

## ACADEMIC STAFF DEVELOPMENT AS AN ENABLER TO GOOD TEACHING PRACTICES AT A HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION IN THE EASTERN CAPE, SOUTH AFRICA

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**Abstract.** Higher Education (HE) institutions have to provide support to Academic Staff Development (ASD) through policies, funding and strategies that afford lecturers opportunities to attend ASD disciplinary-based and professional training. Upgrading the nature of teaching and learning is a key strategy in HE and that responsibility lies with Higher Education institutions that identify with the innovative nature of teaching and learning. Good teaching is not an accident, it is achieved through continuous engagement and enhancement of lecturers on both content and innovative pedagogical skills. Such skills need to be honed continuously to close gap in lecturers' gap and Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) suits that approach. This study was grounded on principles of Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK). It was conducted in one university campus comprising of two sites in the Eastern Cape in South Africa. A purposive sample of 51 academics was used for data collection. Content analysis was used to identify emerging themes from the interview responses. The findings showed that lecturers regard ASD as enhancing quality teaching and empowering lecturers to improve their lecturing skills and responsibilities.

**Keywords:** academic staff development, good teaching, pedagogical content knowledge.

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### Introduction

The purpose of this article is to investigate whether academic staff development in pedagogical content knowledge enhances good teaching. Data was collected using face-to-face and telephonic interviews, qualitative research methods. The age long practice in the university teaching generally has focused on delivery of academic contents in ways that suggest that the cognitive academic contents in various fields are the only important consideration. According to Ajibade, Adeleke, and Oyetoro (2020), this practice has, really, produced academic giants in different disciplines who may have adequate content knowledge and research skills but who may lack other components of teaching needed to produce all-round professionals who possess pedagogical content knowledge that would help in impacting others positively. These academic giants include seasoned, research respected professors who are specialists in their disciplines. They might have published books and articles that carry a lot of content knowledge (CK) but they lack the pedagogical knowledge (PD). Berrett (2012) opined that professors who do not have an understanding of pedagogy may think about the content students should learn, but not the cognitive capabilities they should develop. It is difficult to blame such lecturers as they are totally oblivious that something more than content knowledge would be required of them as university teachers who are meant to contribute maximally to students' all-round development in the highest educational echelon. This means that some lecturers might not notice their pedagogy gap in their teaching approach until they are confronted by issues like curriculum design, assessment, technology integration into teaching and feedback.

Although training of lecturers started in 1980s, research generally shows that gaps in pedagogical training still exist among teachers in colleges and universities (Biku, Demas, Woldehawariat, Getahun, & Mekonnen, 2018; Negassa & Engdasew, 2017; Tsegay, Zegergish, & Ashraf, 2018). Efforts at addressing these gaps in ability to exhibit pedagogical skills in instructional delivery have continued to receive attention as various HEIs and governments of

some countries like South Africa through CHE guidelines. HEIs have to improve the quality of teaching as universities begin to realise that the possession of a doctoral degree may not be a proxy for teaching competence (Henard & Leprince-Ringuet, 2008; Okolie, Igwe, Nwajiuba, Mlanga, Binuomote, Nwosu & Ogbakirigwe, 2020). HE institutions have introduced policies and strategies like short courses in teaching as well as sending their academics to other HEIs to register and study HE teaching qualifications like PGDip (Higher Education) to close the PCK gap. Negassa and Engdasew (2017) in their own evaluative study of a pedagogical skills training for teachers in Adama Science and Technology University, Ethiopia, also reported positive effects on the participants' teaching skills in using lesson planning, active learning, continuous assessment and classroom management.

## Literature Review

Almarghani and Mijatovic (2017) argue that many Higher Education institutions (HEIs) are pressurised to develop good quality university education. These pressures emanate from the competition on the market of HE facilities, national initiatives for quality assurance and accreditation, and the ever-changing pre-requisites from employers and industry. Therefore, HEI should plan and offer credible programmes or short learning programmes to continuously upskill their academic troops.

