

Perceptions of stakeholders on modalities for giving quality assurance feedback to tutors in teachers' colleges in Tanzania

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Abstract

Effective dialogic feedback demands active zonal quality assurance officers and tutors. The use of oral and written modalities to provide quality assurance feedback on learning environment in teachers' colleges could make tutors more active in teaching. This article appraises modalities used to give feedback to tutors; and analyses the modalities regarded by tutors and quality assurance officers as effective in Tanzania. The article adopts a qualitative multiple-case study involving thirty-four respondents from three teachers' training colleges in Tanzania. Data were collected using in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and documentary reviews with tutors. It is revealed that oral and written modalities were mainly used to give quality assurance feedback to tutors in teachers' colleges. Moreover, these feedback modalities do not have a bearing on the effectiveness of learning in the studied institutions. The paper also identifies significant differences between the quality of oral and written feedback. Tutors tend to prefer oral to written quality assurance feedback modality. Specifically, tutors perceived oral quality assurance feedback modality as the most effective way as it allows for more interaction, collaboration and dialogue between tutors and zonal school quality assurance officers. On the other hand, zonal quality assurance officers prefer written to oral quality assurance feedback modality as most effective for permanent record keeping in the majority of cases. Moreover, written feedback is the only means by which quality assurance stakeholders get to know about the state of quality of education provision in teachers' colleges. It was also found that the new framework for giving quality assurance feedback was adopted and implemented before tutors were adequately oriented to the framework. It is, therefore, recommended that before quality assurance framework and its modalities of giving quality assurance feedback are changing feedback modalities, the

government should first consider adequate training of zonal quality assurance officers for them to perceive feedback as a dialogic process.

Keywords: Oral feedback, written feedback, dialogic feedback, teacher education

Introduction

In acknowledging the power of feedback to produce varied effects on learning, researchers have proposed principles that encapsulate conditions for effective feedback (Boud & Molloy, 2012; Brooks, Carroll, Gillies & Hattie, 2019; Fisher & Frey, 2013; Gamlem & Smith, 2013; Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Hattie, 2009, 2012; Kluger & DeNisi, 1996; Sadler, 2010; Tomlinson, 2014). First, there is a need to clarify expectations and standards for learners (Boud & Molloy, 2012; Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Hounsell, McCune, Hounsell, & Litjens, 2008; Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006). This means learners should be oriented towards purposeful actions designed to satisfy or exceed the learning intent or goals (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Furthermore, feedback should lay the platform for learners to monitor their own learning, a key facet of self-regulated learning (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Second, feedback should encourage formative learning, that is, it should be on-going, targeted and specifically received within current learning (Boud & Molloy, 2012; Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Hounsell et al., 2008; Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006). Formative, rather than summative, assessment is a key process for creating opportunities for improvement-based feedback (William, 2013). Experts as source of information for feedback must strive to provide regular, purposeful and constructive feedback that is matched to the criteria for assessment (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006). This also provides teachers with evidence-based understanding of learners' progress towards the learning intent. By comparing the learning intent and criteria for success with learners' current learning state as evidenced by their formative assessment samples, teachers should direct their attention to the gap between learners' current state in the learning cycle and the learning intent. Third, it should be for self-regulation (Boud & Molloy, 2012; Brooks, Carroll, Gillies, & Hattie, 2019; Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006). That means it is a key process within an effective model of feedback. It should make learners distinguish and apply standards and criteria to their work and learning. Learners should form judgments about the level to which they are satisfied with such standards or criteria (Bound & Molloy, 2013). Effective feedback informs part of self-regulation where learners can direct and monitor their actions to achieve

learning goals (Brooks, Carroll, Gillies & Hattie, 2019; Boud & Molloy, 2012; Boud, 2013; Hattie & Timperley, 2007; McNamara & O'Hara, 2008; McNamara, O'Hara, Lissi & Davidsdottir, 2011; Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006; Plowright, 2007). This ensures that learners are proficient in self-assessment and self-regulation; and have become willing and active seekers of feedback. Fourth, effective feedback needs opportunities to close the feedback loop (Boud & Molloy, 2012; Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Hounsell et al., 2008; Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006). That means that learners would be required to use deep learning principles such as relational thinking and self-monitoring to compare and adjust their work in relation to the required standards, criteria or intent. This helps to close the gap between where learners are and where they aim to be, a demonstration of the power of feedback (Sadler, 1989; Shah, Cheng, & Fitzgerald, 2016). Despite its valued process, written quality assurance feedback is often missing from learning episodes due to delays in learners receiving feedback or misinterpreting feedback content (Hounsell et al., 2008).

