CHAPTER TWO

Key Concepts and Discourses Shaping NATHEP

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Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the key discourses and concepts related to new academic induction, as these exist in the literature. In conceptualising NATHEP, a deep dive into the literature and scholarship in this field was necessary to identify extant and new constructs regarding new academics and how they transition. Discourses related to being new in the higher education (HE) space proliferate with sometimes negative effects (Mathieson et al., 2023). Until these are unpacked and challenged, they continue to influence how values, ideas and beliefs shape and inform the discursive terrain of new academic induction into HE, negatively. Staff developers themselves might carry some of these assumptions and associations into their interaction with new academics, compromising trust even before the professional relationships have begun.

Professionalising HE

The discourse of professionalising HE is ubiquitous as it is not easy to define the "profession" of HE itself. It is easier to identify professional disciplines in HE than it is to define HE as a profession in and of itself. This could be linked to the composition of a university, with faculties established with clear but traditional delineations between disciplines and cognate disciplinary fields. As an epistemic project, this is how the university understands itself. Schreiber and Lewis (2020) offer some interesting views on the benefits and drawbacks of describing an epistemic community as a profession. Among these faculties there is a host of professional disciplines, which include but are not limited to engineering, accounting, law, medical sciences and commerce. Each of these professions is regulated by their own professional bodies, who share an interesting relationship with the university through their various gatekeeping mechanisms, policy briefs, assessment regimes, etc. By being overt and connected to funding and reporting lines, disciplines get the lion's share of attention.

The closest we come to a direct indication that HE is in fact a profession is signalled by the title "professor", obtained when academics advance successfully through the career track to reach a stage where they are "professing" something. When this "professing" leans more towards proselytising rather than engaging in meaningful excursions into knowledge forays, it might mean that the said professor, while exemplary in research, lacks the pedagogical repertoire that brings the worlds of

scholarship and teaching together. While disciplinary foci are an important part of a university's makeup, there are tacit components and areas of work such as student success, leadership, administration, management and support staff development that also need to be professionalised (Schreiber et al., 2020). When staff join a university in academic roles and positions for example, they are obliged to embrace and enact the full ambit of academic work, albeit incrementally as they progress through their career trajectories. This includes but is not limited to teaching, research, social responsiveness, professional service and academic citizenship.

This brings us to the notion of the "academic practitioner" who is responsible for teaching as a core activity in their academic roles, in addition to a host of other activities and deliverables. Professionalising HE could then mean developing capacity in the academic teacher, as opposed to the academic researcher, who is at the coalface in the university classroom, involved in practice. If the profession of HE is to ensure that students thrive and succeed in ways similar to a medical doctor or engineer who assesses their professional contribution through their impact, professionalising HE might be seen as a necessary means to that end. With a more acute attention to quality learning in recent years, it makes sense that the quality of teaching and teachers is high on the list of change imperatives for the DHET nationally.

In recognising high student dropout and low throughput rates, the DHET signalled its focus on teaching to improve national patterns of student success. Academics' ability to teach in ways that respond to students' learning needs was identified as a key lever. Acknowledging that academics entering the academy bring with them a wealth of disciplinary expertise, research and lived experience, the sector and academy are slowly recognising that this is not enough. To fulfil their roles, academics need to be effective teachers too. The University Capacity Development Programme (UCDP) from which NATHEP is funded, is intended to support and to strengthen the development of university teachers within the staff development component of the programme. The DHET recognises that it is essential that, "across the career continuum from emerging academics to established professionals, there are development opportunities for university teachers and teaching support professionals, including those in teaching leadership roles" (DHET, 2018).

While many initiatives are afoot, the sector is still disparate and unequal in its resources and infrastructural arrangements. In some contexts, institutional culture might be debilitating, especially where it is authoritarian, managerialist and corporate, and where academics and students "feel marginalised, silenced or threatened by the demands for change or unable to respond to the evolving environment" (DHET, 2018). Worse still if the culture at the university is driven by a compliance ethos (Boughey & McKenna, 2021), with little or no critical thought

or engagement. The overarching danger is that no matter how many initiatives are in place, and how much money is thrown at the problem, if the interventions are not critical, contextualised, responsive and change oriented, there will be a reproduction of the status quo with minimum impact on systemic issues in the sector. It must also be pointed out though that focussing on academic professional development alone is an insufficient and impoverished view on how to shift the success of the South African HE sector (Schreiber, et al. 2020). We need to focus on HE holistically because the whole and the parts are equally important.

