According to Galbraith (2004, p. 3), the purpose of teaching is to facilitate personal growth and development that impact the professional, social, and political aspects of the learner. In view of Galbraith's argument, this particular practice does little in as far as growth of the learner is concerned. Learners need to be given chance to explore possible sources of information with the guidance and close supervision of the expert (lecturers) (Mjelde, 2005, p. 56) so that they can achieve personal and professional growth.

It was further discovered during the interviews with the continuing students that some lecturers did not update their notes for teaching. The students simply accessed the notes from their former colleagues who had completed in previous years, and thus were able to avoid attending the lectures. This practice was bound to encourage students to simply cram the notes for purposes of passing examinations, but did little to promote understanding of the concepts, henceforth have nothing to offer in the places of work. If students simply copy notes from colleagues, the question is, what was the intended outcomes of the learning encounter?

Judging from the objectives of the curriculum, which required the student to develop practical skills in research, more so current methods of research, students ought to have been encouraged to do research on their own so that the pedagogical aspect of learning by doing (Mjelde, 2006b) is enhanced. According to Cort, Harkonen, & Volmari (2004) workplace is changing faster both in terms of technology and work practices and this calls for teachers to continuously update their content, pedagogical and vocational skills. Unfortunately as observed earlier, part-time staff were more likely to be limited in as far as varying the teaching methods was concerned because of the limited time .

Study findings from the teaching staff indicated that majority of the teaching staff were on part-time employment. In such a situation, there was a possibility that some of the staff were actually too busy to make adequate preparation for the lecture, supervise the learning process, or even update their notes. The study indicated that part-time staff simply popped in for one or two hours lecture and walked away

immediately thereafter. Part-time time staff, because of the limited time that they had with the students cannot form a community of practice noted by Lave & Wenger, (1991). The special relationship expected between the master (lecturer) and the apprentice (students) to support the learning process was limited.

According to Knowles, Holton and Swanson (cited in Amutabi, et al 2005, pp. 11-12) 'adult learners bring to the classroom a diversified range of individual differences related to their experiences, interest and background, goals and learning styles. The best way to help learners manage their differences is by creating activities that tap into their experiences such as group discussions, problem-solving activities and simulations' - they must be involved in the constructive alignment process. To create learning environment that involves problem-solving activities and simulations requires that the lecturer makes adequate preparation for it. Part time lecturers did not have adequate time to make such preparations since they may have been committed to their fulltime employment elsewhere.

My interview findings revealed that learning was basically organized on the individual basis, although in some instances group tasks were given. A class was comprised of over seventy (70) students and the sitting arrangement was that found in traditional lecture halls. In such a situation, interaction among learners was greatly limited, and learners did not benefit from the mutual or reciprocal effects in the learning process (Mjelde, 2006a, p. 78). In a traditional lecture, there is limited mutual interaction among students, and between students and the lecturer. Students did not have the chance of making their plans/schemas because they lacked mutual

interaction with their supervisor/lecturers within a community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

Interviews with the students revealed that there was limited supervision of the learning process by the teaching staff. It was up to the individual student to attend lectures or not. There were no specific rules followed to ensure students attendance and participation in the learning process, nor was there systematic follow-up of the students' learning progress. I do not condone forcing students to attend lectures, but guiding and counseling students would be vital to help them develop a direction. This would be done in form of mentoring them. This strategy is supported by Inglar (2002, p. 25), who argues that it helps in locating the client's learning needs, making the client aware of it, and help her to take responsibility of her learning process. Like Mjelde and Vygotsky, Inglar asserts that the relationship should be based on cooperation and in symmetric way. Mentoring does help the learner to have an atmosphere of trust, support and challenge with the aim of creating reflection (Inglar, 2002, p. 25).

According to Ssemwogere (2010), 'quality BTVET training can only be delivered by competent trainers with sufficient technical and practical training. They must exhibit confidence in practical and pedagogical skill commensurate with technologies of the day and befitting the different workplaces' (p. 16). Findings revealed that at the time of this inquiry, the policy in place for recruitment of lecturers at Kyambogo University was a minimum of a second class upper degree in related field for a position of a teaching assistant and a masters' holder for the assistant lecturer.

