

UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ARE BEING FAILED BY THE ‘QUALIFIED’: A CRY FROM SEVEN AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES

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This article discusses the view that most university teaching staff members are consciously or otherwise, playing significant roles in their students' academic underperformance due to their failure to effectively deliver their lectures and examine their learner's performance. Cases in point are the failure of graduates of whatever level to demonstrate through practice what their academic transcripts declare they have qualified in. By way of foregrounding, this discussion submits that universities teaching staff appears to be 'sacred cows' as the public seems unqualified to question them as they are conferred with the highest qualifications. Data for this comparative action research was gathered from two universities in South Africa and five universities in Zimbabwe through two questionnaires namely, student-lecturer questionnaire and Institutional teaching excellence award questionnaire. Data draws from the researcher's tertiary experience over a period of eight years. From these universities, it emerges that the majority of the teaching staff holds first and second degrees yet they lead students through similar qualification levels. Also, an examination of their qualification profiles reveal that 1419 of the 1892 universities teaching staff members consulted for this study need to be professionally trained or retrained so that they can be fully acquainted with contemporary prerequisite skills that enhances lecturer's service delivery. The article argues that training in lecturing skills, examining skills, critical thinking skills, problem solving skills, independent learning skills among others, is necessary so that they can properly facilitate their students' learning processes. Furthermore, it emerges that the prevalent examining and moderation policies in most of these universities stand in contrast to their universities' stipulated guidelines and international practice for various reasons within this scope. Resultantly, this article denies the myth that seniority always equates to knowledgeability as in many circumstances within the same department the seniors might not be experts in the fields under examination, a scenario which amounts to no moderation. Therefore, lack of adequate examining and moderation modalities have significantly contributed towards the dwindling of academic standards. This discussion therefore implores relevant stakeholders to ensure that university academic teaching members are urged to be

sufficiently professionally trained through various approaches to handle diverse teaching and learning environments. Teaching staff members can enroll for short training programmes and/or attend in-house staff enrichment programmes. In addition, universities need teaching staff members to imbibe hands-on initiatives like the institutional teaching excellence award that affords them the chance to be helped through peer assessment in the programmes so that they can sharpen their practice. The subsequent sections of the discussion are devoted to an introduction, background, rationale; methodology and discussion of responses before concluding remarks are made.

Keywords: lecture method; academic underperformance; professionally trained/retrained; effective lecture; feedback; moderation

A lecture is a formal ‘oral presentation of instructional material’ (Ruyle, 1995) by the educator for the ‘subsequent learning and recall in examinations by students’ (Vella, 1992). The lecture method was established centuries ago as a teaching process that began with a literal reading of important passages from the text by the master while students were listening and taking notes followed by the master’s interpretation of the text (Swanson & Torracco, 1995). The lecture format is outdated and ineffective for large classes as ‘lack of interaction’ (Edlich, 1993) is its ‘major limitation’ (Munson, 1992). Freire (1972) is also critical of the lecture method as it is frequently a ‘one-way process unaccompanied by discussion, questioning or immediate practice’ (McIntosh, 1996), which makes it a poor teaching method as many lecturers ‘are not trained in giving effective lectures’ (Arredondo et al., 1994). Notwithstanding, Agochiya (2002:155) and Renner (1993) agree that a lecture is appropriate when disseminating new information quickly to a large audience before using other media or activities (e.g., a brief lecture before playing a videotape), providing an overview of a topic and for arousing interest in a topic.

Background

Zimbabwe and South Africa attained their independence in 1980 and 1994 respectively. Before then, university education was the preserve of their colonial masters. The ushering in of independence meant that all resources, inclusive of education, had to be equitably distributed. This saw the opening of several primary, secondary and tertiary institutions. Among other things, university education became an attainable commodity amongst the black people. Within this breath, Zimbabwe has eleven universities against South Africa with twenty three public higher education institutions which fall into eleven universities, six comprehensive universities and six universities of technology. Since the 1990s the Zimbabwean economic ‘meltdown and political standoff’ (Makondo, 2005) saw many senior Zimbabwean academics deserting their tertiary institutions, a scenario that left the bulk of junior academics (holders of first degrees) in charge. In comparative terms, many South African universities are better resourced and are able to lure senior academics from around the globe.

