



ENSURING AND PROMOTING THE PEDAGOGICAL COMPETENCE OF UNIVERSITY LECTURERS IN AFRICA

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Abstract

This paper examines the availability or otherwise of structures in universities in Africa for ensuring and promoting the promoting the pedagogical competence of lecturers. The characteristics that university students do observe in their lecturers while performing their pedagogical duties and which they abhor are also examined. Data were collected through interviews with 100 university lecturers, 200 university students and twenty key university administrators. In all, a total number of twenty universities in Africa were covered with two universities in each country. The universities span ten countries in Africa. Findings from the study show that only 20% of the universities sampled have adequate structures in place for continuous pedagogical development of all lecturers. All the students interviewed (100%) came up with traits that they observe in their lecturers when carrying out their pedagogical duties and which they abhor. Attempt is made to draw out the implications of the findings and to make relevant suggestions.

Key Words: Pedagogical training, professional development, teaching, universities, Africa.

INTRODUCTION

University education occupies a cardinal position in every society. The university not only receives products from preceding levels of education, it is usually the final destination for formal teaching and learning before the ultimate launch into the wider world for employment or entrepreneurship (Ajibade et al, 2010). The Institutional Management in Higher Education (IMHE 2009) also points out that higher education is becoming a major-driver of economic competitiveness in an increasingly knowledge-driven global economy. However, while higher education in general has experienced significant development over the years, university education in particular is currently undergoing a challenging phase. For example, Malik (2009) points out that university education is facing challenges that it never faced before. These challenges according to him include increasing number of students, diverse background of students, use of technology, assessment, globalization-learning and corporate style management. These challenges, he maintains, put extra pressure and responsibility on the shoulder of those responsible for policy decisions and also on the lecturers.

Similarly, Mugimu & Ezati (2010) citing the example of Makerere University in Uganda point out that prior to the 1970's, the university had a small population of about 2000 students but from 1990, the population rose from less than 10000 to 40000 in 2010. This increase in student numbers has created more challenges and attracted public concern about the capacity of Makarere University to promote quality education, given the inadequate facilities, equipment and the numerical strength of the teaching staff (Mamdani 2007). This fear points to problems with the curriculum, delivery methods, quality of teaching staff, as well as teaching and learning materials (Mugimu & Ezati 2010).

Latchem et al (2006) in an international overview of professional development of university lecturers observe that, with the exponential expansion of higher education, lecturers are expected to teach larger classes and students from non-traditional backgrounds with a wide range of motivations and abilities. In addition, Latchem et al, observe that lecturers are also expected to embrace new forms of educational delivery such as open, distance, blended and work-based learning and master the latest tools and methodologies of information and



communication technology. They submit that all of these are expected to occur without commensurate increase in funding and in most cases, adequate training provision. According to them, with some notable exceptions, there is little in the way of systematic professional development to prepare lecturers for contemporary pedagogical challenges in the universities.

Postareff et al (2007) however highlight the trend that is becoming widespread around the world of training university teachers in order to improve their pedagogical thinking and skills as evidenced in such countries as Norway, the United Kingdom, Sri Lanka and Finland. Furthermore, Hussain et al (2010) report that, the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan is training the academic staff of universities under the cover of National Academy of Higher Education's (NAHE) Faculty Development Program. Mirroring the diverse range of reasons for the importance of courses to support academic staff in their teaching are discussions about similar courses offered in Belgium (Stes et al 2007), Sweden (Ahlberg, 2008) and New Zealand (Tynan & Garbett, 2007).

Goody (2007) also confirms that nearly seventy five per cent of Australian universities offer teaching preparation activities which 'require' staff to participate in them. He provides an overview of twenty five of the Foundation programs that are offered across Australia. In addition, Goody identifies Foundation programs as "formal programs that induct and develop university teachers with the aim of fostering and supporting the quality of teaching and learning in the university" (p1.). These programs according to him are usually completed within the first three years of employment and offer more than induction. Most of the Australian courses are mandatory, non award programs that did not include formal assessment but require that participant engage in specific activities (such as the presentation of teaching portfolio, engagement in an online discussion or peer observation of teaching) to satisfactorily complete the course.

