



**ALTERNATIVE METHODS OF ASSESSING GRADUATE STUDENTS IN
GHANA INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM (GIJ)**

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**A LONG ESSAY SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE
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STUDENTS DECLARATION

I do hereby declare that this long essay is the result of my original research, and that it has not been partially or wholly presented by anybody for the award of any degree in this institution or elsewhere. All references used in the work have been duly acknowledged.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to God almighty for his everlasting love, grace and mercies. I also dedicate it to my late father Mr. Kwaku Amoa-Bosompem, my mum Mrs. Mary Oforiwaa Bosompem and my siblings who supported in diverse ways to help me finish this program successfully.

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TABLE OF CONTENT

STUDENTS DECLARATION.....	i
DEDICATION.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	iii
ABSTRACT.....	vi
CHAPTER ONE	1
1.0 INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY	1
1.2 JUSTIFICATION FOR THE STUDY	3
1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY	4
1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	5
1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY	5
1.6 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY.	6
CHAPTER TWO	7
LITERATURE REVIEW	7
2.0 INTRODUCTION.....	7
DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS	7
2.1 ASSESSMENT	7
2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	11
2.3 SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT AND THE NEW PARADIGM (FORMATIVE)	13
2.4.0 Feedback (Key Characteristics of Alternative Assessment).....	18
2.4.1 Formative Assessment (Alternative): Different Forms	20
2.4.2 Diagnostic Assessment	21
2.4.3 Portfolios	21
2.4.4 Self-Assessment.....	23
2.4.5 Peer-Assessment	23
2.4.6 Performance-Based Assessments	24
2.4.7 Interview-Based Assessment.....	24
2.4.8 Play-Based Assessment	25
2.4.9 Co-operative Group Assessment	25

2.4.10 Dialogue Journals and Scaffolded Essays	26
2.4.11. Scoring in Formative Assessment	27
2.5 SUMMARY	27
CHAPTER THREE	29
METHODOLOGY	29
3.0 INTRODUCTION.....	29
3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN	29
3.1.1 Qualitative Approach.....	30
3.2 METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION	31
3.2.1 Semi-Structured Interview.....	32
3.2.2 The Interview Guide.....	33
3.3 THE SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS	35
3.4 METHOD OF DATA-ANALYSIS	36
CHAPTER FOUR.....	38
CONCLUSION.....	38
REFERENCES	41

ABSTARCT

Graduate education is to prepare students for academic, government (public) or private sector careers in their chosen field or for further study. Assessment is therefore seen as an important tool for active learning in Class. It includes the exploration of practices around assessment and grading which are reasonable, fair, and focused on acquiring practical knowledge rather than competition among students. It further argued that the low assessment literacy of lecturers has been the result of the fact that most school curricula fail to explicitly list the basic competencies (national minimum standards) that guarantee academic success. In Ghana, assessment and its practices among teachers has been well researched and documented. Unfortunately, the application of alternative assessment techniques among Graduate students during facilitation has not been well researched. This study, therefore, investigates the alternative methods of assessing Graduate Students with a special focus on Ghana Institute of Journalism using a qualitative research method (in-depth interviews) to find out from some purposefully selected participants, comprising of Graduate Students, Lecturers and some administration staff on the implication the traditional way of assessment has on pedagogy and policies relative to assessment. The study came out with a conclusion that assessment in higher education is an important task that needs to be strategized and applied efficiently for effective learning. In order to have an effective assessment, the current assessment techniques need to be reviewed or amended so that practical aspects and real-life applications of course contents could be given more significance. For effective assessment, Universities must involve practical approaches/exposure or hands-on approaches in the curriculum, develop entrepreneurial abilities among students, discourage spoon-feeding practices to the students and not be restricted to only sit-down exams and focus more on experiential or field learning rather than on the theoretic knowledge.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter covers the background of the study, justification for the study, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study and organization of the study.

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The major goal of graduate education is to prepare students for academic, government or private sector careers in their chosen field or for further study. Identifying and addressing students' needs and expectations allows institutions to attract and retain quality students as well as to improve the quality of their programs (Elliot and Shinn, 2002).

Also, student's outcomes, including productivity while enrolled in a graduate program, can be a key measure of the quality and effectiveness of the degree program (Hatcher et al., 1992; Redd, 1998).

According to Dr. Rawlasyk (2018), scholars state that examination has become the focus of assessment, which adversely affects learning. Effective assessment for learning promotes the active engagement of students, also teachers have conflicting views relative to students use of feedback and the use of dialogue.

These show that there is limited involvement of learners in assessment strategy which can impact learning. It is recommended that lecturers(teachers) make use of professional development to comprehend how to optimize the active participation of their students in various authentic assessment methods and feedback.

Educators and educational leaders have continually debated student assessment in higher education (Boud & Falchikov, 2007, Careless, 2015; Gilles, Detroz & Blais, 2011).

Academics expressed concern that methods used to assess students are not linked to students learning (Carless, 2014; Douglas Wilson & Ennis, 2012; Trevalyan & Wilson, 2012; Webber, 2012).

Furthermore, ongoing discussions center on such topics as whether a student's success in examinations relates to high standards, what assessment tasks are best for learning, whether assessment practices promote lifelong learning, and how feedback could help improve student progress. (Carless, 2015).

Scholars, however identified that teachers do not always link assessment with quality teaching (Postareff, Virtanen, Katatjavuori, & Lindblom-Ylänne, 2012). Instead, they view assessment as a practice that signifies evaluation and formation of grades (Sambell, McDowell, & Montgomery, 2013; Torrance, 2012).

Again, scholars suggest that assessment can be an important tool for active learning in the Classroom (Bonwell, 2010; McGinnis, 2018).

Again, UNICEF also describes quality in education to encompass a broader definition involving learners' readiness, learning environments, curriculum content, curriculum processes and curriculum outcomes.

Most lecturers are with the view that sit-down examinations are the only and best methods by which Graduate Students can be assessed and students who do not make the pass mark are classified as failures or the non-performing ones thereby not being able to complete their program of study.

However, student satisfaction has also been found to be one of the factors that affect the quality and overall effectiveness of a program (Aiken, 1982; Astin et al., 1987; Bailey et al., 1998)

It is with this context that the research seeks to systematically examine alternative methods of assessing Graduate Students in order to suggest or formulate different ways Graduate students can be assessed and not only be restricted to the everyday sit-down exams.

1.2 JUSTIFICATION FOR THE STUDY

The concept of development has overtime become the prime quest of the modern-day Ghanaian. Also, student satisfaction has also been found to be one of the factors which affect the quality and overall effectiveness of a program (Aiken, 1982; Astin et al., 1987; Bailey et al., 1998)

Assessment of graduate students is a complex and tough responsibility. This statement has been supported by the number of facts like discipline-specific assessment, program-level assessment, maintaining standards among integrated programs and assessing students in programs which allow diverse choices (Clair Hughes, 2010).