What does professionalising HE mean for NATHEP?

The professionalising of HE through supporting the teaching role is seen through NATHEP as critical to the transformation of the sector. This position is supported by the DHET Framework (DHET, 2018), which serves as an advocacy role to focus attention on nurturing, supporting and developing new academics as university teachers. This has immediate implications for ways in which professional and academic development programmes are conceptualised and implemented. While massification, neoliberal policies, austerity and other questions occupy global HE debates, the urgency of the contextual challenges at South Africa's universities, compounded by a complex past, makes South African HE a highly contested space; one that needs to be engaged with in a critical way. Professional developers need to engage with these imperatives and find ways to build these into their programmes.

The conceptual framing for the project proposal and plan also drew primarily on a doctoral study exploring how new academics exercise their agency and how new academics transition into HE despite contextual challenges. The critical insights from the study (Behari-Leak, 2015), on the gaps in induction processes and how they need to change, was key to the design of this project. Where pedagogy was once heavily reliant on psychological theories, they now need to be based on critical social theories (Freire, 1993; Bartolome & Macedo, 2001; Hooks, 1994) that are socially situated and highly contextual to address real issues that academics face. Social and cultural contexts in higher education and critical agents must be considered in the design and implementation of professional development programmes.

New academics are differently positioned and enabled at their point of entry and therefore require different interventions to acclimatise to university life and its requirements. In many cases, this is related to inexperience in teaching, assessments and curriculum design. Here, professional development with a

focus on teaching becomes the focus of induction and probation. In NATHEP we were very concerned about academic identity and by extension professional identity, but the latter is less about disciplinary identities and more about the "profession" of being an academic. For many, this is experienced as being stuck between a rock and a hard place as their disciplinary identity, strongest on arrival, clashes with the emerging identity as academic that they need to nurture. An architect for example might find it difficult to distinguish between the studio as a site of practice for master-apprentice as well as the university classroom, as a site of practice for teacher-student. This identity clash is compounded by a tension between being a novice and an expert simultaneously, which often is a significant challenge in the initial years in how academics exercise their agency. The NATHEP, conceptualised and optimised for induction in our context, targeted staff developers to influence their understanding of induction as a transitioning phase for inductees, into their being and becoming in relation to their agency and newness.

Activating discourses on new academic transitions

What follows is an engagement with different discourses that guided the project. These are not mere phrases or themes imposed after a literature search. In a social realist sense, these discourses are real ideas, values, belief and attitudes that people draw on when making choices about and for new academics (Fairclough et al., 2004). In this chapter, key concepts and discourses related to new academic induction are unpacked to explicate the layered meaning in this cultural domain. After each discourse is unpacked, the question of what it means for NATHEP will be addressed. In this way, the project demonstrates how it engaged with and contextualised the discourses for its work during the deliberations and implementation of the NATHEP activities over the project life cycle. This will be illustrated through the use of this symbol:

Newness

"Newness" is a complicated concept in HE. Where "new" can infer meanings of novelty, freshness and innovation, newness at a university can also draw on meanings that denote inexperience, incompetence and lack of knowledge that leave newcomers feeling like impostors (Young, 2011). Impostor syndrome is well known by new people in HE to indicate a sense of "diminished self-worth and

incompetence" as a person (Behari-Leak, 2015). This can have a debilitating effect on newcomers' engagements with peers and management in departmental settings where they need the most support. In some spaces, "new" is conflated with inexperience to the extent that it can mean that the new academic does not fully understand how things work. This stymies newcomers' chances to make informed decisions in groups as they are seen by others as still inexperienced. Many staff do not see novice academics as having a great deal to offer or contribute, especially because their position on the periphery suggests they need to cover more ground to make it to the centre (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Feeling like the proverbial deer in the headlights, new academics sometimes experience severe anxiety and a lack of confidence from those around them, especially students (Behari-Leak, 2015), When we draw on the discourse of "newness" in this way, we tend to misrecognise that newcomers have both "tacit knowledge" (Polanyi, 1983) as well as fresh views and ideas that come with them being a "stranger in a strange land" (Northridge, 2003). They are often experts already in many professional areas that benefit the institution, but they are not always enabled to bring their experiences to bear on HE practices in certain spaces. HE thus loses out on tapping into the potential of the very newcomers we deemed fit to "hire".

