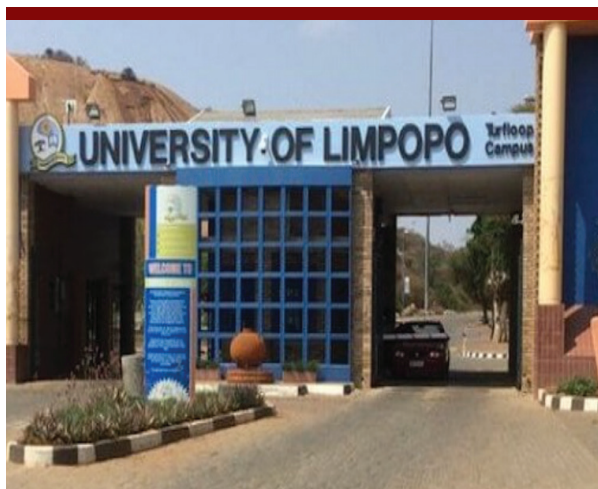


# CHAPTER SIX

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## UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO



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## Turning the Tides of New Academic Staff Induction at the University of Limpopo

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Owence Chabaya, Evelyne Chia and Kasturi Behari-Leak

### Introduction

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It is widely recognised that the South African (SA) university system currently experiences severe challenges in relation to size, composition and capacity of its academic staff largely due to the loss of staff owing to retirement, death, emigration and moves to other sectors (SSAUF, 2015). Likewise, Samuel and Chipunza (2013) say competition for top academics across the higher education (HE) and research landscape of South Africa has assumed a prominent dimension, resulting in the ever-increasing fluidity of such seasoned employees within institutions. These factors compel some institutions to recruit young and inexperienced staff. Such new staff need professional learning programmes that will assist them to be more effective in their teaching. HE institutions across SA offer various academic staff development programmes aimed at promoting quality teaching and learning (T&L). One of the programmes offered to new staff upon joining an institution is a new staff induction programme. This induction programme is meant to welcome staff, increase their sense of belonging to their new environment, provide space for interaction, engagements, and networking opportunities, boost morale and support their professional development (Hendricks & Louw-Potgieter, 2012; Ndebele, 2013; Wadesango & Machingambi, 2011). New staff induction facilitates the professional development of staff and aims to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. This can be achieved by exposing academics to new ideas and strategies relating to how to teach and enable students to learn better in diverse ways (Dall'Alba, 2017; Luckett, 2012).

Another critical area of induction is the context of the institution within which the academics work as this has considerable influence upon their practice. However, this is not usually included, as the induction mainly focuses on teaching quality improvements and the individual development of academics (Leibowitz & Bozalek, 2014; Price & Kirkwood, 2013). Kirkwood and Richardson (2016) emphasise that to appreciate the complexity of teaching in HE, it is necessary to adopt a holistic approach, noting individual differences in conceptions around T&L, the sociocultural and the structural context within which the staff work, and the relationship between these conditions. Also, new staff entering HE would benefit if teaching in a postcolonial classroom is discussed in the induction. Therefore, induction should enable new academics to understand enablers and constraints of university settings and how these influence their practice. New academics should be assisted to see their potential as change agents who can respond to challenges

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across disciplines, backgrounds and institutional contexts in HE (Behari-Leak, 2017; Englund et al., 2018).

At the University of Limpopo (UL), it seemed that the old influences the new, which leads to a recycling of same ideas. Most of the new staff members were once students at the University. These new staff members were products of elderly academics still adhering to traditional ways: silencing students' voices and having the power to control them in their roles as departmental academics. Naively, novices do as their old professors did, without questioning the systems. Obviously, these scenarios unfortunately stifle innovation, creativity and growth for both new staff and students. This case study examines how a previous staff induction programme at UL was transformed into a theorised one after interactions and influence from the New Academics Transitioning into Higher Education Project (NATHEP) participation. This chapter will proceed with situating the UL case and explain the sequence of the induction phases as the journey unfolded as follows:

- The UL induction before NATHEP (T1). This section discusses the context, assumptions and the characteristics of the generic induction.
- Colleagues' interactions during the NATHEP sessions (T2-T3) elaborates on the key interactions and thought-provoking engagements with the NATHEP SC members and other academic developers who took part in the programme.
- The induction after NATHEP with all its embellishments (T4) explains the implementation of what was learned and all the changes that took place towards the new theorised induction.
- The synopsis of the UL Induction Journey in figure format will be shown. This is followed by key takeaway points of the chapter and a conclusion.

