



Lecturers' Perspectives on the Relevance of Pedagogical Training Programmes offered at One Higher Education Institution (HEI) in South Africa

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ABSTRACT

This article investigated how lecturers in one Higher Education Institution (HEI) in South Africa perceived the relevance of pedagogical training workshops offered to them. This investigation was premised on three features of Karl Marx's Critical Theory, namely empowerment, transformation, and emancipation. An explanatory sequential mixed research method was chosen where questionnaires and interviews were used to collect data. The sample was made up of 51 academics. The target for qualitative data collection was to get 10% of the questionnaire respondents for the interview which consisted of 5 academics. The findings had negative responses like some lecturers feeling their academic qualifications were sufficient for their teaching and others valued research more than teaching. Nevertheless, most lecturers identified relevant areas of pedagogical training. They believe that training in pedagogical strategies empowers them as critical lecturers. In conclusion, pedagogical training empowers lecturers as HE teachers to facilitate better when they obtain better professional qualifications like PGDHE, and SETA accredited courses. The study recommends that to improve the shortcomings of academics who were never trained as teachers, all academics should be provided with proper pedagogical training that is discipline-based as they assume duties in higher education institutions and they should only be employed on probation until they pass these basic teaching modules.

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INTRODUCTION

“How we see ourselves as teachers is just as important as the competence and insight that we develop over time. It is crucial that as teachers in Higher Education, we reflect on and update our practice, monitor and develop our own professional impact, and draw on evidence and research in order to inform our practice.”¹

Pedagogy entails the study of how to deliver lessons to students in the best way and enable high-quality learning through the process.² Therefore, pedagogy combines teaching methods, and learning activities inclusive of assessment. In pedagogy, lecturers deal with theory and practice of how to assist students in

¹ Maria Slowey, E Kozina, and E Tan, “Voices of Academics in Irish Higher Education,” *Perspectives on Professional Development*. Dublin: AISHE, 2014.

² Slowey, Kozina, and Tan, “Voices of Academics in Irish Higher Education.”

learning in their respective classes. Pedagogical training in the Higher Education (HE) context is central to learning and teaching improvement.³ Hence academics must be exposed to various higher education professional qualifications, be it short courses or Higher Education Qualification sub-framework (HEQSF) aligned qualifications in Higher Education Studies. Non-exposure or training of university academics often results in the preservation of the old traditional teaching methods which often are teacher-centred instead of focusing on students' needs and transfer of knowledge.

In the researcher's experience since 2010 working as an academic developer in an academic staff development portfolio in the university where the study was conducted, it has been observed that some lecturers were never trained as teachers. Even though teaching is one of the core purposes of universities, several academic staff members lack pedagogical skills since their academic careers are discipline-based. Universities produce academic giants in different disciplines who may have adequate content knowledge and research skills but who may lack other components of teaching needed to produce all-around professionals with pedagogical content knowledge. Furthermore, research generally shows that gaps in pedagogical training still exist among HE academics. Students often perceive the lack of pedagogical training among HEI academics when they give less attention to students' engagement. Very few can articulate pedagogical concepts well. They do not understand some of the key concepts like learning outcomes, assessment criteria and how or why they should be aligned with class activities. This gap of lecturers having not been trained necessitates pedagogical training sessions. As Baleni puts it, academics need to continuously reflect on and update their teaching practice. At the HEI understudy, training for academics in various areas like assessing students, curriculum design and development, and facilitation of teaching are offered both by internal academic developers and external Skills Education and Training Authorities in South Africa (SETA) accredited companies. They are also funded to register for Postgraduate Diploma in Higher Education (PGDipHE). Hence this study explores how lecturers in this comprehensive higher education institution perceived the relevance of pedagogical training workshops offered on teaching in their disciplines. Attendance is optional though.

The following sub-sections will discuss:- literature review, the theoretical framework, methodology, findings, conclusion and recommendations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Different approaches are usually adopted in bridging the skills gap. Among such approaches are internal arrangements of training for employees as well as external ones where staff are sponsored to other institutions for training. For the internal mechanisms, there is training in the form of workshops that lead to the award of certificates of participation. In the external arrangements, the acquisition of a postgraduate diploma or degree in education may be made mandatory for lecturers in disciplines other than education. Indeed, the realities of advancement in teaching and learning have shown that such a practice is needed to promote the essence of development in the 21st century. Teaching without professional development support may be a quarantining action.⁴ That means university teachers need enhancement in their teaching practice to enable them to apply innovative pedagogies in class. They become confident and encouraged as they scaffold their students towards success in their future careers if they are trained on effective and relevant professional strategies. The exposure and know-how that lecturers value when they enjoy being part of a community of practice and as they actively connect with experts in the field of teaching and learning, results in huge competence and improvement prospects. Such prospects enrich their pedagogical practice, and their career path is fortified leading to the deepening of learning knowledge in their students.

