

Cross-gender Mentoring of Principals in Selected South African Schools

Vuyisile Msila

*University of South Africa, College of Education, PO Box 392, UNISA, 0003, South Africa
E-mail: msilavt@unisa.ac.za*

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ABSTRACT Many South African schools, especially secondary schools, are led by male principals although female school manager numbers are gradually growing. Current research is also beginning to show that there might not be any major (gender-based) differences between male and female school managers. This study reports on findings on cross-gender mentoring in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa. Ten female school leaders were mentors to a number of male protégés who were candidates in the Advanced Certificate in Education-School Management and Leadership (ACE-SML) programme. The article traces the dynamics involved in cross-gender mentoring and it also dispels some of the assumed positions. This was a generic qualitative study that employed observations, document analysis and interviews. The conclusions explicate that mentoring is influenced more by effectiveness of the mentors than by their gender. Moreover, certain qualities are important for any mentoring relationship to prosper.