TERTIARY EDUCATION SERIES

Published by
National Council for Tertiary Education
P. O. Box MB 28
Accra

Tel: 0302–918793–5
Email: nctepublications@gmail.com

PRODUCED IN GHANA

Typesetting by GertMash Desktop Services, Accra New Town, Tel.: 0302–251386
Printing and Cover Design by QualiType Limited, Accra, Ghana. Tel.: +233–0302–325266/7

CONTENTS

THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE TEACHING AND LEARNING INNOVATION FUND (TALIF) TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF WA POLYTECHNIC

Solomon A. Dansieh and Thomas O. Ocloo

Wa Polytechnic

Abstract

Society regards higher education as the key to technology, productivity, and the enhancement of international competitiveness and economic growth. In spite of the growing importance of tertiary education as a vital engine of national development, the sector seems not to be receiving the necessary financial support to carry out its mandate effectively. All over the world today, high and rapidly rising costs seem to be outstripping available revenues. In the competition for government funding, higher education does not fare half as well as other sectors such as health and infrastructural development as other sectors of immediate impact. Within education itself, the pre-tertiary levels cater for the large numbers; accordingly they take the lion's share of the funding. To ensure that higher education does not lose out altogether; the Ghana Education Trust Fund and the Students' Loan Trust Fund are among safety nets provided by government. The Teaching and Learning Innovation Fund (TALIF) is another recent welcome intervention. This paper seeks to assess the impact of TALIF on the development of the Wa Polytechnic. It argues that in the face of limited resources, the choice of a mechanism of funding through competitive proposal writing is a wise one, as it ensures fairness in the allocation of funds. For infant tertiary institutions established without seed money, TALIF can be described as an ideal weaning formula. Notable benefits Wa Polytechnic derived from the TALIF include the establishment of new departments, such as the Cosmetology, Information and Communication Technology, and Building Technology Departments. Essential equipment and software for teaching, learning and management was also procured. There were some major implementation challenges: Delays in milestone disbursements, long procurement processes, lack of motivation for main contact persons, misplaced priorities and subsequent midway review of project activities were encountered. These notwithstanding, the fund should be institutionalised to provide further support for the growth of infant tertiary institutions like the Wa Polytechnic.

KEYWORDS: *tertiary education; innovation; challenges; implementation; effectiveness.*

Introduction

Around the world today, demand for education beyond the secondary level is fast outpacing the ability of governments to provide adequate resources for effective teaching and learning. This phenomenon can be ascribed to many factors, foremost among which is the increasing recognition in all countries that the economic value or returns accruing to persons who have received higher education is much higher than those with secondary education or less (Salmi and Arthur, 2006; UNESCO, 2006:7; Johnstone, 1992: 1). In Ghana, increased access through recent state interventions, like the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) programme, Capitation Grant and the School Feeding Programme, (to meet the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) on education for all by the year 2015), have also contributed immensely to increasing enrolment figures in various tertiary institutions. Student enrolment in Ghanaian tertiary institutions between 1999/2000 and 2005/2006 more than doubled, with enrolment rising from 53,495 in 1999/2000 to 118,239 over the

period (Effah and Senadza, 2008).

Salmi and Arthur (2006: 8) also identify the strong social pressures that are exerted on students to move beyond the secondary level of education for greater social standing and prestige in their communities, and even better marriage prospects for girls, as a major factor. Such is the situation in Ghana that, even though the term 'graduate' has somehow undergone a semantic shift to include all manner of students completing a study programme, many people still limit its use to only persons who have completed university education. Societies, on their part, see higher education as the key to technology, productivity, and the enhancement of international competitiveness and economic growth (Johnstone, 1992: 1). In the attempt to increase the relevance of tertiary education curricula, many higher education institutions and governments are now deemphasising certain fields with low levels of labour force demand in favour of those that are more closely related to emerging labour force needs.

In spite of the growing importance of higher education as a vital engine of national development, the sector seems not to be receiving the necessary financial support to carry its mandate effectively. Reasons such as pressure on government to provide better health care, shelter, security, potable water and transportation have often been cited as depriving higher education of enjoying the highest priority for state funding (Bloom, 2002; Salmi & Arthur, 2006). Globally, high and rapidly rising costs seem to be outstripping available revenues and "other claimants on public funds begin to see higher education as a voracious competitor of public resources and not merely as an insignificant fringe activity" (Williams, 1990). Probably the best description of this phenomenon is found in Chevalier's (1991) words:

> The conclusion is clear. There is financial crisis in education in most countries. The crisis is much deeper than macrostatistics reveal; and it is not going to disappear soon, especially in developing countries, if new solutions are not found (cited in Johnstone, 1992: 1).

New solutions must indeed be found and urgently too. With the current global economic downturn, the credit crunch and recession in the developed world, the situation is likely to worsen as many African countries, including Ghana, often depend on development partners for budget support. For Ghana, in the competition for government funding, higher education does not fare half as well as other sectors such as health and infrastructural development as sectors of immediate impact. Within education itself, the pre-tertiary level caters for the large numbers, accordingly they take the lion's share of the funding, leaving the tertiary sector under-funded.

To help address the problem of mismatch between available public resources and the growing demand for higher education, countries and institutions have had to adopt different intervention mechanisms. In recent times, Ghana for instance has introduced

interventions like the Teaching and Learning Innovation Fund (TALIF), Ghana Education Trust Fund (GETFund) and the Students Loan Trust Fund (SLTF) besides the usual annual government subvention. In this article, we examine the contribution that TALIF has made to the development of the Wa Polytechnic.

Background and Information Gathering

Using the Wa Polytechnic as a case study, different types of data such as results from interviews with the TALIF Campus Coordinator, proposal originators (main contact persons), students, faculty and management were examined. Secondary data from existing progress and terminal reports, as well as other relevant print and electronic literature were also utilised. Direct observation techniques were also employed. The case method was adopted, since it is considered most appropriate for individual researchers and also gives an opportunity for one aspect of a problem to be studied in some depth within a limited time scale (Bell, 2004: 10). The study entailed a comprehensive description and analysis of the variety of events and issues in Wa Polytechnic's involvement in proposal writing for funding and implementation of TALIF projects. This was done within the framework of the result-based management tool used by many funding agencies; and also bearing in mind Bennett's four-stage analysis of:

1. Determining the present situation;
2. Gathering information about the background to the present situation;
3. Gathering more specific data to test alternative hypothesis about the important factors in the present situation;
4. Presenting recommendations for action; and where possible, evaluate the outcomes of these recommendations after they have been implemented. (Bennett, 1986 cited in Jankwowicz, 1995: 181).

Categories of Higher Education Cost

Higher education costs may be viewed under four broad areas: basic costs of instruction; costs associated with sponsored research or special activities; costs of student living; and costs of foregone earnings (Johnstone, 1992). The first category, basic costs of instruction, covers those that the institution incurs in executing its core mandate of teaching, learning and research. These include costs of faculty and staff salaries, equipment, libraries, administrative and secretarial services.

Funding Mechanisms

To promote more open access to higher education, there is the need for more diverse funding sources. Citing a review of tertiary education policies carried out by the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the Secretary-General of the organisation

observed that "the best way to provide effectiveness and fairness is a well-designed model for charging students to make a contribution but we need to be careful and recommend adequate financial support in the form of loans or grants and help with living expenses" (Gurria, 2009: 2).