The way higher education teachers value themselves is just as vital as the know-how and vision that they develop over time. It is critical that as university lecturers in higher education, they mirror on and apprise their practice, monitor, and advance their own professional impact, and be research evidence-based so that they inform teaching philosophies. Through professional development activities, academic staff sustain a high level of expertise and acquire new skills and knowledge that contribute to their personal

³ Zweljongile, G. Baleni, "The Effect of Academic Staff Development on Lecturer Teaching Practices at a Historically Disadvantaged Institution: Lecturers' Perspectives" (Walter Sisulu University, 2022).

⁴ Batfobile, P. Dlamini, "The Professional Development of Lecturers in a Higher Education Institution in Eswatini: A Case Study." (Stellenbosch University, 2022).

growth and development, student advancement, and institutional benefits.⁵ Higher education institutions can attain such reflective lecturers through effective and well-planned academic staff development initiatives. This is aligned with critical theory's principles of empowerment, transformation, and emancipation. To regulate the effectiveness of academic staff development, the voice of the academics is critical as they are the ones who appraise the relevance of such training to their teaching needs. Thus, when planning Academic Staff Development (ASD) strategies and schedules, academic staff developers must take note of the academics' voices from various HE sector disciplines and experiences. As academics continuously engage in ASD, they should continue using their own experience as a point of reference and baseline for their development. The time academics can pledge to SETA-accredited or non-accredited professional development activity is not permanently prearranged, but it is extremely vital. Therefore, any pedagogical activity should be relevant to the various pedagogical needs of academics. Since their needs might differ, a needs analysis must be done before an ASD schedule is drawn up. Lecturers are not at the same level of qualifications, experience and pedagogical knowledge hence academic developers need to analyse them so that the training offered is pitched at the correct level of understanding and needs. It is very boring for someone to listen to information he already knows and the workshop is a waste of their class /research time. Workshop outcomes will only be clearly aligned and relevant when the organiser knows his audience's background or prior knowledge. Higher Education institutions need to contextualise the needs of academics. Caffarella and Daffron also support this notion of needs analysis.⁶

Higher Education institutions need to contextualise the needs of academics. The content of the pedagogy programmes must be relevant to the national and political contexts of universities which means that planners must contextualise the pedagogical activities used to train lecturers.⁷ For example, Naidoo argues for the conceptualisation of ASD that would creatively combine theories to fit into the local and national contexts of universities on the one hand, and to promote social justice on the other hand.⁸ However, in some instances where the university's strategic goals contradict the country's culture, then lecturers' pedagogical needs might suffer. For instance, introducing interactive learning as a pedagogical strategy when the culture of that region or country does not allow such, might confuse or be resisted by students. Furthermore, as each discipline has specific graduate attributes, there is a need to also conceptualise staff training to fit diverse disciplines, not a one-size-fits-all. Also, pedagogy training programmes that ignore the characteristics of the student population in the institution and do not meet the specific needs of lecturers can indeed provoke resistance and jeopardise their long-term effectiveness.⁹ As the literature indicates, the needs of university lecturers for professional development are diverse and contextual, influenced by international and national trends, and institutional cultures, missions and teaching evaluative frameworks.¹⁰

There are various academic staff professional development practices worldwide. United States universities, for example, established in-service training after realizing that lecturers were incompetent and inefficient.¹¹ Academic members at universities in the United Kingdom choose to pursue development courses to further their intellectual development, career advancement, and individual welfare.¹² Ontario University in Canada offers staff development courses to enhance newly recruited staff facilitation

⁵ Dlamini, "The Professional Development of Lecturers in a Higher Education Institution in Eswatini: A Case Study."

⁶ Rosemary, S Caffarella and Sandra, R. Daffron, *Planning Programs for Adult Learners: A Practical Guide*, 3rd ed. (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2013).