Conversely, Knight (2007) stated that assessment is the best way to judge the student in terms of their time utilization and how they witness themselves as students and as graduates. He further added that through their assessment attributes, employers evaluate and see their potential. It is due to the assessment that the government become evident of the number of graduates and linked them with the literacy rate.

Research by Craddock (2009) showed that the nature of assessment has a direct influence on the student's learning process and their perception about the whole process. Students generally think that they could not be able to express their knowledge within a given time constraint. Results indicate that students need to react quickly in giving the answers against questions due to time

constraints. Students complained that they never feel doing justice with their acquired knowledge while sitting in an exam hall and therefore feel disappointed and stressed (Craddock, 2009).

It is always difficult to predict the future of the student at the time of graduating, as they are being prepared for an indecisive and unknowable future. University programs get critique from students as they are insufficient and unable to fulfill their professional needs and demands.

Also, it is associated with the assessment policies of universities as they are deemed irrelevant to their professional lives. However, assessment is still important to improve the quality of the learning process (Maxwell, 2012).

In Ghana, the assessment and its practices among teachers have been well researched and documented (Amoako, 2018; Bordoh et al, 2013; Akyeampong, 1997). However, research in this area focused attention on assessment practices among senior high school teachers and its impact on students learning (Sofo, Ocansey, Nabie & Asola, 2013), among Colleges of Education tutors and the strategies they use (Akyeampong, 1997; Bekoe, Eshun & Bordoh, 2013; Eshun, Bordoh, Bassaw & Mensah, 2014) as well as among elementary school teachers in the country (Asare, 2015). Unfortunately, the application of alternative assessment techniques among graduate students during facilitation has not been well researched. This study, therefore, seeks to investigate the alternative methods to assess graduate students at the Ghana Institute of Journalism.

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The primary objective of the study is to identify an alternative method of assessing Graduate Students.

The specific objectives of this study seek to achieve the following:

1. To highlight the key assessment techniques employed by Lecturers of Ghana Institute of Journalism.
2. To investigate the views of lecturers on assessment methods used for Graduate Students at GIJ.
3. To examine the views of Graduate Students on assessment methods employed by lecturers of GIJ.
4. To examine the benefits and challenges of assessment methods used at GIJ for Graduate Students.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the key assessment techniques employed by Lecturers of Ghana Institute of Journalism?
2. What are the views of lecturers on assessment methods used for Graduate Students at GIJ?
3. What are the views of Graduate Students on the assessment methods employed by lecturers of GIJ?
4. What are the benefits and challenges of assessment methods used at GIJ for Graduate Students?

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The primitive purpose of the study is to look out for the alternative ways Graduate Students of GIJ can be assessed and would not be restricted to a sit-down examination only.

Again, the study is seeking to establish an alternative method of assessing graduate students. The findings from the study will provide some useful data and suggestions for future research into other various means of assessing Graduate Students. This study will also help expand the body of

knowledge in an area; The importance of fieldwork and Effective ways of assessing Graduate Students.

The study will not only benefit Graduate students of GIJ but all Graduate Institutions in the country in terms of other alternative ways of assessing Graduate Student.

1.6 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY.

The study has been organized into four main chapters with each chapter linking to the other to produce a complete work. The first chapter covers the introduction that sets out the main focus and purpose of the study. It outlines the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, and organization of the work. Chapter two will also deal with review of related literature that supports the study and theoretical framework according to the following underlying theme: alternative method of assessment. This theme is considered to be important on the topic of research. The review of the literature would provide additional justification for the purpose and direction of this study. Chapter three focus on methodology, where the researcher will present and discuss the research design and the approach that will be adopted for the study, the study population, sample and sampling technique, data gathering tools, pilot study, access, ethical consideration, procedure for data collection and analysis. The fourth chapter will reflect on how the study contributes to knowledge and provide the summary of the research, conclusion, and recommendation and suggestion for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

Hammond and Wellington (2013) state that reviewing the literature entails researchers to establish an overview of what has already been studied in the field or area under intention of the investigation. By highlighting these arguments, this research shows what has been studied in the field, definitions of terms, theoretical framework that can be used to explain the study and also where the weaknesses, gaps, or areas which need further studies are. This review validates why this research is very useful and necessary.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

2.1 Assessment

Assessment has been defined in many ways by different scholars. Among the many, Linn and Miller (2005), defined assessment of student learning as a systematic process of collecting information about student progress towards the learning goals.

Huba & Freed (2000), assessment is a systematic way of putting together, interpreting, and acting upon data related to student learning and experience for the purpose of developing a deep understanding of what students know, understand, and can do with their knowledge acquired as a result of their educational experience; the process culminates when assessment results are used to improve subsequent learning processes.

Dhindsa et al. (2007) have also characterized assessment as a key component of teaching and learning.

According to Dhindsa et al. (2007) assessment is “a systematic process of data gathering” about students’ progress (p. 1261).

However, Linn and Miller (2005) maintain that students’ performance can be measured in various ways, including “traditional paper and pencil tests, extended responses (essays), the performance of an authentic task, teacher observation, and student self-report” (p. 26).

Additionally, the authors distinguish between two other terms aligned with assessment i.e.:

1. Test “an instrument for measuring a sample of behavior” and
2. Measurement, “the process of obtaining a numerical description of the degree to which an individual possesses a particular characteristic” (Linn & Miller, 2005, p. 26).

According to Herrera, Murry and Cabral (2007), students are now being asked to use their “cognitive development, academic knowledge, and language skills to read, comprehend, synthesize, analyze, compare, contrast, relate, articulate, write, evaluate and more” (p. 23). This encouragement builds the foundation for alternative forms (formative) of assessment to be used in the classrooms so that the instructors can “measure incremental gains” (Herrera, Murry & Cabral 2007, p. 22).

Although various definitions are given about alternative assessment in the literature, Crawford and Impara (2001), Cooper (1999), Diaz-Rico and Weed (2006), Linn and Miller (2005) and Hancock (1994) maintain that alternative assessments: Are generally developed directly from classroom instruction, group work, and related classroom activities and provide an alternative to traditional assessment, can be considered valid and reliable in that they genuinely and consistently assess a student’s classroom performance, facilitate the student’s participation in the evaluation process, including measurements and evaluations relevant to both the teacher and the student, emphasize

real-world problems, tasks, or applications that are relevant to the student and his/her community (cited in Herrera, Murry & Cabral, 2007, p. 23).

However, Wiliam and Thompson (2008) introduce a shift from traditional assessment forms to a newer paradigm, alternative assessment. According to them, the emergence of formative and summative assessment as two different formats principally has attracted educators' attention in the current literature (Wiliam & Thompson, 2008). These authors argue that the use of assessment for student learning is the main feature of formative assessment.

