

ENHANCING GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES AND EMPLOYABILITY THROUGH STANDARDS ALIGNED CURRICULUM DELIVERY

John Kwame Boateng 

School of Continuing and Distance Education, University of Ghana Learning Centres,
University of Ghana, Legon, Accra, Ghana
jboat2009@gmail.com

Akosua Eghan

Wisconsin International University College, Ghana

Mavis Osafo Adu

Wisconsin International University College, Ghana

Abstract

In this study curriculum delivery at Wisconsin International University College (WIUC) Ghana was examined in relationship to employability of graduating students. An online based survey was placed on the University College's website and graduates from 2000 to 2012 were invited through e-mail message to visit the website and complete the survey. 238 graduates completed the survey. Results indicated that, time taken by graduates to find employment averaged one year from year of graduation. Most of graduates (55%) who explained that their current job was not their first also indicated that they had work before graduating from the University College. Respondents pointed to a strong relevance of WIUC-Ghana Curriculum delivery to graduate job responsibilities. 86% of graduates indicated that the curriculum experienced at WIUC-Ghana had relevance to their job responsibilities. Respondents confirmed that, they realized career goals and expectations from their current employment and felt satisfied with their use of qualifications obtained from the WIUC-Ghana. This work should extend the knowledge that, putting the right (aligned) curriculum in place and effectively delivering it, will equip graduates with the skills they need for advancement and in achieving employment related outcomes.

Keywords: Curriculum delivery, standards alignment, employability, graduating students

INTRODUCTION

Universities and institutions of higher learning are no longer expected to simply prepare graduates for a world of work, but to continuously support the learning and professional development of working people. It is therefore important for these institutions to develop more flexible and creative models of delivery in order to support the development of autonomous, lifelong learners who are skilled in reflecting on their learning (both formal and informal) and planning for their personal, educational and professional development (Gray and Knight, 2013). Against this backdrop, the Wisconsin International University College, a private University College (WIUC) in Ghana embarked on a standards aligned curriculum delivery effort providing internal quality assurance, teaching and learning support, advice, guidance, coaching and mentorship, peer and collaborative learning, assessment and feedback, personal development planning and tutoring, skills development and practice and enabling access to curriculum resources such as technology and state of the art library facilities.

According to Tweed (2007), standards are statements that define what all students need to know, understand and be able to do and that standards form the framework of the curriculum by stating the most important big ideas, concepts and skills. Curriculum was referred to as lessons and courses or whole year frameworks in a subject. Curriculum delivery, according to Gray & Knight (2013), is the many ways in which learners are empowered to achieve the outcomes offered to them by a curriculum. In this context, curriculum delivery is meant to embody the many diverse ways in which learners are enabled to achieve the outcomes offered to them by a curriculum. Teaching, learning support, advice and guidance, coaching, mentorship, peer and collaborative learning, feedback and assessment, personal development planning and tutoring, skills development and practice, and enabling access to curriculum resources are all processes that might be involved in this context is meant to embody the many diverse ways in which learners are enabled to achieve the outcomes offered to them by a curriculum.

The interplay among standards, assessments, content, and instruction and describes activities that will lead students to understand the knowledge and skills they should acquire. Furthermore, Tweed (2007) shows that, the subject area curriculum combines standards with themes or subject area topics in an orderly sequence alongside instructional methods that give students ample opportunities to learn content and skills. When content, assessment and instruction are aligned, it means that the three become coherent across grade/credit levels and courses (Tweed, 2007) to impact positively on graduate attributes. Bowden et al (2000) define graduate attributes as the qualities, skills and understandings a university community expects its students to develop during their time with the institution. They further note that these attributes

go beyond the disciplinary expertise and technical knowledge that has traditionally formed the core of most university courses and show that graduate attributes are the qualities that also prepare graduates as agents of social good and change in an unknown future.

