

Mentors' and Supervisors' Perceptions on B.Ed. Pre-Service Student Teachers' Skills in Lesson Planning and Evaluation

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Abstract

The study investigated mentors' and supervisors' (lecturers') perceptions on Bachelor of Education (secondary) pre-service student teachers' skills in lesson planning and lesson evaluation. The qualitative inquiry adopted a case study design that focused on one university in Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe. From the population of mentors, lecturers and student teachers, thirty mentors, thirty student teachers and thirty supervisors (lecturers) were purposively sampled for the study. Data were collected through interviews with mentors and document analysis of supervisors' teaching practice supervision reports. The findings revealed that although both mentors and supervisors acknowledged that some of the B.Ed (secondary) pre-service student teachers do well in lesson planning and evaluation, most of the students displayed glaring shortcomings in articulating lesson objectives, assumed knowledge/prior knowledge, media, lesson development, and lesson evaluation. The study concludes that such shortcomings could be a manifestation of lack of thorough preparation of the students for teaching practice by the university, as well as lack of assistance and guidance from the mentors. The study recommends a peer and micro-teaching module for the students as well as a handbook on teaching practice documentation. It also recommends regular workshops for mentors.

Key words: *mentors; supervisors; objectives; assumed knowledge; media; lesson planning; evaluation*

Introduction and background

Some universities in Zimbabwe now offer degrees in teaching. Previously, the preparation of teachers in Zimbabwe was the exclusive preserve of teachers' colleges. In the current case, the university offers a four-year honours Bachelor of education (pre-service) degree in both primary and secondary education. The programme is such that the students spend the first two years on campus, studying theory of education and their areas of specialisation, then go on work-related learning or teaching practice (TP) for one year, after which they come back to campus to complete their degree programme by doing further teaching and specialisation modules. As Gonye, Mareva, Dudu, Sibanda and Mavunga (2008:135) explain,

student teachers are introduced to the theory of teaching in their initial stages of training, put the theory learnt into practice in the next stage of training and then return to college to consolidate their learning through reflection in the final year.

During the teaching practice year, the theories that were learnt at university are put into practice and the student teacher is offered the opportunity to evaluate his/her professional growth and abilities to implement teaching skills that were learnt at university (Gonye et al., 2008). Teaching practice is viewed as the best practical way in which the novice (student teacher) is inducted to the various responsibilities that he/she will perform after qualification (Mkandla, 1996).

One of the ways in which the student teacher can implement what was learnt at university is through good documentation. “To have skilfully-structured, expertly framed and readily accessible document, therefore, is the sine qua non for effective TP” (Gonye et al., 2008:139). The current study focuses on establishing pre-service university student teachers’ skills in lesson planning and evaluation, from the perspectives of teaching practice supervisors (lecturers) and mentors. The study focuses on one of the most important documents to the student teacher on teaching practice: the daily lesson plan (DLP) and its evaluation.

Good planning is viewed as a crucial aspect of effective teaching (Kyriacou, 2009). Lesson planning refers to “the daily decisions a teacher makes for the successful outcome of a lesson” (Farrell in Richards & Renandya, 2002:30). Farrell goes on to define a daily lesson plan as a written description of how students will move towards attaining specific objectives, that is, a description of teaching behaviour that culminates in student learning. In lesson plans a teacher’s thoughts about what will be covered during a lesson are systematically recorded.

Planning entails a teacher’s decisions about the general aims and specific educational outcomes, context (learning environment), the activities of the lesson and their sequencing, as well as the monitoring and evaluation of learners’ educational progress (Kyriacou, 2009). Similarly, to Arends (2001:63), daily plans “outline what content is to be taught, motivational techniques to be used, specific steps and activities for the students, needed materials, and evaluation processes.” Lesson evaluation is an assessment that is “formal or informal, that you make after students have sufficient opportunities for learning” (Brown, 1994:398).