In Ghana, higher education is funded largely from government sources. Fees paid by students are highly subsidised, and attempts by school authorities to charge 'realistic fees' have often been met with student riots and demonstrations. Academic Facility User Fees (AFUF) can only be increased by10% and with the approval of the National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE). That is not all; various Academic Boards negotiate with local student leadership, i.e. the Students Representative Council (SRC), before such fees are finally agreed upon; yet defaulting rates are very high. In some cases, faculty and other staff members have had to guarantee for students who could not pay their fees before expiry of registration deadlines. Between 1990 and 2000, the tertiary sub-sector of Education was allocated about 12% of the total education recurrent budget. In the year 2000, the amount allocated to the education sector from government's discretionary budget was $204, 824,621 (32%). Some $23,870,359 (15%) of this amount was allocated to the higher education sector (Effah, 2004: 43). Figures for the polytechnics between 1990 and 2000, showed a marked improvement over those of the universities. The approved budget for the universities in 1998 was about 58% of their estimated requirements with the corresponding figure for 2000 standing at 56%. Over the same period, the figure rose from about 30% in 1998 to 58% in 2000. Such increases notwithstanding, the 2000 budget still left serious institutional budgetary gaps (*Ibid.*). Such was the situation that the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports, as part of the implementation plan of its Education Strategic Plan (ESP 2003–2015) commissioned a study over the period 2000–2003 to come out with a comprehensive strategy on how the tertiary education sector could be financed on a sustainable basis, while providing the desired levels of educational quality. The study revealed that there was a rapid increase in enrolments in Ghanaian tertiary education from 1990 to 2004 at an average of 18% per year. The report, which came out in 2006, stated *inter alia*, "This pace has been more rapid than both NCTE expectations and the Government's Education Strategic Plan" (Adu and Orivel, 2006: ix). The result was the deterioration of teachers' working conditions, remunerations, student accommodation and quality of service in general. It concluded that although there is an appreciable increase in the commitment of the country to tertiary education, the mechanism for ensuring sustainable funding of tertiary education is yet to be achieved (*Ibid.*).

There was therefore the need to put in place innovative mechanisms for the allocation of public funds so as to mitigate the financial dilemmas of tertiary

institutions and students in Ghana. Some of the mechanisms introduced to mitigate this phenomenon include student loan schemes, the Ghana Education Trust Fund (GETFund) and recently, the Teaching and Learning Innovation Fund (TALIF). Partner donations, endowment funds and alumni contributions also constitute some significant sources of funds for tertiary institutions. In the next two subsections, we will provide brief outlines of two of these funding mechanisms — the SLTF and the GETFund ahead of our evaluation of TALIF.

Student Loans in Ghana

Student loans were first introduced in Ghana in 1971 but had to be abandoned a year later due to a change in government. A revised scheme introduced in 1975 also ran into problems of low recovery rates. Some improved recovery rates were however recorded from 1986 (Kotey, 1992). In January 1988, the Students' Loan Scheme was established under PNDC Law 276, and administered by the Social Security and National Insurance Trust (SSNIT). The Scheme was a financial arrangement under which Ghanaian students who were enrolled and pursuing approved courses in tertiary institutions in Ghana could access loans to supplement their own private resources to finance their education (SSNIT, 2009). By the 2004/5 academic year, a total of 679,190.92 million old cedis had been disbursed (*Ibid*). In the face of high loan defaulting rates, resulting in 500 billion old cedis accruing in outstanding debts (Boateng, 2003), alleged administrative inefficiencies, and the precariousness of the sustainability of the Trust, an alternative had to be sourced. In December 2005, the Students Loan Trust Fund (SLTF) was established under the Trustees Incorporation Act 106 of 1962 to replace the SSNIT-administered Students' Loan Scheme to provide financial resources and sound management of the Trust for the benefit of students (SLTF, 2009).

GETFund

Another intervention was the institution of the Ghana Education Trust Fund Act which was passed in 2000 with the aim of providing finance to supplement the vision of education at all levels by the government. In addition to providing funds for the development and maintenance of essential academic facilities and infrastructure, the fund also provides, through the NCTE, grants to tertiary institutions:

(i) to train brilliant students as members of faculty;
(ii) to undertake research and other academic programmes of relevance to national development (GETFund Act, Article 2, clause (a) and (d) (Government of Ghana, 2000: 1)

The main source of money for the fund is 2.5% of the prevailing rate of Value Added Tax. Since its inception, the GETFund has contributed immensely to the infrastructural and staff development needs of various tertiary institutions. Wa

Polytechnic, for instance, was built from scratch with GETFund money.

The Teaching and Learning Innovation Fund (TALIF)

TALIF is financed with credit from the International Development Association (IDA) of the World Bank Group and a counterpart fund of 10% from the national budget. Launched in 2004, the fund, which is for tertiary institutions, operates under the Education Sector Project (EdSeP) of the Ministry of Education as part of the Government of Ghana's tertiary education improvement efforts contained in the Ministry of Education's Education Strategic Plan (ESP 2003–2015) (Government of Ghana, 2003).

As a development tool aimed at enhancing the ability of Ghana's tertiary institutions to fulfill their mandates and contribute more effectively to national development, TALIF supports innovations that seek to improve education in the polytechnics and the University for Development Studies, and at postgraduate levels in the other universities (NCTE, 2005: 1). Eligible institutions thus include all 10 polytechnics, all public universities, private tertiary institutions with three years' continuous accreditation and national supervisory bodies such as the National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE), National Accreditation Board (NAB), and the National Board for Professional and Technician Examinations (NABPTEX).

Through well-publicised calls for proposals open to all eligible tertiary institutions, specific innovative projects based on approved funding proposals and clearly defined measurable results are funded after signing of performance agreements between the NCTE and the institutions. There have been five such calls since the inception of TALIF in 2004, and the Wa Polytechnic submitted proposals during each call.

Objectives of TALIF

TALIF has both general and specific objectives. As a medium-term instrument of tertiary education policy, TALIF was designed to address four broad objectives:

1. raising the quality of tertiary level teaching and learning activities;
2. sharpening the relevance and skills content of polytechnic education;
3. improving the efficiency by which polytechnics, universities and system supervisory institutions manage their academic programmes; and
4. through the combined effect of these, opening up greater access to tertiary level academic programmes in order to meet the increases in demand brought about by population growth and globalisation.

Among its numerous specific objectives are:

1. Improving the quality of teaching and learning;

2. sharpening the relevance and skills content of polytechnic education;
3. improving the efficiency with which tertiary institutions manage academic programmes;
4. tackling problems of HIV/ AIDS; and
5. broadening access, especially in disadvantaged regions (NCTE, 2005).

In assessing its impact then, these objectives will constitute a useful measuring rod to supplement other assessment frameworks outlined in the introduction.

TALIF at Wa Polytechnic

In keeping with these objectives of the fund, the Wa Polytechnic submitted a total of twenty-nine proposals between 2004 and 2007 and won seventeen of them, (six regular and eleven small proposals), as shown in *Appendix A*. Being the youngest polytechnic in Ghana, the choice of the proposals was based on some of the strategic needs of the institution as can be deduced from the project titles in *Appendix B*. Guided by visionary leadership, a hardworking faculty and support team, as well as an efficient Proposal Review Committee, all the efforts contributed to the achievement of the remarkable results described in this article. Records from the NCTE TALIF Unit indicate that the Wa Polytechnic won 11 per cent of the total number of regular proposals under the polytechnic window (NCTE, 2007), placing her 5th after older polytechnics like Kumasi, Takoradi, Sunyani and Ho.

Assessing the Impact

The impact is measured against the general objectives of TALIF and Bennett's four-stage analysis (see page 4) of determining the present situation; providing information about the background to the present situation; providing more specific data to test alternative hypothesis about the important factors in the present situation; and subsequently, present recommendations for action (Bennett 1986, cited in Jankwowicz, 1995: 181).

As most contracts for putting up offices and lecture halls under the Ghana Education Trust Fund (GETFund) did not include furnishing, essential equipment for teaching, learning and management were lacking. TALIF was therefore a timely and welcome relief and could be described as an ideal weaning formula for an infant institution. Through TALIF, not only were some offices in the new administration block furnished and equipped, whole academic departments were also set up. These include the Departments of Cosmetology, Information and Communication Technology, and Building Technology. The Departments of Agricultural Engineering, Secretaryship and Management, and Accountancy Studies were also given a boost by way of the acquisition of teaching and learning materials and capacity building. In the latter case, faculty of the Agricultural Engineering Department received training

in data processing at the Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER), University of Ghana, and also had industrial attachment in various industries. Staff industrial attachment which was unimaginable in 2004, became a reality in 2008 through a proposal that was won by the Agricultural Engineering Department. Lecturers had the opportunity to experience new trends in industry. In November, 2009 training in use of AutoCAD software was organised locally by the department, with staff from other departments also benefiting. The department has also bought a tractor and has a four-acre demonstration farm funded by TALIF for teaching, learning and income generation (see next section for details). The project on preventive maintenance (see Appendix A) also organised seminars that benefited the entire polytechnic community. These seminars were facilitated by the Ghana Fire Service, ICT experts and experienced estate managers. A draft maintenance policy document has also been developed under the project and is awaiting publication. Entrepreneurship training was also organised for staff, students and the general public with funds under one of the TALIF projects.