Being new sometimes means being treated like an initiate. There is sufficient precedence for this in the social world as one just has to look at freshman classes, first year initiation rites, etc. to make the links between newcomers and the rituals they are subjected to. We have heard of many events where initiation practices are still considered a rite of passage for newcomers to a social or professional space before they are part of the "tribe". While initiation ceremonies are now prohibited at many universities, given the grave consequences extolled on "victims", the traditions continue in subtle ways. New academics report that their "initiation" means that they are rendered silent and invisible for the first three years, not allowed to take on new projects alone, not given space to have their voices heard in staff meetings and have to prove themselves before departments and managers trust them (Behari-Leak, 2015) especially with funded projects or other high stakes deliverables. Heads of department are hypervigilant regarding evaluations of newcomers by students, even when little support in teaching is offered or available to them.

Newness also depends on perceptions, needs and expectations that new academics have of others. A new academic to HE can be very different to an academic new to the institution. Where one finds themselves on their career trajectory can influence how one navigates newness. Being new is also linked to how new academics are perceived and perceive themselves. Early adopters have a more confident edge and present themselves more forthrightly. Those more reticent tend to wait in the wings until they are stronger (O'Meara, Lounder & Campbell, 2014).

When new academics join HE from research-rich environments or industry, they

come in as experts in their own right (Sales, 2014). While they might be new to HE, they are not new to the world of work. This can lead to a clash of professional and academic worlds, especially if there is a perceived loss of status from expert to newcomer in joining a university (Boyd, 2010). This can also lead the newly appointed academic to feel all the insecurities that come with being a novice. While many universities have put in place some form of induction or orientation, research indicates that the increasing academic staff turnover that results in a revolving door syndrome, is due to a lack of institutional support for their academic roles (Watanabe & Falci, 2016). Being experts and novices at the same time can make new academics both vulnerable and robust (Tierney, 2003). Where newcomers enter from cognate fields like information technology (IT) and computer science, newness can be an advantage as those coming in are seen as having had exposure to the latest technologies and modus operandi. The protocols and traditions at universities however are very different to those in industry. Institutional innovation and cultural practices churn slowly. Newcomers have to adjust to how (slowly) things are done in the institution even while they are called on to share their expertise in different educational and professional settings that require an extremely fast pace (Levine & Moreland, 2013).

The concept of "newness" can thus be an enabler and a constraint in how new academics navigate their transitions and how they mediate obstacles. Where newly appointed academics are research-active with little experience of teaching in higher education, they can feel a threatened sense of wellbeing and uncertainty in developing an academic identity that balances research and teaching, in the context of unsupported demands and work overload (Mathieson et al., 2023). While being knowledgeable in their respective disciplinary fields, being new to HE and the university classroom makes it difficult for them to make contextual and conceptual shifts into their classrooms, where they must make critical decisions that sometimes have a negative impact on the social inclusion of students (Behari-Leak et al., 2019).

Key to academic induction is "identity work" regarding the many hats a new academic must wear. Professional development programmes must recognise that new university teachers more than others need to do "identity work" by "making and remaking their identities" from novice to expert to establish themselves in their new environment and culture (Trowler & Knight 2000, p.34). Identity formation usually emerges in the initial period of becoming a university teacher, when the professional typically retains an identity as a professional in a new context, for example, as an architect or physiotherapist (Boyd, 2010) expert. In the transition period, newcomers redefine their identity, for example, as "architect teacher", in which they integrate their identity as professionals with their new career identity as academics. Professional development programmes for induction must engender an intentional and well-designed process of socialisation (Becher & Trowler, 2001;

Clegg, 2008; Henkel, 2000; Trowler & Knight, 2000) into the profession of teaching and the practices and expectations of this role (Boyd, 2010; Field, 2012; Janhonen & Sarja, 2005). This challenges the "expert to novice" discourse, suggesting that there is a complementary relationship between previous practitioner and the new teacher identity, theorised as moving from first order (practice setting) to second-order practitioner (within a higher education setting) (Murray & Male, 2005). The downfall, however, in trying to engage with the university as a structural entity, is that new academics identify strong social and cultural factors that affect their sense of agency (Kahn, 2009).

