

**Concept Note on Pedagogical Leadership in Africa:
Pedagogical Training Workshop for University of Nairobi MRPP Staff
January 28-30, Nyahururu**

1. Background

PedaL is a suite of intentional and integrated interventions in design, context, processes and content of teaching and learning aimed at maximizing learning outcomes among students. The PedaL curriculum was developed around the innovative teaching tools (pedagogical strategies) of the collaborative Master of Research and Public Policy (MRPP): case study teaching, role plays, simulations, flipped classroom, tricky topics and reflective practice. Besides pedagogical strategies, the PedaL curriculum encompasses 5 other modules: Educational foundations (includes theories of learning and pedagogical models); Transformative curriculum and learning design; Innovative assessment; Technology Enhanced Learning; and, Leadership in pedagogical practice.

PedaL is organized around a series of interlinked activities with the following specific objectives:

- A. Design and implement features and processes that drive PedaL pedagogy in selected social science graduate programmes;
- B. Develop the capacity of lead course instructors to catalyse systemic change in teaching and learning methods/pedagogy;
- C. Create and sustain an active community of practice around PedaL pedagogy;
- D. Support delivery of graduate social science programmes using PedaL pedagogy and share lessons across the partnership;
- E. Facilitate the institutionalisation of PedaL in partner universities.

2. The Pedagogical Training Workshop for the University of Nairobi

The University of Nairobi has had a long standing relationship with the Partnership for African Social and Governance Research (PASGR). The University is currently part of a partnership of 12 other universities across 7 African countries that offer the collaborative Master of Research and Public Policy (MRPP). A key element of the MRPP is a focus on pedagogical innovations that deliver exceptional learning moments. The emphasis on alternative pedagogy that delivers exceptional learning moments that have been emphasized on the MRPP have now been crystalized through the PedaL training programme. This pedagogical training is aimed at equipping teaching staff to deliver the MRPP and other courses they teach better so as to develop quality graduates. The training is aimed at the achieving the six specific objectives outlined below:

- Articulate and implement a personal teaching philosophy and employ reflective processes to improve practice;
- Analyse and employ effective teaching and learning strategies using applied, authentic and learner-centred practices informed by relevant theories, models and empirical evidence;
- Design and deliver inclusive teaching and learning experiences that address the diverse needs of learners and are responsive to emerging trends;



- Use appropriate teaching and learning materials, and adapt technology to facilitate learning;
- Construct and implement effective assessment practices;
- Demonstrate pedagogical leadership in distinct contexts by identifying and sharing good practices across their universities and beyond.

PedaL training programme (*details appended*) encompasses six building blocks and the University of Nairobi will launch PedaL with components of four modules:

- Educational foundations;
- Technology Enhanced Learning;
- Transformative curriculum and learning design;
- Pedagogical models and strategies.

The programme will impart pedagogical knowledge and skills through practical application of tools and technologies that facilitate exceptional learning moments that contribute to holistic development of competencies. The training will be interactive and will draw on, extend and seek to modify the teaching experience of participants by applying innovative pedagogical tools and interactive teaching tools. Particular attention will be paid to gender dynamics in the content of modules, selection of teaching and learning materials as well as classroom interactions.

Collaboration with the University of Nairobi around PedaL will also catalyze “network effects” to the mutual benefit of all members of this network. In concrete terms this implies that with more members in the network possibilities for associated activities will increase exponentially: staff exchange, peer-training, online or offline co-teaching, pooling of teaching material and African teaching cases, common conferences, and collaborative research to uncover emerging learning outcomes as a result of pedagogical innovations. It is expected that this will also have far-reaching “external effects” in terms of catalysing interest and spreading best practices in other programmes outside the social sciences.

3. Expected outputs

It is expected that the three day training will have both immediate and longer term effects that are highlighted below:

- A total of 30 teaching staff would have been trained;
- Strengthening of the community of practice around PedaL;
- Intensification of pedagogical innovations in the delivery of MRPP courses;
- Integration of PedaL pedagogy in other social science courses.



Appendix 1: Pedagogical Leadership in Africa (PedaL) Training Programme

A. Rationale for PedaL

Several actors on the African higher education landscape lament the quality, relevance and sustainability of the education system. The Association of African Universities notes that the greatest conundrum confronting African universities is how to become relevant to local needs and social realities while simultaneously responding adequately to the opportunities and risks of globalization. As globalization continues to challenge the content and delivery of education programmes, blur boundaries and complicate education spaces, most institutions in the West are adapting while African universities are left struggling behind.