Further findings showed that recruitment of staff was based on paper qualification rather than their professional/specialized skills in teaching/facilitating. Consequently, this ought to have had a bearing on staff performance and quality of graduates produced. However, findings from the teaching staff revealed that all the teaching staff had the minimum qualifications required of a university lecturer. In a situation where the lecturers were not trained as trainers/teachers/ adult educators, it can be very hard to determine their ability to teach/train others. This contradicts the views given by Ssemwogerere, (2010) in which he supports the need to have the teaching staff trained in technical and practical training in a specific field if they have to give quality training.

Ability to get a good grade may not necessarily translate into ability to train others. It is however, worth noting that, apparently, there is no institution/college in Uganda that trains lecturers. Although some lecturers were teachers of secondary schools and adult educators by training, a good number were recruited on the basis of their grades and not ability to train.

Cort, et al, (2004) argue that,

> Teachers and trainers in VET require two distinct sets of skills. That is, pedagogical skills- ability to analyse and identify student needs, ability to design training programmes to meet these needs, ability to teach and ability to assess the educational and professional outcome of this teaching, and generic skills needed by all teachers regardless of the discipline in which they work (2004, p. 10).

Conversely, the findings revealed that not all the lecturers who were teaching on the programme were teachers/ adult educators by training. Those who were not teachers or adult educators by profession may have had the generic skills, but lacked the pedagogical skills to handle the teaching effectively.

Cort et al (2004) further put forward that VET teachers also need vocational skills and knowledge. They need to understand and perform the tasks trainees will be asked to perform when they leave school and begin work – and also have a firm grounding in the theory underlying these skills. The lecturers who were not professional adult educators could have lacked appropriate pedagogical skills noted by Cort, et al, (2004). The scholars seem to suggest that, today's' VET teachers should adopt innovative teaching methods, something involving the use of technology.

Other methods used in the teaching included a few group tasks, plenary discussions, and fieldwork/placements during the recess term for the period of ten weeks. According to the students, the teamwork/group work was usually very limited and sometimes even discouraged by some of the teaching staff. Every student was expected to work on their tasks individually. The staff however pointed out that, students abused this method, because group tasks were sometimes left to only two or three people in the group of about seven to ten members. Some lecturers on the other hand noted that, *"group course work was a relief in times of crisis. One had to find a way of avoiding marking a lot of scripts on individual course works"* (SR4). Many lecturers preferred group coursework as opposed to individual assignments when it came to handling big numbers of students.

From my observation, classes were extremely big, and sometimes some students lacked where to sit. This had implications on the ability to manage a successful learning experience. One of the implications that could arise was inability by the teacher to attend to individual differences of the learners, tapping the varied experiences possessed by the learners and lack of guidance by the expert/lecturer. This limits quality learning (Billet, 2001) on the part of the learner.

The poor use of group tasks in teaching and learning observed is an indication that the students as well as the trainers did not understand the advantage of group tasks/ team-work in a teaching /learning situation. It was taken as an opportunity for free marks on the part of students, and a relief from heavy load of marking on the part of lecturers and not an opportunity to learn from members of the group who are usually believed to be comprised of different expertise (Inglar, 2002). A lot of uncooperativeness was cited as the cause of lack of participation. Cooperation in the learning process is heavily encouraged by different scholars, for instance Inglar, (2002); Lev Vygosky (cited in Mjelde, 2005; 2006), and John Dewey, (cited in Mjelde, 1995); because of its great advantages in as far as supporting learning was concerned.

Group tasks ought to go beyond course work alone, but to involve other tasks during the learning process. Without serious supervision and follow up many students were bound to dodge group tasks. Supervision by the senior supervisor as pointed out by Mjelde (2006a, p. 79) is very vital in the learning process. However this was reported missing especially in the school environment than work environment.

4.2.1 Organization of the learning process

Organization of the teaching and learning process in the course in which I carried out my study was divided into small, additive, defined steps. The entire first year was meant for theory with no practice in any practical situation at all. This was followed later by the practical placements during the recess term of second and third year. However, more findings from the interviews with the students and the graduates indicated that they wanted more time in the curriculum to be given for learning in the workplaces/ organization of placement. In other words, they preferred learning at work, as this was seen to be more practical than learning at the university. This is in conjunction with Mjelde, (1995) in which the apprentice noted that they learnt better at work.