What does the discourse of *newness* mean for NATHEP?

NATHEP was sensitive to the importance of identity formation that engages with the complex, dynamic set of demands on the new academic. New therefore cannot be conflated with level of experience. Academics can be new to HE but still have a range of experiences in related fields. NATHEP was also acutely aware of how the transition period influences choices newcomers make as novices. Given Wenger's (2008) argument on the profound connection between identity and practice, NATHEP emphasised that induction curricula must be aware that most academics enter HE while still holding on to a professional practitioner identity aligned to their discipline or field of study. It can become conflicting and confusing to navigate the institutional and curriculum spaces as university teachers of the discipline. This suggests that academic induction is critical in providing a space that supports multiple identity shifts as academics continuously construct and reconstruct their reflective teacher, researcher and scholar identities. NATHEP asserts the need for professional development induction programmes to provide a physical and conceptual space (embedded in teaching and learning curricula) which supports this transition (Kandlbinder, 2011; Knight, 2002; Ramsden, 2003; Scheckle, 2014).

While induction programmes are successful in being geared towards a meaningful introduction into teaching, these are sometimes too generic (Behari-Leak, 2017). Challenges faced by new academics and the tensions of juggling multiple roles and identities are not covered by generic interventions. Induction programmes that encourage and educate individuals to take responsibility for their socialisation can enhance positive outcomes. What is missing, from a NATHEP perspective, is specific induction into cognate areas that respond to unique university and regional contexts. Much of the literature from the Global North assumes that the curriculum and content of induction-to-teaching applies universally across the globe. Context really does matter and how new academics understand and respond to the South African context, for example, given its apartheid and colonial

legacy might be vastly different to a new academic in Sweden, embedded in a different historical and cultural milieu. In South Africa, professional development programmes include topics on diversity, language, culture, interpersonal skills, literacy practices, classroom management, innovation, and technology and challenge discourses such as underpreparedness, students as customers etc.

NATHEP has a keen focus on critical agents (Postma, 2015) and critical professional development (Kohli et al., 2015). Contextualised induction shapes the extent to which new academics feel they can exercise their agency in their departments and faculties, based on what they have encountered in the induction programme. Many new academics who are grateful for the support will admit pedagogical or curriculum knowledge gained in professional developmental spaces is not easy to link to disciplinary ways of knowing and doing, making it difficult to transport the knowledge gleaned (Fanghanel, 2007; Kahn, 2009; Mathieson, 2011), without guidance from professional development interventions.

Induction programmes need to be designed so that academics can problematise 'newness' in relation to how they enter HE and what they see as their roles in influencing change. Being (new) in the classroom is not only about the personal and affective domain but involves the epistemic. Critical thinking about how knowledge is structured, reinterpreted and facilitated for different cohorts of students (Bernstein, 2000; Gamble, 2006; Maton, 2008) is needed. More recently, universities have been called on to decolonise their curricula (Maldonado-Torres, 2007) to focus on whose knowledge interests are served. Newcomers need to engage with epistemic injustice (Fricker, 2007), epistemic access (Morrow, 2009) and inclusion (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018). Inability to have some mastery of these aspects in relation to the university teaching role could mean perpetuating social and epistemic injustice and exclusion unwittingly. A lack of engagement with these aspects restricts the ability of new academics to exercise agency in being innovative in facilitating effective curriculum change and learning for their students.

Transitioning

Historically, the transitioning process of new academics into the university is sometimes not afforded the luxury of time and care as the "business" of the university does not allow for it. The aim is to get newcomers up to speed quickly. From management's perspective, induction should be a once-off event even though management does see newcomers' transitioning as a way to shape the attitudes and behaviour of the people they employ (Scheckle, 2014). Viewed as an organisational HR function, new academics are onboarded through orientation

or welcome sessions to give them information to "hit the ground running". Hitting the ground running is not easy when historical differences make the ground itself uneven and unstable. Like shifting sands, new contextual challenges are faced daily. Given the disparate entry points based on newcomers' background and prior learning, there is no foolproof recipe or formula for inducting academics into a space that is contested, fraught with challenges and often complex even for established staff.

