

APPENDIX SEVEN

The Learnership as a Mode of Delivery: Experiences of the Hospitality, Travel, and Tourism Sector

INTRODUCTION

In its 1999 document, *National Strategy for Further Education and Training 1999 – 2000: Preparing for the Twenty-first Century through Education, Training and Work*, (DOE, 1999¹) the Department of Education observes that:

The re-entry of South Africa into the competitive international market has created an imperative for FET to develop a skilled and technologically competent labour force. This is further compounded by the historical collapse of the youth labour market in the country. (p. 5)

In a subsequent document, *National Curriculum Framework for the Further Education and Training Band; Discussion Document*, published in September 1999 (DOE: 1999²), the Department of Education remarks on the current system's inability to meet the above imperative:

The present system of FET qualifications and programmes offered by schools, colleges, industry, and private providers does not prepare learners adequately for success in further learning and for productive employment. On the one hand FET programmes offered by schools are constrained by narrow academic concerns, are too general offering little or no specialization, while on the other hand programmes offered at technical colleges are narrow and specialized, and their duration is not always equivalent. These programmes fail to equip learners adequately for the social, economic and cultural changes they will face during the course of their lives. (p. 4)

The Department therefore advocates a new approach to education and training provision; one which will be underpinned by the following principles:

- Integrating theory and practice;
- Learning how to learn and embracing lifelong learning;
- Designing relevant and flexible curricula;
- Recognizing prior learning;
- Accommodating learners with special needs;
- Advancing nation-building and non-discriminatory behaviour;
- Developing critical and creative thinking abilities;
- Assessing and assuring quality; and
- Accessing, transferring, and progressing within the curriculum.

In the document *Strategic Framework for Reviewing and Modernising FET Programmes: Working Document, July 19, 1999 (GDE: 1999)*, the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) makes the following observations on the current implementation of FET education and training in the province:

The bulk of the general school instructional offerings in Group F of Report 550 are outdated and were not subjected to the revision process of the NETF (National Education and Training

Forum) process in 1994. (p.3) ... Performance of learning is still reliant on the final, high stakes matric exam. The examination question papers are too content based and do not allow for the assessment of skills and higher order thinking. Assessment for formative purposes is minimal and is almost an exception rather than a norm. This applies to assessment of learning in both schools and technical college sectors. (p. 4)

In order to review and modernize current FET syllabuses to tackle the above problems, the GDE identifies a strategic framework of five key curriculum change factors crucial to the success of the review and modernisation process:

- What learning outcomes should be achieved at Grade 12?
- Pedagogic vision (What teaching and learning will lead to enhanced learning performance?)
- Capacity (What minimum human and physical resources are required to achieve the pedagogic vision?)
- Ownership (How are key stakeholders in the review and modernisation process involved?)
- Support (What on-going support is required for the review and modernisation process?)
- Monitoring and evaluation (What, who and how will the review and modernisation process be monitored and evaluated?) (p. 4)

It notes that the review and modernisation process will need to intervene in the following areas:

- Policy and legislation
- Learning outcomes
- Teaching and learning (pedagogic vision)
- Programme development
- Assessment, evaluation, examinations and qualifications
- Quality assurance and management
- Institutional ethos and development
- Learner support services
- Learner support materials
- Professional development. (p. 6)

WHAT ARE LEARNERSHIPS?

The research undertaken for this case study attempted to gain an understanding of the potential inherent in 'learnerships' as one possible model for learning to address the kinds of issues outlined above and also of the challenges involved in setting up learnerships in practice. *The Skills and Development Act, 1998*, identifies the key characteristics of learnerships as follows:

- a) The learnership consists of a structured learning component;
- b) The learnership includes practical work experience of a specified nature and duration;
- c) The learnership would lead to a qualification registered by the south african qualifications authority and related to an occupation; and
- d) The intended learnership is registered with the director-general in the prescribed manner.

Omar (1999) makes the following useful observations on the learnership model in contrast with the traditional apprenticeship:

Learnerships incorporate traditional apprenticeships, and are similar to traditional apprenticeships insofar as they provide a work-based route for learning and gaining qualifications. There are, however, some important differences between apprenticeships and learnerships.

While apprenticeships were essentially a response to the needs of the formal economy, and tended to focus on blue-collar trades, learnerships are to be offered in response to more broadly based social or economic needs, and cover any occupations in which work-based learning paths are viable.

Furthermore, apprentices tended to be registered with a single employer for the duration of the apprenticeship, whereas learnerships will involve partnerships and cooperation between several workplace contexts to provide learners with the necessary spectrum of work experience.

...

Negative features of the apprenticeship system included emphasis on repetitive tasks and drills. The duration of the apprenticeship was long, examinations were held at the end of each year, the final goal of attaining a certificate was very distant, and the dependence of the apprentice on the trainer or college was extended for the entire duration of the apprenticeship. Often the apprentice – as learner – was regarded as a nuisance in work situations where a choice had to be made between supporting learners and getting the work done.

In this document, the nature of learnerships was outlined as follows:

- Learnerships are demand-led
- Learnerships are more diverse than apprenticeships
- Learnerships appeal to a wider range of learners
- The role of learners is different (more emphasis on being a learner as opposed to an employee/helper)
- Learnerships take place in multiple workplace contexts
- Learnerships have different content to apprenticeships (involving theory and skills and an orientation towards future learning and work).

SCOPE OF THE RESEARCH

In March 1999, the Gauteng Department of Education, in partnership with the Centre for International Migration (CIM: a German development aid agency), started a pilot project at Roodepoort Technical College on developing a Learnership for the Hotel, Hospitality and Tourism industry. The pilot project set itself the following outcomes:

1. To develop a Qualification, Unit Standards, a Curriculum and a training method/system; and
2. To develop a learnership contract.

Emanating from this process, the German Technical Cooperation organization GTZ, in partnership with the Department of Labour, produced in July, 1999 a document entitled: *A framework for establishing learnerships and the quality assurance functions of sector education and training authorities: draft discussion document (GTZ, 1999)*.

The following principles were identified as a crucial underpinning for a successful learnership:

- Cooperation and partnerships;
- Demand-led;
- Diversification (not just blue collar);
- Variety of employment contexts (for wider experience and participation);
- Increased participation of individuals;
- Integration of education and training with workplace experience;
- Lifelong learning;
- Quality; and
- Efficiency and sustainability.

The purpose of this document is to identify lessons of experience that can be derived from the experiences of the Hospitality, Travel and Tourism sector as a basis for recommendations

about the implementation of learnerships as a mode of learning in other areas and contexts. Four broad strands of enquiry have been pursued:

- Lessons of experience from pilot projects in Kwazulu Natal (KZN Pilot);
- Progress with the Hospitality learnership project at Roodepoort Technical College (RTC Pilot);
- Progress with the national pilot project involving Travel and Tourism studies in GDE schools and a parallel programme for adult learners outside of schools (TT Pilot); and
- Progress with the Business Trust Tourism Learnership Project being managed by the HITB (TLP).

DETAILED FINDINGS OF RESEARCH

LEARNERS

The Skills and Development Act, 1998, identifies the following possible categories of learner for a learnership programme:

- Work-seekers; and
- Retrenched workers needing to re-enter the labour market.

It makes special mention of the need ‘to improve the employment prospects of persons previously disadvantaged by unfair discrimination and to redress those disadvantages through training and education. The DOE (1999²) identifies the probable target group for FET level studies as “youths” aged 16 – 35 and adults’ (p. 2).

Silke Leiendecker, the Project Manager appointed by the German government to support the implementation of learnerships in the Hospitality and Tourism field at Technical College level, suggests that learnerships will cater for a very wide range of types of learners. These could range from people already fully employed in the formal sector of the industry but requiring upgrading through to the unemployed person who seeks support in setting up a modest subsistence level business selling fast food in the informal sector. This diverse target audience requires a great deal of flexibility in the design and management of suitable learnership programmes.

Leiendecker makes the point that, where the learnership involves providers in the formal sector of the industry, it is necessary for the institutions providing structured workplace experiences to be involved in the process of selecting candidates, since the learners will be representing these institutions in their dealings with clients.

Since the proposed learnerships to be offered from Roodepoort College are directed at Levels Two and Three and lend themselves to implementation by SMMEs, Leiendecker suggests that the projected initial intake of learners will have a greater proportion of unemployed people than is envisaged for the Business Trust Tourism Learnership Project (TLP), for example. The TLP envisages a three-phase, four-year implementation plan starting with the upgrading of workers already employed in the tourism industry and increasingly reaching out to the unemployed as the programme advances into years two to four and the possible new employment opportunities in the expanding tourism sector become clear (Parker/*Training Matters*).

For the KZN Pilot, which ran from about September 1997 to April 1999, the focus was on providing learnerships to unemployed persons in predominantly rural-based communities and involved considerable consultation with the Department of Labour.

Selection of candidates for such a learnership is difficult and time-consuming, but the KZN Pilot indicates that this is an essential activity to undertake if the learnership is to provide candidates with the potential to meet industry requirements. Although the learners who were recruited had a minimum of Standard Eight and many had Matriculation certificates, instructors and training providers commented that these certificates clearly did not guarantee basic mathematical competence (for example, knowledge about how to calculate area, even when the formula was provided) or the level of reading (and writing) skill one might expect from someone who has had a minimum of ten to twelve years of schooling. Looking back at the experience acquired from the recruitment of learners under the Pilot Project, it would appear that more 'real-life' activities should complement the 'paper assessment' of learners. Indeed, testing for the aptitude of a learner seems to be even more important than a learner's schooling background. (Rambøll¹)

The major objectives of the recruitment and selection process for the KZN project were to ensure that:

- The selection process was non-discriminatory, fair and transparent;
- The selection tools were appropriate and effective in providing a reliable, motivated and capable pool of learners;
- The distribution of selected learners in terms of gender, race and geographical area was adequate;
- Sufficient information was transferred to learners to ensure that they made informed decisions concerning their participation;
- DoL personnel were given adequate training to enable them to undertake their key performance responsibilities;
- Key stakeholders were adequately involved in the process; and
- The time frames for the process were both realistic and reasonable.

The process developed was comprehensive and encompassed the following KZN stages:

- Identification of selection criteria;
- Identification of pool of potential applicants;
- Briefing sessions for potential applicants;
- Applications;
- Assessment tools;
- Interviews;
- Establishment of pool of screened applicants;
- Selection panel; and
- Information meetings for selected learners.