⁷ Johanna L. Geldenhuys and Lizette C. Oosthuizen, "Challenges Influencing Teachers' Involvement in Continuous Professional Development: A South African Perspective," *Teaching and Teacher Education* 51 (October 2015): 203–12, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2015.06.010>.

⁸ Rajani Naidoo, "The Competition Fetish in Higher Education: Varieties, Animators and Consequences," *British Journal of Sociology of Education* (Taylor & Francis, 2016).

⁹ Lynn Quinn, "Enabling and Constraining Conditions for Academic Development," in *Re-Imagining Academic Staff Development: Spaces for Disruption*, ed. L. Quinn (Stellenbosch: SUN MeDia, 2012), 27–50.

¹⁰ Council on Higher Education (CHE), "South African Higher Education Reviewed - Two Decades of Democracy," 2016, www.che.ac.za/media_and_publications/monitoring-and-evaluation/south-african-highereducation-reviewed-two-decad-0.

¹¹ Graham Gibbs and Martin Coffey, "The Impact Of Training Of University Teachers on Their Teaching Skills, Their Approach to Teaching and the Approach to Learning of Their Students," *Active Learning in Higher Education* 5, no. 1 (March 24, 2004): 87–100, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1469787404040463>.

¹² Andrew Green, "Teachers' Continuing Professional Development and Higher Education," *Changing English* 17, no. 2 (June 22, 2010): 215–27, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13586841003787415>.

expertise.¹³ The Helsinki University in Finland offers academic staff members training on pedagogical skills as they enter higher education and can only be employed permanently once they finish such training or qualification. Additional academic staff development initiatives are apparent in Sweden and New Zealand.¹⁴

In Japan, most of the lecturers were found not to be fully competent and that resulted in the formation of national advisory groups whose responsibility was to make the teacher training improvement as the main theme of the country's educational reform.¹⁵ In a study done in ten African countries including Ethiopia, the report indicated that the teaching-learning process is not motivating because of varying environments.¹⁶ Class presentations were boring, the lecturers used a teacher-centred approach, and some lecturers even avoided students' questions during lectures. Students also mentioned that some academics have difficulty in leading classes, and they simply read their notes or show slides to students during lectures with no explanations.

If academics participate in refresher programmes, this could encourage them to perform better as academics would be able to reflect on their daily teaching challenges, advise each other and use the findings from these workshops and seminars. Universities are known for their training in research and teaching, yet many of their academic staff lack pedagogical skills despite having well-developed research skills.¹⁷ According to research, as much as teaching is the core purpose of universities, many academics have a deficiency of pedagogical skills albeit being good researchers. Various researchers have investigated the qualifications of university academic staff members and found that, while they are competent in their academic areas and possess impeccable qualifications, they are generally lacking in their ability to apply a variety of teaching approaches, classroom management techniques, and student assessment methods. Learning how to teach only happens informally through trial and error or simply from their former lecturers.¹⁸ Hence, a professional development programme is a valuable method of developing pedagogical skills. The importance of academic staff development programs cannot be overstated.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Critical theory is the chosen theoretical framework for this article. It is a Western-Marxist-motivated development theory, that is primarily linked with the work of the Frankfurt School.¹⁹ Drawing especially on the ideas of Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud, scholars maintain that an essential objective of critical theory is to comprehend and help defeat the social structures through which individuals are ruled and mistreated. Critical theory is inspired greatly by Marx's theoretical formulation of the relationship between economic base and ideological superstructure and focuses on how power and domination operate. The work of the Frankfurt School members, including Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, Erich Fromm, Walter Benjamin, Jürgen Habermas, and Herbert Marcuse, is considered the heart of the critical theory.²⁰

Critical theory provides a basis for conceptualisation and it also provides a guide for social change. It is underpinned by values such as empowerment, emancipation, transformation, and contradiction. However, for this paper only empowerment, transformation and emancipation will be used. In the field of education, empowerment is often associated with the classic work by Freire.²¹ In the process of improving

¹³ Carol Miles and Polovina Dragan, *The Role of New Faculty Orientation in Improving the Effectiveness of University Teaching Part I: University Sector* (Toronto, Canada: Higher Educational Quality Council of Ontario, 2012).

¹⁴ Belinda Tynan and Mark J W Lee, "Tales of Adventure and Change: Academic Staff Members' Future Visions of Higher Education and Their Professional Development Needs," *On the Horizon* 17, no. 2 (2009): 98–108.