Statement of the problem

As university lecturers in the field of education, whose domain is the preparation of both in-service and pre-service teachers, part of the researchers' duty is to visit student teachers on work-related learning or teaching practice (TP). The researchers have noted that there seems to be general consensus by mentors that pre-service university students who are trainee teachers seem to have shortcomings in how they craft and evaluate their daily lesson plans (DLPs), with mentors seeming to agree that when compared to their counterparts from teachers' colleges, student teachers from universities play second fiddle in lesson planning and evaluation. Fellow lecturers who also go on teaching practice visits have expressed the sentiment that the way pre-service university student teachers on teaching practice plan and evaluate the lesson plans leaves much to be desired. This is despite the fact that before the student teachers go on teaching practice, they would have done theory of education and applied modules that are supposed to prepare them for teaching practice. It is against this backdrop that, for broader insights, the researchers decided to carry out a study aimed at examining the pre-service university student teachers' skills in lesson planning and evaluation.

Objectives of the study

The study sought to:

- examine pre-service university student teachers' skills in planning and evaluation of lessons, as perceived by mentors and supervisors
- proffer suggestions on how the student teachers can improve the way they plan and evaluate lessons.
- come up with some recommendations on what universities could do to prepare student teachers for lesson planning and evaluation.

Literature review

Good planning is viewed as a crucial aspect of effective teaching (Kyriacou, 2009). Richards (1998) views the purpose of lesson plans as helping the teacher to think about the lesson in advance so as to curtail possible challenges, provide structure and map for the lesson, and to provide a record of what has been taught. In the same vein, Purgason (1991) observes that a lesson plan helps the teacher to think about content, materials, sequencing, timing, and activities. It also provides security in the atmosphere of the classroom that is often

unpredictable. Apart from that, a lesson plan is a log of what has been taught. Finally, Purgason views a lesson plan as a substitute to smoothly take over a class in the event that a teacher cannot teach a lesson.

Literature suggests the following as significant aspects that should be included in a lesson plan: objectives, assumed knowledge (also known as prior knowledge or background knowledge), media (also known as audio-visual aids or teaching-learning aids), activities and procedures, as well as evaluation.

Farrell, in Richards and Renandya (2002:32), explains the important role played by lesson objectives thus:

An effective lesson plan starts with appropriate and clearly written objectives. An objective is a description of a lesson outcome. Objectives describe the destination (not the journey) we want our students to reach. Clear, well-written objectives are the first step in daily lesson planning. These objectives help state precisely what we want our students to learn, help guide the selection of appropriate activities, and help provide overall lesson focus and direction. They also give teachers a way to evaluate what their students have learned at the end of the lesson.

Farrell goes on to suggest use of action verbs when teachers state lesson objectives, some of which are: identify, present, describe, explain, demonstrate, list, contrast, and debate, and warns that vague verbs such as understand, appreciate, enjoy, and learn should be avoided.

Petty (2014) also alludes to the importance of objectives in lesson planning by stating that at the beginning of the lesson the teacher could clarify the purpose of the lesson. In the same vein, Sesorina (2014) also identifies goals and objectives as part of the essential elements that should be included in a lesson plan. Therefore, the current study sought to investigate student teachers' weaknesses in stating lesson objectives, with a view to offering recommendations for improvements.

Media, or audio-visual aids, according to Anzaku (2011), refer to materials that may be used to convey meaning without complete dependence on verbal symbols or language. They are materials that do not solely depend on reading to convey meaning, but may make use of a sense of hearing, a sense of sight, or a combination of senses (Dike, 1993). Dike goes on to give the following as example of audio-visual aids that teachers could employ: models, real objects,

displays, chalkboards, bulletin boards, adhesives, graphs, diagrams, charts, maps, cartoons, pictures, posters, slides, films, filmstrips, television games, as well as dramatisation.

Wright, cited in Sesorina (2014) argues that media should be easily prepared and obtained, be easily used and operated, attract children's attention, be meaningful and authentic, that is, media should be practical, appropriate and authentic. Ashaver and Igyuve (2013) identify the following as some of the important functions of audio-visual materials: basing learning in sense experience, extending experience, encouraging learner participation, stimulating interest, individualising instruction, providing a source of information, and making learning permanent. Thus, the present study was interested in finding student teachers' weaknesses regarding media in lesson planning.