"Transitioning" can be as long or short as needed provided it is a process and not an ad hoc or arbitrary compliance exercise (Hurst, 2010). There are limited opportunities available for ongoing professional development with a process-oriented approach. The time taken to transition has consequences for other aspects of newcomers' professional life. Many HE induction programmes do not provide a much-needed intensive professional development for newly appointed lecturers (Wong, Britton & Ganser, 2005) to transition well, with new lecturers often left in isolation to work through the challenges within their own classrooms. Academia, it seems, is the only professional system that does not support its newcomers in discovering how to do what they will spend most of their time doing (Reddy et al., 2016). Not being properly inducted to their university roles can have serious consequences for the newcomer and for the ecosystem in which they work.

How the academic community draws on the discourse of transitioning places new academics in a dubious position. In the transition phase, newcomers are seen to be in a state of limbo, neither here nor there. This liminal state is not always considered an advantage or a zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1979) but seen rather as murky waters in which one swims or sinks (Rust, 1991). To be a transitioner as a new academic is to deal with unwarranted assumptions from colleagues and line managers about one's capacity and capability; often casting aspersions and doubt on one's ability to do the job well (Cangelosi, Crocker & Sorrell, 2009). Again, for new academics who straddle the murkiness of being experts (in their fields) and novices (new in HE) simultaneously (Jansen, 2010), this might be an overwhelming task. Apart from managing their own discomfort, the HE context into which they are being inducted is complex. What makes it complex is that what it means to be an academic in South Africa in HE is complicated by the political, economic, financial, social and cultural complexity in HE and society at large (HESA, 2011; Waghid, 2001; Badat, 2011).

What does transitioning mean for NATHEP?

The process of transition, which sometimes needs to be slow, is often neglected by institutions who tend to focus on a rapid immersion into all aspects of the job without dedicated time for proper induction and introduction. Transitioning, as an important temporal and spatial segue in the career trajectories of new academics, should not be fast tracked, ignored, minimised or dismissed. Probation periods extend over three years in some cases, but little transitioning support is provided in this time. Research shows that employees who enter a fairly stable and well-oiled machine through well-designed induction processes have a better chance of learning the ropes quicker and transitioning more effectively (Mathieson et al., 2023). Through NATHEP, staff developers are acutely aware that new academics need to be inducted into the academy in much more structured and deliberate ways than in the past (Quinn & Vorster, 2012). The Higher Education Studies field recognises these challenges and has worked rigorously and in a scholarly way to canvas and advocate for professional development for new lecturers through postgraduate diplomas to become an established feature of higher education, nationally and internationally (Gosling & Hannan, 2007; Fanghanel & Trowler, 2007). In an era of a neoliberal sensibility, employees today (Adams, 2023) are looking for more humane policies, more aligned leadership, more connectedness, and more meaning. To this end, NATHEP encourages induction as a process of supported, guided and meaningful orientation to teaching as part of the slow movement (Kahneman, 2013).

Transitioning through a well-considered induction programme should ideally be a gradual process, like a period of probation that allows newcomers to find their way from novice on the periphery to the expert positioned at the centre of the community (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Professional development programmes with an emphasis on identity and "journey" work would be optimal. Through NATHEP, staff developers are made aware of the need to slow down processes that will enable newcomers, from different backgrounds and entry points, a fair chance of learning how to be an academic in a supportive environment. This is not to suggest that staff developers will hold newcomers' hands throughout their transitioning process, but it does propose that there is empathy and understanding of the challenges that newcomers face and strategies to help them overcome these processes that will enable newcomers from different backgrounds and entry points a fair chance of learning how to be an academic in a supportive environment. This is not to suggest that staff developers will hold newcomers' hands throughout their transitioning process, but it does propose that there is empathy and understanding of the challenges that newcomers face and strategies to help them overcome these.

Induction

Although sometimes used interchangeably with orientation or onboarding, induction refers to the act of combining people, process and technology to optimise the effect that newcomers have on business outcomes (Snell, 2006). An induction process is slightly different to onboarding in that it usually encompasses the very beginning of the new employee's work life, whereas onboarding can stretch to a year and beyond. Induction can also focus more on introducing the new starter to the role and what is expected of them, while onboarding considers more of the wider organisational culture (Adams, 2023). Induction may be viewed through many lenses but it should not be inconsequential to the effects on the academic project and its relation to student success.

