

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS FOR TVET COLLEGE NOVICE LECTURERS: TRANSITIONING TO HIGHER EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this paper is to explore the professional development needs of novice lecturers in three selected Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges in South Africa as they transition from different industries into the higher education sector. The methodology of collecting data was individual face-to-face interviews. The study participants were six novice lecturers and three TVET college managers, who were selected purposefully. The study is underpinned by an adult learning theory, which argues that adult learners have accumulated life experiences and knowledge and require structured programs that have clearly defined outputs. The paper responded to two research questions: What are the professional development needs of novice lecturers in a TVET college, and how does college management respond to the professional development needs of novice lecturers? Data were analyzed using thematic content analysis. The findings indicate that pedagogic and classroom management skills were the basic needs of novice lecturers through professional development programs. In light of the findings, the study suggests capacity-building for college management to respond appropriately to the induction and mentoring needs of novice lecturers as well as the provision of internally conducted and structured professional development programs.

Keywords: novice lecturers, professional development, mentoring, induction, higher education

INTRODUCTION

The study examined the professional development needs of novice lecturers in three selected Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges in South Africa as they transitioned from different industries into the higher education sector. A novice lecturer is described as a new lecturer in an organization who performs lecturing duties (Hudson, 2012). Furthermore, the author states that the novice lecturer is an employee who has been in the field for less than five years and requires guidance and development in their profession. Novice TVET lecturers who join the TVET sector from different industries experience

frustration and confusion when they are supposed to adapt and adjust to the TVET culture (Jeannin & Hallinger, 2018; Kim & Roth, 2011; Matshaya, 2016). These novice lecturers are academically qualified but not professionally qualified and therefore require induction, mentoring, and continuing development from the college management.

Given the above, there is a need for college management to design professional development programs to assist novice lecturers in adapting to the many changes, such as new colleagues, processes, skills, as well as learning teaching methods (Hong et al., 2021). The policy on professional qualification for lecturers in technical and vocational education

and training (RSA, 2013), which is a South African policy framework, provides for continuing professional development (CPD) and work-integrated learning (WIL) for TVET lecturers. Therefore, novice lecturers transitioning from other industries to the higher education sector require CPD to improve their professional confidence, pedagogical skills, and classroom management. Against this background, this paper explored the professional development needs for TVET college novice lecturers as they transition to the higher education sector.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Several scholars have highlighted the benefits of relevant professional development programs for novice employees (Banja et al., 2018; Veigel, 2021; Watson, 2018). Given the plethora of predicaments novice lecturers face as they enter the TVET sector, college management is expected to provide relevant professional development for novice lecturers. Researchers indicate that novice lecturers experience frustration, confusion, and discomfort when they join the TVET sector from different industries (Cholifah & Rini, 2020; Jumpakate, 2019; Yariv & Shelly-Huber, 2020).

Hurst (2010) states that the transition to academia becomes challenging and stressful for novice lecturers. Some of the challenges experienced by novice lecturers as they join the TVET sector include insufficient support from colleagues (Tammets et al., 2019), challenges with team teaching (Bywater & Mander, 2018), lack of pedagogical and research skills (Ibrahim et al., 2013), lack of classroom management skills (Coggins, 2009; Linh et al., 2020), and lack of role clarity and the need for more guidance regarding the practicalities of teaching (Hurst, 2010). These challenges point to the need for college management to design professional development programs relevant to the needs of novice lecturers.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study responded to the following research questions:

- What are the professional development needs of novice lecturers in a TVET college?
- How does college management respond to the professional development needs of novice lecturers?

METHODOLOGY

Underpinned by the interpretive qualitative approach, this study employed a case study design. Three TVET colleges were used as research sites and were purposively selected based on their location within an industrial area. Six novice lecturers (two from each TVET college) and three campus managers (one from each TVET college) were participants in the study, respectively. The novice lecturers were purposively selected because they were new in the teaching field, were from industries other than the education sector, and had never been exposed to the teaching environment. All ethical considerations were observed before the collection of data. Data were collected face-to-face using a semi-structured interview schedule with each participant. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis as guided by Braun and Clarke (2006).

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section provides literature that was reviewed regarding the professional development needs of novice lecturers as they transition to higher education from different industries. Three sections are discussed: challenges faced by novice lecturers, the importance of professional development for novice employees, and the role of leadership and management in the professional development of novice lecturers.