Nasser-Abu and Alhija (2017) ascertain that the terms like 'good', 'effective', 'excellent', 'quality' teaching are applied interchangeably when referring to student learning. Generally, the literature displays there is no agreed-upon definition of good teaching, nor are there well-established resources for quantifying it (Nasser-Abu & Alhija, 2017) but below are some of the definitions or interpretations of good teaching from literature. Hatiya (2015) defined two general dimensions of good teaching. The first common dimension is cognitive and refers to cooperating the learning content to students. The cognitive dimension consists of three sub-dimensions (Hatiya, 2015) to which she brings up as: course and lesson organisation, clearness, and interest/intellectual challenge. The second common dimension is affective good teaching which refers to generating optimistic classroom atmosphere (Hatiya, 2015). Two sub-dimensions entitled as responsiveness (interaction with students) and showing respect, (support and empathy with students) define the second dimension. Hatiya (2015) claims that this inconsistency is based on the fact that good teaching is context based whereby good lecturers might do different things in varying HE institutions with a variety of students for different goals. In this study the term 'good teaching' is used.

McMillan and Gordon (2017) define good teaching as characterised by lecturer eagerness and zeal; is student centred; is experientially based, participative, and intended to create basic reasoning, reflection, and critical thinking abilities; causes students to extend their applied comprehension; is prefaced on a sufficiently planned, significant educational programme that adjusts results, teaching and learning techniques, and appraisal; creates students' fitness through useful input and includes on-going lecturer reflection. The question then is how does Academic Staff development (ASD) enhance such good teaching and furthermore do the lectures at the chosen HDI know what good teaching entails.

Elsewhere, Hénard and Rosereare (2012) viewed good teaching as the effective use of pedagogical techniques to produce learning outcomes for students. Hatiya (2015) provided a similar definition that also centres on teaching outcomes. Hatiya (2015) emphasised that good teaching supports high-quality learning and that in addition to developing a consideration of the subject matter, an assortment of skills and capabilities, as well as assertiveness, are advanced through good teaching. Thus, teaching ought to accomplish multi-dimensional tenacities in addition to learning.

Chikari, Rudhumbu and Svtwa (2015), further points out that despite the fact that a few lecturers have more distinctive talent than others, all successful teaching is the consequence

of studying, reflecting, practice, and hard work, therefore teaching well is not a coincidence it should not be accidental. Excellent lecturers are made, not born; they become excellent through investment in their teaching abilities (European Science Institution (ESF), 2012). European Commission (2013:13) states: "A good teacher, like a good graduate, is also an active learner, questioner and critical thinker". It is a waste of time, determination, and institutional assets to leave lecturers to learn by trial and error. In this way, staff associated with teaching and supporting student learning should be qualified, supported, and sufficiently resourced for that teaching. Teachers learn best through professional development that addresses their needs (Meissel et al., 2016) so that fills in the gaps in the skill sets of new teachers, and to continue to develop the expertise of teachers (Evers et al., 2016) throughout their career. Professional development is necessary to keep the teacher up-to-date with the continuously changing practices, and student needs. Each academic needs to be supported, get relevant academic and professional qualification that will strengthen his/her discipline knowledge plus the pedagogy on how to facilitate teaching effectively.

Somewhere, Vorster and Quinn (2017) ascertain that good teaching involves becoming more acquainted with who your students are, providing for the genuine adapting needs of the students in front of you and not the magically decidedly ready students you might want, drawing in information students bring into the course, utilising instructional methods that give students a chance to connect effectively in learning and to interface their current information to new information, drafting them into the skill levels and methods of "being" of control, utilising solid, substantial and reasonable techniques to evaluate their students, and more. Good teaching requires having both a strong discipline identity and a strong pedagogic identity, with the understanding that strong pedagogy is grounded in a deep understanding of the discipline. This is aligned with PCK chosen theoretical framework.

Academics work with knowledge as the basis of their identity. Identity is embedded in the discipline (or disciplines) as a knowledge learner, a knowledge producer, and as a knowledge disseminator. These are not binaries. Academic identity is not a static construct; it is fluid and of a hybrid nature. The identity of an academic in HE ought to be rated with both academic qualifications and professional competence. They might be expects in their disciplines but further training in the pedagogy is always crucial to keep them abreast of new learning process strategies. Identity changes over time, as work foci and values (the personal project) and external influences (e.g. marketisation) change and as a career progresses, or even as the notion of 'discipline' changes. Therefore as the identity changes, academics need guidance and proper training on how to align their teaching approaches to the students and curriculum demands. Academics necessarily need to work across these knowledge areas in different ways at different points in their careers. The PCK combo intertwines pedagogy with content knowledge and moulds a competent academic with good, effective teaching. Pedagogy builds the how to facilitate curriculum in the lecturer.

