



DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

National Catholic Secretariat



A COMPENDIUM OF SOME BEST PRACTICES IN EDUCATION: EDUCATION MANAGERS' PEER LEARNING EXPERIENCES

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Strengthening Transparency, Accountability
and Responsiveness in Ghana



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INTERNATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

Edited by Samuel Zan Akologo
October, 2014



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This product could not have been achieved without the backing and facilitation of the Ghana Catholic Bishops Conference. They acted as legal holders of the project and provided leadership for all other Faith-Based Organizations with public schools to continue to engage Government on the need for cooperation in Education. STAR-Ghana provided generous funding for the project over a three-year period that was the essential grease which kept the process-machinery in motion. Both STAR-Ghana and the Ghana

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It is my conviction that the outcome of this project, especially this COMPENDIUM OF SOME BEST PRACTICES IN EDUCATION: EDUCATION MANAGERS' PEER LEARNING EXPERIENCES is a testimony of effective cooperation in the promotion of the common good. I personally feel very proud of the achievement.

Very Rev. Fr. Nicholas Afriyie - Secretary General, National Catholic Secretariat.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

CoP	Community of Practice
STAR-Ghana	Strengthening Transparency Accountability Responsiveness in Ghana
GES	Ghana Education Service
PTAs	Parent-Teacher Associations
SMCs	School Management Committees
NAGRAT	National Association of Graduate Teachers
GNAT	Ghana National Association of Teachers
CEU	Catholic Education Unit
DDO	Diocesan Development Office
NCS	National Catholic Secretariat
PTR	Pupil-Teacher Ratio
BECE	Basic Education Certificate Examination
INSET	In-Service Training
JHS	Junior High School
KG	Kindergarten
SPAM	School Performance Appraisal Meeting
TLMS	Teaching and Learning Materials

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Literature Review

Peer learning is a Community of Practice (CoP) model. The use of peer learning and mentoring in higher education environments has been established as an effective learning strategy (Skalicky & Brown 2009). The Education Managers' peer learning for quality education, which was conceptualized and facilitated by the Department of Human Development of the National Catholic Secretariat, was aimed at piloting a model of Community of Practice in Ghana's education service delivery and management. It created a framework that brought diverse education managers together periodically to learn and share knowledge. As Community of Practice, the Managers from various levels of education shared best practices, innovations and models that they have employed for successful outcomes in education service delivery, management or both. A Community of Practice of Education Managers can inform and enhance education policy with peripheral participation (Lave & Wenger 1991).

Communities of Practice (CoP) have been in existence as far back as storytelling has been used as a channel for sharing experiences (Shields 2003, Wallace 2007, Lave & Wenger 1991). In spite of its primeval origins, the conceptualisation of CoP has remained nebulous in literature; thus amenable to several interpretations in theory and practice (Cox 2005). Notwithstanding this, the purpose of CoP as a mechanism for creating and sharing knowledge among people with similar interests and goals has always remained intact

in the existing body of knowledge (Cox 2005). This paper provides a review of the literature on CoP and is organised in 5 main sections.

Commonalities and differences in conceptualisations

The four earlier seminal works on CoP cited by almost all authors on the subject are replete with significant commonalities as well as major conceptual disagreements. These seminal papers comprise:

- i. *Situated learning: legitimate peripheral participation* (Lave and Wenger 1991). This paper provides a theory of newcomer learning stressing it as a continuous, active, engaged, situated, and identity forming process – in contrast to the then dominant cognitive view.
- ii. *Organizational learning and communities of practice: toward a unified view of working, learning and innovation* (Brown and Duguid 1991). This paper takes the concept more directly into the organisational setting, stressing communities of practice's role in the improvisation of new understanding where official accounts of work prove inadequate to “get the job done” and stressing the importance of narrative.
- iii. *Communities of practice: learning, meaning and identity* (Wenger 1998). This paper focuses on social identity, trajectories of participation and the stresses of dilemmas to the individual of their multi-membership of different communities.

iv. Cultivating communities of practice (Wenger, McDermott and Snyder 2002). This provides a manual and inspirational text for practitioners on the formation of informal groups for learning in large companies.

Although these seminal works share significant commonalities especially in their perception of meaning as locally and socially constructed and in their emphases on identity as central to learning, there are major dissimilarities in their conceptualisations of: community, learning, power and conflict, diversity, as well as informality.

Community

Community as a concept has been variously perceived in literature. To one school of thought, the concept connotes a broad group of people involved in a coherent craft or practice (Lave and Wenger 1991). To another, the concept means an informal group of workers doing the same or similar jobs (Brown and Duguid 1991). Others consider the concept to represent a group that coheres through sustained mutual engagement on an indigenous (or appropriated) enterprise, and creating a common repertoire (Wenger 1998). To some others, the concept of community stands for an informal club or special interest group inside an organisation, set up explicitly to allow collective learning and cultivated by management action (Wenger, McDermott and Snyder 2002).

Learning

Whereas all authorities on CoP stress on the importance of learning rather than teaching as pertains in formal trainings, there are

distinctions in terms of what is considered key in the process of learning. While one school of thought strongly holds that peripheral participation (as in apprenticeship) and active involvement in existing practice is vital in the process of learning (Lave and Wenger 1991), others consider the reproduction of existing practice or knowledge as less important. In the view of these authorities, collaborative problem solving or improvisation leading to new practice achieved through storytelling is rather vital in the learning process (Brown and Duguid 1991). Others are of the opinion that an individuals' identification with different communities of practice and trajectories of participation constitutes what is essential in the process of learning (Wenger 1998). For some others, the key process in learning is by deliberately bringing together multiple experts in learning-focused communities to share knowledge, innovate and solve problems (Wenger, McDermott and Snyder 2002).

Power and conflict

The concepts of power and conflicts as related to CoPs have been differently perceived in the various conceptualisations in the existing literature. The CoP is conceptualised by some authorities to involve power relations between different generations of stakeholders such as masters and trainees (Lave and Wenger 1991). To some others, the CoP is non-hierarchical with all its members on the same level (Brown and Duguid 1991). However, in other conceptualisations of CoP, power is not considered as a central concern and the prospect of conflict is largely envisaged as a consequence of tensions resulting from multi-membership of

different communities by an individual (Wenger 1998). Moreover, some conceptualisations of CoPs reflect attempts to create value by linking the personal development and professional identities of practitioners to the goals and strategy of the organisation. In this respect, the management of the organisation is deemed to assume a benign role in the coordination of relationship within the community (Wenger, McDermott and Snyder 2002).