Some TALIF-funded projects like the meat, shea-butter, and groundnut processing units of Wa Polytechnic have a high income generation potential that will yield profit for a long time. Yields from the demonstration farm will be used as raw materials to feed the processing units, and thus cut down the cost of buying from the open market. Other important projects include a Language Laboratory and Counseling Centre. Considering the proximity of the Wa Polytechnic to Burkina Faso, the laboratory could serve as the nucleus of the Polytechnic's internationalisation drive. General counseling services, including HIV/AIDS voluntary counseling and testing will also be provided at the Counseling Centre for staff and students. Important policy documents like a Strategic Plan, an Institutional Policy Framework for HIV/AIDS, an ICT Policy Plan, and a Maintenance Policy document were all developed with TALIF funds. An HIV/AIDS Club which was inaugurated on the 12th of November 2009 was also sponsored with funds from TALIF. Library, student and financial records management software was also acquired for the enhancement of management.

Impact on Teaching, Learning and Management

Total student population for both tertiary and non-tertiary programmes in 2004 was 277. By the 2009/10 academic year, the number had risen to 1995, an increase of 720%. This was partly made possible by TALIF through the provision of funds for the acquisition of basic but essential teaching and learning equipment. For instance, the study discovered that between 2004 and 2009 the number of students' desks increased from 500 to 600. From a single tabletop Canon photocopier in 2004, the Wa Polytechnic now has three (3) giant and two (2) tabletop photocopiers. This has greatly enhanced

teaching, learning and management. The threat of examination question leakages arising from the use of private communication, secretarial and reprographic services outside the campus has now been contained. In 2004, there was not a single laptop or LCD projector in the Wa Polytechnic. Today, there are eight (8) laptops with four (4) LCD projectors and screens for teaching and learning. Current student-computer ratio stands at 12: 1, a marked improvement over the pre-TALIF ratio of about 64: 1 (Wa Polytechnic, 2008). As a result of the increased number of computers, Diploma in Business Studies students now participate in computer literacy lessons too unlike before. Introductory courses are also run by the ICT Department for school pupils offering ICT in remote communities that do not have access to electricity or computers. Non-governmental organisations like the SEND Foundation, Plan Ghana, and Action Aid-Ghana, who operate in the region, have at various times sponsored basic school pupils to access the facility. The most recent was on 9th September 2011 when Action Aid-Ghana, brought three busloads of such pupils to have their very first ever experience of seeing a computer and clicking the mouse.

Internal communication has also been enhanced greatly. From three (3) landline telephone sets in 2004 (in the Rector's, Registrar's, and Finance Offices only), the institution now has a PABX intercom system that was funded by TALIF linking all the major offices. Thanks to TALIF, internet service is now available, though not very reliable. From a single refrigerator in 2004, the Wa Polytechnic now has over 10 being used in various offices and the Senior Common Room. There are today eight (8) television sets in the Polytechnic; but there was none before the inception of TALIF. From a handful of obsolete textbooks that were hardly sufficient for teaching and research, the Agricultural Engineering Department now has 93 copies of assorted modern textbooks, Building Technology Department 134, and Secretaryship and Management Studies Department now has 165 relevant up-to-date textbooks. The library's collection of 2441 books, eight (8) shelves and 10 tables in 2004, now stands at 3000, 20 and 18. The additional books and furniture were procured with TALIF funds. The typing pool was not left out. While the number of typewriters increased from 32 to 41, tables and chairs increased from 20 to 32.

Agricultural Engineering students of the Polytechnic are also given practical lessons in tractor maintenance and ploughing using the tractor that was acquired through TALIF. The tractor also ploughs at reduced rates for communities where students do their extension service. The impact of all the above on teaching, learning, and management is simply tremendous, and could not have been achieved without the timely advent of TALIF. Interacting with a top management staff recently, he remarked: "Everything in my office, except one computer, is TALIF." Many other workers of the Polytechnic can affirm this.

Challenges

In competing for TALIF funding and

implementing approved projects, Wa Polytechnic faced some challenges. The implementation process for instance was confronted with challenges engendered by factors from within and without the Polytechnic. Disbursements from the NCTE sometimes arrived very late as illustrated in the table in Appendix B. Even after such disbursements were eventually made, there were further delays caused by long and cumbersome procurement processes required by the Public Procurement (ACT 663, 2003). The Entity Tender Committee that had the mandate to approve major procurement contracts involving money beyond thresholds that institutional heads could approve met only once every quarter. Earlier unawareness by implementers that the Committee could convene emergency meetings to fast-track the process contributed to the delays.

The dissolution of various governing councils at the beginning of 2009 due to a change in government, also contributed to implementation delays. This is because chairpersons of these councils chaired the entity tender committees. Internally, some main contact persons added to the delays with lackadaisical attitudes; because as some of them disclosed, "After spending sleepless nights to write proposals that fetched the Polytechnic thousands of dollars, nothing was given to us. We used our brains for free. If a consultant had been hired, how much would he/she have charged?" The research also revealed that, in some cases both the main and alternative contact persons were not available to carry out some crucial time-bound project activities because they had left for further studies elsewhere. Where they were available, some simply forgot that they had deadlines to meet and had to be reminded several times by the Project Implementation Committee. The delay in the implementation of projects in Wa Polytechnic could also be blamed on the fact that being a new institution there was a delay in the completion of lecture and office buildings to install equipment procured. This led to the malfunctioning of some delicate electronic equipment when they were eventually installed, due to long stay on the store shelves. Lists approval dates of the seventeen proposals and the dates on which their first milestone disbursements were received are attached as Appendix A.

Generally, delays in the receipt of milestone disbursements resulted in price fluctuations due to inflation. Consequently, some project activities could not be carried out as earlier planned. Also, considering the fact that the project life-span of regular window proposals is 24 months, and only 12 months for small windows, the delay in receipt of milestone disbursements led to a revision of the action, work and procurement plans of about 80% of approved projects. Main contact persons therefore had no choice but to ask for extension of implementation periods, approval of which also came in late in most of the cases. Some suppliers were reluctant to accept payment without Value Added Tax (VAT) component; while others simply refused to supply until they had received assurance on how the VAT component will be settled. There were very few and minor contract amendments,

but there were not disputes with the potential of contractual claims, cancellation of contracts, arbitration or legal remedies during the period. Internally, some discontent was recorded as in some cases the Chairman of Proposal Review Committee, the Campus TALIF Coordinator and main contact persons of projects were not involved in the procurement process. There were instances where procurement staff constituted their own tender evaluation teams without consulting these key persons in the implementation process. This was rectified when they were cautioned.

Conclusion and Recommendations

With the growing number of persons gaining access into higher education institutions in Ghana, government budgetary support seems to be declining too. Some of the recent interventions include the GETFund, Students Loan Trust Fund and the TALIF. While the GETFund has assisted (and is still assisting) with the provision of physical infrastructure, faculty development and research, through TALIF many a higher education institution has acquired basic equipment for teaching and learning. To young institutions like the Wa Polytechnic, TALIF was an excellent funding facility. The implementation process of TALIF projects was not without challenges. Delays in milestone disbursements, long procurement processes, and lackadaisical attitude of some main contact persons all contributed to making the implementation process more challenging. In spite of these challenges, there is no doubt that the positive outcomes far outweighed the challenges. In the case of the Wa Polytechnic, not only were new departments set up with money from TALIF, the procurement of essential equipment and software for teaching, learning and management was also made possible. In view of the numerous benefits of this innovative fund, it is recommended that alternative funding is sought for its institutionalisation. It is recommended that in future main contact persons and their proposal writing teams be given some incentives. Management could arrange locally to remunerate them through internally generated funds. The work of the chairman of the Proposal Review Committee and that of the Campus TALIF Coordinator is so demanding that without any incentives, they can be demoralised. A reasonable package should be worked out by management for them too. The Chairman of Proposal Review Committee, Campus TALIF Coordinator and main contact persons of projects should be involved in the procurement process to ensure that there is value for money and also avoid rancour engendered by Procurement staff constituting their own tender evaluation teams. Technical persons in the Polytechnic should also be invited to advise on the choice or specifications of equipment, even if they are not directly involved in a particular project. To ensure that the challenges that impeded smooth implementation of TALIF projects do not resurface, it is advisable to learn from the lessons cited.

