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Self Evaluatation as a Method of Improving Teaching Practice at the University of the Witwatersrand

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ABSTRACT

This research report investigates the relationship between critical self-evaluation and improved teaching practice. A sample of nine lecturers at the University of the Witwatersrand were identified, and, by means of a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews, participants were asked to disclose their attitudes towards performance evaluation as a practice at the University, and their personal views in relation to critical self reflection. Critical reflection involves an appraisal of that which is being reflected upon. When such appraisal involves assumption or presupposition, it "holds major potential for effecting change in one's established frame of reference (Mezirow, 1998). This reflection leads to improved teaching practice. Lecturers at the University all support the notion of self-evaluation, but in practice only one of the nine participants actively and critically reflected upon his teaching. Most of the subjects sanction self-evaluation as a concept, do not practise critical reflection. The reasons for this are numerous as the conclusions to the study reveal, but most significant is that lecturers do not see any reason to reflect upon their own performance, nor see any benefit in doing so.

Key Words:

Performance Appraisal; Self-Evaluation; Critical Reflection; Improvement of Professional Practice; Higher Education; South Africa.

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