Policy Briefing

T-TEL
Transforming Teacher Education and Learning

Management and Leadership of Colleges of Education

Effective management and leadership of Colleges of Education can greatly enhance teaching and learning, yet there are significant areas in which this leadership could be improved. The principal areas for improvement are colleges' processes for self-evaluation and review; quality improvement planning, appraisals and professional development of teaching staff and; approaches to ensuring diversity among staff and students.

This briefing summarises these areas for improvement and identifies measures to address them. It is based on meetings with stakeholders, a literature review, and interviews with college principals, heads of department, teaching staff and students, and two consultation forums with principals, conducted for T-TEL. A full report of the findings of the research is available.

Overview of current practice

There are some examples of good practice in management and leadership among the 38 Colleges of Education. Some leadership teams have strategic plans and vision for their college. In some cases heads of department organise workshops on teaching practice and some colleges encourage paired teaching as a means of facilitating collaboration between tutors.

Yet despite these examples, there are areas in which college management and leadership can be improved:

Colleges lack systematic processes for continuous improvement

Quality improvement processes are not well developed and embedded in the Colleges to assure quality teaching, learning and the student experience. Although some college leaders explained that they are putting measures in place to improve teaching and learning standards, there is a lack of written improvement plans to guide self-evaluation and review college performance. Without these plans, it is difficult for college assessment to be meaningful and to guide continuous improvement.

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Staff appraisal does not facilitate professional development

- Student surveys and feedbacks are the principal means of evaluating performance, yet they may not be the most effective way of improving teaching and learning. These surveys and feedback, along with student exam results, do not necessarily facilitate the identification of areas for improvement or of good practice that could be shared across the college and beyond.

- Similarly, there are no formal processes for classroom observation or monitoring tutor performance. This again further indicates an absence of measures for identifying and disseminating good practice or for assuring teaching quality.

- Most college tutors see professional development in terms of improving their educational qualifications. There is a risk that the prioritisation of these qualifications, above the development of teaching skills, may be a less effective way of improving teaching and learning. There are some exceptions to this, with some colleges holding workshops on teaching practice.
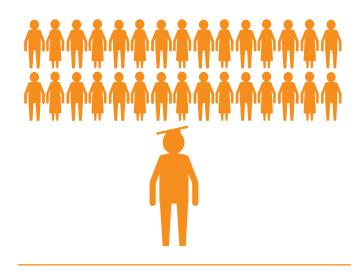
More work is needed to ensure diversity

Some aspects of colleges' approaches to diversity may require further attention. Female trainees have restrictions relative to male trainees in some circumstances, such as the issuing of permission to be absent from college. Access to many buildings is a challenge for students and staff with physical disabilities.

Some colleges are particularly constrained by lack of resources

While most colleges now have reduced resources following the removal of the Ghana Education Service student allowances, there is considerable variation between colleges in teaching resources. Student-Teacher Ratios vary from 15:1 to 30:1, with larger colleges tending to have higher ratios. Class sizes vary from around 35 to 50, typically because of a shortage of classrooms rather than insufficient teachers. These classes are too large for good quality teacher training.

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Next steps

Several measures have the potential to facilitate increased quality assurance and professional development:

Support for college self-assessments and improvement plans

College leaders can be supported to conduct self-assessments that will lead to the development of College improvement plans with clear targets and performance indicators, which are reviewed annually. These self-assessments and improvements plans could be linked with colleges' transition to becoming autonomous tertiary institutions that deliver quality training to their trainees.

Assistance in development of quality assurance systems

As a part of their improvement plans, colleges can be supported to develop quality assurance systems for teaching and learning. This should include lesson observations, and evaluation and appraisal of tutors; these would be integrated into departmental planning and professional development. T-TEL will work with experts in educational leadership and management to create resources to support this.

Professional development programmes and coaching for college leaders

A programme of professional development for college leaders and governors could also be developed, targeted at improving college leadership and management. T-TEL will work with Ghanaian experts to develop a strategy for the delivery of this support and will create a professional development module, which will be published as an Open Educational Resource.

Support for College governance council

To ensure Colleges fulfil their mandate as tertiary institutions and maintain the standards that are required, the governing council will play a critical role in the strategic planning for Colleges, ensuring financial accountability, appointment of key staff, and approving educational programmes. As part of the professional development for college leaders, T-TEL will develop modules to support the induction of council members.

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