CHAPTER 7

Transitioning Doctoral Students to University Teachers: A Case of an Online Teaching Development Programme

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Abstract

Doctoral programmes in many research-based Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) focus on equipping students with research capabilities with little emphasis on teaching skills. This study examines doctoral students' experiences of a four-day voluntary teaching development programme that inducted them into the craft of university teaching. The aim was to ascertain how the experience contributed to building their teaching capabilities and informing their career choices in academia. Data from 24 student evaluation forms administered to all 80 participants in the 2021 cohort and subsequent student reflections on the programme were reviewed to understand the extent to which the opportunity empowered them to teach and informed their subsequent career decisions. The findings indicated that participants felt capacitated for university teaching by attending the programme, enabling a smooth transition to academia and contributing to a successful doctoral education. They provide valuable insights for transforming doctoral education and improving university teaching while contributing to the scholarship of teaching in doctoral programmes.

Keywords: Doctoral education, Teaching Development Programme, Transition to teaching, Online teaching, Doctoral students

1 Introduction

The South African Higher Education sector is undergoing many changes, such as massification, diversification, transformation, digitalisation, and other innovations. The demand for highly-skilled, innovative academics to work in this transforming milieu has thus grown exponentially. However, Higher Education scholars have noted that a significant problem associated with university academics is the lack of pedagogical training that can assist them in transitioning from being disciplinary content experts to teaching such content knowledge to their students (Shawa 2020).

In many Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), doctoral qualifications are a prerequisite for career progression and are viewed as the pinnacle of educational attainment (Bullin 2018; Maynard *et al.* 2017; Jones 2013). Like many other educational programmes, Higher Education is a period of socialisation in preparation for a prospective career, including academia (Austin *et al.* 2009). As an academic, one is expected to engage in teaching, research, and service (community or leadership) with administrative duties across all categories (Khan & Siriwardhane 2021; Chan *et al.* 2019; Bexley 2013; Martin 1984). However, for decades, the focus of doctoral studies in many research institutions has been on research and disciplinary content expertise to the detriment of teaching (Bishop-Monroe *et al.* 2021; Bonner *et al.* 2020; Barney 2019; Marx *et al.* 2016; Boman 2013). As such, there have been calls for HEIs to incorporate teaching into doctoral education (Lumpkin & Achen 2021; Chan *et al.* 2019; Connolly *et al.* 2018; Maynard *et al.* 2017; Lewicki & Bailey 2016).

In response to this call, HEIs such as the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) are beginning to include teaching development components in their doctoral programme offerings (Bishop-Monroe *et al.* 2021; Bonner *et al.* 2020; Chan *et al.* 2019; Connolly *et al.* 2018; Maynard *et al.* 2017; Lewicki & Bailey 2016; Brightman & Nargundkar 2013). These teaching programmes, which are usually organised by academic units, graduate schools, or teaching and learning units, range in format and duration from discussions to once-off workshops and more rigorous semester-long and certificate courses (Connolly *et al.* 2018; Maynard *et al.* 2017; Marx *et al.* 2016). In a bid to enrich the doctoral programme at UKZN in line with its curriculum transformation drive, the University Capacity Development Plan (UCDP) hosted by the University Teaching and Learning Office (UTLO) developed a four-day Teaching Development Programme (TDP) workshop to acquaint doctoral candidates with teaching and research supervisory skills while enabling them to make informed

choices about a career in Higher Education (Reddy 2018). However, two years into the commencement of the workshops, the extent to which the objectives of the programme are being achieved remain uncertain.

This chapter, therefore, aims to ascertain the extent to which doctoral candidates' experience of the TDP at UKZN contributed to building their teaching skills and informing their career choices by answering the following questions: How has doctoral candidates' experience of the UKZN TDP empowered them with teaching and supervisory skills? How have doctoral candidates' experience of TDP at UKZN enabled them to make informed choices about pursuing an academic/teaching career in Higher Education? Premised on Schlossberg's Transition Theory and Lent *et al.*'s (1994; 2000) Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT), the research used evaluation reports and subsequent reflective qualitative questionnaires to answer these research questions. Exploring doctoral candidates' perceptions of their teaching and supervisory skills post-attendance of the TDP can provide useful insight into the programme's effectiveness while informing policy and curricula reforms. The remainder of this chapter proceeds with a review of relevant literature, followed by an exposition of the SCCT and transition theories before the research methodology is described. Thereafter, a detailed presentation of the research findings and discussion ensues, followed by the conclusion.

2 Literature Review

Doctoral programmes have evolved over the years. The word doctorate originated 'from the Latin verb "docere" which means "to teach"' (Bullin 2018: 13). It is usually bestowed on a 'successful candidate who has something to teach on the premise that teaching [is] … both an honour and a rare opportunity' (Winter *et al.* 2000: 36). These authors explain that what is taught could be new and worthy of passing on to a particular audience in a specific context. Over time, doctoral programmes became associated with the production of new knowledge in a specific field or context. They typically focus on producing independent scholars capable of advancing the discipline by creating new ideas and knowledge foundations upon which subsequent learning can be established, nurtured, and sustained (Lumpkin & Achen 2021; Bullin 2018; Maynard 2017; Jones 2013). Thus, the doctoral programme in many HEIs is basically a research degree (Lumpkin & Achen 2021; Bullin 2018; Maynard *et al.* 2017). Many are therefore structured to equip students with 'content expertise and

research practices' (Bonner *et al.* 2020: 436) with little regard for teaching (Lumpkin & Achen 2021) as originally intended.