Assumed knowledge, also known as background knowledge or prior knowledge, is defined as all the knowledge that learners have when they enter a learning environment, knowledge that is potentially relevant for the acquisition of new knowledge (Biemans & Simons, cited in Campbell & Campbell, 2009). Background knowledge is the raw material that conditions learning by acting as mental hooks for the lodging of new information and is the basic building block for content and skill knowledge. Students bring beliefs and academic and life experiences to the classroom. These influence what they learn and how it is learnt and facilitate learning but can also thwart the acquisition of content if it conflicts with students' pre-existing information (Campbell & Campbell, 2009). Similarly, Svinicki (1993) points out that students bring to the learning setting what they have learnt before, their experiences, backgrounds and environments, which affect how the learner perceives new information, organises the new information, and how easily students make connections for the new information. Therefore, the teacher should know what prior knowledge students bring to the learning setting. Schrum and Glisan (1994) also allude to the importance of prior knowledge when they suggest that in the perspective or opening of the lesson, the teacher asks students what the previous activity was, that is, what concepts were learned. Hence this study investigated B.Ed pre-service student teachers' weaknesses in stating assumed knowledge in lesson plans.

The next important element of a lesson plan involves activities and procedures or lesson development or lesson stages. Petty (2014) observes that lessons often follow a 'beginning-middle-end' structure. At the beginning stage links are made with previous material and students are introduced to the lesson's content. Then the purpose of the lesson is clarified. At

the middle stage the student activity is introduced. Students discover what they are supposed to do, why and how. Practice then follows. Following this, the teacher may check and correct students' work. At the end stage, what has been learnt is made clear, summarised and noted down, after which a pointer is given to the next lesson. Schrum and Glisan (1994) also suggest key generic components of a lesson plan's activities and procedures. Firstly, there is the perspective or opening, where the teacher recapitulates on the previously learnt material and gives a preview of the new lesson. Secondly, Schrum and Glisan propose the simulation stage, at which the teacher poses a question to get the students to think about the coming activity, the teacher then helps the students to relate to the activity to their lives, and then the teacher uses an attention grabber and uses it as a lead into the activity. The third stage is the instruction/participation stage. Here, the teacher presents the activity, checks for student understanding, and encourages active student involvement through pair work and/or group work. Fourthly, there is closure, a stage at which the teacher checks what students have learned by asking questions, then gives a preview about the possibilities for future lessons. Finally, there is the follow-up stage, which involves the teacher using other activities to reinforce some concepts and even to introduce new concepts, followed by assigning independent work or homework. Therefore, the current researchers sought to inquire into student teachers' weaknesses in crafting activities and procedures in lesson planning.

The last essential element of a lesson plan is the evaluation segment. Brown (1994) argues that without the evaluative component, the teacher cannot assess the success of the students or make adjustments for the next lesson. This point is also underscored by Petty (2014) who argues that reflecting on and learning from past successes and failures results in ability to improve.

Ur (1996) suggests that in lesson evaluation the teacher could determine if, among other aspects, the class seemed to be learning the material well, if the learners were attentive, if the learners were enjoying the lesson and were motivated, if the learners were active, if the lesson went according to plan, and if language was used communicatively. Similarly, Farrell, cited in Richards and Renandya (2002:35) suggests the following questions for the teacher after conducting a lesson:

What do you think the students actually learned?

What tasks were most successful? Least successful? Why?

Did you finish the lesson on time?

What changes (if any) will you make in your teaching and why (or why not)?

In the same vein, Kyriacou (2009) argues that evaluation and reflection go together and involve, firstly, considering whether the lesson was a success and to act on implications for future practice, and secondly, to assess and record the educational progress of the pupils.

Petty (2014), cautions that when evaluating the lesson, the teacher should be neither too self-critical, nor too self-confident. “If you are too self-critical, you will lose confidence and fail to experiment; if you are too self-confident, you will think improvement is unnecessary” (Petty, 2014:418). Thus, the present study focused on student teachers’ weaknesses in evaluating taught lessons, with a view to offering suggestions for improvement.