Diversity

The membership of CoPs has not assumed the same characteristics for all conceptualisations in the existing literature. While the membership of some CoPs has been largely heterogeneous in terms of power and influence (Lave and Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998), others have been predominantly egalitarian (Brown and Duguid 1991). However, in some cases, diversity is intentionally designed into the group (Wenger, McDermott and Snyder 2002). In all the various conceptualisations, the degree of diversity of membership is to a large extent influenced by the conceptualisation of community and focus of learning.

Informality

One of the points of convergence among all authorities on CoP is the notion that learning within CoP is informal, i.e. unstructured, unplanned, not taught. Nonetheless, the various conceptualisations of CoPs in the literature differ in terms of the degree of informality. While some are constituted in the setting of a formal organisation system of learning (Lave and Wenger 1991), others exist outside the formal organisational system often as a

counter to formal organisational culture (Brown and Duguid 1991). Moreover, others evolve into highly informal system with their shape and purpose different from that envisaged by the designer (Wenger 1998). Others, however, thrive on pre-exist management interests although informal in character (Wenger, McDermott and Snyder 2002).

While there are commonalities in the existing literature on CoP, major divergences are also evident as already discussed. It is therefore important to operationally define the key concepts that are amenable to multiple interpretations in any use of the term CoP to avoid confusion. The next section provides an overview of the advantages of CoP.

Advantages of CoP

CoPs have gained recognition and support within many organisations because of its potential benefits of facilitating learning and sharing of tacit knowledge leading to higher organisational performance (Wenger 2004, McDermott & Archibald 2010). CoP can significantly improve four key areas of organisational performance (Lesser & Storck 2001). These include: reducing the learning curve of new employees leading to enhanced and rapid response to operational demands, reducing duplication and preventing "reinvention of the wheel" and stimulating new ideas for products and services.

It has been shown that workers spend a third of their time in search of information and are five times more likely to go to a co-worker rather than revert to an explicit source of information (book,

manual, or database) (Davenport & Prusak 2000). Time is saved by talking with members of a CoP. Members of the community have tacit knowledge, which can be difficult to store and retrieve outside. For example, one person can share the best way to handle a situation based on his experiences, which may enable the other person to avoid mistakes and reduce the learning curve.

Through open discussions and brainstorming about a project, CoPs can stimulate new capabilities and knowledge. The type of information that is shared and learned in a CoP is limitless (Dalkir 2005). Performing optimally in a job requires being able to translate theory into practice. Communities of practice helps the individual to bridge the gap between knowing what (explicit knowledge) and knowing how (tacit knowledge) as well as facilitate the generation of new knowledge. (Duguid 2005; Ardichvilli, Page & Wentling 2003).

Comparison between CoP and functional or project team

CoPs differ in several significant ways from project teams. The major differences between CoPs and project teams are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1: Comparison between CoP and project team

Criteria	CoP	Project team
Scope of Objectives	A community of practice has as many objectives as members of that community.	A project team is driven by deliverables with shared goals, milestones and results.
Membership	CoP is made up of practitioners; membership evolves and members may take on new roles within the community as interests and needs arise.	A project team meets to share and exchange information and experiences just as the CoP does, but team membership is defined by task. A project team typically has designated members who remain consistent in their roles during the project.
Term	CoP can exist as long as the members believe they have something to contribute to it, or gain from it.	A project team is dissolved once its mission is accomplished

Comparison between CoP and community of interest

CoPs differ in two main ways from Community of Interest as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Comparison between CoP and community of interest

Criteria	CoP	Project team
Membership	Made of people who are active practitioners. Participation is not appropriate for non-practitioners	Made of people interested in sharing information and discussing a particular topic that interests them. Members are not necessarily experts or practitioners of the topic around which the CoI has formed.
Purpose	Provide a platform for practitioners to share tips and best practices, ask questions of their colleagues, and provide support for each other.	Provide a platform where people who share a common interest can go and exchange information, ask questions, and express their opinions about the topic

Factors of a successful CoP

The success of any CoP depends to a large extent on a number of factors. These include:

Activeness of Members of CoP

The level of activeness and responsiveness of individuals in the CoP largely determines its degree of success. Through the process of experience sharing through storytelling among members, CoPs help members to strengthen their skills on the job. (Seely Brown & Duguid 1991).

Motivation

Closely linked to the level of activeness of participants is their motivation to exchange knowledge as this is considered vital to success in communities of practice. Studies have shown that the motivation of CoP members is based on two main factors: consideration of knowledge as public good and sense of reward. It has been shown that members are motivated to become active participants in a CoP when they consider knowledge sharing as intended for the public good, a moral obligation and/or as a community interest (Ardichvilli, Page & Wentling 2003). In addition, a sense of tangible returns (promotion, praises or bonuses), intangible returns (reputation, self-esteem) and community interest (exchange of practice related knowledge, interaction) could also motivate CoP members to actively participate.

Collaboration

Collaboration is noted to be crucial to the survival of CoP. Research has shown that factors such as experience of colleagues and educational attainments can affect the level of collaboration in knowledge exchange in a CoP (Sveiby and Simon 2002). It has been shown that more seasoned colleagues tend to foster a more collaborative culture. Besides, higher educational level also facilitates a tendency to favour collaboration.

1.2. Background

In Ghanaian schools, there are indeed two basic areas of interest. These are the internal and external entities. The internal involves the process – all the learning experiences and how the teacher will organize these for learning and growth to satisfy the external which involves parents, the Ghana Education Service, and other stakeholders. The efforts towards achieving quality education in Ghana need to involve both the internal and the external entities. However it has been observed that there has been undue emphasis on only the external i.e. what Government (Policy Makers) is doing about achieving quality education in the country. The Peer learning Project was developed to give opportunity to Managers of Education to demonstrate and share how the two entities involved in education can work together to ensure the delivery of quality education in Ghana..

