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Interrogating the Lesson Plan in a Pre-service Methods Course: Evidence from a University in Kenya

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Abstract: The paper reports on research that examined how the content of a History methods course, taught in a university in Kenya, influenced student teachers' lesson planning and pedagogical skills. A lecture on a lesson plan, micro-teaching lesson plan documents and presentations were examined to determine student teachers' preparedness for teaching the History and Government (H&G) secondary school curriculum in Kenya. A case study was employed including lesson observations, interviews and document analysis. The findings demonstrate that focusing on parts of a lesson in lesson planning in the lecture may have derailed student teachers from developing the pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) that is likely to enable them develop competences that are expected for teaching H&G.

Keywords: History, secondary school; method course, lesson plan; competence.

Introduction

Teacher Education policies in Kenya expect institutions to "...develop communicative skills; develop professional attitudes and values; equip the teacher with knowledge and ability to identify and develop the educational needs of the child; create initiative, a sense of professional commitment and excellence in education; and enable the teacher to adapt to the environment and society" (MoED-HRD & UNICEF, 1994, pp. 146-147). The government regards "...academically and professionally qualified teachers ... as a prerequisite for provision of high quality and relevant education at all levels" (p. 147). However, unlike global trends in teacher education, wherein the prescription of standards of practice is increasingly the norm (Grossman & Thompson, 2004; Morrow & Torres, 2000), the situation in Kenya leaves it to the teacher education providers to make good on the interpretation of policy.

For teaching at the secondary school, students begin the Bachelor of Education (B Ed) programme by studying more than two academic subjects as a general requirement and, from their second year of study, they choose two teaching subjects in addition to the professional courses. In the main, the academic departments offer teaching subjects whilst the faculties or schools of Education, with school practice or practicum playing a central role in these programmes, offer the professional courses. The courses have to equip students with appropriate curriculum design knowledge and skills that schools expect upon graduation. As part of the requirements of the programme, there is also a mandatory placement of student teachers in schools for a period of 12 weeks, generally, at the end of the third year of study.

In this paper we interrogate how a methods course guided student teachers to translate History subject matter (content) into classroom knowledge suitable for the subject objectives (Authors, 2013). We used data from a lecture on the lesson plan taught to students and their micro-teaching lesson plans and presentations to examine the translation of H&G objectives into practice. The questions we sought to answer were: (1) What knowledge and skills for teaching H&G were the student teachers taught in the History Teaching and Methods (HTM, hereafter) course? (2) What factors contributed to the ways in which they (students) planned and presented their micro-teaching lessons? (3) How do taught lesson plans and micro-teaching lesson plans and presentations reflect the knowledge and skills that are implied by the objectives of the H&G syllabus?

Santagata, Zannoni and Stigler (2007) have argued that lesson planning comprises a range of forms of knowledge for teaching. These include, among others, "... goals for students' learning, instructional activities, strategies for monitoring students' thinking and assessing their learning, curriculum and pedagogy..." (p.127). A lesson plan, therefore, reflects a teacher's interpretation of subject matter, the multiple ways to represent it, the adaptations and tailoring that is made to instructional materials as influenced by what the teacher knows about learners' prior knowledge, and alternative conceptions of the topic or notion to be presented (Choy, Wong, Lin & Chong, 2013). It thus provides a useful context for examining knowledge of how to teach. However, Corcoran (2007) has argued that pre-service teacher preparation does not equip prospective teachers with the appropriate knowledge and skills for classroom teaching. Ensor's (1999) view is that whilst the rhetoric of many programmes emphasises a propensity to transform the professional language/vocabulary of prospective teachers, there continues to be a chasm between what they offer and the school's curricular expectations. The situation points to, in general, an absence of curriculum coherence between teacher education and school curricula.

Curriculum coherence has been defined as the degree to which various educational activities in a system accord with each other, both in intention and practice (Newmann, Smith, Allensworth & Bryk, 2001; Schmidt, Wang & McKnight, 2005). It has also been understood as a deliberate means through which an educational programme is able to bring together "competing tensions in the curriculum" (Johnson & Ratcliff, 2004, p. 93). As regards teacher education, Roberts (1998) argues that it promotes the importance of a clearer and more integrated organisation of courses and activities for student-teachers' learning and practice of teaching. Therefore, a coherent curriculum would ensure a design that relays clarity of purpose through the way content is organised and communicated.

In Kenya there has been criticism that secondary teacher education programmes reflect a mismatch between the output from the institutions and the needs of schools in key subjects (Karugu, 2005; ROK, 1998 & 2005; Sitima, 1995). For example, Sitima, (1995, p. 111) has argued that

One of the major weaknesses in the university teacher education programme is the adoption of the "unit system" in major teaching subjects. This system does not take cognisance of the secondary education curriculum. Undergraduates specialise too early yet when posted to our schools they are expected to handle all concepts/topics in their teaching subjects of specialisation. Cases have arisen where some graduate teachers cannot handle or teach those topics that they did not take in their course.

This view reflects recommendations from a 1978 study conducted by the Deans' Committee at the University of Nairobi on the BEd programme that it be reoriented to address the needs of the secondary school curriculum: "...subjects must be looked at for what they have to offer the

teacher ... The teacher's role and responsibilities in the field [school] are the ultimate criteria for developing a teacher education programme" (UON, 1979, p.102). The Committee further suggested that, an appropriate teacher education programme would be one that enabled the student teacher to "...experience accomplishment by having mastery of the content and skills of the subject. The student teacher must feel that [he/she] is successfully managing classroom tasks and becoming competent in the subject [he/she] being taught" (p.103). However, research on teacher education in this country, for example, Lutta-Mukhebi (1982) and Shanguya (1995), has dealt mainly with what teacher graduates do in classrooms (see also Mueni, 1999; Odeo, 2003; Too, 2004; Osoro, 2006) and not how they learn to teach or instruct.