In broad terms, one of the major objectives of these learnerships was to ensure that previously disadvantaged groups would have an opportunity to participate in the learnerships. The selection of learners should therefore reflect the composition of the population in general. However, some decisions needed to be taken to make these overall objectives operational. The following general selection criteria were therefore adopted:

- *Persons recruited must be unemployed (more than six months)*
The six months criteria was considered important, as the target group was not simply unemployed persons, but persons who had been unemployed for a longer period of time.

At the same time, the implications were that unemployed persons still receiving Unemployment Insurance Benefits would not be eligible for this learnership programme.

- *Youth (minimum 16 years of age)*
As approximately half of the unemployed are below 30 years of age, it was considered important to give this specific group special preference.
- *Gender balance*
It was considered especially important to give women a fair chance of participating in the learnerships. It was therefore decided that the two sexes should each be represented by a minimum of 40% of all learners.
- *Racial balance*
It was considered very important that the final selection would reflect racial balance. It was decided to use racial distribution in Kwazulu Natal as the guiding parameter.
- *Minimum basic schooling*
It was decided that a minimum level of schooling was required. A balance had to be found between giving previously disadvantaged groups a chance to participate in the learnerships, and simultaneously ensuring that these learners would be able to follow the learnerships. It was decided that a minimum of ABET 4 would be required.

In addition to these general criteria that were applicable to all learnerships, sector-specific selection criteria for the Hospitality industry were also developed. These criteria included:

- Service-minded;
- Willing to work Saturdays and Sundays;
- Willing to work shifts;
- English-speaking (Food and Drink Service);
- Minimum 18 years of age for Food and Drink Service (serving alcohol);
- Sense of humour;
- Initiative;
- Attention to detail;
- Neat and clean;
- Ability to work under pressure. (Rambøll²).

The KZN Pilot suggests, that once the starting date for a learnership has been set, the recruitment and selection process should be started not later than two months prior to that date.

Another important lesson of experience from the Pilot Project is the need to start with a considerable number of potential applicants to ensure that there will be a sufficient number of qualified applicants to start the learnerships. This aspect is often underestimated.

In the case of the KZN Pilot, it turned out that, in order to get 255 learners to start the learnerships (in the Hospitality and Building industries for this pilot), as many as 1,800 potential unemployed persons were contacted. This ensured participation of 1,200 unemployed in the briefing sessions, 900 of whom applied, resulting in 600 interviews, from which 300 names were put forward to the Selection Panel. Even then, it turned out to be difficult to find suitable candidates for the Building sector and especially for the bricklaying learnership. Extra efforts had to be made to identify a sufficient number of learners for these learnerships.

Based on this lesson of experience, it is therefore recommended to try to obtain the following numbers at the various stages of the recruitment and selection process, if one wants to have X number of learners to start a learnership. In the right hand column is given an example of the number of people to contact, if one wants to have 100 learners to start.

ACTIVITY	NUMBER	EXAMPLE
Contacted as potential learners	6 – 8 times	600 – 800
Participating in briefing sessions	4 – 6 times	400 – 600
Applying for the learnership	3 – 4 times	300 – 400
Participating in assessment tools and interviews	2 – 3 times	200 – 300
Put forward to the Selection Panel	1.5 times	150
Contingency pool	0.2 – 0.4 times	20 – 40
Start learnership	X	100

Briefly stated, the challenge was not getting 255 learners – but getting the *right* 255 learners.

The following screening tools were applied and assessed in the following way:

- The general and sector specific criteria used were based on sound reasoning and were useful for providing the recruiters with concrete criteria to target the appropriate pool of potential learners. However, for learnerships in other sectors and unemployed training, consideration needs to be given to developing generic criteria.
- The current database of unemployed people at DoL does not reflect the actual number of unemployed persons in KwaZulu-Natal. The database needs to be updated. This may circumvent the need to use other recruitment sources e.g. advertising. DoL needs to attract work seekers to register through providing them with some real and tangible incentives. Targeting rural communities must be given due consideration.
- Briefing sessions served as a cost-effective way of interacting with potential candidates and thereby conveying information on job requirements, expectations and terms and conditions. For future learnerships as well as DoL training programmes, it is recommended as a necessary recruitment procedure. This must be undertaken in both English and a relevant home language so as to ensure understanding. The relevant stakeholders should also be involved in these briefing sessions. As a minimum by providing the DoL with relevant information, and if possible by participating in the briefing sessions themselves. This will ensure commitment and ownership.
- The application forms were more comprehensive than traditional ones used in organizations. They included biodata that tapped preferences, motivation and interest. However, in order to meet the demands of different sectors and programmes, it is recommended that a standard format be formulated which includes biographical information, work experience and educational qualification.
- The numeracy and language tests must in future be linked to proper ABET based outcomes. However, interviews attested to the value of both these tests during the selection process.
- The interview is regarded as the most important selection tool. The interview guides provided by the Hospitality Industry Training Board comprised situational questions, job knowledge questions and worker-requirements' questions, i.e. their willingness to perform under prevailing job conditions. This form of structured interviewing is a valid predictor of job performance. The involvement of relevant stakeholders is also important to ensure commitment and ownership.

- It is recommended that the structured interview be used for determining a candidate's level of motivation, interpersonal skills, potential and organizational fit.
- Consideration must be given to the APIL Battery, TRAM 1 and 2 Batteries and the Figure Classification test to assess conceptual reasoning for future learnerships.
- The use of a Selection Panel was considered useful and should be applied. The stakeholders interviewed all confirmed this. This will help to ensure a transparent selection process as well as ensuring involvement and ownership on part of the involved stakeholders. (Rambøll²)

Absenteeism and timekeeping issues affecting learner performance appear to relate more to working conditions offered than to learner attitudes. An argument was put forward that learners should understand that they are obliged to work whatever hours are required by the Structured Workplace Experience (SWE), but of course subject to regulations (as would be the case if they were employees). While concessions may be negotiated with SWEs, this should be handled by the Training Provider (TP) instructors rather than by learners themselves. TP instructors should also be sensitive to disparities in conditions of SWE 'employment' between learners that may cause some dissatisfaction and de-motivation. (Rambøll¹)

Where possible, learners should be placed with SWEs close to their home or with accommodation. It is also suggested that a 'learners' travel allowance be considered by DoL, based on the distance from home to the SWE.' (Rambøll¹) A major issue that needs agreement is: Are learners workers (working under employment like conditions and times) when they are at a SWE or are they learners (attending under school like times)? The behaviour by some learners indicated that they perceived themselves as the latter. (Rambøll¹)

The following specific examples from the KZN Pilot, indicate a range of attitudinal issues that will need to be considered in providing future learnerships:

- In some instances 'Chef-like uniforms' provided to learners caused some tension at the workplace.
- Most learners were found to be very friendly and they were well received by their co-workers and customers.
- Some learners did however show a bad attitude according to SWE providers.
- One learner was asked to leave due to fighting and drinking.
- Some learners needed much more training/experience in dealing with customers.
- Some new bullet point learners came with the idea that they knew it all. Other learners had limited cultural awareness and customer care awareness.
- In one instance, a learner was not prepared for the male/female hierarchy in the work place/kitchen.
- Learners should generally utilize the same **facilities** as other employees in order to familiarize them with the real working world. Exceptions should be made where acceptable facilities are lacking e.g. female changing rooms, in which case, special arrangements should be negotiated with workplace providers before learners arrive at the workplace.
- Basic Conditions of Employment, Occupational Health and Safety and other minimum labour standards must protect learners in the workplace. The implications of this should be thoroughly researched.
- The **terms and conditions** for the workplace experience, including benefits such as meals and accommodation, not covered by legislation, should be negotiated between the SETA or its agent; the workplace provider and the learner and confirmed, in writing, in a simple Learner Workplace Agreement.
- In the event of a **dispute** over workplace conditions, learners should have recourse to the SETA or its agent for appropriate action. (Rambøll¹)

During briefing sessions conducted for potential learners prior to applying for participation in the learnerships, it was made quite clear that even successful completion of a learnership did not give any guarantee that students would eventually get a job. During the briefing sessions, attempts were made to impress on learners what to expect, both during theoretical training and structured workplace experience. Learners were told about tough working conditions, different hours, pressure at work, and other challenges.

The review has revealed that some learners had high and perhaps unrealistic expectations of the kind of jobs they were likely to be offered upon completion of the learnerships. For some learners the working conditions have come as a surprise. Working conditions are here interpreted in a broad sense (including salary, working hours, treatment of staff, repetitive and monotonous work, and so on). As Rambøll notes,

Even though briefing sessions did try to address this situation, it still remained a 'theoretical' exercise. Only when a learner is faced in person with actual working conditions over an extended period of time, will s/he be in a position to determine whether s/he wants to work in that industry or not. (Rambøll³)

Depending on how one defines 'gaining meaningful employment', between 30% and 60% of the 217 learners who completed the KZN Pilot had gained some meaningful employment within a few months of exiting the programme. However, there was a general reluctance to register with the Employment Service of the Department of Labour (DoL) in order to gain employment. Some of the reasons advanced for this were as follows:

- They would like a break after 8 – 12 months of continuous work/study.
- They are not interested at the terms and conditions offered.
- They do not find the work attractive.
- They have been treated badly at the workplace.
- They do not want to register as workseekers at the Employment Service – or they will only register, when they have a guarantee that they will get a job.
- They are not able to find work in different communities, as they do not belong to that specific community. This is especially the case in the building sector with jobs offered in Public Works and other job-creating activities. (Rambøll³)

The KZN Pilot also points to the difficulty of establishing and maintaining communication with the unemployed who typically do not have ready access to telephones or transport.

Unemployed adults are also the focus of another Tourism industry pilot project that has been running for the past three years. The information that follows is based upon a briefing provided by Estelle Nel of the IEB and Jenny Cornish of Empower-Ed.

Currently, 14 adult learners from previously disadvantaged backgrounds are enrolled in the programme, which runs parallel to a school-based Travel and Tourism initiative promoted by the National Departments of the Environment, Tourism, and Education. The programme is rooted in an international campaign sponsored by American Express (AE) to promote tourism learning in schools, in recognition of the growing financial importance of this industry. AE approached a local training organization, Reach and Teach, to be a partner in a pilot project in South Africa. Seven industry partners and representatives from the broader Travel and Tourism sector subsequently became involved and Tourism studies began to be offered as an extra-curricular option in 16 pilot schools. A committee of educators was established to provide ongoing feedback on the outcomes of the pilot. After 18 months, the Department of Education (DoE) became interested in the project, and sought to extend the pilot over a three-year period to 65 schools in nine provinces. A DoE curriculum sub-committee was established to expand on the existing extra-curricular curriculum so that Travel and Tourism studies could be offered as a full matriculation subject.