1.3. Objectives

The objectives of the Project were to:

- Give opportunity to managers of education to share experiences in best practices, models, stories that have worked in enhancing quality education in the schools
- Give opportunity to managers of schools (Head teachers, teachers, PTAs and SMCs) to carry out a self assessment of their performance
- To demonstrate a model of dialogue and cooperation in education service delivery and management with the view to mainstreaming it in national policy

2.0 METHODOLOGY

It all began with the conceptualization of the project titled **“Government and Church partnership towards enhanced education service delivery and governance”** which was funded by STAR Ghana, a national pooled funding mechanism for civil society. The idea of the partnership was broadened to include all Faith-Based Organizations during the project approval and implementation stages. Thus, the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference (GCBC) and the National Catholic Secretariat – Department of Human Development (NCS-DHD) retained project ownership and management, respectively, while reaching out to all the other Faith Groups with public schools in Ghana.

The first year of the project implementation from December, 2011 to November, 2012 was devoted to building consensus on the question of partnership between Government and Faith-Based Organizations in the management of public schools. The project facilitated nation-wide

dialogue meetings of education stakeholders in nine of the ten political regions in Ghana. Greater Accra Region was excepted from the project coverage according to the contract with the funders. The regional dialogue meetings culminated in a National Conference on education which was jointly organized by the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference and the Ministry of Education, representing Faith-Based Organizations and Government of Ghana, respectively. The dialogue meetings effectively placed the partnership question in the public domain, gave it visibility, enhanced public awareness and built stakeholders' consensus. The outcome document of the Regional dialogue meetings and National Conference has been published separately.

The second and third years of the project implementation focused on Regional-level meetings of Managers of Education from both Government and Faith-Based Organizations, sometimes called Religious Education Units, to share knowledge and best practices in Education. The Department of Human Development developed the framework for the peer learning. A technical committee of representatives from the Ministry of Education, Ghana Education Service, Civil society, Ghana National Association of Teachers, Christian Council of Ghana, Private sector and the National Catholic Secretariat were put together. The committee met two times and developed what was called the critical areas of innovative learning in Education services delivery and management. These were clustered into two areas, namely, Management and Service delivery. Issues prioritized under the management area were: Discipline, Effective Supervision, Teacher discipline, Health status of children, Learning environment, Disability access, Community participation and General environment of school. Under the service delivery area, the priorities

were: Girl-child enrolment and retention, promotion of children's participation and ownership in the learning process, community participation, reading ability and attitudes of teachers and children, making learning easy and interesting for children, effective management of school time, Teacher quality, Disability access and promoting positive peer influence among children in education. Some of the issues were noted to be relevant in both management and service delivery. The management areas were about decisions, guidelines, directives, bye-laws and local policies that demonstrate positive outcomes in education. Service delivery was defined in terms of facilities, skills, approaches, methods and materials which directly benefited and enhanced pupils' learning.

The second framework that the Technical Committee helped to develop was the reporting template for the Peer Learning. The template had a brief introduction to the rationale and purpose of Education Managers Peer Learning. A short checklist of the following questions was meant to guide and capture information on the success stories that were shared:

- What is the success story/best practice/model?
- Which area of Education outcome does it address: service delivery, management or both?
- Explain briefly the reason for your categorization above
- Give summary narration of your success story or model; and
- Provide concrete evidence of impact of success story.

A demonstration learning approach was used to prepare the Regional Managers of Catholic Education to facilitate the round of peer learning.

Each Regional Manager was expected to facilitate one peer learning meeting each half year over the two-year period, bringing it to four sessions per Region. The regions were clustered into three zones: Northern, Central and Southern. The first peer learning session in each zone was facilitated by a member of the Technical Committee and was attended by all Regional Managers of Catholic Education unit in that zone so that they could learn how to apply the frameworks developed for the peer learning. Each Regional Manager was then facilitated further with budget support to undertake the remaining sessions. Each session ended with media briefings as a means of keeping the public informed.

Some members of the Technical Committee were joined by selected staff of the Department of Human Development to constitute the Joint Facilitation Team (JFT). Their role was to split up in pairs and take turns to participate in Regional Peer Learning sessions and to provide support to the Regional Managers. The team met every half-year to share experiences from their participation in the Regional Peer-Learning meetings.

During the third year when most Regional Managers were done with about three rounds of peer learning sessions, an Editorial Team was put together to review, edit and compile the success stories that were harvested from the peer learning sessions. The Team also helped to develop an objective tool to assess the performance of the Regional Managers of Catholic Education which was the basis for determining an incentive award package to them.

The final edits and literature review were the responsibility of the Executive Secretary of the Department of Human Development. This outcome document titled, **A COMPENDIUM OF SOME BEST PRACTICES IN EDUCATION: EDUCATION MANAGERS' PEER**

LEARNING EXPERIENCES brings together a conceptual framework whose implementation and documentation was the product of the Department of Human Development under the leadership of its Executive Secretary, Mr. Samuel Zang Akologo. It is expected that the content of the document will serve as proposals of guidelines to Government to mainstream the model of peer-learning and multi-stakeholder participation in Education in Ghana.

2.1 Data Collection

Series of workshops were organized for Education Managers from diverse background, GES, Christian and Islamic Faith Units, Garrison Units, and Private proprietors. Through facilitated sessions, Managers were put in groups to share their own experiences of best practices and to discuss how these experiences have enhanced quality education in their units. Reports from the group sessions were collected on the following Peer Learning Models:

2.1.1. Management

- Discipline
- Effective supervision
- Community Participation

2.1.2. Service Delivery

- Community participation (PTAs, SMCs etc)
- Reading ability and attitudes of teachers and children

- Effective management of school time
- Teacher quality
- Time on task (Effective management of school time)

2.1.3. Both Management and Service delivery

Participants were drawn from the following stakeholder categories:

- Regional Directors of Education
- Municipal/District Directors of Education
- Unit and Local Managers of Unit and Mission schools
- Representatives of Colleges of Education
- Identified retired Educationist
- Representatives of Conference of Basic Schools
- Representative of NAGRAT
- Circuit Supervisors of Education
- Media
- Catholic Education Unit
- Religious/Clergy
- DDO
- NCS

The data collected centered on the following areas:

i. The success story/best practices/models

A success story is any intervention that addressed any of the issues covered under the two Project areas, management and service delivery.

ii. Education outcome addressed

Education outcome is the identified Project areas i.e. management and service delivery.

iii. Evidence/Reason(s) for education outcome in ii above

This section involves the justification of the choice of a particular education outcome which the intervention impacted upon

iv. Summary narration of success story or model.

