

# Integration of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Competencies in Faculties of Education for Improving Teaching and Learning

Helen, Ngozi, Ibe<sup>+</sup>

Faculty Of Education, Department Of Curriculum Studies And Educational Technology, Imo State University, Owerri, Nigeria

**Abstract:** This study ascertained the induction courses with which new lecturers in higher institutions are exposed to in order to enhance their Competence in pedagogy. Competence Pedagogy is associated with the constructivist view of learners as active and creative in constructing meaning. The Higher Institutions require knowledge-based economy and workforce that could face the challenges of the millennium. The subjects consist of thirty- six (36) lecturers purposively drawn from three higher institutions in the country. The design of the study was the descriptive survey. The, lecturers responded to the questionnaire. The reliability of the instrument was established at 0.81 using Kuder- Richardson 21. Findings reveal that subjects who had induction courses (25%), those without induction courses (75%). Equally for, proficiency in use of instructional materials , the subjects had only 50(%) mastery of such materials as flip charts and over-head projector (50%), the rest 7 items had percentages below 50%. Researcher recommends that universities organize standard based and content relevant professional development every session.

**Keywords:** Competence, Pedagogy, Strategies, Active Learners, Constructivist Teaching.

## 1. Introduction

The future of any nation (Nigeria) depends on the quality of the output of its higher education efforts (Chapman, 2006). The professionals and experts trained in the higher institutions in Nigeria can only reflect the quality of the systems that produced those (Tobias & Duffy, 2009). It is therefore very important that the instructional systems within the Higher Institution level should be modernized and improved. This can best be achieved through adequate support, in terms of resources and programmes for the lecturers in their teaching functions. Such resources and programmes aimed at improving the instructional sub-system require properly equipped and specialized academic units within the institutions.

If new and older lecturers are to establish themselves quickly, efficiently and effectively, there is a need to provide them with guidance, support and information in a planned and considered way (Nilson and Linda (2010) , Rigden 2002; Wong 2004). The benefits of a thorough induction are: lecturer feels welcome and valued; accelerated success and effectiveness; improved personal and professional wellbeing; heightened job satisfaction, greater self confidence and enhanced commitment to students, school and profession (Britton, 2003; Moller, 2005; Wong 2004; Chapman 2006). Induction enables new lecturer to: understand the culture of the higher institution and how they can be most effective in it; become familiar with departmental practices, policies and guidelines; appreciate and understand fully the expectations of their role and understand the duties and activities of the job and to begin to perform them effectively (Lerman & Zevenbergen (2006); Breaux and Wong 2003; Chapman 2006).

It is recognised that where lecturers are provided with an appropriate and well-planned induction programme, they are more highly motivated; can extend their range of skills and knowledge, enabling them

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<sup>+</sup> E- mail: helen\_ibe@yahoo.com

to be more adaptable; are less likely to waste the University's resources and lecturers time, and benefit from reduced levels of stress and anxiety (Fullan 2001; Tabulawa (2003).

New employees also need to understand the organisation's mission, vision, goals, values and philosophy; personnel practices, health and safety rules, and of course the job they are required to do, with clear methods, timescales and expectations (Johnson and Kardos 2002; Wong 2004).

The Constructivist Theory (Tobias & Duffy, 2009, Kim, 2005, Dorgu, 2007) suggests that learners construct knowledge out of their experiences. Various approaches in Pedagogy derive from constructivist theory.

## 2. The Problem

Teaching and learning at the higher education level involves the development of subject matter expertise by recognized qualified subject matter experts, in other words, the transfer of expertise and expert knowledge from lecturers to students. That the lecturers are experts in their fields of learning is usually not in doubt. What is a cause for concern is the efficiency of the instructional system, i.e. how good the lecturers are at using the resources available to the lecturers in transferring knowledge to the students.

- What induction training in pedagogy is available to the lecturers in the Higher Institutions (HI)?
- What are the lecturer's proficiency in use of instructional materials?