CHALLENGES FACED BY NOVICE LECTURERS

A plethora of challenges novice lecturers face leaves them dissatisfied and confused (Jeannin & Hallinger, 2018; Yu et al., 2021). These challenges include but are not limited to teaching in different classes, making them uncomfortable because they do not understand students' expectations and learning styles, and they lack classroom management skills (Jeannin & Hallinger, 2018); lack of teaching skills (Ibrahim et al., 2013); having to adapt to new roles quickly (Shi, 2015); feeling anxiety about surviving in the job (Ramhurry & Luneta, 2021); and lack of intensive mentorship (Sebola, 2021). Ramhurry and Luneta (2021) indicate that entry into academia for novice lecturers can be alienating and lonely unless practical and professional relationships are created. These relationships serve as a way for novice lecturers to fit into their new roles and responsibilities. The greatest need for novice lecturers is to obtain support and guidance from

their managers so that they adapt and adjust to the institution's culture.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR NOVICE LECTURERS

To improve the quality of instruction delivery in any learning institution, teachers and lecturers must continually work on their proficiencies and competencies through continuing professional development (CPD). The role of professional development is to develop and enhance organizational practice, leading to improved outcomes for all involved. In a study on how new lecturers engage with continual professional development activities, Chadha (2021) found that there was often dissent between what novice lecturers needed and what management could provide regarding CPD. Cabezas, Martínez, and Ruiz (2014) indicate that the professional development of novice staff at institutions of higher learning still requires considerable improvement.

Cabezas et al. (2014) further state that the main difficulties faced by new academics in their professional teaching activities include course planning difficulties, teaching implementation dilemmas, and tensions in assessment procedures. The professional development of lecturing staff is instrumental in their academic career. Jalaefar, Abdollahi, Zeinabadi, & Abbasian (2021) identified educational, organizational, ethical, service, and classroom engagement as professional development needs for novice lecturers. Although there is a need to establish formal rules of engagement regarding the professional development of novice lecturers, a novice lecturer has a personal responsibility for their professional growth so that they can learn as they work. In their study on professional development programs for university teachers, Fabriz et al. (2021) found that professional development in new academic staff positively impacted their teaching-related self-efficacy and self-concept, as well as independent knowledge about teaching.

For novice lecturers, professional development encourages collaboration, whether through formal or informal interactions (Postholm, 2018). Professional development positively affects novice lecturers' practices, knowledge, and skills. It allows these lecturers to update their knowledge and skills and continue to make their instruction relevant to their students' needs. Professional development has

the benefit of assisting lecturers to learn the needs of their students so they can deal with them accordingly. Novice lecturers develop teaching strategies and practices, content knowledge, and classroom management skills, which improves the academic output of the students and the higher institution (Ghani & Ghani, 2021).

THE ROLE OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT IN THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF NOVICE LECTURERS

When college management engages in the professional development of their staff members, it positively influences their effectiveness in instructional delivery, communication skills, and student evaluations (Udoh-Uwah & Etim, 2018). Hirsch, Lloyd, and Kennedy (2019) support this view, stating that management is responsible for improving academic engagement through coaching, mentoring, and inducting novice lecturers. The college management must identify the needs that require development to improve instructional practice among novice lecturers. In a study examining the impact of professional development and coaching on mentoring novice lecturers, Cornelius, Rosenberg, and Sandmel (2020) asserted that management needs to target areas of development to provide specialized professional development for their new employees.

CPD is consistent with monitoring and feedback, which is central to the coaching, mentoring, and induction functions; therefore, management has to work collaboratively to ensure the continuous implementation of these functions. Yu et al. (2021) indicate that novice lecturers are generally satisfied with coaching, mentoring, and induction programs and activities, hoping their institutions could provide more opportunities to help them grow in their new job. In their study on lecturer professional development strategies in higher education, Ngoc et al. (2020) emphasized the significance of having a teaching qualification for lecturers. Novice lecturers ought to possess a teaching qualification or be in the process of acquiring one as part of their professional development. Chawla (2021) notes that though some novice lecturers are armed with subject competencies, they need nurturing and guidance in methodologies to deal with classroom engagements and exigencies.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study is underpinned by Adult Learning

Theory (ALT) (Speck, 1996), which argues that adult learners have accumulated life experiences and knowledge and require structured programs with clearly defined outputs. This theory emphasizes that learning for adults is autonomous and self-directed and that adults are goal-oriented. Novice lecturers are adult learners who are academically qualified and have previous work experience. This means that the TVET college needs to assist novice lecturers as they “unlearn” what they already know and learn something new, such as pedagogic skills adopted by the TVET colleges. This theory is appropriate for this study since learning becomes applicable and relevant to their work. For the success of the professional development programs designed by TVET college management, there must be a direct connection between their professional development and daily activities.