This involves a brief description of the success stories from which lessons could be drawn

v. Evidence of impact of success story

This section involves the indicators of evidence of impact of a success story. The impact of a success story is evidenced on the following outcomes due to interventions:

- PTR for all classes or schools maintained at approved level.
- Increase in number of parents or community members visiting school

- iii. Increase in attendance at PTA meetings
- iv. Improvement in girl - child enrolment or attendance or retention in school
- v. Increase in number of girls in top ten performers in class

These criteria were used to select success stories presented in Session 3.0 - Results-Selected Success Stories, under issues, intervention strategies and outcomes.

3.0. RESULTS-SELECTED SUCCESS STORIES

The reports from the groups were collected and the criteria defined in session 2.0 were used to select success stories under the Peer Learning Models of Management, Service Delivery or Both Management and Service delivery. The results of each model are presented under: issue, intervention and the output.

3.1. Management

Within the management category ten (10) fell under supervision; seven under discipline and five under community participation. A correlated summary of problems recurring under the three critical areas listed above and approaches adopted to correct them are presented below.

3.1.1. Ineffective supervision

I. Issues

- Low academic performance
- Ineffective use of instructional hours
- Non submission of lesson notes
- High level of truancy and poor performance
- High level of teacher absenteeism
- Teacher absenteeism and drunkenness
- Teacher absenteeism on re- opening day
- Low teacher output and quality
- Poor academic performance at BECE
- Falling standard of academic performance

3.1.1.1 Low academic performance

• Description of issues:

A school has been recording poor academic performance for a couple of years and eventually registered a zero per cent in the BECE. The District Education Office and the community removed the head teacher.

• Intervention Strategy

The new headship put in place the following measures:

- i. Setting a standard for learning output to be met by all teachers in the school

- ii. Effective vetting of lesson notes
- iii. Constant observation of happenings in the classrooms
- iv. Frequent organization of INSET
- v. Ensuring that teachers were punctual in reporting to school and teachers in turn made sure that pupils were also punctual.
- vi. Retrospection checks on pupils/teachers' output of work
- vii. Introduction of a motivational scheme for teachers and pupils
- viii. Involvement of all stakeholders (PTA/SMC and community) in the school's supervision

- **Outcome**

- i. Teachers and pupils were punctual to school
- ii. Improvement in academic performance of pupils.

3.1.1.2. Ineffective use of instructional hours

- **Description of issue:**

A Municipal Directorate of Education noticed that teachers were not managing the instructional hours properly through lateness and absenteeism, use of mobile phones and the use of instructional hours for co-curricular activities.

- **Intervention Strategy**

The Education Directorate put the following measures in place to ensure optimum use of instructional time:

- i. Teachers who reported late to school were made to answer written queries.
- ii. Use of mobile phones during instructional hours was banned.
- iii. Teachers who absented themselves were made to appear before a disciplinary committee set up in the school.
- iv. Preparation for co-curricular activities was limited to only pupils involved.

- **Outcome**

- i. There was a noticeable improvement in academic performance in the Municipality.
- ii. The Municipality came second in the Eastern Regional 2012 BECE ranking.

3.1.1.3. Non submission of lesson notes

- **Description of issue:**

Attitude of teachers who either did not submit their lesson notes for vetting or prepare their lesson notes.

- **Intervention Strategy**

After head teacher could no longer endure the bad attitude of teachers who either did not submit their lesson notes for vetting or prepare their lesson notes, she put the following measures in place:

- i. Introduction of a monitoring chart.

- ii. Pasting of information on chart on schools notice board for parents and other visitors to the school to see
- iii. Termly documentation of remarks on chart for future references.
- iv. Intensification of supervision and monitoring of attendance and output of work

- **Outcome**

- i. Teachers now prepare and submit their lesson notes on time.

3.1.1.4. High level of truancy and academic poor performance

- **Description of issues**

New head teacher realized that teachers were not regular and punctual. Teachers also left the school before classes ended. This led to loss of instructional hours which ultimately affected pupils' performance.

- **Intervention Strategy:**

In order to ensure that the right thing was done, the head teacher adopted the following strategies:

- i. Head teacher used himself as a model by being punctual at school.
- ii. Monitoring of teachers' punctuality, regularity and output of work by an invited Circuit Supervisor.
- iii. Monitoring of in and out of school movement of teachers by the

Introduction and inspection of Teachers' Movement Book.

- iv. Collection of lesson notes on Monday before 8:15 am
- v. Encouragements of Parents to visit the school

- **Outcomes:**

The following outcomes were observed within a year of initiating the above measures:

- i. Teachers' punctuality and regularity improved.
- ii. Pupils output of work and termly report improved.
- iii. Improved use of instructional hours leading to improved termly reports

3.1.1.5. High level of teacher absenteeism

- **Description issues:**

Teachers failed to report to school on time and also regularly. Pupils took advantage of this and did same leading to a low pupils' output.

- **Intervention Strategy**

The headmistress put the following measures in place:

- i. Signing of attendance register by teachers when they reported and departed from school. Cumulative count of attendance was used to check regularity.
- ii. Class prefects kept attendance of teachers who honoured their

periods and reported teachers who absented themselves.

- iii. Exercises were given by teachers and recorded by class prefects.

- **Outcome**

These measures resulted in the following:

- i. Average exercises recorded from pupil's books increased from five in 2012 to 10 in the 2013 academic year.
- ii. Lateness to school by teachers reduced drastically.
- iii. Teachers sought official permission before absenting themselves from school

3.1.1.6. Teacher absenteeism and drunkenness

- **Description issues:**

The Municipal Education Director observed that some teachers in the municipality were drunkards, perpetual absentees, and late comers; dressed shabbily and hardly prepared their lesson notes.

- **Intervention Strategy**

To stem out the behavior of teachers in the Municipality, the directorate put in place the following measures:

- i. Series of counseling meetings with teachers.
- ii. Assigned circuit supervisors to make regular visits to the schools of such teachers.

