BASIC COURSE FOR ADULT EDUCATORS

1992 MATERIALS DEVELOPMENT
PROGRESS REPORT

Materials Development in the Basic Course for Adult Educators

1992 Progress Report

1. ## INTRODUCTION

The Basic Course for Adult Educators was launched in 1992. Its primary aim for 1992 was to pilot the development and delivery of a basic course for the training of educators. To this end the programme planned to facilitate the production of course material consistent with the core modules of the curriculum. The programme developed the material with a view to the programme potentially delivering the course on a mass scale.

2. ## THE PROCESS USED TO DEVELOP MATERIALS

The process of material and curriculum development in the programme was a collective one. Staff members responsible for this process were the national curriculum developer, the national materials developer and regional curriculum and materials developers. The programme was unfortunately not able to recruit people for some of the national and regional posts.

All of the BCAE programme staff contributed to the process of designing the final curriculum staff, which was based on draft curricula received from each region.

The programme decided that the course should be delivered in a face to face context with handouts to support the lessons. The training was designed to take place in two blocks, of 17 days and 11 days respectively, with a (6-8 weeks) period of fieldwork between these. The methodology was designed to be participatory, based on Freirian principles of adult education.

Once the curriculum had been developed, the lesson plans for each module were designed. This took place regionally, with each regional curriculum/material developer being allocated one module to do. These modules were sent to each region for critical evaluation. Following that, the lesson plans were laid out and sent to the regions for use in the delivery of the course. This process was co-ordinated by the national materials developer and the acting national curriculum developer.

3. MATERIALS DEVELOPED FOR THE COURSE

The programme staff developed handouts and lesson plans for all the modules in both blocks of face to face learning, as detailed below.

BLOCK ONE AND TWO	
Module 1 : Orientation	an orientation to the course involving introductions, trust-building, expectations, goal-setting and the creation of a climate of learning
Module 2 : Learning Tools	a module for the trainees' own support in the course which included skills for learning, like the use of mindmaps, reading skills and report writing
Module 3 : Introduction to Adult Education	an introduction and deepening of understanding of the arena of adult education within the context of South African organisations
Module 4 : Planning and Co-ordination	involved skills for planning and coordinating educational events ranging from small scale workshops to longer term programmes
Module 5 : Educational Methods	included skills for facilitating educational events, and a range of methods and techniques that can be used, e.g. brainstorm, buzzing, roleplay
Module 6 : Evaluation	an introduction to the skills of evaluation and its uses in educational events

The major thrust of the second block was to reflect on the fieldwork experience and contextualize new learnings within that. Different content areas were designated to different regions. Following the development of the lesson plans, a smaller group came together to work on the full package in order to ensure consistency and a common thread. A clearer, more accessible format for presentation was also designed at this stage.

4. ASSESSMENT

The programme experienced some problems with the development of materials. The most serious of these was the lack of time available for adequate planning to ensure that a common thread flowed through all the modules and materials. This was problem was exacerbated by the programme's difficulties in effectively coordinating the materials development process for the BCAE. Some further diffficulties with the process were identified as:

a.   There was inconsistency between modules due to the fact that they were designed in isolation such that modules did not flow smoothly into each other. This caused some repetition within modules.

b.   A shortage of time resulted in lesson plans arriving late in the regions, which in turn did not allow adequate time for preparation.

c.   Lesson plans were not always easy to follow and often obscure to those who had not designed them. A lack of time prevented a training programme on the use of these materials.

d.   Lesson plans were badly laid out making it difficult to read and use.

e.   Assessment of the trainees was not built rigorously into the lesson plans.

f.   Evaluation of the lesson plans and materials were not built into the programme consistently and clearly enough.

These problems were identified in the evaluation of the first block and attempts were made to redress them in the second block. The content for the second block was workshopped by the team of curriculum/material developers at a national meeting, where these problems were raised and discussed.