Adult Learning Theory demands that professional development programs be organized such that there is support, guidance, and motivation for members throughout learning. Furthermore, ALT emphasizes that adults bring with them to the learning process, a range of previous practices, information, and abilities. Thus, the TVET college management is responsible for designing professional development programs that acknowledge novice lecturers’ existing knowledge, experiences, practices, perspectives, insights, and anxieties.

FINDINGS

The findings reveal three critical themes that emerged from the data. First, pedagogic and classroom management skills were the basic professional development needs of novice lecturers. Second, training, workshops, and seminars are required to understand how TVET colleges operate. Third, it emerged that college management was not cognizant of some of the professional development needs of novice lecturers. It is important to note that in this study, campus managers are the people tasked with the overall management of each of the three TVET colleges. Table 1 below profiles the research sites and participants as identified in this paper.

Table 1. Profile of research sites and participants

Colleges	Novice Lecturers	Campus Managers
C1	NL1	CM1
C2	NL2	CM2
C3	NL3	CM3
	NL4	
	NL5	
	NL6	

Keys: C = Colleges (1 to 3), NL = Novice Lecturers (1 to 6), CM = Campus Managers (1 to 3)

Letters of the alphabet are used to identify participants as follows:

Colleges – C1, C2, and C3

Novice lecturers – NL1 to NL6

Campus managers – CM1, CM2, and CM3

PEDAGOGIC AND CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT SKILLS AS BASIC PROFESSIONAL NEEDS FOR NOVICE LECTURERS

Across the three colleges, it emerged from the six novice lecturers that pedagogic and classroom skills were the basic professional development needs for novice lecturers as they transition to higher education. C1, NL1 revealed that they needed training in classroom management and instruction delivery:

I didn't know what to do and what was going on because classroom management was too difficult...the students also complained that they couldn't understand what I was teaching them. (NL1)

NL2's view was that they expected their immediate seniors to develop them:

I think I need to be guided on how to deliver the subject matter especially the methods or skills of imparting the subject matter [...] but I do not have the skill of delivering that knowledge to students. (NL2)

C2, NL3, and NL4 had this to say regarding professional development needs as novice lecturers.

Teaching methods, I have a challenge because if you are lecturing a subject such as those for Civil engineering in the TVET,

it is challenging. (NL3)

NL4 had this to say regarding their professional development needs:

In teaching methods, I always use one method of teaching and I think I need to know and understand other teaching methods. (NL4)

From C3, the first participant revealed that they had a challenge with pedagogical skills and did not know how to deliver the subject matter to students:

For me, teaching methodologies are a serious need because no one has to communicate knowledge to learners, and I am finding it difficult but with time I will learn. (NL5)

Views from the second participant resonated with NL5's views:

...the professional skills in particular because this person is well qualified in the field but when it comes to the professional skills and the knowledge of how to teach and how to control students when there is a need, that one is lacking. (NL6)

The emerging data revealed that novice lecturers were more industrialists than academics and had knowledge of the content of the subjects but lacked the instructional skills to deliver it to students. They attested to their lack of pedagogical and classroom management skills. Data also revealed that novice lecturers and lecturing in a TVET college or any educational institution require relevant pedagogical and classroom management skills. This points to the need for the TVET college management to provide continuing professional development for novice lecturers.

TRAINING, WORKSHOPS, AND SEMINARS

From the data, it emerged that the provision of training, workshops, and seminars for novice lecturers was a need for them to adapt and adjust to the TVET college environment. As part of their CPD, novice lecturers revealed that they expected some form of induction and continuous mentoring through different training sessions, workshops, and seminars from the TVET college management.

In discussion with C1 participants, NL1 revealed that the kind of training and workshops

required would assist novice lecturers in understanding the teaching processes:

For me, this is a new work environment and I need workshops in terms of new developments that are there...and also training that would assist me in teaching and understanding all TVET processes and systems. (NL1)

From the same campus, NL2 revealed that there are new terms and concepts that novice lecturers do not know and understand; however, they have to use them in their new line of work, and this would be remedied if they were to attend training and workshops as new academic employees in the TVET college.