### **Situating the case study**

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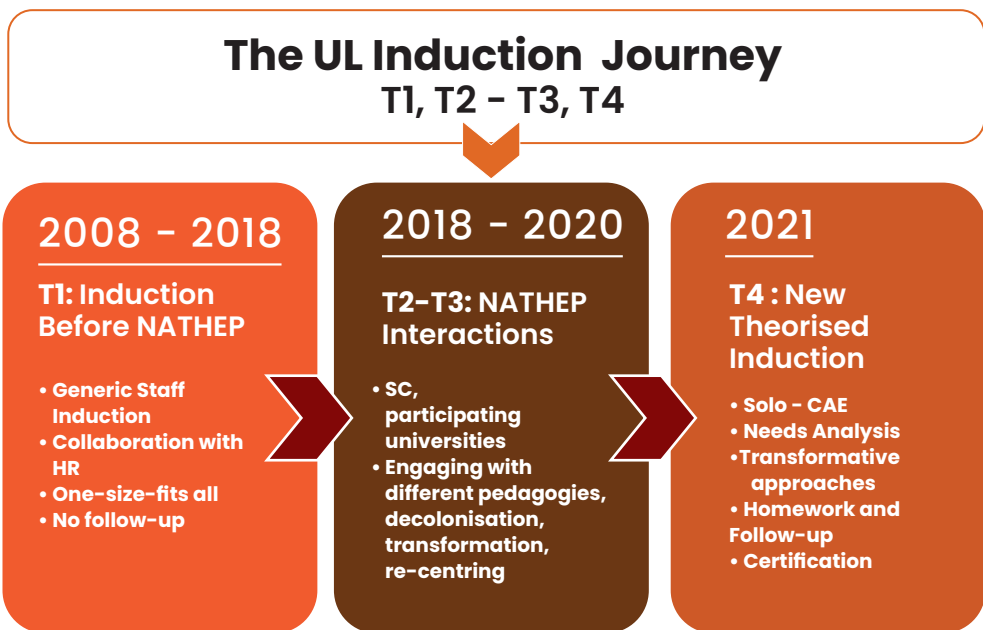
This case study is based on the induction processes at UL, where the authors are academic developers (ADs). The two ADs participated in a national project, the New Academic Transitioning into Higher Education Project (NATHEP), which had the aim of providing professional development training for ADs in relation to inducting new academics. The programme sought to better understand how induction practices were conceptualised and delivered in the 10 participating national universities. It offers a critical analysis of the generic new staff induction that was being offered at UL and the customised new staff induction that was eventually developed after interactions with NATHEP. The latter emphasises the importance of considerations around structure, culture and agency if authentic, transformative T&L is to be achieved. The case study will take the reader on a UL contextual journey of the former and subsequent induction programmes. The main focus of the case

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study is efforts towards improved induction through a sequencing of the following morphogenetic phases:

- T1 (Induction before NATHEP – context: enabling factors and constraints, and the induction)
- T2-3 (Interactions during NATHEP)
- T4 (Induction after NATHEP with all its embellishments)

Please note that T (alongside the numbers 1, 2, 3 and 4) is a symbol used to denote time, indicating the sequencing of the UL induction phases.



**Figure 29** The journey of the UL induction phases

### **T1: institutional and induction context before NATHEP**

The section presents an introduction to the institutional and induction context, and all that transpired before UL's participation in NATHEP.

#### **Institutional context**

The University of Limpopo, formerly known as University of the North, was established in 1959 under the apartheid regime's policy of creating separate, ethnically-based institutions of higher learning. The university is situated about 30 kilometres east of Polokwane City at Turfloop, Mankweng. This area is also known as SOVENGA,

owing to the area's three predominant ethnic groups, namely, Sotho, Venda and Tsonga. Most of the student population come from rural communities dominated by speakers of Sepedi, Xitsonga, Tshivenda and IsiSwati, who come mainly from the Limpopo and Mpumalanga provinces. The remaining students are from other parts of the country (North-West, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Free State, Northern Cape), and both neighbouring and far-flung countries (Zimbabwe, Swaziland, Zambia, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria).

UL is classified as a traditional rural university with most of its students coming from disadvantaged backgrounds and many not being competent in English, the official language of instruction. This, coupled with socio-economic problems, creates serious challenges that negatively influence the academic preparedness of students, leading to high failure and dropout rates. Petersen et al. (2009) highlight how dropout rates tend to be higher for students who come from disadvantaged backgrounds and low socio-economic populations because of poor adjustment to tertiary academic and social environments. This is evident at UL, with a large number of African students who were schooled in rural communities and who come from disadvantaged backgrounds.

In 2015, the University had 18 907 students, of which 18 894 were Black, three were Coloured, five were Indian, and five were White, as reflected in the Higher Education Management Information System (HEMIS) database (HEMIS, 2016). Most students from disadvantaged backgrounds found themselves facing increasing challenges such as lack of access to online technology, compromises around connectivity and data necessary for online learning. The situation was exacerbated by COVID-19 at the beginning of 2020 when most of the teaching and learning had to be taken online. Students who came from such disadvantaged communities needed more academic attention to curb high dropout rates. To achieve this, academics should not only be aware of such context and these considerations but should also be well trained and supported to carry out their roles and responsibilities in enabling student access and success.

The history and location of the university negatively affects staffing, as most of the recruited academics do not remain employed at the institution for very long. Furthermore, a lack of effective and efficient infrastructure contributes to a lack of expertise retention. Some experienced and knowledgeable teachers feel that they cannot work for long in rural areas. Accordingly, the location of the institution works against its desired principles of transformation, since people who bring change and different ways of working seldom remain employed at the institution. Given this high staff turnover, the institution resorts to recruiting young, inexperienced staff who need a well-planned induction programme that supports them to be effective, reflective teachers. This was the motivation behind UL's New Academic Staff Induction Programme for the new academic.