Methodology

The data that was sought in the current study, that is, participants’ perceptions, necessitated the adoption of the interpretivist paradigm and its related approach, the qualitative approach. Qualitative research focuses on understanding participants’ behaviour, beliefs, opinions, emotions, views, processes, social interactions and meanings (Matthews & Ross, 2010; Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2011). Perceptions fall into the above categories.

The present study adopted the case study design, which is a study of a bounded system or case (Merriam, 2009; Creswell, 2013). The case study examines a social unit, which may be a person, a family, a social institution, or a community (Best & Khan, 2014). In the current study the bounded system, case or social institution is one university out of the several universities that offer B.Ed secondary pre-service degrees.

Population

The targeted population for the study was all the mentors who were mentoring B.Ed secondary pre-service student teachers from a selected university in Masvingo Province who were on teaching practice from January to November 2018. Also targeted were all the B.Ed secondary pre-service student teachers from the selected university who were on teaching practice during the period. Further targeted were all the lecturers from the university who participated in assessing the B.Ed secondary pre-service student teachers on TP.

Sample

Purposively sampled were all the thirty mentors for the thirty B.Ed secondary pre-service students from the selected university who were on TP at all the five secondary schools in Masvingo Urban cluster. Also purposively sampled were all the B.Ed secondary pre-service students who were on TP at the five secondary schools. In addition, through their TP supervision assessment reports (critiques), thirty lecturers who assessed the B.Ed students in the Masvingo Urban cluster were purposively sampled to participate in the study.

Data collection tools

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and document analysis.

Semi-structured interviews

Being a qualitative research tool, the interview was chosen for its suitability for gaining insights into people's behaviour and feelings or how they interpret the world around them (Nyawaranda, 2000). In this study, mentors' perceptions on B.Ed secondary pre-service student teachers' weaknesses in lesson planning and evaluation were investigated. An interview is a very good way of getting access to people's perceptions, meanings, their definitions of situations and their constructions of reality (Punch, 2005). Hence the interview was found to be very suitable in the current study on mentors' perceptions on the phenomenon under investigation. Thirty mentors from the five Masvingo Urban cluster secondary schools that hosted B.Ed secondary pre-service student teachers on TP from the selected university were interviewed for their perceptions.

Document analysis

In keeping with qualitative research, document analysis was also employed to collect data. Through document analysis, the researcher interprets documents so as to give voice and meaning to a topic under investigation and to triangulate data (Bowen, 2009). In the present study, sixty TP supervision assessment reports produced by thirty lecturers were analysed for the lecturers' perceptions on B.Ed secondary pre-service student teachers' weaknesses in

lesson planning and evaluation. Data from the documents were triangulated with data from interviews with mentors.

Findings and discussion

Findings from interviews

Lesson planning

In the interviews with the mentors, the students were commended for crafting generally achievable or behavioural objectives, but the mentors also lamented that in some cases the objectives were not SMART, that is, Specific, Measurable, Achievable, and Time bound. One of the mentors had this to say:

Some of the lesson objectives are expressed through verbs that are not action-oriented, such as know, understand, appreciate etc. These verbs are suitable for expressing aims, not objectives. Also, some of the students do not give suitable opening statements to show the timeframe for achieving the objectives, statements like 'By the end of the lesson...

Another challenge that was noted by the mentors was under-planning, which was manifest through failure to state an adequate number of objectives, with some lessons plans showing only one objective even where two or three seemed adequate, thus potentially making the lessons end prematurely. Conversely, some students crafted too many objectives to be achieved during the course of one lesson. One of the mentors observed that:

Some students state five or six objectives for a single lesson. To me these are too many to accomplish, given that most lessons in secondary schools in Zimbabwe take between thirty-five and forty minutes

Yet another challenge that was observed among the student teachers' objectives was lack of creativity, with some students reported to be using the same verbs in all their lesson plans, verbs such as 'define', 'name', 'state' and 'describe'. Said one mentor: *Some students express their objectives from lesson to lesson in a very predictable and monotonous way, regardless of the nature of the lesson.*

A further shortcoming that was revealed by the mentors concerned students who duplicated objectives using different verbs which actually mean the same. One mentor cited the example of a student who, in a Geography lesson plan, stated that learners should be able to 'give the

agents three types of rainfall' as the first objective, and 'state the three types of rainfall' as another.