Moreover, Henard & Roseveare (2012) mention that the Catholic University of Portugal has in place a strategic plan with the following goals among others: (a) ensure high levels of pedagogical innovations, particularly through the start up projects with significant impact on the lecturers. (b) develop and implement a Skills Development Plan teaching of lecturers(e.g., linking objectives, strategies and pedagogical evaluation, coordination of teaching in attendance and technological contexts).

With the moves that many non African countries are making to ensure that lecturers in their universities are pedagogically competent and remain so, effort is made in this paper to examine the situation in Africa. Attempt is also made to find out the traits that university students find to leave much to be desired amongst their lecturers as they carry out their pedagogical responsibilities. As a background to this study, the author attempts an exploration of the concept of Pedagogical competence as would be used in the study.

The Concept of Pedagogical Competence

Ryegard et al (2010) point out that in agreement with international research with respect to the concept of pedagogical competence there is a clear development from what was previously referred to as teaching ability or teaching skill to a more comprehensive definition of pedagogical competence. The thing that has meant the most for development during the last few years is above all the idea of Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (Boyer 1990) where the teacher is expected to have a scholarly attitude towards the teaching task and in that way contribute to the formation of knowledge of teaching and learning in higher education. According to them, contemporary meaning of pedagogical competence includes greater organizational responsibility. The lecturer's contribution to the development of higher education (Ryegard 2008) and responsibility as a pedagogy leader (Giertz, 2003) are now being emphasized. It is argued therefore that while pedagogical competence includes teaching skills and the scholarship of teaching it goes beyond them.

Oldsjo(2010) stresses further that the traditional view of pedagogical competence is primarily a question of practice "in the classroom" whereby a skillful teacher through knowledge, methods, actions and ability to communicate etc, gets teaching situation to function and creates conditions for learning. He however points out that this view is deficient in the sense that it does not include a scientific attitude towards teaching and learning. He points out that the teachers ability lies primarily in a scientifically based subject competence and the practical teaching skills that he /she has acquired and continued to develop. As a result of this, deficient knowledge of learning theory, pedagogy for higher education research into teaching and tried experiences



means that the teacher does not have a real scientific foundation for pedagogical development work. Oldsjo comments further that the frame of reference risks being limited to the teacher's own experiences and the tradition of the institution.

In agreement with Magin (1998), Olsson et al. (2010) confirm that pedagogical competence is a broader concept than teaching skills. They opine that pedagogical competence presupposes good, broad and deep knowledge of the subject of teaching. A pedagogically proficient teacher shall in different context demonstrate a good ability to use subject knowledge in research – related, practical, pedagogical actions with student learning in focus.

In the same vein, Apelgren & Giertz (2010) define pedagogical competence as *“the ability and will to regularly apply the attitude, the knowledge, and the skills that promote the learning of the teacher’s students in the best way. This shall be in agreement with the goals that apply, and within the framework available and presupposes continuous development of the teacher’s own competence and instructional design.* They highlight a number of aspects in their definition which they deem to be of importance for the teacher's pedagogical competence. These aspects are:

- **Attitude**

Apelgren & Giertz argue that having an attitude that best promotes student learning is the cornerstone of pedagogical competence. Attitude according to them means the perception of the lecturer with respect to his own responsibilities, the responsibilities of the students and his pedagogical outlook. They also reiterate the need for the lecturer to have a general academic attitude towards teaching. This they wrote means among other things that when choosing content, teaching method, examination and evaluation, cognizance is taken of what research has shown to promote student learning. They submit that higher education rests on a foundation of research regarding both content and pedagogical design. According to Apelgren & Giertz, having attitude that best promotes student learning also implies the need for the lecturer to ensure good contact with all students, create good teaching climate, help students to develop good study habits, stimulate students to be active learners and to listen to students.

- **Knowledge**

Apelgren & Giertz maintain that as a basis for pedagogical competence, the lecturer needs knowledge within the following areas: the subject, how student learn (in general and for specific subject), the teaching process and teaching methods, the goal of the course and the organization. They however submit that to have knowledge in these areas alone has little value as a qualification. According to them, it is not enough to have knowledge and skills that are needed. This is because the most important word in the definition is *apply*. It is emphasized therefore that pedagogical competence means that the teacher also uses his/her knowledge and applies acquired insights and skills.