In 1998, it was decided to run a parallel pilot project for unemployed, unskilled adults from disadvantaged communities. Using curriculum developed for schools as a base, the intention was to offer eight weeks of intensive college-based training (to be provided by the newly-formed organization Empower-Ed) and followed by a six-month internship. It was hoped to provide learners with sufficient knowledge, skills, and experience to gain them entry level knowledge and skills for the industry. The programme was advertised in *The Sowetan*, and 1200 applications were received for 15 places. Selection of the 15 learners was effected through analysis of CVs and written motivations, as well as competency-based assessment tests run in groups of 20 in the areas of Reading and Writing and Comprehension. It also included assessment of whether candidates appeared to have appropriate attitudes for a service industry placement. Empower-Ed's training costs were met by its industry partners. The industry partners also paid the learners a workplace allowance for the duration of their 6-month internship. Twelve of the graduates from the programme went on to secure employment in the industry.

Students currently on the programme need to pay R1,800 in training fees. The balance of the fees, R1,800, are paid by the workplace employers and recouped as a stoppage against the learners' workplace allowance of between R1,200 and R1,500 a month. There is no guarantee of employment after the programme, although Empower-Ed have been able to help about 70% of learners gain permanent employment with car rental, hotel, and travel companies (Cornish).

PROGRAMME OFFERINGS

The Skills and Development Act, 1998, identifies the following general purposes of the Act, towards the realization of which learnerships need to contribute:

- (1) The purposes of this Act are –
 - (a) to develop the skills of the South African workforce –
 - (i) to improve the quality of life of workers, their prospects of work and labour mobility;
 - (ii) to improve productivity in the workplace and the competitiveness of employers;
 - (iii) to promote self-employment; and
 - (iv) to improve the delivery of social services.

GTZ (1999) confirms the above programme focus for a learnership in answer to the question: What are the right things to do when establishing learnerships? It points to the need for:

- Addressing the needs of the labour market; and
- Aligning learnerships with labour market issues, for example, productivity, employability, innovation (technological and workplace).

The discussion document goes on to observe:

While learnerships' starting point is the world of work – and, in particular, the occupations that define them – it is vital that they include general education components that take learners beyond the confines of the work for which they are being trained, and include components that are socially relevant and personally enhancing. (p. 23)

It notes that achieving the above will include developing:

- Underpinning knowledge;
- General education relevant to the area of learning undertaken;
- Communication and numeracy competencies; and
- National issues (for example, AIDS).

This accords well with the GDE observation that modernizing the curriculum to achieve the new objectives ‘will also necessitate regrouping and combining instructional offerings in the FET band in terms of fundamental, core and elective learning’ (p. 7, GDE, 1999). GTZ (1999) recognizes the need for this restructuring of the curriculum offering, as well as a need to tackle the critical cross field outcomes that have been specified for the education and training system as a whole.

GTZ (1999) also identifies the DoE’s concern over separation of theory and practice. It suggests that:

The ideal structure, then, is when what is learned through structured work experience is supported by structured learning in the same field, at the same time.

In a recent Government gazette, it is proposed that the above needs might be met in longer programmes by a phased programme offering as illustrated below:

YEAR	STRUCTURED LEARNING (DAYS)	STRUCTURED WORKPLACE EXPERIENCE (DAYS)
1	210	90
2	150	150
3	90	210

Such a process, in which the emphasis falls increasingly on workplace experience, would seem to offer a learner-friendly gradual introduction to the world of work.

Leiendecker points out that whilst many unit standards for core and elective aspects of a learnership are generated by the industry through Industry Training Boards (ITBs) and subsequently Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs), unit standards for the fundamental learning aspect of programme design have yet to be posted by the Department of Education. Taking into account also that SETAs have not yet been launched and that no interim regulations have been promulgated, it is currently not possible to offer a fully-fledged learnership as defined by the Skills Act, since it is not possible to have a national qualification certified by both SAQA and a SETA. Consequently, only ‘pilot’ programmes can currently be explored.

She notes that, at the Technical College level, learnerships would be aimed at developing competence at operational and supervisory levels (Levels two and three), but not management levels. She envisages a greater college orientation at the start of a programme and an increasing workplace orientation as the programme progresses.

However, she notes that some forms of learnership will require more of a college-based programme than others. An example is the Bed-and-Breakfast industry, which comprises largely SMMEs that may not be able to provide the kind of workplace support envisaged for a learnership.

Leiendecker is currently working with Roodepoort College on a pilot project for a learnership in Conference/Event/Function/Convention Tourism (CEFCT). She is also exploring the possibility of learnerships for the Fast Food and Bed-and-Breakfast industries. She notes that a very flexible, responsive system is required for implementation of learnerships, as different

needs may be expressed by potential learners, industry stakeholders (individually or in groups), educators, and communities at different times.

The following table, attempts to illustrate the way in which a learnership programme would, in general, be designed to lead to a national qualification (NQ) in this sector:

UNIT STANDARDS DEVELOPED BY DOE	UNIT STANDARDS DEVELOPED BY SETA (HITB)	
Fundamental	+ Core	+ Elective
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literacy • Numeracy • Life orientation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food handling • Food preparation • Hygiene • etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weddings • Game Parks • Exhibitions • etc.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently not available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General requirements applicable to all aspects of the industry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Largely dependent on local industry needs

Most learnership programmes will probably last a minimum of twelve months, although the *Review Report on the Implementation of Learnerships* (Rambøll¹) suggests that there will need to be some flexibility about duration. Shorter programmes would be aimed at developing specific skills as defined by unit standards.

Whilst the GTZ (1999) discussion document advocates for a learnership to involve multiple workplace experiences involving different providers, Leiendecker notes that, in practice, the proposed learnership offered from Roodepoort College will seek to establish a single workplace for each learnership, with the opportunity for the learner to move between various departments of a single employer.

The CEFCT learnership has been proposed in response to the following factors:

- There is currently no official accredited qualification/training in this particular field, with the result that there are no trainee- multi-skilled employees available;
- Projected growth of conferencing/business tourism in Gauteng is 42%. (UTC, Feb. 2000)

By the end of the CEFCT learnership, learners will be equipped with basic skills and knowledge on an operational level in conferencing/event/function/convention tourism, and their achievement will be recognized in the form of a SAQA-recognized national qualification. The qualification will cover the following basic knowledge and skills:

- Front office;
- Food preparation;
- Food and beverage service;
- Tourism knowledge;
- Rooms division;
- Planning and organization skills;
- Communication; and
- Hygiene and first aid. (UTC, Feb. 2000)

The experience of the KZN Pilot and diversity of the SA labour market suggest a need to establish a number of different '*Core Learnership Types*', based on which specific learnership identification could take place. Such core types could usefully be defined along

the lines of what type of employment/work opportunity learnerships are going to support and who their main target groups of participants would be. Having different learnership types would confirm that learnerships must be demand led or driven, but simultaneously acknowledge that this term could have several meaningful interpretations. It could, for example, adopt the meaning of employment opportunities in the formal sector (both new and in-service), but it could also mean work opportunities to become self-employed, possibly in the context of an SMME. The following parameters could be considered when identifying core types:

- For staff in employment;
- For new recruits to formal sector and corporate employment;
- For SMME work;
- For self-employment;
- For unemployed (including retrenched workers); and
- For school leavers, youth or pre-employed.

These core types should be linked to the establishment of new occupational areas as a result of, for example, widespread introduction of new technology (such as information technologies) and new legislation (for example, environmental). (Rambøll¹)

Before the start of the KZN Pilot, the HITB had completed a national process of updating their qualification structure. Vocational Unit Standards had been acquired from the United Kingdom and were, with some modifications, used when composing and proposing the two learnerships for the Pilot Project. No substantial consideration was made for unit standards in the ‘fundamental’ and ‘soft’ skills areas such as life skills or entrepreneurship. Integration of critical cross-field outcomes had also not been given any substantial thought.

The HITB maintained that they were not in a position to change the Unit Standards already drafted and approved by the hospitality and tourism industry. Besides being short of time, this limited the contribution that the KZN Pilot could make to the standards generation process. The ‘vocational unit standards’ were therefore developed solely by the HITB. Additional unit standards, included as part of the learnership programme, were developed by the HITB in conjunction with the project consultants, following the format that had already been used by the HITB. It must be noted that SAQA structures (National Standards Bodies and Standards Generating Bodies) for the approval of new standards were also not in place. Even if they had been, the timetable for implementation of the Pilot Project could not easily have been reconciled with a SAQA standards approval timetable.

During the middle of 1997, SAQA published their requirements for the interim registration of *existing* qualifications only. This should have allowed for organizations such as ITBs to register their existing qualifications (not necessarily in line with all SAQA-requirements). It would also give these organizations a couple of years to re-engineer these qualifications and re-submit them for permanent registration. In line with this, the HITB submitted their existing qualification (Certificate in Hospitality Operations) to SAQA. Some of the content (unit standards) of the Pilot Project learnership programmes formed part of this submission. The new qualifications of the HITB, as described in their National Qualification structure, and part of the Project – namely Food and Drink Service level one and Food Preparation and Cooking level one – were not submitted, since they were seen as ‘new’ qualifications.

The learnership concept envisages the necessity to include other than just vocational unit standards. With the assistance of consultants attached to the pilot project a few additional standards were developed and included: (a) The Hospitality, Travel Tourism Industry; (b)

Cultural Awareness; (c) Work Seeking; (d) Basic Calculations; (e) Basic First Aid Procedures and (f) Small Business Start-up and Management.

The HITB called these standards for ‘L’ (learnership)-unit standards, and they were included both into the Food Preparation and Cooking as well as the Food and Drink Service Learnership. The new standards were taken to the HITB Regional Operational Board (ROB) in Kwazulu Natal for approval. The ROB consists of representatives of the formal economy (both larger and smaller employers), Government Departments, employee representatives, and provider representatives. It was considered an adequate local stakeholder forum. After ROB approval, the unit standards were submitted to the National Board of the HITB, which also gave its approval, which was restricted in that the standards could initially only be used for the purpose of the KZN Pilot. (Rambøll¹)

When the outlines for the KZN pilot learnerships were translated into learning programmes (implementation plans), two models presented themselves:

- A substantial block of institutional learning followed by extended experience at a workplace; or
- A number of smaller blocks of institutional learning interspersed with periods of workplace learning (‘alternating phases’).