Doctoral studies play a crucial role in shaping a candidate's future career in academia or practice (Jones 2013). The literature suggests that many doctoral students take up lecturing during their studies while the majority obtain academic positions on completing their programmes (Lumpkin & Achen 2021; Bullin 2018; Maynard *et al.* 2017; Marx *et al.* 2016). In her systematic literature review, Bullin draws on the work of Redmond (2015), and reports that '80% of Ph.D. graduates take up a position in college/university as teachers' (2018: 2). Coupled with the fact that these programmes have become a prerequisite for progression in academia, it is vital that they go beyond equipping students with research skills to equip them with all the skills needed to thrive in academia (Chan *et al.* 2019). In recent years, a PhD qualification or a commitment to embark on a doctoral programme and complete it within a specified time have become a requirement to apply for a position as a lecturer in many HEIs. If obtaining a doctorate is vital in pursuing an academic career, it is imperative that the programme prepares the student for all facets of academic life, including teaching (Bishop-Monroe *et al.* 2021; Bonner *et al.* 2020; Chan *et al.* 2019). Integrating the teaching component in the doctorial curriculum is critical considering that the traditional model for academic recruitment is based on some qualification, trade, experience, or content expertise save for pedagogical competencies (Bonner *et al.* 2020; Barney 2019). As is widely known, disciplinary expertise and research accolades do not make for instructional and pedagogical competence (Lumpkin & Achen 2021; Lewicki & Bailey 2016).

Some of the reasons adduced for focusing on research in doctoral studies include the fact that research is more valued than teaching, as academics have to 'publish or perish' (sink or swim) (Bonner *et al.* 2020; Marx *et al.* 2016). There is also a notion that general teaching strategies are not ideal for all disciplines, including the need to teach disciplinary threshold concepts in a specific manner (Brightman & Nargundkar 2013). Others firmly believe that research is more highly rewarded than teaching (Bullin 2018; Marx *et al.* 2016; Brightman & Nargundkar 2013). Some institutions do not have the additional resources (financial, human, or time) to accommodate the teaching component (York 2019-20, cited in Bishop-Monroe *et al.* 2021; Marx *et al.* 2016). Yet, some academics/professors are of the flawed view that teachers are born and not made (Brightman & Nargundkar 2013). Still others believe that those who have contributed most to knowledge creation make the best teachers (Marx *et al.* 2016).

Nonetheless, research has shown that many doctoral and newly-graduated students feel stressed or less confident in their teaching skills compared to their research skills (Lumpkin & Achen 2021; Bishop-Monroe *et al.* 2021; Barney 2019; Marx *et al.* 2016). Chan *et al.* (2019) found that undergraduates ranked Accounting doctoral programmes with formal teaching components higher than those without. In their study on international doctoral students' preparation for teaching, Li and Liu (2020) concluded that teaching support by older professors in terms of syllabus development and other learner-centred methods of student engagement was helpful to students. Course coordinators in Lumpkin and Achen's (2021) study concluded that doctoral students were ill-prepared to design and facilitate active learning because the programme is predominantly research-focused. Furthermore, many post-doctoral students desired and supported the inclusion of the doctoral programme's teaching component (Bishop-Monroe *et al.* 2021). Non-inclusion of a teaching component in the doctoral curriculum may imply that future academics may not be effective teachers even though they are experts in research and specific subjects. Since students learn less from a 'very bad teacher' (Marx et al 2016: 512), graduates taught by ineffective academics may not be properly trained. As such, it would appear that many doctoral programmes are failing not only their students, but also their undergraduates, whom these future academics may not teach effectively (Bonner *et al.* 2020; Chan *et al.* 2019; Bullin 2018; Marx *et al.* 2016). In other words, a lack of training in teaching could become a liability for students in the job market while undermining undergraduate programmes (Marx *et al.* 2016; Austin et al. 2009).

As the call to incorporate a teaching component into doctoral programmes intensifies, many HEIs are beginning to include some elements of teaching in their doctoral curriculum (Lumpkin & Achen 2021; Bishop-Monroe *et al.* 2021; Bonner *et al.* 2020; Chan *et al.* 2019; Lewicki & Bailey 2016; Rousseau 2016; Marx *et al.* 2016; Boman 2013). This takes different forms. Drawing from a sample of teaching development programmes, Marx *et al.* (2016) described four structured programmes. The first includes an in-house three-year teacher training programme (in pedagogical competence, classroom management, and teaching practice, amongst other things) which is a prerequisite for doctoral certification. Another strand is the inclusion of a mandatory semester-long teaching practicum component in the curriculum. The third comprises a series of teaching seminars offered by the institution's Teaching Office. The last strand is an intensive six-day teaching seminar which

may not run continuously as a prerequisite for receiving the doctoral degree. Bonner *et al*. designed a semester-long, four-hour weekly workshop for students to develop competencies in five broad areas '(1) content expertise; (2) a teaching philosophy; (3) instructional design skills; (4) course administrative skills; and (5) instructional delivery skills' (2020: 438). Barney (2019) proposed three possible strategies for incorporating teaching into the doctoral curriculum – teaching mentorship programmes, direct observation of excellent teachers, and obligatory teacher improvement seminars. Besides equipping doctoral candidates with pedagogical skills and strengthening undergraduate programmes (Austin *et al*. 2009), this provides a pathway for executives and industry technocrats to venture into academia (Brightman & Nargundkar 2013).

