

CHAPTER THREE

INSET OF UNIVERSITY LECTURERS : AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Universities world-wide are facing daunting challenges. The increased number of students, the critical and often articulate student body, knowledge exploitation, the changing societal values and expectations, the changing requirements of professions, the expectations of governments as well as the institutional characteristics of universities are some of the conditions which pose serious challenges to universities everywhere in the world (Teather, 1979:13).

The need for INSET that focuses on the professional development of university lecturers has mainly been more common in developing countries than in developed ones. Elton (1987 : 64) cites examples of case studies in Malaysia in order to demonstrate this fact. These case studies describe the development of INSET programmes for university lecturers. He points out that in the 1980s many other universities in Asia and Africa have followed similar lines of approach in developing INSET programmes for lecturers.

However, the review of literature points to the fact that in developed countries such as Australia, there has always existed a need for universities to reflect on their activities and respond to their changing environments. For example, Teather (1979 : 64) reports that in

the early 1970s, concepts such as staff development, instructional development and organisational development became prominent. Clearly, the systematic provision of INSET in the form of policies and supportive services has become an accepted feature of universities in the developed countries as well.

An overview of INSET in Australia, Britain and Africa is provided below in order to clear any possible confusion regarding the provision of INSET for university lecturers in developed and developing countries. This overview also contributes towards the understanding of the context in which INSET in South Africa is provided.

3.2 AN OVERVIEW OF INSET FOR UNIVERSITY LECTURERS IN AUSTRALIA

An overview of INSET for university lecturers is provided below. The discussion focuses on the background to Higher Education, the organisational characteristics of universities, the teaching and research roles of lecturers, academic freedom and authority as well as INSET practice for lecturers in Australian universities. This aspect is underpinned by the study visit to investigate the INSET activities for lecturers at Curtin University of Technology undertaken by the researcher.

3.2.1 BACKGROUND

Higher Education in Australia is primarily provided by universities, colleges of advanced education and colleges of technical and further training. In terms of the Act of Parliament

establishing the universities, each university has autonomy in managing its own affairs (UNESCO, 1982:12). Consequently, the management of INSET is the responsibility of these institutions.

It is also imperative to note that Australian universities are in close contact with the government and with each other through bodies such as the University Council of the Tertiary Education Commission (UCTEC), the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee (AVCC) and the Federation of Australian University Staff Association (FATUSA) (Zuber-Skerritt, 1997:207; see also, Kogan *et al.*, 1994:24).

Moses (1993 : 219) points out that most Australian universities accept the preservation, transmission and creation of knowledge as their primary role. He points out that much needs to be done because lecturers who are expected to perform this role need some kind of training. Furthermore, he argues that the tradition of awarding doctoral degrees in Australian universities is relatively new. He states that the first Ph.D. degree was awarded only in 1948. Before then, aspiring university lecturers tended to go abroad for graduate qualifications.

The social, political and economic factors affecting priorities of INSET for university lecturers in Australia are discussed against the above background. The impact of changes which have been brought about by the influence of industry and government on the Higher Education system will be elucidated.

With regard to the implications of these changes for INSET of university lecturers, Zuber-Skerritt (1997:207) maintains that:

“ There are no simple answers or recipes; we have to develop alternative approaches, theories and methodologies, social technologies and strategies to develop, train and prepare people for these changes, including our own staff. ”

He contends that INSET has become the most important issue in Australian universities since the government's White Paper on Higher Education. Adams (1998:43) supports this view . He states that changes introduced by universities have been based on the requirements of the government for greater efficiency, effectiveness, accountability and high quality assurance.

Apart from the requirements of the government, there has been pressure from students who demanded that universities should adapt their curricula, teaching and assessment methods to the changing needs of society. Funding bodies have also demanded greater accountability and effectiveness in terms of costs, resources, quality and relevance to teaching and research in Higher Education.

Naturally, all these pressures significantly affected INSET of university lecturers. The effect of these pressures can be noticed from the various recommendations on INSET which have been made in documents such as the Williams Report of 1979, the 1981 AVCC

Report by the Working Party on Staff Development, the Dawkin's White Paper of 1989 and the Aulich Report of 1990 (Adams, 1998:432). The nature of the academic career in Australian universities attests to the fact that changes in Higher Education are a direct result of external environmental factors.

3.2.2 THE NATURE OF THE ACADEMIC CAREER IN AUSTRALIA

In line with the systems theory described previously, the analysis of the distinctive characteristics of Australian Higher Education sector suggests that attempts to develop the competences of lecturers such that they are able to carry out their academic tasks more effectively must take into consideration the organisational complexities of the universities. Australian universities are open-systems which have strong links with other organisations and individuals in the external environment, that is, outside the universities themselves. Nevertheless, the links between the departments and lecturers in different universities are often considered to be more important, stronger and more active than intra-university relationships (Cannon, 1983:56).

There appears to be three environmental factors which have significantly influenced the academic careers of lecturers in the Australian universities. These have affected the competences required of university lecturers. Firstly, there has been concern for the improvement of teaching, research and community-service. Consequently, the acceleration of change and its effect on the academic roles of university lecturers have been the subject of discussion in the press, academic literature and government reports for some

years. Secondly, there has been broadening of concern for the quality of teaching and the persistent higher failure rate of students. Thirdly, the pressures for change have mainly come from outside universities, particularly from the government-sponsored inquiries and the AVCC (Adams, 1998:432 ; see also, Education, Training and Employment, 1979:200; Moses, 1988:26; Cannon, 1983:4).

As stated previously, changes in the work environment of Australian academics have largely come as a result of government policy and funding initiatives. For example, government policies have changed the university sector through the massification of Higher Education. Major changes to the Australian universities following the release of the Dawkins-driven Green Paper of 1987 and the White Paper of 1988 were calculated to contribute to the government's national goals of producing, among others, large numbers of skilled graduates. In these reports, the pressures for change were identified as the changing economic context and the gap existing between Australia and other OECD countries (Dawkins, 1987:7-12).

According to Moses (1993:219), the expansion of universities in Australia as a result of external environmental forces of change in the 1950s, 1960s and early 1970s necessitated the employment of more lecturers. He mentions that most of the newly appointed lecturers did not have the necessary skills and competences to perform their academic tasks more effectively. Consequently, it becomes necessary to examine the teaching, research and community-service roles of lecturers. These roles have important implications for the INSET needs of lecturers. The roles that lecturers are expected to fulfil in Australian

universities are discussed briefly below:

3.2.3 IMPROVING THE TEACHING FUNCTIONS OF UNIVERSITY LECTURERS IN AUSTRALIA

In Australia, attempts have been made to emphasise the importance of teaching and to consciously and systematically include the teaching criteria in promotion and tenure decisions. For instance, Zuber-Skerritt (1997:117) reports that there is growing awareness by university lecturers that the quality of teaching will increasingly be taken into consideration as more sophisticated procedures for evaluation are developed. Much of the concern about the competences of university lecturers has centred on their functions as teachers. In this respect, the Williams Report of the Committee of Inquiry into Education and Training to the Prime Minister made the following recommendations:

“ ... that the Australian Vice-chancellors’ Committee appoint an expert Working Party to formulate theory and practice of teaching, curriculum development and examining, and then later consider whether satisfactory participation in such programmes should become a normal condition of tenured appointment.”

(Education, Training and Employment, 1979:200)

The following deductions can be made from the above recommendations:

- The concern for the improvement of teaching has been expressed over a

considerable period of time.

- There has been concern for the quality of teaching in Australian universities.
- The pressures for change have mainly come from outside the universities, particularly from the government-sponsored inquiries.

Following the Williams Report, concern for the quality of teaching has been broadened to include concern for high failure rates and investigations into teaching methods (Cannon, 1983:4). Calls for research into teaching methods and into the causes of high failure rates have led a few universities to establish academic development units.

The effect and acceleration of change in the teaching role of university lecturers has created a need for university lecturers to improve the skills, knowledge and competences required for effective performance of their tasks. In addition, the integration of teaching and research as well as the recognition given to these core academic tasks have come under scrutiny because they affect policies which affect INSET of university lecturers.