The second option, which became known as the ‘sandwich model’, was finally agreed upon. The motivation for this second option was that it would enhance the learning experience by integrating formal learning with experience and learning in the workplace. It was certainly seen to require more work on the part of the ITBs, training providers and their staff, and workplace providers. For DoL it also constituted a challenge to find a suitable financing model. In the ‘sandwich’ model, a role is envisaged for the training provider also during the workplace phases. Under the Pilot Project, it was therefore decided to pay training providers during the institutional and workplace learning periods. This is an expense that is normally not considered under the Scheme of Training for Unemployed Persons.

Despite the additional load created by the alternating phases, content in the outlines was distributed across a number of institutional phases. For hospitality learnerships, workplace phases were planned to coincide with busy seasons, in order to give learners a proper taste of what working would be like. (Rambøll¹)

Hospitality workplace providers required that institutional training should relate to the tasks needing to be performed and that more time should be spent on practical work (and less on theory) before learners enter the workplace. Life skills were to be introduced gradually over the entire programme. (Rambøll¹)

The Pilot Project generally promoted the idea that a close learning link should be maintained between institutional learning and workplace experience. In fact the notion ‘workplace learning’ was applied, to signal the importance of the learning approach being designed as an integrated and interlinked model. To this end, learning design assumed that the instructors would have a role to play during workplace learning and that documentation (workbooks and worksheets) would also be developed. Furthermore, the learning concept operated with a ‘site contact’ at the workplace provider, who was responsible for management of the learners. What emerged from the pilot is that both the workplace experience *and* the workplace

learning are important, and ways should be found to reflect both of these in the learners' record of achievement. (Rambøll¹)

Workplace providers did, however, make some suggestions for improvement. They suggested that the first experience in the workplace should perhaps be during a quieter period when staff would have more time for learners. They said that learners should certainly have experience of the busy season, but preferably only towards the end of the learnership when they are better prepared to deal with the pressure. (Rambøll¹)

Closer cooperation between the training provider and workplace provider prior to the workplace experience could also mean that the learning programme could be adjusted (within certain agreed parameters) so that learners are prepared for the experiences that the workplace can offer. This would require that the learnership outline provide a range of acceptable electives, which would help the individual learning programme to be more sensitive to local context. (Rambøll¹)

The HITB argued that incorporation of entrepreneurship in the learnership context requires careful re-thinking, and suggested two possibilities:

- A learnership, which develops a thread of business understanding, that builds awareness of what to consider, what questions to ask, where to go for information, and what motivates people to try.
- A learnership that brushes up on a person's existing skills, but which focuses on the start-up of a small business. Such a learnership would be hands-on and highly practical in nature, with a strong mentorship component out in the field where people operate their businesses. (Rambøll¹)

Length of various learnerships was an issue where wildly differing opinions were offered. Those people who came from strong training backgrounds, ventured that the programmes were too long, while those more educationally inclined argued that they were much too short! At the end the following lengths were agreed:

- Food and Drink Service: eight months
- Food Preparation and Cooking: eleven months. (Rambøll¹)

Several important considerations regarding duration of a learnership have emerged from the KZN Pilot:

- A long learnership is expensive, which means that very few people can be afforded the opportunity
- A long learnership delivers/is able to deliver more than entry-level skills into the workplace, which is in keeping with the third requirement of the learnership definition in the Skills Development Bill (1997:6) - it must 'guarantee that the successful candidate is competent for the specified occupation'.
- A long learnership provides opportunity for integration of education and training, and can more readily fulfill the second requirement of the learnership definition in the Skill Development Bill (1997:6) - it must 'lead to a registered (SAQA) qualification'. (Rambøll¹)

The possibilities of finding employment after completion of a learnership of course depend very much on the contents of the learnership and the relationship between needs of industry and content of learnerships. The content of the learnerships should be in line with the industry needs.

Some of the workplace providers that hosted learners as part of the KZN Pilot, as well as learners, were interviewed as part of the review process to determine the relevance of the content of the learnerships. Some comments received indicate that the learnerships might not fully comply with the skills required by the industry. A number of limitations were observed, mainly:

- The learnerships were too narrow in their contents
- The learners had not learnt enough and did not have sufficient work experience
- Level of English proficiency was not sufficient
- Not enough focus on entrepreneurial skills. (Rambøll³)

Learners involved in the Empower-Ed Travel and Tourism Programme follow a modular programme, which is constructed as follows:

TRAVEL AND TOURISM PROGRAMME		
<i>Module Title</i>	<i>Unit</i>	<i>Unit title</i>
Module 1: Essential Skills	Unit 1	Interpersonal communication
	Unit 2	Working in a team
	Unit 3	Basic numeracy
	Unit 4	Time and stress management
	Unit 5	Solving problems and making decisions at work
	Unit 6	How a business works
Module 2: Introduction to Tourism	Unit 7	An overview of tourism
	Unit 8	Sectors and services of the travel & tourism industry
	Unit 9	Sectors and services of the hospitality industry
	Unit 10	The socio-economic value of tourism in South Africa
	Unit 11	Tourism development: the role of government and tourism organizations
Module 3: Tourism Geography	Unit 12	Using a map to give directions
	Unit 13	South African tourism geography
	Unit 14	South African tourist attractions
	Unit 15	Sports and recreation for tourists
	Unit 16	South African wildlife
	Unit 17	World tourism geography
Module 4: Quality Customer Service	Unit 18	Communicating and interacting with colleagues and customers
	Unit 19	
	Unit 20	The role of different cultures and values in tourism
	Unit 21	The needs and expectations of different types of travellers
	Unit 22	How to present a professional image How to deliver quality customer service
Module 5: Accessing and Processing Information	Unit 23	Gathering and processing information
	Unit 24	Technology used in the tourism industry
	Unit 25	The requirements for international travel
	Unit 26	Health and safety tips for tourists
	Unit 27	Planning and operating a tour
Module 6: Developing and Marketing Tourism	Unit 28	Issues of ecotourism and conservation
	Unit 29	Promoting community participation in tourism
	Unit 30	Marketing and selling tourism products
Module 7:	Unit 31	Job and career prospects in tourism

TRAVEL AND TOURISM PROGRAMME		
<i>Module Title</i>	<i>Unit</i>	<i>Unit title</i>
Career Skills and Opportunities	Unit 32	Developing a small tourism business
Module 8: Practical	Unit 33	Practical work experience

ASSESSMENT

GDE (1999) observes: 'The review and modernisation process will establish benchmarks for the three levels of the FET band.' One of the objectives of the GDE/GTZ learnership project was to develop a qualification and unit standards for the Hotel, Hospitality, and Tourism industry.

GTZ (1999) remarks:

... it must be made clear in advance which standards will be provided through structured learning, and which will be provided through structured work experience, and which will be provided through both. There should always be a schedule outlining the proposed learning programme beforehand.

In exploring assessment practices in pilot learnerships in this sector, we therefore expected to find clearly defined assessment criteria linked to unit standards, encompassing fundamental/ core/ elective/ and critical cross-field outcomes, as well as an open assessment process that addresses the sort of concerns outlined by the GDE at the beginning of this appendix.

A visit to the HITB website (www.hitb.co.za) reveals that National Qualifications (NQs) in the Hospitality industry have been formulated in the following functional areas:

- Front of house – receptionists, porters, reservationists, switchboard operators, payroll clerks, accounting staff, HR staff.
- Food preparation and cooking – executive chef, sous chef, cook, kitchen cleaner.
- Accommodation services – chambermaid, cleaner, laundry, worker, executive housekeeper.
- Food and drink services – waiter, head waiter barman winesteward, F & B manager.
- Training and development – assessors, site contacts, trainers and quality assurers.

National qualifications are offered at the following levels:

- *Level One – Basic.* Individuals at this level would be competent in a limited range of activities, most of which are repetitive and familiar.
- *Level Two – Intermediate.* Individuals at this level would be competent in a moderate range of activities that are established and familiar. They would work under general supervision and quality control, but with some responsibility for quantity and quality and possibly for guiding others.
- *Level Three – Advanced, Supervisory, and Training Development.* Individuals at this level would be competent in a broad range of varied work activities performed in a wide variety of contexts, some of which are complex and non-routine. There would be considerable responsibility for quantity and quality of output and for that of others.

- *Level Four – Management, Finance and Training Development.* Individuals at this level would be competent to manage departments. The work activities are broad and complex. Considerable emphasis is placed on management functions.
- *Traineeship.* This comprises a combination of various unit standards from all levels, including a cross section of functional areas. It is designed for individuals who require development through the levels to become managers of departments.

Leiendecker observes that, in line with the overall intentions of a learnership, assessment should be workplace-based so that learners are able to demonstrate their ability to transfer theory into practice in a legitimate context. Her understanding is that assessment procedures will be determined by a combination of SAQA guidelines, emanating from the registration of the provider with SAQA, and SETA guidelines emanating from the registration of the various ‘departments’ within the provider’s organization with the various applicable SETAs. She notes that it is possible that any learnership may need to meet requirements of more than one SETA. She further notes that, once SETAs have been established, they will need to draw up criteria for assessors and develop systems for assessment involving people outside of the provider’s own staff in order to allow for industry wide benchmarking.

The HITB’s assessment process, supporting its National Qualification System, was already in place for the KZN Pilot. This included the methodology and materials. Assessment was exclusively workplace-based and also based only on ‘vocational’ unit standards. Each specific outcome or element as described by the HITB has an individual assessment sheet, and assessment instructions appear on the right hand side of each sheet. Each learner also has his or her individual assessment sheet for each outcome to be assessed as part of a unit standard. The integration of assessment was planned to take place through assessing a number of unit standards simultaneously.

Training of assessors is outsourced, but the HITB remains responsible for final licensing of assessors. It is mainly workplace trainers/supervisors who are being trained and registered as assessors. In the case of the KZN Pilot, individual instructors had to be trained and registered as assessors, since the workplaces were not all secured before and also since not enough people at the workplaces could perform the assessment procedure.

The HITB also performed a monitoring function (external verifier) role by performing *ad hoc* assessment functions. The assessment methodology for ‘vocational unit standards’ concentrated mainly on actual on-the-job performance.

The so-called ‘L’-Unit Standards (generic skills) were mainly planned to be assessed at the training centre, or integrated with some other unit standard assessment at the workplace. The assessment material for the ‘L’-Unit Standards was developed by Project Consultants and the HITB.