Rationale for this study

Highlighted here are the reasons that gave rise to this study. The general complains by the government, parents and companies that university graduates are generally underperforming (Mokoena & Makondo, 2010a, 2010b) especially in the education sector as testified by the failure of students necessitated this study. Secondly, the study emanates from the researcher's observations that university graduates are underperforming in their teaching/lecturing professions yet they have the highest appropriate qualifications required for such posts. The researcher has taught at six high schools and five universities in Zimbabwe and South Africa. In addition, the day to day experiences of the researcher as a senior academic development advisor for teaching staff members opened the researcher's eyes to the failure and inability of University tutors and/or lecturers to deliver meaningful lectures, to effectively administer assessment instruments and produce confident, competent and all-round academics to run tertiary institutions (Mokoena & Makondo, 2010a), among others gave rise to this comparative action research.

Methodology

The researcher adapted and modified two 2007 North West University Institutional Office Academic Development and Support student-lecturer and Institutional teaching excellence award evaluation questionnaires into ten questions. Therefore, by way of foregrounding, the ten questions which define the scope of this article are a blend of the two sources. Students and lecturers were requested to give their views of how they experience the teaching of particular lecturers. Only question one could be answered by students while the other nine solicited the views of the students and lecturers. The questionnaires were administered to randomly selected 1108 students and 1892 lecturers from the University of Zimbabwe, Midlands State University, Zimbabwe Open University, National University of Science and Technology Chinhoyi University of Technology (Zimbabwean Universities) and the University of South Africa (Sunnyside campus, Pretoria) and the North West University, Mafikeng Campus (South African Universities). Having outlined the methodology, the article proceeds by way of presenting and discussion the emerging trends.

Discussion of responses

This section is devoted to the discussion of responses got from the ten questions that made up the questionnaire. By way of explaining, (1) definitely disagree, (2) do not agree, (3) not sure, (4) agree and (5) definitely agree. The approach preferred here starts by presenting the concerned question, its findings followed by an analysis of the emerging trends.

		Total	1	2	3	4	5
1	The lecture notes are helpful in assisting me achieve the specific learning outcomes	1108	100	519	44	324	121
		100%	9	47	4	29	11

Question one was meant for students to give their views on how they view the importance or otherwise of the lecture notes or the study guide

material that refers to the concerned lecture. From question number one, it emerged that 56% respondents from number 1 and 2 denies whilst 40% from numbers 4 and 5 agrees that the given notes are beneficial. This is against the view that lecture notes should help the instructor and students to remain focused on their study topics, among others. To shed light on how this can be achieved, insights were drawn from Sullivan and Wircenski (1996) who identified seven basic approaches the instructor can use to outline key points namely; standard sheets of paper (full-page or two-column), note cards, overhead transparencies, flipchart pages, slides, computer-based projections, pages from a report, text or manual, key words, phrases and other reminders (e.g., audiovisual cues, questions, examples, notes for activities) organized into an outline format. This ensures that the classes get detailed and balanced lecture notes. Respondents further note that language use, demonstrations must be appropriate to their level. This underscores the need for lecturers to prepare before hand, a move which shows their respect of their profession and their students.

