

CHAPTER EIGHT

MANGOSUTHU UNIVERSITY OF
TECHNOLOGY



Transformation of an Academic Induction Programme at Mangosuthu University of Technology

Phiwayinkosi R. Gumede, Muntuwenkosi M. Chili and Noluthando Toni

Introduction

This case study is the culmination of an invitation by the University of Cape Town to Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT) to join a national collaborative programme on the induction of new academics, the New Academics Transitioning into Higher Education Project (NATHEP). In 2018, MUT agreed to be part of the project. Three senior academic developers from the Teaching and Learning Development Centre (TLDC) participated as representatives of MUT. It was vital that TLDC participate in the project since the centre was still in its developmental stages. The TLDC was established to support academic enterprise through a recommendation of the 2011 Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) institutional audit, which recommended that MUT establish the TLDC. One of the TLDC's mandates is to implement an academic induction, which would introduce newly appointed academics to teaching and learning pedagogies. Hence the participation of the TLDC to the NATHEP was motivated by a need to improve the academic induction at MUT.

The focus of this case study is to present the emergence of academic induction at MUT; the nature and focus of the general staff induction; and the influence of NATHEP in transforming the academic induction. This case study further gives an account of how participating in the NATHEP has helped the TLDC to transform, reshape and establish a new culture of academic induction. In achieving this, this case study elaborates on the following considerations, namely, institutional context; general staff induction at MUT; the evolution and implementation of academic induction at MUT; impact of COVID-19; and provides an overall summary in the conclusion.

Institutional context

MUT is located in Umlazi, the largest township in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) and the second biggest township in South Africa. MUT is one of the smallest public institutions of higher learning in South Africa, and among the five public higher education institutions operating in the province. Other institutions of higher learning in this region include the University of KwaZulu-Natal, University of Zululand, University of South Africa, and Durban University of Technology. MUT was established in 1979 when it was inaugurated as Mangosuthu Technikon with an initial intake of 15 students in prefabricated buildings. As a technikon, its mandate was to offer vocational and technical subjects. Construction of the main campus buildings commenced in 1980 with the laying of the foundation stone by Dr Mangosuthu

Buthelezi, the founder of the institution who was the chief minister of KwaZulu at the time. The Mangosuthu Technikon was officially opened by Harry Oppenheimer, one of the major sponsors of the institution in 1980 (MUT Strategic Plan, 2015–2019). In 2007, the Minister of Education designated the institution as the Mangosuthu University of Technology. This was part of the transformation agenda of the entire higher education system. At the core of such transformation was the recognition that institutions were unique and hence there was a need to focus on different curriculum offerings. MUT is one of the few institutions that did not merge with others as part of the post-apartheid education transformation agendas. This spoke volumes in the way MUT was able to preserve its own identity and culture, particularly, translanguaging in teaching and learning. Consequently, the focus of the induction programme has not delved into the decoloniality agenda. The institution has a single campus accommodating approximately 200 academic staff members and 14 700 students enrolled for a range of career-focused undergraduate programmes offered in 21 academic departments spread over three faculties, namely, the Faculty of Management Sciences, Faculty of Natural Sciences, and Faculty of Engineering. The UoT is predominantly a science, engineering and technology (SET) university.



Figure 43 MUT Campus

General staff induction at MUT

Until 2014, academic induction did not exist at MUT. The only induction that existed was a general staff induction which was conducted by Human Resources and Development (HR&D) for all newly appointed employees. This HR&D induction focused on the introduction of key agents within the university and covered aspects

relating to institutional structures such as HR policies, missions and visions, etc. The MUT Induction Policy served as enabling structure as it mandated HR&D to conduct inductions for new staff members. Salau et al. (2014) argue that general staff induction exposes new employees to the history and the organisation of the institution as well as to the core values/activities, the competitors and their activities. While acknowledging the significant influence of the induction programme at our institution on staff attitude and behaviour, aspects of teaching and learning were overlooked. Given that MUT is an academic institution, one would have assumed that academic induction could be prioritised. Conceptually and contextually, the induction programme needed improvement because it was focused on general aspects to the exclusion of teaching and learning. As academic developers we argued that a more integrated approach was needed to infuse academic induction into the existing system, or alternatively to be set up as a separate process so that newly appointed academic staff members are inducted into the teaching and learning culture of the university. This omission remained a gap that needed addressing and closing this gap would introduce a new culture in the institution, i.e., a culture that would focus on both general staff induction and academic induction.