- iii. Reposting of the teachers behaving unprofessionally to schools where the head teachers would constantly help re-mold them.

- iv. Introduction of a “redeem yourself programme” in the Municipality- Selection from the group of drunken teachers to attend durbars in honour of national dignitaries visiting the Municipality to afford them the opportunities to redeem themselves.

- **Outcome**

The immediate effects of the above measures were:

- i. Punctuality to school of teachers improved remarkably.80% rate of punctuality was recorded.
- ii. Preparation of lesson notes in schools in the Municipality is now generally regular and timely.
- iii. There is marked improvement in the drinking habit and physical appearance of teachers who were drunkards.

3.1.1.7. Teacher absenteeism on re- opening

- **Description issues:**

The Lower Manya Municipal Education Directorate observed that teachers in the Municipality absented themselves from school on re- opening days.

- **Intervention Strategy**

To put a stop to this, the directorate put in place the following measures:

- i. No officer from the directorate was permitted to go on leave at the beginning of academic terms to ensure the availability of enough officers for monitoring of teachers in schools in the Municipality.
- ii. Teachers found to be absent were made to write undertaking to stop the misconduct.

- **Outcome:**

The interventions have led to the reduction in the incidence of teacher absenteeism on re-opening day.

3.1.1.8. Low teacher output and quality

- **Description of issues:**

A head mistress was faced with a problem of inadequate quality of teachers posted to her school and the subsequent low teacher work output. She realized that some of the teachers could not teach subjects assigned them while others did not know how to prepare lesson notes.

- **Intervention Strategy**

The head mistress introduced the following interventions to correct the situation:

- i. Identified the subject area teachers could well handle through consultation and discussion with the teachers involved.
- ii. Organization of an in service training for all teachers.

- iii. Prepared a chart for lesson notes vetting
- iv. Instituted an appraisal book for number of exercises given, homework, class tests and mid-term exams by teachers
- v. Teachers were directed to subject pupils' performance in exams to statistical analysis to find the average score earned by pupils in each subject to find out how pupils are performing.
- vi. Good performing teachers were praised at PTA meetings.

- **Outcomes**

The intervention strategies resulted in the following:

- i. Teachers submitted their lesson notes on time.
- ii. Teachers gave more exercises than before.
- iii. Teachers gave enough class tests, etc.
- iv. Average subject performance index has become a measure for teachers' performance.

3.1.1.9. Improving on academic performance

- **Description of issues:**

School performed poorly at the 2010/2011 BECE. It obtained a 40% pass rate. The stakeholders became worried and concerned.

- **Intervention Strategies**

The school management put in place the following measures:

- i. School management set a 50% target and established milestones for achieving it.
- ii. Teachers set target for subject areas.
- iii. Head teacher checked Lesson notes weekly.
- iv. Exercises given to pupils were checked weekly.
- v. Extra classes were introduced-Classes started at 6:30am and closed at 4:00pm
- vi. Teachers were not permitted to be absent for more than once in a term.
- vii. Head teacher effected strict supervision.

• **Outcome**

The measures taken resulted in the following:

- i. Increased in BECE pass rate from 40% to 85%.
- ii. Improvement in rate of submission of lesson notes.
- iii. Improvement in school attendance of both pupils and teachers.
- iv. Improvement in parents' interest in the school as indicated by increase in attendance of PTA. Meetings.

3.1.1.10. Falling standard of academic performance

• **Description of issues:**

The circuit supervisor observed the downward trend in academic performance of the once celebrated Junior High School.

• **Intervention Strategy:**

After series of separate meetings with teachers, pupils and parents he introduced the following interventions:

- i. He assisted the School Management Board to identify the problems.
- ii. School management enforced effective supervision to check lateness and absenteeism of teachers.
- iii. Introduction of a system to ensure effective assessment of pupils
- iv. Provision of opportunities for collective responsibilities in pupils' upbringing.

• **Outcome**

The outcome of the above measures was:

- i. Teachers are now committed to school work as they are regular and punctual at school.
- ii. BECE results improved from 40% to 63%.
- iii. Parents' inspect and confirm students' work

3.1.2. Discipline

The following issues were covered under the discipline sub-category

- Excessive use of the cane

- Late submission of lesson notes by teachers
- Pupils reporting for classes late after break
- Absenteeism and lateness by teachers and pupils
- Ineffective supervision
- High incidence of indecent dressing by both teachers and pupils.
- High level of absenteeism, truancy and lateness by pupils

3.1.2.1. Excessive use of the cane

- **Description of issues:**

Head teacher noticed the excessive use of the cane to maintain discipline by teachers in the school. Even though he believed in the adage, “spare the rod and spoil the child”, he felt this could be counterproductive.

- **Intervention Strategy**

To strike a balance he introduced the following measures:

- i. Introduction of and the use of a punishment book for recording offences
- ii. Approval of corporal punishments by head teacher as a requirement
- iii. Introduction of other forms of punishment eg pupils forfeit their break periods

- **Outcome**

As a result of these measures

- i. The number of offences necessitating punishment reduced and caning as a mode of punishment declined significantly
- ii. Other forms of punishment requiring that pupils forfeit their break periods have been introduced

3.1.2.2. Late submission of lesson notes by teachers

- **Description of issues**

Most teachers submitted lesson notes late making it difficult for vetting by head teacher.

- **Intervention Strategy**

To put a stop to this behaviour the head teacher did the following:

- i. Establishment of a lesson note submission chart on the notice board in his office.

- **Outcome**

- i. Defaulting teachers easily noted their position on the chart even without being spoken to
- ii. Significant improvement in the early submission of lesson notes.

3.1.2.3. Pupils reporting for classes late after break

- **Description issues:**

Pupils reported back late from break. As a result teachers could not effectively teach subjects planned for the day and this affected overall academic work.

- **Intervention Strategy**

The following measures were taken to address the problem:

- i. PTA meetings were held to discuss the issue
- ii. Parents were advised to provide food for pupils before allowing them to go to school.
- iii. Pupils who go to school late had their names written on chalkboard and mocked by colleagues.
- iv. The gate through which pupils escaped to buy food was locked.

- **Outcome**

Lateness after break drastically reduced after adopting the above measures.