From a socio-constructivist point of view, feedback is a dialogue with a formative function (Carless, Salter, Yang & Lam, 2011; Espasa, Mayordomo, Guasch and Martinez-Melo, 2019; Nicol, 2010). From this perspective, dialogue can be promoted by external quality assurance officers or by peers, who are internal quality assurance officers, but it can also take the form of a self-dialogue or an inner dialogue (Carless, 2015). Nicol (2010) notes, "Such inner dialogue would involve students in actively decoding feedback information, internalizing it, comparing it against their own work, using it to make judgments about its quality and ultimately to make improvements in future work" (p. 504). In general, feedback can be understood as a socially embedded process in which learners' prior experience affects the use they may make of it (Price, Handley & Millar, 2011).

Dialogic feedback is essential in synchronous face to face learning environments, where zonal school quality assurance officers and tutors share the same space and time. In this context, feedback is crucial in promoting regulation of learning and its monitoring. Feedback may be given as written, oral or demonstration modality. In recent years, studies on the technological means and/or channels through which feedback is offered (written, audio or video) have become more prominent (Borup, West, & Graham, 2012).

Feedback as Evolving and Complicated Construct

The meaning of feedback has changed in recent decades, making it difficult to achieve a consistent understanding of what constitutes feedback. In general, three paradigms have

contributed to our definition and understanding of feedback. They include teacher-centred transmission-oriented paradigm, student-centred process-oriented paradigm, and ecological or socio-material paradigm (Chan & Luo, 2021; Chong, 2021).

Conventionally, feedback is understood as an ‘end product’, in the sense of ‘knowledge of results’ or ‘correction of errors (Gibbs & Simpson, 2004). As the traditional focus was on the information delivered to learners, there has been much discussion on how teachers deal with feedback (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Teachers’ provision of feedback is often found entangled with a range of issues, including increased workload, limitations in time, difficulties in catering for individual learners in large classes, and a lack of motivation and expertise (Gibbs & Simpson 2004; Henderson, Ryan, & Phillips, 2019).

In the past decade, this conventional way of perceiving feedback as unidirectional transmission to learners has evolved along a more student-centred and sustainable model (Carless et al., 2011). In this sustainable model, feedback involves a dialogic process in which learners take increased responsibility in seeking and acting on feedback (Sadler, 2010; Chan & Luo, 2021). The effectiveness of feedback depends on learners’ feedback literacy as well, that is, their ability to appreciate feedback, to make judgements, to manage emotions and to take action (Carless & Boud, 2018).

Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by the social constructivism theory proposed by Lev Vygotsky (Vygotsky & Cole 1978). The theory emphasizes that effective learning can be understood in the context of sharing the constructed knowledge and experiences of both learners and experienced teachers. Learning is further influenced by learners’ need to collaboratively work, acquire, share knowledge and structure the knowledge among their teachers with the teacher acting as a guide, collaborator and coach (Wells, 2000; Van Huizein, Van Oers & Wubbels, 2005). By adopting social constructivism theory, it was considered that effective modalities of giving quality assurance feedback is constructed by both tutors and zonal school quality assurance officers using their experiences, beliefs, thinking strategies and other required information.