Contextual challenges with the existent general staff induction

The conceptualisation of the general staff induction that HR&D conducted did not consider the contextual realities of new academics who sometimes had never taught in a higher education setting before. Therefore, their knowledge was predominantly disciplined-based and needed to be inducted on academic aspects such as understanding higher education, teaching and learning pedagogies, curriculum, assessment, etc. The general staff induction lacked authenticity and legitimacy for these new academics. The generic staff induction only catered for certain groups such as administration staff and academic support staff. Consequently, it was not responsive to the needs of academics, particularly, new academics who are disciplinary experts or specialists but lack teaching pedagogical skills to deliver on their core mandate, which is teaching. It was apparent that there was a need to revisit the nature and the focus of that general staff induction so that it became inclusive of academic imperatives.

The evolution of academic induction

To transform the dominant culture where HR&D conducted general staff induction for all newly appointed employees, the TLDC exercised its agency by proposing an induction programme that would address the needs of academics in response to the training needs and assessment feedback of academics. To effect this change, the Academic Induction Charter was developed and approved by Senate in 2014. This charter became an enabling structure for transforming induction at the institution. It was used as an annexure/extension to the existing induction policy and

its purpose was to distinguish between the general staff induction that is facilitated by HR&D and the one offered by the TLDC. The term “academic induction” was adopted as an identifier. Consequently, a new culture emerged, i.e., MUT embraced two types of induction programmes, namely, general staff induction and academic induction, with the latter focusing predominantly on newly appointed teaching staff and mainly dealing with aspects concerning teaching and learning.

Implementation of academic induction (phase one)

In 2015, the first academic induction was introduced. The academic induction was conducted over one day, twice a year at the beginning of each semester. Its core objectives were to:

- i. Integrate newly appointed lecturers into MUT and its strategic plan;
- ii. Provide pertinent documentation and information on MUT policies and procedures related to its academic activities;
- iii. Orientate academics to the university and academic support services and units for enhancing teaching and learning practices, including educational technology;
- iv. Sensitise academics to their new roles and responsibilities to promote efficiency;
- v. Highlight the academic profession, i.e., contemporary learning and teaching practices and trends;
- vi. Introduce lecturers to the South African higher education landscape; and
- vii. Begin to capacitate lecturers with the skills and competencies necessary to ensure effective teaching and learning.

In an attempt to achieve these objectives, a one-day academic programme was conducted. Figure 44 presents the content of phase one of the academic programme.

Date: 24 February 2016 Venue: New Engineering Boardroom		
9H00 – 9H10	Opening and Introductions	Mr. Gumede
9H10 – 09H20	Welcome and introduction to TLDC mandate.	Dr. Makua
09H20 – 09H35	Presentation from Faculty of Engineering	Prof. Malinga
09H35 – 09H50	Presentation from Faculty of Natural Science	Prof. Small
09H50 – 10H05	Presentation from Faculty of Management Sciences	Ms. Lupaveni
10H05 – 10H20	Awareness of teaching and learning policies and promotion pathways through demonstrated teaching excellence at MUT	Prof. Small
10H20 – 10H40	Comfort break	
10H40 – 10H50	Professional development opportunities at MUT	Mr. Gumede
10H50 – 11H20	An awareness of the teaching and learning support available to students	Mr. Samkange
11H20 – 11H50	Enhancing teaching using Blackboard	Mr. Nyanda
11H50 – 12H20	Incorporating Blooms Taxonomy in teaching and assessment	Mr. Gumede
12H20 – 12H40	Engagement with learning technologies to enhance student learning	Dr. Jugoo
12H40 – 13H10	Lunch break	
13H10 – 13H20	MUT Academic Identity (focusing of graduate attributes)	Ms. Rodebe
13H20 – 13H40	Early identification of “at risk students” using HEDA	Ms. Ramrung
13H40 – 14H00	Quality assurance processes at MUT	Dr. Merkestein

Figure 44
Phase 1 of
academic
programme

As seen in the programme, the induction was structured in an information session fashion and lacked some critical aspects such as an opportunity for new academics to engage with the content presented. It further lacked a theoretical underpinning. The programme was rather too shallow and superficial to achieve its set objectives. Despite the identified gaps, we argue that it provided some aspects of teaching and learning that were valuable to academics. We also acknowledge that it provided an opportunity to source feedback from academics.