Studies on learning how to teach emphasise a shift from guiding students that "...teaching [is] only the delivery of information" (Nilsson, 2008, p. 1281) to encouraging, *inter alia*, pedagogical reasoning (Shulman, 1987 & 2004) that fosters links with pupils' learning (Feiman-Nemser, 2001) and the attainment of school subject objectives (Thornton, 2001). The emphasis is on improving methods courses that either are too procedural and simplistic and thus lack rigour; or, are so theoretical that they have minimal practical relevance to the actual teaching demands in school classrooms. For example, according to Shulman (1987), instruction is constituted by the actual classroom activities that are planned to encourage learners to engage with the content. It is demonstrative of teachers' professional capacity or competence for directing the interactional activities in the classroom with his/her learners.

Pedagogical reasoning and professional competence/capacity

Bailin (1998) distinguishes competence in terms of skills and knowledge. For her, skills are mainly descriptive competencies that focus on the proficiency of certain mental processes. They are different from knowledge, which is mainly normative and concerned with principles, reasons and arguments. Normative knowledge thus underscores processes such as respect for reasons, an inquiring attitude, open-mindedness and fair-mindedness as mental abilities that are logical, criteria based and pragmatic, that is, reasonable reflective thinking that focuses on decision-making. Being knowledgeable is thus not a skill but a way of accounting for what is entailed in something.

Such reasoning has been described by Orton (1997) as enabling a teacher to reach a decision on what to do with regard to instruction (what to teach and how to teach it). It is a rational process by which teachers are able to derive ways of acting (teaching) that are "... good, sensible and conducive..." (Orton, 1997, p. 570), and thereby considered as worthwhile for learners. Dunne and Pendlebury (2003) and Waghid (2006) describe it as deliberation that is about a normative vision, contemplative and focused on subject matter, learners, educational purposes and contexts. For Dunne and Pendlebury, it demands "... the capacity to respond to a range of cognitive uncertainties that arise from related features of the world of practice, namely mutability, indeterminacy, and particularity" (p.210). It thus does not require a teacher to adhere judiciously to a prescribed format of deriving the most appropriate decision on what to do, but rather there is a need for flexibility. In their view

... a wise and competent teacher is surely one who has a rich understanding of the internal goods and definitive ends of the practice and a realistic, clear-sighted perception of what is possible and fitting under different circumstances. If practical argument elicitation can help teachers to see the richness and complexity of practical deliberation in

their practice, then perhaps, and only then, can it serve as a device for appraising and improving teaching (pp.210-211).

It is in this sense that teacher action has to be understood as involving practical deliberation about means and ends that involve being in pursuit of an appropriate response to a practical question, “what should I do?” (Audi, 2004, p. 119). It requires one to weigh the pros and cons of a particular *course of action*, given that any action has its liabilities. Doing so contains “... a moral concept [that] invokes intrinsic ends and ideas of perfection [which are its] constitutive fidelities ... [that may be only accessible through] contemplation...” (Buchmann, 1988, p. 205). Therefore, exercising such deliberation implies the need to be appropriately resourced in terms of knowledge of the constituent parts of the context in which we function (work) and heuristic device(s) by which to figure out what is the best thing to decide and do. This is what makes teaching a moral practice.

In order to determine the significance of the HTM course in the pre-service programme for H&G, we examined the lesson plan that was taught as part of its content and student-teachers’ micro-teaching lesson plans and presentations as examples of preparation for teaching the H&G syllabus. The next section provides a detailed discussion of the research design and methods that we used.

Methodology

Sampling

We used both convenient and purposive sampling to select two lecturers and five student teachers studying History as one of their secondary school teaching subjects to serve as key informants because of being information-rich (Patton, 2002; McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). The two lecturers were in-charge of the HTM course and thus best placed to explain how they were teaching students to teach for H&G objectives. They were colleagues to one of the authors and were expected to be fairly at ease with having to discuss the course.

The author was less experienced within the faculty than the lecturer participating in the research at one campus and this ensured that the lecturer did not feel coerced by an unfavourable power relationship. The other lecturer was assigned to students at a different campus of the university and did not work directly with the authors. Both lecturers offered their co-operation willingly and this was needed for the intense observations and conversations that they were to be involved in. As Delamont (1992) warns, often when people are persuaded to take part in research they perform for research rather than be natural. This did not apply in the case of this study. The pledged cooperation created the confidence that trustworthy data would be collected. The teacher educators’ lectures and explanations were used to cross check it and reduce the effect of personal bias on the basis of conformability (Lincoln & Guba, 1999).

Together the teacher educators had thirty years ($n=18$ and 12) of teaching experience both at secondary school level and the university. They were also authors of history school textbooks and well known in the country.

From thirty student teacher volunteers observed during microteaching presentations, five were selected through convenience sampling. They lived on campus and therefore found it convenient to participate in the interviews that were scheduled at the end of day lectures. This

facilitated fieldwork and provided ample time for discussing issues identified in the lesson plans and their teaching in addition to what they felt needed attention.

Research Approach

We adopted an interpretive case study (Merriam, 2002) because we viewed student learning as a social construction that depended on the meanings and interactions that were promoted through the HTM course content and the social context (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997) in which it was taught. The assumption was that the lecturers of the HTM course did not decide arbitrarily on how to prepare the students for the H&G syllabus, but rather made their decisions in a considered manner. These decisions were rooted in what they viewed as valuable to prepare students to teach the H&G objectives. Therefore, how the course and students' micro-teaching plans and presentations took into account these objectives was significant.