Evaluation of the second block found the lesson plans to be better than the first block. The improvements can be ascribed to the fact that the fieldwork period allowed staff to gain a better understanding of the context from which trainees came since they had first-hand contact with the broader membership base of the trainees' organisations. But there were still criticisms concerning the quality of the lesson plans. The programme recommended that a small team of curriculum/material developers should work closely together on the development of the curricula and the lesson plans for the 1993 course. In so doing they should

1.   design the lesson plans for both blocks at the same time to ensure that block two builds on the knowledge gained in the first block.

2.   build assessment exercises into each module in a clear and rigorous way.

3.   consistently build into each module an evaluation of the lessons.

A two-day, intensive evaluation was held at the end of the course. One of the regions developed a set of guidelines on areas to be covered. The evaluation programme was designed in consultation with an evaluation expert.

Following a full evaluation of the years' work and within the context of the plans for 1993, a course team structure, consisting of curriculum/materials developers and led by a coordinator, has been established. The course team will be responsible for refining the curriculum and materials for the 1993 course. This will take the form of a package consisting of instructor and learner manuals. It is hoped that these will be accessible to a wider audience and therefore conducive to mass scale delivery of the course.

5.   CONCLUSION

The process of curriculum and materials development was a difficult one in 1992, but at the same time many valuable lessons were learnt. The restructuring of the team will go a long way to address some of the difficulties experienced. The curriculum/materials development team started the process of refining the 1992 materials in preparation for the course which will commence in July 1993. The programme will draw on the expertise of organisations and individuals who have extensive experience in the field of curriculum/materials development and design.

DETAILED BREAKDOWN OF MODULES

BLOCK ONE

Block 1 was made up of six modules:

1. **Orientation:** This module aimed to orientate trainees through introductions to various players in the programme and course, the creation of a climate of learning and the setting of ground rules. The following took place:

    *   Introduction to Sached, the BCAE, educators, trainees and the participating organisations
    *   Trust-building exercise (e.g. Tree of Life)
    *   Introduction of detailed BCAE programme and structure of course
    *   Clarification of expectations and goals in relation to the course
    *   Introduction of dialogue journals
    *   Evaluation of value of trust-building
    *   Setting ground rules and practises for the group
    *   Election of coordinating committee and definition of role and responsibilities
    *   Evaluation of the module

2. **Learning tools:** This module set out to develop the trainees' competence and confidence to use language, reading and writing skills for learning throughout the course. The following took place:

    *   Introduction of module
    *   Introducing verbal and non-verbal communication and linking it with life experience
    *   Reflecting on the empowering and disempowering aspects of language and laying ground rules for empowering use of language on this course
    *   Demonstration of disempowering reading/writing activities (linked to school experiences)
    *   Introduction to module and and our approach to learning on this course
    *   Mind-mapping as a technique of writing (input and practice)
    *   Reading skills - skimming, scanning, prediction reading (input and practice)
    *   Free writing
    *   Note-taking and report-writing
    *   Evaluation and self assessment
    *   Evaluation of the module

3. **Introduction to adult education:** This module introduced trainees to the arena of adult education with a focus on adult learning. The following was covered:

* Introduction to the module
* Trainees' expectations and concerns
* Exploring the main factors involved in adult learning: theory on how adults learn
* Introduction of action-reflection cycle
* The value of theory
* The role of the educator (focus on building reliance of learner)
* Role of the educator in the South African context
* Evaluation of the module

4. **Planning and co-ordination**: This module introduced trainees to different ways of planning and coordinating educational events and the stages involved, including needs assessment. The following was covered:

    * Introduction to planning and its value
    * Expectations and concerns of trainees
    * Fundamental human needs - cycle of needs model
    * Fieldtrip - related to organisational needs and resource needs
    * Drawing up a resource network
    * Needs assessment - survey methods (questionnaires and interviewing)
    * Visual planning
    * Seven-step planning/analytic planning
    * Drawing up fieldwork plans
    * Evaluation of the module

5. **Educational methods**: This module aimed to facilitate trainees' ability to practically implement educational events using different methods. The following was covered:

    * Introduction to the module
    * The value of methods in education
    * What methods are used in adult education?
    * Reflecting on past learning experiences and understanding of different processes of learning
    * Compare past learning experience with BCAE experience and identify differences
    * Defining process and its application (individual, group, mass)
    * Practise implementing educational events (in different learning processes - individual, group, mass)
    * Educational techniques
    * Practise brainstorming and group discussion techniques
    * Lecturing as an educational tool - how to use effectively and practise
    * Role plays as an educational tool - practise
    * Groupwork as an educational technique - guidelines for effective groupwork and practise
    * Learning aids - value, use and practise

In different regions a number of other content areas were covered including:

* simulation as an educational technique
* group dynamics and group development
* facilitation skills
* fieldtrip to look at different methods of education

5. **Evaluation**: This module introduced trainees to the basic skills to evaluate educational events/programmes and to understand educational evaluation processes. The following was covered:

    * Introduction to evaluation - what is its value?
    * Expectations and concerns
    * Defining evaluation
    * Defining criteria for evaluation and practice
    * Types of evaluation - participative, summative, formative, criteria-based and objective-based
    * Choosing appropriate approaches
    * Evaluation of the module

BLOCK 2

Block 2 was made up of five modules:

1. **Orientation**: This module aimed to reorientate trainees to the training course through the sharing of fieldwork. Content included:

    * Welcome of trainees and the statement of housekeeping and practical rules for the course.
    * Outline of block 2
    * Reorientation exercise ("most important events")
    * Brief report on fieldwork activities
    * Sharing experiences, positive and negative, of fieldwork in groups
    * Reflecting on fieldwork in terms of learnings in the first block and identifying gaps to fill
    * Expectations for block 2
    * Setting ground rules
    * Reconstituting committee and redefining role and responsibilities

    One region built a half-day workshop with the mentors into the orientation module as well. It looked at the role of the mentor and tried to find ways of improving the system in the BCAE.

2. **Learning tools**: This module followed up on self-assessment and strategies for improving skills and to practise verbal and written reporting. Covered the following:

    * Learning tools self-assessment form - completed individually and discussed
    * Strategies for improving skills
    * Verbal reporting - practise and feedback

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* Written reports - discussion
* Input on reporting - group presentations on verbal and written
* Written reports - practise individually (submitted as assignment)
* Evaluation of the module

3. **Adult Education:** This module intended to contextualize the field of adult education in the South African context of education historically, in the present and future, and familiarize trainees with policy issues. The following was covered:

* Introduction to the module and outline
* Exploration of hierarchies and inequalities in the education system in South Africa
* Linking with workplace hierarchies - political economic picture
* Development of an alternative educational model to contrast with present status quo model of education
* History and present context of adult education in South Africa - presented through case studies
* Policy for adult education - presented through case studies.

4. **Planning, coordination and educational methods:** The module revised planning and designing of educational events (covered in block 1), to impart skills in longer term programme planning and coordination, and practise educational methods. The following was covered:

* Reflecting on experiences of planning, designing and facilitation during fieldwork -drawing out common problems
* Listing of organisational and community needs which emerged during fieldwork survey
* Course/programme planning and coordination
  - differentiating between course planning and educational events p l a
  n n i
  ng
  - practice and input
* Planning for fieldwork (some regions gave input on POTSAE method to be used to do this)
* Groupwork - advantages and disadvantages and ensuring effective groupwork
* Group dynamics - task and maintenance functions
* Educational methods practise - designing lesson plans, implementation and feedback
* Evaluation of the module

5. **Evaluation:** This module's major aim was to revise evaluation methods, reinforce the value of evaluation and to develop a set of evaluation instruments for the programme. The following was covered:

* Outline of the programme and aims of this module
* Expectations, concerns and problems which have emerged since the 1st

block
* Instruments of evaluation: questionnaire, interview, observation - practice designing one of them
* Roleplay of evaluation implementation
* Why is evaluation necessary?
* Evaluation of the day

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