

## CONNECTING THE WORLDS OF LEARNING AND WORK: THE ROLE OF THE WORLD OF WORK PROGRAMME

**Caroline Aba Anane**

World of Work Centre, Accra Polytechnic,  
Accra, GHANA.

[caronanab@yahoo.com](mailto:caronanab@yahoo.com), [canane@apoly.edu.gh](mailto:canane@apoly.edu.gh)

### ABSTRACT

*The “World of Work” programme which is offered in leading universities such as Liverpool John Moores University in the UK, University of the West Indies and Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) in Malaysia has been cited by the UK Government as an excellent example of employability practice. This Programme aims at ensuring that every student is equipped with the skills they need to stand out from the crowd and successfully engage in the world of work, either because they possess skills which are highly valued by employers or because they are well equipped to set themselves up in their own business. It therefore provides valuable information on industries, jobs, career paths, and training programmes to equip students to be able to explore possible careers that match their interests and skills.*

*There is no doubt that the preparation of our graduates for success in their chosen occupations is dependent on a wider range of skills and personal attributes acquired beyond academic capabilities. The World of Work programme has therefore been devised as the means by which the trainee can acquire key “employability skills” through workshops, professional mentorship by captains in industry and commerce, job fairs, etc. to improve their chances of gaining employment or becoming entrepreneurs in the present highly competitive market.*

*This paper presents a conceptual framework of the World of Work programme at Accra Polytechnic which aims at bridging the divide between school and work to improve teaching and learning in the Polytechnic.*

**Keywords:** World of Work, employability skills, mentorship, academic capabilities, career paths

### INTRODUCTION

The Polytechnic Act 745, passed by the Parliament of Ghana in 2007, gave the Polytechnics in Ghana autonomy and spelt out what is expected of a polytechnic in its capacity as a tertiary institution as follows:

1. Provide tertiary education in the fields of manufacturing, commerce, science, technology, applied science, applied arts and any other fields approved of by the Minister of Education, and
2. Provide opportunities for skills development, applied research and publication of research findings

The first objective indicates that what is taught in the Polytechnics must be aligned to the world of work. The second embodies the hope that the Polytechnics would help to develop Industry. Thus there is an insistence on an alignment through knowledge and skills transfer from the Polytechnics to Industry or the World of Work.

The mandate of polytechnics therefore is to prepare students directly for the labour market in a practical way. Yet the labour market often complains about a lack of practical skills in the graduates. This could be attributed to inadequate industry involvement in what and how teachers teach students and also to the polytechnic curricular not always based on occupational standards.

It is an undeniable fact that for people to be adequately prepared for the world of work, they need to be proficient in a set of skills and personal attributes that will make them more likely to gain employment and be more successful in their chosen occupations. But are the graduates well prepared for the job market? Are they being equipped with the requisite set of skills and personal attributes that will give them long term relevance in the fast-changing globalised marketplace? So many students graduate from the tertiary institutions each year but the unemployment rate keeps rising all over the world especially in the developing countries.

Research has shown that one cause of unemployment is the mismatch between skills people possess and skills the labour market requires. According to International Labour Organization (ILO) Economist, Steve Kapsos (2011) a big reason for the high youth unemployment rate in the world is a skills mismatch. Young workers do not have the skills needed for the jobs that are available. Kapsos stated that education is one solution and improvements in education have occurred. But according to him there are often wide education and skills gaps between men and women in developing countries.

The competitive nature of the economies of many countries has raised concern for employability of today's graduates (Blackwell *et al.*, 2001). One of the purposes of higher education is to provide graduates with the means through which their potential could be realised (Gibbs, 2000). This is especially important as students search for a better way to achieve professional skills and to reduce uncertainty in their learning process as commented by Ju *et al.* (1998)

With the fast changing globalised marketplace, there is an urgent need to adjust training to meet the demands of the changing world. The changes that seem to occur in industry means there must be ways of developing and equipping today's graduates with the requisite skills of functioning within and beyond the working environment. There is therefore the need for higher level knowledge and skills in the work force which can be achieved if these skills are provided within educational institutions and this is where the World of Work programme run by the World of Work Centre at Accra Polytechnic plays an important role.