Flinders University has adopted seven graduate attributes and aims to produce graduates of bachelor's degrees who are knowledgeable, can apply their knowledge, communicate effectively, can work independently, are collaborative, value ethical behaviour and connect across boundaries (Flinders.edu, 2014). Graduate attributes are thus linked to learning and pedagogy and provide opportunities to develop specific skills such as team work, problem-solving, critical thinking and support experiential and work-integrated learning referred to as generic skills. Bridgstock, (2009), observes that, in the context of a rapidly changing information and knowledge-intensive economies, workers must be both immediately and sustainably employable. In order to do so, they must not only maintain and develop knowledge and skills that are specific to their own discipline or occupation, but must also possess 'generic' skills, dispositions and attributes that are transferable to many occupational situations and areas. Kearns (2001) defined generic skills as 'those transferable skills which are essential for employability at some level for most and Mayor (1992), identified generic skills as 'core skills', 'key competencies', 'transferable skills' or 'under-pinning skills essential for employment.

As a matter of fact they possession of generic skills or graduate attributes may also influence the way the University is perceived and marketed by its students and others. Barrie (2004), writes that "the skills, knowledge and abilities of university graduates, beyond disciplinary content knowledge, which are applicable to a range of contexts." Applying graduate attributes to different contexts shows how students' and graduates' lives are shaped. To academia, graduate attributes may show the type of students and researchers they are, can be and are going to be in future. To society and the community, they demonstrate their contribution to the job market, their employability. Employability therefore reflects the outcome of applying graduate attributes in the context of work and career (University of Edinburgh, 2011).

The development of student attributes is constantly featured in the WIUC's standards aligned curriculum delivery drive and strategic plan whether talking about research, teaching and learning. However, there has not been any study as yet to assess the impact of the WIUC's standards aligned curriculum delivery mode on graduate attributes and their employability. A tracer study was therefore carried out in 2013 to examine the impacts of standards aligned mode of curriculum delivery at the Wisconsin International University College (WIUC) on graduate attributes and employability of its graduating students over a twelve year period.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Internal Quality Assurance

The WIUC, received its Interim Accreditation in January 2000 under the name University College of Wisconsin International University - Ghana (UCWIU-Gh). It was thus one of the first private universities to receive accreditation. It began its operations in August 2000. The WIUC's vision is to provide the opportunity for young men and women from Ghana, as well as the rest of Africa, to acquire the knowledge and skills relevant to successful careers and fulfillment in an increasingly globalizing and competitive world. It is affiliated with the University of Ghana, Legon, and the University of the Cape Coast.

It offers Bachelor's degrees in Computer Science, Management and Business Studies. Graduate programmes include an MA degree in Adult Education with emphasis on Human Resource Management and Community Development and an MBA with specializations in Human Resource Management, Marketing, Finance, Accounting, Project Management, Entrepreneurial Management and Management Information Systems. The University also offers an MA in Global Leadership through Azusa Pacific University in California. Currently the university college has 4000 undergraduate students and 500 graduate students. About 30% of students come from outside Ghana, mainly from Nigeria and 11 other Africa countries.

The University's commitment to the assurance of the quality of its academic programmes was broadly expressed in its mission statement. The mission of the University is to "develop world-class human resources and capabilities to meet national development needs and global challenges through quality teaching, learning, research, and knowledge dissemination (Boateng, 2012)".

1. Activities of the Quality Assurance and Institutional Relations Unit include:
2. Curriculum audits to make sure that what is taught by instructors is consistent between WIUC and benchmarked Universities (affiliated Universities)
3. Aligned curriculum to standards enforced by the National Accreditation Board
4. Audit course outlines to make sure they are created and properly aligned groups of instructors of common course taught
5. Audit course descriptions to be sure that course outlines are properly aligned

The overall goal of the Quality Assurance Policy (QAP) of the University College is to demonstrate that WIUC's responsibility as enshrined in the vision and mission statement is being satisfactorily discharged. Specifically, quality assurance at the University College worked to ensure a guaranteed and viable curriculum by:

1. Identifying and communicating the content considered essential for all students

2. Ensuring that the essential content can be addressed in the amount of time available for instruction
3. Sequencing and organizing the essential content in such a way that students have ample opportunity to learn
4. Ensuring that teachers address the essential content
5. Protecting the instructional time that is available (Marzano (2003; cited by Tweed, 2007)

Transition from higher education to work

Teaching and Learning Support

A number of scholars have examined the relationship between the effectiveness of teaching and learning support provided to students in the last three decades. Some of these scholars have studied instructional communication (Frymier & Thompson, 1992; Thweatt & McCroskey, 1998) in conjunction with others writing on learning theories have provided a pedagogical basis for understanding how students learn. Keese (2011), writing on learning theories agrees that at heoretical perspective offers benefits to designers but the perspectives must be taken into context depending upon the situation, performance goals and ability of learners. He argues that since the context in which the learning takes place can be dynamic and multi-dimensional, some combination of the three learning theories and perhaps others should be considered and incorporated into the instructional design process to provide optimal learning for students.