This situation is compounded by: a) Resource deficiencies and infrastructural challenges that constrain the teaching and learning environment; b) Massification of higher education which has led to phenomenal increase in student enrolment at undergraduate and poor preparation of students for post graduate studies; c) Heavy teaching loads which translate into an emphasis on content and surface learning rather than deep learning; d) The old adage of 'publish or perish' which has shifted attention from classroom content and teaching and learning dynamics to research. Systemic weaknesses have therefore conspired to entrench a transmission model of teaching and learning that legitimizes some form of content tyranny across programmes.

PedaL is premised on the need to catalyse systemic change in teaching and learning in African universities. African university lecturers are highly qualified in their disciplines, yet may lack appropriate pedagogical skills. This affects their ability to deliver effectively in the teaching and learning process, and to sustain holistic development of student competencies; the mismatch between skills and labour market needs cannot be underrated. While this situation can be attributed to the many known underlying factors, it is also true that pedagogical competency is not a requirement for teaching at African universities.

There has been hue and cry over eroding standards of higher education and failure to effectively equip graduates with the skills needed in a rapidly changing and complex knowledge-driven society. By developing and sharing PedaL pedagogies, the PedaL partnership aims to enhance the teaching capacity of university teaching staff to improve student learning outcomes, thereby to produce high quality social science graduates who are employable; and creatively able to use their education to sustain opportunities that stimulate economic growth and social transformation.

It has been argued that even gains from the best designed curriculum are often lost without competent teachers to interpret the objectives, organize the content and determine the stimulus that meets the prescribed objectives. Academics must constantly resolve the tension between 'what should be learned' and 'how it should be organized' to achieve exceptional learning moments for optimum learning outcomes. The problem is that teachers' dispositions, needs and motivation that could help them stimulate active learning among students have not received the right attention. This brings into sharp focus an urgent need not only to reform the curriculum but also to address conditions that facilitate desirable shifts in pedagogical practices.

Taking cognisance of the neglect and under investment in social sciences as African countries and development partners put STEM at the heart of their development strategies; PedaL deliberately privileged the social sciences. The goal is to gradually replicate PedaL across other university programmes so as to catalyse systemic change.

B. PedaL Pedagogy

It is a suite of intentional and integrated interventions in design, context, processes and content of teaching and learning through strategies such as use of case studies, flipped classroom, role plays, and a range of problem based learning activities aimed at maximizing learning outcomes among students.



Supported by



PedaL pedagogy places the responsibility on teaching staff as facilitators to create the appropriate environment for a holistic teaching and learning experience that integrates the student, content and a variety of learning materials to make learning interesting and effective both inside and outside the classroom.

The pedagogy comprises the six building blocks/modules illustrated in the Table below:

- Pedagogical models and strategies;
- Educational foundations;
- Technology Enhanced Learning;
- Transformative curriculum and learning design;
- Leadership in pedagogical practice; and,
- Innovative assessment.

C. Structure of Pedagogical Training Programme

The architecture of PedaL programmes assumes a blended approach with face-to-face sessions as well as online engagement.

Face to Face Sessions

The face to face component is delivered in 7 days. Sessions are facilitated by trainers from the continent, assisted by Open University, UK; and, IDS, University of Sussex. Innovative training tools and technologies are used to impart pedagogical knowledge, skills and experiences through exciting and interactive learning experiences.

Online Engagement

The face-to-face teaching and learning experiences will be reinforced by synchronous and asynchronous learning experiences on a virtual platform. Online engagement will facilitate the intra and inter staff interactions within their institutions and in the wider community of practice around PedaL. The virtual platform will support reflective practice, knowledge transfer and mentorship.

Reflective Practice

As part of the training, teaching staff will formulate personal pedagogical goals that shape their teaching and learning strategies. The goals will be pursued over the academic year through application of the knowledge, skills and experiences to selected graduate social science courses.

Pedagogical Leadership

PedaL fellows demonstrate leadership by sharing knowledge and skills as well as challenging and influencing the pedagogical practices of peers.

D. Certification and Recognition

There will be three levels of certification for completion of distinct training activities:

- Upon successful completion of the face-to-face session and online engagement activities, participants will be awarded a certificate of accomplishment;
- Upon completion of all training, reflective practice and pedagogical leadership activities participants will attain a PedaL fellow status attesting outstanding competence;
- Once the full PedaL programme is accredited by participating universities¹; participants who pursue various training programmes at the universities will obtain respective degrees: post graduate certificate; post graduate diploma; or master's degree in pedagogical practice and leadership.

¹ Egerton University has launched the accreditation process.