¹⁵ Sari Hosoya and Mirja-Tytti. Talib, "Pre-Service Teachers' Intercultural Competence: Japan and Finland," in *Changing Educational Landscape: Educational Practice, Schooling Systems and Higher Education – A Comparative Perspective.*, ed. D. Mattheou (New York: Springer, 2010), 241–60.

¹⁶ Baleni, "The Effect of Academic Staff Development on Lecturer Teaching Practices at a Historically Disadvantaged Institution: Lecturers' Perspectives."

¹⁷ Geldenhuys and Oosthuizen, "Challenges Influencing Teachers' Involvement in Continuous Professional Development: A South African Perspective."

¹⁸ Fredericks Evers and Shirley Hall, *University Faculty Engagement in Teaching Development Activities: Phase I.* (Toronto: Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario, 2010).

¹⁹ Florence R Sullivan, "Critical Pedagogy and Teacher Professional Development for Online and Blended Learning: The Equity Imperative in the Shift to Digital," *Educational Technology Research and Development* 69 (2021): 21–24.

²⁰ Ashley Crossman, "Understanding Critical Theory," 2019, <https://www.thoughtco.com/critical-theory-3026623>.

²¹ P. Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (London: Penguin Books, 1993).

lecturers' teaching skills, they are empowered to be good lecturers. These lecturers through ASD will be motivated to teach effectively as they will be confident i.e. self-efficacy is enhanced. When an individual feels empowered, he/she has a greater sense of intrinsic motivation and self-confidence; alternatively, a feeling of disempowerment can result in decreased levels of motivation and self-confidence.

Empowerment leads to transformation. Critical theory is applicable to ASD as it advances transformation and change, which are the aims of developing academics towards being quality university teachers. Empowerment is the trademark of academic staff development and without it, there is no transformation in HE to discuss. Emancipation concerns critically analysing, resisting, and challenging structures of power. According to Clouder, reflective practice promotes professional development through critical analysis of contextual issues of power and inequality, diversity and inclusion which manifest themselves in HE.²² Chabaya also supports that reflective practice as part of critical theory is accepted as a key component of professional development.²³ The implication is that ASD ought to empower academics to be critical and independent thinkers who will engage in critical inquiry.

For academic staff development, critical theory is useful because lecturers who are trained come from different disciplines. Their levels of professional training in teaching differ so critical theory will assist this study in critiquing how it is implemented to cater for their individual needs and not as one size fits all.

METHODOLOGY

An explanatory sequential mixed research method approach was chosen where quantitative and qualitative methods were combined starting with quantitative thought. The quantitative sampling strategy chosen was probability sampling specifically the simple random sampling technique. All academics who participated in academic staff development programmes, for example, the Skills Education and Training Authorities in South Africa (SETA) accredited and non-accredited teaching and learning workshops and Post Graduate Diploma in Higher Education (PGDipHE) had an opportunity to be part of the sample and were sent the questionnaire. The quantitative data through questionnaires was collected and interviews were conducted in line with the explanatory sequential missed method. Questionnaires were sent to 80 lecturers through Google Docs and 51 lecturers responded. For analysis of data, diagrams and charts that were automatically developed by Google Docs were used. The sampling strategy for the qualitative approach was non-probability, purposive sampling. The target was to get 10% of the questionnaire respondents for the interview which consisted of 8 academics. Face-to-face interviews were conducted for further clarity on certain responses and to gain a deeper understanding of their feelings. For the qualitative data collected, voice notes transcripts were used and additional notes from the interview were categorised into themes. The responses were reported per theme.

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The data collected from the questionnaires was analysed through Google Docs and the following results were found which are discussed per subheadings:

Workshop Attendance

For staff development to be effective, two components, namely, one's professional development and the institutional development process are crucial.²⁴ Hence, the question of what encouraged lecturers to attend workshops was posed. Lecturers had to choose which factors motivated them to attend workshops. Table 1 below shows that 73% attend if it helps their teaching and 65% are encouraged to attend if the topic/area of the training is relevant to their teaching. Not surprising though, is that another big reason for attendance is personal growth as 65% of responses show that lecturers do anticipate their future career in the teaching profession.

²² Kate Karban and Sue Smith, "Developing Critical Reflection within an Inter-Professional Learning Programme," in *Beyond Reflective Practice* (Routledge, 2012), 170–81.

²³ Raphinos Alexander Chabaya, "Academic Staff Development in Higher Education Institutions: A Case Study of Zimbabwe State Universities" (University of South Africa, 2015).

