

**AN INVESTIGATION OF FEEDBACK TO SECONDARY
SCHOOLS FROM THE CAMBRIDGE OVERSEAS SCHOOL
CERTIFICATE (COSC) ENGLISH LANGUAGE
EXAMINATIONS IN LESOTHO**

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Abstract

This study investigates how feedback from the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate (COSC) English language examinations marking board is transmitted to the teachers and other stakeholders for effective teaching and learning in Lesotho secondary schools. The aim was to discover teachers' and other stakeholders' views, feelings and reactions to examiners' reports. The focus was also on the general information that comes from the marking board. In carrying out this study, interviews, questionnaires and documents were used to examine the extent to which teachers access and make use of this information in improving their pedagogical practices. End of year results, from selected schools, covering a period of five years, were analysed. The major findings of the research revealed that there was a correlation between the feedback and students' results. Based on feedback from the marking board there were positive washback effects on teaching methods and on teachers' perceptions, resulting in improved students' scores. Nevertheless, there were contradicting views on the issue of washback effects and this situation simply highlighted the ambivalence of the concept of washback, especially on the high-stakes tests such as the COSC discussed here. One major discovery was in relation to the issue of full localization of COSC. An overwhelming majority of the respondents suggested that localized marking of the COSC has positive washback effects on teaching and learning of English language in the context of Lesotho, and more positive results are envisaged with full localization of such examinations and the curricula. It is hoped that the MOE, will make informed policy modifications using some of the findings in this report.

List of Abbreviations

COSC	Cambridge Overseas School Certificate
ECOL	Examinations Council of Lesotho
ERs	Examiners' Reports
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
HOD	Head of Department (English Language)
IGCSE	International General Certificate of Secondary Education
JC	Junior Certificate
MOE	Ministry of Education
NCDC	The National Curriculum Development Centre
NUL	The National University of Lesotho
NTM	Non-Teacher-Marker
STL(s)	Senior-team-leader(s)
SO	Subject Officer
TM	Teacher-Marker
UBLSEC	The University of Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland Examinations Council
UCLES	University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate

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