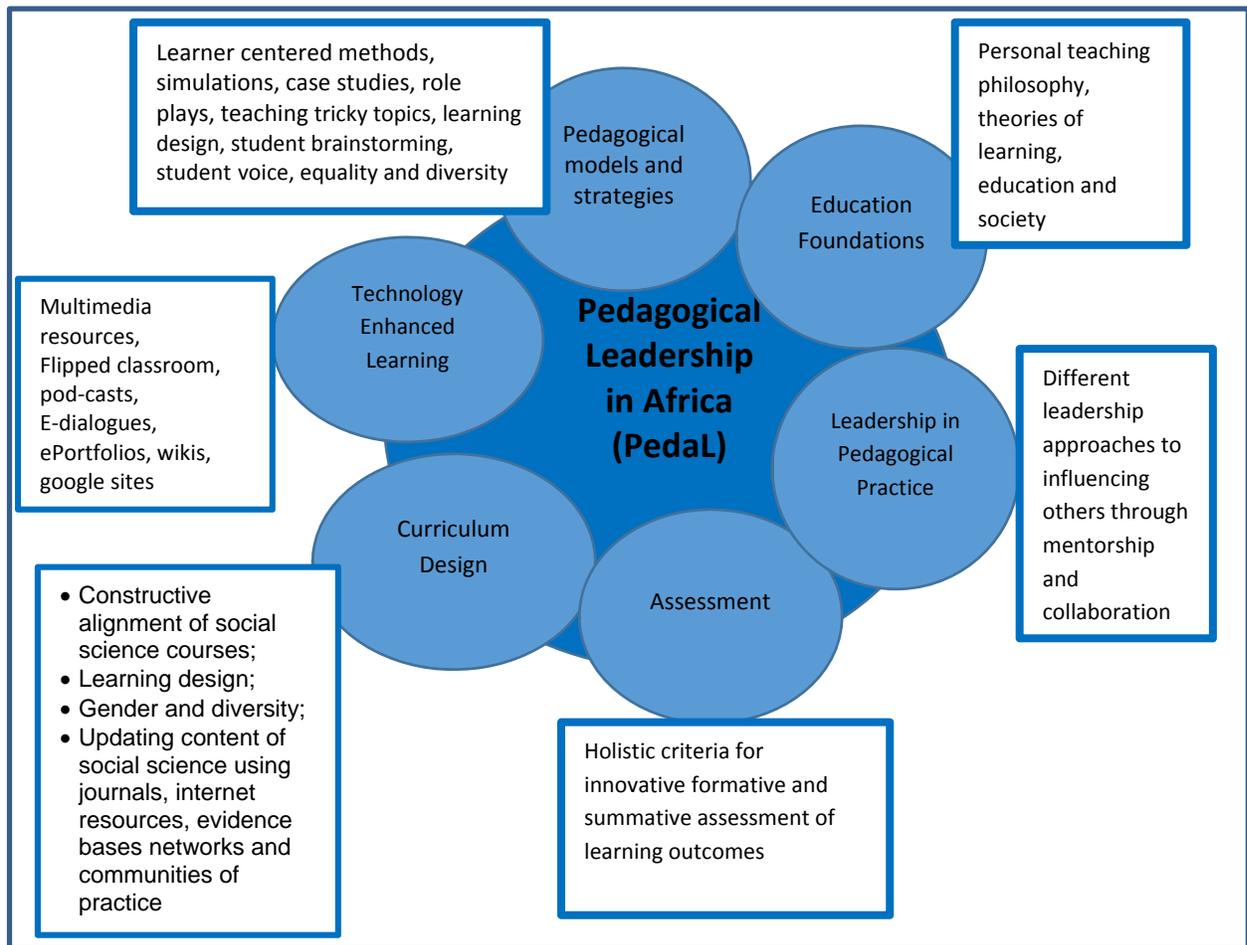


E. Conclusion

The PedaL training programme embraces teaching and learning as an art to be orchestrated in classrooms through thoughtful preparation of university teaching staff. This is consistent with the perspective expressed in The Chronicle of Higher Education that:

‘...teaching is a craft, learned not just in a single class, practicum, or workshop. Rather, it’s a recursive process, developed through trial and error — and yes, by “fire” — but also through conversation with others: a mentor, a cohort, your peers².’

Schematic Representation of PedaL Pedagogy



² Elizabeth Alsop, 2018: Who’s Teaching the Teachers? In *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, February 11, 2018

<https://www.chronicle.com/article/Who-s-Teaching-the-Teachers-/242488>