- **Ability**

Applying knowledge in the areas mentioned in item 2 above , according to Apelgren & Giertz means demonstrating different types of ability; ability to plan and organize activity, ability to structure and present material in a subject in an appropriate way for students, ability to adapt teaching to the particular group of students and the situation.

- **Adapting to the situation**

Apelgren & Giertz opine that the composition and the mental ability of students vary. As a result of this, they point out that pedagogical competence means handling the diversity of factors in the best way with the goal of optimizing the learning of students.

- **Perseverance**

Apelgren & Giertz put it forward that good teaching requires perseverance. It is also their view that neither the students nor the institution gain from brilliant one-off if interest and commitment then wane. They conclude

therefore that the ability and the will to work regularly in the best way therefore is emphasized as an important aspect of pedagogical competence.

- **Continuous development**

Apelgren & Giertz further submit that pedagogical competence is neither something static nor something which one ever completes. According to them, showing the ability and the will to apply a way of working that best supports student learning means continuously searching for and taking in new knowledge, learning from new experiences and developing professionally both in one's subject specialty and pedagogically. Pedagogical competence means continuously evaluating one's pedagogical practice in the light of what research and proven experiences have shown to best promote student learning and making necessary adjustment.

In a concise way, Ryegard (2008, p.9) captures the concept of pedagogical competence in his comment that: *"pedagogical competence implies that the teacher from definite goals and frameworks, through continuous development of teaching and personal professional development, support and facilitates the learning of the students in the best way. This pedagogical competence also reflects the teacher's competence in regard to collaboration, comprehensive view and contribution to the development of pedagogy for higher education."*

While admitting the possibility of other definition or description of pedagogical competence, Rygard et al 2008 argued that a correct and comprehensive definition or description/perspective of pedagogical competence must include three basic components.

- It shall be based on that which supports the students' learning. In other words, a correct definition, description or perspective of pedagogical competence shall take into consideration what both research and well tried experience have demonstrated to promote students' learning. This position, they contend is strengthened by the fact that international research in pedagogy for higher education have shown that there is a correlation between the lecturer's understanding of what and how students learn along with the conditions for that learning, and the lecturer's success in lecturing (see, Marton et al., 1984; Prosser & Trigwell, 1998; Ramsden,1992; Biggs, 2003). In the light of this, Rygard et al., 2008 argue that knowledge about learning and the conditions of learning are indispensable requirements. While emphasizing factors that support students learning, they reiterate the fact that lecturer's perseverance, attitude, ability to adapt to situation, didactic knowledge, and knowledge about learning are critical if the lecturer is to be taken to be a professional by students, colleagues and superiors.
- It shall include the lecturer's ability to develop with the support of theory and to make public their practices –Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. Furthermore, they highlight the fact that a pedagogically competent lecturer finds out what works and what outcomes their choices result in, examines his lectures and uses this knowledge to create better conditions for students' learning. The lecturer if he is pedagogically competent, shares knowledge in the same way that a researcher shares research results (Antman & Olsson, 2007).
- It shall make it possible to describe a threshold value (a lowest level) and a progression of pedagogical competence.

Threshold value has to do with –what shall be required to be qualified and this also implies that the lecturer is continuously developing pedagogically..

In a more concise way, Tagerud (2010) also emphasizes the fact that even if pedagogical competence is defined with different words at different institutions there is a basic understanding that is shared by everyone, namely that pedagogical competence comprises much more than teaching skills.

The Problem

University education is becoming increasingly competitive in terms of students, staff and resources. As a result of the increasing demand for access to it by the masses in many countries of the world including Africa, it has shifted from being the exclusive reserve of the elite that it was to a service open to the masses (Okwakol 2009). In many countries outside Africa however, another development that is rapidly gaining ground is the attention that is being given to the pedagogical competence of university lecturers; Henard & Roseveare(2012), Hussain et al(2010) and Postreff et al(2007). This study therefore aims at finding out what the situation is, in Africa with



respect to provisions for ensuring that university lecturers are pedagogically competent and for promoting lecturers' pedagogical competence.