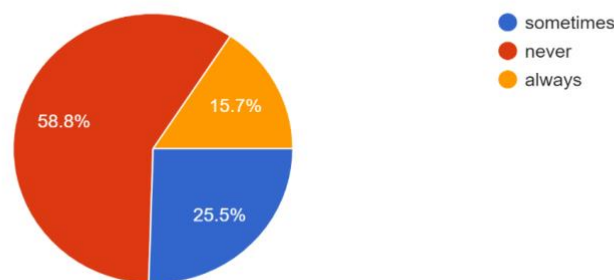
²⁴ Dorothy Marriss, "Academic Staff Development," *Key Concepts in Healthcare Education*, 2011, 1–5.

Table 1: Factors that prompt attendance

Item	No of Participants
If I am interested	8
If the topic is relevant to my teaching	26
If instructed by my Supervisor/Head of Department	2
If I have the time	3
If there is an incentive/reward	0
If required by my institution	1
If it will advance my career	6
If it can help my teaching	2
If I want to apply for promotion	1
If I need CPD points	0
If it speaks to a need I have at the time	0
If colleagues suggest it would be worthwhile	2
If I think it would be worthwhile	0
If there is a positive attitude towards teaching in my department	0

Another noticeable comment is that pedagogical workshops are organised without considering the lecturers' differing teaching experiences as 59% of the respondents claim in Figure 1 below. Only 17% of the academics believe their teaching experience is considered for ASD programmes they attend.

My experience is considered in developing academic staff development programmes
51 responses

**Figure 1: Consideration of Experience in organising ASD activities**

In Figure 2 below, 53% of the participants view ASD programmes as concentrating on teaching strategies only while 45% believe sometimes that is the case. The danger of this belief is that academics might miss out on using teaching as part of research through the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL). Instead, ASD should correctly be conceptualised as Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) where the emphasis should be on the training of lecturers to emerge as introspective specialists

Academic staff development is aligned with workshops on teaching skills than research into teaching problems
51 responses

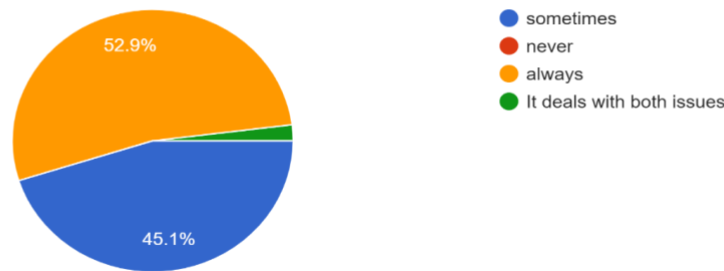


Figure 2: ASD aligned with workshops on teaching skills

Again in Figure 3, responses given emphasised the need for ASD training as 53% always regard ASD to enhance quality teaching. The other 45% of the participants indicated that quality teaching is augmented at times by attending these academic staff development activities. They contended that upgrading the nature of teaching and learning is a key central strategy in HE and that responsibility lies with HE institutions that identify with the nature of teaching and learning. Surprisingly, there was one participant who found no alignment between quality teaching and ASD activities.

Quality teaching is enhanced by academic staff development activities
51 responses

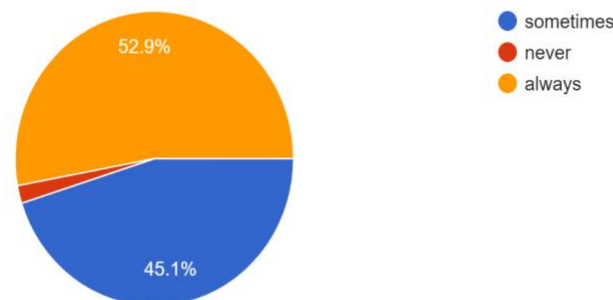


Figure 3: Enhancing quality teaching.

The adequacy of a lecturer, or a professional, improvement programme is somewhat reliant on programme qualities. To supplement the information from the questionnaires, a sample was chosen from the participants. In the interviews, respondents were questioned about their encounters with respect to the relevance of ASD in their institution. Those experiences were recorded and are presented below.

