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OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING STAFF DEVELOPMENT: an impact evaluation of a southern African collaboration programme.

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.

DECLARATION

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

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ABEP	Adult Basic Education Project
ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
ADEA	Association for the Development of Education in Africa
BOCODOL	Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning
CCE	Centre for Continuing Education
CD	Compact Disc
CDE	Centre of Distance Education
CDL	Centre for Distance Learning
CDEP	Certificate for Distance Education Practitioners
CEMSA	Centre for Education Media of Southern Africa
CES	Centre for External Studies
CESAG	Centre Africain d'Etudes Superieures en Gestion, African Centre for Higher Management Studies
CIFFAD	Consortium International Francophone de Formation a Distance, A Consortium of Distance Education in French-Speaking Countries.
COL	Commonwealth of Learning
COLL	Centre for Open and Lifelong Learning
DAE	Department of Adult Education
DE	Distance Education
DEASA	Distance Education Association of Southern Africa
DEMS	Department of Extra-Mural Services

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

SAIDE	South African Institute of Distance Education
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SARDEC	Southern African Regional Distance Education Centre
SCU	Sector Coordinating Unit
SAEU	South African Extension Unit
TCDE	Technical Committee on Distance Education
TECHNISA	Technical College of South Africa
TSA	Technikon Southern Africa
UB	University of Botswana
UB-CCE	University of Botswana Centre for Continuing Education
UK OU	United Kingdom Open University
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children Education Fund
UNISA	University of South Africa
UNISWA	University of Swaziland
UNZA	University of Zambia
WCEFA	World Conference on Education for All
WDEFA	World Declaration on Education for All
ZOU	Zimbabwe Open University