The HTM course signalled what was important to learn to teach H&G competently. It positioned teacher educators and students as reality constructors for H&G teaching and learning. Guided by the views of, amongst others, Nieuwenhuis (2010) and Fairclough (2003) who viewed discourses as transcending language to encompass ways of expressing oneself using words and actions in interactions, we examined the lesson plans that were taught in the course and highlighted issues that predisposed student teachers to planning and presenting their micro-teaching lessons as they did. The consciousness it raised and hoped to develop and the interactions/dialogues and artefacts that were used were important. Content and discourse analyses were thus adopted to illuminate the ways in which the teacher educators and students constructed the H&G reality and to uncover what they considered to be the implications of the H&G objectives for teaching and learning. As explained by Nieuwenhuis (2010), as ways of knowing, valuing and experiencing the world, discourses, in this case, in the HTM lectures and micro-teaching lesson plans and presentations represented everyday texts for building what the objectives of H&G proposed as knowledge and skills to be developed. Therefore, texts both written and spoken by the teacher educators and students, needed to be examined to reveal these aspects, in particular how they were embedded in and enacted as appropriate responses to these objectives. We thus hoped that the content, language chosen to explain and discussions about how to plan and teach, meanings promoted, documents, tools, activities, interactions and other artefacts that were used in the HTM course and micro-teaching lessons characterised understanding how to teach the H&G objectives. As reflections of lived experiences or what Heidegger (cited by Hofstader, 1988, p. 278) describes as "being in the world", they were studied through an interpretive phenomenological approach (IPA) (Klein and Myers, 1999).

We paid special attention to the following three aspects that were relevant to these experiences: the knowledge and skills taught through the lecture on a lesson plan that was used in the HTM course, the ways in which the student teachers planned and presented micro-teaching lessons and the relevance of the lecture and micro-teaching lesson plans and presentations to the H&G objectives.

Data Collection

Data was collected over two semesters (covering two months in each semester). In the first semester, lectures on how to teach H&G were observed. These were theory sessions. In the second semester, the focus shifted to microteaching sessions. Since the study was conducted at a time when students would not be in schools, the microteaching lessons were used as representative of the learnt practice of teaching. This was particularly useful because when students are in schools they are not practising their teaching in contexts that are always similar nor guided by the same teachers. The micro-teaching lessons provided an opportunity to study the influence of the guidance that was given to the students by their subject methods teacher-educators. It constituted common experience that predisposed them to a particular way of reasoning in their lesson plans and their enactment in micro-teaching lessons.

The micro-teaching lessons were observed in the presence of the teacher-educators. Influenced by the focus in the course (*what was offered as content, how lesson planning was taught and the reasons for these decisions 'why'*) two methods of data collection were adopted. Notes were taken with the aid of an observational log that allowed for systematic attention to be paid to instruction and an audio recorder was used to capture data from the lectures. By focussing on the content of the lecture, how it was organised and presented to the student teachers, it was possible to capture how the concepts and principles that are communicated or implied in the curriculum policy for H&G were dealt with in the HTM course. In addition, both an audio and a video-recorder were used to capture data during the micro-teaching sessions after the lesson plans were studied.

Research process

Guided by LeCompte's (2000) views on the importance of the research questions to structuring the research process, we interrogated how the HTM course taught students to develop lessons that foster national unity and thereafter paid special attention to the ways in which these students planned, enacted and explained their micro-teaching lessons. Focussing on what they knew about the content of the topic, the learners to be taught, the syllabus with which they worked, Kenyan schools as a local context and what they believed counted as good teaching that is, PCK (Shulman, 1987) was essential. Both the teacher educators' and students' subject matter knowledge and its translation into practice had to be studied as evidence of how they thought about what to do with the H&G objectives. We understood that this reasoning might be tacit and therefore difficult for the educators and students to articulate. Therefore, words, sentences or utterances, materials used, explanations and interactions that occurred in lectures between teacher-educators and students to develop the knowledge and skills to teach H&G and, students and students during micro-teaching lessons, highlighted reflections on the H&G objectives (Dunne and Pendlebury, 2003). These were ideas and strategies about curriculum materials or a teacher's 'tools of the trade', that included scheme of work, lesson plan, textbooks, and charts. As minimal units used to teach knowledge for teaching they were invaluable to the lectures.

By also paying attention to the interactive nature of the communication and how the forms of communication positioned students, what Mouton (2001) would describe as the relationship between language and participants (as society) in lectures, course readings and hand-

out supplements used to develop teaching competences, we could focus closely on how decisions were made as a reflection of the mediation and translation of the objectives of H&G syllabus. As signals of a ‘theory of content’ (Deng, 2009) they conveyed the ideas and strategies that were needed to fulfil the requirements of these objectives

Data Management

The concepts of normative critical thinking by Bailin (1998) and amongst others, Dunne and Pendlebury’s (2003) views on the value of practical deliberation in teaching, served as important heuristics for examining the lectures. How students were taught to make rational curriculum decisions for the successful teaching of the H&G objectives, for example, translate the objective of fostering national unity in terms of historical content knowledge and teaching strategies that promoted democratic discussions when teaching such content, were given special attention. Codes were identified by systematically separating how the course dealt with segments such as topic, lesson objectives, learner activities and teacher activities and then categorising them under knowledge of content (subject matter), knowledge of curricular material, knowledge of learners, and knowledge of educational objectives. For instance, for a *scheme of work as a minimal unit of data*, the category was *knowledge of curriculum material*. This derivation was borrowed from Turner-Bisset (2001), in whose view knowledge of curriculum entails an understanding of what is possible to use in order to communicate knowledge, skills and understanding to learners. Table 1 below illustrates how this categorisation of teaching tools was done.