Statement of the problem

Review of both theoretical and empirical studies drawn from around the world, in general, and Tanzania, in particular, have shown that modalities of giving quality assurance feedback have both information transmission effectiveness (Boud & Molloy, 2013; Dobbelaer, Prins &

van Dongen, 2013; Henderson, Dawson, Mahoney, Phillips, Ryan, Boud & Molloy, 2019; Nash & Winstone, 2017; Wilson, 2019; Winstone & Boud, 2019; Winstone & Carless, 2019) and dialogical effectiveness (Bergh, Rose & Beijgaard, 2013; Brookhart, 2012; Gan, 2011; Hattie, 2012; Hawe and Parr, 2014; Nicol, 2019; Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006; Sadler, 2010; Ibarra-Sáiz, Rodríguez-Gómez & Boud, 2020).

Empirical studies and reports on modalities of giving quality assurance feedback in Tanzania are scanty. The few studies which have investigated some elements of modalities for giving quality assurance feedback in Tanzania are mostly based on primary and/or secondary school contexts (CAG, 2016; Choma, 2011; Kosia, 2018; Matete, 2009; Ngatoluwa, 2010). Consequently, they may not translate effectively into the teacher education context because they did not capture the dialogical practices that emerge as central element in practice. Moreover, the studies leave much to be desired as they give a general picture on the use of input measures such as timing, frequency, quantity or externally judged product of quality as a way of evaluating the effectiveness of quality assurance feedback. For example, the studies view feedback as mere information exchange/transmission and barely engaged with the dialogic process in the collaborative construction of shared understandings of quality assurance feedback. Thus, the studies do not adequately depict how dialogic feedback through oral and written modalities have been used to give feedback to tutors in Tanzanian teachers' colleges. This study, therefore, seeks to fill this gap by investigating stakeholders' perceptions of oral versus written modalities for giving quality assurance feedback to tutors in teachers' colleges.

Methodology

The study employed a qualitative research approach informed by multiple case design. Multiple case study was selected because the problem is embedded in multiple cases which are believed to have similar characteristics. Multiple case study design allowed for cross-case analysis as well as comparison, and an in-depth investigation of quality assurance stakeholders in diverse settings. The design also helped to capture unique features related to modalities of quality assurance feedback to tutors in Tanzania, which could be overlooked in large scale designs. The study employed interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs) and documentary reviews in collecting relevant data. Interviews were conducted with administrative officer at the Directorate of the School Quality Assurance (DSQA), Zonal School Quality Assurance Officers (ZSQAOs), college principals, internal college quality

assurance officers (ICQAOs), college academic deans, Ward Education Officers (WEOs), as well as College Board chairpersons. On the other hand, FGDs were held with five content tutors in each involved college to gather information regarding tutors' views and involvement in quality assurance feedback. FGDs were thought to be beneficial because tutors were free to discuss and share views on the effectiveness of the modalities of quality assurance feedback. Each FGD session lasted for between 45 minutes and one hour. Data from interviews and FGDs were tape recorded and transcribed for subsequent thematic analysis. A top-down thematic analysis was used to identify, describe and illustrate voices of participants (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Also, documents reviewed included annual reports of zonal school quality assurance, minutes of college quality assurance meetings, college quality assurance feedback, college quality assurance reports, tutors' self-evaluation reports, lesson observation forms and tutor development plans. Other documents included strategic plans, schemes of work, lesson plans and lesson log books. Document review enabled the researcher to understand how quality assurance officers give feedback to tutors as well as stakeholders' perceptions on the modalities for giving quality assurance feedback to tutors in teachers' colleges.

This study involved three Diploma teachers' colleges, namely Al-Haramain (Dar es Salaam zone), Morogoro (Eastern zone) and Kleruu (Southern Highlands zone). The zones and teachers' colleges were purposively selected due to the fact that they allowed for an in-depth cross-case exploration as well as comparison of modalities used in giving quality assurance feedback and their effectiveness.

The study used a total of thirty-four participants to capture their perceptions on the modalities for giving quality assurance feedback to tutors in teachers' colleges. Purposive sampling technique was employed to obtain one administrative officer at the directorate of quality assurance from the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, three zonal quality assurance officers, three teachers' college principals and three internal college quality assurance officers. The technique also applied to three college academic deans, three ward education officers, as well as three chairpersons of college boards. The participants were selected with respect to their role in managing and coordinating matters related to quality assurance. Likewise, fifteen tutors were selected purposively due to their involvement in receiving quality assurance feedback from zonal quality assurance officers.