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## **Assumptions about new staff before NATHEP**

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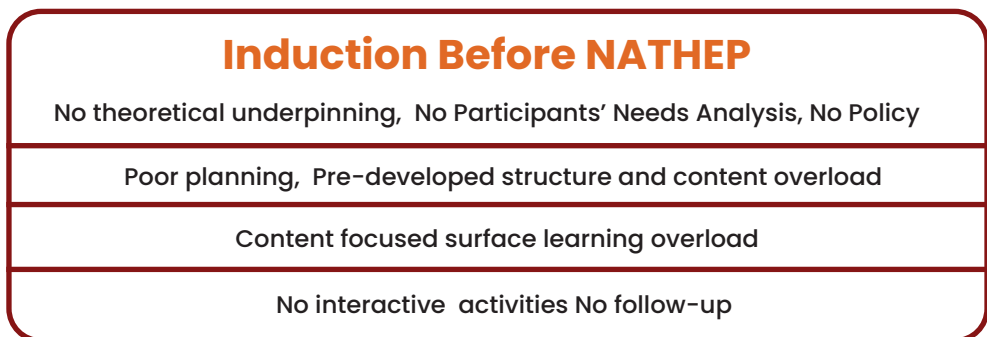
Generally, academics in South Africa and globally seldom have formal training as teachers (CHE, 2017). Most get recruited on the basis of their specialised subject knowledge, while pedagogic abilities are given lesser consideration. At UL, these academics will encounter students mostly from “disadvantaged” backgrounds, with reading and writing challenges, gaps in conceptual knowledge, a lack of critical thinking skills, and who are in dire need of language support and development (Boughey, 2005). Such staff need to be prepared to engage with issues related to students at risk and in need of support. If academics are from historically white institutions, recruits may be overwhelmed by differences in institutional culture and structures. Staff induction then should equip these inductees to embody their professional roles in socially aware ways. Christie et al. (2007) acknowledge that this is a long process; there are neither quick fixes nor a one-size-fits-all formula.

The University of Limpopo believes that for effective and efficient in-service delivery, all employees must be taken through a comprehensive induction process. Previously, the Centre for Academic Excellence (CAE) organised the new staff induction, in collaboration with the human resources (HR) division. The purpose of induction was to integrate new employees into both the organisational culture of the institution and their roles in the organisation, which had to be done quickly and effectively. The induction took place twice a year; one in each semester, usually around March and September. Both CAE and HR were responsible for planning and executing induction annually. From its initiation in 2008, the induction was conducted for five days, with the first three days allocated for HR and the last two days for CAE. While HR dealt with employment and labour issues, CAE dealt with teaching and learning issues. This introduced new academics to key aspects of learning, teaching and assessment, policies, approaches and practices in HE, and research practices. The intention was to transform academics and in turn both transform students to become lifelong learners and engage in ongoing evaluation of their practice. The three days with HR were known as general orientation for all newly appointed academic and non-academic staff. These HR sessions introduced staff to various departments, finance, and HR policies and procedures. The HR orientation additionally helped new staff understand the hierarchy of the institution, and different divisions such as quality assurance, library, safety and security, finance and HR. While HR formed an important function through the induction, CAE had specific expectations of induction as an intervention to introduce new appointees to the university classroom.

Despite there being an induction programme at UL, there were a number of weaknesses which remained ignored for some time due to not having a clear policy on these issues. For example, there were operational challenges such as the manner in which sessions were organised and facilitated, having to work with

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HR on their terms while also having a limited number of days allocated for the academic teaching and learning portion of the induction. Subsequently, a draft submission was made to senate, and the policy, at the time of writing, is still a work in progress. Due to a shortage of staff within CAE at times, there was no proper planning of the induction programme. It became more of a congested information dumping session for new staff. During induction, traditional basic facilitation modes were used to speedily complete topics in the programme, with neither deep learning tasks nor follow-up workshops given. Mostly, topics were determined by expertise available to facilitate the programme rather than the needs of inductees. The completion of the programme was primary, which meant rushing through, compromising understanding, and attending to arising teaching and learning topics in an ad hoc manner through group work or general discussions. There was also low staff turnout. In addition, the practice was the same every year. We did not consider that the staff who came in were different and had diverse needs, and there was no innovation in how induction was thought about or delivered. At the end of induction, participants were given questionnaires to evaluate the workshop, but their inputs and feedback were not used to inform subsequent workshops. Certificates were issued by CAE to all inductees to acknowledge attendance, but not to recognise competence. However, it is worth noting that participants were always appreciative of what they learnt and of the space provided for discussions. This meant that the induction that existed at UL was not poor but was more of a ticking-the-box event. We did not like the way we operated but we also did not know how to improve until our participation in NATHEP presented itself. Figure 9 summarises characteristics of the generic induction:



**Figure 30** Generic induction characteristics

## **T2-T3: NATHEP interactive sessions**

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On being introduced to NATHEP, we were exposed to a number of considerations that invited us to rethink what we were doing with induction at our institution. NATHEP exposed us to work done by other AD practitioners within academic development centres in participating institutions. We were provided with various platforms to discuss issues affecting the scope of our work and we shared ideas on best practices with regards to staff induction. We were also provided with space for presentations and deep discussions of theories and practices underpinning the work of ADs. These discussions included theories such as Archer's (1995, 2019) critical realism, and how the realist attaches more meaning to structural and cultural constraints and to agential inventiveness in transforming them; Bhaskar's seven scalar (Bhaskar et al., 2018; Lotz-Sisitka, 2011), showing the patterns of emergence relations between layers as with the ADs' interactions with different stakeholders and the need for interdisciplinary wellbeing; as well as critical decolonisation and *carpe diem*. We developed an understanding that theory adds value to and informs practice since it serves as guidelines and the base for AD practitioners' practice. The NATHEP sessions helped us to transform our work, seek recognition and develop a unified voice while appreciating our own and participating institutions' differences and uniqueness. We were encouraged to disrupt the staff development status quo and develop agency.