REFERENCES

Adu, P., and Orivel, F. (2006). "Financing Strategy for Tertiary Education in Ghana." *Final Report* Submitted to the National Council for Tertiary Education.

Bell, J. (2004). *Doing Your Research Project: A Guide for First-time Researchers in Education and Social Science*. 3rd edn. London: Open University Press.

Boateng, R. (2003). "SSNIT to Scrap Student Loans." *General News* Monday, 19th May 2003. Accra: GNA *http://www.ghanaweb.info/GhanaHomePage/election2008/artikel.php?ID=36594* Accessed on 3/11/2009.

Bloom, D. E. (2002). Should there be a General Subsidy for Higher Education in Developing Countries? *http://www.codesria.org/IMG/pdf/5-BLOOM.pdf* Accessed 4/11/2009.

Chevalier, T., and Eicher, J. C. (1991). Rethinking the Financing of Post-Compulsory Education, in *Prospects — Quarterly Review of Education.* 21(2) Issue 78.

Effah, P. (2004). "Ghana", in Teferra, D. and P. G. Altbach (Eds) *African Higher Education: An International Reference Handbook*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Effah, P., and Senadza, B. (2008). "Ghana" in Teferra, D., and Knight, J. (Eds) *Higher Education in Africa: The International Dimension.* Accra: Association of African Universities.

Government of Ghana (2003). *The Public Procurement Act. Act 663, 2003*. Accra: Public Procurement Authority.

Government of Ghana (2003). *Education Strategic Plan (ESP, 2003–2015)*. Accra: Ministry of Education, Science and Sports.

Government of Ghana (2000). *The Ghana Education Trust Fund Act, 2000*. Accra: GETFund.

Gurria, A. (2009). World Conference on Higher Education. Paris: UNESCO Headquarters, 5 July, 2009.

Jankwowicz, A. D. (1995). *Business Research Projects*. 2nd edn. London: Thomson Business Press.

Johnstone, D. B. (1998). "The Financing and Management of Higher Education": A Status Report on Worldwide Reforms." Paper Presented at *UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education*, Paris 5–9 October 1998.

Johnstone, D. B. (1992). "The Costs of Higher Eduction: Worldwide Issues and Trends for the 1990s." *Sixth International Conference on Higher Education*. Washington, August 1992. *http://gse.buffalo.edu/fas/Johnston/TRENDS.HTM* Accessed: 3/11/2009.

Kotey, N. (1992). "Student Loans in Ghana." *Journal of Higher Education*, Vol. 23: 4, 1992, 451–458. Netherlands: Springer.

NCTE (2005). Teaching and Learning Innovation Fund. *Revised Operational Manual*, Version 2.B August 2005. Accra: NCTE.

NCTE (2007). "Implementing and Innovation Fund in Tertiary Education: Status, Lessons Learnt and the Way Forward." *Presentation by the TALIF Unit* at Mid-year Review Meeting of Stakeholders, Regency Coconut Grove Hotel, Accra Monday 29th January, 2007.

Salmi, S., and Arthur, M. H. (2006). "Innovations in Tertiary Education Financing: A Comparative Evaluation of Allocation Mechanism", in *Education Working Series* Number – 4. Washington: The World Bank.

SLTF (2009). *Student Loan Trust Fund 2008–2009*. Information Brochure. Accra: SLTF.

SSNIT (2009). *Students' Loan. http://www.ssnit.com/corp_n.cfm?CorpID=5* Accessed: 03/11/09

UNESCO (2006). "Comparing Education Statistics Across the World", in *Global Education Digest.* Montreal: UNESCO Institute for Statistics.

Wa Polytechnic (2008). *ICT Policy and Plan 2008–2010*. Accra: KAT 7 Studios.

Williams, G. (1990). *Financing Higher Education: Current Patterns*. Paris: OECD.

APPENDIX A

Participation in TALIF Competitive Proposal Writing 2004–2007: Wa Polytechnic

S/N	*Calls*	*Proposals Submitted*	*No. Approved*	*No. Rejected*
1.	1st	3	1	2
2.	2nd	3	3	0
3.	3rd	7	4	3
4.	4th	10	6	4
5.	5th	6	3	3
Total		**29**	**17**	**12**

Source: Wa Polytechnic, Proposal Review Committee.

APPENDIX B

Approval Dates and First Milestone Disbursements of Approved TALIF Proposals to Wa Polytechnic

S/N	*Project No.*	*Date Approved*	*Date of Receipt*
1.	WPR/002/2004	28–01–05	29–08–05
2.	WPS/2/001/2005	22–07–05	12–05–06
3.	WPS/2/002/2005	22–07–05	12–05–06
4.	WPS/2/003/2005	22–07–05	12–05–06
5.	WPS/3/001/2005	25–01–06	15–09–06
6.	WPS/3/002/2005	25–01–06	21–02–07
7.	WPR/3/006/2005	24–02–06	15–02–07
8.	WPR/3/004/2005	24–02–06	15–02–07
9.	WPS/4/001/2006	02–10–06	29–06–07
10.	WPS/4/002/2006	02–10–06	29–06–07
11.	WPS/4/003/2006	02–10–06	29–06–07
12.	WPS/4/004/2006	02–10–06	29–06–07
13.	WPR/4/002/2006	02–10–06	29–06–07
14.	WPR/4/004/2006	02–10–06	29–06–07
15.	WPS/5/001/2007	06–11–07	18–08–08
16.	WPS/5/002/2007	06–11–07	18–08–08
17.	WPR/5/004/2007	06–11–07	12–02–09

Source: Wa Polytechnic, Finance Office. See Appendix B for Titles of Proposals.

APPENDIX C

TALIF Project Titles, Main Contact Persons & Amounts Approved for Wa Polytechnic (2004–2007)

S/N	*Project No.*	*Project Title*	*Main Contact Person*	*Amount ($)*
1.	WPR/002/2004	Acquisition of Teaching and Learning Materials for the Secretaryship & Management Studies Department	Emmanuel Baganiah	**134,088.30**
2.	WPS/2/001/2005	Development of Strategic Plan	Prof. Sampson K. Agodzo	**15,000.00**
3.	WPS/2/002/2005	Development of ICT Plan	Solomon A. Dansieh.	**14, 000.00**
4.	WPS/2/003/2005	Institutional Policy and Framework for the Management of HIV/AIDS on Campus	Thomas Ofoe Ocloo	**7,000.0**
5.	WPS/3/001/2005	Enhancing HIV/AIDS Awareness Creation and the Avoidance of Stigmatisation in Wa Polytechnic	Aliata Issahaq M.	**20,000.00**
6.	WPS/3/002/2005	Enhancing Teaching and Learning of Typewriting in Wa Polytechnic	Aliata Issahaq M.	**15,611.00**
7.	WPR/3/006/2005	Implementation of an Integrated Management Information System	Prof. Sampson K. Agodzo	**194,800.00**
8.	WPR/3/004/2005	Enhancing Teaching, Learning, Skills Development & Industrial Attachment of Agricultural Engineering Students of Wa Polytechnic	Thomas Ofoe Ocloo.	**199,900.00**
9.	WPS/4/001/2006	Enhancing Preventive Maintenance at Wa Polytechnic	Akaboka L. Gloria	**14,967.00**
10.	WPS/4/002/2006	Improving the Physical Learning Environment in the Department of Building Technology & Estate Management	Moo Fortunatus	**14,500.00**
11.	WPS/4/003/2006	Entrepreneurship Training and Development	Aliata Issahaq M.	**14,593.00**
12.	WPS/4/004/2006	Enhancing the Teaching & Learning Functional French in Wa Polytechnic	Solomon A. Dansieh	**14,411.96**

Appendix C (*Cont'd.*)

S/N	*Project No.*	*Project Title*	*Main Contact Person*	*Amount ($)*
13.	WPR/4/002/2006	Acquisition of Computers and the Establishment of Computer Laboratory and Internet Centre to Enhance Learning and Research Work by Students, Faculty and Staff	Mohammed I. Ngmenipuo	**199,850.00**
14.	WPR/4/004/2006	Meat Processing Unit in the Technology Park of Wa Polytechnic	Thomas Ofoe Ocloo	**200,000.00**
15.	WPS/5/001/2007	Establishing the Cosmetology Department of Wa Polytechnic	Doreen Amponsah	**20,000.00**
16.	WPS/5/002/2007	Improving the Internal Telephone System of Wa Polytechnic Using the PABX System	Salifu Yakubu	**20,000.00**
17.	WPR/5/004/2007	Acquisition of Tractor, Shea-butter & Groundnut Processing Equipment for Practical Skills Training of Agricultural Engineering Students	Thomas Ofoe Ocloo	**155,873.00**
	TOTAL AMOUNT APPROVED			**$1,158,425.30**

Source: TALIF Project Implementation Committee, Wa Polytechnic.