Findings and discussion

To understand stakeholders' perceptions on the modalities for giving quality assurance feedback to tutors, it was considered pertinent to familiarize with modalities of giving quality assurance feedback on tutors' pedagogical performance in teacher education from 2014 to 2020. The selection of this timeframe was based on the emphasis of collaborative and community engagement that required application of learner-centred approach as spearheaded in the Education and Training Policy (ETP) of 2014 (MoEVT, 2014). Additionally, the preferred period was considered to have enjoyed thorough monitoring of educational practices, including evaluation practices by education managers. Quality assurance was the main emphasis as well as the establishment of National School Quality Assurance Framework (NSQAF). Quality assurance depicted the change from compliance to quality model of educational improvement to establishment of quality assurance framework, which emphasizes collaboration of tutors during data generation, sharing of experiences and knowledge among tutors. It considers zonal school quality assurance officers as supporters and guides for improvement of tutors. Quality assurance also emphasizes Internal College Quality Assurance Officers to work collaboratively with zonal school quality assurance officers and share the constructed feedback with tutors (ADEM, 2020; ADEM, 2021a; ADEM, 2021b; MoEST, 2017a; 2017b; 2017c).

This period was found to have witnessed a sharp change in the maintenance of the quality of teacher education from traditional system of inspection where quality assurance officers were seen as knowledgeable and tutors as passive recipients of feedback without interaction between them. In the traditional system that operated before 2014, feedback was also seen as an end product or 'knowledge of results' or correction of errors since emphasis was placed on unidirectional information transmission to tutors. The period from 2014 also experienced changes in the way of seeing feedback as unidirectional transmission of information to tutors. Development was towards a more student-centred and sustainable model (ADEM, 2020; ADEM, 2021a; MoEST, 2017b). In this model, quality assurance feedback involves a dialogic process in which tutors are considered important stakeholders in seeking and acting on feedback through collaboration and knowledge sharing. This study, therefore, found this period of seven years appropriate to consider because it would provide adequate information on the modalities of giving quality assurance feedback to tutors in

teachers' colleges. Findings through the consulted primary sources of information revealed the findings presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Regularity of Modalities of Giving Quality Assurance Feedback to Tutors

SN	Year	Dar es Salaam Zone			Eastern Zone			Southern Highlands Zone		
		Private Teachers' College			Government College	Teachers'	Government College	Teachers'		
		Al-Haramain TC			Morogoro TC			Kleruu TC		
		Wri	Oral	Demon	Wri	Oral	Demon	Wri	Oral	Demon
		tten		stration	tten		stration	tten		stration
1	2014	√	√	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
2	2015	√	√	×	√	√	×	×	×	×
3	2016	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
4	2017	√	√	×	×	×	×	√	√	×
5	2018	×	×	×	×	×	×	√	√	×
6	2019	√	√	×	√	√	×	×	×	×
7	2020a	√	√	√	√	√	×	√	√	×
	2020b	√	√	√	×	×	×	×	×	×
Total	7	6	6	2	3	3	0	3	3	0

Source: Field data February – April 2021

Table 1 shows that in written, oral and demonstration modes, quality assurance feedback modalities, Al-Haramain TC received the highest frequency (6 times), followed by Morogoro and Kleruu (3 times). However, in the year 2020, Al-Haramain received written, oral and demonstration quality assurance feedback modalities 2 times, whereas Morogoro and Kleruu received written and oral quality assurance feedback modalities only once. This can be attributed to the fact that Al-Haramain as a private college might have low level of involvement of quality assurance stakeholders, including tutors, during its 2019 college evaluation processes.