The views of the students and lecturers were sort for through question two. The following emerged:

		Total	1	2	3	4	5
2	The lecturer's presentation shows that s/he has done thorough lecture planning.	3000	326	489	254	1201	730
		100%	10.8	16.3	8.4	40	24.4

Sixty four point four percent (64.4%) from number 4 and 5 respondents against 27.1% from numbers 1 and 2 agrees and made reference to clearly presented introductions, lecture outcomes, learning activities, assessment activities, and feedback modalities and concluding remarks. The respondents emphasized that lecturers must follow their introductions with appropriate elucidation of the learning outcomes, the laying out of the learning outcomes so that students would appreciate the extent to which they would be involved in the learning process. This is followed by the proper outlining of how the learning would be assessed, how feedback would be given as well as the concluding remarks. From Furcsa (2008) it emerges lecturers as experts must adequately perform their organizer's roles for students to enjoy their learning. The lecture activities are well packed in view of the time available, the class size, the classroom and seating arrangement.

On the other hand, data shows that many lecturers acknowledge having difficulties in achieving this. Informants show that in some incidences they hardly can follow the progress of the lecture as the presentation is just mixed up, is rushed or a lot of things are referred to and left hanging. In addition, the session will be an individual show, a scenario that reduces students to mere recipients of data. A similar observation was made by Blatchford, Moriarty, Edmonds, and Martin (2001:32) who note that inadequately trained educators lack confidence, doubt their ability to communicate effectively with learners and feel disempowered.

It further emerges that lecturers should be encouraged to improve on these aspects so that their lecture sessions can be enjoyable and beneficial.

The third question below sought to establish the views of students and lecturers on whether lecturers are adequately preparing their students to be life-long individual learners (Mokoena & Makondo, 2010b). The following trend surfaces from the responses given to the third question.

		Total	1	2	3	4	5
3	The lecturer makes an effort to develop students' analytical and problem solving skills by giving them appropriate learning tasks.	3000	624	582	396	1098	300
		100%	20.8	19.4	13.2	36.6	10

It emerges that 46.6% from numbers 4 and 5 against 40.2% from numbers 1 and 2 of the respondents gave an affirmative response citing the giving of students enough time to make their contributions against 'a series of studies by various researchers that found that most discussion classes are dominated by instructors' (Brown & Atkins, 1988). About forty percent when you start a sentence with a figure the convention is to write the figure in words of the respondents point out that the lecturers lack the prerequisite approaches to instill these skills in their learners. This might be because the lecturers, as many of them do not have teaching qualifications; they are not trained in this area. The problem is made worse by the fact that they have been taught in a way that did not inculcate these crucial study skills. Good lecturers are aware that group size determines the use of questions, amount of interaction, selection and use of media like overhead transparencies, slides, computer-based projections, video, audio and use of small group activities such as case studies, role plays and problem-solving exercises (Sullivan & McIntosh, 1996). They emphasize that lecturers need to appreciate that the key in asking and answering questions is to avoid a pattern. If the educator always asks and answers questions using the same pattern, this critically important teaching skill will have limited impact. When addressing student questions, good lecturers' philosophy is that they show students the techniques needed to find the answer(s) for themselves so that they can become self-sufficient life-long learners in their fields. The research informants suggested the following as tips for effectively using questions in a lecture method:

- The lecturer must ask questions to the entire group, call for volunteers and must guard against some students dominating the sessions.
- The targeting of questions to specific students through use of their names especially if the audience is relatively small. This is regarded as a powerful motivator.
- Lecturers need to provide positive reinforcement when students respond as this creates a positive climate that encourages more students to enter into the discussion.
- Lecturers need to repeat students' questions and answers to ensure that all students hear the discussion.
- When a student asks a question, the lecturer can answer the question directly, respond by asking the student a different, related question or offer the question to the other students.
- To remember that questions can be used to introduce lectures, stimulate interaction throughout the lecture and summarize content. In fact, their use must be planned for.
- To remember that questions must be pitched in accordance to the needs of the class.

Furthermore, Vella (1992) recommends the use of active learning activities including analysis of case reports, problem-solving exercises, student presentations and students working cooperatively in groups. Similarly, Gravett (2001) emphasizes on the use of role plays as they promote creativity in a lecture that is usually known not to “allow feedback and to promote passiveness” (Bryars & Rue, 2008:182). Also, Belmonte (2006) notes that exceptionally grounded teachers use the Socratic seminar method and get their students hooked through the power of inquiry science. Therefore, this study encourages lecturers to blend diverse student centred activities so that their desire to learn can be triggered and sustained. In fact, education should strive at producing critical thinkers as such products have the greatest chance of being life-long learners who can contribute immensely to the good of humanity.