## 3. Method

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The population for the study consisted of Ninety-seven (97) lecturers drawn from three Higher Institutions from Imo state. The sample is made up of thirty-six (36) lecturers drawn purposively from the Faculty of Education, Arts and Faculty of Sciences. The instrument for the study, the structured questionnaire was developed by the researcher. The instrument was on a 'yes' and 'No' response which was converted to percentages. Four Curriculum studies experts and two in Measurement and Evaluation validated the instrument. The kuder- Richardson formula 21 (K-R 21) for non -test instrument was estimated and the co-efficient of 0.81 established.

## 4. Results

Table: 1 Percentage Response of subjects on the Conduct of Induction Courses for Pedagogy in the HI

Condition	Relative frequency (%)
1. Subjects who had induction courses	25
2. Subjects who had no induction courses	75
3. HI with centrally organized induction courses	17.5 (of 3 HI)
4. Subjects who benefitted from centrally organized induction courses	33.33
5. Subjects who benefitted from own faculty organized induction courses	66.66

Table 1 above shows the percentage of subjects who had induction courses (25%) and those subjects that had no induction courses (75). As well the table shows subjects who benefitted from centrally organised induction courses (33.3) and subjects who benefitted from faculty organised induction courses (66.6).

Table 2: Indication of Proficiency in Use of Instructional Media by subjects

Media	Frequency of Indication	% of subjects
Overhead projector	18	50
Photographic slides	5	13.9
Video tape	6	16.7
Television	6	16.7
16 mm films	5	13.9
Flip charts	23	63.9
Audio media	3	8.3
Film strips	3	8.3
Opaque projector	2	5.6

Table 3 above shows that only the use of flip charts and overhead projector had percentages of 50 and above. The rest of the methods had very low percentages between the ranges 5.6- 16.7.

## 5. Discussion

Results from this study show that a small percentage of the sampled Higher Institutions provide induction courses in pedagogy for incoming lecturers. Of the 36 subjects only 9 lecturers indicated that they had had an induction course in pedagogy at their institution, while 27 subjects had not had any induction courses. Of the 9 subjects who had had induction courses, 3 had attended such courses organized centrally by the institution administration while 6 had had such courses organized within their own faculties. The pattern of response however indicated that this practice is not as well spread as it should be and that in some cases, where these courses exist, all staff do not benefit from it. This would indicate that the importance of such training in pedagogical skills has not yet been widely acknowledged in Higher Institutions in Nigeria. It is therefore necessary for a mechanism to be set in motion for spreading the awareness of the need to provide pedagogical training for lecturers in higher educational institutions. The findings of this study corroborates with those of (Cross & Rigden, 2002; Allington, 2003; Wong, 2004; TLC, 2004; Chapman, 2006) where they found out in their studies that new academic lecturers members joining higher institutions do not get adequate support that is crucial for proper adaptation and adjustment to their working environments. The induction of new lecturers is meant to equip and capacitate lecturers with adaptive and operational skills which are a prerequisite for the efficient and effective discharge of official duties among other things. This is not only important for the overall well-being of the lecturers, but is also a precondition for overall student pass rates as well as throughput rates. The relationship between a lecturer's general wellbeing or stability and student performance has been repeatedly demonstrated by several studies on motivation and performance. This confirms Allington's (2003) postulation that effective lecturers produce better results. In addition, Wong (2004) asserts that the teachers hired today are the teachers for the next generation. Their success will determine the success of an entire generation of students. Their success can therefore be ensured by providing them with a comprehensive, coherent professional development programme.

## 6. Conclusion

The higher institutions studied in Imo State of Nigeria provide skeletal induction courses for new lecturers that do not acquaint them with the pedagogic skills required. However this practice needs to be

popularized and further developed as an essential feature of academic practice in higher institutions. As expressed by the subjects in the study sample, assistance from teaching support units to lectures should focus more on the assistance in the development and use of instructional materials and methods. Lecturers need to be aware of all the advantages of the use of media (old and new) in instruction and should be encouraged to shift from conservative lecture methods of instruction to more modern and more effective methods.

## 7. Recommendations

The researcher makes the following recommendations:

- Training of lecturers in higher education institutions in skills required for effective teaching through induction programmes and short courses, workshops and seminars.
- Familiarization of lecturers with new strategies of instruction mainly in the innovative combination of newer methods and media for effective instruction.

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