

Strategies for Lesson Presentation for Student Teachers

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The presentation of lessons is a cumbersome task for student teachers since they are inexperienced in presenting them. Some, if not most, student teachers struggle with lesson presentations during teaching practice. Even though they have the requisite pedagogical knowledge, blending it with content knowledge in a classroom situation becomes a challenge. To solve this problem, this paper answers the following questions: What strategies can student teachers use to present lessons effectively? How can student teachers blend content and pedagogical knowledge in a classroom situation? This paper sought to propose strategies for student teachers in this regard. It was framed using pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1987), which merges pedagogical and content knowledge. The proposed strategies advocate for an inductive approach, which puts learners at the centre of learning through active engagement and involvement. These strategies guide student teachers on how to blend content and pedagogical knowledge when teaching during teaching practice. They elucidate how to present a lesson considering all the stages of lesson presentation, including introduction, presenting a lesson, and conclusion. This paper is clear on how to handle each lesson presentation stage and provides examples that clarify how to engage with each such stage.

Keywords: Student teachers; lesson presentation; strategies; pedagogical content knowledge; content knowledge; teaching practice.

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Introduction and Background

“What I teach?; Who are my learners?; Why am I teaching this?; How can I teach this? How successfully do I teach?” (Du Toit & Smit, 2016)

These critical and crucial questions should be answered when presenting a lesson. If one does not have answers to all of these questions, lesson presentation can be a fiasco. Effective lesson presentation should stimulate and inspire the learners to attain the desired lesson objectives (Owuamanam, 2016). It is the responsibility of teachers to ascertain that lesson objectives are achieved by learners. However, how the teacher presents the lesson determines the achievement of lesson objectives. In line with this, Letuka and Mollo (2023) argue that student teachers should be trained to know and understand the lesson aims and objectives; they should be trained well about all lesson objectives' dynamics, from crafting to implementing them. Letuka and Mollo (2023) argue that teachers' biggest responsibility is using lesson objectives to develop learners holistically. Lesson presentations should be used to bring about the desired learning through various educational activities (Boadu et al., 2022). Therefore, teachers are responsible for bringing about the desired learning by employing diverse learning and teaching activities.

However, most student teachers struggle with lesson presentation during teaching practice. They do not present lessons vividly and logically; they do not know where and how to start a lesson; they seem to lack in-depth knowledge about lesson components. According to Kara et al. (2023) some student teachers lack a structured planning process for implementing the curriculum, showing limitations in their ability to plan and prepare lesson plans that align with curricular standards. When formulating lesson objectives, they do not use appropriate action verbs or align them properly with activities to achieve these lesson objectives. This is supported by Syahidah et al. (2022) who argue that some student teachers fail to identify and formulate objectives within their lesson plans, and struggle with utilising Bloom's Taxonomy vocabulary effectively. When engaging learners through questions, they only rely on prepared questions, and they do not make follow-up questions to show that the learners have enough content knowledge. They are also not concerned over learners who are not involved in the lesson; they simply continue with those actively involved. Drake and Jackson (2016) stress that student teachers are expected to display their knowledge of the content and the different skills of presenting it, strategies for interacting with learners, and the ability to interact with different types of learners during lesson presentations. Student teachers should plan learner activities in line with the teacher's actions to achieve the required lesson objectives (Drake & Jackson, 2016). Student teachers should have competencies that will help them answer learner needs by providing learners with quality education (Aimah et al., 2023).

