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Assessment of Teacher Trainees' Performance in Lesson Presentation: A case of a Kenyan Public University

Florence Kanorio Kisirkoi^{a,*}, Godfrey Shedd Mse^b

^a School of Education , Maasai Mara University, Kenya

^b School of Education, Kenyatta University, Kenya

* Corresponding author: Florence Kanorio Kisirkoi; e-mail: kisirkoiflorence@gmail.com;

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ABSTRACT

Teaching practice is a significant aspect of teacher preparation that equips the teacher trainees with pedagogies that enhance students' learning. This study assessed the effectiveness of teaching practice strategies during the pre - service period of teacher preparation in the Bachelor of Education degree program in a public university in Kenya. The objectives of the study were to establish the extent to which teacher trainees effectively presented their lessons and used teaching learning resources in class interaction. The Pedagogic Content Knowledge (PCPK) model by Shulman (1986) guided the study. A case study approach was employed with a study population of 500 Bachelor of Education teacher trainees who were going through the teaching practice stint in the third year of their course. The study assessed the teacher trainees' lesson presentation from introduction to conclusion including use of teaching learning resources during the lesson presentation. Secondary data was used by analysing the Teaching Practice Observation Schedule entries and scores by 36 teaching practice assessors of the 500 teacher trainees. It was found that the trainees' performance in lesson presentation was rated 'fair' for the majority of the teacher trainees in a rating scale of Very good, Good, Fair and Poor. In learner engagement and participation, the majority of the teacher trainees performance was rated 'fair' as follows: lesson introduction 300(60%) fair; lesson development 290(58%) fair; conclusion 280(56%) Fair. A majority (256(51%)) of the teacher trainees were also rated 'fair' in the use of teacher made and acquired teaching learning resources. A longitudinal study should be conducted to follow up the teacher trainees in the future teaching schools to find out the trend of their performance. The study indicates that the use of resources in the classroom and lesson presentation strategies require special emphasis in teacher education.

1. Introduction

Teaching practice or practicum is the exercise that plays the role of internship of pre-service teacher preparation in a teacher training program. It provides the teacher trainees the opportunity to put into practice the content learnt theoretically and develop pedagogic practices that impact on students' learning outcome. It plays a significant role in building the teachers' pedagogic strategies constituting teachers' thinking, including their knowledge of both content and pedagogic content, their practices and the impact of the practices on students' learning outcomes. The teacher's mastery of the subject and knowledge and skill of how to teach a subject are critical components of teacher preparation. Effective teachers use strategies to enhance learner achievement by attending to the learners' learning needs and manipulating the learning environment creatively to enable the students learn. Darling [Hammond et al., \(2006\)](#) observed that content knowledge alone does not adequately prepare teachers for the challenges they face in a real teaching environment. [Kelly, \(2004\)](#) also expounded that children learning depends much on how teachers teach. Hence teachers need to be prepared for the prevalent learning differences. Teacher trainees therefore require to be exposed to the realities in the classroom during their pre service teacher preparation course.

[Shulman, \(1986\)](#) Pedagogic Content Knowledge (CPK) model guided this study. It postulates that teachers need knowledge of what teaching approaches fit the content and also knowledge of how elements of the content can be arranged for better teaching, and the strategies most likely to be fruitful in reorganizing the understanding of learners for effective learning outcome. This necessitates the trainees to be put in a real teaching learning situation and observed as they practically execute their teaching.

This paper is based on practical teaching observation of third year Bachelor of education students taking science and art subjects in preparation for teaching in secondary schools in Kenya. The students had already covered all the theory courses and had undertaken micro teaching in preparation for the teaching practice exercise.

The objective of the study was to establish the extent to which teacher trainees effectively present lesson and used teaching learning resources while teaching in class.

Lesson presentation included learner class participation and engagement in the entire teaching learning process from lesson introduction to conclusion and the teacher's mastery of content and sustaining learners' interest. Use of teaching learning resources

included manner of use of writing board, use of teacher-made resources and improvisation.