In the nature of organization of learning as mentioned above, there is a danger on the part of the learners to lose connectivity of the content to the practice in real life situations. Dewey contends that the divisions between theory and practical elements make the development of scientific and analytical thinking impossible. He believes in a holistic teaching (Mjelde, 2006a, p. 96).

According to Ellegard, et al, (1991, p. 33), such additive education leads to difficulties in seeing the meaning in what one is doing, since the final result is removed far outside the time perspective that individuals in general can survey. To them, learning must be so organized that the person who has done the work can survey the product and the work processes. This helps the learner to simultaneously assimilate both knowledge of and proficiency in using different types of tools and materials. These are needed in order to achieve a work process which will show results of the desired quality and volume (Ellegard, et al, 1991, p. 34). In view of this, ACE training

programme ought to have a mode of training that exposes the learner to the theory that is closely linked to the practice in real life situations. It is important as educators to help learners to have a holistic[19] view of what they are learning. That is why Nilsson (2008b) contends that a holistic oriented approach to learning, although slow, it eventually creates a very big increase in competence of the learners compared to small additive approach. There is a need to have a backward and forward movement in the learning process, moving from practice to theory and back again (Mjelde, 2006a).

4.2.2 Field Placements/Attachment

All the respondents pointed out that practical field attachment was one of the practical pedagogical approaches used during the training. It took place during the recess term at the end of the second and third year for a period of 10 weeks. The objectives of fieldwork as stipulated in the curriculum/programme document were to help the student to relate the theory acquired in class to the practical experiences in the workplaces; to expose the students to the world of work where they were expected to work after completion of their course. Students were expected to do fieldwork with organizations of their own choice that had activities related to adult and community education.

To create a connection between workplace and learning content, Jorgensen (2008, p. 188) asserts that there must be a follow-up taking place at the workplace after the learners have taken part in the course. He argues that the learners must have the

[19] It is an approach that integrates theory, practice and general knowledge Nilsson, (2008b)

opportunity to try out, apply and develop what they have learned – which in itself is a new learning process. Like Egau (2002), he contends practical placement is an integral part of courses that the learners plan how what is learned is translated into changed practice. These scholars are in support of the findings from the students about field work. These views support the finding above.

From the interview with the graduates and the continuing students, I discovered that practical field work was awarded a very short period, and yet it was an opportunity to equip the learners with skills necessary for work. It also exposed the learners to the reality and work ethics in the work places (WCRWC, 2008, p. 22). Students preferred spending more time on field work in organizations to attending classroom work this is in concurrence with Mjelde, (2006a). Many of them pointed out that field work was real, unlike classroom work. Findings from the graduates revealed that field placement/work helped them in providing them with an opportunity to access jobs (WCRWC, 2008). It gave them an opportunity to work at an existing organization and learn directly from established workers. With this opportunity they were able to improve their core skills, professionalism, work ethics from which some of them were identified for specific jobs.

As an integral part in vocational training (Egau, 2002, p. 20), field attachment/placement was an opportunity for the student to practice what they had learned in theory while in class. The findings from the students indicated that the advantages of field work were enormous, as it helped learners to find jobs; equip them with the competences required by employers, and introduced the learners to work environment similar to what WCRC, (2008) pointed out. It is however disappointing

to note that there were still no clear parameter of work relations between training institutions and the organizations of placement WCRWC, 2008, p. 22; see also Ssempijja, 2010) as far as the supervision of the students was concerned.

When explaining their experiences while on field work/placement during the interview, continuing students as well as graduates revealed that organization of placement were more concerned with the labour they (students) provided than helping them to learn. Kyambogo University and the department in particular need to establish parameters and standards for field work to make the experience valuable for both program participants and organizations hosting the students (WCRWC, 2008). For the students to gain a level of skill mastery from field work, the department (ACE) and the students must be ready to invest sufficient time and commitment to the experience.

More findings from the interviews with students revealed that they individually found organization of placements, sought for permission to do their field work with the organization in question. Of course, this has ethical issues such as doing fieldwork in organizations of a close relative; getting organizations that had no activities related to what the students had studied, getting 'briefcase organizations'[20] for placements, which are present one day, only to disappear the next day. These and many more issues were bound to affect the whole exercise of learning.