In order to transform from a culture which did not compel staff members to attend the induction, the academic induction was made compulsory for newly appointed academic staff as determined by the Induction Charter. According to the Academic Induction Charter (2017, p.1) "all new academic staff members are all teaching staff who join the institution for the first time (whether they have previously taught or not)". The rationale for such a definition was based on the fact that MUT attracts academic staff who are discipline specialists from industry. Most of these academic staff might not have a teaching or pedagogical background, hence a transformative discourse was vital to help capacitate those academics to teach effectively.

The philosophy behind academic induction is that academic staff are introduced to the university teaching culture so that they can begin to orientate themselves in a structured manner. In a differentiated educational system such as in South Africa, being an academic can be a daunting proposition for academics who have never taught or who have taught in a different setting such as a traditional university or a comprehensive university. We argue that teaching in an environment such as ours, that is, a university of technology, is different from the settings indicated above, given that a university of technology focuses on technical and practical aspects with less emphasis on pedagogical underpinnings. Academic induction is therefore designed to assist academic staff members with such a transition.

Implementation of academic induction (phase two)

Although there were clear core purposes to academic induction, feedback from academic staff members who attended the one-day academic induction indicated that time was limited to achieve these goals. To be responsive to feedback from participants, the approach had to change. In 2017, a new approach was introduced where the academic induction evolved from being a one-day session to a two-day-long programme, thus affording more interaction between the facilitators and inductees. Phase two of the academic induction is depicted in Figure 45.



Mangosuthu
University of Technology

2017 Academic Induction Programme

Date: 18 & 19 September 2017		
Venue: New Engineering Boardroom		
9H30 – 9H45	Welcome and the purpose of academic induction.	Dr Gumede
9H45 – 10H05	An awareness of the teaching and learning support available to students	Mr Samkange
10H05 – 10H30	Professional development opportunities at MUT	Dr Gumede
10H30 – 11H00	<i>Comfort break</i>	
11H00 – 12H30	Introduction to Higher Education	Dr Gumede
12H30 – 13H30	<i>Lunch break</i>	
13H30 – 15H00	Understanding MUT teaching and learning agenda	Dr Chiti
<i>Wrap-up for day One</i>		
DAY 2		
09H30 – 10H00	Community Engagement at MUT	Prof Nkonki-Mandieni
10H00 – 10H30	Research and innovation at MUT	Prof Shale
10H30 – 11H00	<i>Comfort break</i>	
11H00 – 12H00	Developing a shared understanding of curriculum at MUT	Dr Gumede
12H00 – 13H00	Using technology platforms in teaching and assessment	Mr Mgijima
13H00 – 13H45	<i>Lunch Break</i>	
13H45 – 14H15	Using Blackboard for teaching and assessment at MUT	Mr Nyondo/Mr Mhlongo
14H15 – 15H00	Teaching Portfolio Development	Ms Lekoa
15H00 – 15H30	Discussion of the academic induction framework	Dr Gumede

Figure 45 Phase 2 of academic programme

The programme transformed from being a show and tell to being more engaging and additionally infused pedagogical aspects of teaching and learning. It included aspects such as an introduction to higher education; understanding the MUT teaching and learning agenda, and developing a shared understanding of curriculum at MUT. While the academic induction was starting to address key aspects of teaching and learning, it however lacked theoretical underpinning.

In phase three the induction was better conceptualised as compared to phases one and two. The comparison between these phases is presented in Table 3 below (“Yes” indicates the presence while “No” indicates the absence a particular variable).

Variables	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Clear conceptual structure	No	No	Yes
Articulation of rationale of the academic induction	No	No	Yes
Articulation of the purpose of academic induction	No	Yes	Yes
One-day academic induction	Yes	No	No
Two-days academic induction	No	Yes	No
Six months academic induction	No	No	Yes
Wide range of teaching and learning topics (content)	No	No	Yes
Introduction of key Agents	No	No	Yes
Theorised academic induction	No	No	Yes
Submission of portfolio of evidence.	No	No	Yes

Table 3 Differences between the phases

This case study uses a combination of Archer’s (2000, 2003) social realism and NATHEP’s CRITicAL Framework to explain how new academics at our institution navigate enabling and constraining conditions in institutional, faculty, departmental and classroom contexts as they transition to academia. While the social realism framework identifies the interaction between structure, culture, and agency, the CRITicAL Framework provides principles and underlying mechanisms that influence these phenomena. Using both frameworks allowed us to interweave key properties, enabling us to reflect and analyse on our induction programme and processes. The frameworks complement each other as these theories lay the foundation of our academic induction programme structure. The rationale for adopting these frameworks was the need to develop a more theorised and customised academic induction.