The Polytechnic's World of Work Programme seeks to ensure that the new paradigm of professional training, where there is alignment between the worlds of learning and work, becomes the norm so that the tradition paradigm of education and training where there is no connection between the worlds of learning and work becomes a thing of the past.

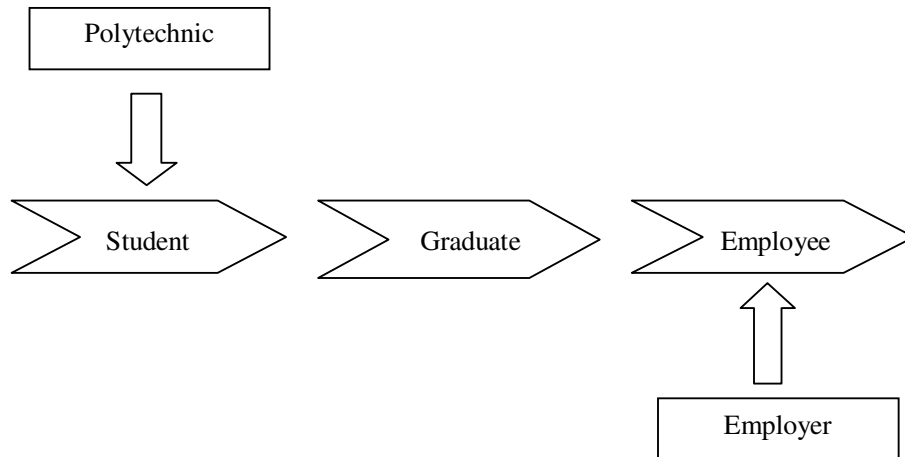
Figure 1 below is an illustration of what education is (traditional paradigm) and what it should be (paradigm shift) if institutions want their graduates to meet the demands of the labour market.

The traditional paradigm involves enrolling students and training them to become graduates who would end up as employees and it is only when they become employees that the employer comes into contact with them. In effect there is virtually no input from the employer into the training of the student.

The paradigm shift (new paradigm) on the other hand has the employer being involved with the training of the student from the very beginning when he/she enrolls as a student through to

when he/she becomes an employee. In other words, there is collaboration between polytechnic and industry from start to finish. This will invariably ensure that the student obtains the skills required by industry and thereby reduce the incidence of skills mismatch.

### Traditional Paradigm



### Paradigm Shift

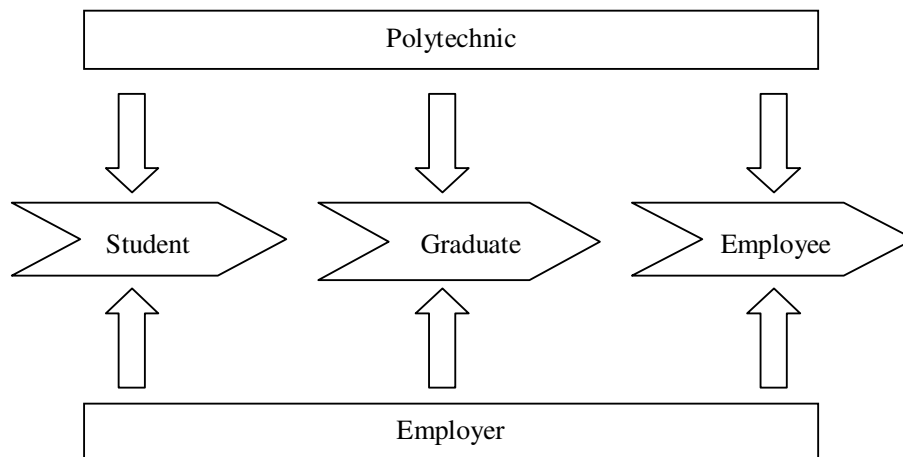


Figure 1. Paradigms of Education

### OBJECTIVES OF THE WORLD OF WORK PROGRAMME

The World of Work programme is offered in leading universities such as Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU), University of the West Indies, Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) in Malaysia among others and has been described as an excellent example of a Public-Private Partnership. It is therefore not surprising that the World of Work project has been cited by the UK Government as an excellent example of employability practice.