In terms of legislation, university management is expected to regard teaching as one of the key areas which needs to be improved. However, the study conducted by Adams (1998:424) revealed that INSET policies and legislation do not easily translate into reality. He found that university lecturers do not believe the rhetoric emanating from university administrators that good teaching is valued and is favourably considered in promotion applications. This belief is reinforced by the results of the earlier surveys conducted among university lecturers in Australian universities. For example, Sheehan and Welsh (1996:37;

see also, Barker, 1994:9) found that forty five per cent of lecturers agreed that teaching was not taken seriously as a criterion for promotion in their institutions. Everett and Entekin (1994:216) report that an even higher proportion of university lecturers considered that the promotions criteria were not consistently applied and interpreted by administrators in their places of work. Adams (1998:425) maintains that although there are policies which recognise the importance of teaching, lecturers believe that teaching is not highly valued by university administrators. He cites the following reason for this widely-held belief:

“ The difficulty of devising generally agreed measures for judging teaching quality, and hence a reliable way by which to recognise and reward it, has contributed to the impression that teaching is an undervalued activity in universities.”

Nevertheless, a closer look at the attitudes of university lecturers in Australia shows that they are consistently highly interested in teaching activities. For instance, the investigation which was carried out by Cannon (1983:4) found that lecturers show a moderate level of agreement with the proposition that university education would be improved by attendance of INSET activities which have been designed to improve teaching methods.

One of the challenges which organisers of INSET have to face is related to the teaching styles of lecturers. University lecturers have different teaching styles. The differences are mainly attributed to disciplines and complex characteristics of the needs experienced by university lecturers. The implications of this diversity is articulated by Cannon (1983:5). He

argues that:

“ The complexity of academic staff characteristics suggests that needs in professional development are idiosyncratic. However, most professional development programmes have been ‘ universal ’ in their approach in an attempt to bring together people to form workable groups. This has value, but may not have been sufficient in meeting the distinctive needs and interests of each group member. Balancing individual needs and group needs is a major challenge in the design and conduct of professional development activities.”

The problems of INSET of lecturers in Australia are compounded by the fact that much of the concerns about the competences of university lecturers in Australia have centred on their roles as teachers. Studies have identified certain contentious issues which have to be considered when INSET plans are designed. One of these issues is the preference of research to teaching. Despite research evidence confirming the fact that teaching the students was a highly valued aspect of academic work among university lecturers, the perception that research is considered to be more important than teaching by university officials persists (*The Chronicle*, 1996:A14-A15; see also, Committee on the Future of Tertiary Education in Australia, 1964:56).

A perceived increase in the demands made by administrators is often cited as an interference with the core responsibilities of lecturers as far as teaching and research are concerned (McInnis, 1996:108). In this regard, Burroughs-Lange (1996:29-49) makes a

stark observation that the majority of Australian universities seem to conceive of their teaching role as a didactic one, aimed at the transmission and evaluation of knowledge. He further notes that they perceive themselves as gatekeepers of knowledge and do not have a clear picture of what learning actually entails. Furthermore, he argues that a considerable number of lecturers do not emphasise their shared responsibility in partnership with students for the enhancement of learning. This observation makes it imperative to inquire into the role that university lecturers play in the research functions that the Australian community expects of them.

3.2.4. IMPROVING THE RESEARCH FUNCTIONS OF UNIVERSITY LECTURERS IN AUSTRALIA

University promotion requirements seem to be emphasising research requirements. In many universities, declining orientations to teaching are expected as lecturers climb up the academic ladder (Cannon, 1983:26). There is also evidence from a wide range of documents that strong relationships exist between lecturers in different fields of teaching, research or discipline, and attitudes to teaching and research. For example, in terms of interest in teaching or research, Hasley and Trow (1971:315) found that the weakest interest in research was among lecturers in the Social Sciences and that the strongest interest was among those in the Natural Sciences. Seeing that in most universities the majority of lecturers are in the Social Science disciplines, there has always been a need to encourage them to participate in INSET so that they can perform their research role more effectively. In this connection, Moses and Ramsden (1992:105) conclude that there

is a need to enable staff in all types of institutions to be involved in research of some kind.

However, it needs to be pointed out that university lecturers in Australia value their freedom to choose how and when to pursue their research interests. Consequently, they are likely to resist policies that regulate or prescribe academic activities or workloads which limit available time to engage in research (Little and Peter, 1990:71; see also, Adams, 1998:426). In addition, a perceived increase in the demands of administration is cited as an interference with their research activities (McInnis, 1996: 108). This is corroborated by the results of the survey which was conducted by *The Chronicle* (1996:A15). The survey reported that the greatest sources of stress among Australian university lecturers were time pressures and bureaucratic red tape. Studies cited in Little and Peter (1990:47) also show that the main concerns in the academic life of lecturers were lack of financial resources and time to keep abreast of the latest developments in their fields of specialisation.

3.2.5 QUALITY ASSURANCE IN AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITIES

Kogan *et al.* (1994:24) report that the core functions of lecturers in Australian universities are quality teaching and research. They further report that these core functions are complemented by service to the society. The government has responsibility for ensuring that universities provide high quality service.

However, the survey conducted by Sheehan and Welsh (1996:72-77) found that a high proportion of lecturers in Australian universities feel that they have little knowledge or

influence in the operations of their institutions. They further found that fifty seven per cent of lecturers in Australian universities had a perception that government interference in academic policies was excessive. This percentage was only exceeded by Korea in terms of international comparison. The survey also indicates that lecturers are already aware of their responsibilities to the social and economic fabric of society, with over seventy per cent of them giving the highest priority to preparing students for work, for facilitating quality lifelong learning and for assisting to resolve social problems.

As in most other countries, so too in Australia, universities are public institutions. Consequently, their functions are often subjected to public scrutiny. Due to the fact they use public funds, they are expected to produce high quality workforce and promote the capacity of the nation to make a meaningful contribution to the economy. Therefore, it is deemed that the intervention by the Australian government in the functioning of universities in that country is understandable.

Adams (1998:433) argues that as universities are pressurised by the need to meet bureaucratic and financial goals in a competitive market, there will be an erosion of academic freedom and authority and consequently a negative effect on the motivation and performance levels of lecturers. Nevertheless, Lockwood and Davies (1985:2) argue that throughout their histories, universities have had to strike and maintain in their constitutional arrangements a balance between the two demands for independence on the one hand and of quality and public accountability on the other. Balancing the demands for independence, quality and public accountability is made more difficult by the fact that:

“ ... academics demonstrate a tendency to ‘ cry wolf ’ with each new government policy direction.”

Public quality assurance mechanisms impact on Australian universities. Kogan *et al.* (1994:24) state that an important element of change in the governing patterns of Higher Education in Australia has been the growth of mechanisms for quality assurance. Financial stringency and the accountability of universities with regard to how they spend public funds affect the nature of the academic work of lecturers. Consequently, INSET needs of university lecturers are affected (Kogan *et al.* ,1994:24; see also, Ellis,1993:3).

The nature of the academic career as well as the roles of lecturers have been discussed above. Literature is conclusive that the external environmental factors which affect Australian universities have particular implications for the practice of INSET programmes. Consequently, an overview of INSET practice for university lecturers in Australia is provided as follows:

3.2.6 AN OVERVIEW OF INSET PRACTICE IN AUSTRALIA

Most issues that affect INSET of university lecturers in Australia are detailed in the work of Foster and Roe (1979), Boud and McDonald (1981), Cannon (1983), Elton (1987) and Zuber-Skerritt (1997). There is consensus among these sources that INSET programmes should systematically try to harmonise the interests and wishes of lecturers, and their carefully assessed needs for furthering their careers. The only condition is that the needs

of lecturers should meet the expectations of universities in which they are employed (Teather, 1979:14).

During the last two decades, most universities in Australia have established units or centres with the general aim of improving teaching and learning. The promotion of research and community-service have not been fundamental to the establishment of these units. The recommendations of the 1981 AVCC Working Party on INSET for university lecturers in Australia have been resisted or largely ignored. The reason which is often cited by some lecturers is the fact that these recommendations promoted teaching and learning at the expense of research and community-service (Zuber-Skerritt, 1997:152).

Activities of the INSET units in Australia vary considerably. Although they were initially established to improve teaching and learning, their other functions now include curriculum development, audio-visual services, dissemination of research information, educational management, research facilities and other professional development activities (Cannon, 1983:39; see also, Zuber-Skerritt, 1997:163).

According to Zuber-Skerritt (1997:172-173), the role of these units is regarded by the 1981 AVCC Working Party Report on Staff Development as collaborating with the heads of departments, serving as information centres which provide details of research findings and examples of teaching materials, providing workshops and short courses and participating in the induction programmes. He further cites the provisions of the report which state that the professional development activities of university lecturers do not necessarily have to

be formal and that details of implementing such activities are left to each institution. Furthermore, he argues that the report has had at least the following effects which have implications for INSET in the Higher Education sector:

“[Because of the report] universities in Australia have reflected on the professional development of university lecturers during the time of financial, community and government pressures, the report has stimulated research into systematic, effective evaluation to enhance informed professional judgement and the report also provides advice and guidance on the evaluation of academic performance.”