To better understand and reflect on phase three of the induction, we used a multifaceted approach to gather and analyse data, i.e., autoethnographic approach; academic induction evaluations; and institutional documents reviews.

Although we considered gathering data as a way to improve our processes, we equally felt it was ethical for participants to be informed that data from the academic induction would also be used for the NATHEP collaborative project. Table 4 indicates the sources of data for this case study.

Autoethnographic approach	Academic induction evaluations	Institutional documents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-reflections by the two main authors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participant's feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MUT Strategic Plan MUT Policies, e.g., Induction Policy, MUT Academic Induction Charter, etc. 2011 HEQC Audit Report Teaching and Learning Framework

Table 4 Data sources for the MUT case study

Analysis and discussion of phase three academic induction

Having discussed the various phases of induction the institution went through over the years, we found it imperative to present a comprehensive discussion and analysis of phase three as it encapsulates key components of the reimagined programme. The academic induction is one of continuous professional development, one which encourages a balance between disciplinary and pedagogical knowledge. It is part of the transformational agenda to disrupt the previous culture of teaching and learning. Transforming the culture where disciplinary knowledge is valued more than pedagogical knowledge is contested in higher education and requires deep engagements. The section that follows is a deep dive into the intricacies of phase three of the academic induction.

Theorising phase three academic induction

As mentioned in an earlier section of this case study, until 2014, an academic induction did not exist at MUT. The only induction that existed was a general staff induction for all newly appointed employees. The 2011 HEQC audit had already identified the void caused by the absence of academic induction. This culture had to be changed by integrating academic induction. Phase 3 of the academic induction provided major reflections on the entire academic induction trajectory after its evolution from general academic induction to Phase 1, and to Phase 2. The figure below presents the evolution of academic induction at MUT.

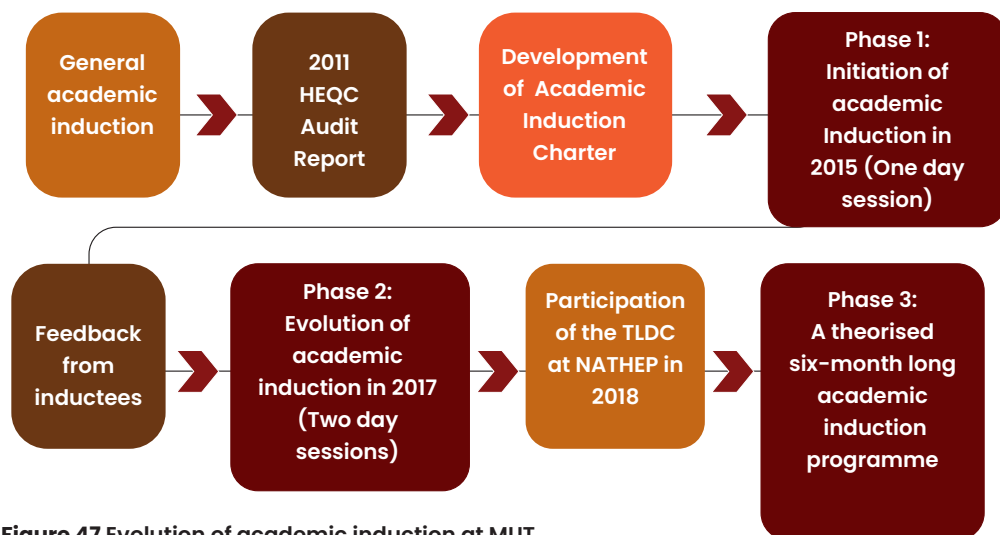


Figure 47 Evolution of academic induction at MUT

We decided to offer the programme as an ongoing process and not the previous model that focused merely on two days of intensive engagement. Engagement with NATHEP enabled us to critique and reflect on our programme and to reconceptualise it. We realised that a two-day induction session was too short to cover a wider scope of the aspects that relate to teaching and learning. Therefore, we had to first accept that the conceptualisation of our academic induction was flawed and there was a need to be critical of our own context where MUT is a UoT and does not offer teacher education programmes. Also, most academics who join MUT are industry experts and do not have teaching background due to MUT's focus on technical and vocational programmes. Offering a superficial academic programme defeated the objectives of the academic induction. New academics are likely to benefit more if the programme offers them basic pedagogical principles.