<i>Minimal Unit</i>	<i>Category</i>
Scheme of work Lesson plan Media/teaching aid	Knowledge of curriculum material
Syllabus: lesson topic lesson objectives Reference (books etc)	Knowledge of subject matter
National educational objectives Lesson (instructional) objectives	Knowledge of educational goals/syllabus

Table 1: Categorising the Teaching Tools Used in Lectures

In addition, teacher and learner activities were identified as minimal units of data that developed into knowledge of curriculum and knowledge of learner, respectively. Thus, teacher activities mainly involved examples of what student teachers did, such as: "...explain the reasons for..." or "...allow students to ask questions; ...ask students question; On the part of learner activities, some of the items included were as follows: '...observe the flow chart.....take notes.....participate in a discussion...'".

<i>Minimal Unit</i>	<i>Category</i>
Teacher activities	Knowledge of educational context/curriculum
Learner activities	Knowledge of learner

Table 2: Categorising Teacher and Learner Activities – Data from Lectures and Microteaching Lessons

Likewise as shown in Table 3, to derive categories for knowledge for teaching, we would ask the question: 'how is knowledge for teaching explained by the teacher-educator? As regards data from the observed lectures and microteaching lessons, the questions were: what role was the student teacher made to play in the lecture on lesson planning? What did the role taken up by the student mean in terms of learning how to plan for and teach for H&G objectives? From these questions, it became apparent that there was a preference for knowledge for teaching that seemed to concentrate on the construction of lesson objectives and the systematic progression of lesson activities through phases that began with lesson topic, objectives, introduction, followed by lesson development and conclusion. A selection is used to illustrate below.

<i>Minimal Unit</i>	<i>Category</i>
Lesson topic	Knowledge of subject matter
Lesson objectives	Curriculum knowledge/ Knowledge of educational goals

Table 3: Categorising knowledge for teaching – Data from Interviews with teacher educators

Guided by Taylor (2008), themes were developed by asking 'how' in relation to the data knowledge for teaching was explained by the teacher-educator and use the answer to derive what distinguished the teacher-educator as presenter of this knowledge. As shown in Table 4 for each aspect of a lesson, reference was made to an issue in the syllabus and an explanation provided of what was essential to it in terms of experiencing the teacher educator in the lecture.

<i>Minimal Unit</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>Theme</i>
Teacher activities Learner activities	Curriculum knowledge/ educational context knowledge of subject matter/ knowledge of learner	Knowledge of teacher as presenter Knowledge of learner as receiver of content
Media/teaching aid	Knowledge of curriculum materials/	Knowledge for teaching as procedural/ lesson- phases oriented
Reference (books etc)	Knowledge of subject matter/ Knowledge of curriculum	Knowledge of teaching as delivery of content

Table 4: Deriving themes for knowledge for teaching

To identify the instructional knowledge that student teachers were exposed to and the instructional knowledge and skill which they demonstrated, we paid attention to their views on knowledge for teaching (the nature of the PCK, curriculum coherence and practical reasoning) they thought were taught in the HTM course. Table 5 below gives an example of one of the responses received.

<i>Minimal Unit</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>Theme: Developed from 'how is teaching talked about?'</i>
What matters most, to me, is how you <i>deliver the content</i> ... In fact, for me I wish we were just taught how to <i>deliver content</i> . That is what I think the schools out there regard as important... [emphasis added]	Curriculum knowledge	Teaching as content delivery/ teacher as conveyor

Table 5: Deriving a Theme from Interview Data with students

The student teachers' microteaching lessons reflected what was meant with 'how you deliver the content. Learning to teach H&G was presented by the teacher-educator as an encounter that privileged mainly familiarity or mastery of the content subject content. There was also clear preference for knowledge for teaching that prioritised the systematic progression of lesson activities through phases that began with lesson introduction, development and

conclusion. As a result, HTM course could be described as promoting a concept of teaching as ‘the ability to present information to learners’, that is, teaching as procedural. A more detailed discussion of the lecture is presented below.

Data presentation and analysis

The example of a transcript of a lecture on a lesson plan as a tool for curriculum translation at the school classroom level that is provided below in table 6 illustrates how the plan was presented to the students as a heuristic device for the presentation of lesson content. The lecture emphasised the components of an instructional plan; namely, the introduction, lesson development and the conclusion.

Topic: European Invasion of Africa & the Process of Colonisation. Subtopic: The Process of Partition. Class: Form Three
Objective(s): By the end of the lesson, a learner should be able to: (1) Describe the process of partition. (2) Explain after the scramble.
Learning Aid(s): Map. Reference(s): Hist. & Govt. pp. 148-9 by Kivuitu, W.
Stage 1 (3 minutes) <u>Introduction</u> Teacher Activity: Previewing the previous lesson; Previewing new words for terminologies; Define scramble. Learner Activity: Taking notes; Observing; Answering questions.
Stage 2 (3 minutes) <u>Lesson Development</u> Teacher Activity: To state ways through which European powers acquired colonies; The consequence of the process of partition. Learner Activity: Writing notes; Answering questions; Taking notes.
Stage 3 (1 minute) <u>Conclusion</u> Teacher Activity: Summarise the lesson and give an assignment. Learner Activity: Asking questions; Taking down the assignment.

Table 6: A Lesson Plan taught in the HTM lecture

The lecture on this lesson plan prioritised what students needed to include. It was conducted as follows:

The lecture on the lesson plan

I focused on what would be appropriate activities to choose when teaching the topic ‘Study of Man’s Past; Record of Past Events’ rather than teach the students how and why the suggested teacher and learner activities would ensure a curriculum design that addresses the essence of the H&G objectives through teaching the content of this topic. The teacher educator concentrated on what he called a ‘road map’ during the lecture. Students were guided to know that:

First, a lesson plan serves as evidence of a careful pre-instructional thinking and preparation by the teacher...