APPENDIX D

List of Abbreviation and Acronyms

AFUF	Academic Facility User Fee
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
EdSeP	Education Sector Project
ESP	Education Strategic Plan
FCUBE	Free Compulsory and Universal Basic Education
GETFund	Ghana Education Trust Fund
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IDA	International Development Association
ISSER	Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research
LCD	Liquid Crystal Display
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NAB	National Accreditation Board
NABPTEX	National Board for Professional and Technician Examinations
NCTE	National Council for Tertiary Education
OECD	Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development
PNDC	Provisional National Defence Council
SLTF	Students Loan Trust Fund
SSNIT	Social Security and National Insurance Trust
TALIF	Teaching and Learning Innovation Fund
UNESCO	The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
VAT	Value Added Tax

TEACHER EVALUATION IN GHANAIAN POLYTECHNICS
Some Experiences from Takoradi Polytechnic

Maame Afua Nkrumah and Dr. Samuel Obeng Apori

Takoradi Polytechnic

Abstract

The concept of school self-evaluation is quite new in the Ghanaian Polytechnic system. In fact, ensuring the quality of Polytechnic education internally has had a checkered history in most Ghanaian Polytechnics and Takoradi Polytechnic is no exception. In recent times, however, Takoradi Polytechnic has put in place several interventions intended to improve its educational quality. Among these interventions has been teacher assessment which is an important component of school self-evaluation. Teacher assessment is expected to impact positively on teaching and learning but the exercise is faced with many challenges. Hence, the main objective of this research was to find how teachers and students of the Polytechnic perceive teacher assessment, and the challenges associated with the exercise.

To effectively investigate this, data was collected from the Rector of the Polytechnic, four staff members of the Academic Quality Assurance Unit, fifty lecturers and three hundred students. In all, three hundred and fifty-five respondents were involved in the research. The following aspects were investigated using structured questionnaire and interview guide: the value of teacher evaluations, the consequences of it on teachers and students, challenges associated with it and areas for improvement. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for the analysis and the results were presented using descriptive statistics.

The results of the study revealed that assessment of lecturers is very much valued by all and sundry and most lecturers did not see the exercise as 'attacking'. In fact, many of the lecturers were willing to effect the needed changes. Unfortunately, few students entertained fear of being victimised, while others were not motivated to participate in the exercise because of the perception that the exercise had no consequence. Some students were also not very cooperative during the exercise since they lacked adequate education on the exercise. Interestingly, the majority of the concerns raised by the students were beyond the power of lecturers. Details and possible explanations to these, and their implications for Polytechnics and researchers are presented in this report.

KEY WORDS: *teacher assessment, value, consequences, challenges, improvement.*

Introduction

Students' evolution of teacher performance is one of the most controversial techniques used to identify teacher effectiveness. Many question and challenge the usefulness of students' ratings in providing feedback that can lead to improved instruction, and the usefulness of it in making personal decisions about teaching (Marsh and others 1979). Aleamoni (1981) explains the reasons behind such concerns. He contends that:

- Students have inadequate maturity and expertise to make judgments about course content and instructor style;
- Students' ratings are often measures of popularity rather than of ability;
- Students' ratings may be unreliable and invalid due to other variables such as grades received, class size, whether the course is required or not etc.

Aleamoni was quick to add this warning: 'all who use it must be careful to avoid placing inappropriate emphasis on selected student responses'. Ideally, they should be a component of a comprehensive instructional evaluation system but not the ultimate. Multiple-source and multiple-method approach to evaluating teaching effectiveness are advocated by many. Such sources and methods may include peer review, teaching portfolios, classroom-observations, or self-evaluations (Ory, 2001). According to Aleamoni it is important to note that teachers have limited control over many of the important factors that influence students' learning, including students' attitudes, background knowledge of the course content, study and learning skills, time students spend on their learning and their emotional readiness to learn. Also, since teaching and learning is a shared responsibility between teachers and students, it would be unfair to blame one party for the poor performance of students. Aleamoni however, offers the following arguments in support of students' assessment of teachers' performance:

- Teachers are the major source of information about the learning environment including students' satisfaction with course content, method of instruction, homework, and interest;
- Students' ratings encourage communication between students and instructors, and
- Student's ratings of particular instructor or course may be used by others to select courses.

Takoradi Polytechnic was established in 1955 as a Government Technical Institute and in that same year, it was upgraded to a second cycle institution. The institution remained under the administration of the Ghana Education Service for almost forty years. During which, it offered courses mainly in commercial and technical subjects at the certificate level. In 1980, the Polytechnic was upgraded to tertiary status. During the 1992/93 academic year, it started offering courses at the Higher National Diploma level. The Polytechnic has the mission of providing tertiary education in the fields of manufacturing, commerce, science and technology; and of encouraging study and research in technical subjects at the tertiary level. Takoradi Polytechnic's vision is to achieve excellence in manpower training and action research in order to provide support to industries and contribute to the economic development of the Western Region and Ghana as a whole. For the Polytechnic to become a pacesetter in these areas, it must guarantee educational quality. It must internally ensure the quality of its educational programmes and services. To effectively do this, an Academic Quality Assurance Unit has been established in the Polytechnic.

The Academic Quality Assurance Unit (AQAU) of Takoradi Polytechnic is tasked with many responsibilities including ensuring the quality of research works within the Polytechnic, and advising the management of the

Polytechnic on quality issues in the area of teaching and learning. However, the unit has become synonymous with teacher assessment for obvious reasons. Assessment of lecturers is done once every academic year. The assessment process usually starts with the meeting of the AQAU committee chaired by the Vice Rector. The committee, at its meetings, design the schedule for the academic year which usually highlights several meetings with students and lecturers at the school level to educate them on teacher assessment and also to discuss and adopt the assessment tool to be used. Meetings with students and lecturers usually lead to corrections and additions to the assessment tool and the entire exercise. In fact, at these separate meetings with students and lecturers, they are taken through the assessment tool item by item. They are also educated on the purpose, use, and interpretation of the assessment report. After this, the assessment tool is used to collect data from students and the data collected is analysed using SPSS. The adopted evaluation criteria are then applied to give value judgement on each coded item on the assessment tool. For open-ended questions, summaries are made. The coded part is presented in a tabular form and the open-ended part is bulleted. Copies of the reports are given to the individual lecturers concerned, the Head of Department and the Dean for record keeping. The AQAU also keeps a copy of each report.

Research Problem

Over the years, Ghanaian Polytechnics have relied heavily on external-quality assurance bodies for educational quality assurance. Indeed, an enormous amount of work is currently being done by the nation‘s quality assurance agencies. Yet, it would be prudent on the part of the Polytechnics to constantly and regularly check their internal quality before any external intervention. This is especially necessary in response to the newly gained autonomy and the rising number of diploma and degree programmes in the Polytechnics. Many are the techniques employed by AQAU to ensure educational quality, nevertheless; teacher assessment is the most frequently used.