There are various critical aspects that should be considered when presenting a lesson; and student teachers should be aware of them, one of which is the mastery of content and pedagogic knowledge. Adedoyin (2011) elaborates that these two form the basis for developing innovative teaching approaches and techniques. If one does not have good content knowledge, it may be difficult to identify appropriate teaching approaches for the lesson. Student teachers must have general and pedagogic content knowledge (Adedoyin, 2011; Ebuoh et al., 2019). Koehler et al. (2011) adds that if a student teacher has good content and pedagogical knowledge, it would be

easy to break this down and present it to the learner in the form the learner best understands. Also, there are basic qualities of a good teacher (Owuamanam, 2018), such as the ability to set and pursue instructional objectives, competency in lesson preparation and presentation, lesson evaluation, motivating learners, and organising, coordinating, and utilising personnel, materials, and facilities in and around the class. These qualities can help promote and enforce the efficiency and effectiveness of teaching (Owuamanam, 2018). Student teachers should have these qualities before attending teaching practice. This will not only help them obtain good marks during evaluation but also to display good acquisition of pedagogical content knowledge in the school; and thus, better chances of employment when vacancies become available.

Student teachers are expected, amongst other things, to explain and confirm learners' responses, simplify the material, stimulate the learners to be attentive and involved in the learning process, and allow them a chance to ask questions as needed (Aimah et al., 2023). These are key skills that every teacher, including student teachers, should possess. If the teacher cannot explain and simplify the content, there is no need for him/her to go to the class because teaching entails mostly explaining and simplifying content for learners. Active involvement of learners in the lesson is profusely encouraged and demanded because it is in line with the inductive approach. A student teacher should have the skill of engaging learners in the lesson so that they do not become passive, but active. Aimah et al. (2023) go on to argue that student teachers should know learners' difficulties, anxiety, and strengths to maximise the learning atmosphere. If student teachers can identify these, they can adjust their lesson presentation so that all learners achieve learning outcomes.

In line with the Outcomes-based Approach, student teachers must actively involve learners throughout the lesson. This means they should be able to guide learners to facilitate their curiosity in learning. They should learn to pose leading questions that will help them seek more knowledge (Gutek, 2013; Saritaş, 2016), and this can stimulate learners' interest and participation. It can also enhance critical thinking skills, engagement, and independent learning. Employing these skills can encourage learners to link their past learning experiences to new knowledge (Akpan & Beard, 2016). However, for student teachers to do all these tasks when presenting a lesson, they need decision-making and pedagogical reasoning where they can critically analyse their teaching moments (Güngör & Güngör, 2023). If they have pedagogical reasoning, they can understand what they do and why they do it. In line with this, Drake and Jackson (2016) discuss teacher presentation and learner practice as major components of teaching and learning. By this, they emphasise lesson presentation as the major role to be played by the teacher while at the same time, learners practice what they have been taught. Similarly, Owuamanam (2018) warns about using Learning and Teaching Support Material (LTSM). The assertions made here are that LTSM should be relevant and suitable for effectively delivering the lesson: it should be used at the most appropriate time but ensure that learners' attention is not diverted from the lesson's objectives. So, before student teachers attend teaching practice, they must have acquired and been equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to facilitate or present lessons. In other words, they must have developed enough pedagogical content knowledge.

Purpose of the study

This paper sought to propose strategies for student teachers to present effective lessons. This is complemented by Kisirkoi and Mse (2016) who argue that effective pedagogies depend on the acquired pedagogic content knowledge, which entails knowledge and the ability to present a lesson in a way that students will grasp the content taught. Student teachers should master these strategies in order to find it easy to show off their pedagogical content knowledge during teaching practice. Also, they can develop confidence in lesson presentations. Above all, they can then be good teachers who understand all the “nitty-gritty” of lesson presentation. Therefore, this paper was guided by the questions: What are the best strategies for lesson presentation for student teachers? How can student teachers blend content and pedagogical knowledge in a classroom situation?

