

CHAPTER 5

PART V: CONCLUSION

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CONCLUSION

There is a paradigm shift from traditional content-based education and training to competency-based and practice-oriented training. This shift has occurred because practice-oriented teaching has been found to produce a training outcome that is industry focused, generating the relevant occupational standards. Competency-based training program often comprises of modules broken into segments called learning outcomes. These learning outcomes are based on criteria set by industry and assessment is designed to ensure students become competent in their respective areas of specialization.

The thrust of the book is the development of students' skills and competencies through practice-oriented teaching and learning. It documents the experiences of educators relevant for developing the skills and competencies of students in higher education. The accounts in this handbook provide educators, administrators, and students interested in the applied teaching and entrepreneurial education, with an approach to practice-oriented education within the African context.

The Handbook of Applied Teaching and Learning presents very interesting topics including Applied Teaching in Higher Education; University Collaboration-Research Collaboration and Teaching Collaboration; Competency Based Learning using Cross-cultural Students' Project; Cross-cultural Approach to Entrepreneurial Training of University Students; Faculty Exchange Program: Experiences by Kenyan in Germany and Teaching with Technology and competency-based assessment; Competency Based Teaching using Simulation Exercises. The book presents case studies in Ghana (Student Project with Nigerian Company); Germany (Student Project from Ghana and Kenya); faculty exchange program; and Experiential Learning through the Student Exchange Program.

From the contributions, essential lessons were drawn. First, practice-oriented teaching and learning was deemed to be much more appropriate and preferable to the current method of curriculum-based education. The approach equips students with a diverse range of skills

including problem-solving skills, communication, teamwork; and cross-cutting knowledge in various disciplines. Furthermore, the application of digital tools (Web 2.0 tools) was found to be necessary for developing the 21st-century students' skills and competencies. Moreover, a number of these tools are available free of charge.

Second, Web 2.0 tools were found to ease teaching and learning, especially when dealing with large classes. They help with lesson planning, monitoring students' performance, both for individual and group work. Examples of such tools include wiki spaces, Facebook, Skype, and WhatsApp.

Third, the methods for curriculum delivery include the use of games, simulations, case study, videos, trade fairs, and mini projects. Others include the use of field trips, internship, and industry visits. In effect, the application of problem-based curriculum delivery means a change in teaching and assessment techniques.

The experiences of students in the cross-communication projects show that students learn by doing and experiencing what they learn. The project-based approach equips students with research, communication, negotiation, and necessary computer skills. Other essential skills acquired from the project-based technique include working in teams, working with people from different cultures, and managing time.

The handbook signals a change in content delivery and invites university teachers, researchers, and resource persons to adopt new methods and tools to empower students and enable them take control over their learning experience. This change calls for a paradigm shift in curriculum development and the mode of instructions at institutions of higher learning. Indeed, the student-centered approach to university training is seen to be the best form of developing the competencies of students if their skills are to be relevant for industry and society. The new student-centered teaching methods such as the flipped classroom approach, simulation, and project-based teaching have yielded greater benefits including increased knowledge among students, synthesis and analytical capabilities of students, and higher class attendance. Whereas the handbook may not have all the answers to questions relating to practice-oriented approach to training, it provides the take-off stage for molding graduates behavior, improving their knowledge and skills, and assisting them in discovering their potential.