However, in the year 2016, there were no written, oral or demonstration quality assurance feedback given to the selected colleges. This could be attributed to challenges faced by the directorate of school quality assurance in engaging stakeholders in collaborative learning. The challenges included credibility barriers relating to Zonal school quality assurance officers' ability to make and convey judgments of tutors' instructional performance; and contextual constraints (Choma, 2011; Jaffer, 2010; Ngatolua 2010; Nkinyangi, 2006). It could also be attributed to the changes from NECTA to NACTE, where

college evaluations were not conducted. It has been noted by other scholars that without college evaluation visits, quality assurance officers cannot generate evaluative data and, therefore, cannot analyse and give quality assurance feedback (Grauwe, 2007, 2008; Sanyal, 2013).

Findings from tutors revealed that oral and written modalities were dominant in giving quality assurance feedback. The findings are in line with the study by Kosia (2018), which revealed that oral and written quality assurance feedback modalities were used to give feedback to secondary school teachers. However, the findings are in contrast with Espasa, Mayordomo, Guasch and Martinez-Melo (2019); who found written, audio and video modalities were used to give quality assurance feedback to learners. The findings are also in contrast with Ice, Swan, Diaz, Kupczynski & Swan-Dagen (2010), who found that learners felt stand-alone written feedback was more effective than stand-alone audio feedback, and that the combination of written and audio feedback was the most effective of all. The findings are also in line with the findings by Nelson and Schunn (2009), which classified feedback modalities into cognitive and affective categories. On the one hand, cognitive feedback focuses on written text which summarizes and explains the accomplished work or task. Affective feedback, on the other hand, reflects the quality of the work. The reviewer employs praise or criticism or non-verbal language to convey points to the writer. The findings are contrasted with the study by Ellis (2009), who categorized feedback modalities into cognitive and socio-cultural perspectives. The former seeks to identify the corrective feedback strategies that are most effective in promoting the internal processes responsible for acquisition. The latter views corrective feedback strategies as a form of social mediation that assists learners in performing teaching activities that they are incapable of performing independently. The findings are in line with the study by Chan & Luo (2021), which found that feedback is divided into three categories, namely transmission of information from the teacher to the student, dialogic process where learners take responsibilities in seeking and acting on feedback, and feedback as an ecological and socio-material concept acknowledging the messy and situated nature of feedback such as contextual factors, (e.g. culture, feedback modes and teacher-student relations) and individual factors (e.g. student learning goals, and feedback beliefs).

Oral quality assurance feedback modality

Oral quality assurance feedback modality involves a dialogical conversation between zonal school quality assurance officers and tutors; which is instant and speaks directly to tutors' weaknesses and strengths on pedagogical performances (Ehren, Altricher, McNamann & O'Hara, 2013; Zhu & Carless, 2018). Tutors perceived oral feedback as the most effective for greater interaction and dialogue between tutors and zonal quality assurance officers, and that also creates the greatest sense of collaboration (Eddy-Spicer, Ehren, Bangpan, Khatwa, & Perrone, 2016; Kosia, 2018; Grauwe, 2001; Nash, & Winstone, 2017; Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006; Nelson and Schunn, 2009). The study found that oral quality assurance feedback modality offers an opportunity for greater interaction and dialogue between zonal quality assurance officers and tutors. It also helps them reach conclusion collaboratively. It further supports tutors to take appropriate action immediately after weaknesses have been identified. In addition, it saves time in data generation process, and provides feedback for individuals and group of tutors. The findings are similar to the study by Eurydice (2004), which found that directorates of education in Netherlands, England, Belgium, Denmark, Sweden, Iceland and Norway do not generally provide feedback to individual teachers even though teachers often ask for individual feedback from inspectors who observe their classrooms. However, school inspectors feel that they should not give feedback to individual teachers, but rather; to the whole school as feedback to individual teachers is considered to be the task of heads of schools and principals. School inspectors sometimes interpret requests of individual teachers for inspection feedback as an indication of lack of feedback culture in schools. Directorates of education in the Netherlands, England and Ireland publish inspection reports in which the functioning of individual schools according to the inspection standards is described and areas of improvement are identified. Inspectorates of education aim to make written feedback reports easily accessible to stakeholders particularly parents by using plain language and by making the format of the reports as similar as possible in order to aid comparison.