Since 1974, Griffith university has had a system that has assisted lecturers in their academic tasks through the use of professional consultants at the staff development unit. Whereas the staff development unit was designed primarily to safeguard the quality of academic programmes for students, it turned out to be a unit of continuing debate as some lecturers who were continually involved in curriculum development felt that they were incidentally and indirectly engaged in professional development (Zuber-Skerritt, 1997:197).

In Australian universities, organisers of INSET activities find it difficult to create and maintain an environment which is conducive to continuing education and training if these activities are linked with evaluating the performance of lecturers. However, Griffith university and many other universities and tertiary education departments have demonstrated that a supportive environment can still be created even though INSET

activities are linked to staff assessment. The view which is held by most staff development units personnel in Australian universities is that they cannot be involved in judgmental decisions on the performance of lecturers for tenure and promotion because that would be detrimental to a trusting and confidential work- relationship with lecturers (Zuber-Skerritt, 1997:171).

The study conducted by Elton *et al.* (1986:37) interestingly found that lecturers at the University of Surrey had changed their teaching as a result of the INSET programmes introduced there. The most frequently mentioned examples of how their teaching was changed included:

- The introduction of an experimentation with systematic course design.
- The use or increased use of small-group work, especially buzz groups.
- The revised assessment procedures.
- The greater use of student feedback and student self-assessment.
- Greater consciousness of the role of the lecturers, followed by more careful planning.
- Generally enhanced awareness of teaching and learning possibilities.
- Greater participation in using research findings.
- A total revision of previous teaching methods.

An effective method used by the Australian government to influence INSET for university lecturers has been to provide incentive funding. Adams (1998:431) cites the National Priority (Reserve) Fund, The Commonwealth Staff Development Fund (CSDF), the grants

and commissioned projects administered by the Committee for the Advancement of University Teaching (CAUT) and the funds distributed by the Committee for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (CQHE) as examples of funding sources made available to Higher Education institutions. The funded institutions are expected to implement policies which are considered desirable by government departments.

Professional bodies such as Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australia (HERDSA) and Society for Research into Higher Education (SRHE) also organise conferences, workshops and seminars where lecturers and professional consultants meet to share their ideas, innovations and research findings (Zuber-Skerritt, 1997:201). Further, some institutions such as the University of Deakin offer a Diploma in the Practice of Higher Education (DPHE). According to Elton *et al.*(1986:29-40), this diploma is an appropriate and formal induction programme for professional consultants and lecturers who do not have a formal qualification in Higher Education. In addition to the formal INSET programmes, there are library facilities in all Australian universities through which lecturers usually obtain books, newsletters, journals and other publications which assist them to improve their competences (Zuber-Skerritt, 1997: 202).

As an integral component of the empirical investigation of this study, the researcher was provided with an opportunity to visit one of Australia's universities which offers INSET programmes for lecturers. This was made possible by the senate research grant and release time offered by UNIQWA. The research grant and release time enabled the researcher to visit Curtin University of Technology (CUT) in Perth, Western Australia.

Appendices 8-14 show the preparations for the study visit. Due to financial and time constraints, it was not possible to visit all the Australian universities. Consequently, it was deemed necessary to make an in-depth investigation in terms of a broad case study as advocated by McMillan and Schumacher (1993:373-379) and Mouton (2001:149-150) of INSET activities in this institution.

The objectives of the study visit were:

- To identify the INSET needs of lecturers with regard to teaching, research and community-outreach activities.
- To study the current provision and delivery systems of INSET for lecturers.
- To study the management of INSET activities.
- To study any specific adaptations that South African universities could learn from CUT as the model of Australia in terms of planning, implementation and evaluation of INSET programmes.

The report on the investigation of INSET activities for lecturers at CUT is presented below:

3.2.7 INSET OF LECTURERS AT CURTIN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

3.2.7.1 BACKGROUND

CUT has a history that can be traced back to 1900 when the Perth Technical College was formed. In 1967 the college became the Western Australian Institute of Technology

(WAIT) and, on 1st January 1987, it finally became CUT. This gave recognition to its development into a world-class teaching and research institution, encompassing a wide range of undergraduate, postgraduate, research and development, continuing education and community-service programmes.

Since its inception in 1987, CUT has maintained a reputation for research in teaching and innovation, being ranked fourth in a 1988 national newspaper survey as a quality provider for overseas students. In 1998, it was ranked as Australia's number one university of technology by *Asia Week*. This accolade followed the university's placement in the top band of universities by the National Quality Review in 1995 based on performance in research and community-service (CUT, 1998:1-67).

Although the main campus of CUT is at Bentley in Perth, it maintains campuses at Shenton Park (accommodating major allied Health Departments) and Perth City (the Graduate School of Business). Main regional campuses also exist at Northam (the Muresk Institute of Agriculture) and Kalgoorlie (incorporating the Western Australian School of Mines). During 1999 the university launched a cardinal joint venture in Malaysia with the opening of the Miri campus in Sarawak (CUT, June 2000: 2).

In the report prepared for the Office of Research and Development, Hall (1999:26) states that the origin of CUT as a technical college and later as an institute of technology, provides it with an inherited focus on practical learning. She further points out that the years of its development have incorporated gradual and substantial shifts in the core business of the university, including emphasis on excellence in teaching, research and community-service.

The following discussion which is based on in-depth interviews, observation and CUT-based documents shows that the university recognises the value of the teaching and research training environment, both in providing a high quality training experience for lecturers and in supporting the overall university teaching, research and community-service programmes:

3.2.7.2 IMPROVING THE TEACHING FUNCTIONS OF LECTURERS AT CUT

The Centre for Educational Advancement (CEA) at CUT is charged with the responsibility of planning, organising, implementing and evaluating INSET activities. The INSET activities are aimed at both the new and experienced lecturers who are interested in enhancing their teaching and their students' learning. It offers lecturers a forum where they can:

- talk about and reflect on their teaching;
- share experiences and ideas with colleagues from other disciplines;
- enrich their knowledge about using various technologies, including communication and information technologies to support teaching and learning;
- get advice and assistance about curriculum development and teaching, learning and assessment strategies; and,
- learn more about the resources and services offered by the CEA.

The CEA organises weekly seminars and workshops which have been designed to be interactive. These seminars and workshops focus on offering practical

suggestions for enhancing teaching and helping lecturers to identify and develop new strategies to improve students' learning. These INSET activities are publicised through flyers, E-news and E-mail to the information list of academics and circulars to heads of departments. Lecturers are able to enroll online at the Teaching and Learning Website, namely, <http://cea.curtin.edu.au/tlc>. Apart from the wind-up lunch prepared for participants in the workshops and seminars, certificates of attendance are awarded as incentives. The attendance certificates can be included in the professional portfolios of lecturers as evidence of the commitment to enhancing their teaching and their students' learning.

- ❖ Wright (July, 2000:1) reports that seminars held in the first half of the academic year 2000 included:
- ❖ Making the most of your teaching at Curtin.
- ❖ Resources to support teaching and learning.
- ❖ Helping students to be effective learners.
- ❖ Planning effective teaching and lecture sessions.
- ❖ Supporting flexible learning.
- ❖ Fostering self-directed learning.
- ❖ Teaching online.
- ❖ Integrating generic skills.
- ❖ Assessing student learning.
- ❖ Designing effective teaching units online.
- ❖ Developing students' cross cultural perspectives.

Presenters of INSET activities are usually involving the CEA staff, personnel from Library and Information Services and visiting scholars. The majority of these activities are team-developed and/or presented. Presenters are usually invited to attend meetings in which INSET activities are planned and feedback from lecturers is reviewed with the purpose of future planning.

The most popular aspects of the INSET activities are those expressed as feedback through questionnaires and online responses as well as the interaction with lecturers. This provides opportunity for lecturers to share experiences, get ideas from others and learn about practical suggestions and resources. Further, most lecturers expressed the view that they would recommend the INSET activities to their colleagues. Their reasons included:

“ The activities are excellent learning opportunities.”

“Topics are relevant to our needs.”

“Issues discussed provide a good networking and information opportunity.”

“Most people need improvement to be good teachers and not just coping.”