The programme has the following objectives:

1. To provide skills to students to improve their chances of gaining employment in the present highly competitive market;
2. To help students explore possible careers that match their interests and skills;

3. To provide students with valuable information on industries, jobs and career paths; and
4. To provide training programmes to equip students

### **COMPONENTS OF THE WORLD OF WORK PROGRAMME**

The Accra Polytechnic “World of Work” Programme has six major components to complement the academic and professional training of the students in order to produce highly skilled and competent professionals who can thrive in today’s employment marketplace and have a long-term relevance in the fast-changing globalised marketplace.

These are:

- a. Training Workshops
- b. Career and Personal Development Services
- c. Work Related Learning
- d. Mentoring Programme
- e. Public-Private Partnership
- f. Networking Events

The above six components are highlighted below.

#### **Training Workshops**

Workshops with industry participation to cover key world of work skills known collectively as “Employability Skills”. Currently nine skill areas have been identified and are being handled by experienced facilitators. These “employability skills” which have been designed in modules are facilitated twice a week on week-ends so that the workshops do not interfere with academic work. Each module is completed in eight hours, four hours per day. During the facilitation of these modules, students have the opportunity to work in groups and make presentations of what transpired during their group discussion. Through this method, students learn how to articulate and demonstrate these skills to build confidence and creativity in them. At the end of the facilitation of each module, students are assessed to ensure that they have acquired the respective skills and can exhibit these skills in simulation situations. These assessments are done to add more credibility to the certificate given at the end of the workshop sessions.

A summary of what each of these nine “Employability Skills” entail are provided below:

#### ***Team-working Skills***

All employers are keen to recruit graduates who are able to cooperate, solve problems and work in teams. With advance in technology, less hierarchical organizations are emerging with project teams, self-managed work teams and management teams being the order of the day. Therefore, what is becoming increasingly important is for us to get on well with people and be in a position to work with and through others. Participants learn the skills required to work confidently within a group, accept and learn from constructive criticism, give constructive feedback to others, and take a share of the responsibility.

#### ***Communication Skills***

Effective communication requires being able to actively listen and express ideas and views clearly, confidently and concisely both in speech and in writing tailoring your content and style to the audience and promoting free-flowing communication. Participants learn the skills required in speaking, listening and writing effectively.

***Leadership Skills***

Participants gain a practical overview of the different leadership styles required for different situations and will be better placed to manage, coordinate, supervise and take responsibility for others; including directing, organizing and motivating them.

***Time Management Skills***

Time management skills are valuable in many aspects of life. Participants develop effective strategies for managing their time in order to balance the conflicting demands of time for study, leisure, earning money and job hunting.

***Creative Thinking***

This is the ability to think creatively or “outside the box” so that you use your inspiration and imagination to solve problems by looking at them from unexpected perspectives. Participants learn how to think creatively in order to enhance their career.

***Pursuit of Excellence***

Striving for excellence which involves trying to put quality into everything you do is an important part of professionalism in any job. This is because this attitude makes you to stand out and make rapid strides in your career thereby making you an achiever. Participants learn some of the attributes that these successful individuals tend to have.

***Commercial Awareness***

This module involves an interest in business and an understanding of the wider environment in which an organization operates: its customers, competitors and suppliers. Participants gain practical understanding of the key drivers for business success (including importance of innovation and taking calculated risks) and the need to provide customer satisfaction and build customer loyalty.

***Information Literacy***

Information literacy is the ability to identify what information is needed and the ability to locate, evaluate and use information in solving problems and composing discourse. This module develops the skills needed for participants to be able to locate, collect, evaluate, and organize information from a variety of sources.

***Job Preparedness***

This deals with key job preparedness skills including Curriculum Vitae writing, Interview Techniques, and knowing the science behind undertaking a job-search. Participants having gone through this module develop proficiency in these key skills.

When all stake holders in the programme are satisfied that participants have acquired these “employability skills” on completion of the workshops, the participants are provided with an Accra Polytechnic validated World of Work Certificate endorsed by Industry. The Certification will be recognized as the attainment of a quality standard and will complement the student’s academic qualification. Currently, 36 students have successfully completed these workshops and have obtained World of Work skills certificates.

***Career and Personal Development Services***

Career Advisory Services designed to provide information and advice on career planning and personal development are offered to students from Year One to final year. Under the close supervision of more experienced professionals who provide important source of advice and support, students have the opportunity to maximize their career potential.