[20] These are organizations/Agencies with no legal documentations for operation, but simply start with hidden agendas and disappear on suspicion that they are about to be netted by the authorities. So they have to close down immediately or else they face charges. They are so scrupulous that some of them simply take advantage of innocent citizens and Conn them of their valuables.

From the programme document, organizations of placement ranged from Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs), both local and international, Community Based Organizations (CBOs), Faith Based Organization (FBOs) and the Local Government. The choice depended on the student's convenience in terms of accessibility and sometimes affordability. This pedagogical approach was greatly preferred by both the students and the staff as the best because it gave them a feel of the reality in the workplaces and prepared them better. This finding is greatly supported by Mjelde (1995) in which the apprentices preferred to study at work.

Findings from the students revealed that mentoring and supervision during field work was left to the agency supervisor for the biggest period of placement and the university/staff supervisor during a few hours contact after two or more weeks of placement. Students on placement were left at the mercy of the agency supervisors, whose mandate on the other hand was not formerly made clear. It was not clear whether the agency supervisors had adequate qualification to mentor the students appropriately.

The teaching staffs further revealed that the university on the other hand, did not have clear guidelines in as far as how the supervision was being done; by whom in terms of qualifications; who should be the right agency supervisors, and what should be assessed for that matter. This finding is in concurrence with the argument advanced by Mulwana in Ssempijja, 2010; see also WCRWC, 2008, who observed the continuous lack of linkage between training institutions and the private sectors who take up students for practice and employment.

If there is no close collaboration between the two parties, the students are greatly disadvantaged. There is very little that they will learn from the agency supervisors since it is not their mandatory role to train the students on field work. Like Mjelde, (2006a) observed, supervision and guidance of the expert is very vital, until such a time the students can stand on their own. According to Moore; Billet (cited in Billet2001), the absence of an expert to provide guidance is likely to inhibit the quality of workplace learning. Students who were left at the mercy of the agency supervisors did not benefit much from the experience of workplace learning.

4.2.3 Assessment and Evaluation of the Learning Process

In respect to assessment and evaluation, the study found that this was both formative and summative. There were usually semester examinations for the theory papers at the end of every semester, in which every individual sat for a minimum of six papers for a period of two weeks, each paper taking three hours. This was a summative assessment used to measure a student's knowledge or skills for the purpose of documenting their current level (Shepherd & Godwin, 2004). The semester examinations accounted for 60% of the final mark.

Interviews with all the respondents further revealed that during the semester, the student was expected to do a minimum of two course works, accounting for the 40%. The course works comprised of either individual attempt of the question, a test and/or a group question. This was a formative assessment, one that had a primary objective of providing practice for search and retrieval from memory for a student and to

provide prescriptive feedback (item, topic and/or assessment level) (Shepherd & Godwin, 2004, p. 2).

Students who did not do course work, were not allowed to sit for the final examination, and the implication was re-taking the paper when it was next offered. If a student failed the examination, he/she was expected to re-sit the paper for a minimum of three times, after which he/she would be discontinued irrespective of the level he/she had attained without any paper qualifications. The students pointed out that the assessment process was examination oriented and not testing the competences the students had acquired. This finding is supported by Egau, (2002, p. 22). This also concurs with the argument put forward by Yates (2007) that knowledge is something displayed in writing and language pointing to underlying hierarchy of intelligence, and assesses via examinations that are scored.

Practical skills were reportedly not assessed. Assessment and evaluation focused mainly on theory papers than the practical skills the students could portray. On the other hand, findings from the teaching staff revealed that practical skills were assessed during field work. It was the time when students' ability to perform practical tasks was assessed and evaluated. While this can be taken note of as something good by the teaching staff, earlier findings showed the contrary. Field work assessment was generally treated with less attention by both the agency supervisors and the teaching staff. There were no clear parameters (WCRWC, 2008) as far as assessment was concerned. If learning is to be useful for the particular job as pointed out by Shepherd & Godwin, (2004), then neglecting assessing the practical skills acquired by the learner left a lot to be desired.