CUT has officially endorsed a teaching evaluation instrument for the promotion and self-development of lecturers. The instrument encourages and supports reflective educational practice by providing feedback on teaching quality and effectiveness from both the lecturer and student perspectives. Wright (2000:1) reports that lecturers at CUT university have actually made wide use

of this instrument for career development and for researching and improving teaching practice. The CEA is responsible for co-ordinating and administering the instrument. The centre has designed a brief online survey as indicated above in order for lecturers to provide it with feedback which is used for planning and improvement.

The CEA also uses video-conferencing facilities as a form of INSET for lecturers. Video-conferencing offers synchronous face-to-face video and audio communications to sites around the world. Its uses include teaching; seminar addresses and presentations; meetings and consultations; staff training and marketing or product launches.

The Learning Effectiveness Alliance Program (LEAP) is one of the INSET programmes in use at CUT. This programme has been designed to enhance the quality of teaching and learning. According to Weir (1999:4), the Faculty of Education's LEAP project, "Developing student-centred learning within an outcomes-focused environment", was one of five funded in 1999. They point out that this project builds on extensive restructuring of the undergraduate curriculum which began in 1998 and will enable the faculty to achieve a consistent focus on the outcomes of student learning. The programme matches what is now being required in most Australian primary and secondary school systems. It is designed to produce a collaborative learning community exploring such practices as team planning and teaching, the development of student portfolios and electronic monitoring activities.

The LEAP project in the Faculty of Education is important because the nation-wide move

towards Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) in secondary schools poses a number of challenges for university lecturers, particularly in the area of teacher education. They are expected to prepare graduates for the new system, be prepared for future commencing students who will bring different learning strategies and attitudes into their university studies and initiate corresponding INSET programmes to prepare lecturers for the new system. The project has the following three major goals:

- The establishment of a professional collaborative learning-community which exemplifies an outcomes-focused approach to student-centred learning in the university environment.
- The development of teaching and learning outcomes which clarify support and document improved university teaching practices.
- It examines the potential for the transferability of an outcomes-focussed student-centred learning approach to other schools and departments within the university.

The CEA also provides services to help lecturers produce and deliver quality flexible, open and distance education materials. Flexible learning is an approach to teaching and learning rather than a system, technique or method. Its aim is to provide students with an increased range of options in their studies. Flexibility may include multiple entries to a course or unit of study, choice of times, place and pace of study, availability of learning resources outside ordinary teaching schedules and electronic access to the materials and processes of study. It also offers opportunities for lecturers to change their role from being the key knowledge sources to facilitators and managers of learning.

According to the Flexible Learning Workshop Series (2000:1), in order to respond to the needs of CUT, the CEA has developed a series of workshops covering a range of topics related to flexible teaching and learning. The series include the following:

- Introduction to flexible learning.
- Planning for flexible learning.
- Course and unit design.
- Beginning online teaching.
- Standards for online teaching.
- Copyright and intellectual property rights in a flexible environment.
- Meeting the needs of learners in a flexible environment.
- Evaluating teaching and learning in a flexible environment.

Apart from helping lecturers to produce and deliver quality flexible, open and distance education materials, the CEA also offers them INSET activities on evaluating these materials. The CEA staff further advise lecturers about and help them produce the full range of audio-visual services. The staff also assist lecturers and provide them with support for computer-based teaching. Further, a senior librarian, who is a member of the CEA also assists lecturers. This person usually facilitates the identification of information resources to support subject content of the unit and also helps to ensure that these resources are available to the lecturers via a computer with remote access (Boyd *et al.*, 1999 : 5-7).

The Aboriginal Lecturer Training or Mentoring Scheme project was designed by CUT to

meet an increasing need for part-time lecturers. The programme imparts specific academic skills to Aboriginal lecturers within the centre for Aboriginal Studies at CUT. According to lecturers who were interviewed, this INSET programme increased their confidence levels and added to their specific lecturing and tutorial skills. O'Brien (1996: 139) reports that the workshops on the induction of Aboriginal lecturers dealt with the following topics :

- Advance organisers.
- Audio-visual equipment.
- Communication skills.
- Evaluation techniques.
- Lecturing techniques.
- Lecture planning.
- Materials preparation.
- Problem-solving.
- Public speaking skills.
- Questioning techniques.
- Research techniques.
- Tutoring techniques.

Wright (2000:2) reports that there are challenges that the CEA staff have to deal with. For example, people enrolling and then not attending INSET activities such as workshops, seminars and conferences is one of the major concerns for the CEA. This affects the preparation of materials and catering arrangements. Nonetheless, the CEA staff interviewed pointed out that this problem was being addressed by working with other

people involved in providing INSET activities and that the aim was to develop a university-wide strategy to deal with it.

The other problem relates to the current under-staffing within the CEA. There are only a few staff who are able to contribute to INSET programmes. Consequently, most activities are dependant on the goodwill of non-CEA staff who contribute their time, expertise and experience.

In conclusion, there is no doubt that INSET activities at CUT expose new and experienced lecturing staff to current theory and research on teaching and learning and to presenters who model good facilitation practice. The CEA provides valued support in line with the teaching and learning plan of the university. It also contributes to the realisation of the goals of CUT with respect to teaching and learning by giving lecturers the opportunity to explore ways and means of enhancing their teaching and their students' learning.

What follows then is the brief report which provides the context in which lecturers at CUT are empowered through INSET to perform their research functions more effectively. The report is also mainly based on the interviews that the researcher had with a variety of stakeholders as well as on the CUT-based published sources.

3.2.7.3 IMPROVING THE RESEARCH FUNCTIONS OF LECTURERS AT CUT

3.2.7.3.1 INTRODUCTION

The main goal of CUT is the achievement of excellence in research and development, particularly as a partner with government, commerce, industry, professional organisations, other institutions and the community (CUT, June 2000:1). Due to the fact that lecturers are the key agents in the achievement of this goal, the university has designed comprehensive INSET plans in order to enhance their capacity to carry out the expected research and development tasks.

The need for INSET activities which aim at improving research performance is strengthened by the fact that since the inception of the Unified National System for Higher Education in 1987-1988, many Australian universities have experienced an increase in the enrolment of postgraduate students. CUT is one such university, where lecturers are carrying a larger supervision load than they were in previous years. For some lecturers this has meant supervising more postgraduate students and for others it has meant undertaking research supervision for the first time (Hall, 1996:71).

Given its historical background, CUT has made significant progress in addressing the research needs of its lecturers. For example, the percentage of lecturers holding a Doctoral qualification has risen from 35,5% in 1994 to 43,7% in 1999 while 52% of lecturers hold some kind of higher degree by research (CUT, June 2000:2).

During the in-depth interviews which one had with lecturers, INSET personnel at the CEA and the executive management of CUT in August 2000, it became evident that more still needs to be done to enhance the research competences of academics. One also found that official documents confirmed the need to address some problems experienced by lecturers. An overview of some areas of concern regarding the research capacity of lecturers at CUT is provided below:

3.2.7.3.2 AN OVERVIEW OF THE AREAS OF CONCERN REGARDING THE RESEARCH CAPACITY OF LECTURERS AT CURTIN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

The Research and Research Education Management Plan at CUT acknowledges that there are areas of concern to the university with regard to developing a sustainable research education environment (CUT, June 2000:6). According to this plan, the problem areas include uneven levels of support to postgraduate students concerning access to facilities and resources, variable quality of supervision and ineffective communication within the supervisory panels and with students as well as relatively small numbers of postgraduate research students in some areas. The plan also cites the lack of supportive research culture in some schools as another problem area.

Hall (1999:35), in the most recent report prepared for the Office of Research and Development at CUT, identified the following constraints experienced by lecturers in carrying out their research:

- Teaching loads and other commitments.
- Insufficient assistance.
- Library inadequacies and insufficient contact with other lecturers in the field.
- Slowness in getting books and journals.
- Difficulties in obtaining information or data.
- Differences between research interests and teaching interests of the department.
- Pressure to direct research into areas regarded as commercial.

The report further attributes the barriers to research performance to scarcity of talent, lack of research infrastructure, shortage of high quality research students, non-supportive colleagues, inadequate salaries, little support from the head of department and inappropriate study leave periods.

The views of academic staff, INSET facilitators and management elicited by the researcher during interviews and seminar lunch-break discussions helped to clarify the research needs of lecturers at CUT. It was obvious from interviews and discussions that certain problems had to be vigorously addressed through INSET if the university was to achieve its goal of excellence in research and development. Some of the major problems which inhibit the research capacity of lecturers at CUT are related to issues underpinning the following considerations:

- Induction of postgraduate students.
- Preparing annual progress report on supervision of postgraduate students.
- Assisting international postgraduate students and students from non-English speaking background.