The last major common challenge in the lesson objectives that the mentors identified involved failure to state the objectives from lower order to higher order ones in line with Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives, for example, some students stated that learners should 'explain' before they 'identify.'

On how the student teachers state learners assumed knowledge or prior knowledge or background knowledge, there was general consensus among the mentors that most of the student teachers do not seem to understand what the concept entails. Firstly, it was noted that most of the student teachers state the content of what they have actually planned to teach as that which they assume the learners know. In the words of one of the mentors

The student teachers need to re-think assumed knowledge. Assuming that learners know what you have planned to teach defeats the spirit of prior knowledge in learning. If you assume that your learners have knowledge of something then why bother teaching it?

Secondly, the mentors observed that some student teachers stated far-fetched, irrelevant assumed knowledge that has nothing or very little to do with the planned material. Thirdly, it was pointed out that even where the student teachers have come up with assumed knowledge that is related to the planned work, a common challenge was failure to state the assumed knowledge in a clear, understandable and straightforward way.

The mentors also identified a number of student teachers' shortcomings that are related to the use of media or teaching-learning aids. The first major weakness noted was failure by the student teachers to be resourceful and innovative with media, with the chalkboard, work cards and charts invariably featuring on almost all lesson plans. One of the interviewees observed that:

The student teachers from the university do not seem to invest time and thought on teaching media. Instead of making use of real objects from the environment, the student teachers seem to be obsessed with the chalkboard, work cards and charts

The other weakness identified was failure by the student teachers to explain the media by being specific on, for example, what exactly will be on the work cards, charts, pictures etc. Thirdly, the mentors revealed that some of the student teacher appeared to lack knowledge of what media entails, as textbooks and notes were sometimes stated as media.

The mentors also revealed further shortcomings in how the student teachers articulated the lesson stages, from the introduction, through teacher-learner activities to lesson conclusion. A common finding from the mentors was that the majority of the student teachers stated predictable, dull, uninspiring introductions that almost always involved ‘recap of previously learnt material’, even in situations where new topics were being introduced. Also, most of the introductions were reported to be too teacher-centred as they largely focused on what the teacher would be doing, with no explanations of learner involvement. It was also revealed that most of the introductions lacked specificity and sufficient detail and were thus vague, for instance, ‘Recap’, ‘Teacher exposition’ and ‘Introduction from the teacher.’

On lesson development, the mentors were agreed that the lesson steps were generally too brief and did not adequately reveal teacher-learner activities. For example, single words and short phrases such as ‘Question and answer’, ‘Group work’, ‘Pair work’ and ‘Feedback’ were used in showing lesson steps. Another challenge noted on the lesson steps was that often the steps did not show ‘a teaching moment’. Rather, straight from the introduction the learners would in most cases be prematurely rushed into group work. With regard to lesson conclusions, the major theme that emerged was that although some of the student teachers involved learners in lesson conclusions, lesson plans showed predictable, teacher-centred lesson conclusions in which ‘The teacher summarises the main points of the lesson.’

Lesson evaluation

On lesson evaluations, the mentors revealed that although some student teachers made a good attempt at making detailed, critical and objective evaluations, most evaluations had glaring shortcomings. Firstly, it was observed that most student teachers gave very brief, apparently rushed and not well thought out evaluations that were uninformative. Secondly, the mentors observed that most of the student teachers were not self-critical and objective in their evaluations as they largely painted a rosy picture of what would have happened in almost all lessons. In other words, the student teachers tended to focus on their perceived strengths while glossing over or ignoring their own weaknesses. Where weaknesses were pointed out, these

were mostly learners' weaknesses. Thirdly, another major challenge noted by the mentors was failure by some student teachers to evaluate timely, with some even failing or completely 'forgetting' to evaluate their lesson plans.

