Development and Implementation of a Mentoring Programme at a Historically Disadvantaged South African University

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ABSTRACT Mentoring is an intentional instructional improvement strategy which, in most cases is mutual. It is one of the strategies used to support and develop new academics in their work. This study sought to explore the factors that affected the development and implementation of a staff peer-mentoring programme for junior and senior academics at an institution of higher learning in South Africa. The study focused on a peer mentoring project funded by an outside body where junior academic members of staff desiring assistance in developing their research capacity in order to complete higher degrees and increase research output teamed up with experienced members of staff as mentees. This was a mixed methods research where both qualitative and quantitative data was collected through questionnaires with semi structured and open-ended questions. The findings of the study showed an impact of mentoring on preparing the next generation of researchers. The greatest impact could be seen in the completion of further degrees, presenting papers at conferences and refining the papers for publication The study recommends greater funding for the mentoring role, workload relief for mentors and training staff to become effective mentors as this would provide an effective but cheaper form of staff development,