- Academic culture which is not conducive to conducting research.
- Inadequate knowledge of intellectual property rights.
- The role of thesis committee reports.
- Expanding the number of postgraduate enrolments.
- The relative inexperience of postgraduate supervisors, many of whom have had few, if any, opportunities to observe other approaches to supervision.
- The clash, at management level, between the institutional imperative to undertake research and the lack of institutional reward, encouragement or facilitation for doing so.
- Departments and faculties taking no co-ordinated approach to facilitating research development.
- Restriction of academic autonomy due to regulations imposed by external funding bodies.
- Lack of orientation programmes related to research capacity-building for newly appointed and inexperienced lecturers.
- Lack of focus and strategic planning regarding grant applications and publications.
- A lack of balance in life for researchers who are attempting to carry out excessive teaching and administrative loads requiring them to do their research after hours in conjunction with leading a healthy personal family life.
- Limited INSET support for engaging in the research process.
- Lack of distinctly articulated INSET policies related to research.
- Lack of interaction between support centres.

In the light of the above situation, CUT has identified the need to provide support for the professional development of its lecturers. The analysis of the recent CUT-based documents indicate that some INSET strategies have been reported as being in place at the university. Some arrangements for ensuring an effective research training environment at CUT are discussed below:

3.2.7.3.3 ARRANGEMENTS FOR ENSURING AN EFFECTIVE RESEARCH TRAINING ENVIRONMENT AT CURTIN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

All the six divisions or branches of CUT are contributing to the university's research performance as a result of some arrangements that have been put in place to ensure effective research training conditions. This is evidenced in the following table of Research Performance Indicators (RPI) points per division or branch for 1997:

Table 3.1 CUT RPI points by division / branch: 1993 - 1997.

Division	RPI 1993	RPI 1994	RPI 1995	RPI 1996	RPI 1997
Academic Affairs	3576	4085	3995	3987	
Humanities	39466	30589	33667	34956	40951
Curtin Business School	12609	14653	14012	14063	17432
Engineering and Science	93133	103656	117879	122557	127401
Health Sciences	43344	50680	52458	56031	53603
Muresk Institute of Agriculture	1187	1566	1582	3290	6325
Others					7373
Total	198611	209457	227501	238305	253085

Source adapted from: CUT (1997:15)

It is worth noting that CUT is Western Australia's largest university, with more than 40 teaching schools and several research centres and institutes. According to Hall (1999:27) the above data incorporates a wide range of disciplines, research approaches and fields of study. It is likely that more details on the specific nature of this diversity could inform decisions about redressing performance.

Although the above data is largely quantitative, with no breakdown of the fields of research and research approaches used, it does show that the six divisions of CUT have made tremendous progress in addressing the research capacity of lecturers. The analysis of

CUT-based documents indicates that the following strategies which have been reported to be in place might have ameliorated some of the problems which inhibit the research performance of lecturers:

- Cutting the number of teaching units offered and then allowing time for research.
- Mentoring for new researchers within the schools.
- Deliberately employing researchers and staff with Ph.Ds.
- The demand from management that heads of schools should be committed to research excellence.
- Facilitation of writing groups for lecturers.
- New research centres being established or applied for.
- Postgraduate seminars which are held across schools with overlapping research interests.
- Centrally run workshops, seminars and action learning or action research programmes on postgraduate supervision.
- Visiting scholars who are expected to share their expertise and experience with supervisors of postgraduate students.
- The establishment of researcher-data bases on Research and Development Website.
- The promotion of collaboration among researchers across different part- disciplines.
- Financial support for conference attendance.
- Assistance with grant applications.
- The availability of research related information through the Internet.
- The documentation of research policies or guidelines.

- Leadership development programmes for senior academics, particularly those from the private sector, or unfamiliar with the nature of academic work.
- The work and family policy programmes which provide advice and counselling to lecturers juggling work and family commitments.
- Advice on research activities and research careers which is provided to lecturers, giving them the opportunity to develop a more strategic approach to research.
- Funded release-time which is made available in order to pursue research, publications and study for research higher degrees.
- The design of a number of strategies which encourage women lecturers to undertake research. These include the establishment of consultative committees on women in research, mentoring and networking systems, release-time programmes and seed grants. Appendix 15 is an example of programmes designed to empower women academics.
- Support mechanisms for new researchers which include release-time for them to work with established researchers, seed grants for new researchers and orientation programmes.

Given the fact that most challenges experienced by lecturers at CUT are related to the supervision of postgraduate students, the university has decided to place the direct management of postgraduate research students at the divisional and school levels. This is in line with devolved management structure at CUT. Consequently, the following features outlined in the CUT (June 2000:5-6) document support the research training environment for postgraduate students and their supervisors:

- **Quality Plan for Postgraduate Students:** This plan provides practical advice to schools and divisions in relation to best practice in postgraduate student management.
- **The appointment of a dean of Postgraduate Studies:** The university has appointed a dean of postgraduate studies in the academic year 2000 for an initial two year period. The appointee is expected to be responsible for the overall postgraduate research programmes and to investigate possible models to enhance the co-ordination of support services within the university.
- **Guidelines for essential facilities:** The university has detailed guidelines on the provision of essential facilities for postgraduate students and lecturers.
- **The Office of Research and Development:** This office provides central and administrative support for postgraduate studies.

Hall (1996:76-77) reports that the above features have resulted in strengthening postgraduate supervision and that they have contributed to knowledge about research supervision by identifying and exploring some key issues which have been published and discussed through conference papers and presentations on sessions related to supervising postgraduate research students.

CUT has also put quality assurance mechanisms in place in order to enhance the professional development of its lecturers. Consequently, some of these mechanisms are briefly discussed below because they are an important aspect of INSET:

3.2.7.4 QUALITY ASSURANCE AT CURTIN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

In order to ensure quality at CUT, research activities are subjected to cyclic reviews of academic operational units and a comprehensive process of review of university research centres and institutes. The Office of Research and Development in co-operation with the University Quality Office initiated a programme of review of all university research centres and institutes in 1999. The review included INSET programmes designed by these centres and units.

The University Quality Office has developed a comprehensive review methodology, a detailed self-assessment instrument and external moderation procedures. In terms of the current Research and Management Plan, as a primary step in the review of the quality assurance process within the university, a series of major studies were undertaken with strategic funding, including Best Practice in Postgraduate Research Supervision, Identifying the Barriers to Research Performance, Quality and Impact of Measures of Research Performance, and Efficiency and Effectiveness of Research Support programmes (CUT, June 2000:9).

3.2.7.5 CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS ON THE STUDY VISIT TO CUT

The political, economic, historical and social factors impacting upon Australian universities influence INSET of university lecturers. Increased student enrolments, knowledge explosion, technological innovations, progress made in the democratisation of universities

and the development of international exchanges have all resulted in universities finding themselves in what UNESCO (1982:XI) describes as:

“ ... a state of effervescence and spectacular quantitative expansion.”

Despite challenges posed by the paradoxical relationship of academic freedom, autonomy and public accountability, university lecturers have generally been found to be keen to expand the horizons of their disciplines by developing a richer repertoire of skills which will enable them to carry out their teaching, research and community-service roles more competently. Consequently, professional development units have been established with the main purpose of facilitating continuing education and training for university lecturers in Australia.

CUT plays a crucial part in preparing lecturers for roles which demand skills, knowledge and ability to effectively contribute towards the achievement and accomplishment of its goals and mission. To a large extent, this has mainly been as a result of adopting quality mechanisms which help to ensure that INSET activities support lecturers to meet expectations of students and maximise graduate employability, while ensuring that the environment created embodies international standards of research. INSET programmes at this institution appear to have helped it to smoothly adapt to rapid and pervasive changes which normally affect universities world-wide.

At CUT, the concept of community-service is subsumed within teaching and research

activities. Consequently, research and teaching, in line with the goals of the university, are the only two main functions of the university administered at the administrative level of Deputy Vice-Chancellor. Despite the fact that research and teaching are considered as the core functions of the university, there is evidence that INSET programmes include attempts to empower lecturers to render improved service to the community and the nation at large. This model of INSET of lecturers at CUT as representing the general pattern in Australia certainly has numerous lessons for us in South Africa.

It is important to note that research training at CUT is associated with teaching. In addition, teaching and research problems at CUT have rapidly influenced a move towards extensive preparation and INSET of lecturers.

We shall now consider the situation with respect to INSET of university lecturers in the UK. Most universities especially in Anglophone Africa have been influenced by universities in the UK. For South Africa in particular, this consideration is significant because of the historical ties of South Africa with the UK. This relationship has provided the context in which most university programmes in this country have been designed or based.

