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MENTORING AND SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING:
ISSUES OF LEADERSHIP, POWER AND ETHICS

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements
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ABSTRACT

Mentoring has long been accepted as a means of personal and professional development. It is an accepted tool used in a variety of settings, including education and business.

This thesis aims to provide a theoretical study of mentoring. The intention is to see how leadership, power and ethical practice impact on the self-directed learning that is required for mentoring relationships to be successful. Insights into issues and practices in mentoring provide valuable insight for practitioners – mentors in particular, but also for educators of adults everywhere.

The research was based on a number of questions: What is mentoring? What constitutes a successful mentoring relationship? What role do leadership, power and ethical practice play in successful mentoring relationships? Why is self-directed learning important, and how is it influenced by leadership, power and ethics?

Philosophical foundations of the thesis are identified. Feminism and classical liberal thought are shown how they influence the choice of research project and methodology, and have an impact on data analysis and recommendations.

The researcher undertakes a review of literature on mentoring. This review, together with four mentoring stories taken from professional experience, provides the basis of the theoretical study, and generates data. In addition to the data obtained from a review of literature, four case studies provide insights into mentoring practice. Analysis of the data is followed by a number of recommendations for practice, addressing issues in a way that readers will be able to generate their own solutions to the problems identified.