

An Exploratory Critique of Action Learning in Higher Education in South Africa: Barriers and Challenges

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ABSTRACT This exploratory study investigated the perceptions of staff and students about the Action Learning implementation of Action Learning in higher education. Using judgemental sampling, a qualitative approach was adopted to collect primary data. Action Learning focuses on working with realistic life challenges of groups of students, supported and encouraged by a skilled facilitator to reinterpret the dated information and create new knowledge. A thematic approach was employed to analyse the data. Themes focused on the Educational System, Conventional Learning as opposed to Action Learning, and Challenges and Barriers in implementing Action Learning in higher education. The findings concur with the literature, showing that while Action Learning is a powerful tool for educational and personal development, there are several barriers in the present higher education system that impact on implementing Action Learning, including class sizes, inadequate training of lecturers and the diversity of the student population.