Method

This study employed a qualitative research design grounded in systematic documentary analysis to propose strategies for student teachers on how to present effective lessons. The research was conducted across academic databases, including ERIC, Scopus, Web of Science and Google Scholar, as well as specialised journals. The goal was to locate publications that discuss student teachers and lesson presentation during teaching practice period. Using specific search terms, the initial search yielded approximately 65 papers. After reviewing titles and abstracts for relevance, the pool was reduced to 53 articles. A full-text evaluation was then conducted to assess the articles for theoretical depth and conceptual insights, as well as for their contribution to synthesising ideas on student teachers and lesson presentation during teaching practice. This process reduced the selection to 40 items. The final selection was based on strict criteria whereby relevance, theoretical depth, conceptual breakthroughs, contribution to the synthesis of ideas, and reputable publication sources were tested by the author’s niche areas in research. Applying these criteria resulted in a final sample of 30 publications.

Theoretical underpinning

This paper was framed using the Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) of Lee (2007) and Shulman (1987). PCK is a unique blending of content knowledge (CK) with pedagogical knowledge to help teachers transform content into learning experiences for learners (Lee, 2007; Shulman, 1987). Teachers need more than content and pedagogical content knowledge to blend the two. They also need curricular knowledge, general pedagogical knowledge, knowledge of aims and purposes, knowledge of learners, and knowledge of educational contexts, settings, and governance (Gudmundsdottir & Shulman, 1987). Additionally, Lee (2007) suggests knowledge of self, the milieu of teaching, curriculum development, and instruction. Therefore, before student teachers attend teaching practice, they ought to have acquired these types of knowledge: when they engage in school activities, they fulfil most, if not all, of them. Understanding these knowledge types and activities can enable student teachers to process pedagogical reasoning and action (Shulman, 1986) and make the content ‘teachable.’ Gudmundsdottir and Shulman (1987) go on to argue that PCK is shaped by CK, which entails knowledge of the central topics, concepts, and areas of the subject matter to learners. Student teachers should know the issues

relating to the topics they will handle in class during lesson presentations. Haertel (1990) adds that PCK is about understanding how to impart knowledge to learners. Having extensive and substantive knowledge about the subject is useless if a student teacher cannot translate that to learners; they can only present lessons successfully if they know how to impart learners with new knowledge. Student teachers should ensure that before presenting lessons, they have considered all aspects that can assist in making their lesson presentation effective. Therefore, they should consider all the above-mentioned aspects as they prepare for the lesson.

Strategies for lesson presentation

Student teachers, please note that no lesson can be presented successfully or effectively without thorough preparation. This is because presenting a lesson portrays what you planned for your learners. It is crucial that you mirror yourself in class before you get there. There is no method / approach of teaching that can be effective without thorough preparation.

Lesson objectives

The literature indicates that the purpose of a lesson objective is to guide teachers' and learners' activities to achieve learning outcomes. According to Yolandari (2022) a lesson objective should adhere to the ABCD framework, where: "A" refers to the audience (who are learners), "B" refers to the behaviour that learners should express through observable action verbs, "C" indicates the learners' condition or context in which learning occurs, and "D" entails the degree of achievement expected from learners. In support of this framework, Haryati et al. (2021) articulate that if this ABCD framework is well-constructed, lesson objectives can provide the necessary specificity for effective instruction and assessment. If lesson objectives follow this framework, Wellington et al. (2024) argue that they will define what knowledge, skills, and values learners will acquire at the end of the lesson. This implies that lesson objectives should be properly crafted and be meaningful. To support this, Letuka and Mollo (2023) emphasise that student teachers have a mammoth task of using lesson objectives to develop learners holistically, and this shows how crucial these lesson objectives are. On the same note, Owuamanam (2016) suggests that student teachers should stimulate learner interest to achieve learning objectives. Lesson objectives are crucial and critical in the lesson. However, I have witnessed student teachers failing to formulate lesson objectives properly. Please note that lesson objectives are guided by action verbs, which tell us what you will be doing in the class and also guide you on how to structure your lesson in line with the learning outcome. I have seen, for example, lesson objectives like:

At the end of the lesson, learners will be able to:

- ***Know*** the reasons for the formation of the Warsaw Pact.
- ***Understand*** how Britain colonised South Africa.