On the other hand, the study also found that oral quality assurance feedback modality is hindered by credibility barriers of zonal school quality assurance officers who upgraded from primary and secondary levels of education into quality assuring teachers' colleges, among other contextual factors (Baxter, 2013; Dobbelaer et al., 2012). The findings further indicated that much of oral quality assurance feedback modality is dominated by views and opinions of zonal school quality assurance officers (Ahmad, Said, Khan, Yassin, Tahir, Bukhari, & Ali, 2013; Brown, McNamara, O'Hara, & O'Brien, 2016; Dobbelaer et al., 2013; Grauwe, 2008; Van Bruggen, 2010; Wanzare, 2002). Findings on oral quality assurance

feedback modality unfolded that tutors are forced into other modalities of receiving quality assurance feedback involving written quality assurance feedback for their pedagogical improvement.

Written quality assurance feedback modality

Written quality assurance feedback modality is a printed text report prepared by zonal quality assurance officers after they have conducted a college visit evaluation. Written feedback modality is usually delayed as it takes time to prepare. The findings are related to the study conducted by Hattie & Timperley (2007), which revealed that instant feedback can be more effective than delayed feedback. Specifically, feedback given to correct response is better than the one given to incorrect ones (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Additionally, written feedback covers both general weaknesses and strengths of tutors' pedagogical performances. The findings are in line with the study by Hattie & Timperley (2007), which found that feedback given to correct responses is better than one given to incorrect responses.

The study found that zonal school quality assurance officers found written feedback more effective than oral quality assurance feedback. This is because written quality assurance feedback report is a permanent record and, in most cases, is the only means by which quality assurance stakeholders such as the ministry of education, college owners, and teachers' colleges get to know about the state of the quality of education (Alkutich & Abukari, 2018; Grauwe, 2007). It also helps to provide feedback in general terms. This finding is dissimilar to the study by Ferris (1997), which found that feedback which is specific can work better than broad or general. In other words, comments given timely on each individual performance is more effective than those given to a group with different nature (Brookhart, 2012). It also provides feedback collectively, covering and showing what tutors do best, what they need to do and what they need to do for future improvements. This means that written quality assurance feedback is lengthy in character. This is in contrast with the study by Tseng & Tsai (2007), Bitchener, Young, & Cameron (2005), which found that short and to-the-point feedback explanations are more effective than lengthy and didactic ones.

The effectiveness of written quality assurance feedback also seems to relate more to the need for administration to control managers of teacher education (Grauwe, & Carron, 2004b; Grauwe, 2007; Wanzare, 2011). Zonal quality assurance officers spend a lot of time preparing written quality assurance feedback (Grauwe, 2001; Grauwe, & Carron, 2004a; Grauwe, 2007; Grauwe, 2008).

The study further found that written quality assurance feedback modalities were found to be directed much to the task that tutors had completed or performed by identifying correct against incorrect pedagogical tasks, surface information and giving extended information (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). This finding echoes the study by Kosia (2018), which found that written quality assurance feedback had positive contribution in teaching and learning for secondary teachers. It is shown that in secondary schools, quality assurance officers are at the same level as secondary school teachers; and so their conversations and dialogues are similar. This scenario is different in teachers' colleges as upgraded quality assurance officers from secondary schools may not be competent enough for quality assurance activities in teachers' colleges.

The study found that oral, written and demonstration quality assurance feedback modalities did not increase collaborative learning between tutors and zonal school quality assurance officers. The findings are similar to Choma (2011), who revealed irregularities of school inspection feedback to teachers' colleges. The study found that there was no collaboration between internal administration systems and other external quality assurance systems that disallow close contact on the daily realities of the college. This is consistent with a study by the Controller and Audit General (CAG) (2016), which found that mechanisms for reporting quality assurance feedback in education systems from heads of schools at secondary level to Presidents Office – Regional and Local Government (PO-RALG) at ministry level were not functioning properly enough to improve teachers' pedagogical practices.