At the Wisconsin International University College, teaching is facilitated by seasoned academic faculty supported by experts drawn from industry, banking and administration. Courses taught combined theory with practice, thus providing students with employable skills and manageable student numbers in uncongested classrooms and serene and conducive environment meant that students are supported to do serious academic work. In addition, the university college's strategic location at North Legon, near Haatso offers freedom from the hustle and bustle of the city, and proximity to other tertiary educational institutions like the University of Ghana and the University of Professional Studies, Accra, meant that students always had access to facilities that were not available on site. Moreover, flexible study options such as day or evening undergraduate programmes and evening and weekend modular MBA, MA programmes. Flexible payment plan for students and assistance with immigration and other services for international students so that students can access trouble free learning experience at WIUC.

A number of researchers have shown that teacher clarity can support student learning (Hooker, Simonds, Hunt, & Comadena, 2004; Powell & Harville, 1990). Others have also shown

that improving communication with students improve their learning (Ellis, 1995; Frymier, 1993). The Registry at WIUC acts as the custodian for student records and academic information at the university interacting with both students and faculty to provide services areas that include, student online information system (OSIS), academic calendars, admissions and semester course registrations, orientation and enforcement of academic policies, course auditing, faculty and staff support, graduation planning and certification, integrity, access and security of academic records, enrollment verification, transcripts requests, student database support and answering all questions related to academics.

All students in their final years (undergraduates and graduates alike) are required by a policy of the university college to carry out project work attracting six course credits. Students are assigned to supervisors who provide advice, guidance, coaching, mentorship for students to write and present their project work to a panel of internal and external examiners. Other support areas provided to support teaching and learning in the University College include peer and collaborative learning where outstanding students are paired up with not so good students, so that students can engage in peer and collaborative learning. Students are provided with full access to state-of-the art curriculum resources including ultra-modern library and computing facilities to support student learning.

Skills Development and Practice

Christophel & Gorham, (1995); Frymier, (1994) and Jaasma & Koper, (1999); all underscore the importance of sufficient motivation of students to support their learning. According to Sternberg (1994) and Stipek (1988), there are a variety of reasons why individuals may lack in motivation. Stipek gave a list of specific behaviours that are connected to academic achievement. These include a variety of specific actions that teachers can pursue to increase motivation (categories of extrinsic and intrinsic motivations) on classroom tasks (Huitt, 2005).

Examples of intrinsic motivation include cognition, emotion and self-regulation and that of extrinsic motivation in education is social and ecological aspect learning. Huitt (2005) notes that, teachers must focus much on the intrinsic motivators while also recognizing the importance of the extrinsic motivators for effective skills development and practice. At the Wisconsin International University College, skills development and practice as well as effective personal development planning and tutoring are achieved through the services rendered by the writing Centre and the career services centre. Through the activities of these two centers, students build essential skills in communication, teamwork, interpersonal relationships, writing and presentation skills.

Attachments, Internships and Practicum

According to Arroyo, (2010), the level of implementation of attachments, practicums or internships programmes in a hospitality industry significantly influenced the level of job performance of the graduates. The longer the period of implementation of the programme, the better the level of job performance of the graduates was also. At the WIUC, the attachment, internship and practicum experience provides opportunity for students to apply some of the theory learned in class to the actual workplace while working under the supervision of professionals.

The field mentor, faculty supervisor, faculty advisor, and internship, practicum or attachment coordinator all work hard towards the success of the student completing the attachment experience. The attachment experience is one of the most important career enhancing choices the students makes. The students' get the opportunity to creatively build his or her resume and develop a professional portfolio by carefully choosing an employer for the attachment, field mentor, and special project. Reasons for which students from WIUC have chosen attachments include the following:

- Experiencing the general aspects of work in an information setting
- Completing a special project with a unique learning experience
- Understanding different types of information-providing agencies
- Developing an area of expertise with a large project

The attachment experience can propel the student into a career path or help develop an expertise in a particular area. It can open doors to a special experience in a particular institution. It can also provide an opportunity to work closely with an expert in the field.