Furthermore, the fact that good teaching needs to be research-informed is one example of the interplay between being a good teacher and a good researcher. Both are equally important, interdependent and both roles need to be developed, valued, rewarded, and incentivised. In terms of curriculum transformation, effective teaching requires that lecturers have a good understanding of the interplay between knowledge and power, and the ability to question 'what knowledge', 'whose knowledge' and 'who is served' through knowledge selection into the curriculum.

Cameron and Woods (2016) cite an ongoing cooperative study in Australian universities (Australian University Teaching Criteria and Standards Project) (AUTCSP 2014) which offers a valuable structure to characterise national teaching measures and principles. Its seven models are portrayed and conceptualised as a network to give instances of execution at every one of five degrees of vocation movement. In Sweden, Lund University has distinguished three overall standards of 'good' teaching, portrayed as 'educational capability', which they have used to

perceive and remunerate phenomenal teaching practice. Lund University's origination of an 'Educational Academy' (Olsson, Martensson, & Roxa, 2010) is a structure that is utilised to assess teaching ability. These great teaching standards have been utilised to conceptualise principles that empower lecturer improvement professionals to help lecturers in developing their mastery. These principles empower lecturers to be deliberate and centred in building up their skills and furnish assessors with strategies to survey the degrees of the educational capability of each lecturer.

Also, in South Africa, the Council for Higher Education (CHE) and the Higher Education Learning and Teaching Association of Southern Africa (HELTASA) introduced National Excellence in Teaching and Learning Award in 2010 and even the university under study does offer Vice Chancellors' Teaching excellence awards since 2012. The national awards are issued yearly to deserving applicants across all higher education institutions in South Africa. One of their aims is to show support at a national level for excellence in teaching and learning in higher education.

Kember and Wong (2000) outlined what poor teaching is. They inferred good and poor teaching within four quadrants moulded by the junctures of students' philosophies about learning (passive vs. active) and their perception of their teacher's beliefs about teaching (traditional/transmissive vs. non-traditional). Teaching is perceived as poor when students' beliefs concerning learning and their perception of their teacher's beliefs about teaching were dissenting (Kember & Wong, 2000).

## Theoretical Framework

Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) was chosen as the theoretical framework for this study because PCK is associated with the teacher's learning organisation in the classroom, which challenges their creativeness in altering the teaching resources (Kulsum, 2017). The PCK is defined as the basic skill for lecturers so that they improve their teaching excellence and approach (Kultsum, 2017). According to An, Kulm and Wu (2004) the significance of PCK is comprised of three parts namely knowledge of content, curriculum and teaching. Teaching is a multifaceted perceptive action where the teacher is expected to apply knowledge from various fields (Barnett & Hodson, 2001; Cochran, et al., 1993): (a) subject matter knowledge, (b) pedagogical knowledge, and, (c) pedagogical content knowledge (PCK). Hence knowledge of content alone is not enough to teach effectively.

According to Shulman (1986, 1987) cited in Hancherngchai (2018), the concept of Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) as a new realm of teacher knowledge has been a useful framework for discovering the teachers' needs and content improvements. Shulman (1987) presented Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) as a key part of the knowledge base of teaching, that is comprised of (a) subject matter knowledge, (b) curricular knowledge, (c) pedagogical knowledge (d) knowledge of students, (e) knowledge of the context, and (f) knowledge of educational goals. He conceptualised PCK as containing influential subject matter specific correlations, illustrations, models, demos and other techniques of constructing the module logical to other people where both the content and pedagogical knowledge are incorporated.

Ever since Shulman, many researchers have investigated PCK and it has been construed in diverse ways (Gess-Newsome, 1999; Cochran, et al., 1993; Grossman, 1990). Grossman (1990) expounded on Shulman's work, by theorising PCK as an outcome of alteration of information from three areas: (a) subject matter knowledge and beliefs, (b) pedagogical knowledge and beliefs, and, (c) knowledge and beliefs about context. Individually, these knowledge areas portray PCK as improvement and in turn affects the three underwriting areas while Franke and Fennema (1992) denoted PCK as teachers' knowledge of teaching processes such as operational approaches for planning, lecture room practises, behaviour managing

systems, lecture room organization procedure, and inspiration procedures. Magnuson, Krajcik and Borko (1999), adding on Grossman's effort, termed PCK for teaching as comprising of five parts: (a) orientations toward teaching, (b) knowledge and beliefs about the curriculum, (c) knowledge and beliefs about instructional strategies, (d) knowledge and philosophies about students understanding of explicit subject topics, and (e) knowledge and theories about assessment in that theme.