When we view induction through a business or corporate lens, it is easy to see how new employees can be perceived as cogs in a machine to increase efficiency, productivity and the bottom line. Where induction is seen as the initial organisational training (Klein & Weaver, 2000) with appropriate content, process, support and follow-up to improve employee retention and brand identity (Brodie et al., 2007), its value is a direct link between new employee talent and productivity (Hendricks, 2009). This neoliberal discourse focuses on efficiency by reducing employee vulnerability and staff turnover (Butler, 2008) while increasing profit making potential (Fritz & Vonderfecht, 2007), customer satisfaction, professional socialisations and a sense of belonging (Killeavy, 2006). Linked to their use in industry, human resources departments in universities approach induction as the process of getting new employees acquainted with the "business", helping them to settle in and giving them the information required for them to become a valuable team member (Adams, 2023). By introducing new employees to the organisation, their work department and their jobs, they are inducted into the organisational culture by receiving and obtaining information, values and behavioural skills associated with their new role (Byars & Rue, 2001).

The question is whether the university is a business, programmed on a technocratic, managerialist logic, or something entirely different. If induction is seen as instrumentalist, it will place the focus on technical skills. This performative thrust leads to alienation and disengagement between the act of teaching, the person doing the teaching and the person learning. Performative processes might then be transferred to the classroom to foreground management, competencies, evaluation, tips and techniques, classroom control and discipline instead of deep engagement with knowledge and being.

When we look at induction through an efficiency lens, as discussed above, we place the onus on the individual newcomer to do what is needed to become productive in the shortest required time. This makes the induction of new academics especially

complex as it locates the deficit that accompanies being a new university teacher in the incumbent, whether it is lack of knowledge about the institution, teaching, classroom practice or working with students. The perceived remedy is a dominant focus on the "doing" rather than the "being and becoming of academics in their practice, university employment and identity formation" (Ennals, Fortune, Williams & D'Cruz, 2015, p.5). Traditional, one-size-fits-all induction that focuses on the "doing" of academic practice leaves individuals unequally prepared for academic life (Billot & King, 2017). Personalised, professional scaffolding for scholarly development as part of a more supportive academic culture should be the goal of induction (Billot & King, 2017).

Induction programmes that focus on new academics in their teaching and academic roles are usually provided by the universities' higher education development or teaching and learning centres who have the specialist knowledge and expertise to provide academic/ professional support to students and staff. Given the unequal distribution of material resources and human capacity across the HE sector, academic development (AD) units are differentially resourced, with practitioners themselves differently trained and prepared for their roles, resulting in a very wide range of competing conceptualisations of what it means to be an academic staff developer in HE today. Sometimes these understandings are not aligned with the national goals for transformation or decolonisation, and this significantly influences the way professional developers induct and support new academics in their teaching roles, especially those with no prior experience in HE teaching. How new university teachers are prepared for teaching affects their sense of self and belonging in the academy, which is in turn reflected in how they engage with students and their learning.

When we view induction through a colonial lens, it could be seen as a socialising process into the organisation that acculturates, subjugates and denies one's identity (Spivak, 2016). This can lead newcomers to inhabit dispositions incongruent with their sense of self which in turn can cause cognitive damage (Amin et al., 2016). Alienation and detachment create a deep sense of alterity (Mafeje, 1998) where fitting in and becoming like the rest is favoured over respecting the individuality and uniqueness of each newcomer and the diversity they bring. If any academic is denied their full ontological density, there is little opportunity for teaching and learning to advance and innovate in ways that expand the sector in meaningful ways. What we then have is induction on a conveyor belt of reproduction, which provides a false sense of stability to the university but an increased sense of compliance, mimicry and reductionism (Wa Bofelo, 2017) to staff and students. Countering coloniality requires induction processes to recognise newcomers as whole human beings with ontological depth: personal, social, educational, professional and spiritual who have to in turn work with epistemological depth with disciplines, curricula, and learners.

What does induction mean for NATHEP?