3.1.2.4 Absenteeism and lateness by teachers and pupils

- **Description issues:**

School management observed that teachers and pupils were not punctual and regular at school.

- **Intervention Strategy**

To stem out this behaviour, the head teacher adopted the following measures:

- i. A “red line” was drawn after 8am in registers for pupils.
- ii. The assistant head teacher took statistics of teachers' performance in class which was posted on the school's notice board.
- iii. Pupils who absented themselves from school were made to a write letter to explain why they were absent

- **Outcome**

There was considerable reduction in the incidence of lateness and absenteeism after adopting the above measures.

3.1.2.5. Ineffective supervision

- **Description issues:**

A new head teacher met a laissez-faire type of system in the school which did not augur well for academic work.

- **Intervention Strategy**

To rectify the situation the head teacher took measures which included the following:

- i. Adopted a leadership by example model in which he himself demonstrated exemplary character

- ii. Delegated duties, supervision and monitoring of duties assigned
- iii. Introduced a system to reduce lateness and absenteeism
- iv. Ensured teachers have accommodation, water, light and access to health service.
- v. Introduced a programme of orientation of new teachers posted to school
- vi. Ensured lesson notes were submitted regularly
- vii. Vetted weekly teachers' lesson notes.
- viii. Involved other teachers in taking decisions to sanction any offending teacher
- ix. Introduced severe sanctions against any offending teacher.
- x. Regular visits by the PTA/SMC to encourage teachers to regularly report to school
- xi. Managed the school through Team work
- xii. Built capacity in teachers through series of internal in-service training

- **Outcome**

As a result of the adopted measures, the following were achieved:

- i. The school won the District best performing school award

- ii. Students of the school won the Regional and National Presidential Awards
- iii. Teachers on duty duly submitted a report at the end of their duty week for discussion by all teachers.

3.1.2.6. High incidence of indecent dressing by both teachers and pupils

- **Description issues:**

The headmistress observed teachers were always indecently dressed and as a result pupils were gradually imitating the practice.

- **Intervention Strategy:**

To stem this indiscipline, the headmistress initiated the following measures:

- i. School management collectively agreed and introduced a dressing code.
- ii. Headmistress enforced the dressing code.

- **Outcome**

The following resulted from the initiatives:

- i. Teachers now dress decently.
- ii. The school was commended by the Ho Municipal Education Office.

3.1.2.7. High level of absenteeism, truancy and lateness by pupils

- **Description issues:**

The problems of truancy, absenteeism and lateness were rampant in the school when a new head teacher took over the administration. As a result of the situation the school which used to be a double stream became a single stream as many parents and guardians withdrew their wards from the school.

- **Intervention Strategy:**

The head teacher took the following steps to remedy the situation:

- i. Organisation of PTA meetings to plead with parents from withdrawing their wards
- ii. Organisation of early morning classes for pupils at no cost to parents
- iii. Introduction of a Friday wear in the school to attract pupils to school especially Fridays which were market days.
- iv. Introduction of motivation scheme for teachers and pupils who came to school early

- **Outcome**

The above measures led to the following:

- i. Teachers are punctual and regular and their pupils do not loiter about during instructional hours

- ii. Gradual increase in enrolment

- iii. Significant reduction in absenteeism, lateness and truancy.

3.1.3. Community Participation

The following issues were covered under the community participation sub-category

- Poor school infrastructures leading to poor academic performance and increased truancy among pupils
- Poor BECE performance
- Concerted effort for success for final year JHS pupils
- Poor infrastructure and inadequate number of teachers
- Provision of facilities for effective learning

3.1.3.1. Poor school infrastructure and poor academic performance and increased truancy among pupils

- **Description of issues:**

The school management realized that academic performance was poor and truancy was on the increase. School infrastructure was also poor and some classes were held under trees. A few community members transferred their wards to more endowed public and private schools nearby.

- **Intervention Strategy**

To change the image of the school, the following interventions were implemented:

- i. Improvement of the school infrastructure with assistance from the community
- ii. Construction of a three classroom block for the KG department which had classes under trees by the PTA through communal labour.
- iii. Emphasizing physical education periods and using sporting activities to retain many of the truant pupils since most of them loved sports

• **Outcome**

The measures pursued by the school management yielded the following results:

- The school won the maiden edition of the nation's "under 13" Milo Soccer Championship and went ahead to place second at the continental level held in South Africa.
- Enrolment and attendance improved tremendously
- Attendance at PTA meetings increased significantly

3.1.3.2. Poor BECE performance

• **Description of issues:**

For three consecutive years the school scored zero per cent in the BECE. The community called for an investigation which revealed that majority of the pupils did not live with their parents and most did not eat before going to school.

• **Intervention Strategy**

The following measures were taken to improve the academic performance of the school:

- i. Introduction of feeding programme to provide pupils with breakfast and lunch
- ii. Introduction of a programme of free extra private studies in the school after closing,
- iii. Payment of a monthly allowance to teachers by the community in recognition of their contribution for improved academic performance.

• **Outcome**

The outcomes recorded from the above initiatives were:

- Pupils became more interested in school
- Pupils and teachers reported to school on time
- Performance at BECE improved
- Strengthening of school community relationship

3.1.3.3. Concerted effort for success for final year JHS pupils

• **Description of issues:**

The school did not ever have any impressive record at BECE and the Community where the school is located has often harassed the teachers with the release of each BECE results.

- **Intervention Strategy:**

The newly appointed head teacher who used to be a member of staff before his appointment together with his teachers took the following initiatives to arrest the situation:

- i. Invitation to parents to collaborate with the school to address the downward performance trend.
- ii. Parents agreed to buy prescribed books.
- iii. Parents agreed to supervise their wards' learning program at home and report pupils' behaviour to school authority

- **Outcome**

The outcome of the above was:

- i. Parents bought the prescribed books
- ii. BECE performance improved from 50% to 75% in the 2009/2010 academic year
- iii. In terms of academic performance as shown by the BECE the, school placed 10th position in the Municipality
- iv. Parents have shown increased interest in the school by their regular visits.

3.1.3.4. Poor infrastructure and inadequate number of teachers

- **Description of issues:**

The school was faced with the problem of poor infrastructure and the retention of teachers. Teaching was done under trees and pupils did menial repair works which took part of their instructional hours.