**During sessions, academic induction was the main agenda. Engaging with this topic, we deliberated on a range of questions such as:**

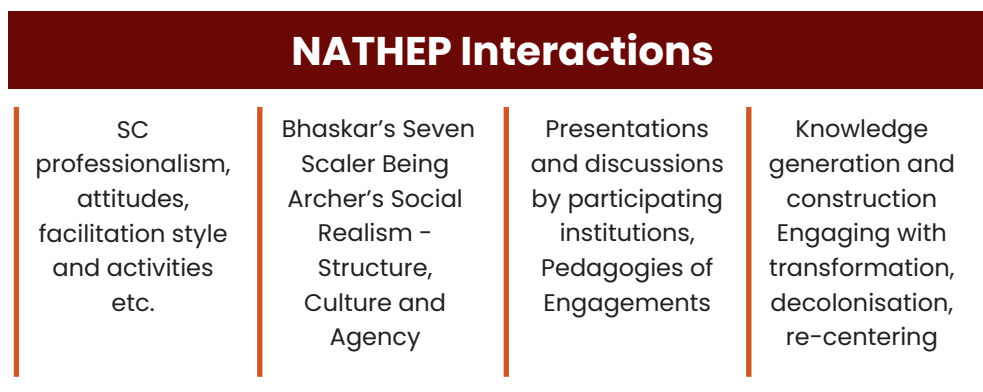
- Why induction? Induction into what, by whom and how? Why now? Who do we consider a new academic? What is involved in our induction programmes?
- What pressures are we attending to and what specific needs of academics?
- What kinds of knowledge do new staff bring into the university context and how does it affect the kind of induction we offer?
- What kind of "knowledges" do new staff in different disciplines need to access?
- What are the cultures, structures and agencies in the institution and how do Bhaskar's seven layers (Lottz-Sisitka, 2011) unfold in our institution?
- What is the duration of an induction programme? What kinds of follow-ups do we institute and do inductees really use the information beyond the induction?
- Do ADs have a voice? How is their work perceived and received? Do ADs feel supported?

NATHEP gave us access to powerful epistemologies to begin unpacking and rethinking our practices. Through interrogating these questions, we were able to

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develop an understanding and facilitation style for a holistic induction process linked to knowledge, educational pedagogies, and self. As participants, we presented our imagined inductions through a Pecha Kutcha presentation during a workshop that was hosted in Durban and we took part in the NATHEP Colloquium in 2019 in Boksburg, Johannesburg. The diagram below summarises key interactions and thought-provoking engagements.



**Figure 31** Key interactions and thought-provoking engagements at the NATHEP Colloquium

Through NATHEP processes we could reimagine and theoretically ground our induction practices. Our participation in NATHEP was invaluable to us as ADs for our work beyond new academics and into our work with academics at other stages of their academic careers.

### **T3: The implemented induction after NATHEP**

New initiatives around social transformation invited rethinking around an academics' agency within HE practices. Interplay between the context and the individual's agency was emphasized, which demonstrated that there is no "one size fits all" when it comes to different institutions, different individuals and different groups of inductees. Following the process of transformation through NATHEP, our endeavour was to reimagine our new staff induction, to conscientise and support inductees to become agents of change for both students and the institution in which they operate, and to reclaim their voices. This was meant to seek to be relevant and responsive, and what better place to start than by using Bhaskar's critical realism (Bhaskar & Norrie, 1998), as a lens for an in-depth look at structure, culture and ways of enhancing agency in a context. Transformative learning and critical reflection become necessary and, as ADs, we had to dig deep and revise not only our processes but also the content of our induction.

## Critical realism and its influence

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In this case, as authors we considered critical realist (CR) approaches in developing the newly theorised staff induction programme. CR proposes that the world is real, structured and complex. This is useful when examining aspects such as academic staff induction taking place in structured and complex institutions. Additionally, CR argues for ontology of being which is real and independent of epistemology, and contends that our reality consists of the real, the actual and the empirical. The real (structures and mechanisms) generate the actual (events) and is distinct from the empirical (experiences of humans) (Bhaskar & Norrie, 1998; Khazem, 2018).

By implication, when a new staff member joins an institution, he/she will find that it has its own managerial and operational structures and culture that drive how things should be done, and these are independent of experiences he/she brings in. Accordingly, an effective induction should include ways of making inductees aware of and enable understanding of these structures and cultures, since these mechanisms influence their actual roles in HE spaces (Quinn, 2012; Luckett, 2012)

At the outset of our reimagined induction programme, we had to look at the word “new” in relation to new staff in induction. We had to understand different dimensions of “newness” as it came across as being problematic (as there are many different dimensions to the “newness” of a newly appointed staff). The challenge was identifying and categorising these nuances, which involved asking “New to what?” and its implication with reference to teaching, HE, the university, discipline, geographical location, student type, language and so on. Hence, understanding new staff and their needs was our first priority. The first step was to request inductees to respond to a needs assessment survey, which assisted in guiding the content of induction programme. Feedback from the survey provided a sense of the degree of differences among new staff with regards to years of teaching, training received, kind of support needed and more. The next question was thinking of ways to enable new academics to exercise their agency in T&L in the new institution. This meant looking at the programme structure, length and content as narrated in the subsequent paragraphs.