In many ways HE uses the HR definition of induction (above) to describe its value proposition for the organisation. Many HEIs only offer an HR-focused induction, which is very different to the induction practice that NATHEP is concerned with, namely induction provided by staff developers with a focus on the academic, intellectual, cultural and social transition into the HE field. Induction into the HE field and the classroom require a different set of practices and goals that prepare new academics for life in the classroom.

One cannot assume that new lecturers will become effective educators, with the requisite pedagogical knowledge about teaching, learning, assessment, curriculum and quality frameworks, as well as understand the student experience and integration of research, scholarship, and professional activities with teaching and learning (Fanghanel & Trowler 2007; HEA, 2006; Ramsden, 2003), by osmosis. Even early adopters struggle with this transition and upskilling. Transitioning is a process that needs to be treated with due consideration for who is being inducted and into which context and university system. Universities have listened and successful completion of such programmes is a now requirement of probation (Sales, 2014; Stefani, 2004) at many institutions.

NATHEP is supportive of contextualised induction, which enables not only an understanding but being effective with university culture, departmental practices, policies and guidelines. The South African HE context demands a conscious shift towards the enhancement of the new academic as a knower and the academic being coming to know to enable enhanced ways of doing (Ndebele, 2013) to help new employees settle into the organisation. In the South African literature, Wadesango and Machingambi (2011) speak of induction enabling an understanding of university and national ethos and culture. Ardts and Jansen (2001) value effective and efficient socialisation for new academics to develop relevant institutional attitudes and behaviours. Hendricks and Louw-Potgieter (2012) agree, and suggest employee social networks being established via induction programmes. Steyn and Van Niekerk (2005) call for induction to create a community of learners comprising experienced and new academics continuously working towards improving their practice. Mlindazwe (2010) asks for programmes to focus on academic confidence and competence to enhance employee value and respect. Given the concern in South African HE with academic retention and institutional quality, NATHEP pays attention to induction programmes that provide emotional, social, academic and institutional environmental support (Kelley, 2004).

Kandlbinder and Peseta (2011), drawing on a research survey on higher education teaching and learning across Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom, identified five concepts that hold "key" status in professional development courses for most academics, new and established: reflective practice, constructive alignment, student approaches to learning, scholarship of teaching, and assessment-driven learning. NATHEP brings into focus these various layers and strands of induction, necessary to differentiate induction from HR onboarding processes, which are not located in the university classroom.

Context matters

"Global South" is not just a geographical concept. It is geopolitical, historical and developmental, all at the same time (Jacob, 2023). Many countries included in the Global South are in the northern hemisphere, such as India, China and all of those in the northern half of Africa. Australia and New Zealand, both in the southern hemisphere, are not regarded as being part of the "Global South", which tends to describe countries with a relatively low level of economic and industrial development, typically located to the south of more industrialised nations, with lower levels of technology and resources. The Global South is not an entity that exists per se but has to be understood as something that is created, imagined, invented, maintained, and recreated by the ever-changing and never-fixed status positions of social actors and institutions.

While the term has been critiqued for oversimplifying challenges faced by marginalised communities, it has explanatory power to account for actions of agents and social actors who consider themselves to be in subaltern(ised) positionalities of global networks of power (Spivak, 2016; Mignolo, 2007). In linking this to critical professional development practitioners (PDPs) that are contextualised, there are huge opportunities for new modes of knowledge production. This is even further enriched if context and positionality are used as levers (Manathunga , 2017) to provide causal reasoning and through that, a spectrum of agential options for professionalising HE in ways that are relevant and socially just.

If social justice is what is needed, where we hold a concern for individuals as well as the broader issues of race, gender, sexuality, (dis)ability, religion, ethnicity, nationality, social class, and other divisive differences in society (Griffiths, 2003), then we need social actors who have a sense of their own agency as well as a sense of responsibility towards others, their society and the broader world in which we live (Adams et al., 2007). In other words, what is needed in the South African context is a "critical agency", where one's voluntary and purposeful actions as an educator respond to the wider historical, social and political context in

the service of educating students to be thoughtful, active citizens (Giroux, 1988). Critical agency and social justice lenses are often not readily included in current induction practices or in the repertoire of academic staff development as a field (de Kadt, 2019). Critical agency, in the context of education, explores how agency is linked to identity and social justice, especially in shaping pre-service teachers' understanding of their role in addressing issues like racism and sexism by enabling teachers to recognise and challenge inequities in the classroom, thus promoting more socially just educational practices (Francis & Le Roux, 2011). In Postma's (2015) perspective, informed by Foucault (2000), critical agency is about resisting dominant power structures and imagining alternative ways of being. It is not just about recognising systems of control but also exercising freedom by developing new modes of thinking and acting, particularly within educational contexts.