Even though many internal stake-holders value teacher assessment, the exercise is faced with many challenges and reactions. For instance the receipt of evaluation reports has at times resulted in complaints by lecturers and propaganda by some stakeholders that the report has no use. Others fear that this might result in the victimisation of some students. It was upon this basis that the research sought to investigate the challenges and reactions accompanying the exercise, and how these can be reduced if not eliminated completely.

Research Questions

The purpose of the study was translated into the following research questions:

1. How do teachers and students perceive teacher evaluation at Takoradi Polytechnic?
2. How do teachers react to assessment reports?

3. What challenges are associated with teacher evaluation at Takoradi Polytechnic?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (1994) defines evaluation as 'the systematic investigation into the worth or merit of an object'. School-self evaluation helps to internally document whether a programme is accomplishing its goals or not. It identifies programme weaknesses and strengths and areas of a programme that need revision (Howell and Evan 1995; Johnson and Sands, 1995). The results from such evaluations are to be given to stakeholders. According to Kluger & DeNisi, (1996) feedback refers to information about the outcome of a task undertaken, such as the development of a motor skill, compliance with a behavioural injunction, job productivity etcetera.

Factors affecting Feedback Effects

Kluger & DeNisi identified three classes of variables that determine the effects of feedback: the cues in the feedback message, the nature of the task, and the situational (and personality) variables. Other researchers describe the following variables and factors:

Attitudinal variables — defined as the emotions or feelings of individuals associated with those involved (the affective dimension is a major component of attitudinal change, according to psychological literature (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975);

Cognitive variables — this refers to the level of cognitive functioning or understanding that individual's exhibit;

Context variables — since feedback and improvement strategies should also be context sensitive, it is affected by: socioeconomic status (SES) of student body, community type, and governance structure (Teddlie, Stringfield, and Reynolds, 2000).

Effect of Feedback

Despite the widely held perception that feedback is a good thing, its effects are extremely complex, not well understood and quite often harmful. In fact, feedback can be beneficial to future performance, but it can also do much harm (Coe and Visscher, 2002). Coe and Visscher believe that feedback can lead to learning, and produce change. Kluger and DeNisi list four possible ways a person may respond to feedback: one can seek to accept, alter, abandon, or reject the performance feedback or standard. Each of these four options can be seen to be the likely choice in certain circumstances. Given this complexity of feedback, it is often hard to predict confidently what the effects will be in any particular case. Feedback may also have some unintended effects or residues such as:

- Instructors may alter their teaching

to get higher ratings; thus, weakening the difficulty of the course or giving higher grades;
- The content of the student rating form may drive what is taught;
- Students may reward poor teaching by giving high ratings in exchange for high grades;
- Ratings may be used to discriminate against those not supported or favoured by it;
- The data may become meaningless because of the lack of use and control.

How to Improve Teacher Assessment

Coe and Visscher argue that to optimise the beneficial effects of performance, feedback should direct attention to an achievable gap between desired and actual performance. Cues in the feedback should focus on the task or direct attention to the wider goals of the self; thus avoiding any threat to self-esteem. The cues should make the gap seem achievable by making the receiver feel competent by comparing current performance with one's own previous performance. Feedback should facilitate genuine task learning by ensuring that feedback is clear, specific, and timely and relates to outcomes that are central to the performance in the task. It should also be perceived as credible, accurate and fair; otherwise it can simply be rejected and may not produce any change in performance.

Coe and Visscher further favour communication and negotiation between stakeholders in the design process, and reaching consensus on the problem to be solved, the desired outcome, and how it will be done. Consensus between participants serves as a shared frame of reference and legitimises the decisions taken. Similarly, Gross (1971) suggests avoiding top-down innovation because it causes resistance, whereas some degree of user participation stimulates user commitment. The degree to which users can influence decisions on the nature of innovation (the 'ownership' concept) has proven crucial for acceptance and use (Miles, 1998). The positive innovation attitude of school staff is a crucial prerequisite for success (Coe and Visscher). Next, the special role of the principal is stressed. It is often helpful when the institution views performance evaluations not as 'attacks' but as a basis for individual and organisational improvement.

There is always a tendency to reject or discredit negative or critical feedback (Ilgen, 1979; Jussim, 1995) but if feedback is to reflect reality it must sometimes be negative. Theall and Franklin (2000) contend that where systems are perceived as attacking school staff, staff is unlikely to respond positively. It would be important in such cases to find out how negative feedback can be presented in such a way that it does not appear to be attacking. Svinicki (2001) argues that certain conditions are necessary if assessment of lecturers is to be effective. Among these conditions are:

- Students need adequate notice on when they will be asked to give feedback. This will allow them to

prepare and give precise and meaningful feedback;

- Students need adequate instruction on how to give feedback — One way is to share experiences from previous evaluations with them;
- The assessment tool should not be given to students at the end of the class period since students may hurry to finish, in order to leave quickly;
- Explanations to key vocabularies and words used in the assessment tool should be made to students (Bandura, 1986);
- The assessment tool and its administration must be uniform and standardised to keep the playing field levelled for all (Cashin, 1999; Theall and Frankiln, 1990);
- Students must be assured that the information they give is welcomed and will be used to improve teaching and learning; otherwise they are unlikely to take the rating process seriously (Peterson, Maier, and Seligman, 1993);
- Those persons interpreting the results of student ratings should be given assistance on how to interpretate and use the data, its reliability, validity and factors that may impact the results, including the number of students present;
- Training is necessary for anyone who will use the rating information to make decisions about a teacher's performance (Centra, 1993; Marsh, 1987; Murray 1994).

METHODOLOGY

In this research the perceptions and reactions toward teacher assessment and the challenges associated with it at Takoradi Polytechnic were explored. To effectively investigate these, the research involved a sample size of 355: the Rector of the Polytechnic, staff members from the Academic Quality Assurance Unit, Lecturers; and students from all the four Schools of the Polytechnic: Applied Art, Applied Science, Business and Management Studies, and Engineering. Staff members from the AQUA were purposely selected and interviewed on the challenges they faced in the assessment of teachers. Only students and lecturers who have had the opportunity to participate in teacher assessment or received feedback on students' assessment were used for the research and these were randomly selected. The views of students and lecturers on how they perceive teacher assessment and how lecturers react to the assessment feedback were sought using a semi-structured questionnaire. The case study approach was adopted for an in-depth analysis of the issues involved. As a key member of management, the Rector was interviewed on the use of the assessment feedback by the Polytechnic. The Academic Quality Assurance Unit of the Polytechnic is responsible for the assessment of teachers; hence their views on the challenges

associated with the exercise were sought. Also, since teacher evaluation is done in all the four Schools of the Polytechnic, samples were taken from all the four schools. The lecturers were chosen because they are directly involved in the teaching and learning process and are expected to effect changes that would lead to the desired improvement. Similarly, students are key stakeholders in the teaching and learning process and may directly or indirectly experience the effect of the assessment; hence their involvement in their research. The data from the structured questionnaire were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) after coding. For qualitative data, the following procedure was adopted: the gathered data were read in the context of the setting and the purpose of the research by employing content analysis. Chunks of data that demonstrate some commonalities were identified; they were worked through once again to identify patterns, themes, differences and then they were reported upon.

RESULTS

In presenting the results of the study, the demographic data was first dealt with. This was followed by the three main aspects of the research questions in the following order:

A. How students and lecturers perceive teacher assessment at Takoradi Polytechnic;
B. Reactions toward assessment reports;
C. Challenges associated with teacher assessment at Takoradi Polytechnic.

Demographic Data

The research involved a total of 355 respondents: 300 students, 50 teachers, 4 staff members from the Academic Quality Assurance Unit, and the Rector of the Polytechnic. In total, the females were 94 and the males were 261. Students involved in the research were from all year levels of the Higher National Diploma level (Table 1).