2.1 Structure of the TDP – UKZN Approach

To incorporate a teaching component into its doctoral curricula, UKZN's UCDP under the auspices of the UTLO, designed a Teaching Development Programme (TDP) for doctoral candidates. The TDP is designed to 'enhance the competence of PhD students through strengthening and consolidating their knowledge of teaching, learning, designing, assessing and evaluating curricula in higher education' (Reddy 2018: 1). More specifically, it aims to:

- Empower currently enrolled PhD students with teaching and supervision skills
- Increase the number of academic staff with teaching capabilities
- Enable PhD students to make informed choices on whether to pursue an academic/teaching career in Higher Education

The TDP is a four-day voluntary online workshop that commences on day one with Teaching and Learning in HEIs. Students engage with philosophies and theories of teaching and learning to rationalise their perspectives to guide practice. It also involves interrogation of diverse teaching strategies and learning styles. Day two focuses on assessing learning in Higher Education, where students are introduced to the principles and practices of assessment. Drawing on theory, participants construct assessment tasks across different levels of learning while striving for constructive alignment between their module learning outcomes, teaching and learning strategies and assessment tasks. The session also makes room for the participants to critique various forms

of assessment and their applicability in their respective disciplines. In addition, there is an opportunity to interrogate the institution's assessment policies. On day three, the focus is on curriculum design and evaluation in Higher Education, where students are introduced to different models of curricula design and evaluate their curricula 'in relation to the transformation/decolonisation agenda in the South African higher education context' (Reddy 2018: 2). They also critique their respective curricula in light of Higher Education curricula policies. The workshop concludes on the fourth day with supervising research in Higher Education, where participants are acquainted with the relevant policies on supervision, deliberate on supervisory ethics, and devise their own supervisory approaches based on the case studies they are presented with.

The workshops were facilitated using active learning approaches (reflective practices, whole class discussions, group work, case studies, debates, plenary presentations, research and questioning) that allowed participants to contribute from their experiences and question their ideologies and understanding of teaching and learning in light of the course material and information. Drawing on their experiences, group discussions, theory, and the literature, participants were encouraged to reflect critically on diverse teaching and assessment strategies. Each session included individual or group activities to show their level of understanding and pedagogical competence. The zoom breakout rooms were used for group activities within a specified time. The groups would then join the plenary session to present their discussions. Group presentations were followed by constructive feedback from peers and the facilitators, prompting rich debate while enhancing learning. Some of the materials and activities were sent to participants in advance to allow sufficient time to prepare and make meaningful contributions to class discussions. The workshop also encouraged the use of diverse teaching and assessment strategies, including debates, powerpoint presentations and panel discussions. Students were encouraged to mimic these active teaching and learning strategies in their own classrooms when they were appointed as university teachers.

At the end of the workshop, students evaluate the programme and are given a certificate of completion. Two years into the programme, the extent to which its objectives have been achieved remains unclear since the programme has not been formally researched. Hence the aim of this study was to determine the extent to which the online TDP contributed to developing PhD students' teaching and supervision skills and informed their career choices (to pursue academic positions at universities). Indeed, there is limited literature on the

effects of teaching development initiatives in doctoral programmes (Connolly *et al.* 2018; Boman 2013), providing further impetus for this study.

2.2 Transition Theory

This study draws from the 4 Ss system of Schlossberg's Transition Theory which can be used to explain transitions of all kinds (Wall *et al.* 2018). It involves taking stock of the resources available to the individual to determine the person's ability to cope with the change or transition (Powers 2010; Moran 2017; Walls 2018, Reddy 2018; Gbogbo 2020). Drawing from the work of Schlossberg and other scholars, Powers (2010) explains the 4 Ss as follows: 'Situation' refers to the individual's opinion of the transition. The situation or change may be expected or unexpected or a desired non-event (Barclay 2017). Other factors that affect the transition are the timing which could be good or bad, the duration, the student's previous experience with such a situation, and the possible triggers of the transition (Barclay 2017). 'Self' relates to the individual's sense of 'meaning and purpose', which is a function of 'their beliefs, self-perceived abilities, perceptions and attitudes' (Barclay 2017: 26).

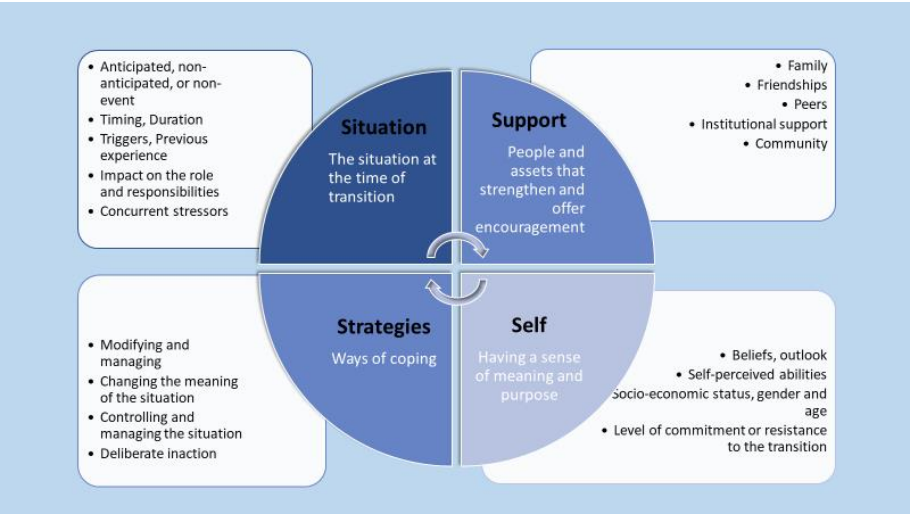

Figure 1: Transition Theory (adapted from Marcr 2019)