Influenced by NATHEP, our greatest aim for the new induction was creating conducive environments wherein interactive engagements could occur to uplift, clarify or build positively towards a better understanding of and service to the institution, students and policies. Furthermore, engagements during the NATHEP process highlight how issues such as identity, experiences and academic roles are relevant and need to be discussed to alleviate fears; to break barriers; to question assumptions and beliefs; and to see constraints as opportunities. Such eye-opening interactions during the NATHEP workshops and the literature helped us to realise that meaningful new staff induction could be enhanced by:

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- developing new ideas of actions that could be taken in the face of challenges by pushing for open and honest discussions in a safe space;
- determining choices, preferences and adaptations that speak more to context of the new institution;
- breaking false assumptions, seeing reality by acting on rather than pointing fingers;
- using knowledge and power for greater good to transform, emancipate and be genuine to self and course; and
- discussing difficulties and enablement and finding pathways whereby teaching can occur with limited resources.

Through the NATHEP workshops we clearly saw the need to (a) bring change where needed and possibilities of learning, unlearning and relearning due to socio-cultural factors, (b) address challenges or even introduce teaching practices that were innovative, and (c) enable new discourses that can be utilised for (dis)continuity of good practice. From the above, it can be seen that being responsive, relevant, authentic, caring and sharing – as per the NATHEP CRITicAL Framework – was our focus.

### **The new staff induction: what changed**

After the interaction with NATHEP, several changes occurred. The following details explain what we explored at NATHEP, and how CAE set about transforming the UL induction.

- Going solo: firstly, we considered time needed for induction, which necessitated a break away from HR involvement. We sent out a call to the entire university, specifying it was the new academic staff induction. To date, all is well and we continue the status quo of facilitating induction on our own.
- Time-frame changes: we changed from two to four/five sessions, and additional follow-up during the year. This is further discussed below.
- Needs survey questionnaire and analysis: we provided a programme that was not only relevant to all but attempts to respond to needs of new staff.
- Programme and content: the programme is run in a venue outside campus to ensure that the inductees stay focused and are not distracted by students. The content is delivered by various relevant divisions in the institution.
- Student voices and support services: were invited to sensitise new staff.
- Changes that occurred are further diagrammatically shown in Figure 32, which summarises our new induction:

## Key Changes in UL Induction

Going solo &  
Time-frame  
changes

Needs survey  
questionnaire  
and analysis

Programme  
and Content &  
Facilitation and  
Engagements

Student voices  
and Support  
services

Figure 32 Key changes in UL induction

### New staff induction survey (needs analysis)

A needs analysis was required to begin understanding what “new” could mean for academics, ADs and for the induction process. This gives vital information to inform not only the induction process but future needs of “new” academics. Through responses provided by the survey, a customised induction that was more appropriate, relevant and responsive was created. To better support new staff at UL, we believe that knowing and understanding them (employee) better will enable us to be relevant and responsive to their needs. Accordingly, a needs analysis survey questionnaire was created with a variety of questions, ranging from training as a teacher, current roles and responsibilities, teaching philosophy and approaches, to challenges and skills or opportunities relevant for new staff to teach effectively. Selection of their preferred topics (from the list below) gives them some ownership of the programme and secures buy-in.