Under any circumstances, all learning ought to have been assessed to ascertain whether learning had taken place or not, whether learners had acquired the competences required in the workplace or not. Much as it was important to assess the retention of theoretical knowledge, there was also need to assess the students' ability to perform practical tasks similar to those performed in the social situation of a workplace. This is because the workplaces are practice oriented. This does not; however mean that I am against the theory portion of the training. It is equally important because the practice and theory enrich one another (Mjelde, 2006a) and together provide the engine to social and technical development in history.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION(S) AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter gives a general summary of the findings, conclusion(s) and some recommendations for improvement based on the findings.

5.2 Summary

In a nut shell, this study was set to find answers to the question that does the training provided by the department of ACE at Kyambogo University equip the graduates with relevant knowledge and skills required of them in the labour market? The study specifically looked at the competence/ skills gaps faced by the graduates at their newly acquired job tasks, the content on the curriculum provided during the training and the pedagogical approaches used by the teaching staff during the training.

Based on the findings, it can be noted that fresh graduates from the department of adult and community education at Kyambogo University had challenges in performing the practical-based tasks, more so during the first task at their newly acquired job tasks. Major skills gaps were noted in areas of writing project report, writing concept papers, conducting workshops, writing project proposals, writing minutes, drawing strategic plans, to mention but a few. There has also been increasing change in roles of adult and community educators from the traditionally known ones such as facilitating trainings, adult literacy to more sophisticated ones, such as management of projects, research work, administration, mobilizing and management

of finances, among others. Because of the change in roles, graduates have been faced with the challenge of performing the practical-based tasks based on the new roles.

The curriculum as observed from the findings was very relevant to what the students got in the field apart from a few courses like political economy of adult educators, workers education and philosophical foundations of adult education. On the other hand, the curriculum had some missing elements that were believed to be important for the graduates if they were to fit well in the labour market. In the era of increased knowledge and technology, ICT was deemed important, and many times students had difficulties working with computers as a tool to perform work.

The most preferred pedagogical approach by the teaching staff was the lecture method against other methods that should have helped the learner to get involved in constructing their learning activities. Group tasks, mentorship, learning by doing from practice to theory and back again, close collaboration and cooperation of the teacher and the learner, and amongst the learners themselves as pointed out by Mjelde, (2006a); Vygosky (cited in Mjelde, 2005) - the basic principles of vocational pedagogy were not emphasized and used by the lecturers. From the findings, learning basically took place in traditionally arranged classrooms. The classrooms did not enhance mutual relationships between the learners and their teachers and amongst themselves. There was field placement in workplaces/organizations during the recess term of second and third year of training to help the students have the experience of the work place in which they were to work after training.

5.3 Conclusion(s)

The study sought to assess the ACE training programme in Kyambogo University vis-à-vis occupational skills required of the graduates once they reached the workplaces. The study aimed at answering the following questions:

i. Is there a mismatch between ACE course of studies and occupational skills requirements in the workplaces?
ii. Does the content in the curriculum prepare graduates who are competent to meet the workplace skills requirements?
iii. What pedagogical approaches does the teaching staff of the Department of ACE at Kyambogo University employ for effective teaching and learning?

Although there has been a claim by UNESCO-UNEVOC (2007, p. 27) and GTZ, (2009) that VET programmes suffer from lack of relevance and that curricula are outdated in terms of industry and economic needs leading to low productivity and limited skilled man power, there were a number of other factors that could bring about this scenario. The study revealed that the graduates of the adult and community education training programme were faced with a skills gap in the performance of practical-based tasks arising at their newly acquired jobs. They were not able to draw strategic plans, organize workshops conduct meetings, use computers and write project proposals. This cannot be blamed on the outdated curriculum alone as pointed out by GTZ, (2009); UNESCO UNEVOC, (2007) and Ssempijja, (2010), but also on other factors such as the poor mode of training that for the most part was theory-based. Most practical aspects in the curriculum were explained in theory right in the classroom without any simulation of the workplace conditions. This limited the students' ability to practically perform the tasks that they would meet at the

workplaces, or more so translate the theory into practice because they were not able to see the connection between the two.

