

The National Department of Education (DoE) and Higher Education's Efforts to Empower School Managers in South Africa: Lessons from the ACE-SML Programme's Pilot Group

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ABSTRACT The current transformation of education in South Africa has ensured that higher education institutions (HEIs) do attempt to build different kinds of students. There is a conscious effort towards the creation of a better and a more resourceful student. The paper is based on a qualitative study conducted among school managers who were registered in the Advanced Certificate in Education – School Management and Leadership (ACE-SML) programme. Thirty participants were interviewed and observed in the field. The findings show that universities have a potential of giving meaning to transformative efforts especially when they take into cognisance the nature of the student as well as context for learning. The interviews and observations results also demonstrate that there were a number of positive experiences by the teacher-learners in the programme. The article also illustrates that HEIs are sometimes challenged when it comes to changing some of the 'traditional' practices contradictory to some innovative programmes.