### **Work Related Learning**

The programme also deals with promoting work related learning through greater access to internships, work placements and volunteering schemes locally and internationally. According to Apori *et.al.*, (2011), Students Industrial Attachment or Internship is a skill training programme designed to expose and prepare students for the world of work during their education process. The objectives of which include bridging the gap between classroom teaching (theory) and practice for students. The ability for learners therefore to transfer knowledge which includes skills to application, may not be the sole responsibility of the education process. This implies that to meet current and future demands for a workforce for the industry who are appropriately skilled and knowledgeable there should be an ongoing cooperation rather than a gap between education and organisations hence the need for workplace experience learning.

### **Mentoring Programme**

The programme has an optional professional Mentoring Programme. This mentoring programme enhances the prospects of students to link up with captains in industry and commerce to be mentored and help them to move their careers forward.

### **Public-Private Partnership**

Through the initiative of the Centre, the Polytechnic has collaboration with a leading automobile company (JAPAN MOTORS) in the following areas: work related learning for students, staff attachments to upgrade their practical skills, provision of guest lecturers, sponsorship packages for best graduating student in the Engineering section, among others. The nine employability skills workshops are currently facilitated by a private service provider (Purplepeople).

### **Networking Events**

A number of networking events designed to bring the world of work (Employers) and students' closer together is an integral component of the World of Work programme. Therefore, Internal Job Fairs, for example, where companies come to show case job opportunities and career prospects are organized at least once per semester for the benefit of the students.

## **BENEFITS OF THE WORLD OF WORK PROGRAMME**

There are enormous benefits for all those who go through the "World of Work" programme. The success story of Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU) "World of Work Programme" for example has been phenomenal as many of their graduates have progressed rapidly in their chosen career paths ranging from positions in local councils, media, teaching, retail and health or set up successful businesses after just three years of running the project in their university.

Malaysia's largest public university, Universiti Teknologi Mara, realising the benefits the world of work programme will bring to its students requested LJMU to introduce the world of work programme in its university. A team from the Graduate Development Centre of LJMU went to Malaysia to launch the LJMU World of Work certificate pilot project with students from the Universiti Teknologi Mara.

Another success story is that of the University of West Indies and Republic Bank Limited "World of Work Programme" which is an initiative geared primarily toward equipping final year UWI students with the necessary tools for succeeding in today's work environment. Since its inception, their world of work programme has attracted an ever increasing number



of participants over its twelve years of existence. More than 1,300 final year students participated in their WOW 2010, with several students obtaining interviews and job offers. The bank to date is collaborating with the university because they regard the programme as adding significant value towards developing the career potential of students.

The benefits for each category are as follows:

## **Students**

### ***Work Related Learning***

Many curricular at polytechnics contain practicals. Yet students complain that even the practicals are too theoretical. There are many reasons for this. With large student numbers and sometimes with only one equipment the lecturer or technician performs the experiment for the students to observe. In other cases, the equipment available may not be working so lecturers end up explaining the functions of the various parts with no opportunity for the students to practice what they have learnt. The World of Work Programme addresses this through work related learning where students go for attachments in industries to give them the much needed work-related skills and experience in order to perform effectively as professionals. Attachment therefore becomes more beneficial to students.

During attachments students gain insights and experience. The companies or institutions they are attached to also gain insight into the attitude, knowledge and skills students have acquired during their studies. Currently there is a pilot programme in the Department of Mechanical Engineering using the Competency Based Training (CBT) system at the Higher National Diploma (HND) level in Plant Engineering. These students undergo what is known as 'Workplace Experience Learning' which a good example of attachments giving students practical experiences relevant to the skills they have learnt. This is because, students are not only placed in organizations relevant to their workplace skills but they also undergo supervised practical training. The various industries these students have undertaken their work related learning have all attested to the high performance of these students on this pilot CBT programme. The "World of Work" programme improves the attachment period and makes it more relevant to the needs of students since it makes use of best practices. Students will therefore benefit more under the world of work's industrial attachments.