Secondly, a lesson plan enables familiarity with content. The teacher is able to visualise some of the most appropriate ways of delivering content and the sequence of its flow.

The third point to consider is that, a lesson plan helps to clarify the rationale behind covering a particular topic. Normally, this is exemplified in the specific objectives that a teacher sets for his or her lesson. Let me give an example.

...a lesson plan also serves as a guide or a roadmap for the teacher on the content and strategies to adopt when teaching... With a lesson plan, therefore, a teacher is able to avoid vagueness and irrelevancies...

The plan guides a teacher on how much time to spend on an activity in the course of the duration of a lesson... Hence, we can say, the teacher becomes very systematic in his or her conduct.

A lesson plan also serves as a memory bank for the teacher. ...

It reminds the teacher of the main ideas and facts that need to be focused on during instruction.

It is also an important guide to the teacher over the actions to take at every stage of the lesson. In this way, it helps the teacher to ensure orderliness, thoroughness and logical flow of the content in a lesson.

In addition, it helps a teacher to map out all methods and resources that he or she proposes to use in the classroom.

Last but not least, the lesson plan gives security and confidence to the teacher. As a result, it helps one to improve performance over and above being the basis for future planning of subsequent lessons. Table 7 below illustrates how the structural components that were explained.

Stage	Time	Teacher Activity	Learner Activity
I – Introduction	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highlight the demands and expectations of the course (i.e. more of like course outline). Draw on learners' (student-teachers) primary school experiences on learning History. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learners/students' take note of course requirements. Generate information about History's definition and aims. Linking definition and aims to the meaning of History.
II – Lesson Development	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Study of Man's Past; Record of past events; It's a form of inquiry; It deals with the relation of cause and effect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify different aspects of meaning of History. Make notes. List branches of History Explain characteristics/features of History, e.g. History as a way of thinking; History as ideas, etc.
III	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask pupils to explain meaning of Government. Guide pupils towards different types of government. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide answers e.g. It refers to ruling, controlling. Identify different types of government, e.g. democratic, aristocratic, and monarchical.
IV- Lesson Conclusion	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highlight main points of lesson Allow pupils to ask questions Ask (teacher) questions Give an assignment Mention the next lesson on Sources of Information in History 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Answering teacher questions on meaning of History and Government Seek clarification on areas of the lesson that they failed to understand Take down assignment

Table 7: Illustration of the Structural Components of the Lesson Plan by a Teacher Educator

Promoting student-teachers' learning and practice of teaching required a design that relayed clearly how the purpose of the syllabus could be met through organising and communicating subject content in a particular way. However, the lecture was largely practice-oriented and prioritised what Norsworthy (2008) describes as 'techniques of teaching'. The students' awareness of the importance of the disciplinary/curricular requirements implied in the objectives of H&G in relation to History was not raised.

In explaining the purpose of a lesson plan, students needed to be guided on ways of expressing themselves in terms of words, actions and interactions that would uncover and illuminate the implications of the H&G objectives for teaching and learning, that is, what would be involved in responding to the question 'what should I do?' (Audi, 2004) when planning a

lesson. It was crucial to make them aware of the importance of looking at the implications (pros and cons) of the H&G objectives as directives to a particular *course of action* (Buchmann, 1988). They needed to be appropriately resourced in terms of knowledge/theory that the constituent parts of the objectives required when planning lessons. These were heuristic device(s) by which to figure out what is the best thing to decide and do. For Dunne and Pendlebury (2003) and Waghid (2006) such 'figuring out' has to involve deliberation that focuses on subject matter, learners, educational purposes /objectives and contexts to clarify the intrinsic ends (outcomes/results) that Buchmann, (1988) has argued are the basis of reasoning about means and ends that make teaching a moral practice. However, the lecture in this HTM course as a context for learning how to 'prepare to teach' appeared to concentrate primarily on what to include as stages in lesson planning and do at every stage. The importance of a discussion or deliberation that would have been useful for identifying the PCK (Shulman, 1987) that would be needed for the professional or competent practice required by the H&G objectives seemed unimportant. Directing the interactional activities with learners and amongst them during the different phases of a lesson needed PCK that would enhance the development of a consciousness that was implied in these objectives.

Focussing on structural aspects and what to do (skills) in the lecture resulted in student-teachers doing the same in their microteaching lesson plans and presentations. The preference was evident in the student-teachers' microteaching lessons. This was not surprising given that a large number of students across the globe are still left (intentionally and unintentionally) with an impression that learning to teach is about mastering classroom teacher behaviour that had been found to have an impact. This has been a common belief from the late 1960s to the early 1990s when the shortfall of microteaching pedagogy in pre-service teacher preparation was exposed and there was a shift towards a model of reflective practice in the early 1980s (see Eraut, 2000). However, the evidence in this study demonstrates how this criticism is still overlooked in the HTM course. To further exemplify the influence of the orientation in this course, we present another transcript of a micro-teaching lesson plan and presentation as evidence of planning how to teach and teaching that was offered by a student teacher. It is an example from the microteaching lessons that we observed.

A Micro-teaching plan and lesson as example

The lesson Plan

Topic: The Government of Kenya *Sub-topic:* The Process of Law Making *Class:* F 3

Objectives: By the end of the lesson, the learner should be able to: a) Define the term bill. b) State the types of bills. c) Explain the process of law making. d) Describe the six main stages of law making.