The fourth question below sought responses of students and lecturers on how motivated or not are the lecturers when presenting their lectures. This is a necessary indicator that suggests how prepared, ready and confident one is to handle his/her lectures.

		Total	1	2	3	4	5
4	The lecturer presents her/his contact sessions enthusiastically.	3000	138	1206	300	1152	204
		100%	4.6	40.2	10	38.4	6.8

The study found that 45.2% from numbers 4 and 5 against 44.8% from numbers 1 and 2 agrees with the above observation whilst 10% chose to be neutral. The findings suggest why in some instances learners end up avoiding lectures of some lecturers they regard as unmotivated and uninspiring. Skilled lecturers use a variety of ‘participatory experiential learning styles’ (Cavanagh & Hogan & Ramgopal, 1995) to involve students as ‘the majority of college students are active learners requiring learning experiences that engage their senses’ (Twigg, 1994). As observed by Karadüz (2010) data presented in a monotonous mode with insufficient stimulus is not acquired adequately by students and results in failure in learning. With the latest trends in education the role of the teacher changed from a person holding a lesson and providing data to a person designing or creating a learning environment and guiding students. Enthusiastic and skilled lecturers, as emerged in this study are aware of the importance of:

- ✓ Every minute, especially the first few lecture minutes as they set the tone of the session.
- ✓ Verbal communication skills namely voice projection, avoiding fillers, using students’ names, making smooth transitions, using examples and providing praise.
- ✓ Nonverbal communication skills like eye contact, positive facial expressions, gestures and movement.
- ✓ Effective questioning skills.
- ✓ Constantly pausing and checking students’ comprehension.
- ✓ Keeping the presentation fresh by remembering that a certain degree of unpredictability is a positive motivator.
- ✓ Not having more than 4-5 main points in a lecture.
- ✓ Exhibiting enthusiasm about the topic.
- ✓ Closing the lecture with a brief but powerful summary.

In essence, lecturers must be innovative enough so that students must look forward to their lectures. Also, starting with formulaic patterns like greetings helps set the tone for the session as students recognize that the lecturer appreciates them.

Furthermore, according to Ericksen (1978:3), "effective learning in the classroom depends on the teacher's ability to maintain the interest that brought students to the course in the first place". Furcsa (2008) is important for emphasizing that lecturers must execute their motivator, entertainer and facilitator roles satisfactorily so that their lectures can be appealing to their learners. Unfortunately, there is no single magical formula for motivating students as many factors affect a given student's motivation to work and to learn namely: interest in the subject matter, perception of its usefulness, general desire to achieve, self-confidence and self-esteem, patience and persistence (Sass, 1989) among others. Ratey (2002) adds that the brain is an analog processor hence lectures must be filled with analogies, metaphors and examples that are real world so they can connect to the students' backgrounds. This study notes that the lecturer's partiality, favoritism or preferential treatments are major demotivators that must be avoided at all cost.

Question five was designed in a way that allows students and lecturers to give their views on whether the lecturer cooperates with students or not. The latter, as experts, during their assessments could pick this through the diverse mannerisms the lecture/tutor uses when asked for a response. Furcsa (2008) identifies this as a mark of good educators.