Wiliam and Thompson (2008), Scriven (1967) and Bloom (1969) proposed the terminology "formative" and "summative" assessment, given the reason to differentiate the role of assessment. Formative assessment is introduced as an on-going process of assessing students' learning, providing feedback to adjust instruction and learning, improving the curriculum (2008). Summative assessment, on the other hand, is bound to administrative decisions and assigning grades to the tests.

Bloom (1969) asserts that when an assessment is aligned with the process of teaching and learning, it will have "a positive effect on students' learning and their motivation" (cited in Wiliam, 2008, p. 58).

Assessment in general accounts for "supporting learning (formative), certifying the achievement or potential of individuals (summative), and evaluating the quality of educational institutions or programs (evaluative)" (Wiliam, 2008, p. 59).

Black and Wiliam (2004) put more emphasis on the use of assessment to support learning; however, they also acknowledge the importance of using assessment for certification and evaluation.

In addition, there is a rising consensus among educators that assessment should be used to diagnose students' achievement, measure their performance, sort students, etc, however, others argue for the use of assessment to enhance student learning and performance (Delandshere, 2002).

Birenbaum (1996) makes a distinction between testing and assessment, in which testing measures achievements, mainly cognitive skills such as memorizing factual information and is considered separate from instruction.

However, the new paradigm of assessment offers an alternative form of testing culture which is "characterized by a so-called objective, such as standardized tests that focused on atomized bits of knowledge at the expense of more complex, higher-order knowledge and skills", assessment an integrated part of instruction (Gulikers, Bastiaens, Kirshner & Kester, 2006, p. 382; Dochy, 1997).

Although interpretations of formative assessment vary widely, according to Wiliam and Thompson (2008), "formative assessment is used to provide information on the likely performance of students" and "to describe and feedback given to students...telling them which items they got correct" (p. 60). This opposes the way selected responses measure students' achievement, given students' scores instead of feedback.

Formative assessment, according to Wiggins and McTighe (2007), occurs during instruction, as part of instruction rather than a separate activity. It has both formal and informal formats including ungraded quizzes, oral questioning, self-reflection, peer feedback, think-aloud, etc.

However, a distinction is made between assessments for learning which describes the process, assessment as a support for learning, compared to the assessment of learning that describes the nature of assessment or the product (Wiliam & Black 1998; Wiliam & Thompson, 2008).

In a similar measure, other researchers agree that the core features that characterize formative assessment are that; it impacts the quality of teaching and learning, and it engages students in a self-directed learning environment (Chappuis & Stiggins, 2004).

The literature on assessment and teaching has expounded on the importance of formative assessment and its implications for instruction. Therefore, its ultimate goal is that "assessment... feed into actions in the classroom in order to affect learning" (Wiliam & Thompson, p. 63).

In the same vein, Wiggins and McTighe (2007) argued that by embedding formative assessment in “curriculum documents, and advice on how to use their results to adjust curriculum, a school...signals that such practices support effective teaching” (p. 103).

Along with this theory, the term “big idea” is introduced as a key component of formative assessment, which goes along with the strategies that describes the role of instructor, learner, and peer (Wiliam & Thompson, 2008; Black & Wiliam, 1998; Herrera, Murry & Cabral, 2007).

Although a variety of definitions are presented for the term big idea, among them, some scholars see it in terms of its implications on assessment.

Big idea is "evidence about student learning used to adjust instruction to better meet student needs", in other words "that teaching is adaptive to the student's learning needs" (Wiliam 2008, p. 64).

Moreover, Black and Wiliam (1998) raise the “scrutiny issue” of developing tests to collect relevant evidence of student progress: “good questions are hard to generate and teachers should collaborate, and draw—critically—on outside sources, to collect such questions” (p. 8).

2.2 Theoretical Framework

Framework Relating Strategies of Formative Assessment to Instructional Processes			
	Where the learner is going	Where the learner is right now	How to get there

Teacher	Clarifying and sharing learning intentions and criteria for success	Engineering effective classroom discussions and tasks that elicit evidence of learning	Providing feedback that moves learners forward
Peer	Understanding and sharing learning intentions and criteria for success	Enabling students as instructional resources for one Another	
Learner	Understanding learning intentions and criteria for success	Activating students as the owners of their own Learning	

Table.1 (Adapted from William & Thompson, 2008, p. 63)

William together with Thompson (2008), presented this matrix describing the role of student and teacher in an on-going classroom assessment model. Given the above criteria, formative assessment has facilitated a change in the practices of some instructors who are encouraged to develop their own assessment formats or to adapt the forms of assessment that help them gather helpful information about their students' progress. The reason that alternative assessments are considered more authentic compared to the traditional forms that they hold approaches to "measure students' learning that embeds both quantitative and qualitative features" (Herrera et al. 2007, p. 25).

Although the term "assessment for learning" is used interchangeably with "formative assessment" among many writers, Black, Harrison, Lee, Marshall, and Wiliam (2003) make a clear distinction between the two. They argue, "assessment for learning is any assessment for which the priority in its design is to serve the purpose of promoting pupil's learning, compared to an assessment design that serves... to provide information to be used as feedback, by the teachers and pupils, in assessing themselves... to modify the teaching" (Black et al. 2003, p. 8).

William and Thompson (2008) observe, "an assessment is formative to the extent that information from the assessment is fed back within the system and actually used to improve the performance of the system in some way" (p. 61).

2.3 Summative Assessment and the New Paradigm (Formative)

Assessment in the context of education has been used primarily "in deciding, collecting and making judgments about evidence relating to the goals of the learning being assessed", which makes no reference to how the information being collected could be used (Harlen, 2006, p. 103).

Assessment of learning, identified as summative assessment in the current literature, is deeply rooted in education and what has emerged along with it is the new paradigm, assessment for learning (formative assessment).

Additionally, Harlen (2006) justifies changes in assessment practices, to be used in four purposes: diagnostic, formative, summative, and evaluative.

The transformation of assessment practices, according to Herrera et al. (2007), is that "assessment of achievement has become increasingly standardized, norm referenced and institutionalized" (p. 13).

Another change that emerged is regarding assessment of achievement (summative assessment) and its negative effect on teaching and classroom climate and assessment (Firestone & Mayrowetz, 2000).

Herrera et al. (2007) state that while they have many uses, standardized tests nevertheless: Limit and negatively affect the quality of content-area instruction; prompt teachers to narrow the curriculum taught in classrooms; encourage "teaching to the test"; push students out of the system;

divert classroom instruction to an emphasis on low-level content and basic skills; and increase the redundancy of instruction (Herrera, Murry & Cabral 2007, p. 13).

On the other hand, the alternative assessment provides more opportunities for the instructor to regularly observe students' skills and capabilities and to adapt the lesson based on their needs.

Alternative assessment can be characterized as any form of measuring student's knowledge or achievement other than the use of standard testing. It refers to "procedures and techniques which can be used within the context of instruction and can be easily incorporated into the daily activities of the school or classroom" (Hamayan, p.213).