Scope of the Study

Data were collected through interviews with 100 university lecturers, 200 university students and 20 key administrative staff. In all, a total of twenty universities were covered with two universities in each country. The universities span ten countries in Africa namely: Botswana, Zambia, Uganda, Ethiopia, Namibia, Tanzania, Cameroon, Republic of South Africa, Nigeria and Ghana. The students covered in the study are from 200 levels through 700 levels (2nd year undergraduate student through to Masters Degree level students).

Purpose of the Study

To investigate the availability or otherwise of structures for the promotion of pedagogical competences amongst lecturers in the universities covered by the study, find out if pedagogical competences and formal teaching qualifications are required in the recruitment of university staff in the universities covered by the study and to identify the characteristics that students in the universities covered by the study do observe in their lecturers and which they abhor while these lecturers are carrying out their pedagogical duties.

Research Questions

Specifically, this study addresses itself to the following questions:

1. Do universities in Botswana, Zambia, Uganda, Ethiopia, Namibia, Tanzania, Cameroon, South Africa, Nigeria and Ghana have structures in place for the purpose of promoting pedagogical competence of lecturers?
2. In the countries listed in 1 above, is proven pedagogical competence or formal teaching qualification required in the recruitment of university lecturers?
3. What are the characteristics that university students in the countries listed in 1 above do observe in their lecturers while performing their pedagogical duties and which they abhor

Significance of the Study

The study's significance is that it will highlight the prevailing situation in the universities covered, with respect to the availability or otherwise of the structures for ensuring and promoting the pedagogical competence of lecturers. Furthermore, it will illuminate the challenges of university lecturers in becoming and remaining pedagogically competent. In addition, the study will bring to light, the experience of university students' which they find to leave much to be desired as lecturers carry out their pedagogical duties. Also, findings from the study, if made available to policy makers and stakeholders in university education, may inform the promulgation of regulations towards arresting identified short-comings

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This study made use of qualitative research method adopting a survey research design. Using qualitative research technique allows the researcher to get data directly from the subjects themselves by interacting with the respondents and hearing their views in a comprehensive way using semi structured interviews conducted face to face with the respondents. Purposive convenience sampling was adopted in the selection of participants for this study. This type of non probability sampling method seeks information- rich cases which can be studied in a comprehensive way (Patton 1990). Participants for the study were selected from the faculties of Social Sciences, Science, Arts, Agriculture, Technology and Law.

Data Collection

Appointments were made with participants and interviews were conducted in stages over a period of time. The emphasis during the interview was upon grasping the participants' perspectives and comprehending the experiences. In a few cases, it was necessary to interview participants' more than once especially when new perspectives were raised by subsequent participants. The duration of the interview ranged from thirty to sixty minutes. Audiotape was used in recording the interviews and this was supplemented with reflective field notes. The participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity.



Data Analysis

After transcribing the audiotapes of the interviews, the information was analyzed to increase understanding of it and to be able to present the findings clearly.

Responses were treated according to the research questions they were responding to while the data analysis was also approached by treating each research question on its own. Simple percentages were used to analyze the data collected.

Achieving Reliability and Validity

Notable qualitative researchers such as Smaling (1994:78) regard reliability as the elimination of casual errors that can affect research results. In order to ensure the trustworthiness of the findings of the study therefore, Guba's Model for qualitative research was adhered to. Guba(1982) proposes four criteria that he believes should be considered by qualitative researchers in pursuit of a trustworthy study. The criteria are: credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability. Furthermore, researcher's personal observations and the contrasting and comparison of data served as an additional confirmation of the validity of the data.

Ethical Issues

The researcher sees the topic as sensitive because it has bearing on the quality of teaching and learning in the universities covered. As a result of this, care was taken to adhere to ethical measures such as the secrecy of the participants' identity during the research.

MAJOR FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Research Question No 1:

Are there structures in place in the universities sampled for the purpose of ensuring and promoting the pedagogical competence of lecturers?