Looking at these objectives, they do have verbs, which are known and understood. However, the problem is that they are not action verbs; hence, they do not imply anything when used like this. In line with this, Zodpey and Sharma (2019) argue that the verbs 'understand' and 'know' require not only the demonstration of skills beyond reciting facts but applying knowledge and

actual performance. Therefore, these two verbs cannot be used alone when formulating an objective. For this reason, a proper way of using these two verbs is by coupling them with either ‘show’ or ‘demonstrate’. When doing that, the verbs change to nouns. Therefore, to correct these two objectives, one should write.

At the end of the lesson, learners will be able to:

- ***Demonstrate or show knowledge of the reasons for forming the Warsaw Pact.***
- ***Demonstrate or show understanding of how Britain colonised South Africa.***

Therefore, most of the verbs, such as analyse, explain, evaluate, compare and contrast, and differentiate, such as action verbs; hence, they can be used and they bear meaning because they tell what learners can do at the end of the lesson.

Introduction of the lesson

In the previous section, I mentioned that lesson presentations are guided by lesson objectives, which suggests that at this stage, student teachers should align activities with the lesson objectives (Drake & Jackson, 2016). This is the critical phase of the lesson; it can make or break the entire lesson and default to achieving the lesson objective, so it should be handled carefully. Sun (2018) argues that this is the lesson phase in which student teachers should gain learners' attention through interesting questions or engaging activities, then connect new content to prior learning by activating background knowledge. Most students begin this phase by asking learners about the previous lesson as argued by Sun (2018). However, some student teachers do not demonstrate understanding of the rationale for asking questions; they seem to ask for the sake of asking questions. Questions about the previous lesson are asked to check if learners understood the previous lesson and are ready for the new lesson/knowledge. Therefore, if most learners either do not answer or give incorrect answers, it means the previous lesson should be redone because they did not understand it well. The student teacher is expected to link the previous with the new lesson. It is important to see if learners know about the previous knowledge or lesson. After asking learners about the previous lesson then, the student teacher must realise if everything is “hunky-dory” or not and then introduce a new lesson. Having done all that, the student teacher can set clear learning objectives, provide motivation by explaining the benefits of studying the material, and deliver topics to be covered on that day (Nugrahaningsih et al., 2021; Fan et al., 2024).

Usually, student teachers are encouraged to ask questions to diagnose how familiar learners are with the new topic/knowledge. This calls for patience as learners respond, since the student teacher must understand whether the whole class knows something about what the student teacher plans to teach. In line with the PCK, this is the time to prepare learners for transforming content into learning experiences for learners (Lee, 2007; Shulman, 1987). After a series of questions, the lesson introduction should be done. This is the time to introduce activities that will be used to bring about the desired learning through some educational activities (Boadu et al., 2022). I have witnessed student teachers teaching without writing the topic of the day on the board or anywhere else, and this is the biggest mistake. Learners should not only hear what

the student teacher is teaching about but must also see what the lesson entails. Having written the topic, the next step is to clarify it. As the student teacher writes, displays, or projects the topic, learners start wondering what the topic entails or what it means. Therefore, as a teacher, start by clarifying what the topic means. This prepares learners for all the content/knowledge to be furnished on that day; it paves the way for their understanding; hence, the student teacher needs to be as clear as possible. This can be done by explaining each and every word of the topic and, in the end, bringing all of them together.

For example, say the topic of the day is: THE RESISTANCE OF AFRICANS TO APARTHEID

The student teacher must dissect this topic for learners: as soon as they see this topic on the board, they start asking themselves questions for which answers will be provided through the lesson presentation. The student teacher should think about how to clarify the topic for learners. For example, “What is to resist? What is resistance? What is African? Who are Africans? What is apartheid?” If these questions about the topic have been answered, learners may be prepared for the new lesson, of which they understand what it is all about. The introduction should lay a good foundation for what will be discussed throughout the lesson. Owuamanam (2018) argues that a teacher should arouse learner interest when introducing a topic. Therefore, student teachers should arouse interest by laying a good foundation of what the topic of the day will be all about.