Jobs and Career Fair

Career fairs are critical events for graduate employability. According to Hanover Research (2012), they offer students and employers the opportunity to develop networks and gain knowledge of available job opportunities. The Students Representative Council (SRC), the public relations office and the Placement Centre of the University College collaborate in conducting annual jobs and careers fair and job seeking related workshop. The aim is to orient graduating students on job-search processes. Graduating students are given the opportunity to gain first-hand experience on job application, interview, and online job search. Occasionally officials and resource speakers from government agencies and other private companies such as those in the fields of telecommunications, health, education, business, information technology, banking, hospitality, business and trade are invited to give presentations about jobs issues and answer employment related questions students might have.

Assessments, Feedback and Evaluations

Allen, Witt, & Wheelless, (2006); Andersen, (1979); Christophel, (1990) examined student learning and its assessments. Similarly, Beatty & Zahn, (1990); McCroskey, Richmond, Sallinen, Fayer, & Barraclough, (1995) and Moore, Masterson, Christophel, & Shea, (1996) wrote on students' evaluation of teachers. Assessments of student learning and students' evaluations of teachers are two categories of activities that generate necessary feedback necessary for improving student teaching and learning.

Student assessment at the WIUC is an essential component of quality assurance and as such rules governing examinations including moderation of questions, students' assessment and examination grading are strictly enforced. Every effort is made to guarantee the credibility and integrity of the assessment of student learning. Examination Committees made up of senior and experienced members of the teaching staff are in place for various departments and hold departmental meetings for examination moderation. Procedures such as the system of Invigilators, Chief Invigilators and the Examination Superintending Committees are maintained. Similarly, the University College strictly enforced its policy on the collection and evaluation of feedback from students on teaching by lecturers and the content of courses (Boateng, 2012).

METHODOLOGY

Design & Survey Instruments

The study consisted of online based questionnaire that was placed on the University College's website. Convenience sampling technique was employed. This is a non-probability sampling technique where respondents were selected because of their convenient accessibility and proximity to the research team.

An SMS was relayed to all students who have graduated with the University College from 2000 to 2012 using their phone numbers stored in the College's database. The SMS messages informed graduates about the Tracer Study and invited them to visit the University's website and complete the survey. The survey instrument comprised 27 items that addressed the four research questions as follows:

- a. how was the process of transition of WIUC graduates from higher education to work?
- b. what factors accounted for professional success of graduates (graduate attributes/qualities) taking into account personal factors like gender, work motivation, acquired qualification during course of study and labour market conditions?
- c. was the curriculum delivery at WIUC-Ghana of good quality and relevant to the job market?

Population and Sample

The survey targeted a population of about 1415 graduates (818 males and 597 females) who had graduated with various qualifications since year 2000 up to 2012. The online survey is still ongoing. However, this report is based on a sample size of 238 graduates (comprising 88 females and 150 males) who had heeded the call to complete the online survey by August 2013.

The list comprises graduates from undergraduate and post graduate programmes. The programmes were (undergraduate): B.A. Computer Science with Management, B.Sc. Management with Computer Studies, BA Business Studies with options in Banking and Finance, Human Resource Management, Accounting and Marketing, Diploma in Information Technology. The graduate programmes include MBA with options in Marketing, Finance, Human Resource Management, Project Management and Entrepreneurship, MA Global Leadership in partnership with Azuza Pacific University, MA Adult Education.

Data Collection

The survey was launched in the second week of August 2012. The questionnaire was placed on the WIUC-Ghana website and several SMS messages were sent out to graduates through their telephone numbers stored in the universities database to remind them to go and complete the survey online. First reminder was sent in September 2012 followed by a second reminder in December 2012 then subsequently in February, April and June of 2013. In July 2013, responses to date were collated, coded, inputted and analyzed in SPSS. Some data cleaning was necessary where responses received were left unattended or were missing.

ANALYSIS & RESULTS

Transition from Higher Education to Work

Table 1 shows the graduate characteristics in terms of gender. The table establishes that of the 238 respondents completing the online survey, 37% of respondents were females and 63% were males.

