
By

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Research Report submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy to the School of Education, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

SUPERVISOR: PROF RAY BASSON
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ABSTRACT

This study is a qualitative evaluation of the impact of the Certificate for Distance Education Practitioners, a collaborative staff development programme for open and distance learning practitioners in the five southern African countries of Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa and Swaziland. It aims to inform the stakeholders of this programme on its impact and to add to the limited research on open and distance learning in Africa. It is the first southern African systematic evaluation of the impact of a staff development collaboration programme delivered through open and distance learning methods. The study evaluates the impact of the programme on the 1997 - 2000 learners and on the organisations where these learners worked. Parlett and Hamilton’s (1975) illuminative evaluation methods were combined with McAnany’s (1975) five criteria impact evaluation model to produce an expanded and innovative design of programme impact evaluation. Postal questionnaires and interviews provided biographical data and direct views of the programme’s participants. Progressive focusing illuminated the key issues emerging from the programme’s delivery and McAnany’s (1975) evaluation criteria were used to analyse and interpret the programme’s impact. One of the key findings from this study is that the conceptions informing the delivery of the Certificate for Distance Education Practitioners are based on notions of openness, flexibility, learner-centredness and collaboration and that the programme’s implementation endeavoured, in varying degrees, to match these notions. The second finding is that the participants regarded the programme highly as a sound introduction to open and distance learning approaches and practices and felt it contributed to the application of learner-centred ideas in their organisations. However, the programme’s low enrolment numbers and progressively declining throughput rates contradicted this high regard and did not match the providers’ original projections. Lack of resources impacted negatively on participants’ application of open and distance learning approaches while organisations’ implementation of new policies and mergers created job insecurity for some participants. As in Perraton and Lentell (2004) other key issues emerging from this study include the absence of enabling staff development policies, lack of recognition, currency and/or reward after completion of the programme, limited marketing, level and national focus of the programme, and management and administration issues. These findings suggest that it is possible to deliver a regional collaboration staff development programme through open and distance methods but that the issues raised in this study need to be addressed to make such programmes sustainable, effective and financially viable.

Key words: open and distance learning, staff development, collaboration, policy and implementation, illuminative evaluation, McAnany’s evaluation criteria: effort, performance, adequacy, efficiency, process.
I hereby declare that *Open and distance learning staff development: an impact evaluation of a Southern African collaboration programme* is my own unaided work and that all the sources I have used or quoted from have been acknowledged by way of a complete list of reference. This thesis has not been submitted for a degree at any other university.

EVELYN PULANE NONYONGO

DATE: 11 October 2007

PLACE: JOHANNESBURG
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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<td>ABEP</td>
<td>Adult Basic Education Project</td>
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<td>ABET</td>
<td>Adult Basic Education and Training</td>
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<td>ADEA</td>
<td>Association for the Development of Education in Africa</td>
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<td>BOCODOL</td>
<td>Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning</td>
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<td>CCE</td>
<td>Centre for Continuing Education</td>
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<td>CD</td>
<td>Compact Disc</td>
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<td>CDE</td>
<td>Centre of Distance Education</td>
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<td>CDL</td>
<td>Centre for Distance Learning</td>
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<td>CDEP</td>
<td>Certificate for Distance Education Practitioners</td>
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<td>CEMSA</td>
<td>Centre for Education Media of Southern Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>CES</td>
<td>Centre for External Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>CESAG</td>
<td>Centre Africain d’Etudes Superieures en Gestion, African Centre for Higher Management Studies</td>
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<td>CIFFAD</td>
<td>Consortium International Francophone de Formation a Distance, A Consortium of Distance Education in French-Speaking Countries.</td>
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<tr>
<td>COL</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>COLL</td>
<td>Centre for Open and Lifelong Learning</td>
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<td>DAE</td>
<td>Department of Adult Education</td>
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<td>DE</td>
<td>Distance Education</td>
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<td>DEASA</td>
<td>Distance Education Association of Southern Africa</td>
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<td>DEMS</td>
<td>Department of Extra-Mural Services</td>
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DETU    Distance Education Training Unit
DNFE   Department of Non-Formal Education
DoE    Department of Education
DSS    Department of Student Support
DUSSPRO Distance University Student Support Programme
EDC    Emlalatini Development Centre
EFA    Education for All
GCE OL General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level
HRD    Human Resource Development
HIGSCE Higher International General Secondary Certificate of Education
ICE    Institute for Continuing Education
ICDE   International Council of Distance Education
ICT    Information and Communications Technology
IDE    Institute of Distance Education
IDCS   Institute of Distance and Continuing Education
IEC    International Extension College
IEMS   Institute of Extra-Mural Services
IGNOU  Indira Gandhi National Open University
ILS    Institute of Labour Studies
INADES Institut Africain pour le Developpement Economique et Social. A private Institute based in Cote-d’Ivoire.
LDTC   Lesotho Distance Teaching Centre
MCLB   Multi-Channel Learning Base
MOET  Ministry of Education
MOH   Ministry of Health
NADEOSA National Association of Distance Education Organisations of South Africa
NAMCOL Namibia College of Open Learning
NAPRODOLSA Network for Advanced Professional Development of Open Learning in Southern Africa
NCHE National Council on Higher Education
NEHAWU National Education and Health Workers Union
NGO   Non Governmental Organisation
NOLNet Namibia Open Learning Network
NP    Namibia Polytechnic
NPHE  National Plan for Higher Education
NUL   National University of Lesotho
ODL   Open and Distance Learning
OLSET Open Learning Systems Education Trust
OUT   Open University of Tanzania
PET   Protocol on Education and Training
PGDDE Post Graduate Diploma in Distance Education
SACHED South African Committee for Higher Education Trust
SACTE South African College of Teacher Education
SADC  Southern African Development Community
SADCC Southern African Development Coordinating Committee
SADC-CDE Southern African Development Community Centre for Distance Education
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<td>SAQA</td>
<td>South African Qualifications Authority</td>
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<td>SARDEC</td>
<td>Southern African Regional Distance Education Centre</td>
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<td>SCU</td>
<td>Sector Coordinating Unit</td>
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<td>South African Extension Unit</td>
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<td>UK OU</td>
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