Powers viewed the 'Self' as the individual's 'strengths and weaknesses' (2010: 88) at the time of the transition, which encompass their feeling of control over the situation, their optimism, and their resilience (2010: 88). One's 'Support' structure could emanate from friends, relatives, community, or institution (Walls 2018). To cope with the transition, individuals devise diverse 'Strategies' which may involve 'modifying the situation, changing the meaning of the situation, … controlling and managing the situation, … or taking a deliberate inaction' (Barclay 2017: 28). For Anderson *et al.* (2011), moving through a transition usually involves letting go of something, learning new roles, and taking stock of available resources to develop coping strategies to address the situation. Eventually, growth may be realised. Since Schlossberg's transition theory is usually employed 'to understand adults transitioning between careers, relationships, education, etc.' (DeVilbiss 2014: 6), it is deemed suitable to explain doctoral students' transition into becoming university teachers.

2.3 Social Cognitive Career Theory

The SCCT by Lent *et al.* (1994; 2000) can also explain how individuals choose and attain varying degrees of success in their academic and work endeavours.

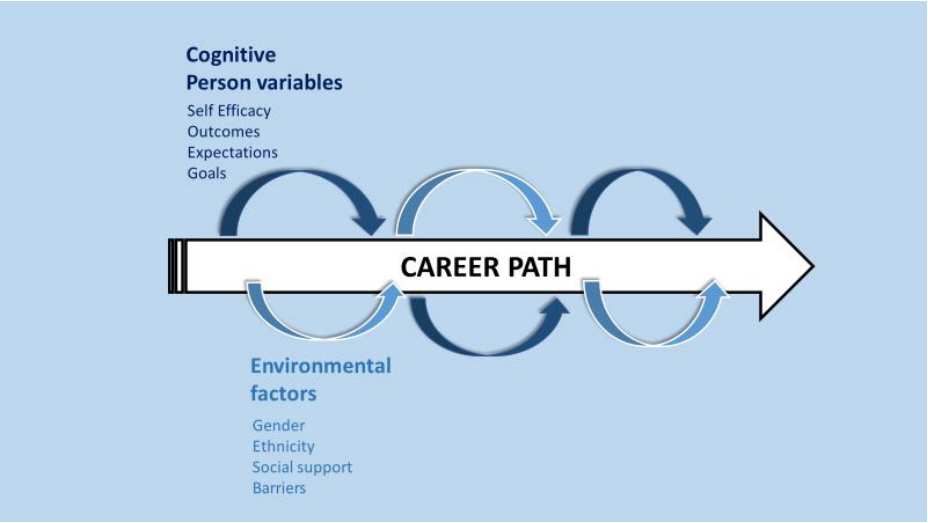

Figure 2: The Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) (Adapted from (Lent *et al.* 1994)

It posits that 'cognitive-person variables (e.g., self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and goals), and on how these variables interact with other aspects of the person and his or her environment (e.g., gender, ethnicity, social supports, and barriers) shape the course of career development' (Lent *et al.* 2000: 36). Cognitive variables enable individuals to exercise agency over their academic or career path. Self-efficacy refers to one's confidence in one's ability to attain an objective or succeed in an activity (Brown & Lent 2019). Self-efficacy determines how individuals approach a task, how much effort they put in and how long they will persist when confronted with challenging situations.

Educators with strong teaching self-efficacy are known to be more enthusiastic, open to trying new teaching methods, and more likely to persevere in difficult times (Hoy 2004). Outcome expectations can be described as one's understanding of the consequences of engaging in an activity (Jordan *et al.* 2020; Brown & Lent 2019). They motivate appropriate behaviour and sustain persistence in difficult situations (Lent & Brown 2019). Goals refer to a person's desired outcome or target, which also helps to maintain their effort in the programme (Jordan *et al.* 2020; Lent & Brown 2019). Amongst the environmental variables, factors such as social support and barriers may hinder or promote access to relevant learning experiences that shape self-efficacy and outcomes while inhibiting the actions needed to actualise goals.

The SCCT is used in academia to explain the self-efficacy and career trajectory of students and academics participating in training development. Rogers and Creed (2011) investigated high school students' career choice activities and found that self-efficacy and goals were the key drivers of career exploration. Connolly *et al.* (2018) concluded that doctoral students who participated in a TDP were more confident in their teaching self-efficacy than those who did not. Jordan *et al.*'s (2020) study on the impact of a faculty development programme revealed its positive contribution to medical education scholarship. It enhanced career trajectories as participants later became education leaders and scholars. In this study, the SCCT was used to explore doctoral candidates' perceptions of their teaching and supervisory skills post-attendance of the TDP and the extent to which the learning during the programme informs/informed their career choices in academia.

3 Methodology

The study employed a mixed-method research design located within an interpretive research paradigm to explore doctoral students' experiences of a TDP.