In other words, alternative ways of assessment offer more authentic, natural and meaningful communication between students and their teachers who can also benefit from getting more information about the students and their language learning (Moon, 2000; p.162).

In accordance with the traditional system of assessment, clear criteria and aims have to be specified. Johnston states that in contrast with traditional assessment, the alternative assessments allow students to show what they can do rather than to catch them out with what they do not know (Johnston, 2003; p.91). That is, what is primarily evaluated are their strengths not their weaknesses. Furthermore, it enables documenting individual student growth over time without comparing students with one another.

Assessment becomes even more relevant when students become involved in their own assessment.

Kolář and Šikulová (2009), are of the view that, students taking an active role in developing the scoring criteria, self-evaluation, and goal setting; are more likely to accept that the assessment adequately measures their learning (Kolář and Šikulová, 2009; p.151).

Self-assessment allows students to make judgements about their own work and also helps them to set new goals.

Moon posits that self-assessment gives an opportunity for teacher and students to work in partnership. If students learn to monitor and assess themselves, they can be more receptive to feedback and therefore more aware of their own needs (Moon, 2000; p.159).

According to Harlen (2006), the formative assessment functions as a cycle of events, which identifies the learner's position and his or her targeted goal (see *Figure. 2*). Students are viewed as active members of the class as opposed to the old version of assessment in which students were simply receivers of information.

Chappuis and Stiggins (2004) agree that students are perceived to be passive actors in the traditional form of assessment rather than active learners in the new forms (formative assessment) who acquire the ownership of their learning.

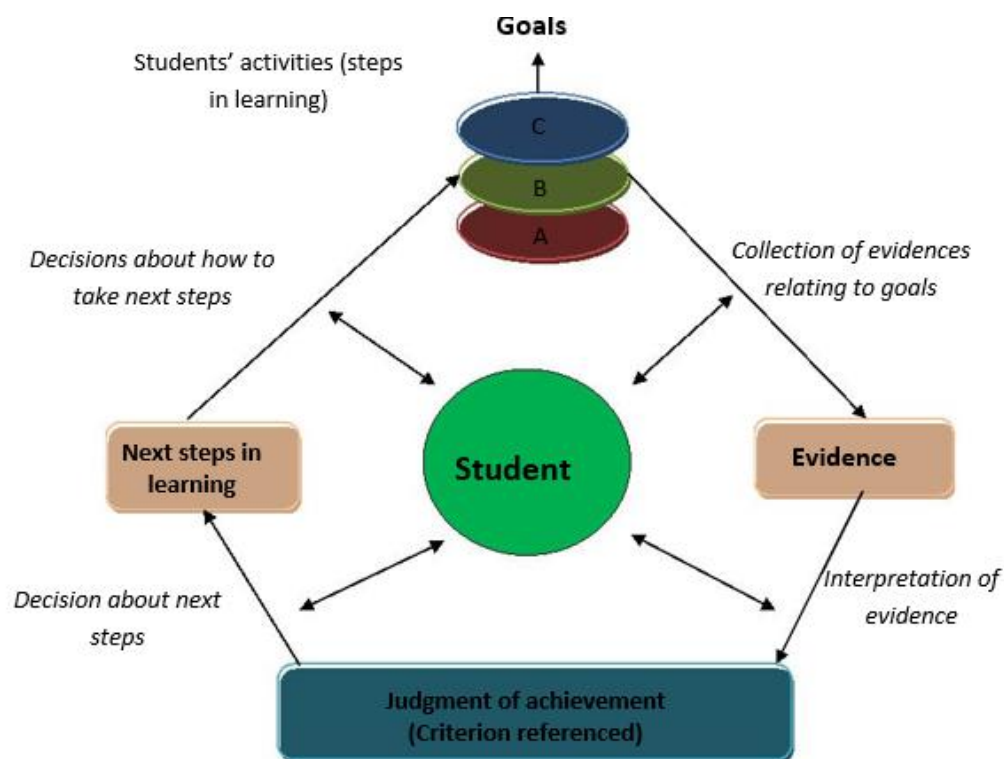


Figure 2 .1: Formative assessment cycle (Adapted from Harlen, 2006)

Another issue that undermines the purpose of using assessment is the prediction made by the instructor that some "students will fail in the state-mandated test" (Wiliam & Thompson, 2008, p. 61).

Black and Wiliam (2008) further note the negative aspect of grade marking, considering that if a student gets lower scores in one or two terms, it creates a shared belief between the student and the teacher that he or she lacks high learning skills or is not intelligent enough.

In addition, a consensus exists among educators that, if tests occur only at the end of cohort or term, the result can hardly be used to adapt instruction and to improve learning (Wiggins & McTighe, 2007; Black & Wiliam, 1998; Herrera, Murry & Cabral, 2007).

Wiliam and Thompson (2008) distinguish between different terms used along with the term "formative assessment": another way of thinking about the distinction being made here is the terms of monitoring assessment, diagnostic assessment, and formative assessment.

An assessment monitors learning to the extent that it provides information about whether the student, class, school or system is learning or not; it is diagnostic to the extent that it provides information about what is going wrong; and it is formative to the extent that it provides information about what to do about it (p. 62).

The literature on assessment and evaluation put emphasis on the formation of assessment tools and activities corresponding to the instruction that displays effectiveness, as opposed to poor assessment format which reduces "students' motivation for learning, inadequately linked to instruction, and incorrect evaluation of effectiveness of instruction" (Dochy, 1997, p. 5).

Dochy (1997) and De Corte (1991) also suggest that "powerful learning environments (PLEs)," an alternative to the old approach of learning, entails creating a balance between "personal exploration and systematic instruction" (Dochy, 1997, p. 5). This means that within a student-

centred classroom, students are perceived as thinkers and active members, opposed to traditional approaches that see students as receivers of information and blank slats (Brooks and Brooks, 1999).

One main feature of high order assessment is high level instruction, making instruction and assessment complement of each other.

Scholars argue that alternative assessment (the new paradigm) has a different “flavour associated” with test-driven instruction (Birenbaum & Dochy 1996, p. 12). This means that the alternative assessment is instruction-driven, given the assumption that it will have a positive impact on instruction, making the instruction real and authentic.

Along with other scholars, Herrera et al. (2007) argue that the traditional forms of assessment, such as standardized tests, teacher-made tests, multiple choice, fill in the blank’s tests, etc., dominated schools and colleges through which the instructors could barely use the information provided by these tests to improve instruction.

However, these scholars recognize that the old forms of tests are useful in comparing students, programs, and schools through quantitative representation.

Birenbaum (1996) asserts, the role of the instructor in the modern form of assessment corresponds to the constructivist approach to education, viewing the instructor as a facilitator and mentor who provides opportunities for students to construct their own meaning (Dochy, 1997; Brooks & Brooks, 1999).