Although ICT was found to be lacking in the curriculum provided by the department of adult and community education at Kyambogo University, a common practice in universities as pointed out by Rodridgue, (2004), the rest of the content was found to be relevant and capable of equipping the graduates with relevant knowledge required of them in the workplaces. In this case the content was not outdated contrary to the views advanced by UNESCO –UNEVOC, (2009). A few courses such as Political Economy of Adult and Community Education, Workers Education, Adult Education Provisions: Comparative Education, Philosophical Foundations of Adult Education and Braille were found to be less relevant to what the student/ graduates got involved in while at the workplace. However, failure by the students to see the relevancy of the courses noted above can be attributed to the lecturers' inability to show the connection between the courses and the students' real life situations. In addition, the extraneous variables such as students' lack of interest, and assurance of a job even before completion could have contributed to their failure to pay attention to what was taught.

The study indicated lack of ICT, both as a tool to facilitate learning and as an element in the curriculum. As noted by Mjelde, (2006a), there is computer revolution and therefore students of the 21st century should be equipped with skills in use of modern technology not only as an element in the curriculum, but also as a tool to ease performance of work so as to catch up with technological trends. Because of lack of

skills in computer, students found it hard to perform certain computer-based tasks. The department ought to scan the labour market to get the new changes in knowledge and technology and beef-up the content within the curriculum.

The study indicated that the pedagogical approaches used by the teaching staff varied from theoretical to practical-based. A lecture method was the most common used method by the teaching staff. Although it was found to be very convenient by the teaching staff, lecture method as pointed out by Farrah, (2007) had its limitations as far as equipping learners with practical skills required of the graduates in the labour market was concerned. This was mainly because the theory was taught separate from the practice. Little simulation of the workplace was emphasized during the study at the department.

Students preferred to have more time on practical field placement, because it exposed them to the real life situation. At the organization of placement, they learnt by doing (Mjelde, 2006a) as opposed to classroom lectures. In view of Lave & Wenger, (1991) and the theory of situated learning, learning takes place through interaction among communities of practice - situated. Methods such as group discussions, work-based learning, project work, needs to be emphasized.

5.4 Recommendations

1. Kyambogo University should sign a memorandum of understanding with major organization (the ones that commonly take up the students for field work) for purposes of placement and supervision of students.

2. The university and enterprises of placement should work hand in hand to design curriculum for training students who will become graduates with the right knowledge, skills and attitudes. This will help to avoid the mismatches between the training and the labour market requirements. Organizations of placement can help the department to develop a demand-driven curriculum, and also help in the training of practical skills.

3. For improved delivery, some of the practical aspects in the curriculum must be taught practically. More practical-based approaches like work on practical tasks should be adopted to equip the learners with skills to perform their tasks adequately and with limited difficulties in the workplaces.

4. The ACE department should have community-based training centers in each of the regions (Northern, Eastern, Western and Central) of the country. These centers would be used for practical placement of students in addition to other organizations.

5. There is urgent need for Kyambogo University to have all the teaching staffs (lecturers) trained professionally in teaching skills. There should be organized on-job training in teaching skills. In this case a professional course like vocational Pedagogy comes in handy.

6. Lecturers should vary their teaching methods by giving examples from real life situations. They should help learners to see the relevance of the theory that is being taught to the practice in real life situations. Methods that involve the students in active participation and not as passive participants should be used. Such methods as group discussion and project work would go a long way to help the learner understand their world.

7. The department should have its new staff teaching particular courses taken through a seminar to introduce them into interpretation of the demands of the curriculum and the expected output, which in turn would help to determine the mode of teaching.

8. There is need for the university to employ adequate full time staffs who have the time and ability to prepare for the lecture before they deliver it. Part time staff should be brought in to teach on the programme where there is lack of expertise in certain curriculum areas.

9. The university needs to introduce ICT, not only as a component in the curriculum, but also as tools to facilitate e-learning where students as well as lecturers can interact and share their experiences, even when they are not able to meet face-to-face.

5.5 Areas for Further Research

The primary goal of this thesis based on empirical study and literature review from the available sources has been the fulfillment of the requirement for the award of a Masters Degree in Vocational Pedagogy. However, the findings from this study

should open a set of informed questions to guide empirical research in the field of adult education and training. I expect that these questions will shift and expand as empirical data is gathered and as feedback from other actors is received. Some of the suggested areas of research are:

5.4.1 How can Adult and Community Education Training Programme at Kyambogo University develop better working relations with organizations/agencies which take up students for field work/placements?