Findings from document analysis

Lesson planning

Comments by TP supervisors (lecturers) showed that generally the majority of the students stated their lesson objectives in behavioural terms. This confirms the general observation by the mentors who were interviewed. However, supervisors' comments also showed that some students cannot state behavioural objectives, as evidenced by the following comments:

- *Make your objectives SMART.*
- *State achievable objectives.*
- *Objectives not achievable*
- *Use action verbs to express objectives.*

The comments above, together with findings from mentors on how the student teachers stated their objectives, confirm the observation that lesson objectives should be clear and action-oriented (Farrell, in Richards & Renandya, 2002).

Also, lecturers' comments revealed that the problems of too few and too many objectives were common in the students' lesson plans. This finding also emerged from interviews with mentors. The following comments by lecturers attest to the aforementioned shortcoming:

"One objective is not enough."

"State at least two objectives."

"Increase the number of lesson objectives."

"Five objectives are too many."

"Do not be too ambitious when stating objectives."

"You may not be able to achieve more than three objectives in thirty-five minutes."

The comments point to the fact that lesson objectives should be neither too few nor too many. Lecturers' comments also revealed that most students state their lesson objectives in a predictable way, with the same verbs being used repeatedly, a finding that also came from the mentors. Below are some of the comments by lecturers that point to this weakness:

- *Vary the way you state your objectives.*
- *Use a variety of verbs when stating objectives.*

Related to the comments above, Farrell, in Richards and Renandya (2002) suggests a variety of action verbs to be used when stating lesson objectives, such as identify, present, describe, debate, list, explain, and demonstrate.

The problem of duplicating objectives was also identified in the lecturers' comments, confirming what came out of the interviews with mentors, as evidenced by the following:

- *Your first and second objectives refer to the same thing.*
- *There is no difference between your two objectives.*
- *Your objectives are similar.*

The above comments point to the need for student teachers to think carefully when crafting objectives so that they do not repeat the same objective using different words.

Finally, on lesson objectives, lecturers' comments confirmed mentors' observation that some students state their objectives in an inverted hierarchy, that is, stating higher order objectives first and lower order ones last. The following comments were identified in lecturers' assessment reports:

- *Students should state first then explain.*
- *State lower order objectives first.*
- *Follow Bloom's taxonomy when stating lesson objectives.*
- *Lesson objectives should show a progression from the simple to the complex.*

The comments above allude to the necessity for student teachers' lesson objectives to reflect that concepts are best learnt from the simple to the complex then the abstract.

It also emerged from the lecturers' comments, just like from the mentors, that the majority of the student teachers have problems in stating credible and reasonable assumed knowledge or prior knowledge, as evidenced by the comments below:

- *Rethink assumed knowledge.*
- *The material you have planned to teach cannot be stated as what you assume learners know.*
- *You cannot teach what you assume learners know.*

These comments suggest that most of the student teachers may not be aware of what assumed knowledge or prior knowledge actually entails, which is what was learnt before (Svinicki,

1993; Schrum&Glisan, 1994), or relevant knowledge that learners bring to the learning environment (Biemans & Simons, cited in Campbell & Campbell, 2009).

Findings from document analysis also showed that as with the mentors, lecturers were not happy with the way the student teachers stated their media, the weaknesses manifesting themselves through the students not being innovative, students failing to briefly explain media, over-use of certain media, among other weaknesses. The following comments by lecturers bring these challenges to the fore:

- *Be more innovative with media.*
- *Vary your media.*
- *Make more use of realia as media.*
- *Briefly explain your media.*
- *Text books are not media.*

The lecturers' comments on the need for media to reflect innovativeness and variety as well as to be in forms of realia confirm the argument that media should appeal to a variety of senses (Dike, 1993), and that media should be attractive, meaningful and authentic (Wright, cited in Sesorina, 2014). Further, the comment that text books are not media is supported by Anzaku (2011), who defines media as material that conveys meaning (to the learner) without complete dependence on verbal symbols or language.