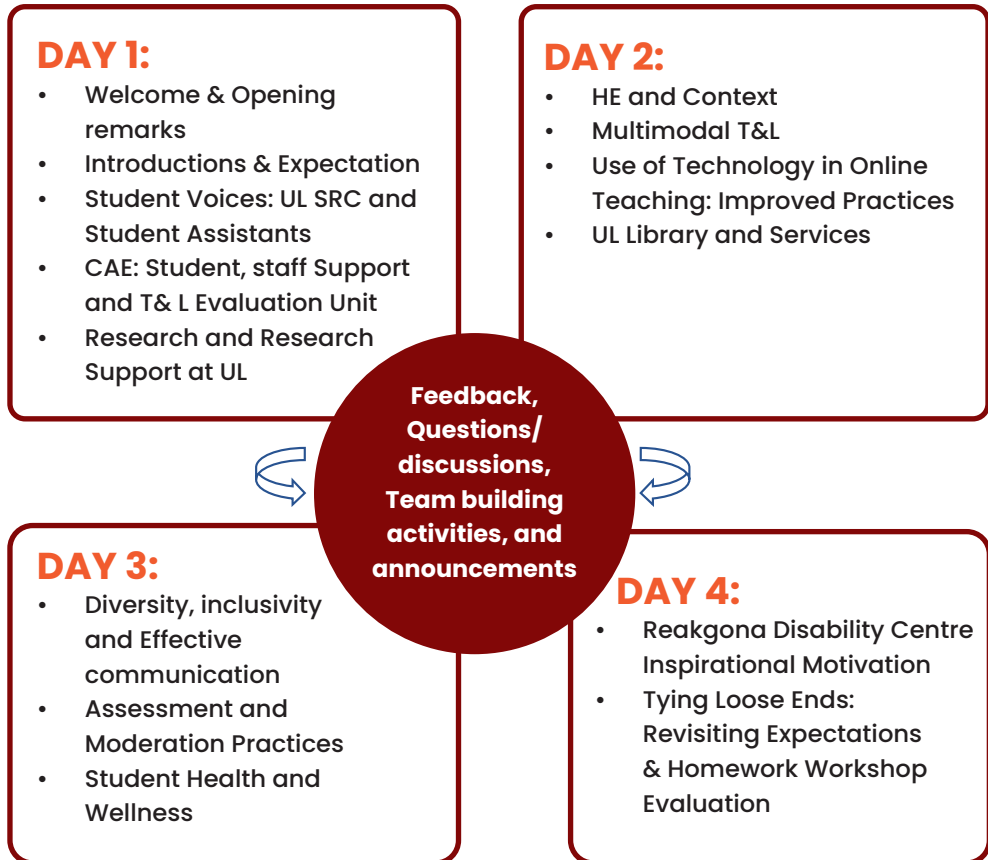
HE and context	<b>Curriculum</b>
Assessment and moderation	Student Voices
Teaching Philosophies and teaching methods, Student engagements	Diversity and Inclusivity for relevance and responsiveness
Knowing yourself and your environment	Communication and presentation skills
Teaching Large classes	T&L policy
Classroom Management	Integrating technology in classroom
Different student support programmes	Evaluation of T&L

Table 2 Topics in the needs analysis questionnaire

### The programme duration and content

After realising the need for more time with new academics, CAE decided to cease partnering with HR and to have academic-focused induction periods of four to five days. This realisation necessitated a rethink of programme duration and

content. The needs of participants, drawn from the needs analysis, influenced the content and structure of the programme. Relevant support services from across the university were invited to participate so as to broaden the scope of induction input. All invited presenters were briefed on the direction we were taking, and we negotiated points of interest and key issues to tackle based on the redesign of the induction programme. The workshop programme and content are shown in figure 13 below including a short description of the topics and the facilitation.



**Figure 33** The four-day induction programme and content

Teaching and learning approaches, methods, techniques and strategy were dissected at length including related challenges and opportunities. This emphasised the point that context and experiences matter, which created awareness of social injustices and history that plagued the institution. Our programme aimed to shape academics who are knowledgeable, well-prepared, motivated and inspired, and are key in ensuring achievement of the university’s strategic objectives and goals.

In our enhanced induction programme, another important session was on e-learning practices for transformation to 21st-century practices. The need to develop responsive e-learning for customised teaching and assessment was discussed to enable academics to embrace changes and improve technical skills. This session explained educational technology theories for effective teaching and learning, and issues around the fourth industrial revolution, self-directed learning, flipped classroom, e-learning at UL, the use of Blackboard Collaborate, and developing your own course. Academics not only need to understand how to use technology in their teaching, but also need to understand how to help students use technology in their learning and research activities. Follow-up sessions with homework were scheduled for this session.

Elements of constructivism and critical reflection guided our facilitation style. The questioning and probing practices of facilitators were enthralling, and most participants were engrossed. Sessions were interactive and engaging. Participants were free to pause the facilitator at any point to debate, seek clarity or share their own experiences and knowledge of topics. Participants were also prompted to reflect on the needs, experiences and feelings of students and themselves. Facilitation styles of induction strived for transformation and activation of agency towards social justice as influenced by NATHEP. Facilitation of induction was done through PowerPoint presentations, and for the first time, our induction was virtual due to COVID-19.

### **The student voices**

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By listening to students' perspectives, facilitators can tailor content and instruction to meet the individual needs and interests of students. In this regard, the induction offered to new academics should assist staff to appreciate and give value to the context of both the students and the institution as it influences their effectiveness. Thus, the new induction sought to help academics better assist students holistically to know, to act in and to value the discipline. In other words, lecturers have to acknowledge their students' background and history and, in the process, prioritise the students' needs in teaching and learning. As such, the programme created awareness of student support programmes for their students as such programmes are centred on the students' needs.

In this regard, some students as well as Student Representative Council (SRC) members were invited to speak at the induction. They expressed their general challenges with academics' attitudes and lack of professionalism, their need to be heard, and their demands to be consulted for actions that would impact their studies and wellbeing. Some academics were criticised for not acknowledging experiences that students bring to classrooms. During the induction, SRC members, CAE student support assistants in the mentorship programme, supplemental

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instruction, the reading and writing centre, and tutorship were invited to talk to the new staff members. This was meant to give new staff some first-hand information about their new place of work and inform them about what to expect as student challenges, as well as being informed about avenues for support available for their students. It was good for new staff to hear first-hand information about challenges that student assistants face in implementation of programmes and how new staff can assist in fostering effectiveness of programmes.