- **Intervention Strategy**

After a number of deliberations on how to salvage the situation by the school management, the following were undertaken:

- i. Dialoguing and consensus building between the school, PTA/SMC and community
- ii. Participatory identification of problems and planning of solutions
- iii. Rehabilitation of the school by the Religious Order of Brothers of the Catholic Church.

- **Outcome**

The outcome of the above initiative was the following:

- Construction of a six classroom block, teachers' quarters and office
- Provision of recreational facilities
- Construction of boreholes, urinals and toilet
- Acceptance of postings by teachers to the community
- Effective use of contact hours for school curricula activities.

3.1.3.5. Provision of facilities for effective learning

- **Description of issues:**

The school lacked basic learning facilities. The Municipal Assembly on which the school had depended for the supply of these facilities over a number of years was not able to cope with the demand.

- **Intervention Strategy**

Realizing the detrimental effects of this situation to learning, the school management did the following:

- PTA/SMC was revived to freely discuss school issues.
- School management involved various stakeholders in discussing issues related to the school.
- Opinion leaders in Community were invited to inspect on-going projects in school

- **Outcome**

The above actions resulted in the following:

- PTA/SMC now functional and active
- Computer laboratory, furniture and a water closet with an overhead water reservoir have been provided for the school by the community

3.2. Service Delivery

Within the Service delivery the problem areas are presented below. A correlated summary of problems recurring under these critical areas and approaches adopted to correct them are presented below.

- Girl-child enrolment and retention
- Promoting children's participation and ownership in Learning process
- Community participation
- Reading ability and attitudes of teachers and children
- Effective management of school time (time - on task)
- Teacher quality
- Disability access
- Promoting positive peer influence among children in education
- Making Learning easy and interesting for children
- Learning environment
- Health Status/Condition of children

3.2.1. Girl Child Enrolment

3.2.1.1. High school girls' dropout rate

- **Description of issues:**

The rate girls drop out from the school due to pregnancy was high. Most girls in the school came from poor homes, followed bad friends and lacked parental care

- **Intervention Strategy**

The school introduced the following interventions

- i. Formation of a Girls Club which engaged the members in a lot of activities
- ii. Sharing of experience of female mentors with female pupils
- iii. Organisation of talks on sex education and grooming and how to maintain your child in school were organized for students and parents respectively
- iv. Organisation of role plays on the effects of drop outs
- v. Introduction of Quiz competitions among girls in sister schools
- vi. Introduction of Award Schemes for well behaved girls who are regular in school
- vii. Introduction of Girls Day for students to share their experiences

- **Outcome**

- i. Increase in Girls' school enrolment

- ii. Reduction in Girls dropout rate
- iii. Improvement of girls academic performance
- iv. Improvement in community school relationship as parents often visited the school to make sure their children were in school

3.2.1.2. Encouragement to school dropout girls to return to school

- **Description of issues**

Girls dropped out of school due to pregnancy and did not return to school after giving birth

- **Intervention Strategy**

To solve the problem the Municipal Assembly put the following interventions in place:

- i. Identification of teenage mothers through the help of pupils, community members, and school based girl-child education facilitators
- ii. Visits to homes of identified teenage mothers
- iii. Counseling of teenage mothers to go back to school
- iv. Monitoring of those who went back to school by Girl-Child education facilitator

- **Outcome**

- i. Six teenage mothers from community went back to enroll in a different school

3.2.2. Reading ability and attitudes of teachers and children

- **Description of issues:**

Pupils could not use sounds of letters to form words and thus could not read.

- **Intervention Strategy:**

The District Education Directorate introduced the following strategic interventions to address the issues.

- i. Training of 50 teachers and 50 head teachers from 50 schools and circuit supervisors of the district were trained in phonic and syllabic methods of teaching and were asked to teach
- ii. A pre-test in reading was carried out before the introduction of the intervention
- iii. After 5 months a post test in reading was carried out and there was a significant difference between their reading ability before and after.

- **Outcome**

- i. Improvement in reading ability of pupils
- ii. Professional development of Teachers and circuit supervisors.
- iii. Positive change in attitude of teachers towards teaching and learning
- iv. Pupils can use sounds to form words
- v. After the intervention the test revealed that pupils' performance had improved

3.2.2.2. Poor reading habit

- **Description of issues:**

Girls in the school found it difficult to read.

- **Intervention Strategies**

The following intervention strategies were put in place:

- i. Formation of two clubs- Spelling Bee and Junior Graphic Fun Club
- ii. Teachers were put in charge to supervise the clubs
- iii. Supervising teachers spent one hour with them on club meetings
- iv. After every meeting students were given a story to read, which was later discussed with the teacher

- **Outcome**

- i. The school took the first position in a local Spelling Bee programme

3.2.3. Community Participation

3.2.3.1. Provision of Facilities and infrastructure- ICT Center

- **Description of issues:**

The school did not have enough classrooms and used ware house as classroom for pupils. The head teacher and other members of

staff had their offices under a tree. The warehouse was not conducive for teaching and learning. Official documents were left at the mercy of the weather.

- **Intervention Strategy**

The school management and P.T.A introduced the following intervention strategies:

- i. Construction of an ICT Center
- ii. Construction of classrooms and staff common room
- iii. Construction of washrooms for teachers and pupils

- **Outcome**

- i. Improvement in academic performance
- ii. Effective use of contact hours
- iii. Increased participation of P.T.A in school development issues

3.2.3.2. Provision of Accommodation for staff

- **Description of issues**

Due to the remote nature of the location of the school, teachers did not accept posting to the school. Those who unwillingly accepted postings left after few years

- **Intervention Strategy**

- i. Liaison with PTA Chairman

- ii. Provision of residential facility for newly posted teachers to the school by the PTA Chairman
- iii. Payment of between six to twelve months rent for teachers
- iv. Construction of new classroom block for the local Islamic pre and basic school by the Municipal Assembly due to the efforts of the PTA Chairman.