Hancherngchai (2018) contends that content knowledge is a necessary but not the only condition for good teaching because lecturers also need to choose appropriate examples and exercises in the correct sequence so that students are guided in their learning. The PCK notion explores the teaching strategies, approaches, and procedures that assist a lecturer to teach more effective but these should be contextualised to relevant National Qualification Framework (NQF) level of the course/module taught. Lastly, Coenders (2010) describes PCK as knowledge for teaching. Daries (2017) supports Shulman (1987) conception as he also explains Pedagogic Content Knowledge as an amalgamation of content and pedagogy into a consideration of how curriculum matters or themes are designed, characterised, and modified to the diverse benefits and capabilities of students. Kultsum (2017) elaborates that PCK is the basic skill for lecturers so that they improve their teaching excellence and approach. This means PCK will enhance lecturers to combine content with effective and innovative teaching approaches relevant to the national qualification (NQF) level and students' cognitive levels. The innovative teaching skills are taught in the staff development training. PCK also develops lecturers to design curriculum inclusive of diverse and integrated assessment to accommodate diverse students attributes. Such an approach results into future ready graduates for the market with the required applied competences namely foundational, practical and reflexive skills (SAQA, 2012).

The PCK concept may be interpreted differently by different people, but it is generally agreed that this amalgamation of knowledge affects how teachers teach and how students learn (Berry, Loughran, & van Driel, 2008). For all the topics they teach, discipline teachers should have a well-developed PCK not restricted to CK hence the need for continuous training on pedagogical skills. PCK is developed by integrating its contributing parts, reflecting on them, and active processing. Teaching experiences shape and develop PCK (Clermont, Borko, & Krajcik, 1994; Van Driel, et al., 1998). Furthermore, according to Kulsum, (2017). PCK is also associated to the teacher's learning organisation in the classroom, which challenges their creativeness in altering the teaching resources.

## Methodology

Qualitative research method was used where face-to-face and telephonic interviews were conducted. The study was conducted in one campus comprising of two sites. The 1<sup>st</sup> site offers qualifications ranging from a certificate to advanced diploma while the second site offers undergraduate degrees and post graduate degrees up to doctoral level. A purposive sample of 51 academics who attended Academic Staff Development workshops inclusive of seven (7) who also completed the Post Graduate Diploma in Higher Education (PGDip(HE)). Only 27 academics responded to the invite for interviews which ultimately were used for data collection. The interview questions were guided by the following key statements which were also used as themes:

- a. The training has improved my teaching knowledge
- b. Participating in the training programme has enhanced my teaching methods
- c. The training was aligned with my teaching needs
- d. The core areas which were more relevant towards my teaching
- e. The new skills acquired in the training cannot be practiced in my lecture rooms

Before the interview started, I addressed the participants about why she/he was chosen as part of the sample, of their rights to withdraw anytime, the purpose of the study and that their

identity will be kept a secret in this study. Each interview was conducted in a room where no one could hear what was discussed. The questionnaires were sent to participants using google docs to their private emails and responses never had their names. The consent form addressed the principles suggested by Neuman (2014). All willing participants signed the consent form to ensure the fair distribution of risks involved in this study and the promise of respectful treatment of participants, which involves maximising good outcomes, and minimising risks. The interviews were recorded to ensure trustworthiness of data. Content analysis was used to identify emerging themes from the responses.

## **Results and Discussion**

There were 27 participants composed of 55% females and 45% males. Their age groups start from 30 -39 years (29%); 40-49 years (43%); 50 -59 years (23%) and the above 60 years group (8%). Their academic qualifications are 12% PhD, 67% Masters and 21% below Masters qualification. Participants who possess a Post Graduate Diploma in Higher Education (PGDip(HE) were 14%, 31% have other teaching qualifications which are not at higher education level and the majority 55% participants have no teaching qualifications.

### **The training has improved my teaching knowledge**

Most respondents contend that ASD enhancement is for lecturers who were never trained to teach; therefore, it is intended to capacitate them with the understanding that it will help them to meet basic requirements to lecture in HE institutions. Some respondents related the issue of ASD with improvement of teaching and stated that ASD was the advancement of ability to teach effectively. Most of the interview participants felt that ASD is relevant to their teaching and career profession. Participant 13 voiced that it is a career change where she learnt the pedagogy of teaching and learning. Comments from some participants are listed below:

*“The training has improved my teaching knowledge”;*

*“Participating in the training programme has increased my motivation as a lecturer”*

### **Participating in the training programme has enhanced my teaching methods**

The response by P2 and P10 highlights the fact that participants acknowledge the importance of training of academics without a teaching qualification to equip them with pedagogical content knowledge in addition to the disciplinary expertise they already have.