In the constructive approach, learning is considered to be a process; that students (learners) create their own meaning of a lesson or concept, primarily, they rely on their prior knowledge, skills, and ability to critically analyse a context and resolve problems (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Brooks & Brooks, 1999).

2.4 Feedback (Key Characteristic of Alternative Assessment)

The literature raises the issue of formative feedback by closely examining teachers' responses to student's work. For example, if the teacher asks students to provide more details about a written work, the practice is characterized as formative; however, a concern arises as to whether the student know what the instructor meant when he or she asks for elaboration and more details (William & Thompson, 2008).

Formative feedback contradicts the traditional evaluative comments teachers frequently use, such as *well done*, *good*, or *great work* and more.

Chappuis and Stiggins (2004) argue that judgmental feedback not only holds less for value for improvement and student learning, but it also discourages students from learning.

Black and Wiliam (1998) assert that formative feedback illuminates' students' strengths and weaknesses, provides some suggestion for improvement, and avoids comparing one student with his or her peers.

There are various definitions presented about feedback in the literature;

Ramaprasad (1983) describes feedback as a tool that provides information that has an impact on the performance, stating, "feedback is information about the gap between the actual level and the reference level of a system parameter which is used to alter the gap in some way".

In addition, Black and Wiliam (1998) point out the importance of oral feedback provided by the teacher, enabling students to reflect on their learning. They write, "the dialogue between pupils and a teacher should be thoughtful reflective, focused to evoke and explore understanding... so that all pupils have an opportunity to think and to express their ideas".

In addition, the literature advocates for appropriate use of assessment aiming to improve learning and enhance instructions (Dochy, 1997; Nitko 1989, Birenbaum, 1996).

In educational assessment approach, called formative assessment, the instructor provides descriptive feedback for the student—indicating progress and guidance for future performance or remedial form, detailed so that students could improve their older work (Black & Wiliam 1998, Birenbaum & Dochy 1996).

Student involvement in the process of assessment has been discussed as an influential tool in augmenting student learning. Wiliam and Thompson (2008) indicate that, contrary to the traditional forms, learners and their peers play a considerable role in assessment process in formative assessment.

Chappuis and Stiggins (2004) reinforce the above point, stating, “classroom assessment that involves students in the process and focuses on increasing learning can motivate rather than merely measure students” (p. 40).

However, a concern remains as to whether the students have acquired sufficient skills and a clear picture of the targets of their learning. Assessment for learning, when accompanied by students’ involvement in the process of development and implementation, appear more similar to teaching than to measurement (Davis, 2000).

Along with other scholars, Chappuis and Stiggins (2004) emphasize the importance of student involvement in assessment, helping them to project their future plans and learning goals.

They explain, “Student involvement in assessment means that students learn to use assessment information to manage their own learning” (p. 41).

Furthermore, Dochy (1997), Black and Wiliam (1998) and Birenbaum (1996) observe that involving students in the process of assessment do not only reduce the burden of work for the instructor, but also assures students that they are viewed as active members who are responsible for their own progress.

Also, validity and reliability of assessment are two important issues in the field of education. They are perceived as core principles that modify assessment forms and practices.

The concept of validity in formative assessment according to Herrera et al. (2007) “refers to the ability of an assessment, process, or product to measure the knowledge or skills it is intended to measure”. However, validity in summative forms of assessment is defined as the appropriate interpretation of assessment result, which deals with quantitative data (Linn & Miller, 2005).

The term reliability in assessment, according to Herrera et al. (2007), “is understood as the power of an assessment to gather consistent evidence of skills, regardless of the examiner, time, place or other variables related to its administration” (p. 25).

Linn and Miller (2005) define reliability as consistent assessment results that yield from a test.

In addition, the literature refers to the main characteristic of reliability of authentic assessment, as well-defined criteria and detailed training for teachers and students in how to rate students’ work based on criteria (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Herrera et al., 2007).

2.4.1 Formative Assessment (Alternative): Different Forms

Most of the current literature uses the terms formative, alternative, and authentic assessment interchangeably; however, some disagreements still exist. Some scholars use the term “authentic assessment” as a part of formative assessment that happens during the learning process whereas summative assessment is considered to occur at the end.

Furthermore, Herrera et al. (2007), include formative and summative assessment along with other types of authentic assessment, such as performance-based assessment, portfolios, self-assessment and peer assessment, interview-based assessment, play based assessment, cooperative groups assessment, dialogue, journal, and scaffold essays. Considering the many different forms of

formative assessment, an illustration of each may allow the reader to distinguish more easily among them,

In addition, it should be noted that the following classification of different forms of assessment is primarily based on the work of Herrera et al. (2007).

2.4.2 Diagnostic Assessment

Although some scholars view diagnostic assessment separately from formative assessment, the intention is that diagnostic assessments are used for formative purposes.

Diagnostic assessment or pre-assessment is used to collect information for planning instruction and acknowledging learners' needs.

Wiggins and McTighe (2007) assert that pre-assessments “include checks of prior knowledge and skill levels and surveys of interests or learning-style preferences” (p. 101).

The scholars maintain that, given the literature, a great number of students come to school with a misconception that they are not talented enough to perform a certain task, such as drawing and colouring a picture or writing an analytic memo (Wiggins & McTighe, 2007).

Given this scenario, a teacher is responsible for recognizing these misconceptions and finding ways to confront them.

2.4.3 Portfolios

Portfolio development is not a new concept in the history of education.

According to Wiliam and Thompson (2008), gathering purposeful examples of students' work that demonstrate their effort, progress, and level of understanding over a period to time, compose the main features of portfolio.

However, what has changed through the course of time is the format and content, making portfolios meaningful and purposeful.

Wiggins and McTighe (2007) maintain that unlike the traditional forms of assessment that take a “snapshot” of students at one point in time, portfolios “function like a photo album containing a variety of photos taken at different times and different contexts” (p. 85).

Similarly, Herrera et al. (2007) assert that the content of portfolios, which incorporate a collection of student work, “some indications that how student rated him/herself on the process and product included the evidences of how those products met the established criteria” (p. 29).

Investigators emphasize the importance of considering the intended purposes for developing portfolios. By establishing the targets for a portfolio, an instructor can decide what kind of student work to incorporate, who should manage it, how often to review it, and more (Wiggins and McTighe, 2007).

The instructors regularly assign students to include writing samples, reflections, drawings, reading logs, student self-evaluation, and progress notes, visuals and audio clips, among the many. According to Herrera et al. (2007), the common forms of portfolios contain best examples of students’ work that illustrate their learning and progress.

In addition, portfolios are considered a good alternative to traditional forms of assessment because they incorporate the perspective of students and teachers about learning and assessment. Another significance of a portfolio is that unlike the traditional synoptic evaluations, such as the final exam or any standardized test that happens once, portfolios provide a longitudinal observation of student progress as they show incremental gains in knowledge, skills, and proficiencies (Herrera et al., 2007).