If you are coming from the industry and you hear people talking about POE's, POA's, ISAT and FETMIS, all these terms are new. So, we need training, not because it is difficult but just the introduction. (NL2)

C2 participants revealed that management had never arranged any form of workshop or training to introduce them to the TVET college environment, and after employment, they were expected to embark on class teaching:

We need the training and workshops to assist us in doing our work, but the management had never conducted any of them. (NL3)

We expected some induction of some sort, but we never received any. (NL4)

In discussion with participants from C3, it emerged that it would have been easy to adjust to the new if there was support in the form of mentoring from college management:

If I had somebody who would guide me maybe it would be easy to adapt to the new system. I would like a mentor to introduce me to the system like to tell me where to find what, how to do what, where and when. (NL5)

Unfortunately, people at the college are always busy when you try and seek help,

they are always busy, and you end up not knowing what is expected of you. I ended up consulting a friend of mine to assist me. (NL6)

In discussion with the campus managers, it emerged that they acknowledge that novice lecturers require training, workshops, and seminars to unpack what TVET colleges anticipate from employees in conducting their duties.

So basically, these people need a lot of training. (CM1)

These developmental training programs will have to cover things like policies that are about teaching and learning, examinations, how to conduct examinations, students' attendance etc. (CM2)

They need to be trained on how to do their work, how to present it in class and how to communicate it to students. (CM3)

The findings reveal that novice lecturers require training in different aspects of the TVET college context. These are training, workshops, and seminars for mentoring to equip them to perform their duties effectively. Leroy and Huysamer (2012) highlight that the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) emphasizes that work-based learning opportunities must be created for lecturers lecturing vocational subjects. This suggests that novice lecturers must be introduced to organizational operations through workshops and training before engaging with organizational tasks.

TVET COLLEGE MANAGEMENT'S RESPONSE TO NOVICE LECTURER'S PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

College management was found not to be cognizant of the professional needs of their novice lecturers. From the data, it emerged that they were oblivious to the role they were supposed to play in providing professional development for novice lecturers. The campus manager from C1 acknowledged that this interview had been an eye-opener since they would then develop induction and mentoring programs.

Structured programme?... meaning that they will be having a programme that they follow?...

Now that you ask, I realise that we do not

have a structured programme for professional development, where we induct and mentor novice lecturers, after appointment, we welcome them and give them all the necessary resources they might need, and they get on with the job. I guess we need to have a structured programme because they might be suffering in silence. (CM1)

From C2, the campus manager revealed that they relied on external providers for professional development programs but that the little they could do for novice lecturers was at the college level, not the campus level.

When there is a cohort of new academics, we usually outsource external service providers to provide an induction process, so far, we have not had any problems. (CM2)

We do have a college prescribed induction where they are taken for one day and they are bombarded with how to fill these forms, how to open our Sherq system, what else, how to get information for the college, code of conduct, we do have that but it's too generic and it is not at the campus level. At the campus level, we have none. (CM2)

It emerged from C3 that they expected novice lecturers to have some knowledge since they came from the corporate side of the job market.

As a manager, I always expect and value someone from the industry to come up with some ideas because where they come from, they were expected to be innovative and come up with ideas. That is also one of the reasons they got employed here so that they could improvise and come up with ideas. (CM3)

Novice lecturers revealed they were expecting some prepared programs and mentoring them into their new career path. From C1, the participant had this to say:

The only thing that I think the management should take care of is that they must look for programmes that are relevant to what we are teaching. They also have to look at

the broader picture on how to develop us in the same way as well in the classrooms. (NL1)

In C2 and C3, the participants revealed they took the initiative to self-develop.

I just enrolled for a PGCE course because I was sinking and no one was noticing so they could help me keep floating [...] so far, I can say that the PGCE has brought me into the classroom and gave me knowledge on how to be a lecturer. (NL2)

...I consulted the previous lecturer to assist me on how to compose a formal assessment, what elements should be part of an assessment because here people are focused on their things. For me as a new lecturer, the assessment was a serious need, now I can do it on my own. (NL3)

The findings reveal that TVET colleges continue to experience poor content knowledge and pedagogy teaching because campus management does not provide CPD to novice lecturers. According to Spaul (2019), TVET colleges suffer from appointing lecturers with no occupational skills, compromising the quality of education and skills development. This points to the need for each campus management to provide CPD for novice lecturers. Spaul (2019) further emphasized that the CPD policy provided for in the Provincial Education Departments (PEDs) since some lecturers inherited from various industries tend to lack the skills as provided in the CPD policy. Campus managers need their CPD to offer and develop novice lecturers. Gustafsson (2019) cautioned that campus managers must investigate the lack of implementation of the CPD policy.

