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**Abstract**

Higher education transformation is context dependent. However, through a comparison of transformation in South Africa and the United States, this paper highlights challenges and issues confronting higher education leaders and policy makers. Contrasting the experiences and issues of transformation in a long-standing democracy and in a newly emerging one surface key elements such as the structures of national mandates, challenges of urgency and abundance, the importance of a language of "transformation", and issues of legitimate and tested decision making processes. This paper raises some of the implications for effecting change based upon this trans-national comparison, and concludes with implications for leaders interested in affecting transformation. (HRK / Abstract übernommen) Eckel, Peter D., E-Mail: peter.eckel@ace.nche.edu