For ACE training programme to have well equipped graduates with relevant skills to meet the demands of the labour market, the students must be exposed to experiences in the workplaces. For this to happen, the department and the university must seek ties with organizations/agencies who take on the role of training the students in the absence of their lecturers. This will help to create a continuum between the training by the department and employment acquisition creation by the receiving agencies.

5.4.2 What is the most effective way to assess training needs of the teaching staff of ACE in knowledge and skills in Vocational Pedagogy?

One of the most probable challenges limiting the training of well grounded graduates who meet the labour market demands could be that those in teaching positions are not well grounded in areas of teaching profession. Many may have the relevant content, but lack the ability to deliver it to the learners effectively. This calls for the need to carry out empirical study to find out the training needs of the teaching staff so that they can be trained in skills of teaching. Not all those with better grades are capable of delivering successful learning sessions.

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Appendices

Data collection Tools

Appendix i: Interview Guide for the Graduates Already Working

Dear Sir/Madam,
I am a master's student of Vocational Pedagogy and I am carrying out research on the Training vis-à-vis occupational skills requirements in workplaces. The data is intended to contribute to the improvement of the training of adult and community educators at Kyambogo University. I would like to request you to give me some of your precious time and answer a few questions I have prepared. The information you are going to give I will treat it with utmost confidentiality and used specifically for this study.
Thank you for accepting.

Demographic Information

1. Age 20 – 29 [ ] 30 – 39 [ ] 40 – 49
   50 -59 [ ] 60+ [ ]
2. Gender Male [ ] Female [ ]
3. What are you working as at the moment? .....

General Information

Skills Gaps

1. When did you complete your studies?
2. Which organizations have you worked with since you completed your studies?
3. How did you get to work with this/these organization(s)? (Was it advertised)?
4. Were there certain things that you were not able to do at the time of your recruitment to this job?
5. What practical things were you not able to do during your first days at work?
6. How were you been able to cope?
7. Are there any particular comments from your supervisors about your abilities? If yes, what are they?
8. Have you ever received any form of training at the place of work?
9. If yes, what core competences were targeted?
10. Did you learn anything new different from what you learnt while at the University?
    If yes, please explain

Learning Content

11. Do you find the BACE course content you did at the university relevant to what you are doing?
    If not, what was lacking?
12. What nature of setting do you come from? (urban/rural)
13. Was there any reference made to such an environment during the learning process? If yes how did it relate to what you were being taught at that time?
14. If you were to be involved in the process of curriculum design, what would you suggest to be included in the curriculum and why?

15. What other suggestions would you give about the programme besides the curriculum?

Teaching Methods

16. What teaching methods were commonly used in the teaching while at University?
17. How was the learning organized? (group work, individual, theoretical, practical)
18. Did you learn under the supervision of any staff?
19. How is learning at the university different from that at work?
20. Do you work under supervision of anybody? If no, why?
21. Comment about the teaching methods used by the teaching staff
22. Do you think there should have been a better way of handling the teaching/learning process in terms of teaching methods?
23. If yes, what do you think should have been a better way?
24. Did you participate in the evaluation of the learning process?

Thank you once again for you time.

Appendix ii: Interview Guide for the Undergraduates in the Final Year

Dear Sir/Madam,
I am carrying out research on the Training programme vis-a-vis occupational skills requirements in workplaces. The data is intended to improve on training of adult and community educators in Kyambogo University. I would like to request you to give me some of your precious time and answer a few questions I have prepared. The information you are going to give I will treat it with utmost confidentiality and used specifically for this study.
Thank you for accepting.

Demographic Information

1. Age 20 – 29 ☐ 30 – 39 ☐ 40 – 49 ☐
   50 -59 ☐ 60+ ☐
2. Gender Male ☐ Female ☐
3. When do you hope to complete your studies?