Portfolios are also authentic because they are driven by classroom activities; in most cases, they reflect “in-process adaptations to instructional methods and assessment”, and they assess learning which motivates students (Herrera et al., 2007, p. 32).

2.4.4 Self-Assessment

Self-assessment is a valuable tool for learning and measurement. For example, when students are engaged in assessing their own work, they try to learn the criteria for high-quality performance, and they experience a willingness to apply those criteria (Herrera et al., 2007).

However, Black and Wiliam (1998) remain concerned about student readiness to self-assess or evaluate peers. They propose that once students acquire a clear picture of the outcome or purpose, “they become more committed and more effective as learners: their own assessment become an object discussion with their teachers and with one another” (p. 7).

Again, agreements exist among educators, in which they recognize the value of self and peer-assessment which helps students exert control over their learning (Chappuis and Stiggins 2004). Initially, some teachers provide rubrics for student so that they can assess their progress. The rubrics incorporate the criteria that provide the opportunity for students to reflect on the extent to which they have made progress.

Atkin, Black, and Coffey (2001) illustrate a feature of alternative assessment that asks learners to ask three questions as they assess themselves: “where am I trying to go?; where am I now; and how do I close the gap” (cited in Chappuis & Stiggins, 2004, p.43).

2.4.5 Peer-Assessment

Similar to self-assessment, educators consider peer-assessment advantageous, as it furthers opportunities for students to identify targeted learning goals (Herrera et al., 2007; & Chappuis & Stiggins, 2004).

In peer-assessment, students often assess other students’ work compared to the criteria developed by the instructor, or both students and the class instructor. An important aspect of peer assessment

is that it engages students in dialogue with their classmates, commenting on each other's work rather than a one-way feedback system from instructor to student.

To enrich peer-assessment and use it productively, Black and Wiliam (1998) propose that students be trained to assess their peers purposefully, with the goal of improving learning. As students comment on their peers' work, they use informal language which is understandable to them.

According to Herrera et al. (2007), given the concept of peer-assessment, students compare other students' work to the accepted criteria, which "enables them to discern outstanding elements of both their own and their classmate's performances and products" (p. 34).

2.4.6 Performance-Based Assessment

Linn and Miller (2005) explain performance-based assessment as "snapshots of students learning in time, which provide a longer exposure with panoramic lens, or real-time video" (p.7).

The idea that knowledge is constructed during the learning process and that a student discovers knowledge for him/herself, rather than receiving knowledge, inspires the notion of performance-based assessment. This approach facilitates both the way students take information and the way they store and apply this information to deal with novel situations (Herrera et al., 2007).

This means that, in addition to eliciting constructed responses, performance-based assessment incorporates authentic tasks that need higher level of thinking and application of skills.

Herrera et al. (2007) interpret performance-based assessment as an opportunity that "tap (s) into the depth and breadth of students' learning" (p. 28).

2.4.7 Interview-Based Assessment

Interview-based assessment is another form of alternative assessment the teachers use to gather data about students' experiences, interests, background, thoughts, beliefs, activities etc.

Teacher-student interviews vary from highly structured to informal conversations.

Herrera et al. (2007) agree that unstructured detailed interviews with students help teachers to adapt the lesson based on the information gathered from students. These scholars note that, through a teacher's interview held with a student, the instructor realized that "linguistic differences can interfere with the development of deeper connections with students" (Herrera et al., 2007, p. 36).

2.4.8 Play-Based Assessment

Play-based assessment is a valuable assessment form that teachers can use at different grade levels. Examples include pre-school children who are learning the names of objects, language learners who can just barely explain things in the new language, and upper grade levels who role play or dramatize concepts from the literature, history, concurrent life situations, and politics (Herrera et al., 2007).

Additionally, Herrera et al. (2007) indicate that assessment can take place in any manner but it does not mean that authentic assessment merely happens in non-traditional ways.

Goodwin (2000) agrees "authentic assessment begins with teachers making it their business to purposefully watch, listen to, talk with, and think about the children in their classrooms" (p. 6). Some teachers reflect on who these children are, the extent of what they know, and the way they learn, based on the evidence that they observe in the role-play (Herrera et al., 2007).

2.4.9 Co-operative Group Assessment

The concept of group work or team work varies, depending on the context. In the Western world, particularly in the United States, an individual's success attracts more attention than the accomplishments of team work, such as in sports, (Herrera et al., 2007).

However, recent recognition of collaborative or team work is increasing among educators, realizing that strengths and skills of some students are well-defined when they are engaged in group activities such as cooperative learning or assessment.

Herrera et al. (2007) observe that “collaborative or group activities often culminate in projects or experiments that may or may not require oral or written reporting”.

Moreover, Slavin (2006) argues that planning for group assessment requires educators to consider both group efforts and individual liability.

Herrera et al. (2007) note the complexity of assessing a cooperative group activity, in particular distinguishing an individual student’s effort and the contribution he or she makes performing a group activity or project.

Teachers often document the thought and action of individual students in the process of performing an activity as they learn from cooperative activities and the dialogue that occurs among the students.

2.4.10 Dialogue Journals and Scaffolded Essays

Accommodative or scaffolded authentic assessment may take various forms, including dialogue journals requiring students to write their thoughts about certain topics, or stories. Another form, scaffolded essays, allows the instructor to simplify a complex essay question by breaking it down into short answer questions. This is especially useful when assessing content information, because it reduces the stress of students who may assume that they will have to answer questions in an essay format (Berkowitz, Desmarais, Hogan, & Moorcroft, 2000).

Aligning the other forms of authentic assessment, teachers collect useful “information about student learning through accommodated and scaffolded assignments” (Herrera et al., 2007, p. 39).

The literature characterizes one goal of authentic assessment as finding out what students are capable of doing. In this assets-based approach, less value is placed on the deficit-based view of what students are not capable of (Black & Wiliam, 2005; Herrera et al., 2007).

2.4.11. Scoring in Formative Assessment

The literature sheds light that one core reason teachers hesitate to use alternative assessment is because they provide little information in a numerical way.

However, Herrera et al. (2007) assert that if teachers become aware of the many ways that formative assessment makes it possible to quantify or measure the information, this concern can be alleviated. Some ways to achieve this numerical representation are using rubrics, checklists, and questionnaires.

Wiggins and McTighe (2007) define a rubric as a “criterion-based evaluation tool, consisting of a fixed measurement scale (such as four score points) and descriptions of the characteristics for each score point” (p. 87). Rubrics are used to engage students in the details of their own learning.

Rubrics can be adapted based on grades of students, starting with picture style in pre-school and progressing to more structured forms in upper levels.

Herrera, Murry and Cabral (2007) emphasize involving students in the process of creating rubrics, which provides an opportunity for the students to focus on the targeted goal, criteria.

Herrera et al. (2007) summarize key tips to follow in developing a rubric: Determine the desired outcome, develop your current classroom practices as task that will create opportunities to students to demonstrate the targeted skill, determine what a good or high-quality performance on this task might look like, and complete the rubric by describing the requirements that must be met to attain each quantified level of performance” (p. 43).