A mixed-method approach which allows for data to be generated quantitatively and qualitatively is known to enhance the validity of a study and strengthen the conclusions reached (Schoonenboom & Johnson 2017). Thematic analysis that is commonly used in examining narratives (Jordan *et al.* 2020; Castleberry & Nolen 2018; Jones 2013; Ritchie *et al.* 2003) was employed. This involves searching for themes by carefully going through the data repeatedly to identify patterns with similar meanings to elicit rich interpretation (Clarke & Braun 2017; Ritchie *et al.* 2003). Thematic analysis is a flexible approach that can be used to identify patterns across participants' lived experiences and perceptions (Clarke & Braun 2017), thus making it ideal to understand doctoral students' experiences of the TDP.

Data from students' evaluations via a semi-structured online questionnaire and subsequent reflection guided by open-ended questions were used to elicit the participants' experiences of the programme. While Clayson's (2014) study suggests that students rate academics they consider helpful higher in their evaluation, a survey by Symbaluk and Howell (2010) showed a positive correlation between academics who were ranked higher by students and those who won teaching awards. As such, scholars (Chan *et al.* 2019) have continued to source data from students' evaluations for research as these provide feedback for assessing participants' experiences (Marx *et al.* 2016). All the students who participated in the voluntary TDP in 2021 had access to the evaluation form on completion of their workshop, and links to the forms were later sent to participants to ensure a maximum response rate. Of the 80 participants who attended the programme in 2021, 24 responded. A 30% response rate is higher than the 20% threshold deemed adequate for a survey (Lumpkin & Achen 2021); thus, the response rate for this study is deemed statistically significant to report on. Ten responses were received to the post-programme reflective unstructured qualitative questionnaire emailed to participants where they shared their experiences and thoughts on the TDP.

4 Data Presentation

The TDP evaluation form mainly comprised of closed-ended questions to obtain participants' views on the programme. The questionnaire was structured in three sections using a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The first section addressed the logistics of organising the workshop, such as timeous dissemination of workshop information and docu-

menttation and the suitability of the venue. The second focused on the workshop, touching on the objectives, structure, content, pace, duration, expectations, and learning. The final section dealt with the facilitation process, considering the ease of understanding, accommodating and answering questions, and group management. Two open-ended questions addressed participants' previous teaching experience and suggestions for improvements.

The summary of the responses in Figure 3 below shows overwhelming support for the 2021 TDP judging by the extent to which participants agreed and strongly agreed on the logistics, the main workshop, and facilitation. Overall, 87% of the responses from a total of 24 participants suggest that they were relatively satisfied with the workshop objectives, offerings, and execution. The research outcome thus confirms the work of previous scholars (Bishop-Monroe *et al.* 2021; Li & Liu 2020) who concluded that the inclusion of a teaching component in a doctoral studies curriculum is helpful to students. Our findings resonate with Bishop-Monroe *et al.*'s (2021) study, which assessed doctoral students' participation in an online TDP and reported higher levels of teaching self-efficacy following the programme.

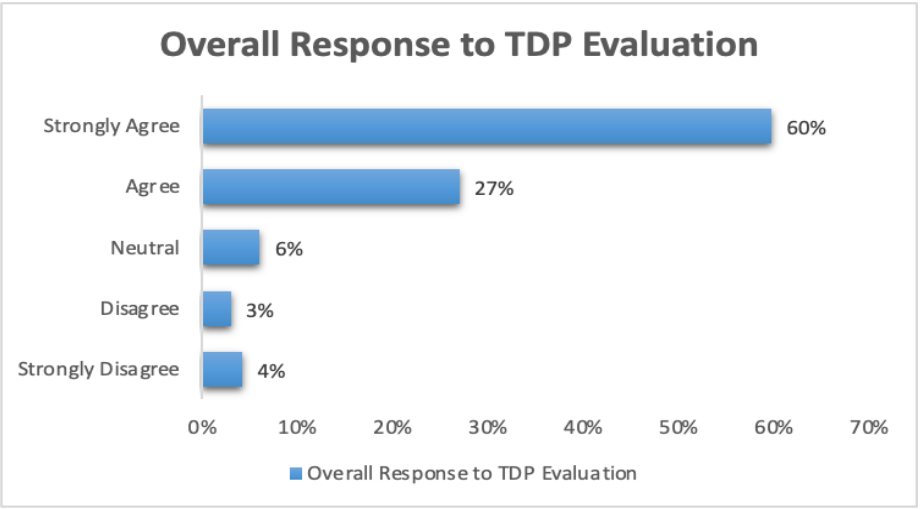

Figure 3: Doctoral students' evaluation of the 2021 TDP workshop

The details of participants' responses to the statements in the different sections of the 2021 TDP evaluation shown in Table 1 below offer more visibility on the variation in students' experiences.