Various assessment methods were used. The assessment material made provision for embedded knowledge to be assessed as part of specific outcomes. Range statements, indicating the circumstances under which the learners would have to prove competence, as well as assessment criteria (what must be performed by the learners) were also included. This further indicates which criteria are to be assessed by observation and finally which should be assessed through other methods such as questioning, observation, simulation or product sampling. The assessment sheets also make mention of what critical outcomes should be assessed as part of each individual outcome or element.

‘Vocational Unit Standards’, assessment procedures, methodology and materials were not really subject to discussion because the HITB had, as part of its unit standards upgrading process prior to the start-up of the Project, also upgraded the assessment criteria and methodology.

The instructors/assessors were of the general opinion that more attention should have been given to the embedded knowledge components and integrated assessment of these with more vocational components of the unit standards. Formulation of the questions asked was in such a way that assessors found it very difficult to determine whether learners really had a good working understanding of these aspects. Learners were in general positive about design, but mentioned that the formulation of some questions was not very clear. Up to three or four different questions had the same answers.

The HITB was of the opinion that assessment material developed by the project consultants was inadequate. One comment was that assessment was based more on written questions than on making use of a variety of assessment methods. This was especially the case in the Business Skills components. The HITB further indicated that it would have to assure quality, on a national basis, in all assessor guides in future, to ensure that quality conforms to national requirements. Training provided to assessors (instructors) did not include the ‘L’-Units. Uncertainty on the way these materials were developed impacted heavily on the quality of actual assessment process and procedures. Because the ‘L’-Units mainly addressed life skills, most instructors (assessors) felt that they did not really know how to assess them.

A point that clearly came out of the development process is the necessity to include both formative and summative assessment in design of the assessment process and assessment materials. It does not appear that the HITB made a clear distinction between the two. Summative assessment done by the HITB also seemed to be much more formalized than formative assessment. There still seems to be big uncertainty as to the status of each. In general, a more holistic approach to assessment has been recommended.

The original idea of the HITB, namely that assessors should be originating from workplace providers, seems to be very valuable, since it would create a situation where there might be more assessors and they would only concentrate on actual performance of tasks and the assessment process. This could then be fed back to the instructor in terms of further training required.

The HITB is monitoring, on an *ad hoc* basis, training of assessors. All except one of the instructors on the Pilot Project attended and successfully completed the assessor training programme and were therefore formally registered as assessors with the HITB. The cost of this training programme had to be covered by the providers, without being included in the course fee.

Feedback received from instructors indicated that they did not feel comfortable to assess all the different Unit Standards, particularly ‘non-vocational’ standards. They feel that assessor training should have included some guidelines on dealing with those as well. The assessor training should have been provided up-front, with the first couple of assessments being mentored by the HITB or the agency outsourced to provide the training. They also mentioned that they did not understand the methodology being introduced.

The ideal situation where instructors are to be registered as assessors would be that they should also demonstrate their industry experience. It could be made compulsory that an instructor should have at least one month per year of ongoing industry experience. The training provider and an employer could come to an arrangement where the instructor actually works for that employer for one month, at the cost of the training provider.

Finally, it is perceived as being crucial that the first couple of assessments by a newly registered assessor should be conducted under the supervision/guidance of a more experienced assessor.

Instructors had to communicate with both workplace providers and learners in order to find out what unit standards had been completed. This then allowed them to perform the actual assessment at the workplace. Where Unit Standards (or some specific outcomes as part of the unit standard) were not practised in the workplace, instructors had to make special provision to ensure that learners were afforded an opportunity to undergo assessment, either at the training centre during a realistic working environment simulation or at another employer.

In some instances, workplace providers formed part of the assessment team. During this period the learner's performance was also discussed with workplace providers. Learners were mainly assessed on an individual basis, and assessment was mainly conducted towards the end of the learnership programme. Instructors and participating employers were not really experienced in the process of assessment, especially not the integrated manner of assessment or the planning and organization of such a process.

It was further mentioned that a proper system to determine and verify the readiness of learners to be assessed should be worked out. The workbooks could, in an updated format, serve such a purpose. The workplace provider could sign off areas that he/ and the learner feel that the learner is ready to be assessed upon. The HITB paid about R400 per unit standard achieved to those employers qualifying for a rebate from their levy grant system.

Assessment should be conducted in a totally integrated and holistic manner. The HITB, through the project processes, might not have achieved this as ultimate desired, but the project provided a very good stepping stone from which to move forward. It did happen that 'theoretical' components were assessed at the training centre and more 'practical application' components were assessed at the workplace. However, it should be possible to assess many of the embedded knowledge aspects when actually performing the assessment at the workplace.

It became clear from the KZN Pilot that a proper appeal process should be in place to ensure that assessment is perceived as being fair and just. If a learner is of the opinion that the assessor was biased during assessment, and this contributed to the learner not being declared competent, there should be a process of appeal in place for learners to follow. (Rambøll¹)

LEARNING MATERIALS

Leiendecker believes that learnerships in the Hospitality and Tourism industry will largely be able to make use of existing materials. These materials have not yet been identified, however, as most proposed learnerships are still in initial planning stages.

Cornish observes that the school-based Travel and Tourism initiative was launched with very few materials and that, although some Grade Ten, Eleven, and Twelve textbooks have subsequently been published, these alone are an inadequate resource. It is therefore necessary to provide ongoing support and information to High School teachers. Empower-Ed have developed their own materials for the eight-week induction programme for unemployed adults and also for training of facilitators.

INSTITUTIONAL PRACTICE: TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGIES

In line with national imperatives, GTZ (1999) offers the following guiding principles for institutional practice:

Institutions involved in providing learnerships should bear in mind the main purposes of the system. These are to:

- Create a swift and efficient introduction to the world of work and to the 'community of expert practice';
- Assist the learner to move from a state of dependence to participation;
- Provide a sound basis of both technical competency as well as a range of supporting competencies to develop the capacity of the learner;
- Allow the learners to take responsibility and to reflect on their own learning and work as soon as possible; and
- Consider the learnership ultimately as preparation for further learning/ education, management or entrepreneurial activities.

It then provides some guiding characteristics for successful learnerships:

CHARACTERISTICS TO STRIVE FOR	CHARACTERISTICS TO AVOID
Focus on the work process – experiencing and contributing to the ultimate purpose and imperatives of the work.	Repetitive tasks and drills for learning's sake, distant goals (end-of-year-examinations, certificates).
Learning by performing, developing ability to do the work and understanding the underlying principles.	Undue emphasis on ability to talk about, describe theoretical concepts, principles, history – without a link to practical application.
See the expert in action, enjoy opportunities for observation and modelling.	Instruction-derived procedures, only peers as comparison.
Attention and interest of the expert. Additional recognition of coaches, master craftsmen.	Learner regarded as nuisance factor. Choice between 'getting the work done' and the need to support learners.
Increasing responsibility, accountability within the work context.	Extended state of dependence (on school, teacher, trainer).
Integration of formal learning and workplace learning.	Alienation and decontextualizing of formal learning.

Leiendecker observes that providers will need to ensure that learner support personnel in both structured learning and workplace environments are familiar with and able to implement the sorts of learning and teaching approaches advocated by government policy documents and that this will require appropriate training interventions, support, and monitoring. As noted in the discussion under assessment above, many practitioners involved in the KZN Pilot feel

insecure about new methodologies being promoted. Concerns raised by the KZN Pilot are discussed in the section entitled *Educators* below.

Cornish notes that the new curriculum for Travel and Tourism that was introduced into pilot schools was based on outcomes-based education approaches. This meant a double challenge for teachers in these schools. They needed to master the new material and source their own original material, but also needed to rethink their methodologies, which tended to be based on more traditional teaching methods. As is noted in the discussion on *Educators* below, teachers did not really receive adequate training and support to meet these challenges.

LEARNER SUPPORT

The DOE (1999²) identifies the following issues around learner support that need to be addressed in a well-functioning FET system, in which learnerships may play a part:

- Psychological services;
- Mentoring;
- Orientation;
- Psychiatric and legal support;
- Financial support;
- Exceptional learners with barriers to learning; and
- Appropriate provision for different learner needs.

Leiendecker suggests that responsibility for learner support would logically lie with the provider (as envisaged in the Skills Act), especially, as in the RTC case, where the provider is a college that presumably has both the expertise and facilities to offer such support. She notes that learnerships in the Hospitality and Tourism industry will probably involve many SMMEs, which are unlikely to have the time or expertise to offer ongoing learner support, especially prior to and after completion of the programme.

ARTICULATION

For the KZN Pilot Project, HITB certificates were issued by the HITB. These certificates indicated what unit standards were achieved towards the Certificate in Hospitality Operations (either in Food and Drink Service or Food Preparation and Cooking), if the number of Unit standards were not enough to constitute the full qualification. If the learner successfully completed all required unit standards for the qualification it was stated as such, listing the unit standards achieved, as well as additional unit standards achieved over and above the qualification.

The HITB head office issues certificates centrally for control purposes. It clearly states that certificates are issued in line with SAQA requirements for interim registration. There is currently no evidence to indicate the extent to which learners have tried to use these certificates to gain entrance to other training opportunities, and hence no information exists about portability of these qualifications.

Cornish points to a possible tension between technical colleges, as traditional providers of vocational courses, and pilot schools that are currently offering Travel and Tourism studies. This is because the extent to which technical colleges will recognize and give credit for school-based studies is not yet clear.

EDUCATORS

Leiendecker notes that currently the education and training system lacks appropriate capacity for quick implementation of learnership programmes. On the one hand, many college lecturers have limited, outdated, or no practical experience of the industries for which learnerships are envisaged. There is currently no system in place for these academic staff to gain relevant experience. On the other, workplace-based mentors have required industry knowledge and expertise, but may lack appropriate education and training practitioner skills. There is also currently no system in place for these workplace-based support personnel to gain these qualifications and experience. This currently means a differentiation in terms of remuneration, with workbase-placed support personnel earning considerably less than their academic counterparts providing the learnership programme.

Leiendecker also identifies a paradigm shift that she feels needs to take place amongst educators, from academically driven to industry driven provision. She suggests that, by and large, schools and school-based educators are not geared for vocational training, either in terms of timetabling and facilities or the experiences and training of educators and that this leads to inappropriate strategies of the kind: 'I just show them how to do it'. She argues that technical colleges offer a more appropriate base off which to offer vocational or workplace-oriented programmes – such as learnerships – whilst schools are better placed to offer more general life skills preparation.

She expresses the concern that the current Grade Twelve school offering of Travel and Tourism studies may lead to unrealistic expectations on the part of learners, given that there is no practical component to these programmes and that few, if any, of the educators offering these programmes will be able to engage with them in anything other than a theoretical, academic way.