		Total	1	2	3	4	5
5	The lecturer willingly explains and discusses the learning outcomes, module content and learning tasks as requested by students from time to time thereby clarifying problematic learning and teaching issues.	3000	24	726	360	1434	456
		100%	0.8	24.2	12	47.8	15.2

Sixty-three percent (63%) from numbers 4 and 5 against 25% from numbers 1 and 2 responded affirmatively whilst 12% declared neutrality. Among other things, good lecturers take advanced knowledge and make it accessible, understandable and usable by the students. Lecturers must lead the way in introducing and explaining their subject matter. Some respondents divulged that some lecturers rush them or threatens them with failure if they insist on asking them questions. The later divulge that they experience threats when they try to get explanations from the lecturers, an indication of the failure of the practitioner to handle learning activities due to lack of knowledge or prerequisite approaches. On this note, Lowman (1984) stresses the importance of an instructor's speaking abilities which "includes skill not only in giving clear, intellectually exciting lectures but also in leading discussions." From Belmonte (2006), it is clear that grounded teachers recognize that:

- The quality of their work is a matter of life and death to their students.
- Their words matter.
- They must have a reason to be in front of their students.
- They must give them hope and not love.

In fact, as Cunningham and Cordeiro (2003:211) note, the lecturer must be innovative enough to promote reflective learning. When this is not done, lecturers must relook at their performance. The discussions characteristic of institutional teaching excellence award are one avenue lecturers can use to enhance their teaching.

As observed by Mátóné Szabó (2008) since all information is available via the Internet, teachers should redefine their old role as a director and rather become a facilitator. Today their task is to teach students how to handle information: how to find the suitable one and how to eliminate wrong data with healthy skepticism. According to Can (2010) educators must give more space to instructional activities. Karadüz (2010) adds by observing that no matter which learning approach accepted, a teacher should always try to enrich the learning and teaching environment both quantitative and qualitative. Multi-learning increases the quality of the learning environment. Within this context, question six identified the following:

		Total	1	2	3	4	5
6	During a lecture contact session the lecturer makes effective use of appropriate instructional media thereby catering for different students' learning styles, abilities and needs.	3000	1134	1206	72	498	90
		100%	37.8	40.2	2.4	16.6	3

Question six was inclusive of the interests of the students and lecturers/tutors. Question six above notes that 78% from numbers 1 and 2 against 19.6% from number 4 and 5 of the respondents deny that lecturers effectively use appropriate instructional media despite the technological boom characteristic of this generation. This suggests that the students are not thoroughly engaged in the learning process through the use of diverse instructional media like role play, guest speakers, transparencies, flipchart pages, slides, computer-based projections, video, websites and demonstrations among others. Microsoft PowerPoint software is very helpful as it allows one to incorporate pictures, sound, videos or animation easily into one's presentations and one may print the presentation, display it on a computer/laptop or project it using a video projector for large groups. The use of diverse instructional methods caters for Kolb's (1985) four-stage cycle of learning that suggests that students have style preferences with respect to "how they learn best." Some students prefer to observe, to reflect, and to listen and are dependent upon the lecture as a dominant learning resource while others prefer to act and interact with their peers, with high preference for mentoring, cooperative learning and group discussion. Current memory research indicates that most learning occurs outside the classroom when students read, reflect, write or experience the information given in lecture (Sprengr, 1999). Vision is central to any concrete experience we have as in many ways, our brain is a "seeing" brain (Zull, 2002:137).

The dominance of the lecturers' voices is rampant in the seven universities under study. Beitz (1994) recommends that the instructor use brain-storming, discussions, problem-solving activities, case studies and games to make the lecture more interactive. This study realizes that an effective lecture has these defining characteristics:

- Two-way lecturer-student interaction and questions.
- Shared responsibilities for active learning.
- Small group, problem-solving activities.
- Variety of supporting media.
- Limited note taking required so they can fully participate.

In short, collaborative learning, group or study teams are promoted as Davis (1993) suggests that some students learn best when they are actively involved. Researchers report that regardless of the subject matter, students

working in small groups tend to learn more of what is taught and retain it longer than when the same content is presented in other instructional formats. From Johnson, Johnson and Smith (1991) there are three general types of group work: informal learning groups, formal learning groups and study teams that lecturers must fully utilize for the success of their lecturing efforts (Can, 2010).