Table 1: TP Evaluation questions

	Strongly agree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Workshop logistics					
• I received information about the workshop timeously		2	5	5	12
• I received workshop documentation in good time	1	1	5	4	12
• The venue was suitable for the workshop	1	2	3	4	9
The Workshop					
• The workshop objectives were clear				5	18
• The workshop was well structured	1		1	7	14
• The content was easy to follow and understand	1		1	9	13
• The pace of the work-shop was appropriate	1	1	1	7	14
• The duration of the workshop was appropriate	2	3	2	6	11
• The workshop met my expectations	1	1	1	9	12
• I will be able to use what I learned in this workshop.	1			8	15
The Workshop facilitators					
• The facilitation made it easy to understand the content	1			7	16
• The facilitation accom-modated questions from the participants	1			5	18
• Participants' questions were answered	1			5	18
• The group was well managed	1		1	8	14

Apart from one student who consistently strongly disagreed with all facets of the workshop, some participants were not happy with the duration. Hence suggestions offered for future improvement included: *'More time needed,'; 'Need to be longer,'; 'Increase the time of the study,'; 'Make it the whole week and in person.' 'Since the COVID-19 cases are no longer as before, kindly make the in-person program and increase the number of days and evaluation for a good understanding'; 'Make it a face-to-face event, increase the time'; 'Maybe make it in-person.*'

Five months after completing the last 2021 workshop, all the partici-pants were emailed a qualitative reflective questionnaire to determine how their workshop experience impacted their teaching and supervisory skills and if the experience gained through the TDP influenced their choice of a possible career in academia. It was envisaged that, by this time, many participants would have processed their experience of the workshop sufficiently and would be in a better position to make an informed choice on pursuing a career as a university teacher. The first section of the questionnaire focused on the programme's four areas: teaching and learning in Higher Education, assessing learning in Higher Education, curriculum design and evaluation, and supervising research in Higher Education. It explored the participants' previous experience, how the activities and materials impacted their perspectives and a post-workshop self-evaluation of their capabilities in the different aspects of the programme offerings. The second section solicited the participants' views on the extent to which the TDP prepared them for teaching and a possible career in academia.

In terms of previous experience, most respondents had never taught or supervised postgraduate students before. One stated, *'I never had any teaching/supervision experience prior to the workshop',* while another had *'low to moderate experience,'* one had *'good'* prior experience, and another was *'a teaching assistant for a 3rd-year module and occasionally led lectures and pracs'*. Their experience in assessing learning in HE was similar to that of teaching. Three had never assessed students, while two had *'Low to moderate'* experience. For another participant, *'It was not highly advanced until I got the opportunity to learn from the TDP*.' Only one participant appeared to be *'okay*' with assessing student learning. In the same vein, the majority (five) of the students had never been involved in curriculum design and evaluation. In

contrast, others (three) had low levels of experience, with one stating that '*It was low until I get exposed to the workshop*.' One had '*okay*' experience. From the responses, it is clear that most of these doctoral candidates had never taught before, while others had low levels of experience of teaching and supervising research. The question is, why would doctoral students with no prior teaching experience attend a voluntary TDP?

All the participants were relatively satisfied with the materials and activities they engaged in **during the workshop**. As one said, *'I was capacitated with a lot of information from this workshop'*. Others referred to *'better understand knowledge transfer'* and curriculum design. The workshop was acknowledged as *'an active learning environment*' where they learned *'how to engage better with students and how to deal with difficult students effectively.'* It further taught a participant *'that as a teacher, I can learn from my students.'* All in all, the workshop *'significantly influenced*' students' perspective of teaching and supervising research, with one confidently stating that '*I now know how to set a test and exam,'* while for another, *'It changed the way I design my teaching material.'* Thus, the workshop offered doctoral candidates a fresh perspective on the world of academia.

The participants' **post-workshop self-evaluation** on the different sections of the programme was quite revealing. They generally agreed that they had *'greatly improved'* in various aspects of the programme, as they '*learnt a lot and the information I learned will improve my teaching and supervising research in future.'* One participant stated, '*I am now significantly equipped to offer teaching and learning effectively*.' For another student '*serving as a replacement teacher currently*,' it would appear that the fear of teaching has diminished as '*I don't see it as rocket science like prior the workshop'*. Regarding assessment, a participant stated, '*I would rate myself to be at 80%*.' Another said, '*I am now way better and above average*.' Yet another felt '*significantly equipped to design/set assessment tasks.'* The participants appeared to be more confident in their teaching/learning/research supervision and assessment abilities than in curriculum design. This is understandable because the latter is not a regular classroom activity. While some confidently stated that they had '*highly improved'* and were '*above average*', others considered their curriculum design abilities as *'fair'*, and *'good*' as they *'can moderately undertake curriculum design and evaluation.'* With regard to teaching, a participant stated, *'I am a calm-*

er, more centred teacher who commands respect in both an in-person and virtual classroom. I am able to keep the students interested in the topic at hand and be more approachable with regards to queries and questions'.

4.1 Preparation for University Teaching

Regarding preparation for university teaching, most (seven out of eight) respondents felt that the programme did them good. One felt *'ready to teach and supervise research at university level.'* Comments from others who had never taught included, *'Very well,' 'I'm highly prepared now,' 'To a greater extent,'* and *'I am now equipped and prepared.'* One participant who had experienced some form of teaching said the programme *'greatly improved my teaching skills*.' The participant who was teaching during the programme felt prepared to *'a large extent. It allowed me to see things from a student's perspective. To understand that every student is unique and learns in different ways. Modules need to be designed to cater for every kind of students. To feed their strengths in a fair way'*. The eighth respondent felt '*moderately*' prepared after the TDP. Two participants did not respond to this statement.