Out of the total number of twenty universities covered by the study and which span ten countries 20% of these universities have in place induction programmes for newly recruited staff. These programmes are organized either within the departments, faculties or centrally by university administration. From the responses of the lecturers in the sampled universities, these induction programmes are merely series of events during which new lecturers are introduced; most of the time hurriedly to the general work environments. The induction programmes, the lecturers highlight are geared towards ensuring that lecturers have an appreciation of their roles and the institution in which they are working and are mostly done within one or two days. 60% of the universities sampled have units which provide pedagogical support to academic staff. These units are located within the departments or faculties and the functions identified for the units include storage and supply of teaching equipments to lecturers. 20% of the universities sampled have structures in place for continuous professional development in pedagogy for all lecturers. The programme covers areas such as: e-teaching, e-learning, lecturers' ethics and code of teaching, general teaching methods, research supervision skills, students' support etc. Compared to the other universities sampled, this programme for continuous professional development is more involving and covers the major areas of pedagogical competence as expounded earlier in the background to this study.

Fleming et al (2004) however argued that, it is not simply a matter of increasing the skills of academic staff but of encouraging university lecturers to become professional by them with opportunities "to engage in critical reflective pedagogy". They point out that this "is being widely acknowledged as an important element in the continuing professional development" of university lecturers (p. 165). Against this backdrop, and coupled with the what pedagogical competence entails as discussed in the earlier part of this paper, one opines that pockets of meetings here and there under the name of induction programmes or merely making teaching equipment available for lecturers will not suffice in keeping lecturers in the universities in Africa on track for pedagogical competence. The fact that only 20% of the universities sampled have in place a relatively comprehensive programme for promoting the pedagogical competence of lecturers implies that necessary and sufficient attention is not being given to the development of pedagogical competence of academic staff in the universities covered by the study. As a result of this, the concentration of lecturers in these universities is on research. This is more so because apart from the fact that lecturers do not have official provisions of



programmes for pedagogical development and enhancement to which they can commit themselves, research is predominantly the yardstick being used for promotion. Henard & Roseveare_(2012) confirm this development in their submission that emphasis on research performance for both institutions and individual academics has traditionally overshadowed teaching and learning for students in many countries. While progress in research is commendable and expected of lecturers, it ought not to be at the expense of steps that can ensure their pedagogical competence and continuous development of the same. So long as this situation persists in universities, so long shall it continue to negatively impact the students who are at the receiving end. When lecturers do not give attention to how they can become pedagogically competent or improve their pedagogical competency, it goes without saying that these lecturers will either not make progress at all concerning pedagogical competence or they will not make appreciable progress. Incidentally, it is under this condition that these lecturers are “deciding the fate” of their students. The outcome of such exercise is better imagined than experienced.

Research Question No 2:

In the recruitment of university teaching staff, is ability to proven pedagogical competence or formal teaching qualification a requirement?

According to the lecturers in the sampled universities and the key administrative staff that were interviewed, neither proven pedagogical competence nor formal teaching qualification is required for recruitment of academic staff except for those in the faculties of education. Furthermore, findings from the study show that only 10% of the sampled lecturers apart from those in the Faculties of Education have undertaken formal pedagogical training at one level or another and at different times. When neither proven pedagogical competence nor formal teaching qualification is a requirement in the recruitment of university lecturers there is no way of ensuring the pedagogical competence of university lecturers before being employed to carry out pedagogical duties. One sees this as an abnormality and again it is the students that will eventually bear the brunt as some lecturers will be unable to carry out their pedagogical duties the way they ought to.

Findings from this study also reveal that, at the point of entry into university workforce, 40% of the lecturers in the sampled universities do not have any teaching experience and do not have any teaching qualification. One does not have any reasonable ground to vouch for these lecturers in terms of their being able to give their students the best pedagogy wise. At the point of entry into university work force, 50% of the lecturers covered by this study do not have neither formal pedagogical training nor university in-house pedagogy training but have years of teaching experience. This group of lecturers might have been able to improve themselves pedagogy wise through “trial and error” over the years. This however does not and cannot rule out the need for initial professional training in pedagogy either at the point of entering into university work force or before and continuous professional training in pedagogy. The fact that all that some lecturers have as their pedagogical background is the experience acquired through “trial and error” over the years speaks volumes as to the quality of teaching in the universities covered by this study.