Learning Aid: A process chart that depicts the various stages of law making. *References:* 1). History & Government, Form Three, KLB. Pp 153-154. 2). Milestone in History & Government, F3. pp. 103-104. 3). Explore History & Government, F3. Pp. 194-195.

Stage 1 Introduction (2 minutes) *Teacher Activity*: Preview the last lesson on legislature; Draw upon learners experience on law making process. *Learner Activity*: Generate information about what they know on the law making process.

Stage 2 Lesson Development (3 minutes) *Teacher Activity*: Link the process of law making with the last lesson, e.g. one of the functions of legislature; Guide students on process of law making. e.g. drafting of bill, first reading, second reading...; Show students a flow chart/ process chart depicting process of law making. *Learner Activity*: Seek clarifications on different functions of the legislature specifically law making like-how can ordinary citizen participate?; Make notes; Observe the flow chart; Draw/write summary of the process of law making.

Stage 3 Conclusion (2 minutes) *Teacher Activity*: Summarise main aspects of lesson; Mention next lesson on the Executive arm of Government. *Learner Activity*: Take notes (Summary); Ask relevant questions.

Video analysis revealed that when the plan was translated into practice in the development stage of the microteaching lesson (see appendix), even though the student teacher presented a lesson on a topic that required more than a simple and direct presentation of content on the process of making of laws through parliamentary procedures, the presentation of content (teacher activity, in this case) was prioritised. There was little in the way of active engagement to ensure that students understand what to do to attain objectives. Also more time (20 minutes) than what had been allocated in the plan (7 minutes, as shown in the lesson plan) was spent. The lesson did not include students' activities to promote learner participation. Instead the teacher dominated the exposition.

The lesson plan illustrates the degree to which the student had understood the prescribed objectives. As a result, its translation cannot be explained solely on the basis of how lesson planning was taught in the HTM lecture. Other inherent subjective factors could have been at play, for example, the student's understanding of the content that had to be taught, its purpose in relation to the overall aims of the H&G syllabus, type of learners, context and other factors that ought to have been considered when teaching about law making in Kenya.

Discussion

Bailin's (1998) construct of normative critical thinking and Audi's (2004) view on practical deliberation provided useful guidance when interrogating the plans for the lessons that were studied on the basis of their actual representation in the micro-teaching lessons. The students' knowledge of history, learners, the H&G objectives and their translation in designing contextually and culturally relevant or responsive forms of teaching, reflected what Hsieh and Shannon (2005) view as the 'state of affairs on the ground' or Heidegger's 'being in the world'.

The orientation in the HTM course that was evident in the micro-teaching lesson as well was informed by the popularly referred to 'process – product paradigm' (Thiessen, 2000); thus the neglecting to emphasise the significance of the classroom as a context for constructing meaningful practical knowledge that was likely to optimise interaction with learners during instruction. As a task that is hinged in 'reasoned judgement' (Bailin, 1998), lesson plans and their translation into micro-teaching lessons needed to reflect an exercise that translated subject

matter (content) into representations/activities that would guide learners towards the attainment of the objectives of H&G. The student teachers needed deeper and more focused attention on deliberation which instantiated sensitivity to situational particularities to facilitate the fulfilment of the objectives of H&G.

Beginning from the understanding that teaching ought to be conceived as driven by the question “what should I do” (Audi, 1989), it became necessary to look at how students were taught to strive for concepts that promoted coherence between the HTM course and H&G objectives. To do so, specifically, the lecture on lesson plans had to be anchored on the essence of, perhaps, one of the H&G objectives as example. It was supposed to have provided a safe and unthreatening context or environment to demonstrate deliberate engagement with these objectives in order for the students to be aware and grasp what was involved in terms of practice in, for example, promoting “a sense of awareness and need for a functional democracy of the Kenyan people and other nations” (Kenya Institute of Education, 2006, p. 6). The objective requires the acquisition of what Little, Feng, van Tassel-Baska, Rogers and Avery (2007, p. 274) refer to as a habit of mind that enables learners to develop, amongst others, attributes and understanding of how the actions of others influence their lives and society. This was the spirit of the objective that is set by the KIE for the topic of ‘law making’.

According to Bernstein’s (2000 & 2004) it is within the structure (design) of a pedagogical activity that the features of educational knowledge organisation and communication can be discerned. The HTM lecture had to be guided by four interrelated rules which constitute the essential (inner) logic of any pedagogic relation; regulative rules to demarcate ‘who’ and ‘how’ the context of teaching and learning H&G had to be structured and thereby “establish the conditions for order, character, and manner” (Bernstein, 2004, p. 198). The roles played by both the teacher educators and student teachers and how they had to act were important. For example, how did the course teach a student to position her/himself in the interaction that occurred in the lesson? What role did the student play in the events of the plan?

From the evidence, it is apparent that the lesson plan was taught as a pre-determined format for student teachers to follow during a ‘journey’ through a lesson/classroom’s specified time. Planning for teaching was driven by the teacher-educator’s metaphor of a ‘road-map’, which prioritised procedures of planning for teaching. This orientation overlooked the importance of integrating the substantive and procedural knowledge components of H&G to highlight the implications the prescribed objectives to teaching.