### ***Enhanced Practical Training***

The labour market often complains about lack of practical skills in the graduates with the principal complaint of the inability of the graduates to effectively apply their knowledge. There have been some forms of linkages with industry and some of these linkages have yielded industry support through donations of equipment to enhance practical training. Departments such as the Mechanical, Electrical and Hotel, Catering and Institutional Management of the Polytechnic have been beneficiaries of such donations from Silver Star Company Ltd., Mechanical Lloyd, Electricity Company of Ghana and Golden Tulip respectively but these donations are not forthcoming since they were done on ad hoc basis. With a more structured linkage through the "World of Work" programme by the signing of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with these companies, the Polytechnic will get more industry support through donations of equipment for the students' practical training to be enhanced.

### ***Provision of 'Soft Skills'***

The "World of Work" programme places premium on giving students what is termed "Soft Skills" which is valued by companies because research suggests and experience shows that soft skills can be just as important an indicator of job performance as "Hard skills".

Therefore, giving students 'Soft skills', which refer to personal qualities, habits, attitudes, and social graces that make someone a good employee and compatible to work with, creates graduates that can thrive in today's employment marketplace thereby ensuring that they maintain a long-term relevance in the fast-changing globalised marketplace. "Soft skills" cannot be adequately provided by classroom teaching alone despite the extensive efforts that may be made by educators; hence the need for a more structured way of providing these skills through the workshops organized under the "World of Work" programme.

### ***Career and Personal Development Services***

With the Career and Personal Development Services provided under the "World of Work" Programme, trainees are able to understand their strengths and weaknesses, personal values, relating to others etc. and the personal actions required on their part in order to place themselves in the best possible position to get that all important first job. The service therefore provides valuable information on career paths, personal development and training programmes to equip students to be able to explore possible careers that match their interests and skills.

### ***Mentorship Programme***

The provision of the professional Mentoring Programmes through mentoring platforms allows students to link up with mentors who are already well established in the profession they intend to enter. The advantage of this is that it provides the students with information, advice and hands-on experience to help them move their career forward. It is also an opportunity for them to create networks and maintain relationships throughout their professional careers.

### ***Online Job Platform***

There is an opportunity for students to access job platforms online to allow them to develop an online profile for themselves so that prospective employers could keep tabs on their development and initiate employment discussions. This youth employment database website which contains information of skilled youth and their employment related profile is very useful for employers who are searching for suitable persons for particular areas. This is indeed a welcome innovation in this era since it affords the employer the opportunity to know the potentials of would-be employees before they graduate. The database also helps in assisting the government policy of reducing youth unemployment to the barest minimum.

### ***Job Fairs***

The internal Recruitment Fairs to be organised once per semester will give students the chance to meet a wide range of employers, submit their Curriculum Vitae (CV) and learn more about the different types of employment available at leading local and international organizations. These fairs also enable charities and non-profit organizations who have work related learning opportunities to interact with students in an informal and friendly environment.

### ***Skills Certificate***

In a fiercely competitive job market, obtaining the World of Work Skills Certificate can help a student stand out from the crowd. This is because the "World of Work skills" the participants acquire will mean that they are not only graduating with a high quality diploma or degree but also the skills and experience demanded – and identified – by today's employers. And they will have a new skills certificate to prove it too, helping their CV stand out from the crowd when applying for jobs.



## **The Polytechnic**

The 'World of Work programme' ensures a more structured interaction with industry through the signing of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). These agreements ensure collaboration between industry and the institution whereby industry provides the skills areas they expect from the respective professions trained in the institution and the institution ensures that these skills are incorporated in the training of the students so that they meet the needs of the labour market. A few MoUs have been signed in the past with some industry partners and their input in the training of the students has enhanced the competencies of the students. There are indications that more MoUs will be signed because consultations have gone on with other industries which have yielded positive results.

There has also been the opportunity for regular interaction between employers and teaching staff which has been used to improve teaching, learning and assessment in the Polytechnic. Some companies for example Silver Star Company Ltd., Mechanical Lloyd, Electricity Company of Ghana and Golden Tulip have even donated equipment and other teaching aids to the Polytechnic to enhance practical training.

The World of Work programme provides the avenue for the Polytechnic to benefit from industry experience through guest lecturers for specific topics to scale up knowledge transfer partnership.

We should create an appetite to link industry to education since industry is a very important stake holder in education and the 'World of Work programme' creates this platform for the private sector to interact with academia on a regular basis.