Presentation of the lesson

Having laid a good introduction and having learners under control, it is time to impart them with new knowledge and skills thoroughly prepared. Ebuoh et al. (2019) clarify that knowledge and skills should be developed, materials to be used should be clear, how learners follow the lesson should be detected, the pace of the lesson should be adjusted, explanations or demonstrations should all be provided and ensured at this stage. I have said in my introduction that without thorough preparation, lesson presentation will definitely be a fiasco. Preparation will help to plan the stages or phases of the lesson, and when starting to teach, one undertakes or implements a plan designed for learners, considering all classroom activities for the day. This is the time to show how one engaged with the content to be presented in class, and it is the time to blend it with pedagogical content knowledge to make the content ‘teachable’ (Shulman, 1986). The student teacher must show learners what he/she is worth regarding pedagogical content knowledge and ensure that the presentation has steps to be followed and demonstrate knowledge of each and every word to be used while teaching, so that learners do not sit confused while the lesson presentation is underway. Muhammad et al. (2022) and Mukuka and Alex (2024) emphasise that during the lesson presentation phase, teachers should explain new concepts, demonstrate procedures for lesson development, and present stimulus materials (Muhammad et al., 2022; Mukuka & Alex, 2024). A student teacher must be able to identify words and areas of the content that will be confusing and / or problematic for learners and the student teacher must clear those words and areas before getting into class. This will help them undertake lessons successfully, and teaching is about that.

I have witnessed student teachers during lesson presentations lecturing instead of teaching. Lecturing is about summarising crucial issues and letting students go and do the rest of the work. The lecture method is centred on the teacher's involvement in teaching through explanation, making it inherently teacher-centred whereas the teaching process is fully focused on teacher engagement (Mukuka & Alex, 2024). Learners play less or no role during lecturing, whereas teaching is about explaining, demonstrating, clarifying, and simplifying so that learners understand everything that is said in class. Ukaigwe and Igbozuruike (2020) view teachers as facilitators of knowledge construction. However, some student teachers read or let learners read some paragraphs from the textbooks, and student teachers will simply summarise those paragraphs with one or two sentences; trust me, that is not teaching but lecturing. A student teacher who does that does not have knowledge of the milieu of teaching, as Lee (2007) argues. A good teacher will read or let learners read but thereafter will explain each and every sentence in those paragraphs, simplifying difficult or new concepts for learners. This will help the student teacher clarify what those sentences/paragraphs entail. This is the time to explain problematic or confusing concepts for learners. For this reason, student teachers must review everything they will teach in class while sitting at home or in their office, ensuring they fully understand the content they will present. When learners engage with them, they should think about activities that will develop the understanding student teachers want learners to have, and this demonstrates the instructional knowledge (Lee, 2007). Student teachers must always bear in mind that they are in class to simplify that which is complex for those learners. This means that without them; as student teachers, learners may not understand what is contained in the textbooks, therefore student teachers should do what they are expected to do, namely facilitate teaching. Additionally, student teachers go to class to clarify and simplify for learners. If student teachers can teach learners well and learners understand the content, student teachers will achieve marks that no one will erase, thus creating a good identity for themselves.

Student teachers should always remember that they do not go to class to preach but to teach. The difference between preaching and teaching is that after preaching, the preacher/pastor hardly needs congregants to show that they heard or understood what he/she told them in the last sermon. In contrast, a teacher will demand that learners prove, through assessment activities, that they understood the content. For this reason, they cannot teach without writing on the board or projecting for learners to see what the teacher is talking about. In short, a preacher/pastor does not need to write while preaching, whereas a teacher must write or project what he is talking about. Writing on the board allows learners to use their visual and hearing senses to understand the content. When student teachers facilitate learning, they must write key issues/points on the board because they will need them when concluding their lesson. If it were possible, teachers would write everything they say on the board. However, it is impossible to do so; hence, teachers should use key points, this is called chalkboard summaries, and they need it to conclude the lesson. Student teachers, like in-service teachers, cannot teach effectively without writing on the board, whether chalkboard or smartboard or displaying what they are teaching about. Student teachers should never forget that a good teacher will engage learners throughout the lesson so that learners are active, not passive; hence, they should always think about the inductive approach, which advocates for learner-centred lessons. Lessons should

encompass activities that will see learners reflecting on what they have been taught and help them see if they understood.