Remarkably, the talk of strengthening pedagogical content knowledge is predominant in the interview information, particularly from five members. Most likely it is because all hold PGDip qualification and the other is an academic developer. P3 contends that such exposure engages one to reflect as they lecture in HE and further recognises that ASD enables lecturers with teaching aptitudes to guide HE students in a manner that is unique. P5,P11,P12, P15 referred to enabling of academics when she described ASD as an engagement of lecturers on teaching abilities and that it underpins and develops them as better-prepared lecturers in offering excellent teaching.

The training discourse also arose from the interview data. Participant P3 stressed that ASD was regarded as a technique to train academics and professors in lecturing expertise, signifying that professors were knowledgeable experts in their disciplinary fields but require to be trained as university teachers.

Respondents also see the outcome of ASD as leading to improvement and upgrade of the teaching and learning competencies within the departments. For example, P2 contended that

consistent refresher workshops and courses are essential for academic staff advancement as they result in improved teaching tactics. P8 explicated that ASD programmes are important in the acquisition of teaching skills.

These respondents' perspectives are aligned with Quinn (2012) and D'Andrea and Gosling's (2001) observations. In their case studies in South Africa and the UK, these authors correspondingly ascertained that academic staff development (ASD) was concomitant with the development of teaching and learning in the HE sector. Surprisingly, some studies (Mizell, 2010) assert that there is no convincing proof to agree with this. Interestingly, the information from the interview reveals that Academic Staff Development's focus is on teaching abilities and methods. Data also showed that using workshops and seminars is the foremost technique in training such competencies. Results categorically display that ASD can be anticipated in relation to its purpose, its methods, its empowering aspect and development. University teachers' development is one of the central dialogues that arose and it characterises ASD. The staff development programmes lend authority to endowing lecturers with pedagogical strategies in teaching undergraduates.

Volbrecht (2003) stated that lecturers' development via ASD should conscientise them to confront HE curriculum problems. Furthermore, Feiman-Nemser (2001) emphasised that academic staff development raises the lecturers' cognisance of HE encounters that impede excellence. It also transpired that Academic Staff Development is linked to induction and training, in that order. There is a growing perception that lecturers' status as discipline or subject experts is inadequate; lecturers require investment and upskilling in the expertise and skill of teaching. Nevertheless, induction and upskilling are restricted in comparison to ASD that might be wide-ranging in freedom and perception (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). In reality, some experts caution that we should not adopt skills training only, as an ASD approach (Feiman-Nemser, 2001) due to the connotations related to it, which include becoming proficient in practical ability, which is a confined interpretation of ASD. Instead, ASD ought to be correctly conceptualised as Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) with an objective of preparing lecturers to grow as reflective specialists (Bath & Smith, 2004).

Some of these comments were:

*"The programme has helped me to carry out my teaching duties effectively. It has also helped in relating with my students.*

*"It has improved my perception about teaching and handling student-lecturer relationship.*

*"It has helped me a lot in the area of evaluation of learning outcomes especially setting of questions and organisation of my lectures. Empowering lecturers to improve their lecturing skills and responsibilities, which encompasses preparation, lecturing, and handling students' assessments*

*"Capacitation to teach is an add-on to my experience*

*"Lecturers need to be trained since they hold only discipline-based degrees.*

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

### ***The training was aligned with my teaching needs***

Congruent to this rationale, lecturers considered professional development appropriate if it considered their exact requests and apprehensions or if their learning practice and their departmental tasks are included within the ASD activities (Hunzicker, 2010). Wood, et al. (2011), in their study, also concluded that lecturers need discipline-specific approaches in teaching to develop the mathematics profession in Australia. Some of these comments were

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

*"It is very relevant because it helps in developing necessary skills required in*

*teaching in the University especially for those who did not go through teacher training programme and do not have previous teaching experiences. It compliments my mind-set and commitment to nation-building through capacity building and mentoring of future academics”.*

### ***Core areas that were more relevant towards my teaching***

Participants identified aspects they felt were relevant and could empower them if training was provided. Most participants identified curriculum development and design as a core area for training needs for any lecturer. The reasoning is that they feel the basics to teach depend on the plan, structure, and design of the curriculum as lecturers strive to constructively align their teaching. This is aligned with Biggs' (2003) model of constructive alignment which McMahon and Thakore (2006) defines as coherence between assessment, teaching strategies, and intended learning outcomes in an educational programme.