2.5 Summary

In addition to these formats, there are other alternative assessments to measure student learning. Questionnaires and checklists are developed initially by identifying skills, knowledge, and competencies to perform a task. Given the identified knowledge and skills, a series of questions or

statements are developed to describe expected outcomes, taking into consideration the varying levels of students, as well.

Herrera et al. (2007) believe that using questionnaires and checklists helps teachers to reduce repetitions, and they also provide information about students' prior knowledge and what they bring into the classroom.

Although alternative authentic assessments can be developed and used in ways that demonstrate students' academic learning, Herrera et al. (2007) note that "such assessments are not immune to bias" (p. 46). This means that a teacher may provide more feedback to some students and less to some others, or the instructor may prioritize his/her perspective in assessing a performance, ignoring the fact that other voices and aspects should be considered accordingly.

As can be summarized from the above discussion, increased student involvement in the process of assessment, can be used to reduce this concern (William & Thompson, 2008 & Herrera et al., 2007).

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

As indicated in the chapter one, this study has set out to investigate the alternative ways of assessing graduate students in GIJ. This chapter explains the methodology for the study as it gives an overview of the procedures that were used and the reasons for using such procedures. The research aims and objectives guided many of the significant choices throughout the duration of the research project (Partington, 2002; Saunders et al, 2000). The chapter includes the research approach, the research design and the method of data collection. The chapter also discusses how participants were selected as well as the analysis procedure.

3.1 Research Design

According to (MERIGAN & HUSTON , 2004, p. P48), research design is regarded as the logical sequence that connects a researchers claim, data or evidence and warrant”. Again, Wedam (2015), believes that the research design is the blue print for conducting the study that maximizes control over factors that could interfere with the validity of the findings.

Designing a research or study helps the researcher to device and implement the study in a manner that will assist the researcher to attain intended results.

John Creswell (2014), presents three different approaches to a research project: qualitative, quantitative, mixed method. These three approaches all have distinctive functions depending on the plan and procedures of the research project. However, the boundaries between the approaches are not as clear-cut as they might seem, and it is therefore normal to present a study as “more qualitative than quantitative or vice versa” (Creswell, 2014).

A quantitative approach can be described as an approach with the aim of testing objective theories by using different variables and measuring these before the data can be analyzed further (Creswell, 2014).

Creswell (2014) explains a qualitative approach as an approach where the aim is to explore and understand the meaning behind a social or human problem by studying the complexity of a situation.

A mixed method approach lies somewhere in the middle of the two aforementioned approaches, and can be recognized as an approach where both qualitative and quantitative data is collected in order to present a more thorough understanding of a research problem (Creswell, 2014).

3.1.1 Qualitative Approach

Considering my research and research question, I believe that a qualitative approach is a more appropriate approach than a quantitative or a mixed method approach. My research objectives aim to explore the key assessment techniques employed by Lecturers of Ghana Institute of Journalism; Investigate the views of lecturers on assessment methods used for Graduate Students; examine the views of Graduate Students on assessment methods employed by lecturers of GIJ; examine the benefits and challenges of assessment methods used at GIJ for Graduate Students.

According to Creswell (2014), the idea of qualitative research is to explore and study a problem from the participants' views, as I aimed to do. One advantage of qualitative research is the dynamic structure of the approach, meaning that the researcher can change the process throughout the research. This is especially useful as the researcher may discover new information or insights concerning the research, and thus has the opportunity to alter the process if needed. Regarding a qualitative research approach and different worldviews, the common idea is that

qualitative research is located within the constructivist worldview. The constructivist worldview can be recognized as a worldview where the participants' views and understanding of a subject are subjective, varied, and multiple (Creswell, 2014).

Considering my research question, it is reasonable to expect the participants' contribution to be both subjective and varied. Therefore, the research question I used was relatively open, and the participants of the study were not restricted in regard to their answers. So, the role of the researcher is to interpret the participants' experiences, thoughts, and underlying opinions about the topic of the research question.

In qualitative research it is common for the researcher to be the tool of interpretation. The researcher is also central in regard to a phenomenological design, as it is the researcher's responsibility to describe the participants' experiences concerning the project (Creswell, 2014).

3.2 Methods of Data Collection

Qualitative research is often recognized as data gathered from observations, interviews, or through public or private documents (Creswell, 2014).

Also, qualitative research method allows the researcher to cover subject matter in great depth due to its flexibility.

Considering my research project and my research question, I will argue that interviews are a suitable and advantageous data collection method. It will enable me to interact with research subjects thoroughly, avoid prejudgment and provide data collection based on students and lecturers' experiences.

3.2.1 Semi-Structured Interview

The different types of interviews can be assorted into structured interviews, semi-structured interviews, and unstructured interviews (Creswell, 2014).

A structured interview is recognized as a set of fixed questions where the questions are asked in a particular order. A semi-structured interview is similar to a structured one, but the structure of the questions is more flexible. Some questions may be decided beforehand, but the researcher has more freedom to alter the phrasing and the order of the questions throughout the interview process (Creswell, 2014).

An unstructured interview can be described as an interview where the questions are not decided beforehand, but they are developed during the interview process. The types of questions that develop depend on the topic of the research.

In regard to my research question, I will argue that the most advantageous type of interview is a semi-structured interview. A semi-structured interview is a versatile method of collecting data, especially if the goal is to explore the experiences of different participants (Galletta, 2013). My research question places a focus on the participants experiences, making semi-structured interview a useful method of data-collection.

In addition, Creswell (2014) emphasizes a benefit of semi-structured interviews which is the opportunity to ask follow-up questions in order to clarify any potential misunderstanding. However, I incorporated open-ended questions concerning differentiated instruction, as these questions have the advantage of giving the participants the opportunity to provide in-depth information about a subject through explanation.

Furthermore, in semi-structured interviews, the participants can speak their mind without the boundaries of rigid questioning (Galletta, 2013).

Besides, semi-structured interviews can help reduce the researcher's influence on the participants and their answers, because the participants are able to speak their minds, arguably ensuring that the participants' answers are of high accuracy (Galletta, 2012).

3.2.2 The Interview Guide

An interview guide is useful as it can function as a quality insurer in regard to the interview, as well as creating a structure for the interview (Creswell, 2014).

Creswell (2012) also states that, the structure of the questions in the interview guide can be flexible, but it is common that the interview contains both key and follow-up questions. This is supported by Creswell (2014) and Galletta (2013) who argue that the questions used in the interviews vary from ice-breaker questions and background questions concerning the theme of the interview, to follow-up questions and key questions about the 20 topics later on.

Galletta (2013) states that background questions and “icebreaker” questions are often used at the beginning of the interview as they can help to “ease the participant” into the interview process and the topic of the interview.