2. Materials and Method

The study employed case study approach which was an in depth analysis of a case in a university in Kenya and data was collected using the university's Teaching Practice standardised Observation Schedule which had been developed guided by [Shulman, \(1986\)](#) view of teacher preparation components and severally used by the university and others during teaching practice sessions. The rating scale used was an adoption of Likert scale rated as 'very good', 'good', 'fair' and 'poor'. The observation was conducted in a secondary school lesson which takes 40 minutes. This study adopted survey research design and explored the situation of teaching practice activity as it was conducted by the teacher trainees in in class. Data was gathered using the university's official standardized Teaching Practice Observation Schedule. The study population was 500 teacher trainees who were third year bachelor of education students undertaking their teaching practice or practicum activity in real life context. The researcher analysed the ratings given by the 36 teaching practice assessors of the 500 teacher trainees. The areas rated in class were learner engagement and participation throughout the lesson, in lesson introduction, lesson development and conclusion; trainees' mastery

of content manifested in their use of detailed description and ability to break down content into chunks which learners can conceptualise. It also rated the trainees' ability to sustain the learners' interest by use of set induction, varied teaching learning strategies and use of reinforcement. Use of teaching learning resources made by the teacher and those improvised was rated. The use of writing board was assessed too.

Apparatus

The University's standardised official teaching practice assessment Observation Schedule was the instrument used to gather data.

3. Results and Discussion

The findings of the study were based on teacher lesson presentation and teacher use of teaching learning resources.

3.1. Lesson presentation

Table 1 below indicates that the trainees' performance in lesson presentation was rated 'Fair' for the majority of the participants in a rating scale; Very good, Good, Fair and Poor as follows: lesson introduction 300(60%) was rated 'Fair'; Lesson Development 290(58%) was rated 'Fair'; conclusion 280(56%) was rated 'Fair'. In learner engagement and participation, a majority of the trainees' performance was also rated 'Fair'. In mastery

of content observed in the trainees ability to give detailed description of concepts taught, a majority of the trainees 300(60%) were rated ‘very good’. but only 80(16%) were rated ‘Good’ and many 200(40%) were rated ‘Fair’

in breaking up content into chunks and 140(28% were rated ‘poor’. One would expect those good in detailed description to be good in breaking down content into chunks which tended not to be the case in this study.

Table 1. Trainees’ performance

Area	Rating				Total
	V. Good	Good	Fair	Poor	
1. Learner Engagement/ participation throughout the lesson					
a) Lesson Introduction	70(14%)	100(20%)	300(60%)	30(6%)	500 (100%)
b) Lesson development	50(10%)	100(20%)	290(58%)	60(12%)	500(100%)
c) Conclusion	60(12%)	120(24%)	280(56%)	40(8%)	500(100%)
2. Mastery of content					
a) Detailed description and explanation	300(60%)	100(20%)	90(18%)	10(2%)	500(100%)
b) Breaking down content into chunks	80(16%)	80(16%)	200(40%)	140(28%)	500(100%)
3. Sustaining learners interest					
a) Set induction	80(16%)	120(24%)	280(56%)	20(4%)	500(100%)
b) Varied teaching learning strategies	60(12%)	80(16%)	180(36%)	180(36%)	500(100%)
c) Use of reinforcement	100(20%)	140(28%)	230(46%)	30(6%)	500(100%)

Mastery of content is critical for effective teaching as well as pedagogic knowledge. The basis for development of innovative teaching approaches and techniques is deep content knowledge and therefore teachers must be proficient in general pedagogic knowledge and pedagogic content knowledge ([Adedoyin, 2011](#)). A teacher with good content and pedagogical knowledge would be able to break down content and present it to the learner in the form the learner best understands ([Koehler, 2011](#)). The most frequently used variables

when attempting to explain why some teachers are more effective than others are the subject matter mastery and pedagogical knowledge. [Shulman, \(1986\)](#) indicated that knowledge base is central in teacher preparation and consists of domains of content, pedagogical and curriculum knowledge and knowledge of learners and educational context and ends. Pedagogic content knowledge is central to effective pedagogies; this includes knowledge and ability to present a lesson in a way students will grasp content taught. It also involves

anticipating difficulties and building on learner support such as using images, explanations, examples and actions. [Westbrook et al., \(2013\)](#) in their rigorous literature review on pedagogies and curriculum teaching practices found out that most effective teachers use strategies that promote students' interaction in class communicatively paying attention to the students, placing them centrally in their construction of teaching learning process. The manner of lesson presentation is critical in teaching learning process. [Kelly, \(2004\)](#) pointed out that what students learn does not depends only on the content taught but also by how teachers teach.