TABLE 1

Profile of Respondents

Respondent	*Female*	*Male*	*Total*
Students	76	224	300
Teachers	17	33	50
Staff from AQAU	1	3	4
Rector	0	1	1
Total	**94**	**261**	**355**

A. How Students and Lecturers Perceive Teacher Assessment at Takoradi Polytechnic

The research investigated the perceptions of teacher assessment among teachers and students of Takoradi Polytechnic. The result of the research showed that many of the students and teachers (on the average, 93%) saw teacher assessment to be necessary. They were of the view that the questions in the assessment tool were objective (97%), relevant (87%) and the timing of the assessment was appropriate (79%). Even though, many of the lecturers

disagreed with the statement that the exercise was meant to punish (74%) or victimise (80%) them; the majority of them (60%) were of the view that students should be held responsible for the feedback they give on teachers (Table 2).

During the interview with the Rector of the Polytechnic, he indicated that management attaches much importance to school self evaluation of which, teacher assessment is an important component. He further stated that if a lecturer persistently gets weak assessment from students, his contract may not be renewed after it has expired. First, the lecturer concerned is to be warned by his Head of Department, then by the Dean and finally the Rector would be informed to take the necessary action if the need be.

B. Reactions towards Assessment Reports

Reactions toward the assessment reports varied in extent among teachers and students. It was important to note that generally, reactions were positive. In fact, the lecturers were happy about the evaluation criteria used (70%), the objectivity of students (70%), and the presentation of the assessment report (80%). Interestingly, the majority of them constituting 60% were of the view that the assessment reports were a true reflection of what actually pertains in the classroom. Many (70%) were happy with their assessment reports. Similarly, the majority of the students indicated that the general effect of the assessment has been

TABLE 2

Perception of Teacher and Students about Assessment

Item	*Agree /%*		*Av/%*	*Disagree/ %*		*Av. /%*
	Stds.	*Trs.*		*Stds.*	*Trs.*	
The assessment was necessary,	97.00	88.89	92.95	3.00	11.11	7.05
The questions were objective,	95.00	100.00	97.50	5.00	0.00	2.50
The areas covered were relevant,	93.94	80.00	86.97	6.06	20.00	13.03
The time of the assessment was appropriate,	78.00	80.00	79.00	22.00	20.00	21.00
Should be used to punish lecturers,	26.00	–	26.00	74.00	–	74.00
Should be used to punish students,	–	60.00	60.00	–	40.00	40.00
Is meant to victimise lecturers.	–	20.00	20.00	–	80.00	80.00

Stds. = Students
Trs. = Teachers
Av. = Average

positive (62%) and an overwhelming number of the teachers (90%) were willing to effect the needed changes.

Most significantly, many agreed that the assessment report has contributed to improvement in their teaching skills (74%), relationship with students (76%) and has generally been useful to them (80%). Further, many of the lecturers (70%) disagreed with the statement that the assessment results have been used against them. Many of the students indicated they have not been victimised in any way as a result of the assessment (Table 3).

C. Challenges Associated with Teacher Assessment at Takoradi Polytechnic

The challenges were grouped into four main areas: before, during and after the assessment and general observations. Teacher assessment has been ongoing at the Polytechnic for some time now. Unfortunately, most of the students have developed the perception that previous lecturer assessments have not had any effect. They had perceived the exercise to result in drastic measures such as dismissal, termination of appointment,

TABLE 3

Reactions toward Teacher Assessment Reports

Item	*Agree/%*		*Av/%*	*Disagree/%*		*Av. /%*
	Stds.	*Trs.*		*Stds.*	*Trs.*	
Evaluation criterion used was appropriate,	–	70.00	70.00	–	30.00	30.00
Students were objective in their assessment,	–	70.00	70.00	–	30.00	30.00
Presentation of the results was appropriate,	–	80.00	80.00	–	20.00	20.00
The assessment report was realistic/true,	–	60.00	60.00	–	40.00	40.00
I am happy with my assessment report,	–	70.00	70.00	–	30.00	30.00
General effect of the assessment is positive,	61.62	61.62	–	38.38	–	38.38
I am willing to effect the needed changes,	–	90.00	90.00	–	10.00	10.00
Has improved the teaching skills of teachers,	67.68	80.00	73.84	32.32	20.00	26.16
Has improved my relationship with students,	73.74	77.78	75.76	26.26	22.22	14.24
The assessment has been useful to me,	–	80.00	80.00	–	20.00	20.00
It has not had any impact,	38.38	–	38.38	–	61.62	61.62
Lecturers comment negatively about it,	28.28	–	28.28	71.72	–	71.72
The results have been used against me,	–	30.00	30.00	70.00	–	70.00
Has resulted in the victimisation of students.	24.49	–	24.49	75.51	–	75.51

suspension and change of lecturer. Since none of these things was done they had no motivation before the assessment to participate in the exercise. The lecturers saw eye to eye with the students on this issue. Some lecturers even went to the extent of bluntly stating that, the assessment is a mere formality. Hence, a few of the lecturers who had been assessed previous years were not interested in being assessed again.

During the assessment, some lecturers and students did not show the needed cooperation. Some students intentionally made noise, called the assessors names or shouted 'away, away' on the assessors. Unfortunately, some lecturers looked on unconcerned. Similarly, a few of the lecturers did not respect personal appointment made with them for their assessment. Few gave wrong teaching time, asked the assessors to wait until the end of the lesson or quickly left the classroom after the lecture, thereby allowing the students to also leave or to become difficult to control. Others claimed that lecturers who were disciplinarians and insisted on the right thing to be done were often victimised by students.

After the assessment of the lecturers, some students entertained fear that they might be marked down as a result of the feedback they gave on teachers. Other students also had the perception that the timing of the assessment sometimes disturbed ongoing lectures. Interestingly, some students were very keen on knowing the result of the assessment and what has been done to teachers they perceived to be 'bad'. Despite the many attempt made by the department to reach all lecturers some lecturers escaped the exercise.

General Observations

Some students were not interested in assessing lecturers they deemed to be 'good' but, were rather very interested in those they deemed to be 'bad'. Hence it was interesting to realise that student had negatively assessed some lecturers other than those they were supposed to and had even created their own scale (zero) probably because such lecturers may escape the assessment exercise. This creates inconsistencies in the assessment data if care is not taken to refuse such ones. Some students also did not read the instructions on the questionnaire and hence did not give feedback in accordance with the given scale. Others did not understand some of the key words, sentences or questions in the assessment tool. Similarly, a few lecturers were assessed more than once due to communication problems. The exercise further revealed that the school time table is not followed by many lecturers and this makes the location of students for the assessment very difficult for the unit. Also, most of the comments given in the 'any other comments' part were not within the powers of the lecturers concerned. They were mostly the problem of management (e.g. inadequate equipment, facilities etc.).

DISCUSSION

Svinicki, (2001) argued that, for teacher assessment to be effective students need

adequate instruction on how to give concise feedback. Similarly, those persons interpreting the results of the assessment (lecturers) should be given enough assistance on how to use the data. Besides, training is necessary for anyone who will use the ratings information to make decisions (Centra, 1993; Marsh, 1987; Murray 1994). Unfortunately, the results of the study showed that most of the teachers and students have not received adequate education on teacher assessment. However, it would be unfair to blame the Academic Quality Assurance Unit for this. In fact, Takoradi Polytechnic has a very serious communication problem. It would not be too farfetched to say that some teachers and students have 'refused' to be educated. To call a spade a spade they are both not interested in getting information. They rarely attend meetings, read notices and bulletins or seek information through any other means. It is therefore not surprising that they are limited in knowledge when it comes to assessment in tertiary institutions.

Indeed, lecturers had areas to improve, but most of the comments given in the 'any other comments' part were not within the powers of the lecturers concerned. At this point, it would be important to bring to bear the argument of Aleamoni (1981). He states that teachers have limited control over many of the important factors that influence students' learning, including students' attitudes, background knowledge of the course content, study and learning skills, time students spend on their learning, their emotional readiness to learn, and so on. He further argued that, since teaching and learning is a shared responsibility between the teacher and student it would be unfair to blame one party for poor performance of students. So, management must also do its part in ensuring that inputs needed for quality education are provided for both students and lecturers.

According to Bandura (1986) explanations to key vocabulary/words used in assessment tool and training on how to give precise, meaningful feedback are needed by students. Further, students need opportunities to practice assessment of lecturers. Irrespective of the fact that the items on the assessment tools were explained item by item to students and lecturers at scheduled meetings, students were not given the opportunity to practice before the actual exercise. If this had been done, it would have revealed some of the weaknesses in the exercise: use difficult words, ambiguities, problems with the scale (Likert scale) etcetera. This would have to a very large extent, improved the reliability and validity of the assessment tool.