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics in terms of gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent (%)
Female	88	37
Male	150	63
Total	238	100

In terms of year of graduation, Table 2 summarizes the graduate characteristics as follows: Only 2.5% of graduates of 2000 completed the survey; below 1% of graduates of 2006 completed the survey and Only 1.7% of graduates of 2007 completed the survey. About 12% of graduates of 2008 completed whereas 11%, 25%, 32%, 15% completed the survey respectively for graduates of academic years 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012.

Table 2. Graduate characteristics in terms of year of completion

Year	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
2000	6	2.5	2.5
2006	2	.8	.8
2007	4	1.7	1.7
2008	29	12.0	12.2
2009	26	10.8	11.0
2010	59	24.5	24.9
2011	76	31.5	32.1
2012	35	14.5	14.8
Total	237	98.3	100.0

Graduates in employment

Table 3 reveals that 2.5% of respondents have never since graduation been employed but 84% are affirmed that they are employed and 13.4 says that they are not employed at the time of completing the questionnaire.

Table 3. Graduates in employment

Employment Status	Frequency	Percent (%)
Never since graduation	6	2.5
Not Employed	32	13.4
Employed	200	84.0
Total	238	100.0

Table 4 shows that 55% of graduates said that their current job is not their first, whereas 45% said that their current job is their first job after graduation. The study revealed that in general it took two years for graduates to find the first job irrespective of the field of study and gender.

Table 4. Graduates finding job within first year of Graduation

Year of employment	Frequency	Percent (%)
First year	90	45.2
Subsequent years	109	54.8
Total	199	100.0

It is noted that the time taken by graduates to find employment averaged one year from year of graduation. Most of graduates who explained that their current job was not their first also indicated that they had work before graduating from the University College. It appeared that some fields of study commanded a higher demand on the labour market than others. The computer field is one of these. Most students graduating with specialization in computer studies, Finance and accounting found job quicker than those in other disciplines. A number of reasons were given by students for explaining the time gap between their graduation and their first employment. Some of the reasons included, jobs not up to expectation, no response from employers, field saturated, graduates not having the right contacts with people in higher places and time lag between application and interviews.

Table 5. How graduates found their employment

Paths to employment	Frequency	Percent (%)
After national service	10	5.9
Family business	12	7.1
On recommendation	40	23.5
Response to advertisement	34	20.0
Through a friend	32	18.8
Walk-in application	31	18.2
Other	11	6.5
Total	170	100.0

Further questions on how graduates landed their first employment revealed the following (Table 5): National Service accounted for 6%, Family businesses made up of 7%, graduates following up on jobs after recommendations from people they know constituted 24% and those responding to advertisement were 20%. Nineteen percent (19%) said they found work through their friends and 18% just by walking in to ask for places whereas all other reasons made up 6%. Some of the fields mentioned include teaching, administration and management, IT profession, Accounting, Banking and Finance, Clerical. Other occupations held by graduates included marketing, public relations and communications among others.

Table 6. Employment status of graduates

Status in employment	Frequency	Percent (%)
Casual	3	1.4
Contractual	29	13.1
Permanent	154	69.7
Self employed	22	10.0
Temporal	13	5.9
Total	221	100.0

Table 6 above shows graduates employment status. Casual (1.4%); Contractual (13%); Permanent (70%); Self-employed 10%, and those with temporary status constituted 6%. It is observed that self-employment stood at 10%. Whereas permanent employment stood at 70%. While this may not be bad in itself, lack of initial capital to start own business, lack of confidence and risk taking to venture into self employment as well as parents' expectation to be supported after they have done their part in educating their wards may be reasons compelling graduates to seek permanent jobs (70%) as opposed to creating their own business (10%) as Table 6 have shown.

Table 7. Classification of position in employment in terms of hierarchy

Classification of Position	Frequency	Percent (%)
First-line Manager	30	13.9
Mid-Level Manager	86	39.8
Non Managerial	63	29.2
Top-Level Manager	37	17.1
Total	216	100.0

Attributes/qualities important for professional success of graduates

Eighty-eight (88%) of graduates indicated that WIUC-Ghana programme was useful to the execution of their job responsibilities in terms of having equipped them with appropriate communication skills (Table 8).