## **Industry**

The programme is equally beneficial to industry because industry involvement in skills training ensures that the requisite skills that will be necessary for the graduates to acquire will be incorporated into their training while at the Polytechnic. This will ensure a reduced need for the re-training of the graduates when employed; saving industry a lot of money which they can channel into other sectors.

The partnership between industry and academia from start to finish ensures the promotion of strategic education and training with a view to improving the skills needs of the workforce, thereby enhancing worker employability, enterprise competitiveness and national growth.

This partnership also helps to cement industry's role in shaping the education and training needs of their employees and making industry more pro-active in the education and training of their workforce to enhance their relevance, effectiveness and efficiency in the global market.

## **CHALLENGES OF THE WORLD OF WORK PROGRAMME**

Every good effort has its share of problems and the "World of Work" Programme is no exception. The challenges are highlighted below:

### **Curricula**

The skills components of the "World of Work" Programme are not incorporated in the syllabus and are therefore handled separately through workshops. The ideal situation, however, is to embed the 'world of work skills' within the Polytechnic curriculum as has been done by Liverpool John Moores University, but this is a challenging task because of large student numbers and strict adherence to curriculum.

The average class size per department in the Polytechnic is about 120 students, with some departments having multiples of this number. Currently, there are fifteen departments offering various professional programmes in the Polytechnic. Therefore, imparting skills to a large number of students at a go can be a big challenge. This is because imparting skills to smaller class sizes is far more ideal since the facilitator gets ample time to evaluate participants' ability to perform essential skills.

Secondly, each Higher National Diploma (HND) programme run in the Polytechnic has several course students have to undertake to obtain a qualification. Departments therefore have to ensure that their students do all these courses to make the total number of credit hours in order to graduate. This strict adherence to syllabi therefore makes it difficult to incorporate other components which have not been captured in the syllabi.

Furthermore, some courses have components which are duplications or are no longer relevant because advancement in technology for example has made them redundant. Unfortunately, syllabi reviews are not done on a regular basis to expunge such courses from the curricula to make room for the essential skills. Therefore, students are overburdened with courses with little relevance to their training. Adding more skills, though relevant, would be overburdening the students with too much to do in very little time.

Trying to incorporate the essential skills offered by the "World of Work" programme into the curricula is a challenge which the Polytechnic is making efforts to address.

### **Funding**

Getting the funds to start and maintain any project can be a daunting task especially for public institutions which are financed by the government budget. Secondly, students in public institutions are not prepared to pay the full cost of training because their financial standing more often than not is not very strong, and the Management is also not in a position to shoulder the entire cost because of budgetary constraints. Where funding is not forthcoming, the project is abandoned or if embarked on, quality may be compromised.

There is also the issue of paying facilitators for facilitating the skills workshops which is treated as extra work and therefore payment for such teaching is comparatively higher than what is paid for 'regular' teaching. Payment of a commensurate fee for facilitating these skills workshops becomes an issue especially when the student number enrolled on the programme is not large and taking into considering the fact that students do not pay the full cost of training. There will therefore be the need for the institution to make up the difference which is not readily acceptable.

The issue of training personnel to handle some of the specialized areas on the programme certainly requires adequate funding for such training to be undertaken and sustained and more often than not the institutional budget is unable to cater for that.

### **Technology**

The internet is a very important tool in the realization of this programme. For instance the mentoring programme and the job platform are all done online. The workbooks for the "employability skills" workshops are sent to those registered for the programme via the internet. Students are also expected to do research on line but in our part of the world, internet accessibility can be a great challenge. For one, power supply can be erratic making easy access to internet connectivity problematic.

There is also a challenge when it comes to reliable internet access and depending on which part of the city or country you reside, you may or may not have easy access to an internet

facility. The worst scenario is that people cannot access the net regularly and are always behind with information.

To compound this, quite a number of people are 'internet illiterates' so using the web facility to access relevant information to enhance their status is not their priority.

