

Challenges in Adult Education in the Rural Areas of Limpopo Province in South Africa

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ABSTRACT Limpopo has been identified as a province in South Africa characterized by high levels of illiteracy that cause unemployment and poverty. However, many adults do not participate in the Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) programs, while others drop out in high numbers. This study, therefore, investigated the challenges that are faced with regard to adult education in the rural areas of Limpopo. A phenomenological research design was followed. Interviews were conducted and focus group discussions were held with 30 educators and 60 adult learners. The findings revealed that situational, institutional, dispositional and informational factors inhibited the learners' participation. Situational factors were related to financial constraints, institutional factors pointed to the location of the classes, irrelevant program content, behaviorist teaching methods and a lack of teaching resources, dispositional constraints included the fact that the learners did not feel respected as adults, lacked confidence, experienced guilt over domestic responsibilities that suffered while they attended classes, and traditional views about gender roles, and informational factors pointed to a lack of information about ABET classes. In the end, recommendations are made for improvement.