Table 8. Usefulness of WIUC-Ghana curriculum delivery to job execution in terms of possession of generic skills

Degree of Usefulness	Communication Skills (%)	Critical Thinking Skills (%)	Problem Solving Skills (%)	Computer Skills (%)	Human Relations Skills (%)
Very High	41	33	34	35	45
High	48	52	52	42	43
Fair	10	11	11	20	11
Low	1	4	3	3	1
Poor	0	0	0	0	0

Ninety-seven percent (97%) graduates respondents indicated that the WIUC-Ghana curriculumis useful in terms of offering them critical thinking skills in the execution of their job responsibilities (Table 8). In terms of the extent to which WIUC-Ghana programmes empowered graduates to apply problem solving skills to address problems at their workplace 97% of graduates indicated that WIUC-Ghana programmes were useful (Table 8). On computer skills

also, 97% of graduate respondents indicated that the programmes at were useful in helping them execute their job responsibilities (Table 8).

Likewise 99% of graduate respondents indicated the WIUC-Ghana curriculum delivery helped them meet their job responsibilities involving the employment of human relations skills (Table 8).Ninety-six (96%) students indicated that the programmes at WIUC-Ghana were useful in helping them execute their job responsibilities regarding employment of their entrepreneurial skills (Table 8).

Strength of programmes taught at WIUC-Ghana

Eighty-six percent (86%) of graduate respondents indicated that the programme at WIUC-Ghana was strong in the quality of teaching and learning (Table 9); only 12% indicated that the courses on offer were weak in quality and in meeting the needs of the job market (Table 9);

Table 9. Teaching quality at WIUC-Ghana

Teaching Quality	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strong	203	85.7	85.7
Weak	28	11.8	97.5
Does not apply	6	2.5	100.0
Total	237	100.0	

There was a strong relevance of WIUC-Ghana Curriculum delivery to graduate job responsibilities. Eighty-six (86%) of graduates indicated that the curriculum experienced at WIUC-Ghana had relevance to their job responsibilities (Table 10)

Table 10. Relevance of WIUC-Ghana Curriculum delivery to job responsibilities

Relevance of Course Delivery	Frequency	Percent (%)
No, it is not related (but my choice)	22	9.3
No, it is not related (not my choice)	12	5.1
Yes it is related to my field of study	203	85.6
Total	237	100.0

DISCUSSIONS

Generally graduates of the WIUC-Ghana were satisfied with their professional situations and endeavors. They were satisfied in their use of the qualifications obtained, working in demanding positions, job security and opportunity to benefit the Ghanaian society at large. From their responses it was clear that most graduates irrespective of year of graduation and sector of employment were satisfied with the education they received at the WIUC-Ghana. These

graduates attached great importance to certain characteristics of their occupation, including good career prospects, opportunities for pursuing further studies and professional development, good working atmosphere and working with people. Graduates indicated relatively good connection and contact with the University College. Since this was the first study of its kind at the University College, there was no benchmark to compare results with. However, in future studies it would be possible to compare, for instance, whether the period spent seeking employment will decrease or increase with time. A good number of students have changed jobs once or twice during the period under study (2000 – 2012). A high percentage of those who had changed jobs are those who graduated around 2000 – 2007. It appeared that a good number of those changing jobs went into self-employment putting the percentage of graduates on self-employment to 10%. The number of graduates in full time permanent employment was significant.

Majority of WIUC-Ghana graduates were employed in the private sector followed by the multinationals and then the public sector. For those in the public sector, it seemed majority were in teaching and education. The use of professional knowledge and skills acquired during studies at the WIUC-Ghana was a very important factor expressed for job satisfaction. The usage may have varied from one degree to another but in general, graduates confirmed that, the use of professional skills and knowledge such as communication skills, computer skills, problems solving skills, critical thinking skills, team work and human relations skills improved their effectiveness in the execution of their job responsibilities. The course content and selection of courses were considered relevant by graduates in the execution of their job responsibilities. A significant proportion of graduates confirmed that they were able to realize the career they expected and that they were generally satisfied in their use of qualifications obtained from the WIUC-Ghana.