The study found that written quality assurance feedback report does not much emphasise face to face socialization, collaboration and sharing of constructed knowledge between tutors and zonal quality assurance officers. The findings are in contrast with the study by Ice et al. (2010), which criticized the partial understanding of physical account (face to face) as necessary for construction of knowledge. The study revealed that narrow interpretation of Vygotsky theory discounts the ability of learners to conceptualize “being” as something other than a physical construct. Online learning environment (asynchronous learning) is also rich enough to support learners through socially mediated practices (Borup, West, Graham, 2012; Gallien, & Oomen-Early, 2008; Ice, Curtis, Phillips, & Wells, 2007; Oomen-Early, Bold, Wiginton, Gallien, & Anderson, 2008). Scholars viewed this creation of online courses as the ability to project oneself into a virtual environment. Learners come to view their interactions as being fluid and integrated process rather than a series of tasks. The sense of “being there” could be established in the online environment through providing and

interpreting emoticons as a replacement for nuance and nonverbal cues (Bullen, 1998; Flahery, & Pearce, 1998; Gunawardena & Zittle, 1997; Short, Williams & Christie, 1976).

The findings from the current study are in line with a study by Choma (2011), which found that there were irregularities in school inspection feedbacks in teachers' colleges. In most cases information gathered from inspection did not portray the reality of normal learning environment; and inspection was seen as remedial rather than developmental. In that case, the study left much to be desired as it generally provided a picture on the use of input measures such as frequencies as a way of evaluating feedback effectiveness, and little on the dialogic process in the collaborative construction of shared understandings of feedback. Moreover, the study by Ehren, Leuve and Schereens (2005) revealed that there was much emphasis on socialization and sharing of written quality feedback knowledge to the whole public through the use of social media, websites, audio (radio) and video (TV talk shows) modalities. The findings are also opposing to other studies by Henderson, & Phillips, (2015) in Australia; Ice et al., (2010) in Eastern and Central US, Laffey, et al (2006) in US, South Carolina and Chung Cheng Thailand; Gunawardena & Zittle, (1997) in US, California, Texas, New Mexico, Wisconsin, and Wyoming and Rovai, (2002) in US, Virginia. The studies found out that online learning environment (asynchronous learning) is also rich enough to support learners through socially mediated practices. They criticised the partial understanding of physical account (face to face) as necessary for construction of knowledge. This is because the modality of giving feedback through social presence (as opposed to physical) can fully support interpersonal communication and construction of knowledge collaboratively.

The findings from this study reported lack of socialization during knowledge sharing through written quality assurance feedback modality between tutors and zonal school quality assurance officers. As described by tutors, written quality assurance feedback report does have utility towards tutors' pedagogical improvements. The findings are in contrast with Choma's (2011) study, which found that feedback was a mere information exchange. Viewing feedback as information exchange did not allow research approaches focusing on the function of dialogue in collaborative construction of shared understandings. On the other hand, the findings echo Grauwe's (2008) study, which found that written quality assurance feedback was superficial and artificial; thus, could not improve pedagogical skills among teachers. At the same time, the findings contrast with the study by Grauwe (2007), who found that simple control without support would not easily lead to quality improvement. This is

why, from the very beginning, these two dimensions of supervision have been intimately linked. In most instances, support takes the form of advice given to tutors and principals during supervision visits, which cover both administrative and pedagogical issues.

In addition, the work of quality assurance officers has always been characterized by a number of tensions that are difficult to overcome such as tension between administrative duties and pedagogical responsibilities. In many countries, these tensions have increased because of the gradual deterioration of functioning of learning institutions. When the system starts deteriorating, the need for pedagogical support becomes stronger, but at the same time, quality assurance officers must invest more and more effort in administrative control and disciplinary issues. This is a real vicious circle that makes the work of quality assurance officers increasingly difficult; and which exposes them to further criticism. Indeed, when a choice has to be made between quality assurance officers and administrative and pedagogic duties, the latter suffer. But arguably, some supervisors may prefer to focus on administration rather than pedagogy as they have the power to take administrative decisions but, in the eyes of some teachers, lack the authority and/or competence to give pedagogic advice.