Relevance of ASD Training

The data collected revealed that various features influence the efficacy or relevance of academic professional development workshops in the institution. Most of the interview participants felt that ASD is relevant to their teaching and professional careers. Participant P3 voiced that these training sessions generally led to a career change when she learned the pedagogy of teaching and learning. Comments from other participants are listed below:

P1: *Capacitation to teach is an add-on to my experience.*

P2: *It is a ladder to my promotion as these courses like an assessment in HE count as criteria for promotion.*

P5: *ASD addresses my teaching needs, but follow-ups are needed to address certain grey areas when in practice.*

Lack of Consultation

Secondly, a critical shortcoming in the plan and improvement of professional development activities that the respondents revealed was that ASD organisers did not consult them. Participants P6 and P2 voiced their discomfort, and similarly, P1 uttered similar anxieties but then again stated that the programmes were of assistance.

P1: *They do not communicate with us lecturers, but the head of the department instructed me to attend. ASD itself is useful.*

P2: *Its flaw is that these organisers do not consult academics on what they need.*

P6: *Consultation is done with Deans only. Departments and university teachers must be consulted. Such leads to better awareness of individual requests.*

The interview responses above emphatically stated that ASD programme coordinators do not seek the opinions of lecturers when designing the programme outline, content, and schedule. Evidently, the respondents' opinions were not considered in developing and designing the workshop outline. The tendency to ignore the views of beneficiaries confirms the views of Hunzicker who has established in a similar study that enacted professional workshops are inappropriate and discourage the participants' interests and career path.²⁵ Therefore, academic developers should identify what roles and career paths university teachers envisage and guide them towards accomplishing them as an alternative to providing a one-size-fits-all method of ASD programmes.²⁶

Appreciation of Experienced ASD Facilitators

The experience of the ASD facilitators was appreciated by the respondents. Participant 1 stressed that the facilitators always bring in useful capabilities, proposing that implementers were alluding to participants' capabilities as they train them. Moreover, P5 added that workshop members' capabilities supplemented the implementers' training and examples. He stated, "*Experiences of the facilitators and learners (academics) were used. The old folks in HE assisted a lot by sharing their teaching pitfalls and successes. Experiences became part and parcel of both.*"

P1 and P5's suggestions show the respondents' appreciation with regard to their encounters, especially since they might be associated with class activities.

Also, it is important to mention the appreciation the young, inexperienced academics have for their seniors' who guide them in HE sector teaching strategies. P3 stated, "*These experienced lecturers share their HE and discipline challenges and tricks to survive in this context, especially a former HDI with limited resources but large student numbers.*" Such statements concur with the adult learning hypothesis which states that adults have an accumulated store of experience that is important as a source of learning.**Error! Bookmark not defined.** Therefore, integration of ASD activities with attendees' capabilities as well as mixing new academics with experienced ones strengthens the programmes to be more efficient and effective. Table 2 below shows the ranking order of which areas of ASD receive more recognition and value from the participants as picked up from the interviews.

Table 2: Ranking of Professional Development Activities

Type of professional development activity	Ranking
Curriculum design and development	1
Aligning assessment and learning outcomes	2
Infusing Technology in teaching	3
Innovative delivery methods	4
Discipline-specific teaching approaches	5
How to deal with student diversity	6
Large-group teaching methods	7

²⁵ Jana Hunzicker, "Effective Professional Development for Teachers: A Checklist," *Professional Development in Education* 37, no. 2 (2011): 177–79.

²⁶ Mary Omingo, "Lecturers Learning to Teach: The Role of Agency," *International Journal for Academic Development* 24, no. 2 (2019): 122–34.

Alternative assessment methods	8
Methods of obtaining useful feedback from students	9
Administration of learning & teaching	10

Professional Development Activities

Some of the participants provided explanations to justify their choices. P3 identified curriculum development and design as a core area for training needs for any lecturer. The reasoning is that he feels the basics of teaching depend on the plan, structure, and design of the curriculum as lecturers strive to constructively align their teaching. This view aligns with Biggs' (2003) model of constructive alignment which defines it as coherence between assessment, teaching strategies, and intended learning outcomes in an educational programme.²⁷ Participant P5 identified technology integration into teaching and learning as requiring serious attention through ASD to reinforce academics' viability. She proposed that technology ought to be incorporated into teaching, concentrating on the substance and teaching approach of the technology. Congruent to this rationale, lecturers considered professional development appropriate if it considered their exact requests and apprehensions or if their learning practice and their departmental tasks are included within the ASD activities therefore lecturers need discipline-specific approaches in teaching.