General Information

Skills Gaps in Relation to Labour Market Demands

4. Have you ever been for industrial training/field placement?
5. How long was the placement and how often?
6. Explain your experience during field placement?
7. Were there certain things that you were not able to do during field work?
8. What are some of the practical things you were not able to do during your field work?
9. How did you cope up?
10. Were there any particular comments from your supervisors about your abilities? If yes, what were they?
11. Did you ever receive any form of training at the organization of placement? If yes, what core competences were targeted?
12. Did you learn anything new different from what you learnt while at the University?
    If yes, please explain

Content in the Curriculum

13. Do you find all the course content relevant to what you were doing at the agency of fieldwork? If not explain
14. From your learning experience at the university, what do you think is lacking in terms of content in relation to what you got at the workplace?
15. If you were to be involved in the process of curriculum design, what would you suggest to be included in the curriculum?
16. What other suggestions would you give about the programme besides the curriculum, and why?
17. Do you participate in evaluation of your learning process? If yes how is it done?
18. What nature of setting do you come from? (urban/rural)

19. Was there any reference made to such an environment during the learning process? If yes how did it relate to what you were being taught at that time?

Methods of Teaching/Learning

20. What are the teaching methods used by the teaching staff?
21. How do you perform your leaning activities? (in groups, individually)
22. Do you perform you activities under supervision of any staff?
23. What are your views about the teaching methods used?
24. Do you think there should have been a better way of handling the teaching process in terms of teaching methods? If yes, explain.
25. How is the assessment of learning done at the department?
26. Do you participate in the evaluation of your learning process?

Thank you once again for you time.

Appendix iii: Interview Guide for the Teaching Staff (Lecturers)

Dear Sir/Madam,
I am carrying out research on the ACE Training programme vis-à-vis occupational skills requirements in workplaces. The data is intended to improve on training of adult and community educators at Kyambogo University. I would like to request you to give me some of your precious time and answer a few questions I have prepared. The information you are going to give will be treated with utmost confidentiality and used specifically for this study.
Thank you for accepting.

Demographic Information

1. Age
2. Gender
3. Occupation/Profession
4. Are you a part time or a full time staff?

Other General Information

Content in the Curriculum

1. Which course(s) do you teach at the department?
2. How long have you taught the course(s) mentioned above?
3. What is your view about the content given to the students?
4. Do you take part in curriculum design/review process at the department?
   If yes, how often has the curriculum been reviewed? If No, why do you think so?
5. What are the considerations during the curriculum review process?

Competence Gaps

6. Do you think graduates from your department meet occupational skills required in the workplaces?
7. From your experience as a lecturer, what do you think are the likely challenges the students may face while at work?

Teaching Methods Used

8. Do you think the course you teach has practical aspects? If yes, how do you handle them?
9. Are the students exposed to both the theory and practical aspects?
   If not, give reasons why. If yes how much time is given to each?
10. How do you organize students learning process? (individually, group work)
11. What methods of teaching do you use?
12. How do you determine the choice method to be used?
13. Do you supervise your students during the learning process? If yes, under what circumstances?
14. What is your view about the teaching/learning process with regard to
    1. Teaching methodology
    2. Resources/facilities
    3. Learning outcomes in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes required by the world of work
15. What are your suggestions towards improving the teaching/learning process?
16. How is the evaluation of the teaching/learning done at the department?
17. Do you think it is the best? If no, what suggestions would you make?
18. Do you involve students in the evaluation of their learning process?

Thank you for your time once again

Appendix iv: Observation Check list

1. The learning organization in the classroom
2. The equipment, tools and materials used
3. The mode of teaching used by the lecturers
4. How long the learning takes place
5. Time given for breaks

Appendix v: Documentary Study check list

1. Curriculum/programme document
2. Time Table

Appendix vi: Letter of Introduction

KYAMBOGO UNIVERSITY
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Tel: 041 - 285001/2 /285037 Fax: 256-41-220464
Website: www.kyu.ac.ug
Kyambogo University Graduate School

Received 31/03/2010

Date 30th March 2010

To: The Head of Department
Adult and Community Education
Kyambogo University

RE: LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

This is introduce Kulabako Mary Reg. No. 2009/HD/COG/MVP who is a student of Kyambogo University pursuing a Masters Degree in Vocational Pedagogy.

He/She intends to carry out a research on:
Training programmes vis-a-vis occupational skills requirements; The case of adult and Community Education training at Kyambogo University.

As partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master in Vocational Pedagogy.

We therefore kindly request you to grant him/her permission to carry out this study in your organisation.

Any assistance accorded to him/her shall be highly appreciated.

Thank you

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2010
REGISTERED

Yours Faithfully,

Dr. Habib Kato
AG. DEAN, KYAMBOGO UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SCHOOL