Selection of instructors to work with the KZN Pilot learnerships was generally based on the fact that they were accredited with the BITB and HITB and/or, in a small number of cases, that sufficient documentation was provided to indicate that such accreditation could be obtained by participating in the project. The ITB accreditation systems were formulated around skills development, with few, if any, requirements placed on softer issues such as entrepreneurship, life orientation, numeracy, and literacy. Initially, it was planned to enrol the instructors into planning and design of the learning approach, but for different reasons this proved to be unsuccessful. Different instructor development sessions were held in both industries, and special training programmes were held to upgrade instructors as assessors. In particular, during the initial stages of learning delivery, the pilot project implemented a fairly substantial mentorship programme for all instructors, but specifically related to lesser-trained instructors in the building sector.

Although the focus of this research is on the Hospitality and Tourism sector, the summary below also includes lessons of experience from the pilot project for the building industry, as there is considerable overlap between the findings of the two sectors, and they both provide some warning indicators. The summary uses the term 'instructors' as used in the KZN Pilot reports. This term could refer to both workplace-based or college-based educators:

- Instructors generally require more training than was anticipated.
- Understanding how to provide NQF-based learning is a particular problem.
- An affirmative model may be needed in order to encourage new and emerging providers.
- Sometimes the workmanship of instructors themselves was not good.

- The integration of embedded knowledge was problematic.
- Some instructors had lower academic qualifications than learners, and this may have led to a narrow focus on trade-based skills only.
- Instructors did very little preparation for learning.
- Contracts, where they existed, did not allow for time to plan learning.
- Many instructors have little or no experience of planning learning.
- Few instructors are confident with new approaches.
- Instructors need further training in providing support in the workplace, including appropriate communication with workplace personnel.
- Instructors found it difficult to assess their learners formally.
- Instructors did not perform their counselling role well, and were generally not well supported by management to undertake the work.
- Some instructors do not understand the psychology of learners and therefore do not communicate with them in an appropriate way.
- Instructors require more training on language and communication issues.
- There was a tendency for some instructors to undermine the material provided by the project by teaching what they personally felt was the right thing to do.

The HITB mentioned that the following generic issues need to be covered in an instructor development programme: lesson plan preparation; learner counselling; time management; workplace liaison and monitoring; handling embedded knowledge and critical cross field outcomes; and learner centred/interactive learning delivery and facilitation methods. The HITB suggested that a learnership-like (on-the-job instructor) programme for instructors would be preferred.

Training providers and their instructors battled in particular with the following: learner counselling and management; monitoring of learners in the workplace; dealing with SWE managers; planning and scheduling of training and assessment; training and assessing 'soft skills' areas like work readiness and the content of the HITB L-units; and being able to draw up a good learning programme from unit standards. The HITB points out that one should actively guard against training providers continuing to offer traditional courses in a traditional manner.

SWE providers said that there had generally been a good working relationship at the personal level, but lack of clear understanding about roles and responsibilities, procedures, allowances, workbooks, and miscommunication got the SWE programme off to a difficult start. Learners should also, from the outset, be more thoroughly briefed about the expectations of industry, and that of being punctual in particular. (Rambøll¹).

When the school-based Travel and Tourism Pilot Project was begun in 1997, there was no budget provision for training educators. However, the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism saw the Pilot Project as an important contribution to raising consciousness regarding the importance of the industry. Thus, they provided funding for a five-day workshop for educators teaching the programme in February/March 1998. Three of the five days were spent on exploring appropriate OBE methodologies to teach the subject, while two days involved industry site visits and talks presented by industry guest speakers.

No ongoing support has been provided in the form of further training, but participating schools receive a regular newsletter, as well as information about activities in 'Tourism Month', and are invited to take part in an annual competition in which schools can win prizes

like computers for submitting well-thought out proposals for tourism-related SMMEs that could be started in their areas. This programme involves an overseas trip, as well as industry placements for six to nine months to gain firsthand experience. Cornish concedes that this is probably inadequate support. She notes the need for further training and support of school- and college-based educators, as well as for mentor skills training for workplace-based educators. Empower-Ed has also established a Travel and Tourism networking system called T10. They have produced a resource directory to which educators can subscribe for an annual fee. The directory is regularly updated. It contains industry information, contacts and statistics, and a growing set of exemplars of good practice, as well as guidelines on issues such as OBE. She also points to collaboration between the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DOEAT), the Department of Education, the THETA, and Empower-Ed to offer a SAQA-recognized *National Certificate in Education and Training Development Practice: Occupationally Directed Learning* at NQF Level 5.

Cornish notes, however, that a far more comprehensive intervention is required to empower educators in both schools and workplaces to facilitate learning effectively, especially in terms of new methodologies such as use of portfolios. Empower-Ed's own facilitator training programme is built around the demonstrable achievement of outcomes in seven areas:

- Module 1: An overview of Outcomes Based Education (OBE) and the National Qualifications Framework (NQF)
- Module 2: Identifying how the Travel & Tourism Programme relates to the NQF and OBE
- Module 3: Managing the Training Programme
- Module 4: Accommodating different learners in a training programme
- Module 5: Applying effective facilitation skills
- Module 6: Assessment techniques in a training programme
- Module 7: Delivering an experiential lesson (using the Travel & Tourism Programme Learning Materials).

MANAGEMENT

The Skills Act, 1998 identifies the following functions of a Sectoral Education and Training Authority (SETA):

- (1) A SETA must –
 - (a) develop a sector skills plan within the framework of the national skills development strategy;
 - (b) implement its sector plan by –
 - (i) establishing learnerships;
 - (ii) approving workplace skills plans;
 - (iii) allocating grants in the prescribed manner to employers, education and training providers and workers; and
 - (iv) monitoring education and training in the sector;
 - (c) promote learnerships by –
 - (i) identifying workplaces for practical work experience;
 - (ii) supporting the development of learning materials;
 - (iii) improving the facilitation of learning; and
 - (iv) assisting in the conclusion of learnership agreements;
 - (d) register learnership agreements;
 - (e) within a week from its first establishment, apply to the South African Qualifications Authority for accreditation as a body contemplated in section 5(1)(a)(ii)(bb) and must, within 18 months from the date of that application, be so accredited;
 - (f) collect and disburse the skills development levies in its sector;

- (g) liaise with the National Skills Authority on –
 - (i) the national skills development policy;
 - (ii) the national skills development strategy; and
 - (iii) its sector skills plan;
- (h) report to the Director-General on –
 - (i) its income and expenditure; and
 - (ii) the implementation of its sector skills plan;
- (i) liaise with the employment services of the Department and any education body established under any law regulating education in the Republic to improve information –
 - (i) about employment opportunities; and
 - (ii) between education and training providers and the labour market;
- (j) appoint staff necessary for the performance of its functions; and
- (k) perform any other duties imposed by this Act or consistent with the purposes of this Act.

It is clear from the above that the Act sees the establishment, registration and monitoring of a learnership as the responsibility of a SETA. A single coordinating body is of particular importance in managing a learnership, since a learnership, by its very nature, involves many role players who need to collaborate in terms of a learnership agreement. A learnership agreement is defined by the Skills Act, 1998, as follows:

- (1) For the purposes of this Chapter, a 'learnership agreement' means an agreement entered into for a specified period between –
 - (a) a learner;
 - (b) an employer or group of employers (in this section referred to as 'the employer'); and
 - (c) a training provider accredited by a body contemplated in section 5(1)(a) (ii) (bb) of the South African Qualifications Authority Act or group of such training providers.
- (2) The terms of a learnership agreement must oblige –
 - (a) the employer to –
 - (i) employ the learner for the period specified in the agreement;
 - (ii) provide the learner with the specified practical work experience; and
 - (iii) release the learner to attend the education and training specified in the agreement;
 - (b) the learner to –
 - (i) work for the employer; and
 - (ii) attend the specified education and training; and
 - (c) the training provider to provide –
 - (i) the education and training specified in the agreement;
 - (ii) the learner support specified in the agreement.

James Parker, a consultant to the HITB in general and to the Tourism learnership Project (TLP) in particular, notes that HITB experience has been that it is very difficult and time-consuming to establish and monitor these arrangements, even in countries that have many years of experience of similar interventions. It may well be more manageable for a SETA to enter into agreements with providers and for providers to enter into separate agreements with a smaller number of learners and relevant employers. The SETA would thus play a monitoring role, rather than attempting to actively manage multiple learnership agreements.

The SETA also needs to play a key role in establishing a supportive enabling environment for establishment of learnerships. An example of how such a role could be played out is the Business Trust Tourism Learnership Project (TLP), which was officially launched on 1st February, 2000, with the Ministers of Labour and Tourism and Environmental Affairs in attendance.

Over the next four years, the TLP aims to deliver 5,000 learnerships among the unemployed and 10,000 among the employed in order to support anticipated expansion of the tourist industry. The TLP has three core objectives:

- To accelerate the development of national qualifications for all primary sub-sectors within the tourism sector. It is estimated that the project will cut the time to develop these qualifications by up to 10 years.
- To increase the availability of national qualifications, which it is hoped will trigger increased investment in training by employers in the sector because they will have clearly articulated standards of competence against which to measure the impact of training. This will assist employers in accessing levy grants in terms of the Skills Development Act.
- Develop systems, and support the training of 5000 unemployed people through learnerships that provide them with the skills necessary to find jobs in a growing job market. (*Training Matters*, Feb. 2000)

The TLP will be phased in over a period of four years in a manner that is synchronized with expected growth of jobs in the sector.

- *Phase 1: (± 18 months from February 2000)*
Priority will be given to the design, development and accreditation of qualifications across the tourism sector.
- *Phase 2: (2-3 years)*
During phase 2, part of which will run in parallel with phase 1, established firms in the industry will upgrade the skills of their employees to nationally accredited qualifications.
- *Phase 3: (3-4 years)*
Here the focus will move to the unemployed, where the bulk of the investment will go into providing learnerships as a bridge into employment or self-employment in the tourism sector. (Parker/ *Training Matters*)

Parker points out that, whilst it is quite easy to gain support for learnerships in principle from industry leaders, it requires considerably more lobbying to win over middle managers, who will be responsible for managing structured workplace experiences in practice. In fact, he anticipates that the TLP will need to engage in this lobbying process for the next 18 months. The need for intensive lobbying and consultation with the people most directly affected was endorsed by Leiendecker and Cornish, and is a clear lesson of experience from the KZN Pilot Project.