CONCLUSION

Taken it all together, it is inferred from Kemmis (1998), that generic skills such as problem solving skills, critical thinking skills, investigative skills, team communication, presentation skills, time management and negotiation skills in higher education are of importance in helping to develop well educated persons who are both employable and capable of contributing to civil society. As findings from this study may have confirmed, reasons cited by Kemmis in 1998 to support his arguments for the importance of generic skills for graduate employability holds true for the situation in Ghana today as possession of generic skills continue to experience growing significance of generic skills as more traditional jobs give way in the face of stiff competition and that prospective applicants entering the job market must have different attributes to remain

competitive. Also there has been increasing pressure on the world of business and employer organizations to go for graduates who possesses generic skills and other economic, technological and educational attainments all of which have helped to bring arguments for generic skills ahead of others.

It is important to note, however, that as much as generic skills are needed to secure graduates the attributes that are required for employment, without an effective quality assurance and auditing practices in place, work done will be nothing. Therefore as Woodhouse (2013), observed, students would want to know which institution to choose; institutions would want confirmation of their standing in quality assurance and accreditation; employers want to know that graduates they are employing are those that have the right set of generic skills that can hit the ground running; governments want to know that their money is well spent and that the external quality agencies (in the case of Ghana NAB) have done their work well to drive institutions (such as WIUC) in the right directions; society wants a prestigious local and international institution where they can be assured that, their sons and daughters will receive first class education and be gainfully employed after their studies. Certainly, these aspirations can best be met when institutions make the right quality decisions and generate outputs that are intelligible and useful.

LIMITATIONS OF THE CURRENT STUDY

This study employed the use of convenience sampling technique to reach respondents who completed the survey online. The study therefore suffers from the limitation of possible under-representation or over-representation of particular groups within the sample. It could have happened that only graduated students who were gainfully employed are also the ones who maintained constant regular presence online. Could also have been otherwise, could be that majority of those completing the College are actually working within Ghana or elsewhere but are too removed from touch so could not receive the invitation to participate in the survey; we may have missed some representation that is difficult to pinpoint. We also do not know why some employees did take part in the survey, whilst others did not. Was it because some employees were simply too busy? Did not trust the intentions of the survey? Or they were unemployed? Did others take part out of kindness or because they had a particular grievance with the WIUC? These types of biases are quite typical in convenience sampling. Since the sampling frame is not know for sure, and the sample is not chosen at random, the inherent bias in convenience sampling means that the sample is unlikely to be representative of the population being studied. This undermined the research team's ability to make generalisations from the sample to the population that was studied. The good thing, however, about this study was that we know that

from the 2000 to 2012, 1415 students graduated through the College, and 238 respondents did complete the survey which is still ongoing online, it means that at the worst case scenario 17% response rate which is not that bad in terms of representation.

REFERENCES

- Allen, M., Witt, P.L., & Wheelless, L.R. (2006). The role of teacher immediacy as a motivational factor in student learning: Using meta-analysis to test a causal model. *Communication Education*, 55(1), 21-31.
- Andersen, J. F. (1979). Teacher immediacy as a predictor of teaching effectiveness. In D. Nimmo (Ed.), *Communication Yearbook 3*, (pp. 543-559). New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books.
- Arroyo, R. A. (2011): Practicum Performance in Singapore and the Philippines of Hospitality Students in a State University. *Asian Journal of Business Governance, Business Education Section*, Vol. 1 No. 1 ISSN: 2094, 9251 pp. 145-166.
- Barrie, S. (2004). A research-based approach to generic graduate attributes policy. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 23(3), 261–275.
- Beatty, M. J., & Zahn, C. J. (1990). Are student ratings of communication instructors due to 'easy' grading practices?: An analysis of teacher credibility and student-reported performance levels. *Communication Education*, 39, 275-282.
- Boateng, J.K. (2014). Barriers to Internal Quality Assurance in Ghanaian Private Tertiary Institutions. *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences*, Vol 4, No. 2, 1-9.
- Bowden, J., Hart, G., King, B., Trigwell, K., & Watts, O. (2000). Generic capabilities of ATN university graduates. Retrieved August 30, 2014, from <http://www.clt.uts.edu.au/ATN.grad.cap.project.index.htm>
- Bridgstock, R. (2009). The graduate attributes we've overlooked: Enhancing graduate employability through career management skills. *Higher Education Research and Development*. Vol 28, No.1, 31-44. Routledge, Taylor & Francis group.
- Christophel, D. M. (1990). The relationship among teacher immediacy behaviors, student motivation, and learning. *Communication Education*, 39, 323-340.
- Christophel, D. M., & Gorham, J. (1995). A test-retest of student motivation, teacher immediacy, and perceived sources of motivation and demotivation in college classes. *Communication Education*, 44, 292-306.
- Ellis, K. (1995). Apprehension, self-perceived competency, and teacher immediacy in the laboratory-supported public speaking course: Trends and relationships. *Communication Education*, 44, 64-78.
- Flinders University's Bachelor degree graduate qualities (2013). Retrieved from: <http://www.flinders.edu.au/graduate-qualities/>; on 28/8/2014
- Frymier, A. B. (1993). The relationships among communication apprehension, immediacy and motivation to study. *Communication Reports*, 6, 8-17.
- Frymier, A. B. (1994). A model of immediacy in the classroom. *Communication Education*, 42, 133-144.
- Frymier, A. B., & Thompson, C. (1992). Perceived teacher affinity-seeking in relation to perceived teacher credibility. *Communication Education*, 41, 388-399.
- Gray L. & Knight S. (2013): *Transforming Curriculum Delivery through Technology*. Retrieved from: <http://www.jisc.ac.uk/whatwedo/programmes/elearning/curriculumdelivery.aspx>; on 28/08/14
- Hanover Research, (2012). *Best Practices in Career Services for Graduating Students*. Retrieved: October 4, 2014 from: <http://www.hanoverresearch.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/Best-Practices-in-Career-Services-for-Graduating-Students-Membership.pdf>