Some participants identified technology integration into teaching and learning as requiring serious attention through ASD to reinforce academics' viability. She proposed that technology ought to be incorporated into teaching, concentrating on the substance and teaching approach of the technology.

While some participants, like P3 and P5 were concerned with content-based needs, P4 was worried about how academic professional development addressed students' diversity. In signifying student centredness, P6 recognised that ASD supported them in realising the diversity of students, recognise the students and their prospects thus leading lecturers to comprehend the differences of their students and reasons for creating opportunities and consultation sessions for students. Chabaya (2015) emphasises a similar argument that an equipped professional course reflected reservations equally for the lecturers and students in its plan. Merriam (2001) believes that the students' criticism formulated a decent basis of acknowledging students' desires to contribute to ASD projects and to enrich them to be more significant.

### ***The new skills acquired in the training cannot be practiced in my lecture rooms***

*“The new skills acquired in the training could not be practiced in my lecture room”  
I am generally concerned about my inability to implement the innovative practices learnt during the programme”.*

*It provides the opportunity to meet other early career teachers/researchers in the university.*

After analysing data from the interviews, the following findings emanated:

- Lecturers in the study regard ASD as enhancing quality teaching; empowering lecturers to improve their lecturing skills and responsibilities which encompass preparations, lecturing and handling students' assessments. As Almarghani and Mijatovic (2017) argue, many HE institutions (HEIs) are pressurised to develop good quality of university education, quality teaching can be achieved through transforming the lecturers' teaching aptitude, skills, and approaches. Transformation without empowerment is not possible. These are critical theory characteristics that are also ASD drivers towards effective lecturer career and classroom practice. ASD is defined as an engagement of lecturers with teaching abilities; it underpins and develops them as better prepared lecturers in offering excellent teaching. The need for training on PCK becomes implicit here.
- Curriculum development and design are core areas for training needs for any lecturer. Hence it is not surprising that the respondents classified curriculum issues as a core attraction to their attendance of ASD. The reasoning is that lecturers consider the basics to teach depend on the plan, structure, and design of the curriculum as lecturers strive to constructively align their teaching. This is aligned

with Biggs's (2003) model of constructive alignment. Due to the current transformation and changes in teaching and learning in HE, lecturers need adequate technical skills to enable them to integrate technology in curriculum development and teaching as technology has become an enhancer to teaching and learning in HE (Balyer, Özcan, & Yıldız, 2017).

- There was also a mention of the importance of aligning module content to pedagogical content knowledge one area of need for ASD. ASD is characterised by academics as career-changing where they learn the pedagogy of teaching and learning, and most are encouraged to attend if the topic/area of the training is relevant to their teaching. Wood, Vu, Bower, Brown, Skalicky, Donovan, Loch, Joshi, and Bloom (2011) in their study, also established that lecturers need discipline-specific approaches in teaching to develop their subject-specific profession. In critical realist philosophy.
- Another finding from the study is that attendance is for personal growth, as more responses showed that lecturers do plan towards their future careers in the teaching profession. This is consistent with Mariss (2011), who advocates that for staff development to be effective, two components, namely, one's professional development and the institutional development process, are crucial. They are motivated as they become confident to assist students' wellbeing. When lecturers are confident in both content and pedagogical knowledge, they become empowered to teach effectively. They easily contextualise their teaching tools and constructively align their teaching with assessment of learning.

## Conclusion

There is evidence that lecturers see ASD as enhancing their teaching for effective delivery, develops their skills (constructive alignment, assessment, credits), and knowledge of teaching and learning (learning theories, teaching methods, student engagements in class). ASD empowers lecturers as HE professionals to teach better and obtain better professional qualifications like PGDip (Higher Education) and SETA accredited courses. All these professional qualifications enhance promote and result to good teaching practices. Finally, lecturers are made, not born, hence there is great support from the academics for well organised, quality training, professionalising, and upskilling initiatives to develop good university lecturers. For this HEI to transform its academics, there is a need for strengthening its ASD approach.

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