Leiendecker points out that, since SETAs were not due to be launched until 1st April, 2000, it was only possible to run pilot projects, as certification implies both SAQA and SETA approval. Planning for a learnership is also very time-consuming. Approximately ten months have been required for consultation with industry representatives, the HITB, and the Gauteng business development planners to draw up a proposal for the CEFCT pilot at Roodepoort.

The following action plan, supplied by Leiendecker, for the CEFCT pilot, which is due to be implemented in June 2000, illustrates the range of activities required in the planning stages in order to set up a learnership:

- Needs analysis to determine the area, level of learners and commitment of industry.
- Meeting/workshop with relevant industry partners to:
 - Share information about the project and project planning;[
 - Select industry partners for one specific learnership.
- Workshop with industry partners on learnership programme design: which standards to use, time frame, when, how long at college or in workplace.
- Unit standard writing/design of new qualification (with help from HITB/SETA) and registration of unit standards and NQ with SGB and SAQA.

- Registration and accreditation process of college and workplaces.
- Preparation/writing/sourcing of training/teaching/learning material.
- Workshop on selection/recruitment.
- Information workshop for potential learners/parents.
- Selection/enrolment of learners with industry.
- Kick-off meeting for learnership.

Prior to and during implementation of this action plan, it was necessary to liaise with the following authorities:

- Gauteng Department of Education;
- National Department of Education;
- Department of Labour;
- Department of Tourism and Environmental Affairs;
- SATOUR;
- GTZ (German technical cooperation);
- Southern African Association for Conference Industry;
- Hospitality Industry Training Board;
- Travel Education Training Authority of South Africa;
- Tourism and Hospitality Education and Training Authority; and
- South African Qualifications Authority.

The following educator training needs were identified as pre-requisites for successful implementation:

- Training of lecturers on OBE, learnership methodology, and organization of the credit system;
- Training of industry partners and their staff on OBE, learnership methodology, and organization of the credit system; and
- Training practitioners in industry and college to meet minimum ETD requirements.

Leiendecker notes that the SETA is necessary to provide a coordinating role and to guard against unnecessary duplication, citing, as an example, a recent suggestion to form an ABET SGB for Tourism, which she feels will simply duplicate work that has already been done.

The wide-ranging consultation and involvement of industry and other stakeholders at every stage that Leiendecker identifies above may seem extraordinarily time-consuming. However, the need for this broad consultative, participatory process is a clear lesson of experience emerging from the KZN Pilot. Many problems described in the final report can be repeatedly traced back to misunderstandings, wrong assumptions, and lack of clarity emanating from the planning stages. However, it is necessary to balance the need for this consultation against the need to be as responsive as possible. As Rambøll¹ observes:

The SAQA currently incur a time lack of at least 6 months before the detailed design of a learnership implementation programme can commence. Assuming a learnership learning period of about 10-12 months, the response time would be in the range of 1½ years before 'graduates' of the programme would be available to the labour market. By this time, the risk is clearly there that an identified demand would no longer be there. This issue has a clear link to the application of a definition of demand led learnerships.

Finding appropriate workplaces has proved to be particularly time-consuming, and the SWEs require constant monitoring even once the learnership is in operation. As an illustration of the logistical challenge involved, more than 800 employers had to be contacted to secure workplaces for 227 learners within the two sectors in the KZN Pilot. Many of the workplaces eventually found did not undertake sufficient different work processes to reinforce all the

vocational skills learned in the training centre, and it was difficult in some instances to match training with the actual cycle of events in the respective industries. In addition, of the 132 workplaces originally identified for the Hospitality Learnerships, 80 proved unsuitable in practice and alternatives had to be found. (Rambøll¹)

Experiences from the Hospitality Sector Learnerships in terms of training-provider management-related issues are summarized by Rambøll¹ as follows:

- Management provided no real support to the instructors. Few managers actually took the initiative to subscribe to hospitality trade magazines and other resource materials that could be used by their instructors.
- The HITB noticed that there was no common understanding amongst training providers about how the industry actually looked and operated and that they were therefore differently positioned to guide learners generally.
- With the exception of two, HITB was satisfied with the management commitment of all participating training providers.
- The HITB felt that management at one training provider purposely tried to avoid dialogue and monitoring. Throughout, this institution seemed to apply its own approach.
- Some providers experienced problems with non-Zulu speaking staff members, leading to communication problems (it should, however be mentioned that most of the other learners, who were guided by non-Zulu speaking people did not have the same problem).
- Some SWE providers claimed that they would have liked to have a look at the content and structure of the learnership at a much earlier stage. This would have given them the opportunity to enter into a debate and also set realistic expectations for the learners.

Some general issues also emerge in terms of the management of SWEs:

- It is important to have a strong *working relationship* between the training provider's instructor and the workplace supervisor(s) directly involved with learners, as well as the official 'site contact,' (if not the same person) and that all fully understand their roles in the learnership process. This relationship, along with other coordinating mechanisms (for example, workbooks) should ensure that the entire scope of the learnership is adequately covered during successive phases of the learnership and protects learners from being given tasks for which they have not been trained and cannot cope. It is also suggested that the training provider's instructor be the arbiter of what tasks are reasonable and valid for learners to perform at the workplace.
- A complication is that higher levels of management from both organizations may have been involved in the initial *negotiation of the learnership* and that the agreements might not have been communicated down to implementing staff. It is therefore suggested that a deliberate attempt to involve implementing staff be made early in the planning cycle or a specific strategy be developed to induct them into the process before implementation commences. The training provider's instructor may therefore have to develop dual or multiple relationships with the official 'site contact' and one or more supervisory level staff.
- Where *workplace supervisors* lack the ability or willingness to provide learners with the necessary workplace coaching and experience, the training provider's instructor may have to provide additional direct support to the learners, at the workplace if possible (it should also be recognized that good workplace supervisors can supplement weak training providers). In cases where workplaces cannot offer all the necessary skills because of

operational limitations, alternative workplaces, which can provide these skills, should be sought for subsequent phases.

- Where workplaces afford learners the opportunity to acquire *additional skills* and the necessary assessment capacity exists, credit should be awarded to learners as electives. It is also suggested that a brief description of each workplace experience be recorded on a learnership certificate in addition to any credits or qualification awarded.

One learnership requirement in legislation is to have a Learnership Agreement signed and registered with the relevant SETA. There is still a debate as to whether the agreement should be between an employer and a learner or a tripartite agreement, which also includes the training provider.

The HITB's agreement is between the employer and the training provider. It is based on their old in-service agreement, as well as the new Basic Conditions of Employment Act and National Qualification project requirements. They were also supposed to sign fixed term employment contracts for structured workplace experience, as this would ensure that learners were covered by workmen's compensation in the event of injury. Many employers had no regard for the agreements, even if they had signed them and few signed fixed term contracts. There seem to be few ways to deal with wayward employers. The Centre for Conciliation, Mediation, and Arbitration (CCMA) might be a route. In the project, it was either tolerated with a bit of extra monitoring or a learner was removed completely and placed with a new employer. Often there were not enough suitable alternative workplaces, which made it very difficult to remove the learner.

As mentioned previously, none of the building industry workplace providers were willing to sign the Learnership Agreement, and many were unwilling to pay any learners' allowance.

ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

What is the minimum acceptable obligation to protect the learners' interests without discouraging employers from offering structured workplace experience? Perhaps a simple temporary *Learnership Workplace Agreement* between learner and workplace would suffice, covering basic conditions, for example working/learning hours, payment amount and frequency, and other benefits (copy to SETA and training provider).

A *Learnership Training Contract* might be set up between the SETA (or DoL if there is no SETA) and the training provider, allowing for the training provider to support several different, unspecified, structured workplace providers.

A *Learner's Agreement* would also be required between the learner and the SETA (or DoL) including details of any learner's allowances and how these shall be paid (copy to training provider for administration, if applicable).

When negotiating structured workplaces, the SETA or training provider (as the agent of the SETA) must provide a copy of the Learner's Agreement to the workplace to ensure that allowances are not duplicated and all parties are clear on who is responsible for what (perhaps the Learner's Agreement should refer to the Learnership Workplace Agreement in order to tie the two together).

Rambøll¹ note that many SETAs will be established on the basis of the existing Industrial Training Boards and hence 'may not, from the outset, be sufficiently resourced or inclined to identify cross-sector and SMME-based occupational fields that could offer financially viable work opportunities.' This is a serious concern because current DOL research points to growth in the SMME and informal sector to provide new employment opportunities rather than the expansion of existing, businesses.

Rambøll¹ also note the reluctance of industry stakeholders to enter into formal learnership contracts and to pay a learner's allowance. They suggest that simpler and more flexible arrangements may need to be made. Cornish confirms the importance of involving key stakeholders at every stage of the process in order to reflect a common understanding of purposes and roles. This holds true from the initial needs analysis stage right through to the, possible, final assessment of learners, which needs to reflect the multiple inputs of the various stakeholders. She points to the need for continuous monitoring of workplace and college-based experiences to ensure that each reinforces the lessons gained from the other.

It is interesting to note that the proposed Tourism and Hospitality SETA (THETA) has recently needed to incorporate a new sub-sector, sports. This follows the dissolution of SETA 24, which covered sports, art, culture, and entertainment. Consequently the THETA will now comprise four sub-sectors: hospitality, travel and tourism, gaming and lotteries, and sport (*Training Matters*, February 2000).

Mommen points out that the role of government in provision of learnerships has yet to be clarified. He suggests that government will have a key role to play in creating an 'enabling environment'. He points to the synergy between DoL concerns as expressed in the Skills Act and DoE plans for FET as expressed in the white paper. Currently DoE and DoL are involved in workshops to discuss implementation of learnerships. Documentation emanating from this process will probably be available only from June/July, 2000. He suggests the possibility of guidelines for role players and for establishment of learnerships (i.e. identifying the factors that need to be in place for a learnership to be a viable proposition). He also suggests the possibility of establishing task teams to tackle particular problem areas. Two such areas that emerge clearly from the experiences of the Hospitality and Tourism sector are the need to streamline SAQA registration processes and the need to overcome some employers' reluctance to enter into formal contracts for Structured Workplace Experiences and to pay a learners' allowance.

Mommen points out that, in the early stages, considerable investment is likely to go into setting up structures and processes, for example on assessment. He notes the need to be able to separate out start-up costs from running costs. He points to the need for existing education institutions to realign their curricula to meet the needs of the country and that, as providers in learnership type arrangements, such institutions would eventually be able to bring funds into their institutions. He notes the need for greater inter-provincial coordination as well as coordination between various SETAs. Mommen also notes a number of recent initiatives in which industry stakeholders have developed training interventions to meet particular industry needs, but have then offered to train an additional number of people on the basis of reimbursement of the additional costs only.