Furthermore, microteaching as modelling of classroom practice was a significant context for demonstrating the nature of the novice teachers’ pre-teaching PCK. Therefore, even though the episodic (brief/short) teaching of a lesson cannot be used to ascertain conclusively the nature of the knowledge and skills that the student was demonstrating, it is useful to indicate the direction that such teaching point towards. It is evident that, more than anything else, it prioritised familiarity with content. The lesson plan and its presentation thus reflected how critical reflection was neglected in the HTM lecture. Relaying how congruence between what students had to learn, that is, the theories and activities for learning the practice of teaching (Roberts, 1998) required logical consistency between the implications of H&G objectives and the content, strategies and activities that were used in lecture. With this in place, the teacher educator would have clarified how coherence could be promoted conceptually and structurally with the topic he used to teach a lesson plan. In this way the HTM course would have provided an important conceptual starting point for efforts aimed at understanding how the H&G objectives could be addressed. Such a focus on the objectives would, in turn, have had

implications for how the knowledge for teaching this school subject and its enactment could be conceptualised. In Shulman's (1987) view, this knowledge is unique to teaching as it is an amalgam of, *inter alia*, content, curriculum, educational objectives, learners, context, and self. It is not theoretical (conceptual) but rather practical in orientation. It is knowledge that is constitutive of action. In Cochran and Lytle's (1993) view, it reflects pedagogical content *knowing* (instead of knowledge). The 'knowing' aspect in it emphasises orientation to practice and is unique and specific to its context. Therefore, for the HTM course to help student teachers develop this type of knowledge, it was important that the purpose of the school subject knowledge be examined. Instead, the evidence demonstrates that students were not aware that what had to be taught required adaptation dependent on the essentials of History and variables encountered in the context of teaching. The complex nature of this context was crucial to acknowledge.

Drawing on Shulman's (1987) concept of PCK, it is thus reasonable to argue that the HTM lecture ought to have served as an important context for raising prospective teachers' sensitivity to the context-bound nature of pedagogical content knowledge. The reasons for the procedures of how to plan and teach lessons ought to have been clarified on the basis of History, the H&G objectives and context and all other relevant factors. This is the essence of Shulman's (1987) construct of pedagogical content knowledge as an amalgam of subject content and other factors. However, from the topics taught it was not possible to discern the *raison d'être* of the methods course.

In general, it is evident that student teachers were expected to learn how to teach through a direct (simple) 'tapping' into 'a bag of tricks' for teaching (Doyle, 1983; Thornton, 2001), even when they were not openly shown this 'bag of tricks'. While the importance of structural features of a lesson, such as lesson introduction, development and conclusion, should not be underplayed, it is still reasonable to argue that the lecture studied ought to have attended deliberately to the reasons for teaching History and H&G. Leinhardt's (1994) orientation to teaching that emphasises that the subject begins with interrogating what constitutes explanation in History, such as an event, an institution, a system and an idea, is invaluable in this regard for the explanatory pathways that may be generated to enhance effective teaching. It requires the teacher to segment instructional tasks in progressive forms as necessitated by the content's inherent logic. This orientation to teaching history is also underscored in a number of studies (Barton & Levstik, 1997 - 'doing history'; Lee, 2005 – multiple perspectives as basis of understanding; Seixas, 2006 – benchmarks for historical understanding; and, van Boxtel & van Driel, 2008 – historical reasoning).

Conclusion

Although the lesson plan is important to proffer student teachers threshold PCK, the evidence in the study presented here shows a worrying orientation. Instead of affording student teachers an alternative orientation that highlighted the significance of practical deliberation as integral to lesson planning, a traditional orientation that is often criticised for being simplistic and of little relevance to actual classroom practice was reinforced. Thus, if a change should be realised in curriculum practices of graduates specializing in History- H&G in this case - of the university in which this study was conducted, there is need for a re-orientation of how student teachers are guided to develop worthwhile knowledge for teaching. Otherwise criticism by the

deans committee will continue and students will graduate unequipped to meet the requirements of policy.

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Appendix: Lesson on Law-making

Student Teacher (ST): Class, last time we looked at the legislature. This was about the Government of Kenya. We discussed at length about the topic. For today, I want us to look at the process of bill writing. But before that, who can remind us some of the functions of the Legislature? [*He looks at the learners in anticipation for a response*] Yes?

Learner (L): Making laws.

ST: Good! Yes? Who can give us another function? [*of the legislature*]

L: Amending laws.

ST: Amending the constitution. Yes! Any other? [*function*]

ST: Very good! Those are some of the functions of the legislature. So today class, I am not going to take you back ... let us continue. So, we are continuing with the same sub-topic on the Legislature but under the constitutional process. So let us see [*look at*] some of these functions of the legislature. We said that the legislature is responsible for making laws. I want us to confine ourselves to the major function of the legislature. A single function that is foremost to the nation for its success. So, we also said that the legislature is responsible for allocating funds. I know class you have heard of this CDF - Constituency Development Fund. Are you aware of this?

Class: Yes

ST: What is CDF? Yes? Let's see. What is CDF? Yes?

L: Community Development Fund.

ST: Very good! Community Development Fund [*Instead of Community it should be Constituency*]. As you have seen this is money for development projects allocated to every constituency.

So let us now go back to the process of law making. A law as you know is something that guides or directs our conduct. So let us see what is this process?

When we say that the legislature is responsible for law making, you have to begin from somewhere. So, for this process to continue, it is either beginning from the executive or parliament.

So, a law can be made by amending an existing law or you really have a totally new law. So, you just begin from the start or amend the existing law. So, for this process to begin, I know, you know this process takes place in the legislature or in the parliament. So, for this process to begin, the speaker of National Assembly must be present. Or rather if not the speaker, he has the deputy speaker. And the quorum for this process to begin must be thirty members.

So with the presence of thirty members and the speaker of national assembly, the process [*of law making*] can kick off.

So let us look at some of the terminologies before making the law [*that are used in the law making process*]. The process of law-making begins from a bill. A bill is a proposal of legislation. A bill can be proposed by an individual, a group of people or a representative of people. Such a proposal would then have to be taken to parliament where the MPs or members of parliament can discuss. Therefore, any citizen with such a need, under the law has a right to propose a bill. Whether one is ordinary '*mwananchi*'

[citizen] or MP [*Member of Parliament*] he or she is allowed to propose a bill. That is why a bill can either be private or public. So we have the types of bill. It can either be a private bill or a public bill.