The findings are related to the US study by Nelson and Schunn (2009), which found that written feedback that identify problems and provide solutions are especially effective. The findings of this study are also in line with the study in Uganda by Altinyeken (2010b) and Tabulawa (1997), which found that learner-centred approach stems from the theory of social constructivism. The theory views knowledge as socially constructed, education as a social process, and teaching and learning as social interaction while the learner is viewed as an active participant, not a passive recipient of knowledge (Altinyeken, 2010a; Tabulawa, 2003). Whereas Piaget's theories of human development focused on the child, Vygotsky focused more on the teacher and the teacher's role in the social interaction of learning. Vygotsky saw activities done by the learners as central to education; and the teacher as an interventionist who supports the learner through the *zone of proximal development*, which lies just beyond the domain in which the child has achieved competence; and this challenges the learner toward his or her full potential (Davydov & Kerry, 1995; Glassman, 2001; Sutherland, 1992). The teacher thus scaffolds the child toward competence in any skill.

Demonstration Quality Assurance Feedback

Demonstration quality assurance feedback modality is a straightforward instructional support given by Zonal School quality assurance officers during tutors teaching process before the

lesson ends. It usually occurs when Zonal School quality assurance officers have mastered both content and pedagogy of the lesson as well as quality assurance process. The findings are related to the study by Morrison, Ross, Kalman, & Kemp, (2011), which revealed that dialogue is best learned through practice.

The major role that this theoretical perspective ascribes to the teacher is that of an inductor or 'guide'. As a facilitator, the teacher's role crucially involves creation of opportunities for pupils to actively engage in tasks that enable them to inquire or investigate the principles being learned. The teacher's role also includes providing a supportive learning environment and offering appropriate learning challenges. The latter requires the use of activities that are open and less structured; and involves the use of pupils' own procedures or methods. Such activities are often presented in problem situations and they enable pupils to encounter learning through intellectual strategies like relationship or pattern searching and experimentation, formulation and testing conjectures about relationships, and formulation of explanations for observed rules (Duncombe, & Armour, 2004; Brownstein, 2011; Molloy, Boud, & Henderson, 2020).

Social constructivism also envisages that effective education can only be applicable when the school links up with the home. There is a meeting of the teacher's mind and that of the child; and the informal education that takes place in the community he/she becomes the starting point for formal education in school (Davydov & Kerry, 1995; Glassman, 2001; Sutherland, 1992). Social constructivism calls for teaching methods which appear to diminish the direct teaching role and authority of the teacher. In other words, constructivism calls for teachers to move away from traditional teaching methods. This approach has come to be referred to as learner-centred education.

The study found that written quality assurance feedback modality was not made available to other important quality assurance stakeholders such as TIE (Tanzania Institute of Education) and NECTA (National Examination Council of Tanzania). To the contrary, this finding contrasted with the study by Ehren, Leuve & Schereens (2005), who examined how inspection leads to primary school improvement in Netherlands. The study revealed that quality assurance feedbacks were published for public use. In addition, the study found that quality assurance officers gave quality assurance feedback through different ICT modalities/channels such as TV, websites, conferences, radio and social media.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The field of feedback research has already had rich contributions. However, a large body of feedback literature has focused on how to apply modalities of giving feedback in quality assurance practices or processes. Effective feedback has unfortunately received limited consideration. Even more, few studies have attempted to answer this question from primary, secondary and university teachers' and learners' perspective on giving and receiving classroom feedback.

The current study has addressed this research gap by investigating stakeholders' perceptions of whether the modalities of giving quality assurance should be considered as effective. The findings show that modality through which quality assurance feedback is provided does not have a bearing on effectiveness. The study concludes that the new framework for giving quality assurance feedback in Tanzanian teachers' colleges was adopted and implemented before tutors were adequately oriented to the framework. The study recommends that when quality assurance framework and its modalities of giving quality assurance feedback are to be changed, the government should consider adequately training zonal school quality assurance officers for them to perceive quality assurance feedback as a dialogic process. It also recommends that tutors take charge in seeking and acting on feedback through collaboration and sharing of constructed knowledge before the new quality assurance feedback modality is implemented.

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