4.2 Possible Pursuit of an Academic Career

To answer the second research question, participants were asked if the TDP influenced their choice of a possible career in academia. There was a resounding 'yes' from all nine respondents. Of those who had not taught or supervised research before, one felt *'motivated to consider a job in academia,'* while another became *'more capacitated to follow a career in academia.'* One remarked that, *'it has opened my mind and added a new career of vision,'* while another *'looks forward to have an opportunity to put into practice what I learnt.'* The participants who already had teaching experience also felt encouraged to further their academic pursuits. It made one *'see how I can change the world through teaching,'* and another understood the different components of the TDP, '*which is highly important in the academic fraternity*.' The participant who had a teaching post *'wants to be an academic now more than ever.'* As for the participant with no prior teaching experience, the TDP appeared to be a game-changer. The response was, *'Yes, it did. Am now employed as a lecturer at the University'*.

4.3 Transitioning to Become a University Teacher

The study also aimed to determine if the programme enabled a smooth transition from being a doctoral student to a university teacher. All seven of the participants who responded to this question were quite optimistic. Transitioning to teaching in HE will evidently be smoother for them because '*this course was really an eye opener'* and '*because now I have an idea of what is expected of me.'* As such, one participant *'cannot wait for the opportunity to present itself.'* The reason for anticipating (or prospecting) an academic career could be that they are '*now confident*' since they have been *'highly capacitated to impart knowledge to students correctly'* from a teaching and learning as well as a research supervision perspective.

5 Discussion

The study aimed to ascertain how doctoral students' experiences of a TDP contributed to developing their teaching and research supervision capabilities and informing their future career choices. One of the questions that it sought to answer was, 'How has doctoral candidates' experiences of the UKZN Teaching Development Programme (TDP) empowered them with teaching and supervisory skills?' The findings indicated that the respondents found the programme helpful as they felt capacitated, motivated, and ready to engage in university teaching and research supervision. These results affirm the work of previous scholars (Bishop-Monroe *et al.* 2021; Brightman & Nargundkar 2013; Boman 2013). Participants in the study conducted by Bishop-Monroe *et al.* (2021) reported higher levels of confidence after participating in an online TDP. Based on a review of selected doctoral teaching programmes, Brightman and Nargundkar (2013) concluded that those who participated in a TDP 'were highly motivated to try out different strategies to improve their students' learning' (2013: 301). Boman (2013) found that graduate students, including those pursuing doctoral programmes found a two-and-a-half-day teaching workshop beneficial. Similar to our study, some of the participants in Boman's (2013) study had no prior teaching and research supervision experience but were already working as newly-appointed teaching assistants.

As excited or capacitated as the participants may have felt, the teaching fraternity would attest that a four-day teaching programme is only the tip of the iceberg. While these short voluntary courses expose candidates to the craft of teaching, scholars Connolly *et al.* (2018) and Brightman and Nargundkar (2013)

are of the view that they are somewhat inadequate. Besides the teaching, assessment, supervising research and curriculum design and evaluation sections, other sections which are deemed essential to enhance teaching competence include mentoring (Bulin 2018), feedback (Connolly *et al.* 2018; Boman 2013), classroom observation (Connolly *et al.* 2018; Brightman & Nargundkar 2013), teaching practicum/teaching experiences (Connoly *et al.* 2018) and classroom management (Brightman & Nargundkar 2013). These scholars argue for the inclusion of a more comprehensive and formal teaching development component in the doctoral curriculum to allow for more time and repeated opportunities to engage with course materials and peers (Connolly *et al.* 2018). They suggest that the teaching component be made compulsory with a minimum of three credits (Brightman & Nargundkar 2013). Connolly *et al.* (2018) advise that a 30- to 50-hour programme would enable more meaningful engagement for doctoral students' teaching and research supervision self-efficacy.

These suggestions were echoed by participants in the TDP workshop who suggested '*more time,' 'evaluation,' 'certificates with NQF level,' and 'a refresher after some time'* as a means of improving the programme. While the drawbacks associated with limited resources (time, finances, and personnel) are very real in the UKZN context, we argue that the long-term benefit of a more elaborate TDP far outweighs the costs. Such a programme would go a long way in consolidating participants' teaching and research supervision skills, easing the anxiety associated with the relatively unfamiliar teaching and postgraduate supervision load and classroom management, enhancing the quality of undergraduate/ postgraduate programmes, and freeing 'more mind-share for research' (Marx *et al.* 2016: 488; Brightman & Nargundkar 2013). In other words, since doctoral programmes are currently more focused on research, the inclusion of a teaching component would likely ease the anxiety associated with teaching and research supervision and reduce preparation time, thereby making more time available for disciplinary research. In a way, it would contribute to building capacity to support a comprehensive doctoral education programme that also prepares graduates for the world of academia. Ultimately, a comprehensive TDP will contribute to developing a more holistic cohort of doctoral graduates with improved capacity to thrive in academia. This is pertinent as research (Rivkin *et al.* 2005 cited in Marx *et al.* 2016) suggests that students taught by a poor teacher learn only half of the year's material while those taught by a competent one learn one-and-a-half years' worth of material on average. Policymakers' buy-in and revision of the doctoral studies curriculum are

required to implement a comprehensive TDP. While some of these changes may not be feasible immediately, we suggest extending the current workshop by two days to incorporate more content such as giving constructive feedback and classroom management. The TDP was offered online due to the COVID-19 pandemic but can be offered face-to-face or via a hybrid mode. This may also influence the response rate in future student evaluations.