Question seven was designed in a way that enabled lecturers and students to give their responses. From question seven below 60.8% from numbers 4 and 5 against 36% from numbers 1 and 2 agree that the lecturer is clearly audible. This is imperative as the work involves public speaking in front of audiences ranging from an individual to hundreds of people in large lecture theatres.

		Total	1	2	3	4	5
7	The lecturer is clearly audible in a lecture-it is easy to hear and understand her/him	3000	438	642	42	1254	570
		100%	14.6	21.4	1.4	41.8	19

The most important factor to master is controlling one's nerves and adrenalin levels, pitch, tone and pace while speaking. The vast majority of people speak too fast and or too quietly with not enough eye contact with the audience. This study recognizes that students appreciate lecturers who reasonably pace their lectures so that students of diverse learning needs can be catered for.

		Total	1	2	3	4	5
8	The lecturer gives regular tests, assignments, practical work, minute papers and or any other task for which marks are awarded or for which feedback on the quality of work is received.	3000	60	1212	102	1158	468
		100%	2	40.4	3.4	38.6	15.6

This question sort informed responses from the students and lecturers. Question eight reckons that 54.2% from numbers 4 and 5 against 42.4% from number 1 and 2 agree that the lecturers frequently administer diverse assessment instruments. This shows that students' performance is always checked so that necessary feedback can be given. Such lecturers are not 'lazy' as they afford their learners adequate practice sessions before they sit for their penultimate exams, opportunities 42.4% of the respondents are denied. This group notes that they are either given one or two assessment opportunities, a number too little for adequate preparation of students for meaningful exams. They cite issues like large class sizes, lack of time and the unbearable number of modules that they teach per semester. It emerges that some lecturers from the Universities under study have three to five modules per semester with an average of 200 students per class. This is rampant in universities that do not offer market related remunerations. These are the lecturers who claim they do not have even time to do research work as they are always before the students hence their over reliance on the lecture method.

This study's finding affirms Erickson and Strommer (1991) that all educators agree that grades provide information on how well students are learning. But grades also serve other purposes. Scriven (1974) has identified at least six functions of grading:

- To describe unambiguously the worth, merit, or value of the work accomplished.
- To improve the capacity of students to identify good work, that is, to improve their self-evaluation or discrimination skills with respect to work submitted.
- To stimulate and encourage good work by students.
- To communicate the teacher's judgment of the student's progress.
- To inform the teacher about what students have and haven't learned.
- To select people for rewards or continued education.

The majority of student respondents declare that they personally take grades as a sign of approval or disapproval. Because of the importance of grades, lecturers and faculties need to communicate to students a clear rationale and policy on grading. Lecturers need to be more serious, articulate and elaborate as grading is such important.

Question nine focused on assessment modalities. This is pertinent as lecturing assumes assessment as an instrument meant to assess the mastery of the covered data. The findings of question nine are as follows:

		Total	1	2	3	4	5
9	The lecturer always, where applicable, gives us assessment criteria to guide us and this helps us submit work of expected high standard.	3000	294	1386	90	1074	156
		100%	9.8	46.2	3	35.8	5.2

Lecturers and students could respond to this question as usually evidence should be available for outside to ascertain the extent to which the lecturer adheres to this requirement. Fifty-six percent (56%) of the respondents from number 1 and 2 disagreed by pointing out that no memorandum is prepared and the assessment criterion is a secret. As a result, they lament that they are not well informed on what they ought to do, a move they feel contributes to their downfall. On the other hand, 41% respondents from number 4 and 5 applaud the transparency of their lecturers as it enables them to make informed and detailed presentations as they know the expected mark distribution pattern. Lecturers need note that if one devises clear guidelines from which to assess performance, one will find the grading process more efficient and the essential function of grades– communicating the student's level of knowledge–will is easier. Further, if one grade carefully and consistently, one can reduce the number of students who complain and ask one to defend a grade. Also, the availability of assessment rubrics demonstrates that lecturers plan their assessment, a move that adheres to good practice and the promotion of fairness.