3.3 AN OVERVIEW OF INSET FOR UNIVERSITY LECTURERS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

Given the history of South Africa as a former British colony, it is appropriate as indicated above to provide an overview which serves as a valuable background to understanding the

appropriate context of INSET provision in South Africa. We reiterate the contention that the provision of INSET for university lecturers in the UK also has had a tremendous impact on numerous African universities in general and the previously “English-Language” universities in South Africa in particular.

3.3.1 BACKGROUND

The question of training university lecturers in the United Kingdom (UK) was raised by the Association of University Teachers (AUT) and the National Union of Students (NUS) in 1945 at the national level. These organisations focussed on the training needs of university lecturers. Despite ensuing meetings held by the AUT and the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals (CVCP) in 1954 and 1961, only the Hale report, entitled ‘University Teaching Methods’ ardently promoted the idea of training university lecturers (Nisbet and McAleese, 1979:38). The Hale report is widely regarded as a watershed in the provision of INSET programmes for university lecturers in the UK.

The report recognised problems which occurred as result of the Higher Education system which was providing insufficient university lecturers to cater for the increase in student numbers. It also suggested that traditional standards should be maintained by providing training for newly appointed lecturers who were not sufficiently trained or experienced to effectively perform their academic tasks. Further, the report suggested that the training of university lecturers should include critical discussion of teaching methods with special attention to the specification of teaching objectives, operational teaching skills and student

motivation. Of utmost importance was the assertion of the report that universities in the UK had failed to improve the efficiency of teaching (Greenaway and Harding, 1978:5).

Nisbet and McAleese (1979:39-40) point out that the following factors also contributed to the need for the INSET of university lecturers in the UK:

- There was the expansion of Higher Education and the consequent need to recruit many new lecturers whose experience was more evident than in the pre-war years when the appointment of new university lecturers was a rare event.
- The influential factor in the early 1960s was the importance of technology in the form of teaching and learning aids.
- The UK society saw Higher Education as a form of national investment.
- Universities were regarded as institutions through which the national and societal needs could be met.
- The Social Sciences discipline had immensely grown in status and offered a body of scientific knowledge from which courses or programmes of INSET could be drawn.

It is obvious, as Phillips (1995:59) correctly observes, that universities in the UK have rarely been in a steady state. He notes that in terms of the systems theory, they have continuously been pushed by external environmental pressures to maximise their contribution to society and economy and, as in the case of Australia, to control expenditure. Commenting on the changes that have taken place since the mid-1980s, he concludes that they have been the most momentous since the period following the

publication of the Robbins Report in 1963 and that they have changed the face of Higher Education.

In the UK, the change in the economic climate, the changing pattern of social needs and demands imposed by students significantly affected the nature and value of INSET programmes for university lecturers. According to Greenaway and Harding (1978:75), these demands manifest themselves in the form of deteriorating lecturer-student ratios, calls for greater relevance, quality in education and restricted movement between universities. They further point out that the expectations of university lecturers in respect of promotion opportunities are also affected by these patterns.

The need for training of academics in the UK is not only confined to INSET of lecturers in the lower ranks, but to the heads of departments as well. Tann (1995:87) states that many heads of departments in the UK universities have had little prior experience of management training unless they have been recruited from or have had prior experience in industry or the private sector. He also reports that universities have formed consortia for management training of departmental heads and that INSET events are built into the academic calendar. Furthermore, he points out that heads of departments need training in induction, strategic planning, team management, delegation, motivation, appraisal, staff development, communication and allocation of time for research (Tann, 1995:89-95).

Change within Higher Education in the UK has been almost without parallel in terms of how they affected INSET for university lecturers. These changes have put immense pressure

on the tasks of university lecturers and leadership styles of administrators (Trow, 1994:11; see also, Slowey, 1995:28). With regard to these changes in Higher Education, Phillips (1995:71) argues that some universities have been minimally affected but that most of them have changed beyond recognition. He further states that the successful way in which the changes have been organised is a tribute to the management skills of staff at all levels in the universities. The impact of change on Higher Education has been exacerbated by the fact that the UK has moved from a system of elite Higher Education to mass Higher Education (Trow, 1992:186).

It would be incorrect to argue that INSET is the only response to meeting the ever changing needs in the UK. According to Greenaway and Harding (1978:75), INSET of university lecturers is an approach which some universities may wish to use in order to meet their institutional needs. They warn, however, that:

“ It is after all realistic to recognise that institutional needs may be fostered through the aspirations and self-interests of individuals. But attempts at treading this path must be treated seriously in terms of institutional involvement and financial support.”

The discussion that follows focuses attention on the nature of the academic career in the UK universities. It includes the competences which lecturers require in order to perform their work effectively as well as initiatives that have been taken to improve their competences.

3.3.2 THE NATURE OF THE ACADEMIC CAREER IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

The nature of the careers of university lecturers in the UK has, to a large extent been influenced by the vision of the government on Higher Education. This is particularly clear from the main features of the government's plans for bringing universities, polytechnics and colleges into a single structure for Higher Education.

According to DES (1991:37), the Higher Education Funding Councils (HEFCs) within England, Scotland and Wales were established in order to distribute public funding to universities so as to support teaching and research. In addition, the framework also unveiled government's plans for the new measures concerning quality assurance.

Accordingly, quality control arrangements across the UK are scrutinised by a quality audit unit developed essentially by the institutions themselves. Furthermore, the units within each Higher Education Funding Council assess universities and advise the government on the quality of programmes offered by the funded institutions. It is, therefore, inevitable that the nature of the academic career and INSET of lecturers cannot escape the influence of the government in the UK.

Court (1999:65) points out that a common theme of recent literature about the nature of academic work and careers in the UK is the dominant role of research and low priority given to teaching. He further mentions that administration, the third part of the *trio* of major academic activities, is rarely mentioned. More than a decade ago, Becher (1989:12) had

the same view and added that:

“ ... for the most part, in leading academic circles, credit is earned through the publication of one’s research findings; excellence in teaching counts for little towards recognition by established colleagues in the same field.”

Fulton (1993:168) concludes that there is little evidence to suggest that characteristics other than research-based qualifications and experience in the UK universities are considered to be important during initial recruitment of lecturers. Hasley (1995:189) also found that attitudes to research and actual publications record were strongly associated with professorship and that the research dimension of the academic career in the UK was considered to be important in determining the promotion of lecturers to the rank of professorship.

The apparent unequal treatment of expectations of the universities with regard to teaching, research, administration and community-service has led many lecturers to regard their careers without enthusiasm despite the opportunities that have been created for their INSET. Bilham *et al.* (1989:8) share this view and point out that INSET makes sense and becomes effective only when there is a sense of purpose and direction which is known, shared and owned by all members of the institution. They argue that:

“ All organisations depend on the quality and motivation of the people who work in them, but this is crucially true of universities ...In the discussions of

the classical nature of a university, the organisation as such is only a background presence, and the progress of universities is presented as something to be achieved through the ideals of an unfettered authority [of university lecturers] and critical inquiry, within a structure of intellectual authority and collegiality ...”

The above background points to the fact that Higher Education system in the UK is so dynamic that competences required of the university lecturers have to be accordingly upgraded. Whiston (1992:18) describes the changes within the UK system of Higher Education events as taking place on a weekly if not daily basis. Therefore, it becomes necessary to provide an overview of the main roles expected of university lecturers within this dynamic system of Higher Education.

3.3.3 IMPROVING THE TEACHING FUNCTIONS OF UNIVERSITY LECTURERS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

In the early 1990s the government claimed that teaching in the universities was held in high esteem both in the UK and internationally. It further pronounced that the responsibility for maintaining and enhancing the quality of teaching and learning rested with each individual university (DES, 1991:24).

As indicated previously, research plays a dominant role and teaching is given a low priority in this country. For example, in the middle eighties, the overwhelming majority of staff

appeared to believe that teaching was undervalued in promotion decisions, *vis-a-vis* research and that the status of teaching as perceived by lecturers had to be enhanced. However, in the early nineties, the INSET of university lecturers in the UK focused on the teaching skills. Since then, there has been a growing recognition of the importance of this field.

The survey of university lecturers from forty one universities and twenty five colleges by Zuber-Skerritt (1992(b):169), for instance, recommended the following strategies:

- A greater institutional recognition and rewards for lecturers involved in undertaking and conducting teaching development activities.
- Departmental recognition and rewards, and the visible support of the dean or head of department.
- Ensuring that INSET sessions are rewarding, of high quality, practical, relevant, well-organised and enjoyable.