To be critical professional developers, we need to stand outside of our histories and examine our epistemological and ontological assumptions (Bartolomé, 2004; Haggis, 2003). For staff developers and new academics to enunciate and act from a place that locates them, conceptually, culturally and epistemically in a legitimate space of belonging, means that the changes that can occur will probably be high impact, authentic and poignant. Generic ways of induction, transitioning and mediating newness are made potent if one is clear about what one is doing in relation to context.

What does the Global South/African context mean for NATHEP?

Working in a context located in the Global South and in Africa, NATHEP was intentional in situating and positioning professional development for induction as a Global South endeavour that is contextualised. The point has been made already that induction cannot be decontextualised. It needs to consider context as key. To neglect this can negatively affect new academics' sense of self and belonging. If PDPs are presented as universal truths that apply generically to new academics everywhere, it means that newcomers have to do the heavy lifting themselves in trying to understand how they fit into a complex context. Using frameworks from the Global North as a springboard, NATHEP went further by using its own critical framework to ensure that these five layers (Kandlbinder & Peseta, 2011) and others are deeply connected to and ensconced in relevant context, so that choices made are not generic and respond directly to real challenges that students face in their learning.

NATHEP aspired to shape staff developers as critical agents, who according to Francis and Le Roux (2011) are transformative intellectuals, who combine scholarly reflection and practice to critically examine the world and its processes, including the political and educational institutions that maintain social inequalities, and subsequently transform it (Giroux and McLaren, 1996; Ladson-Billings, 1995).

NATHEP encouraged staff developers to consider what a contextualised pedagogical engagement could look like as part of induction. Decontextualised induction promotes disengagement with who is doing the engaging and who is being engaged (Behari-Leak, 2020).

NATHEP promoted a critical, conscious, fully present and socially aware engagement to challenge the power dynamics prevalent but hidden within a university's structural and cultural spaces. It further challenged traditional induction participation as often being docile, passive and conformist, while assimilating recipients of information. NATHEP encouraged considered methodological selection and creation to contextually engage a critically conscious relational thinker and academic scholar capable of generating, producing and disseminating new knowledge. This was critical also for NATHEP's African-centred approach, which locates Global South HE as part of the continent that has historically had to defend and advance its own social justice, epistemic justice, decolonisation etc to assert itself as a credible and authentic creator of new knowledge and practices that respond to context sensitively and meaningfully.

Given the cultural register embedded in induction and its related discourses, NATHEP was intentional in excavating assumptions, bias and archaic views related to induction practices in our context. Based on a cascading model of staff development where the ultimate beneficiaries, namely students, are able to thrive and succeed under the tutelage of capacitated academics, who in turn are supported by institutions' professional development units and practitioners, NATHEP's first task was to unsettle hegemonic assumptions and knowledge held by the 20 academic staff developers in this project. If the aim is to support staff developers to initiate and convene well-theorised and conceptualised induction programmes in their institutional contexts, to address historical and systemic challenges and to contribute to the transformation of higher education, we needed to see how much of transformation was needed of the self, first.

NATHEP argues that the curriculum design for induction needs to be contextually and theoretically responsive to encourage academics to take up their responsibility and agency within a new context and self-direct professional learning opportunities for socio-academic integration to enhance positive work experiences

Conclusion

This chapter focused on the main discourses that guide and influence our choices in professional development programmes and in our understanding of what professionalising HE means. In NATHEP, being acutely aware of these contested discourses, the project homed in on whether academic staff/professional developers, eager to see change, could conceptualise and reimagine an alternative theorisation and creation of critical-social induction programmes that focuses on context. We encouraged the view that induction, like other processes, needs to create conducive conditions for the uptake of critical agency by academics, new and established. In both disciplinary and departmental programmes where the structural and cultural contexts might act as catalysts that advance or dampen efforts to effect meaningful change, induction programmes for new academics need to be contextualised, legitimate, relevant, responsive and critical.