Finally, question number ten sought information on feedback modalities. This is important as it gives readership clues on the nature of feedback students get from their lecturers. The findings are:

		Total	1	2	3	4	5
10	The lecturer always gives informative feedback on our tests/assignments which helps one to work on improving one's performance.	3000	624	1302	24	930	120
		100%	20.8	43.4	0.8	31	4

This question sort honest responses from students and lecturers. The latter could best respond to this question through their review of the marked scripts. Sixty-four point two percent (64.2%) from number 1 and 2 against 35% of the respondents from numbers 4 and 5 disagree as they reckon that uninformative feedback is given on their tests/assignments. They cited incidences when a single tick is put on their written essays with general comments that suggest that the marker had not thoroughly read or understood the text. Because some lecturers do not read, students reckon that they resort to giving them 'good' marks within 60% and 70% so that no learner can challenge them. Chickering and Gamson (1987) emphasize the importance of "prompt feedback" against some lecturers who take very long time to return scripts. Students indicated preferences for teaching which provided opportunities for quick and detailed feedback; for learning through revision; for frequent evaluations with quick turnaround; and, for opportunities for cooperative learning through mentoring and study sessions with peers.

To encourage students to become self-motivated independent learners, Lowman (1984) and Lucas (1990) recommend that instructors can do the following:

- Give frequent, early, positive feedback that supports students' beliefs that they can do well.
- Ensure opportunities for students' success by assigning tasks that are neither too easy nor too difficult.
- Help students find personal meaning and value in the material.
- Create an atmosphere that is open and positive.
- Help students feel that they are valued members of a learning community.

Research has also shown that good everyday teaching practices can do more to counter student apathy than special efforts to attack motivation directly (Ericksen, 1978). Most students respond positively to a well-organized course taught by an enthusiastic instructor who has a genuine interest in students and what they learn. Thus activities you undertake to promote learning will also enhance students' motivation.

In addition, lecturers' respondents pointed out their challenges in relation to the implementation of moderation policies. They note that their respective university policies require moderation to be adhered to yet they have challenges that mitigate its implementation. The challenges range from lack of financial resources to have experts from outside the university engaged in the moderation processes. The Zimbabwean universities usually complain of lack of foreign currency to do that due to their economic meltdown. The lecturers also cite the time limitations as some universities require finalized marks to be submitted within seven working days. Furthermore, some disciplines note the failure to have experts in their disciplines who could do the moderation. Lastly, in some instances cases were found in which 'seniors' in the departments, regardless of whether they are subject experts were required to do moderation. In such cases, the study concludes that no moderation was done in such instances as the moderators could not contribute meaningfully to their colleagues. The study therefore encourages universities to honestly adhere to moderation policies so that academic excellence can be enhanced in the tertiary education.

Conclusion

To ensure that the qualified university lecturers do not continue failing their students, they should imbibe a working culture that allows them to:

- Deliver clear and well-organized lectures that have introductions, lecture outcomes/aims/objectives, learning activities, assessment activities and appropriate conclusions.
- Adequately prepare their students for their diverse assessment instruments.
- Collect student feedback on a regular basis to determine their students' mastery levels of the taught concepts.
- Carefully explain course goals, expectations, grading and ground rules at the beginning of the course.
- Ask for and acting upon student suggestions for improving the course.
- Promptly mark and return to students their assignments.
- To ensure that exams and exams scripts are moderated by experts.
- Provide assessment rubrics/memorandums.
- Incorporate diverse instructional media into their lectures for the benefit of learners of varied backgrounds.
- Proper moderation policies so that quality can always be assured.
- Be trained assessors and/or moderators for them to do effective assessment.
- Be trained to handle technological innovations that enhance their service delivery.

Furthermore, the Zimbabwean and South African governments, among others, through their education ministries should ensure that the working conditions in tertiary institutions are favourable and comparable with similar institutions in their regions/world to ensure the retention of the qualified personnel.

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