When we talk of a private bill, this is a bill which is not confined to the private issues but it is private only in such a way that it is about the welfare of an organization or association. So it is a bill that caters for their needs. When it comes to a public bill, it is a bill which affects the public in general. So we have the public which is the nation-Kenya.

Normally, in parliament public bills are moved by the ministers or MPs. MPs can come up with a bill or ministers. And then they propose that they want it to be made into law. A private bill is the bill which is proposed or moved by a private or individual or rather if it is moved by a minister you can see it is by us Kenyans.

So, look at the types of bills, the private and the public. So, once the bill has been made ... it can now ... go through some process. For the process to be complete, there are some stages. So this bill can be proposed in the national assembly and ... thereafter passed on to the Attorney General's Chamber for drafting. It is only after the drafting stage that the public can have a chance to ascertain the validity of the bill. So the public are supposed to ascertain the validity. If it is wrong or if there are some sections which need to be reviewed. They can have some opposition on....

On the other hand, the cabinet ... can be looking at the same bill. So the cabinet can go and discuss the draft or the bill itself and then after discussion if the cabinet recommends it ... it is published in the Kenya Gazette, fourteen days before it is taken to parliament.

So, after fourteen days ... elapse, the bill is taken to parliament. What happens now in parliament to that bill? So we now have the stages of the bill. The first stage of the bill in parliament involves what is referred to as the first reading... [*Teacher writes 'first reading' on the chalkboard*].

The Clerk to the national assembly reads the bill and then the minister on whose portfolio it is concerned with stands and moves a motion. Normally, it happens that after moving a motion, another minister is supposed to second the minister. In the first stage, there is no motion or debating. It is just reading that bill.

And then after seven days, the parliamentary committee now which is elected in that session or the parliamentary committee is given a chance to go and look at the same bill. That is, after seven days, they are supposed to come and report on the same. So, for the second time, the bill [*cleans the chalkboard*] the bill goes for the second reading. That is, after the first reading, then the committee, the parliamentary committee can be given seven days they can go and look into the same bill then they come for the second reading.

The second reading is a very crucial stage in bill making process. This is whereby the MPs now are allowed to air their views. So, you are given now a time or a chance to have your input. You can either support the bill or you don't support. And when you support the bill you must give reasons. In the second stage, if it passes after voting ... it goes to the third stage.

This is the committee stage. And in this stage, we have the committee stage, a committee which is appointed by parliament can go and scrutinize the bill in detail and amend a clause. They can go clause by clause and amend what has been given in the second stage.

So, you can see class, the second stage is very crucial. This is because every member who can have a view he can include it at committee stage. So the committee now can have detailed information and then they revise the bill and then they come up with a revised or something better than the first. And then after

the committee stage, the bill goes to the report stage. [*Teacher writes 'report stage' on the chalkboard*]. Class, what is a report stage? [*Seems rhetorical as the teacher goes on to answer his own question*]

This is the stage where the Committee through its chairman can come to parliament and report about the refined bill. This could be somehow a baptized bill. Are you getting me? [*However, appears not intended for soliciting any response for he goes on to explain:*]

So ... the next stage... they are allowed to vote. They either vote the bill in or out. And then, that is the report stage. Once the bill has reached this stage, this is the report stage. It is a very crucial stage. It is very difficult for somebody to make any objection. Who can tell us why it is very difficult at this stage? Yes. Who can try? [*No response. Teacher then goes ahead to explain*]

Class, let us look at this...let us assume you are a member of parliament and then you can, after the bill has been drafted, so now the public have been given time, they can see the bill, they really know what has passed, *si ndio?* [*Is it true?*]. And then the MP goes collecting information from his constituency, and then comes back with views so that during the second reading, he/she may have a position of either supporting or opposing the bill. So, that is why now it is difficult for it to be changed at that stage.

So the last stage, normally there is the third reading and then voting on the bill. After voting for the bill, if it is voted out like in 1973, there was a pension bill during the Kenyatta regime that was defeated in the third stage...it was rejected.

Then we have the presidential assent. ... [*This is*] the ... consent of the president [*on a bill that has been passed by parliament*]. So, the clerk to the national assembly, through the Attorney General, can write a bill in full and then with a covering certificate of the clerk passes it on to the President. That is to ascertain or confirm to the president that the bill he will get to sign is a true bill. So that makes it possible for the president to sign the bill. If the president declines to sign or denies his signature to the bill and yet two thirds of the MPs or two thirds of the national assembly supported the bill, that president is likely to be impeached. They can also have a vote of no confidence. This is because he will be declining something that the majority in parliament will have supported. Well, yes, we can go to the last stage. After the presidential assent, what happens to the bill?

Class: [*inaudible murmurs*]

ST: It becomes now what we call a...

Class: A law.

Teacher Educator: [*Taps at his desk several times to indicate to the student that he needs to complete his lesson*].

ST: Law. So it becomes an Act of parliament. Or rather we call it a law...an Act of parliament or a law. So, now what was initially a bill is now transformed into a law. It is now used to govern this nation. So, class what we have been looking at is what we refer to as the law making process. Where does the process begin? Drafting of what?

Class: A bill

ST: And what is a bill class? Can somebody tell us what a bill is? [*Does not wait for an answer. He rolls out a chart illustration and pins it on a section of the chalkboard as shown in the lesson plan*]. Ok, what you see in the chart is an illustration of the stages a bill goes through before it becomes a law [*pointing at the chart illustration*]. So, that is it. The next lesson we shall come and look at the executive. [*End of lesson*].