

Learnership in South African Schools as a Community of Practice: An Open Distance Learning Approach

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ABSTRACT The appropriateness of Learnership Programs (LPs) that combine work-based experience for teacher training through an Open Distance Learning (ODL) Institution motivated this research. The specific aim of this paper was to investigate the experiences of student teachers participating in LPs and to empower them towards a career in teaching. A qualitative research approach was chosen as the research methodology. Interviews with semi-structured and open-ended questions were used to gather data from 35 participants. The theoretical framework focused on the situated learning theory by Lave and Wenger. It is evident from the findings that student teachers experienced their learnership appointments at schools as mostly a very valuable positive learning experience. These LPs could be a key influence in the success and/or failure of enticing and keeping student teachers in schools. The recommendations indicate LPs as the way forward to improve teacher training.