On lesson stages, the lecturers' comments also confirmed the findings from mentors, that most of the students were found wanting in this regard. Below are some of the negative comments by lecturers regarding the way the student teachers presented lesson stages:

- *Vary the way you introduce your lessons.*
- *Lesson introductions should not always be about 'recaps' of previously taught material.*
- *Be more detailed when explaining lesson stages.*
- *Clearly explain the teacher's and the learners' activities in lesson development.*
- *Lesson conclusions should be learner-centred.*

With reference to lesson introductions, although Schrum and Glisan (1994) as well as Petty (2004) suggest that introductions could form links with previously taught material, lecturers'

comments suggest that the student teachers rely overly on this particular way of introducing lessons.

Regarding the lecturers' comments advising that lesson stages should be clearly explained and show the teachers' and learners' activities, the comments seem to be in agreement with Schrum and Glisan's (1994) proposition of an opening stage, simulation stage, instruction/participation stage, and the follow up stage. Similarly, Petty (2014) suggests a clear explanation of what the author calls the 'beginning-middle-end' structure.

Concerning lecturers' comments suggesting that lesson conclusions should be learner-centred, this exhortation agrees with Schrum and Glisan's (1994) argument that lesson closure should involve the teacher checking understanding by asking learners questions.

Lesson evaluation

On evaluation of lessons, although some of the student teachers were commended for being detailed, critical and objective, lecturers' comments, as with observations from mentors, indicated that most of the student teachers were weak in this aspect as shown by the comments below:

- *Point out your own strengths and weaknesses in lesson evaluations.*
- *Be self-critical in lesson evaluations.*
- *Refer to your own weaknesses, not just learners' weaknesses.*
- *Evaluate all your lesson plans.*
- *Your evaluation of lessons lacks detail.*
- *Be specific not general when evaluating lessons.*

From the comments above, the lecturers' advice that lesson evaluation should be detailed, critical and specific seems to agree with Ur's (1996) suggestion that lesson evaluation should focus on a number of aspects, such as learner understanding, attentiveness, motivation, participation, as well as the language used by the teacher. Similarly, Farrell, in Richards and Renandya (2002) suggests a number of questions that could help the teacher evaluate lessons. The questions focus on what was learnt, learning activities, timing of the lesson activities, as well as recommendations for improvement. In the same vein, Kyriacou (2009) notes that evaluation and reflection go together, implying that evaluation should be detailed and self-critical.

Conclusions and recommendations

It has emerged, from the present study, that although some of the Bachelor of Education (secondary) pre-service student teachers on teaching practice were deemed by both mentors and supervisors to be doing well in certain aspects of lesson planning and evaluation, the majority of the student teachers were perceived to have glaring shortcomings. These shortcomings were manifest in the key lesson planning aspects of objectives, prior knowledge, media, lesson development, and lesson evaluation.

From the findings, it may be concluded that the B.Ed (Secondary) pre-service student teachers from the university under study are either not thoroughly prepared for teaching practice during the two years that they will be at the university before they are deployed for teaching practice, or the student teachers do not seem to take lesson planning and evaluation seriously, despite having done the relevant modules that prepare them for teaching practice.

It may also be concluded that mentors do not seem to be giving the student teachers adequate assistance and guidance because, despite the fact that the mentors are quite aware of the weaknesses of the student teachers in their lesson planning and evaluation, the weaknesses appear to be endemic. Such lack of assistance and guidance from the mentors may be attributable to lack of knowledge on mentoring and lack of motivation on the part of the mentors.

The study, thus, recommends that the university should thoroughly prepare the student teachers for teaching practice aspects, including lesson planning and evaluation. One way of doing so would be introducing a peer and micro-teaching module to be done before the students are released for TP. Such a module would offer the student teachers the much-needed opportunity to marry the theory they learn with the actual practice of, for instance, making and evaluating real lesson plans. Gonye et al. (2008) propose that student teachers require a handbook on documentation that should tackle aspect of scheming, planning and evaluation, and the current study subscribes to this idea.

The inquiry also recommends that the university could convene regular workshops for mentors at which the mentors could be schooled on what mentoring entails and the university's expectations of the student teachers on TP, including on issues to do with lesson planning and evaluation.

Finally, the paper recommends that the university could consider offering some kind of remuneration to the mentors as a token of appreciation for their mentorship, thereby motivating the mentors.

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