To enable us to analyse the conceptualisation of our academic induction programme to be relevant for our own context, we used Archer's social realism theory and the NATHEP CRITiCAL Framework. Both Archer's social realism theory and the CRITiCAL Framework provided a critical lens to analyse the conceptualisation of academic induction that is relevant to our own context. Hence, they assisted us to develop phase three of academic induction which was a six-month-long programme.

Archer's social realism theory

During data analysis of feedback from participants, we identified structures, cultures, and agents as enablers and constraints in the effective implementation

of academic induction. Table 5 identifies enabling and constraining factors to academic induction for the effective implementation of academic induction.

Enabling Factors To Academic Induction		
Structures	Culture	Key Agents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Induction Policy • Academic Induction Charter • University Capacity Development Grant (UCDG) • TLDC • HR&D • Department of Higher Education and Training • NATHEP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of general staff induction • Implementation of the two-day academic induction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR&D practitioners • Academic developers in the TLDC • DVC • Directors
Constraining Factors To Academic Induction		
Structures	Culture	Key Agents
	<p>The packed timetables Unpredictable schedules</p>	

Table 5 Enabling and constraining factors to academic induction

The presence of the Induction Policy with its purpose to introduce newly appointed employees to the MUT environment formed the basis for the development of the Academic Induction Charter, which focused on newly appointed academic staff members to assist them in fulfilling their teaching, research and community engagement obligations.

The Academic Induction Charter advocated that the revised academic induction be made compulsory and be linked with probation requirements. To improve from the two-day academic induction, the new programme was structured such that it starts with a three-day session, followed by monthly one-day sessions over a six-month period. This was a radical change from the previous academic induction programme. These sessions were to take place off-campus to promote maximum participation and to avoid distractions. During the six months, participants were introduced to key agents within the institution, institutional teaching and learning strategies, and learning management systems, among other things. The one-day

monthly sessions have a structured programme, covering topics such as teaching for learning, curriculum development, materials development, assessment and moderation, and evaluation of teaching and learning.

Due to the existence and influence of these internal structures towards academic induction, a certain way of inducting staff emerged. Firstly, it was the implementation of the general staff induction and later, the emergence of a one-day and a two-day academic induction. Essentially, these structures legitimised some forms of induction programme at MUT. Legitimation is an important element of NATHEP's CRITicAl Framework because it forms a foundation of a particular culture in an institution, in this case, the general induction and academic induction. Hence both the HR&D and the TLDC were able to facilitate induction programmes separately through HR&D Practitioners and the TLDC's academic developers. Both HR&D practitioners and the TLDC's academic developers exercised their agency to inculcate a culture of staff induction in an institution where no induction was previously conducted. The DVC and directors from various departments were invited to present during the induction, thus playing a critical role in enlightening new academic staff of their roles and how that can assist or enable their work.

Over and above the internal structures, the external structures, i.e., DHET that funded the academic induction via its funding mechanism, the University Capacity Development Grant (UCDG), enabled the academic developers to fulfil the intentions of the Academic Induction Charter. The establishment of NATHEP became instrumental in influencing the type of academic induction MUT offers as it influenced the development of an academic induction which is theorised.

On the other hand, there were constraining factors that hindered the implementation of the academic induction. We identified two constraining factors, namely:

- The packed timetables for the academics became a stumbling block for their attendance at induction sessions. The packed timetables suggest that the university values and legitimizes teaching as a priority. This has a potential to disadvantage academics from attending capacity development initiatives such as academic induction.
 - Unpredictable schedules for key agents have made it difficult for academics to honour academic induction. Consequently, inductees miss the opportunity to engage with such key agents. The implementation of academic induction depends heavily on the effectiveness of the following agents: line managers, the deans, heads of departments, the new academic staff members, and the implementers of the academic induction within the TLDC. These agents are drivers that influence the culture that the induction adopts.
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NATHEP's CRITicAl Framework

It is without a doubt that the NATHEP's CRITicAl Framework provided us with the tools to zoom in beyond social realism theory, where we focused on the identification of structure, culture and agency that enables or constrain the implementation of our academic induction. We further used the CRITicAl Framework to analyse underlying mechanisms influencing the academic induction through focusing on the following principles: conceptual, critical, and contextual, responsive, reflexive, rational, re-centred and relevant, theorised praxis, authentic and legitimate. In Table 6 the aspects of the CRITicAl Framework that we used to analyse phase three of the academic induction are indicated.