- **Outcome**

- i. More teachers accepted posting to the school
- ii. Teachers organized free extra classes for the pupils at the weekends in appreciation for the PTA Chairman's gesture
- iii. Improvement in academic performance of the school
- iv. Increase in school enrolment

3.2.4. General school Environment

3.2.4.1. Provision of learning school environment

- **Description of issues:**

Improper disposal of waste in the school

- **Intervention Strategy**

To help resolve the issue of improper waste disposal the following interventions were introduced

- i. Introduction of Waste Segregation into degradable and non-degradable waste

- ii. Degradable waste was buried for decomposition to be used later as manure

- **Outcome**

- i. Proper waste disposal in the school
- ii. Availability of manure for the school garden

3.2.4.2 Health conditions of pupils

- **Description of issues**

Pupils regularly complained of sickness when they reported to school. The problem was traced to pupils not taking breakfast before going to school, poor quality and insufficient food served in the school and pupils own unhygienic behavior of not washing their hands after sweeping, picking and after visiting the toilet

- **Intervention**

To solve the problem the school put the following intervention strategies in place.

- i. Parents were advised to make sure their children ate before going to school.
- ii. School Health Education Programme (SHEP) Coordinators inspected the quality and quantity of foods every day. Vendors whose food did not meet the required standards had red flag placed beside their food stand to warn pupils not to buy their food.

- iii. Vendors were given health cards which were inspected annually

- iv. The teaching of hygiene and cleanliness in the school was intensified

- v. Vendors were taught food hygiene and how to dress when they are selling food to pupils

- vi. Provision of “Veronica bucket” for washing of hands

- **Outcome.**

- i. Reduction in the incidence of sickness
- ii. Well kept toilet and urinals
- iii. Neatly dressed vendors who regularly renew their health cards
- iv. Pupils washing their hands after sweeping and after visiting the rest room

3.2.4.3. Making school environment congenial for effective teaching and learning

- **Description issues:**

The school was situated in the heart of the community and this made it possible for the school children to leave the school at any time. The members of the community also took advantage of this and made the school a thoroughfare and loitered around the school compound frustrating the implementation of the school curriculum.

- **Intervention Strategy**

- The school was fenced with bamboo sticks by the head teacher and teachers and some parents and community leaders
- Seats were made under the shady trees where pupils could sit and study

- **Outcome**

- Improvement in the academic performance of pupils at the BECE
- The school was given an award of a TV set
- Improvement in collaboration of teachers and parents

3.2.5. Making Learning easy and interesting for children

3.2.5.1. Disinterest in school and learning difficulty

- **Description of issues**

Children were unable to cope with teaching and learning in the school and thus performed poorly in their school examinations

- **Intervention Strategy**

The school put the following intervention strategy in place:

- Purchase of Teaching Learning materials including Audio Visuals

- At the KG level a video deck and educational CDs related to the topics they treated in school were purchased
- The CDs were used as audio visual aids to teach during instructional hours
- The Audio Visual aids were also used to teach phonics
- At the Primary and JHS level, ICT tools such as computers and projectors were used.

- **Outcome**

- School recording 100% passes with excellent grades at BECE for four consecutive years
- Reduction in rate of absenteeism and improvement in school enrolment
- Improvement in teacher's work output
- Improvement of pupils' computer literacy
- School adjudged by Municipality best award winner on three occasions

3.3. Both Management and Service Delivery

3.3.1. Community participation

3.3.1.1 Promotion of children's participation and ownership in learning process

- **Description of issues**

Pupils in Schools in the Kansa Community Area were performing poorly in their academic work.

- **Intervention Strategy**

- i. Formation of Kansa Area Educational Board made up of Opinion leaders, retired educationist, head teachers, School Management Committee
- ii. Board supplied school children with pens, exercise books, and pencils
- iii. Board organized spelling BEE's for the pupils
- iv. Training programmes were organized for SMC/PTA, head teachers and teachers
- v. Excursions were organized for pupils
- vi. Mock examinations were organized for JHS students

- vii. Organisation of SPAM to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of pupils

- viii. Intensification of supervision and monitoring in schools in the community

- ix. Regular visits by the Board

- **Outcome**

- i. Improvement in academic performance- Schools in the community have been recording 100% in the BECE since the intervention was put in place



A group photo of managers of education in the Northern Region after a peer learning exercise in Tamale



A group photo of managers of education in the Volta Region after a peer learning exercise in Akatsi



A group photo of managers of education in the Central Region after a peer learning exercise in Cape Coast



The Bishop of Keta-Akatsi Diocese Most Rev. Anthony K. Adanuty giving a welcome address before the peer learning exercise in Akatsi

4.0. LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. Lessons Learnt

Various useful lessons have been learnt from the intervention strategies used by the Managers of Education in the Peer learning Project. The best practices need to be documented and reinforced in the schools. Even though most of these practices are not new in our schools in Ghana the lessons learnt have demonstrated that they are practicable and could be used by all schools. As a way forward, a survey need to be carried out to establish why most schools are not able to use these best practices. Perhaps the lessons learnt would serve as the basis for a paradigm shift in the achievement of quality Education in the country. Some of the lessons learnt are:

- Achievement of quality Education is a shared responsibility which involves major stakeholders-teachers, managers of schools, communities, parents and faith base organizations
- Stakeholders are prepared to participate in management of education if they are given the opportunity
- Heads of schools need to be equipped with skills to enable them identify challenges and resources of assistance in the community.
- The effective use of components of quality education to ensure the delivery of quality education in Ghana. The components of quality education are: The environment (infrastructure, Class size, gender/inclusiveness, health); Process (Guidance and

counselling, Absenteeism and lateness, teaching methods, language usage); Content (TLMs, literacy/numeracy, quality assurance, procurement of text books); Learner/Teacher (Good nutrition, self esteem, attendance, home/school environment); and Institutional Systems (Staff management, institutional management, publicity, welfare)

- The use of effective pedagogical skills in delivery quality education

4.2. Recommendations

Based on the lessons learnt the following recommendations are being made:

- The Ministry of Education and the Ghana Education Service need to adapt this project and implement it on a more broader scale
- Colleges of Education need to improve on their training curriculum to lay emphasis on pedagogy
- Stakeholders need to understand the linkages and interactions among the components of quality education.
- Stakeholders need to be given the opportunity to identify their roles in the delivery of quality education
- This work's contribution to knowledge will be enhanced by further analysis of the Managers of Education Peer Learning model in the context of synergies and variations in current conceptual thought about community of practice

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