While some participants, like P3 and P5 above focussed on content-based needs, P4 was worried about how academic professional development addressed students' diversity. In signifying caring for the students, P6 recognised that ASD supported them in realising the diversity of students, recognising the students and their prospects thus leading lecturers to comprehend the differences of their students and reasons for creating opportunities and consultation sessions for students. A similar argument has been proposed by Chabaya that an equipped professional course reflected reservations equally for the lecturers and students in its plan. **Error! Bookmark not defined.** believes that the students' criticism formulated a decent basis for acknowledging students' desires to contribute to ASD projects and to enrich them to be more significant.

The issue of organised spontaneous and inconsistently held ASD initiatives was additionally brought up as a programme that makes a specialised course incapable. Respondent P2, specifically, commented: *A few projects are not definite and are unstructured. It's a pulverised programme.* This view suggests that the programme is impromptu, resulting in an unproductive exercise. The professionalisation of academics into lecturers stresses the prerequisite for well-designed courses so that lecturers are satisfied, and operative.

As much as attendance was enforced, some aspects that participants wished to be incorporated in ASD programmes as revealed by P4 and P1 respectively:

During the workshop, we are asked about our expectations which sometimes might not tally with the presenters' outcomes.

Oh Yes, we do express within the workshop what areas we need an emphasis on.

From the ongoing discussion, it can be gleaned that the lecturers perceive academic staff development positively for their personal, and professional growth and enhancement as effective university lecturers. Accordingly, ASD is recognised for transforming lecturers' teaching skills towards better student success. The contention is that since critical theory grants individuals the opportunity to design their future through activity and critical reflection, professional development ought to similarly expect university teachers to design their progress through activity and critical consideration. Reflective practice, as an aspect of critical theory, is acknowledged as a core factor of academic staff development and training. This is in line with what Eszter, et.al., research wherein ASD was discovered to help make university lecturers comprehend the requirements of the millennium undergraduates.²⁸

²⁷ Colin Gibbs, "Explaining Effective Teaching: Self-Efficacy and Thought Control of Action," *The Journal of Educational Enquiry* 4, no. 2 (2003).

²⁸ Simon Eszter et al., *The Professionalization of Academic Members of Staff as Teachers in Higher Education* (Strasbourg Cedex, France: European Science Foundation, 2012).

Academics undermine teaching. This results from the fact that senior academics, and professors, feel their experience in their specialisation is adequate to teach successfully. Also, the fact that most academics prefer research since it has been aligned with promotion and recognition in HE. There is also a misguided notion that mastering content material translates into noble teaching and replicates information deficiency on the importance of teaching skills in dealing with annoying encounters that affect HE institutions.²⁹

The majority of respondents appreciated academic staff development as a career change as it capacitated them to teach, an add-on to their discipline specialisation. Critical theory is preliminary to the transformation of the institution, and it gives a profitable measurement to the theoretical system for professional development in HE. ASD addresses their teaching needs, most of the interview participants felt that ASD is relevant to their teaching and their professional career growth.

It also emerged that lecturers feel the need for academic staff development although some lecturers have concerns about how ASD programmes are organised. As much as the lecturers saw empowerment as necessary, the pull and push factors of ASD and HE in general call for the democratic implementation of ASD.³⁰ That lecturers come from various disciplines leads to some contradiction, a critical theory characteristic. The contradiction might lead to concerns like generic workshops conducted as a one-size-fits-all that is not discipline-based. To avoid such contradiction, then lecturers have to emancipate the ASD programme by critically reflecting on their individual teaching needs and career prospects.

ASD empowers lecturers to improve their lecturing skills and responsibilities which encompass preparation, lecturing, and handling students' assessments. The strengthening of professional empowerment should enable university teachers to boost their distinctiveness as decision-makers in their proficient practices. Empowerment, which is a critical theory tenet, is the trademark of academic staff development and without it, there is no transformation in HE. The suggestion is that academic proficiency improvement should not be actualised through force or obligation. Utilising the dialect of critical theory, university teachers should not be manipulated and coerced to attend ASD courses.

The programme at the HDI under study is said to be often impromptu, resulting in an unproductive exercise. This shows that ASD planning is not well structured to accommodate all lecturers' teaching needs and schedules. Since lecturers are not consulted, these are obligatory as 'one size fits all' courses which accommodate all academics' shortfalls although some research tendency differs from the study as it shows that enacted professional workshops are inappropriate and contrast the participants' interests and career path. Therefore, lecturers ought to decide the shape and course of their advancement. If lecturers achieve this via professional development, they feel completely empowered. However, strengthening without human flexibility is constrained. So, pedagogical training should be inculcated in values such as democracy and opportunity since ASD is useful for the lecturers' development and growth of their teaching in Higher Education.