### **Industry Collaboration**

Getting Industry collaboration is a daunting task. This is because industries are there for profit and if they do not see immediate benefits with the collaboration being proposed by the educational institution, they are not ready to partner with the institution to participate in the world of work programme. Informal consultations with some industries have had this question coming up when the issue of collaboration came up: "What is in it for us?" The fact is that industries want to see a correlation between their in-put into the training of students and the growth of their companies which can be difficult to assess in the short term. The reluctance of industry to readily collaborate with educational institutions has therefore been the bane of public private partnership in developing countries. It is gratifying to note that things are changing for the better and now some industries are willing to collaborate but a lot more industries have to come on board as pertains in developed countries for the connection between the worlds of learning and work to be fully realised.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Incorporating World of Work Skills into Curriculum**

Embedding the 'World of Work' skills within the Polytechnic curriculum can be realized when the Competency Based Training (CBT) concept is adopted. Competency Based Training is an industry and demand driven outcomes-based education and training program based on industry generated standards (occupational standards).

It focuses on what the participant is expected to be able to do in the workplace as opposed to just having theoretical knowledge. Detailed training materials are keyed to the competencies to be achieved and are designed to support the acquisition of knowledge and skills. In effect, essential knowledge is learned to support the performance of skills. A variety of support materials including print, audiovisual and simulations (models) keyed to the skills being mastered is used during facilitation in the CBT mode.

By employing the CBT mode of delivery, lecturers can teach the 'soft skills' alongside the technical material ('hard skills'). This is because in CBT, competencies to be achieved are carefully identified to ensure that they are relevant for the training and therefore there is no duplication of competencies. Furthermore, the CBT syllabi are reviewed regularly so the problem of duplication and redundancy as is the case with other curricula is not an issue for the CBT curricula. Students will therefore not be overburdened with duplications or irrelevant courses and therefore have ample time on the academic calendar for the "soft skills" to be incorporated.

For the above to be achieved, there is the need for not only the syllabi of the programmes in the Polytechnic to be structured in the Competency Based Training format, but also the training of staff in CBT facilitation. Lessons learnt from the pilot CBT Plant Engineering programme in the Polytechnic make the CBT the option to go for. Fortunately, the Polytechnic has another centre: the Teaching and Learning Centre, whose role is to enhance teaching and learning through providing refresher training for lectures, and introducing modern teaching methods in Higher Education among others. Plans are underway for the centre to be well resourced to play its role effectively and efficiently.

## Funding

There should be some form of cost sharing with the participants of the programme where they contribute towards the sustenance of the programme by paying a fee to be determined by all parties. However, the institution's percentage of funding for the programme should be higher. Industries should also come on board and help fund the programme.

## Success Stories

There are success stories of institutions which have introduced the world of work programme and sustained it. For example, the University of West Indies has had the Republic Bank Limited in Trinidad and Tobago collaborating with them for seven consecutive years (2003 to 2010). Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU) also has Marks and Spencer, the Confederation of British Industry, Shell International, Sony, Liverpool City Council, and other leading organizations working closely with them to determine a range of higher level 'World of Work' skills that students should have by the time they graduate. Even the police force is in collaboration with LJMU. In 2009, Merseyside Police offered to support students who wished to conduct dissertation research projects (undergraduate or postgraduate) in the area of youth knife crime. This goes to indicate that getting industry support may be difficult but not impossible. The World of Work Centre at Accra Polytechnic would employ the strategies adopted by these institutions and adapt them to our circumstances for the "World of Work" programme at Accra Polytechnic to also become a success story in the near future.

## CONCLUSION

Creating graduates that can thrive in today's employment marketplace is what all educational institutions strive to achieve. If we want to have a long-term relevance in the fast-changing globalised marketplace, then it stands to reason that we ensure that our outputs have what it takes to stand the test of time. If the transformation that the 'World of Work' programme has brought to the graduates from Liverpool John Moores University, University of West Indies and Universiti Teknologi Mara is anything to go by, then there is no doubt that institutions such as ours whose mandate is to train skilled manpower to meet the needs of industry should embrace the 'World of Work' programme and make it work. Then when our students finally graduate from the Polytechnic, they will be well equipped with skills that will help them stand out from the crowd and reach their full potential.

Bill Gates (2012), an American business magnate and chairman of Microsoft, the world's largest personal-computer software company, sums it all up when he said: "I believe that if you show people the problems and you show them the solutions they will be moved to act." The introduction of the 'World of Work' programme in Accra Polytechnic is an indication that the way to go now in education and training is to get the worlds of learning and work to collaborate to produce competent graduates.

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