ADMINISTRATION SYSTEMS

Leiendecker observes that a learnership is designed to be a very flexible form of delivery, bound together by learnership agreements but responding to different needs in different ways with different role players.

In general, however, she suggests that current administrative systems are not designed to be this flexible, and so there is often a tension between the requirement to respond to a need quickly and the often constraining administrative processes and procedures that were designed for a completely different model of delivery. This needs to be managed. She gives delays in appointing appropriate staff as an example of an area in which such tension often exists.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

SAQA and the various SETAs clearly have a key role to play in quality assurance processes. However, with both SAQA and the SETAs being fairly new entities, considerable investment is still required in establishing suitable quality control processes and procedures.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Effective strategic planning calls for careful coordination of the activities of national and provincial governing bodies, SETAs, providers and other stakeholders, in line with provincial and national strategic development plans. It is not clear how this coordination will happen.

COMMUNICATION

In its newsletter, *Training Matters*, the HITB notes that stakeholder participation is vital to the success of the TLP in particular and development and implementation of learnerships in general. It notes that, whilst several important principles underpin the TLP, such as capacity building, transparency and meaningful participation, none of these will be realized without strong stakeholder involvement. These stakeholders include employers, training providers and labour representatives. Since not all of these stakeholders will be able to be involved in all activities at all times, the HITB has identified effective communication as a top priority.

It has identified the following elements to promote open communication:

- Two dedicated contact people who have been appointed to answer queries about the TLP, through the Call Centre at 0860 100 221.
- A TLP section on the HITB website: www.hitb.co.za
- *Training Matters*, which has a circulation of more than 25 000 and will carry regular updates on the project
- Trade publications covering the tourism industry, which will be asked to carry information about the project from time to time.

The HITB further notes that SAQA bases NQF participation on six categories of stakeholder:

- The state;
- Organized employees;
- Organized employers;

- Providers of education and training;
- Critical interest groups; and
- The community.

The TLP intends to use the same categories and to ensure that key national interest groups in all of these categories are consulted, informed and able to participate in every stage of the project. At all points, sub-sector representation will be top of the participation agenda. The KZN Pilot Project and the Empower-Ed Pilot affirm the importance of ongoing and open communication between stakeholders. The KZN Pilot introduces the added challenge of how to establish and maintain communications with potential unemployed learners in rural communities.

MARKETING AND PUBLICITY

The KZN Pilot indicates clearly the need for creative ways of marketing learnerships to unemployed, people from disadvantaged communities and people in rural areas, where easy access to telephones, transport and traditional media cannot be assumed.

COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

One goal of *The Skills Act, 1998* is to encourage ‘partnerships between the public and private sectors of the economy to provide education and training in and for the workplace’. Realization of this goal is an inherent feature of a functioning learnership.

It is very clear, from the KZN Pilot in particular, that this collaboration needs to begin from needs analysis onwards and that agreements regarding Structured Workplace Experiences and relations between providers and employers need to be concluded *before* potential learners are enrolled.

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

The views expressed in this section are those of the researcher, and should not be construed as necessarily reflecting those of anybody interviewed in the course of this research.

In principle, it is difficult to fault the concept of learnerships since they appear to integrate theory and practice and emphasize relevant, empowering learning, both concepts that have underpinned discussion in education and training for at least the past six years. However, without intensive training and support of educators involved in these programmes, there is a clear danger that traditional practices will simply continue under new names.

Moreover, the amount of consultation involved in planning and implementation – which are essential but extremely costly and time-consuming – suggests that criteria need to be developed for the viability of establishing a learnership. For example, it is not clear that the learnership is a viable model for interventions requiring an extremely quick response to a short-term need. It also does not seem to offer the possibility for the sort of intervention that is aimed at a very small target audience (the planning and development cost alone per learner would be exorbitant). Finally, it does not seem to be viable for a very large audience, as only a limited number of SWEs could be negotiated at any one time.

Pilot projects that have been or are being implemented or planned to date suggest that, in general, employers do not feel that the costs they will incur in supporting a learnership will be recouped from the Skills Levy Fund. Neither do they see their involvement as an investment for the future. This is an issue that will need to be resolved.

Administrative systems in general, and the lengthy SAQA registration process in particular, do not seem sufficiently conducive to creating an enabling environment that will allow for the flexibility suggested by learnerships in particular, and by proposed FET practices in general.

Learnerships appear to be an excellent way to upgrade the qualifications of those already employed, but seem to offer limited possibilities for opening employment opportunities for those currently *not* employed. There is an irony in the fact that projections for employment growth in the future see growth happening in the SMME sector, when SMMEs are, almost by definition, too small to easily support a learnership programme.

Although not necessarily limited to learnership-type interventions, the possibility of employers opening up training opportunities to the unemployed at cost (as opposed to profit) as an extension of their training activities and this cost being met from the NSL Fund seems worth exploring further.

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Although many unit standards and national qualifications have been posted, the fact that SETAs have not yet been formed, by definition precludes the possibility of establishing fully-functioning learnerships. However, several pilot projects are in operation or in preliminary planning stages. The SETA for the sector Travel, Tourism, Hospitality, and Sports, for example, was on track, when this research was completed, for formal launch on 1st April, 2000.
2. Learnerships in the Tourism sector will focus on people already employed in the industry for the next twelve months. Focus will shift to the unemployed over the following two to three years.
3. Learnerships in the Hospitality industry lend themselves to a focus on the unemployed and SMMEs from the start.
4. Industry partners need to be involved throughout the process of establishing a learnership, from the needs analysis through to the selection of learners.
5. It is likely that learnerships will begin with a greater college-based orientation, and will move towards a greater workplace orientation as the learnership progresses.
6. Testing the aptitude of learners seems a more valuable guide to potential success than a potential learner's schooling background.
7. A comprehensive, well-balanced, triangulated selection process is required to identify learners with potential for a particular partnership, particularly when dealing with entry-level candidates.
8. The selection process requires a wide pool of candidates in order to select those with greatest aptitude, perhaps as many as eight times the number of candidates required.
9. The nature of SWEs needs clarity: are learners workers (working under employment like conditions and times) or more traditional learners (attending under school like conditions and times)?

10. In establishing learnership agreements, providers are likely to give preference to employers who can offer learners a variety of work experiences in a single workplace, rather than using a model involving multiple employers and multiple workplaces.
11. Potential exists for conflict of interests between the requirements that learnerships have to meet where more than one SETA or ETQA may be involved.
12. Training of competent assessors is a priority need.
13. A considerable body of Learner Support Materials (LSMs) exist for this sector, and these can be adapted to suit new needs.
14. It seems likely that providers will carry primary responsibility for ensuring adequate support for their learners.
15. In general, educators involved in providing learnerships will require training and support in suitable ETD practices, outcomes-based education strategies, and interpretation of a credit system.
16. College-based educators will need opportunities to update/extend their industry knowledge and experience so they can contextualize theory.
17. Workplace-based educators will need support in obtaining recognized ETD training.
18. Disparities in remuneration of college- and workplace-based educators will need to be resolved.
19. It is unlikely that a SETA will have sufficient capacity to be involved in all learnership arrangements in the sector. It seems more practical for providers to enter into agreements with learners and employers and for the SETA to enter into agreements with providers and play a monitoring role.
20. Whilst the captains of the industry view the concept of learnerships favourably, middle- and lower-level managers, who will actually be responsible for managing the structured workplace experiences, require more persuasion and support. SETAs and providers have a crucial but time-consuming marketing and lobbying role to play before a new learnership can be established. This may require six to eighteen months of advance preparation.
21. Key stages in the development of a learnership would seem to include, but not be limited to:
 - Needs analysis;
 - Identification of and consultation with potential partners;
 - Formalization of contractual agreements between stakeholders;
 - Development and registration of a National Qualification based on industry and nationally agreed unit standards;
 - Development of assessment procedures;
 - Development of a learning programme including SWE agreements;
 - Selection/preparation of suitable LSMs; and
 - Development of a process for recruiting and assessing potential learners.
22. Administrative systems generally need to be made more flexible, supportive, and responsive to the flexibility inherent in the concept of a learnership.
23. Continuous, two-way communication between stakeholders is a prerequisite for a successful learnership, and should be based on the following categories:
 - the state
 - organized employees
 - organized employers
 - providers of education and training
 - critical interest groups, and
 - the community.

BROAD THEMES EMERGING

1. Innovation is happening. The KZN Pilot in particular indicates a number of areas in which the learnership as a mode of educational delivery represents a move away from traditional practices and the challenges this represents. The Empower-Ed TT programme indicates that it *is* possible to marry college-based training and workplace-based experience in a fairly cost-effective way, provided sufficient planning has taken place to ensure that all stakeholders are aware of their various obligations.
2. Transformation is happening, but slowly. Sixty-five public schools are currently offering a more vocationally-oriented programme in the form of travel and tourism studies. Despite numerous difficulties, the KZN Pilot managed to get 217 unemployed learners from previously disadvantaged communities successfully through a learnership type programme. However, for learnerships to become a viable mode of delivery to significant numbers of learners, a more enabling environment needs to be created, significant lobbying among stakeholders is required and practitioners require intensive training in the new approaches and how to assess progress.
3. Conceptualization and alignment with FET is more problematic. There is considerable synergy between the Department of Labour's aims, as expressed in The Skills Act and the DOE's White Paper on FET. However, the Travel and Tourism programme in schools running parallel with the Empower-Ed learnership type programme for unemployed adults indicates that, currently, environmental conditions still favour separation of theory and practice. Potential exists for considerable confusion and alienation of favourably-inclined employers, unless there is careful coordination between DOL/SETA-driven and DOE/provider-driven attempts to secure varying levels of workplace experience.
4. Considerable time is needed for consultation and ongoing communication with relevant stakeholders, both during planning and implementation phases. It is possible that consultation could become less time-consuming as relationships and procedures are established, however the TLP, for example, envisages an 18-month long consultation process to provide an enabling environment for the establishment of learnerships in the Tourism industry.
5. *Partnerships* are an inherent aspect of learnership design. However, there is reluctance on the part of many employers to enter into formal learnership agreements, largely, it seems, because of the cost implications of paying learnership allowances and the possible loss of productivity of employees now engaged in supporting learners. It is not clear whether it will be possible to recoup actual costs from the Skills Levy Fund.