- Hooker, J.F., Simonds, C.J., Hunt, S.K., & Comadena, M.E. (2004). An exploration of teacher clarity, credibility, and immediacy as predictors of student learning and motivation. The Annual Conference of the Central States Communication Association, Cleveland, OH, March 31-April 4.
- Huitt, W. (2005). Increasing engagement on classroom tasks: Extrinsic versus intrinsic motivation. Educational Psychology Interactive. Valdosta GA: Valdosta State University. Retrieved, on 30/8/14 from: <http://www.edpsycinteractive.org/topics/motivationclassmot.html>
- Jaasma, M. A., & Koper, R. J. (1999). The relationship of student-faculty out-of-class communication to instructor immediacy and trust and to student motivation. *Communication Education*, 48, 41-47.
- Kearns, P. (2001). Generic skills for the new economy – review of research. Adelaide: National Centre for Vocational Education Research.
- Keesee G. (2011). Learning Theories. Retrieved on 30/8/2014 <http://teachinglearningresources.pbworks.com/w/page/19919565/Learning%20Theories>
- Kemmis, S. (1998). 'System and lifeworld, and the conditions of learning in late modernity'. *Curriculum Studies* Vol.6, No.3, pp. 269-305
- Mayer, E. (1992). Putting general education to work: The key competencies report. Canberra: Australian Education Council and Ministers for Vocational Education, Employment and Training.
- McCroskey, J. C., Richmond, V. P., Sallinen, A., Fayer, J. M., & Barraclough, R. A. (1995). A cross-cultural and multi-behavioral analysis of the relationship between nonverbal immediacy and teacher evaluation. *Communication Education*, 44,281-291.
- Moore, A., Masterson, J. T., Christophel, D. M., & Shea, K. A. (1996). College teacher immediacy and student ratings of instruction. *Communication Education*, 45, 29-39.
- Powell, R. G., & Harville, B. (1990). The effects of teacher immediacy and clarity on instructional outcomes: An intercultural assessment. *Communication Education*, 39, 369-379.
- Sternberg, R. (1994). In search of the human mind (395-396) New York Harcourt .
- Stipek, D (1988). Motivation to learn, from Theory to Practice. Englewood Cliffs, Prentice Hall
- Thweatt, K. S., & McCroskey, J. C. (1998). The impact of teacher immediacy and misbehaviors on teacher credibility. *Communication Education*, 47, 348-358.
- Tweed, A. (2007). Aligning Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment to Standards. ND Title 1 Program Improvement Workshop. Retrieved on 1/12/14 from: <https://www.dpi.state.nd.us/title1/progress/present/handouts/parent.pdf>
- Woodhouse, D (2013). Guest Editorial: Global Trends in Quality Assurance. *Quality Approaches in Higher Education* Vol. 4 No. 2, 3-7