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Opinion

UNEB should change the setting of exams Publish Date: May 31, 2012



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Dear editor, I would like to give a heavy backing pertaining the pre admission exams for law students at [Makerere University](#). In fact other universities like Uganda Christian University started this requirement some time back. Law Development Centre has already adopted the same.

This is a great practice and all courses should emulate this noble practice. I have heard various reactions of some commentators in the media discouraging the practice as a disturbing practice. If one is competent and outstanding, why fear a mere exam!

As I have urged before in my previous articles on an ideal education system, I strongly believe that this practice will provide an insight in what seems to be abnormal performance of students in UNEB exams. I have always and still wonder whether students have become extremely bright than their sires.

Higher education performance seems to be falling a victim of this vice. In one of the exhibition I attended few years ago at Lugogo show ground, organized by the National Council for Higher Education, the guest of honor, Prof. Michel Lejeune, while officiating the closure of the function retaliated his appeal that, "a first class degree of a university should be a first class".

In his presentation, he pointed out that it makes the process lose meaning if a hundred student's graduate with first class at a single graduation ceremony of any university! Those who get it must be outstanding indeed.

This is a reflection of quality not quantity assurance. I strongly concurred with him on this position otherwise universities risk running huge budgets for manufacturing plaques for first class students every graduation!

However, I would like to further propose that to ensure quality in all dimensions, the setting system of UNEB exams be revised from theoretical questions to application questions. This would help students avoid mere clammng of the notes.

It would further encourage critical thinking at a high magnitude. The open limitation of theory based exams arise in case a student's finds questions that correlate with what he has already clammed . It becomes a matter of simply coding down what is in the mind on an exam sheet.

In computer language, one simply cuts from his head and pastes on the answer sheet without any sense of creativity demonstrated.

In summary, the following benefits would be realised if UNEB embarked on setting application questions:

- Reduced costs in policing exams. Since each student would have to answer according to the general knowledge they have acquired, cheating would be minimized in the examination rooms.
- It would empower students with basic analytical skills that would be vital at higher levels of learning.
- The panic of students for pre entry exams for any course at the university or any institution would be reduced.
- It would enable students to confidently attend interviews and respond to questions reasonably with skills acquired.

As our country struggles with high unemployment of the youth standing at 83%, adopting this new strategy would enable many gain skills for peddling through this challenge. As a trained professional teacher, I highly appreciate the value of giving students application questions.

It empowers them to an imaginable magnitude. It is a hand on experience. UNEB as an assessing body of the government can intervene to help Uganda benefit from this great change.

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