Conclusion of the lesson

This is a crucial and critical stage of the lesson presentation that determines whether the student teacher succeeded in imparting knowledge to learners (Haertel, 1990). This is the time to reflect on the instruction knowledge (Lee, 2007) and implementation. This stage determines whether learners and teachers achieved the set learning outcomes. Most of the student teachers I have observed do not even attempt to conclude the lesson, negatively impacting the achievement of lesson objectives. There are three interdependent strategies for handling the conclusion of the lesson. At this stage, the learners must pay their full attention to the student teacher. If they were writing something, they should stop and listen to the student teacher; if they had their textbooks and exercises open, they should close and listen without any disturbance. In fact, they need to put everything away and listen to the student teacher only. This is the time to establish if they understood the lesson or not and also emphasise, for the last time, the most important issues dealt with during the lesson. Therefore, the student teacher needs the chalkboard summary developed throughout the lesson. This is the time to reiterate key points/issues that were taught learners and this can be done using the chalkboard summary. When concluding the lesson, student teachers should start from the beginning to the last point, explaining what was dealt with during the lesson. Thereafter, the student teacher should clear/erase the board and ask learners questions about everything discussed during the lesson presentation. The answers learners give will determine if they understood the content knowledge they were taught. Give the learners classwork that covers all the content taught that day: this will help to see how much they understood the lesson. Therefore, the lesson's conclusion should be characterised by three critical aspects, namely classwork, a summary of what has been done (chalkboard summary), and questions based on what has been done. Marrying these three aspects can ensure that learners achieved lesson outcomes.

Time management

Successfully undertaking all the activities and stages mentioned above relies heavily on how time was managed. According to MacCann et al. (2012), effective time management is associated with greater performance and achievement. Without proper time management, some of the planned activities may be interrupted and thus not undertaken. This can interfere with the achievement of learning outcomes. Kaushar (2013) associates time management mechanisms with being organised. Student teachers cannot teach without constantly checking the time since it will tell how much is remaining per classroom activity. Student teachers need to know how many minutes they will spend on the introduction, lesson presentation, class activities, classwork, and conclusion of the lesson. When they have set times for themselves, they should manage it; it is a good thing to do. It is very embarrassing to see a teacher standing outside waiting for the one inside to go out because the period is over but the one inside does not leave the class. This can be attributed to the lack of time management. Therefore, managing time can be convenient for everyone and shows respect for other colleagues.

Conclusion

The lesson presentations should be interactive to ensure that learners are not passive in class. To this effect, Senthamarai (2018) emphasises that lesson presentations should be organised to meet objectives, encourage and expect learners to participate, and use questions to stimulate discussion, emphasising the value of answers. The student teachers should; therefore, plan their lessons such that they meet objectives, allow learners to participate, and rely on different teaching and learning strategies that will ensure that the lesson is interactive. Student teachers should bear in mind that, as explained earlier, objectives guide lessons. Therefore, they should mitigate their activities to be in line with the objectives. This can ensure that objectives are achieved at the end of the lesson. Good learning is informed by the active involvement of learners. This calls for learners to participate actively in the learning process. So, student teachers should design and plan lessons such that learners are actively involved through participation. It means that student teachers should be conversant with different teaching and learning strategies that can be employed to ensure active involvement throughout the lesson. Student teachers should bear in mind that any successful presentation of the lesson depends on how much one has prepared. The strategies I proposed above can make student teachers the best teachers if they follow them as articulated.

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