Critical, Conceptual & Contextual	Responsive, reflexive, rational, re-centre & relevant	Theorised praxis	Legitimate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Technology • Academic induction • Duration of the induction programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Induction • Feedback from induction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion of key agents • Higher education topics • Pedagogies of engagement • Introduction of Portfolio 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theorised academic induction

Table 6 NATHEP's CRITicAl Framework

Critical, conceptual and contextual

Participating in NATHEP made us critical about our own context and the conceptualisation of our academic induction at MUT. We noticed that the phase two induction was too short to cover most of the higher education content to capacitate inductees who had just joined a university of technology (UoT). As indicated earlier, UoTs focus on technical and vocational programme as compared to teacher education. Indeed, MUT does not offer teacher education, hence the need to reconceptualise and modify the academic induction, which made it evolve from phase two to phase three.

Responsive, reflexive, rational, recentred and relevant

During the induction programme, participants were asked to evaluate the programme and provide feedback on the academic induction programme. On completion of this six months programme, participants were required to produce a reflective portfolio of evidence which was assessed by the facilitators. Both the evaluation reports and the reflective portfolio of evidence were used to evaluate/measure the outcomes of the academic induction. Thereafter the TLDC issued certificates of completion as a fulfilment of the programme. Considering that certificates were not issued in the initial one-day induction programme, the issuing of the certificate of completion could be used as proof to confirm probation. The previous academic induction programme did not provide opportunities for the necessary support to newly appointed academics; hence the academic induction programme was changed to allow for support and scaffolding opportunities. In so doing, it showed how responsive and reflexive the facilitators could be to ensure that the academic induction is recentered and relevant for its purpose.

Theorised praxis

For the phase three academic induction, the assumption is that academics coming to the induction programme bring valuable knowledge that needs to be contextualised to achieve the mission and vision of the institution. Drawing from the multiple knowledges that academics bring to the academic induction helped to enrich the engagements. During the introduction, academics were given an opportunity to share their experiences and trajectories in higher education and to reflect on how they will contribute to the university's strategies. Participation in the NATHEP invoked facilitators to rethink the way in which phase three academic induction had been conducted.

Considering that the initial induction programme used presentation methods as the main mode of delivery, a reconfigured academic induction was inevitable to address the issue of a non-theorised academic induction. The reconfigured induction adopted new pedagogical approaches, i.e., pedagogies for engagement. The two pedagogies of engagement adopted were the pedagogy for knowledge generation and pedagogy for being and becoming. These pedagogies were adopted due to the recognition that the inductees brought both teaching experiences from other institutions of higher learning and/or industrial experience. Their experiences ranged from three to ten years in university teaching. Due to such experience, academic induction took an intentional approach of drawing and learning from the experiences of the participants. Therefore, facilitators built from the previous experiences and knowledge of the academics. This made academic induction exciting for both inductees and facilitators. The inductees were provided with an opportunity to share their trajectories towards becoming lecturers, and

they shared what they were hoping to achieve through the induction and through being academics.

In the pedagogy for knowledge generation, participants were provided with an opportunity to discuss and share their knowledge on a particular topic, e.g., assessment or teaching strategies. Such an opportunity allowed for the co-creation of knowledge between the facilitators and inductees. During the sessions, participants embarked on knowledge café sessions to generate knowledge about a subject matter or task given. One of the inductees in each group served as an anchor. The role of the anchor was to facilitate and collate information during sessions and report to the entire group. The co-creation of knowledge presented an opportunity to engage, critique, and reflect on the knowledge created during the sessions. The main objective was to legitimise the knowledge generation pedagogy as one of the teaching strategies at MUT. Figure 48 depicts the knowledge generation exercise during the induction sessions.