Postareff et al (2007) however point out that in recent years there have been discussions about the need to improve university lecturers’ pedagogical thinking and skills as well. As a consequence, they observe further that the training of university lecturers has recently become a widespread trend in many countries (Postareff 2007). Furthermore, in a study carried out by Postareff et al on the impact of university lecturers’ pedagogical training on approaches to teaching among 200 lecturers of University of Helsinki in Finland, more than half of the lecturers who took part in the university pedagogical training confirm that participation in the pedagogical training made them more aware of their approach to teaching and of teaching methods. These lecturers further believed that their reflective skills had developed during training. Ten lecturers considered that they received theoretical knowledge, new ideas, advice as well as new viewpoints from participation in the pedagogical training.

Research Question No 3:

What are the characteristics that university students in the countries sampled do observe in their lecturers while performing their pedagogical duties and which they abhor?

All the students interviewed (100%) came up with traits that they observe in lecturers when carrying out their pedagogical duties and which they abhor. The characteristics named by the students interviewed in the sample universities are as follow:

- Boring presentations,
- Being short-tempered or moody during lecture
- Threatening students with failure at the outset of the course and or throughout the course period,
- Low voice projection during lecture,
- Direct or indirect avoidance of students' questions during lecture,
- Simply reading of notes to students' during lecture,
- Simply reading of textbook to students' during lecture,
- Arriving late for lecture most of the time,
- Leaving the lecture hall before the scheduled time most of the time,
- Dressing in a way that distracts
- Not making any comment on the script but simply putting the score),
- Asking students to exchange their scripts and do the assessment themselves without double checking,
- Always giving feedback very late,
- Wanting to have illicit relationship with students,
- Not having good mastery of course content,
- Having good mastery of content but lacking the ability to communicate and deliver,
- Announcing at the outset of a course that no one can score an alpha,
- Announcing at the outset of a course that some students must fail,
- Using the same lecture note word for word year in and year out,
- Not making illustration on the board at all or sufficiently during lecture,
- Getting students into group discussion without making any put,
- Always absent from lecture without prior notice,
- Inadequate use of instructional materials during lecture,
- Total lack of the use of instructional materials during lecture,
- Conflicting interest manifested in holding two full time jobs at the same time therefore coming to lecture exhausted most of the time.

It is only normal for students to expect to get value in return for the cost of their education-whether paid directly by the students or by taxpayers. However, a situation whereby students experience all or some of the above mentioned characteristics either frequently or occasionally does not speak of value which students expect to get for hard earned money neither does it speak of professionalism which lecturers are supposed to display. Bearing in mind what pedagogical competence entails as discussed in this study, where a program for ensuring and promoting the pedagogical competence of lecturers is effectively put in place in the universities covered by this study, the characteristics cited above and many other similar characteristics that university students abhor in lecturers while discharging their pedagogical duties would be taken care of. The sad truth however is that until structures are put in place to ensure and to promote pedagogical competence of university lecturers in the universities covered by this study, students in these universities will continue to live with these unpleasant characteristics; the depth of which may worsen with time. In what can be rightly regarded as a confirmation of some of the findings concerning the characteristics that university students do observe in their lecturers and which they abhor, Nwogu (2013) reports that some key university dons in Nigeria have lamented the inability of some lecturers in nation's tertiary institutions to effectively deliver and communicate their lectures to their students. These university dons, Nwosu reports further highlight the fact that inefficient and ineffective communication had contributed to the poor standard of education and mass failure in some examination of some students. Effective communication is an important component of pedagogical competence. That the inability of university lecturers to communicate effectively with their students is a cause of mass failure in some examination of their students is a pointer to the seriousness of the subject of pedagogical competence of university lecturers and the need to give it the necessary attention.

In the light of the aforementioned examples, it stands to reason that the absence of structures for ensuring and promoting the pedagogical competence of lecturers in the universities sampled in this study is a serious missing link in their educational set up. This position is further strengthened by the fact that international research in



pedagogy for higher education have shown that there is a correlation between the lecturer's understanding of what and how students learn along with the conditions for that learning, and the lecturer's success in lecturing (see, Marton et al., 1984; Prosser & Trigwell, 1998; Ramsden, 1992; Biggs, 2003).

SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

The findings of this study are a pointer to what might be the situation in other universities in Africa that are not covered by the study. It is suggested therefore that an audit be carried out by the relevant authorities in university education in the various countries of Africa with a view to determining the status quo with respect to the pedagogical competence of lecturers. The knowledge of the status quo will give insight into the modus operandi of ensuring and promoting the pedagogical competence of the lecturers. This is necessary if universities in Africa will not end up at the very end of the ladder when it comes to international ranking in the all important area of pedagogy. To this end, some practices outside Africa geared towards the promotion of the pedagogical competence of lecturers are presented in the ensuing paragraphs for possible purpose of benchmarking.

According to Henard & Roseveare (2012), the Catholic University of Portugal has in place a strategic plan geared towards making the university to become "a university of teaching and learning of recognized quality". The strategic plan among others stipulates the following goals: among others:

- Ensure high level of pedagogical innovation.
- Develop and implement a skills Development Plan teaching of lecturers (e.g., linking objectives, strategies and pedagogical evaluation, coordination of teaching in attendance and technological contexts).
- Drawing upon external evaluations and consultancy for promoting quality teaching.
- Fostering the use of internal evaluation and prompting institutional research in pedagogical models and conceptions of teaching and learning.
- Developing policies on recognition and reward of innovative and effective teaching.

Each year, the university organizes awards for excellence in teaching and awards for teaching excellence have gradually gained recognition of the same value as those of research. In addition the university keeps their lecturers on track for pedagogical competence by organizing the following:

- Provide an effective venue for discussions and experience sharing on teaching and learning practices (e.g., a Learning and Teaching Center).
- Encourage peer evaluation, constructive feedback and coaching as ongoing practices to foster a "learning community" approach to quality teaching.
- Monitor the effectiveness of professional development through its impact on teaching quality.
- Identify champions of teaching excellence, examine what makes their teaching excellent, publicize their accomplishment and use them as role models.

According to Henard (2008), at the Universidad Nacional del Nordeste (Argentina), the first institutional self-evaluations revealed a major weakness regarding teacher training. Consequently, the university created two programmes to promote continuous training (open to all staff of courses). Henard also highlight the fact that at Dublin University of Technology, there is a programme of mandatory training for lecturers during their first two years. Similarly, at City University of Seattle, institutional quality teaching initiatives primarily target newly recruited lecturers and part-time lecturers (Henard 2008). Henard also report that at Macquarie University, Australia, as a result of the performance Culture of Teaching Project, criteria for promotion at the various academic levels of appointment have been developed based on minimum level of experience, skills and knowledge expected at each level. The criteria specify the form and level of contribution a lecturer can be expected to make at each level to the three elements of scholarship: research, learning and teaching and community engagement. In the case of adjunct staff and staff from the corporate world, Macquarie uses orientation programmes and staff manuals to help them provide teaching of an equivalent quality to that of full time staff (Henard 2008).



Furthermore, Henard & Roseveare (2012) point out that each year, Universite Laval in Canada organizes the University Awards for Excellence in Teaching through which Faculty members are honored for their exceptional teaching or for the production of high quality educational materials.

In the same vein, Tagerud (2012) confirms that competence development in pedagogy for higher education is now offered at all Swedish universities and colleges and the activities in that context make up an important part of the work of promoting pedagogical competence.

As a way forward for universities in Africa with respect to the promotion of pedagogical competences amongst lecturers, one finds Henard & Leprince – Ringuet (2008) very relevant in their observation that: *one of the most foreseeable evolutions in the future of higher education lies within globalization. This rapid process bears many consequences on higher education worldwide. "In many nations, international mobility; global comparison, benchmarking and ranking; and the internationalisation of institutions and system; are key policy themes (OECD, 2007)". "Not all universities are (particularly) international, but all are subject to the same processes of globalisation – partly as objects, victims even of these processes, but partly as subjects, or key agents of globalisation" (Scott, 1998). Therefore, all higher educational institutions should develop a coherent response to globalization. "To be effective in the global environment, means being prepared to changes: Global exchange is transformative and all policies and institutional habits are ripe for reconsideration in the light of global challenge" (OECD, 2007). This may, in particular mean that institutions may have to think over what should be taught, or how classes should be taught.*

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