In sustaining the learners' interest, many of the trainees' performance was also rated 'fair'. In set induction the majority (280 (56%) were rated fair; many others 230 (46%) were rated 'fair' in the use of reinforcement. This finding was not positive because the principles of

effective teaching observed in classroom practice as reported by Organization for International Co-operation and Development ([OECD, 2009](#)) and [Brophy, \(2001\)](#) were creating a supportive classroom climate, providing learners opportunity to learn, raising teacher and learner enthusiasm, enhancing learner creativity and innovativeness, establishing learning orientation, promoting coherent content presentation. The other principles of effective teaching include providing learners' opportunity for thoughtful discourse, practice and application; providing student assistance, cooperative learning, and assessment in measuring expected learning outcomes. The teacher trainees tended not to perform well in these critical areas.

3.2 Use of teaching learning resources

Use of teaching learning resources included manner of use of writing board, use of teacher made resources and improvisation.

Table 2. Use of teaching learning resources

Area observed	Rating				
	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Total
Use of teachers' made/acquired resources	67(14%)	97(19%)	256(51%)	80(16%)	500(100%)
Improvisation of resources	30(6%)	45(9%)	288(57%)	137(28%)	500(100%)
Use of writing board	200(40%)	150(30%)	100(20%)	50(10%)	500(100%)

Table 2 indicates that a majority, 256(51%) of the trainees were rated 'fair' in the use of teacher- made and acquired resources. This

finding positively related to the findings that the majority of the trainees were rated 'fair' in learner engagement and learner participation

throughout the lesson. The finding was also in agreement with [Kisirkoi, \(2011\)](#) who found out that resources were not effectively used in class by regular, full time practising teachers who mostly used teacher centred teaching learning approaches. This minimally elicits learner engagement and, in most cases, this mode of lesson presentation encourages rote learning as reported by [Hardman et al., \(2009\)](#).

A significant number 137(28%) of the teacher trainees were rated 'poor' in improvisation of resources for use in teaching and the majority 288(57%) were rated 'fair' in improvisation of teaching learning resources which could not result in meaningful learner engagement in course of the lesson.

On the use of the writing board, a significant number 200(40%) of teacher trainees was rated 'very good' and a large number was rated 'good'. The trainees performed well in the use of the writing board but not in use of teacher made resources.

Teaching learning resources support students' learning by effectively communicating knowledge and skills, and effective use of resources has been found to significantly increase students' learning outcomes ([Bitner, & Bitner, 2002](#)). Research has established that resources aid in communicating knowledge, skills and attitudes. Technology too, when used as a teaching

learning resource, support cognitive activities ([So & Kim, 2009](#)). Resources are used in various ways in presentation of subject matter especially for purposes of problem based learning to develop critical thinking, scaffolding, and independent learning, hence, improving learning achievements.

Resources also cater for learners' individual differences and different learning styles. Research has also shown that learners learn best concepts when they are taught by use of concrete resources because resources help to make abstract content concrete ([Schwille et al., 2007](#)). The teacher would also use resources for greater class interaction. It would have been expected that the teacher trainees who were found to be good in content mastery would be good in use of resources but that was not the case in this study and this requires further inquiry.

Overall, the teacher trainees were not rated 'very good' therefore not highly rated in use of teaching learning resources to enhance learning effectiveness.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study established that the extent to which teacher trainees effectively presented their lesson and used teaching learning resources in class was low, most of them having been rated only 'fair' and not 'very good'. It appeared that right at the training

point trainees are not good in preparation and use of teaching learning resources and learner engagement for purpose of knowledge creation which is a great challenge in teacher education that requires innovativeness and creativity for purpose of knowledge creation which is a great challenge in teacher education that requires innovativeness and creativity which are the critical skills to the technological the 21st century and beyond. This need is critical in Kenya now when there is move to reform the curriculum to develop in the learner competence based skills.

It is recommended that teacher education should be studied further for purposes of addressing teacher trainees learning needs and issues in teacher preparation. Emphasis should be laid on development of lesson presentation skills and actual lesson presentation in a real teaching learning environment. A longitudinal study should be conducted to follow up the student teachers in their future teaching schools to find out the trend of their performance. To achieve quality education great attention should be paid on how a teacher teaches in their classrooms.

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