Nonetheless, the TDP initiative is a step in the right direction. The participants responded positively to the workshop as it opened their eyes to the world of teaching, allayed their fears, and gave them the confidence to either venture into the world of teaching or consider academia as a choice career. The SCCT postulates that, by acquiring the requisite skills from the TDP, students develop a robust sense of self-efficacy to delve into university teaching, which also allows them to persevere through difficult times (Lent *et al.* 1994). Furthermore, it increases their willingness to try different strategies to enhance learning (Connolly *et al.* 2018). This aligns with the work of scholars (Bishop-Monroe *et al.* 2021; Connolly *et al.* 2018) who concluded that PhD students who participated in TDP felt confident in their teaching abilities and were less anxious about embarking on teaching. These results respond to the second research question on how doctoral candidates' experience of TDP at UKZN enabled them to make informed choices about an academic/teaching career in Higher Education.

Drawing on the tenets of the SCCT (Lent 1994; 2000), evidence from the current research suggests that the TDP enhanced participants' self-efficacy. This is because participating in it empowered them and enhanced their belief in their teaching and research supervision abilities, as indicated in the response: '*I am now significantly equipped to offer teaching, supervision and learning effectively*.' Although the questions did not directly address the participants' goals, one's career interests affect one's participation in activities likely to enhance one's knowledge and abilities in these areas (Lent *et al.* 1994). As such, it would appear that students' aspirations for a possible academic career prompted their decision to attend the voluntary workshop. Hence, the majority stated that the programme's objectives were achieved as it helped to '*better understand knowledge transfer'* and they are '*now confident to pursue a career in academia.'*

Doctoral candidates' capacity to transition to the world of teaching can also be considered via the lens of the 4 Ss system in Schlossberg's transition theory. Faced with the possibility of a future transition into academia ('Situ-

ation'), the perceived weaknesses in 'Self' arising from insecurities about their current teaching and supervision skills may have prompted participation in the TDP. Their evaluation of their 'Self' capabilities was rather inadequate to transition to teaching (the next level in their career trajectory). As such, the programme provided 'Support' that alleviated their fears and anxiety about teaching and supervising research while building the confidence needed to transition to academia. Participants accessed 'Strategies' from the programme for coping with the transition to university teaching.

Indeed, as Wall *et al.* (2018) concluded in their study on enrolled nurses' journey to become registered nurses, institutional support has been identified as a critical attribute in handling transition. Anderson *et al.* (2011) also affirmed the importance of support in any transition as it enables the individual to adapt better. The research further confirmed Gbogbo's (2020) finding that the social support received by adolescent mothers aided their unplanned pregnancy journey. Moran (2017) also found that support services offered to the families of military personnel were an invaluable resource in their children's transition to military schools. As Walls *et al.* (2018) noted, the support afforded by the TDP enhanced participants' self-efficacy, which is crucial in attaining one's desired objectives. Hence, the participants felt empowered to teach and supervise research, answering research question one.

6 Conclusion

In ascertaining the effectiveness of the TDP designed for doctoral students at UKZN, this chapter examined how it capacitated them with teaching and research supervision skills while informing their choice of a possible career in academia. Based on students' evaluation of the programme and a subsequent reflective qualitative questionnaire, the results affirm the work of previous scholars, as participants found the programme useful in their developmental journey. They felt empowered to pursue an academic career as the knowledge and skills acquired from the workshop opened their eyes to teaching, minimised teaching anxiety, and boosted their confidence in teaching. Thus, the institutional support afforded by the TDP enabled participants to access the coping strategies required to improve their teaching self-efficacy. The research also provided evidence that participants' expectations and goals were met as they accessed strategies that will assist them in managing and controlling the transition to academia. While the external transition from a doctoral student to

a graduate is imminent, the participants thus also demonstrated a kind of internal transition from identifying as doctoral students to becoming university teachers.

This chapter echoes the call for the inclusion of a teaching component in doctoral programmes as it contributes to the literature on the importance of teaching in doctoral education. It foregrounds the need to reconceptualise the design of the doctoral curriculum in order to produce more holistic doctoral graduates with enhanced capacity to succeed as university teachers. It motivates for the need to equip doctoral graduates with an academic identity ready to face the transforming Higher Education milieu. Doctoral students become more effective teachers through a TDP that offers them a theoretical understanding of learning, teaching, assessment, curriculum design and evaluation, and supervising research. Besides enhancing their confidence in facilitating learning and classroom management, it frees their minds for research, thereby supporting successful completion of the doctoral programme. In addition, it stimulates their desire to engage in the scholarship of teaching and learning. Finally, such a programme will assist in improving undergraduate and postgraduate programmes (Chan *et al*. 2019), directly impacting the quality of graduates who will be ready for the world of work. This chapter thus offers useful insights to doctoral curriculum reviewers tasked with developing programmes that proactively respond to the needs of stakeholders while strengthening the education system.

Despite the insightful contributions enumerated above, the authors identified some limitations, such as the low response rate. Future research could aim for a larger sample size to enable a detailed analysis, possibly along the lines of race, gender or discipline. One way to achieve this could be to enforce mandatory evaluation of such programmes so that the feedback is more comprehensive. In addition, this research was based on participants' post-workshop reflections on their teaching and research supervision abilities, which may not reflect an objective classroom reality. Interested scholars could focus on the actual classroom experience of doctoral students who have participated in TDPs to obtain a richer understanding of the enactment of their teaching and supervision abilities. Nonetheless, the analysis of participants' reflections enabled a broad evaluation of the effectiveness of the TDP, which will go a long way in informing policy directions. It further contributes to scholarship in the transformation of doctoral programmes in Africa where there is currently scant knowledge of capacity development of doctoral students.

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