### The inclusion of other support centres

Different support facilities are vital for quality teaching and learning. Figure 34 presents the centres that were invited to make presentations on the diverse offerings and support they render to staff and students. Careful consideration was given as to which support services to include, thinking specifically about the direct and indirect needs of new academics. As such, the revised induction programme brought in support around research, Information and Communications Technology (ICT), health and wellbeing and community engagement. The inductees were also shown how to do sign language, Braille reading, and enlightened on the different operations of the Reakgona Disability Centre. These invitations to some students and staff from other support centres from across the university enabled new inductees to understand the lived experiences of students, to know what support exists and to know who to contact should a need arise. Thus, in a single workshop, inductees got an overview of the student populace, referral procedures and how to suitably assist such students in their classes.

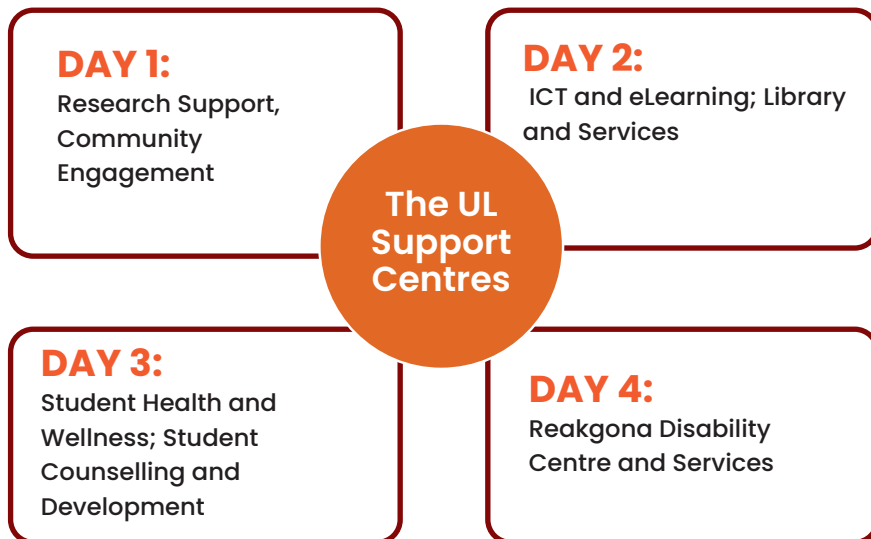


Figure 34 UL support as part of the induction

## **Follow-up workshop**

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Considerations around teaching and learning are vast and consist of many important topics with which new staff may need assistance. Before NATHEP, our interest was in completing the programme, with few interactions with participants. The new induction had a follow-up workshop four months after the end of the initial four days of induction. The purpose was to offer inductees an opportunity to share successes and challenges encountered after the induction and provide answers to questions guided by the results from the needs analysis survey and any other issues that they deemed fit for exploration.

## **Challenges encountered and some thoughts**

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Teaching and learning is a dynamic and lifelong process which will always have challenges. It is important to understand the circumstances in which they occur and learn to adapt and resolve them. Sometimes, these challenges/constraints may become opportunities for growth.

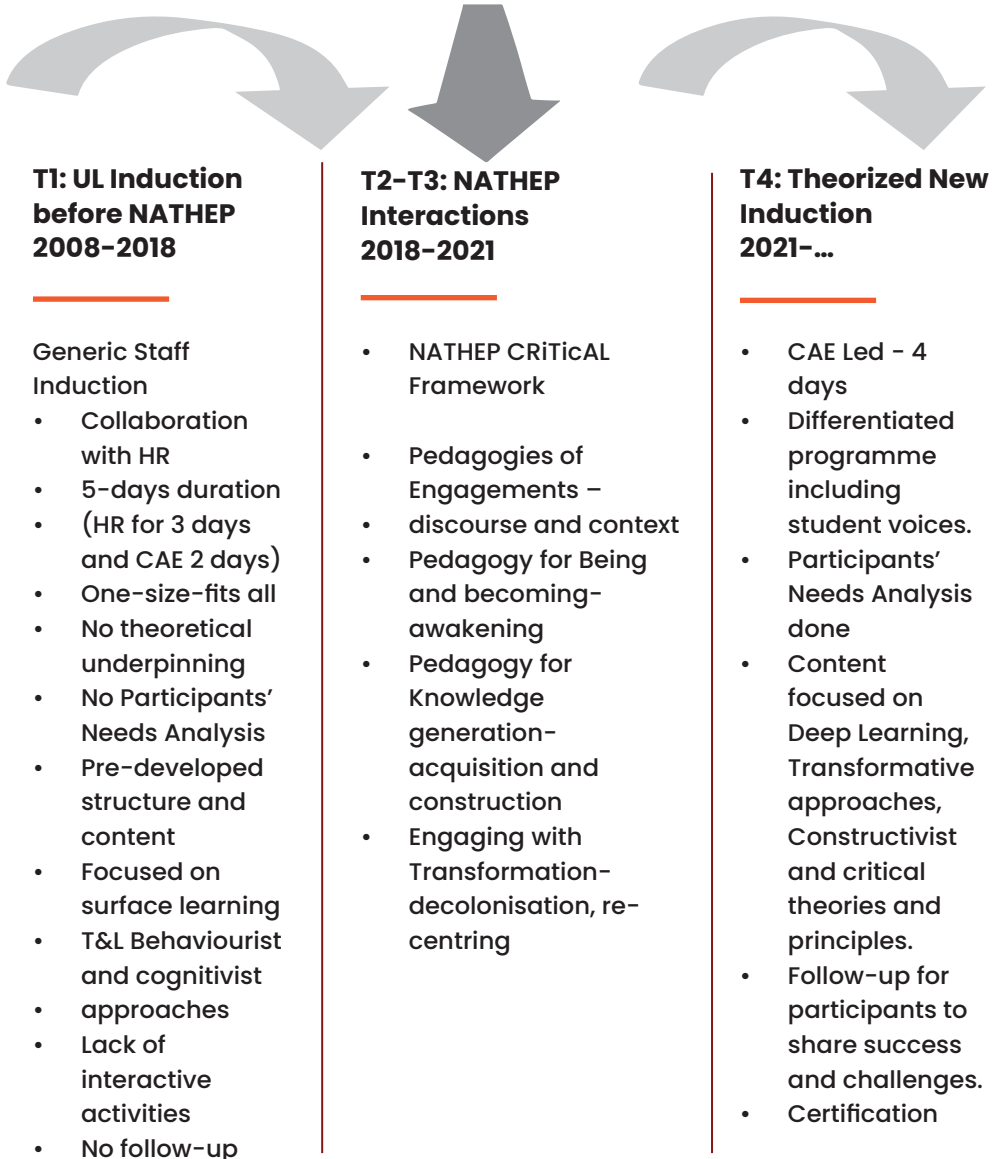
### **Below are some of the challenges encountered:**