It was very important to realise that an overwhelming number of the teachers were willing to effect the needed changes. Despite the widely held perception that teacher assessment needs no justification, Coe and Visscher (2002) believe in feedback that can lead to the needed learning and change. Lecturers' willingness to effect changes may imply that the assessment feedback focused on the task (clear, specific, and timely), made the 'gap' seem achievable and avoided any threat to the self-esteem of the lecturers as argued by Coe and Visscher (2002) they might have also perceived it as

credible, accurate and fair. Gross *et al.*, (1971) suggested avoiding top-down innovation because it causes resistance, whereas some degree of user participation stimulates user commitment. This positive revelation is related to the way the exercise was carried out. Right from the beginning of the exercise, lecturers and students were involved in the design process through regular meetings with them. Hence they came to 'own' the assessment tool. In fact, lecturers' willingness to effect changes is a crucial prerequisite for the success of the entire exercise since they are in the driving seat in the classroom situation. It can therefore be deduced that the exercise will lead to both individual and organisational improvement.

The research made two additional revelations. There was the perception that lecturers who insisted on the right things to be done were often victimised by students and some students entertained fear that they might be marked down as a result of the assessment. These are issues that Coe and Visscher (2002), call the unintended effects of assessment. Such unintended effects may lead to compromises in educational quality, hence the need for strategic education to reduce these effects to the barest minimal.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the research the following conclusions are drawn:

How do teachers and students perceive teacher assessment at Takoradi Polytechnic?

Teachers and students at Takoradi Polytechnic perceive teacher assessment as very necessary and are satisfied with the tool, criteria and approach adopted by the Academic Quality Assurance Unit for the exercise. However, most of them lack adequate knowledge about teacher assessment due to the fact that they do not avail themselves to be accurately educated.

How do teachers react to the assessment reports?

Many of the teachers were happy with their assessment reports and were willing to make the needed changes. This reaction is partly due to how teacher assessment is handled by the unit. The unit met regularly to discuss the tool with teachers and students. Besides, some of the comments made by the students were beyond the abilities of the lecturers concerned. Most importantly, many of the lecturers were willing to make the needed changes in order to improve educational quality.

What challenges are associated with teacher evaluation at Takoradi Polytechnic?

The study revealed that the institution is challenged when it comes to teacher assessment. For instance some students and lecturers were not willing to participate in the exercise because of the perception that the exercise has no use. Others were neither cooperative nor supportive; they did not respect the time table and personal appointments made with them. Also, there was fear among both students and lecturers about the use

of the exercise. Sometimes there were inconsistencies in the raw assessment data because students refused to read instructions hence, they did their own things.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the research findings the following recommendations are made:

- Students' ratings should be seen as one of the several forms of evaluation used to shed light on teaching effectiveness. Other methods such as peer review, self-evaluation, teaching portfolios, and student achievement can also be used (Seldin, 1999; Doyle, 1983; Centra, 1993);
- Students should continually be assured that they would not be victimised for the feedback they give;
- Teachers and students need to be assured that ratings are a formative method of evaluation and that assistance to improve their teaching will be made available;
- Management of the Polytechnics should assist the unit in organising stakeholders meetings within the Polytechnic for the desired education on teacher assessment (e.g. purposes, uses etc of teacher assessment);
- Teachers should be held responsible for not being assessed or for poor assessment reports (after some several discussions or warnings) since some intentionally refused to be assessed, or make it difficult for the assessors to assess them;
- It would be helpful if lecturers would be more cooperative during the exercise by following the school time table, controlling students, introducing personnel form the unit etc.;
- The questions in the assessment tool need to be limited to those areas in which students have adequate expertise to give meaningful feedback, must be concise, easily understandable, and clear;
- During the exercise, students should be encouraged to ask questions and should be given enough time to complete the assessment tool;
- Attention should be given to feedback gained from students through teacher assessment and strategically placed suggestion boxes at the various schools of the Polytechnic.

REFERENCES

Aleamoni, Lawrence M. (1981). "Student ratings of instruction", in *A Handbook of Teacher Evaluation*, edited by Jason Millman. Beverly Hills, CA: SAGE Publications.

Cashin, W. E. (1999). "Student ratings of teaching: uses and misuses", in Peter Seldin (ed.), *Changing Practices in Evaluating Teaching.* Bolton, Mass.: Anker.

Centra, J. A. (1993). *Reflective Faculty Evaluation.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Coe and Visscher (2002). *School Improvement through Performance Feedback.* Swets and Zeitlinger B. V., Lisse, The Netherlands.

Doyle, K. O. (1983). *Evaluating Teaching*, San Francisco: New Lexington Press, 1983.

Fishbein and Ajzen (1975). *Belief, Attitude, Intention and Behaviour: An Introduction to Theory and Research.* Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Gross, M. (1971). *Implementing Organisational Innovations.* New York: Basic Books.

Howell, K. W., & Evans, D. G. (1995). A Comment on "Must Instructionally Useful Performance Assessment Be Based In the Curriculum?" *Exceptional Children,* 61, 394–396.

Ilgen, E. (1979). *Consequences of Individual Evaluation: A Meta-Analysis. Exceptional Children,* 53, 199–200.

Johnson and Sands (1995). Will Our Research Hold Up Under Scrutiny*? Journal of Industrial Teacher Education,* 32(3), 3–6.

Jussim (1995). Self-consistency, self-enhancement and accuracy in reactions to feedback. *Journal of Experimental Psychology,* 31, 322–356.

Kluger and DeNisi (1996). The effects of feedback inventions on performance; a historical review, a meta-analysis, and a preliminary Feedback Intervention Theory. *Psychological Bulletin,* 119, 2, 254–284.

Krejcie, R. V., & Morgan, D. W. (1970). Determining sample size for research activities". *Educational & Psychological Measurement,* 30, 607–610.

Marsh, H. W. (1987). "Students' Evaluations of University Teaching: Research Findings, Methodological Issues, and Directions for Future Research." *International Journal of Educational Research,* 1987, 11, 253–388.

Marsh, Herbert W., and others. "Validity of Student Evaluations of Instructional Effectiveness: A Comparison of Faculty Self-Evaluations and Evaluations by their Students." *Journal of Educational Psychology* 71: 149–160.

Miles (1998). "Finding keys to School Change: A 40-year Odyssey", in A. Hargreaves, A. Lieberman, M. Fullan & D. Hopkins (eds). *International Handbook of Educational Change* (vol. 5, pp. 37–39). Dordrecht/Boston/London: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Murray, H. G. (1994). *Can Teaching Be Improved?* Brock University: Ontario, Canada.

Ory, J. C., and Ryan, K. (2001). *How do Student Ratings Measure up to a New Validity Framework?* in M. Theall, P. Abrami, and L. Mets (eds.). The Student Ratings Debate: Are they Valid? How can we best Use Them? New Directions for Institutional Research, no. 109, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001.

Peterson, Ken and Kauchak, D. (1982). *Teacher Evaluation: Perspectives, Practices Ractice, and Promises.* Salt Lake City, UT: Utah University, Center for Educational Practice, ED 233, 996.

Seldin, P. (1999) (2 edn.). *Changing Practices in Evaluating Teaching*. Bolton, Mass.: Anker, 1999.

Svinicki, M. (2001). "Encouraging your Students to give Feedback", in *Techniques and Strategies for Interpreting Student Evaluations,* Jossey-Bass: San Francisco.

Teddlie, Stringfield, & Reynolds (2000). Context Issues Within School Effectiveness Research in C. Teddlie & D. Reynolds (eds). *The International Handbook of School Effectiveness Research* (pp. 160–185). London: Falmer Press.

Theall, M., and Franklin, J. (eds.). *Student Ratings of Instruction: Issues for Improving Practice*. New Directions for Teaching and Learning, no. 43. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1990.

The Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (1994). "Evaluation in Schools in Manual for Self-evaluation at Programme Level", Workshop Paper, by Vroeijenstijn, A. I. (2001). University of South Africa, Pretoria.