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

Professional growth, self-confidence, classroom management skills, and pedagogic skills are some of the professional development needs of novice lecturers when joining the TVET sector. For example, Taylor and van der Bijl (2018) claim that South Africa's education facilities have a strongly developed practice of school-based workplace integrated learning (WIL), but that is not the same for the TVET sector, particularly for novice

lecturers who have been recruited from industries to assist with skills development. Therefore, management needs to develop strategies to improve novice lecturers' skills, including, but not limited to, presentation of their lessons, conducting team teaching, peer observation, and all other related skills. The findings revealed that novice lecturers required programs such as seminars, training, and workshops to introduce them to their new careers.

The success of these programs would rely on them being continuing programs for novice lecturers to be integrated into the TVET college culture. Some participants revealed they registered for a teaching qualification to gain the skills they needed to acclimate to the new TVET environment. This points to the need for college management to implement policies and procedures of the DHET to professionally develop new employees, particularly those who are academically qualified but not professionally qualified. Being a lecturer does not imply only imparting knowledge to students; it involves many other tasks, and management should outline all expectations and provide professional development relevant and customized to each novice lecturer.

Novice lecturers must be integrated into the profession with professionalism (Sunarto et al., 2021). Subarto, Solihin, and Qurbani (2021) asserted that the leadership style displayed by managers in an institution impacts the novice lecturer's job satisfaction; therefore, they must be cognizant of novice lecturers' professional development needs. To improve novice lecturer performance, each TVET campus manager is responsible for enhancing their leadership style and improving their jurisdiction's organizational climate and work environment. On the one hand, professional development seminars that the TVET college management organizes might assist novice lecturers in executing their duties according to the prescripts of the TVET college. Also, the DHET might assist them in understanding policies related to disciplining students and might assist novice lecturers in implementing professional documents such as subject and assessment guidelines. On the other hand, novice lecturers would develop further if they were allowed to meet together to share experiences, discuss difficulties, acquire skills, and be developed together. Emerging from the data is that TVET

college management needed to develop, support, and ensure that the professional development needs of novice lecturers are met. Novice lecturers expect some form of structured mentoring and induction from their line managers. Among the approaches that TVET college campus managers could use to provide professional development for novice lecturers are the provision of mentors and structured programs for mentoring. While Bell, Wilcoxon, and Steiner (2021) asserted that institutions should ensure the retention of novice lecturers within their environment to avoid feelings of isolation and job dissatisfaction, Swidrak and Badora (2021) emphasized the importance of having mentoring and induction programs that assist novice employees in adapting to the processes and procedures in an institution. The TVET college management has a critical role in providing the professional development needs of their novice lecturers, and novice lecturers look up to their campus line managers to initiate structured programs for professional development.

CONCLUSION

This paper sought to explore the professional development needs of novice TVET lecturers as they enter the higher education sector from various industries and investigate how management provides relevant and appropriate professional development programs for novice lecturers. The study found that novice lecturers' basic needs were pedagogic and classroom management skills. The study also found that TVET college management was not cognizant of the professional development needs of novice lecturers. TVET college management is responsible for introducing, inducting, and providing ongoing mentoring as part of professional development for novice lecturers. This was a multiple case study, and the findings of the paper could not be generalized to the broader TVET college population; however, the study is topical as South Africa and the world are confronted with the challenges of skill shortages, and the presence of the novice lecturers is crucial since they possess these specialized skills. Whereas the current study found that novice lecturers lacked some pedagogical skills, we argue that provided with relevant continuing professional development, novice lecturers in the TVET colleges can enhance academic outcomes and improve skill shortages in the TVET

colleges. Accordingly, this paper alerts TVET college management to the professional development needs of novice lecturers who do not possess any instruction delivery background.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends capacity-building for TVET college management to respond appropriately to novice lecturers' professional development needs and provide internally conducted and structured professional development programs. After taking on their new positions, providing professional development programs in a TVET college equips novice lecturers with relevant knowledge and skills. The complexities of being a new lecturer in an institution for higher learning need not be overlooked, particularly for employees with specialized skills but without professional qualifications. This paper recommends continuing individualized self-initiated and self-directed professional development programs and professional development through collaboration with peers and colleagues. Novice lecturers need to have sufficient autonomy to shape their professional development processes. TVET leadership and management should provide structured, relevant, and continuing professional development for novice lecturers.

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