Figure 48 Knowledge generation during induction sessions

In the pedagogy for being and becoming, inductees were afforded an opportunity to submit an academic induction portfolio where they reflected and shared their trajectories leading them to becoming academics at MUT, the lessons learnt during the induction programme, and their aspiration as academics. Setting personal goals is imperative because it provides a sense of direction for an individual. Such a sense of direction becomes a drive to propel the individual to achieve set goals. The personal goals of the inductees attributed immensely towards setting teaching statements for the academics. Some of the goals are presented in Table 7, and are categorised into short-, medium-, and long-term goals.

Short term goals	Medium-term goals	Long-term goals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • expand knowledge of teaching and learning • expand understanding of higher education environment • to be assisted in conceptualising PhD studies within higher education • learn to develop a professional portfolio of evidence • learn online teaching and learning approaches. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide access and academic support to students, academic and non-academic staff pursuing higher degrees, journal publications and rankings • seek new ways of engaging mobile learning in the classroom as a way to engage with students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide students with the best possible education experience • understand students they were teaching • develop and implement evidence-informed pedagogical practices which would lead to improved learning • equip students with skills that will ensure that they are able to find jobs in their fields of technical skill • seek and implement the evidence-informed pedagogical practice.

Table 7 Participants' goals

Legitimate

The purpose of changing from phase two to phase three of the academic induction was to provide an opportunity for academics to be capacitated on various aspects that characterised the higher education sector. These aspects include topics such as higher education context, learning and teaching, curriculum development, assessment and quality, specifically concerning the national context of higher education and the institutional context of the MUT. The inclusion of these aspects postulated that the academic induction being offered at MUT is contextualised and theorised to achieve specific objectives for academics in a UoT. By so doing, the academics started to appreciate the value of phase three academic induction.

Impact of COVID-19

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 undermined teaching and learning strategies in higher education. The pandemic forced the entire higher education sector to reconsider how things are done and it was never going to be business as usual. Inevitably, with the advent of remote and multimodal teaching, learning and assessment approaches adopted by universities during COVID-19, MUT witnessed accelerated changes in teaching and learning practices as well as staff

engagement strategies. Likewise, the ravaging impact of COVID-19 was felt in our own context where the modality of the academic induction had to change.

The conceptualisation for phase three academic induction was based on face-to-face engagements which were underpinned by the pedagogy of engagement. Unfortunately, the modality of the academic induction had to change to adapt to the new normal because of COVID-19. To adapt to this new normal, we migrated to online academic induction. To the detriment of the phase three academic induction, both the facilitators and inductees could not hold on to the pedagogy of engagement because some sessions were then conducted in an asynchronised model. Hence this resulted in poor attendance of the academic induction. At the time of writing, MUT is reflecting on the best strategy to deal with such a downward spiral experience.

The general induction programme at MUT did not legitimise academic induction, and as a result it disadvantaged new academics. This omission created a void that needed to be addressed. The advent of an academic induction programme has played a critical role in capacitating the academic staff who transition to MUT. Although there were constraining structures during the development and implementation of the academic induction programme, the enabling structures outweighed the latter. Hence the induction programme evolved from being a general induction for all newly appointed staff to a one-day academic induction programme (phase one) which focused on academic staff only. The academic programme coordinators reflected and became reflexive to the evaluations. The evaluation that was conducted at the end of the programme revealed that it was shallow to address the objectives of academic programme.

A second day (phase two) was added, and the academic programme evolved to two days. The addition of the second day provided space for engagement between facilitators and inductees and offered space to address the objectives of the academic programme. While phase two of academic induction addresses the set objectives, participation in NATHEP revealed a gap in our academic induction programme since it was not guided by any theoretical framework/s. Once again, the academic induction programme evolved (phase three) to become a six-month programme, twice a year to ensure that the theoretical framework/s was infused. It is worth noting that the content of the programme in all three phases kept on changing to meet the purpose of academic induction.

Conclusion

There were many lessons learnt during the development and implementation of the academic induction programme. The evolution of academic induction from phase one to phase three bears testimony to some lessons learnt and the need

to be relevant in the delivery of academic development projects. MUT's academic induction uses a combination of Archer's (2000, 2003) social realism, and NATHEP's CRITicAL Framework to guide its academic induction currently. Over and above structural factors, the COVID-19 pandemic imposed an unexpected challenge, which we also had to unravel. We acknowledge these challenges and lessons and endeavour to reflect on them so that we continue to improve the current academic induction programme at MUT.