Based on the presentation and discussion above, there is proof to show that academic staff developers in this institution planned and developed ASD programmes without consulting with academics on the content of the workshops or their needs. Professional courses that exclude the opinions of participants, especially their needs, are probably going to encounter lowered inspiration and result in non-obligation in attending such courses or executing learned ideas. For ASD to have relevance to lecturers it should encourage democratic lecture room relations among consultants and lecturers wherein some opportunities are developed for lecturers to discuss lecturing progress concerns critically.

Academics must acquaint themselves with their curriculum for genuine student engagement and clear any misinterpretations they might have. Society has been exposed to various networks and technologies, and the modern student cohort is exceedingly ICT proficient, therefore academics ought

²⁹ Cosmas Maphosa and Ndileleni P Mudzielwana, "Professionalization of Teaching in Universities: A Compelling Case," *International Journal of Educational Sciences* 6, no. 1 (2014): 65–73.

³⁰ Vinod J Nair, "Perceptions and Perceived Benefits of Continuous Professional Development Courses: Lecturers' Perspective," *Journal of Interdisciplinary Research in Education* 6, no. 1 (2016): 35–51.

to be empowered to utilise teaching technology in their teaching. Concurring with such, ICT should be an authentic scholarly requirement inserted into ASD courses so that they are to have relevance.

Besides dealing with the teaching challenges of university teachers, ASD workshops will be highly effective if they grant lecturers more concern and attention to diverse students. There are arguments supporting the need for diverse student dialogue to be projected into higher education training areas nowadays due to the democratisation of HE. Researchers voice the difficulty confronted of teaching the 4IR cohort, as a convincing situation wherein HE needs to react with professional development teaching strategies in the sector. Academic Staff Development takes into consideration lecturers' awareness of their teaching decisions to respond to student diversity. Student diversity is typically established in relation to variations of scholarship approaches, module selections in disciplines, and lecturers' arrogance.³¹ In critical realist philosophy, ASD must be entrenched in critical pedagogies that enhance lecturers in learner-centred teaching techniques that promote student participation. Envisaged academic enablement must bring about the professionalisation of teaching discourse that stimulates the democratisation of classroom practice. These refinements could open unbiased opportunities for students to question prejudicial HE premises. It was shown from the results that a limited number of respondents communicated disappointment with ASD workshops since they were deficient in detail, and were shapeless and impromptu, thus resulting in ineffectual programmes. Moreover, if lecturers spend more time involved in ASD, their outcomes would be more successful. Therefore, occasional ASD courses that are shapeless and lacking specific detail are likely to be ineffectual. Hence institutional and departmental learning and teaching workshop schedules all year round should be drawn up. Such schedules should be spread to also accommodate enough teaching time to try out learnt strategies as well as get feedback from students and peers on their relevance and impact towards students' success.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is fundamental to do a needs analysis for academics' learning needs before organising academic staff development programmes so that they fit the purpose and remain relevant to the lecturers' key performance areas (KPA). To improve the shortcomings of academics who were never trained as teachers, all academics should be provided with proper pedagogical training, and it should be organised per discipline. This would enhance them to deliver quality education and to produce competent future graduates from the institution to supply competent and professional academics.

CONCLUSION

There is evidence that lecturers see ASD as enhancing their teaching for effective delivery, developing their skills (constructive alignment, assessment, credits), and knowledge of teaching and learning (learning theories, teaching methods, student engagement in class). ASD empowers lecturers as HE teachers to facilitate better and obtain better professional qualifications like PGDHE, and SETA accredited courses. There is also a need for inducting and training lecturers in innovative technology and the art of teaching. The majority appreciated academic staff development as a career change as it capacitated them to teach, an additional qualification to their discipline specialisation.

Evidence from the relevance of pedagogical training collected led to the conclusion that lecturers identify the relevance of ASD from different angles and interests. For some, relevance means that the concept workshopped will be useful in class, and some of it is going to advance her/his future career in the teaching profession. Most of them felt that curriculum development workshops are core for their training needs and lastly, that workshops that responded to strategies to deal with new student generation and student diversity were essential.

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