Smith and Brown (1995:188-190) suggest the following strategies, which if implemented successfully, could contribute towards ensuring that the relationship between research and teaching in the UK universities is not characterised by conflict but producing a climate in which learning is central to the practice of both:

- HEFCs should acknowledge the need for research into the teaching and learning processes and fund it appropriately.
- Vice-Chancellors of universities need to recognise the importance of teaching and learning as the core business of Higher Education. They must evolve proper reward

systems for lecturers who regard facilitation of learning as their primary function.

- INSET developers must find ways in which research into teaching practice can be actively encouraged.
- A supportive environment in which university lecturers can work together to find out about different effective teaching methods must be created.
- Faculties and departments should set up teaching and learning groups. This can greatly empower lecturers to design appropriate strategies and initiatives to improve their own teaching.
- Newly appointed lecturers should be encouraged to be reflective practitioners who regularly evaluate their own teaching and learning experiences. They should regard research into their own teaching and learning as an essential aspect of their academic career.
- All research students who are undertaking teaching need effective support to enable them to develop as teachers.
- Research about teaching must be rigorous and valid.
- The volume of research into teaching that already exists, together with the funding of new research, must be effectively disseminated.
- Lecturers and staff developers must themselves be reflective in their practice.

There is a need in the UK, therefore, to be knowledgeable and familiar with the above recommendations as they affect the whole range of methods and strategies regarding effective INSET of university lecturers. Furthermore, the recommendations provide valuable advice to facilitators of INSET, namely, the involvement of university lecturers in

the INSET activities.

The involvement of university lecturers in the design, planning and implementation of INSET programmes is extremely important. For example, with regard to the importance of engaging lecturers in the improvement of teaching, Zuber-Skerritt (1992(a):168) found the following about university lecturers in the UK:

- They develop only those concepts or skills which are directly relevant to their needs and teaching practice at that particular time.
- They are self-directed. They are motivated to improve a certain aspect or aspects of their teaching when they see the immediate benefits.
- They perceive the need for the improvement of teaching practice as normal, natural and ongoing but not as an indication of their shortcomings.

Consequently, INSET organisers and professional consultants in the UK are expected to inquire about the needs and developmental stages of university lecturers before planning any action intended to improve the latter's teaching performance. There should also be an understanding among INSET organisers, professional consultants and university administrators that teaching and research are two sides of the same coin. In this connection, Ball (1992:133) rightly states that:

“ ... teaching and research are as inseparable as wool and mutton on a sheep-farm ... they mutually reinforce one another ... it is one of the non-negotiable defining features of what is meant by Higher Education that the teaching is

provided by those who are themselves active in research.”

Atkinson (1992:38) holds the same view and argues that teaching and research in the UK are almost inextricably mixed.

Thus far, particular attention was paid to the teaching role of university lecturers. We now need to provide an overview of the research role of university lecturers and the implications of this role for INSET.

3.3.4 IMPROVING THE RESEARCH FUNCTIONS OF UNIVERSITY LECTURERS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

The quality of research in the UK universities has achieved world-wide recognition (DES, 1991 : 15). Basic research in the UK is almost entirely the province of the Higher Education sector which consists of universities, polytechnics and colleges.

Ninety per cent of the research in Higher Education institutions is conducted by university lecturers (Atkinson, 1992:50). These lecturers receive most of their financial assistance from public sources through the University Funding Council (UFC). Funding is made available mainly on the basis of the so-called ‘diary exercises’ of the late 1960s in which lecturers kept a diary of the time they spent on teaching, research and other activities such as administration. Strangely, nobody, not even the government can state with any precision as to how much of the funding goes into research and how much is channelled

towards teaching (Atkinson, 1992:50-56).

The 1991 White Paper in the UK set out the policy of the government with regard to funding teaching and research. In terms of the policy, funding should be separately identified and that research funding should be allocated selectively to encourage Higher Education institutions to concentrate on their strengths regarding research capacity (DES, 1991:paragraph 38). Research within universities has also been subjected to changes because the government has implemented policies which seek to increase accountability and reward quality (Phillips,1995:169; see also, Greenaway and Harding,1978:17). Consequently, these have had particular implications for research INSET needs of lecturers.

The above background elucidates the context which should be considered when the research role of university lecturers in the UK is analysed because INSET policies are formulated within this context. It should also be borne in mind that INSET policies of one institution might not necessarily be directly transferable to another. Nonetheless, the context in which they are formulated might well be worth analysis and consideration.

Further, the context which has been described above also significantly affects the quality of INSET activities for university lecturers. Consequently, quality assurance in Higher Education is discussed below:

university lecturers in the UK. For example, Layer (1995:117) reports that university lecturers in the UK know that quality assurance systems are open and public and that they have a sense of pride in wanting to be seen to do a good job.

Obviously, the willingness of lecturers to be subjected to the quality control measures have important implications for the practice of INSET. Therefore, an overview of INSET practice for university lecturers in the UK is provided below:

3.3.6 AN OVERVIEW OF INSET PRACTICE FOR UNIVERSITY LECTURERS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

In the UK, virtually all the universities make some form of provision for INSET of lecturers. This normally entails short courses as well as anything that has to do with initial training of newly appointed lecturers. The responsibility for organising INSET activities rests with central service units. As previously mentioned, these units have varying titles.

The survey results of the perceptions of lecturers regarding INSET in the UK suggest that universities and departments recognise and reward professional growth activities and that top administrators visibly support them. Further, lecturers view INSET activities as practical, relevant and enjoyable (Zuber-Skerritt, 1992(b):175).

Another important development in the INSET of lecturers has been the establishment of the Co-ordinating Committee for the Training of University Teachers (CCTUT). It consists

of the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals (CVCP), the University Grants Committee (UGC), the Association of University Teachers (AUT) and an observer from the corresponding committee of polytechnics (Nisbet and McAleese, 1979:43).

Procedures for the award of INSET leave vary from one institution to the other and the purpose of leave seems to be regarded differently by universities as a result of institutional ethos. Nevertheless, the major beneficiaries of INSET have been the university lecturers who often leave their non-teaching colleagues in the position of power once they go on study leave (Greenaway and Harding, 1978:74).

In 1972, the National Union of Students (NUS) was invited to deliberate on issues affecting INSET of university lecturers. Based on their recommendations in early 1973, UGC provided an earmarked grant for an initial two-year period of funding in order to keep itself informed of the needs of university lecturers as far as INSET at national and regional levels were concerned. It also had to deal with offering advice on training and dissemination of INSET methods for university lecturers (Nisbet and McAleese, 1979: 40).

Nisbet and McAleese (1979:40) further summarise the position of INSET for university lecturers as follows:

- **Initial training:** Short induction courses of about one week, usually specific to the university are generally available.
- **Formal provision of INSET for experienced lecturers to develop their teaching:** This takes the form of short conferences.

- **Informal provision of INSET within universities:** This often takes place within departments or schools. INSET activities involve research and extensive teaching although these are not organised.
- **Other aspects:** Other aspects include the training and supervision of research students as well as courses in administration.

Since no homogenous system will suit INSET for all university lecturers, it is essential that professional development programmes should be flexible. This can be seen for instance, at Leeds University and London University.

Leeds University is committed to INSET of lecturers as an integral part of its mission. Taylor (1995:7) observes that at Leeds University INSET of lecturers is an innovative and change-driven area which allows the university to respond to change or initiate it. He further mentions that INSET activities are carefully and professionally planned and that time is set aside to enable lecturers to participate in them. Furthermore, he states that in a climate of change, authorities make sure that lecturers are involved and that they develop a sense of ownership of the change process.

Similarly, Nisbet and McAleese (1979:40) report that London University instituted a Teaching Methods Unit in 1965 and that this unit offered courses nationally. They also point out that other universities appointed committees which organised their own courses and that these courses attracted substantial number of lecturers, including those who are experienced and new recruits. They further contend that courses often took the form of

formal lecture sessions which were effective in demonstrating the need for change than in providing a solution. Furthermore, they report that in the years leading to the 1970s, the idea of INSET for university lecturers became increasingly acceptable although there has equally been discontent about the haphazard and unco-ordinated way in which INSET activities were provided.

Due to the fact that most African universities were established with colonial motives, the idea of INSET for university lecturers spread to these universities as well. Therefore, an overview of the development and role of INSET for university lecturers in Africa is provided below because it contributes to a better understanding of the context in which INSET of lecturers in South Africa is practised.