- Running the new staff induction online for four days due to the pandemic posed some challenges of data and connectivity to some inductees;
- Scrambling for time and getting everyone on board. It was very challenging to get a perfect time that suited all faculties;
- Some colleagues from the Centre for Academic Excellence (CAE) took time to understand and appreciate the proposed changes for a newer version of the new staff induction programme;
- The identification of new academics took a long time. However, other means like writing to the deans, directors or all academic staff requesting them to enlist their names, was a success; and
- Connectivity and network problems, and staff who are technophobic.

Challenges are inevitable but can be stepping stones to improved practice. We learnt to be proactive, strove to be excellent, and be ready to explore new things. By way of concluding the case, we provide a synopsis of the UL induction journey as depicted in Figure 35.

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## Synopsis: UL Induction



**Figure 35** The UL induction journey

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### Key points to take away from this case study are:

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- Induction with a theoretical stance is transformative and provides both best value and authentic knowledge for participants;
- A needs survey and analysis make induction relevant and responsive;
- Inclusion of students' voices creates holistic development of students and awareness of challenges, which helps clear bias and assumptions that academics have about students in the new context;
- Inclusion of support services in the institution provides orientation to the entire range of professional services that support academic roles;
- New staff should engage in ways that make explicit the racial, gender and class-based constraints experienced in context; and
- Follow-up work is essential for ongoing professional development and the sustainability of the programme.

Induction is a continuous work in progress. There is always room for revisions and improvements. It is important that universities ensure that new staff are not left on their own to traverse the new context of a teaching and learning environment without appropriate and meaningful guidance and support. It's important to note that, in terms of focus of new staff induction, no "one size fits all" and cohorts are diverse. Whatever you do should be authentic, relevant, and responsive to the needs of staff and the institution's vision and mission.

We are called upon to learn, unlearn, relearn and be innovative in the practice. In being fit for purpose, we must constantly review, reimagine, reconceptualise, and refocus our own AD practices. Such abilities are very beneficial for the development of both new staff and ADs as critical and reflective practitioners.

### Conclusion

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In conclusion, effective new staff induction is crucial for setting the tone for a positive and productive employment experience. Provision of comprehensive and supportive induction processes can lead to improved job satisfaction, increased staff retention rates and enhanced performance. As institutions continue to evolve, it is important to consider making the induction an ongoing process rather than a once-off event. By so doing, a culture of continuous learning and development is cultivated that would ultimately drive success for both the individual and the institution. It is vital to value the voices of other stakeholders and advocate for collaboration. Become an agent for change! A call as ADs to colleagues in HE is succinctly intoned in the poem opposite.

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## The Power Voice and Choice

### The Voice-Be Purposeful

Make your voice count for positive change, empowerment and support

Make your voice count in creating spaces for decentring and indigenising

Make your voice count in acknowledging the Histories and experiences in your practice classroom and corridors

Make your voice count when saying “nothing for academics without academics” and “nothing for students without students”

Make your voice count for inclusion and access for success

Make your voice count in the services you render in T&L, research and community engagement...

### The Voice-Be intentional

Your voice should be for balance, not glorifying one while demeaning the other.

Create spaces for engagements, interrogations for multiple meanings, and ‘knowledges’

Be not quiet, nor forced, nor coerced into silence out of intimidation, fear, race, class, qualification, or title

The language and tenses may be incorrect, and confidence not adequate – it shouldn’t matter the most

Listen to the Message and don’t disagree just for the sake of it

### The Voice-Be unwavering

Acquired knowledge and understanding- use your voice and make it count!

Open your eyes wide, see, say and act

Break silos, break glass ceilings and break the red tapes

Tell them! Make the necessary Noizzz! Disrupt!

My context counts, my story counts, my voice counts!

I Am Free! Be Free!!!

**E. Chia & O. Chabaya**

Figure 36 The power of voice and choice poem