Furthermore, questions asked at the beginning of the interview can be used by the researcher in order to receive the interviewee's general understanding and experience concerning the topic at hand.

Follow-up questions, as mentioned above, are beneficial as they can help the researcher to get as much useful information from the participant as possible.

In addition, probing questions are useful as they can be used in order help interviewees explain their ideas in more detail (Creswell, 2014).

Probing questions are questions about a certain theme or idea brought up during the interview which the researcher wants the participants to elaborate on. Such questions are often used to keep the participants on track and to avoid receiving too many unnecessary answers.

However, probing questions can therefore be useful in semi-structured interviews, as the openness of semi-structured interviews can easily lead to the participants getting off-topic (Price, 2002).

I used all these types of questions in my interview, however, considering the fact that I conducted a semi-structured interview; some questions that were asked were not necessarily planned beforehand. The type of questions I used in my interview guide were determined by my research question.

Before I conducted the interviews with the participants, I did a pilot interview using two of my fellow students. This was done in order to best prepare and review the interview process and the interview guide.

Galletta (2013) states that a pilot interview can provide the researcher with new ideas regarding the phrasing, structure, and usefulness of the questions.

In addition, Creswell (2014) emphasizes a benefit of semi-structured interviews which is the opportunity to ask follow-up questions in order to clarify any potential misunderstanding.

I incorporated open-ended questions concerning differentiated instruction, as these questions had the advantage of giving the participants the opportunity to provide in-depth information about a subject through explanation.

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Besides, semi-structured interviews can help reduce the researcher's influence on the participants and their answers, because the participants are able to speak their minds, arguably ensuring that the participants' answers are of high accuracy (Galletta, 2012).

The study interviews were constructed in a way that it did not reveal the identity of the participants by not requesting for their names which may give a clue about their persons. The participants were briefed about the purpose of the research and to give them the maximum respect.

3.3 The Selection of Participants

The target population for the study is students from the GIJ. I recruited a number of participants purposively by considering their levels and gender till I reached saturation.

Also, four lecturers were purposively selected to participate in this study. The assumption is that four participants would provide me with sufficient amount of data and that it would also realize the norm of phenomenological research where three to ten participants is a typical (Creswell, 2014).

A research project with fewer participants can be a hinder to the generalizability of the study. On the other hand, too many participants and the time aspect become a hinder, and may lead to a less careful interview analysis. Besides, generalizability is not the main goal of qualitative research. The decision to recruit lecturers from this level was to answer my research objective 1 and 2 which are;

- i. To highlight the key assessment techniques employed by Lecturers of Ghana Institute of Journalism and

- ii. To investigate the views of lecturers on assessment methods used for Graduate Students.

On the other hand, the students selected will help answer research objective 3 and 4.

3.4 Method of Data-Analysis

I used a recorder to record the interviews, which I later on transcribed. This was done to enable me focus on the topic and the dynamic of the interview with the participant. With a recorder I was able to catch all the stops, pauses, and the tone of voice, which I consequently included in the transcripts and in the analysis.

Creswell (2010) argues that the transcription process should be done by the researcher because the analysis and interpretation of the transcripts might lead to the discovery of new relevant aspects of the data collected - aspects which were not noticed during the interview.

On the other hand, transcription as a method does have some disadvantages, such as preserving reliability and validity.

Creswell (2014) states that a large disadvantage is that the transcripts will not include any visual signal given from the interviewee, nor is it able to register the mood during the interview.

Since I transcribed the interview myself, I was able to revisit the interview process and was therefore able to register the visual signal which I registered, which is another reason why a researcher should be a part of the transcription process. In order to increase the reliability of my transcripts I listened to the recorded interviews repeatedly and made sure that I did not leave out anything.

To secure validity, I included the pauses, stops, and tones that I registered in the interviews in order to for the transcripts to be accurate

Coding of collected data is a common method to use when the data collected derives from the interviews. Coding is beneficial as it helps the researcher to organize and present relevant information of the data collected (Creswell, 2014).

The first stage in the coding process is to read through all the collected data, which in this case are the interview transcripts. This is done to help the reader get a general impression of the interview and be able to review it without a too rigorous focus on the details. Having done this, I made a list of all the key words and phrases that I considered to be relevant regarding my research question (Creswell, 2014).

Content analysis is useful for my study to compare the data collected with existing theory on differentiated instruction.

Thematic analysis was also used to identify categories from the data collected. The usefulness of a thematic approach to coding is apparent, as some of the data collected is likely to involve topics that I had not planned to focus on.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION

Higher education is considered to be a critical component of human development across the world. It equips a person with relevant professional skills required for market and living.

According to Sadler, 2010, it is through higher education that students or individuals by acquiring the capacity and potential contribute to economic development of the society.

Considering this factor of significance of skill-based learning at higher level, universities pledge tremendous efforts in ensuring that learners are prepared for the market (Astin, 2012).

Hence, teaching and learning is planned in accordance and all related components pertinent to this that is assessment, co-curriculum activities, research and projects are given relevance. (Brown, Bull, & Pendlebury, 2013).

Assessment in higher education level is considered to be the most crucial element of learning and development.

Students are however, assessed by the Universities in order to ensure that the knowledge, understanding and skills are acquired or gained by the learners (Falchikov, 2013). The true essence of assessment is therefore, to explore the level and quality of learning acquired by a student or an individual, by testing how a certain concept is acquired and its understanding is accommodated in the mind of the learner and building upon how learners can use that particular learning for seeking professional solutions and practical life (Stephenson & Yorke, 2013).

Experts of andragogy deliberate specified sets of techniques that should be used in adult learning and assessment and suggest it should mostly be experiential, independent, and research oriented and this is widely acknowledged and implemented in the Western part of the world.

However, it is catching a bull-cart speed in Sub-Saharan Africa specifically in countries like Ghana.

Teachers play a significant role in planning, designing, administering and evaluating learning assessment whilst their perceptions related to this key component of learning are of a great value (Liu, 2011).

Also, teachers if are not satisfied with the technique of assessment, lacks clarity, untrained, unplanned and does not incorporate students' feedback in planning assessment can result in a major chaos (Hughes & Barrie, 2010).

It is therefore, fundamental to see to it that, all teachers' perceptions pertinent to assessment are incorporated in planning curriculum (Tight, 2012).

Bearing in mind implication of this key phenomenon, findings of this study sets grounds for exploring alternative ways of assessment at Universities in Ghana, specifically the Ghana Institute of Journalism.

Assessment in higher education is therefore an important task which needs to be strategized and applied efficiently for effective learning.

In order to have effective assessment, the current assessment techniques need to be reviewed or amended so that practical aspects and real-life applications of course contents could be given more significance.

For effective assessment, Universities are also suggested to involve practical approaches/exposure or hands on approaches in curriculum, develop entrepreneurial abilities among students and discourage spoon feeding practices to the students and sit-down exams even at the graduate level and focus more on experiential or field learning rather than on the theoretic knowledge.

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