3.4 AN OVERVIEW OF THE DEVELOPMENT AND ROLE OF INSET FOR UNIVERSITY LECTURERS IN AFRICA

For the purpose of this research, it has not been deemed necessary to discuss details of INSET of university lecturers in all the African countries. Instead, the discussion concentrates on only those issues which contribute to the context in which INSET programmes for South African university lecturers are organised.

The provision of INSET in Australia and the UK is a model for the professional development of university lecturers in the developed countries. For the purpose of this study, the discussion of INSET in South Africa is considered to be an appropriate model

for most African countries. Consequently, the discussion of INSET in Africa is not exhaustive but merely provides the necessary background which is essential to understanding the professional development of lecturers in South African universities.

South African institutions of higher learning, just like most African universities, were established with the vision and motives that can be linked to the colonial territories. INSET of lecturers in South Africa, which is part of Africa, will be discussed in detail in the next chapter. In this section, the development and role of Higher Education in Africa are discussed because, as indicated above, they have important implications for INSET of lecturers in South African universities.

As a result of the fact that most African universities were established with the colonial motives, there were problems and challenges that these institutions faced. One such challenge emanates from the fact that their origin is mainly influenced by Europe (Thompson, 1977:281). Most of the African universities have their origin in European colonial powers because universities are by nature, European institutions. (Ruegg, 1992:xix) attests to this as he contends that:

“ No other European institution has spread over the entire world in the way in which the traditional form of university has done. The degrees awarded, by European universities- the bachelor’s degree, the licentiate, the master’s degree, and the doctorate- have been adopted in the most diverse societies throughout the world.”

There seem to be consensus among INSET researchers and practitioners that one of the most serious challenges facing universities in most African countries today is the legacy of European colonialism.

Despite the fact that most African countries have attained political independence, the legacy of colonialism is still exerting its unsavoury influence on the universities in profound ways (Ruegg, 1992:5; see also, Mungazi, 1993:133; Yesufu, 1973:65; Mboyane, 2000:17; Tleane, 1999:10). For instance, Mungazi (1982:ix) reports that when education and training would enable the Africans to threaten the domination by colonialists:

“ ... the European colonial governments deliberately created the myths of limited potential and inferior academic ability among the Africans.”

Further, most of Africa is still not developing as desired. Almost 30 years of efforts by most African universities have yielded nothing or stagnation and regression. For instance, Ake (1995:1) states that in the second half of twentieth millennium, many African countries have been characterised by rising poverty, decaying public utilities, collapsing infrastructure, social tensions and political turmoil. He further notes that the premonitions of inevitable drift into conflict and violence retard the development of Africa. These conditions have adversely affected Higher Education.

Clearly, the purpose of establishing a university in Africa is not the same as the one in Europe. European governments have always sought to continue and conserve the purpose

of establishing universities in Africa, namely, ensuring that the whole of Africa remains the European colonies. This has forced African universities to become and remain powerful instruments of change (Ashby, 1964:98).

Consequently, in 1981, following debates that started in 1978, some European countries planned and organised a conference in Berlin whose main focus was the improvement of the quality of teaching and learning in African universities. According to Imenda (1991:12), this conference which attracted participation from universities of Botswana, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Swaziland and Tanzania felt that the need for African universities to address INSET matters with regard to teaching and learning was far greater than that for their colonial authorities.

Further, he argues that despite the establishment of INSET units such as the one at the University of Dares Salaam, other universities were involved as part of the action plans to develop continuing INSET programmes and projects for promoting effective teaching and learning in African universities. Although issues related to the research, community-service and management competences of university lecturers were not adequately addressed, there is evidence that in general, INSET was seen as a critical aspect in enhancing human resource in Africa. According to Deng (1998:263), this would in turn strengthen the capacity of lecturers in African universities to design and implement sustainable development strategies for the African content.

By way of concluding, it is important to mention that although the majority of universities

in Africa were established in the 1960s and Higher Education was generally accepted by the governments as a necessary and worthwhile investment in development, there has been some criticism of the tertiary education sector. The sector has been criticised for a variety of reasons which include elitism, its impact on the educational system and its efficiency and effectiveness in terms of meeting the human resource needs.

3.5 SUMMATION

In both developed and developing countries, universities are challenged by external forces of change such as increased student numbers, knowledge explosion, changing values, government expectations and technological developments. In these countries, universities have always felt a need to reflect on their activities and to respond to their ever changing environment.

Consequently, the need for university lecturers to be involved in INSET so as to improve their teaching, research and community-service performance has become one of the foremost priorities in these countries. INSET of university lecturers has been spearheaded mainly by requirements of governments for efficiency, effectiveness, accountability and high quality assurance.

It can be safely stated that changes in the work environment of university lecturers have come as a result of the policies and funding initiatives of governments. The academic careers of university lecturers have, to a large extent, been influenced by visions of

governments on Higher Education. As a result, the need for INSET is not only confined to lecturers in the lower ranks but to heads of departments or schools as well. This is reflected from the fact that university promotion requirements emphasise improved performance in research, teaching and community-service.

It is also worth noting that in these countries, the weakest research interest is in the Social Sciences and the strongest interest is among those lecturers in the Natural Sciences. Conversely, literature review of INSET needs of university lecturers is also conclusive that the strongest interest in the improvement of teaching performance is in the Social or Human Sciences and that the weakest interest is in the Natural Sciences. It appears that INSET of university lecturers emphasise the development of knowledge and the value of scholarship and research.

Most university lecturers, as reported by Sheehan and Welsh (1996:72-77) believe that government interference in policies governing academic work was extremely excessive and that they had little influence on how their institutions were managed. In addition, a perceived interest in the demands of administrative competences by governments is perceived by university lecturers as an interference with their research and teaching activities.

Most INSET organisers hold the view that INSET activities should not be linked to the formative evaluation of their teaching, research and community-service performance. Given the deficit model which was previously described in Chapter Two, it is

understandable that linking formative evaluation of university lecturers with their INSET activities inevitably would lead to resistance, scepticism and outright rejection by university lecturers in the developed countries.

In formulating policies for INSET of university lecturers, management structures that are put in place as a result of external environmental factors continue to be a critical area in terms of implementing these policies. Quality assurance mechanisms within the management structures are used as some of the main devices for changing the mind sets of university lecturers with regard to the demands of governments to improve their performance or competences in the fields of teaching, research and community development. INSET of lecturers, therefore, plays a key role in the achievement of goals and missions of governments and societies .

Lecturers are not necessarily forced to participate in INSET activities but some of these activities are very critical to the advancement of their academic careers. In this sense, they 'voluntarily', without much choice, actively become involved in INSET activities.

3.6 CONCLUSION

In developed and developing countries, Higher Education is provided by universities, colleges and technikons or polytechnics. It is noteworthy that there has always been a need for especially universities in these countries to ruminate on the challenging changes emanating from their external environments. This has led these institutions to design

programmes and projects which would enable their key agents of change, namely, lecturers to effectively respond to these difficulties.

The increase or decline in student enrolments, knowledge explosion, technological advances, the dynamic nature of professions, the socio-economic factors and the expectations of governments have significantly affected the teaching, research and community-service functions of universities in the countries discussed above. The nature of the academic careers in developed and developing countries is not immune to these changes. Accordingly, the turbulent pressures for change impact on the role-functions of university lecturers in these countries.

Developed countries also appear to be kilometres ahead of the developing countries in terms of establishing appropriate infrastructures for INSET of university lectures. Most universities have established units or centres for INSET, professional development, professional growth, lifelong learning, continuing education and training, staff development or any other infrastructure aimed at ensuring that academics improve their key tasks of teaching, research and community-service.

Nevertheless, there is evidence that in both developed and developing countries the improvement of teaching and learning by lecturers, their development of research capacity, curriculum development, audio-visual services, educational administration, dissemination of research data and other endeavours whose goals and objectives are to

improve their performance within the ever-dynamic tertiary education institutions are pivotal in enabling their institutions to meet the pressing historical, social and economic needs of their countries.

From the above exposition, it can also be safely stated that promotion requirements underscore the importance of teaching and research. This is evident from the fact that INSET programmes are planned, implemented, monitored and evaluated to ensure that the needs of lecturers with regard to these expected functions of universities are addressed.

However, the legacy of European colonialism appears to be one of the most serious challenges which have engulfed universities in Africa. As previously stated, this provides the context in which INSET activities for lecturers in most of the South African universities are planned, organised, implemented and evaluated.

In the next chapter, an overview of INSET provision for South African university lecturers is provided. This should help to further develop the theoretical and conceptual framework of INSET for university lecturers in South Africa as well as to throw light on the nature of INSET practice.