

# **The Influence of Universities on Teacher Effectiveness at the Secondary School Level in Uganda: Kyambogo University as a Case**

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## **Abstract**

This study focused on establishing how the university teacher-education curriculum affects the performance of secondary school teachers. Following a descriptive survey research design, lecturers, university students, secondary school teachers and students assessed teaching and learning in their institutions. This study established that most lecturers and secondary school teachers use lecture (teacher-centred) methods. Theoretical teaching is widely practiced at both school and university levels. Teachers appreciated academic empowerment from lecturers but expressed reservation about the methodologies and management of school practice. Other factors, such as national examinations, instructional materials and teachers' remuneration also influence teachers' performance. It was recommended that lecturers undergo short pedagogical courses and that school practice be improved upon. The university teacher education curriculum and the examination system need to be reviewed. There exists a gap between training and practice. Universities have no mechanisms of following up and supporting their former graduates while in the field. Universities need to be more active in analyzing and improving issues concerning secondary school education than is the case now.

**Keys words:** Teacher Effectiveness, curriculum, pedagogy, school practice, secondary school education, secondary school teachers

## **1. Introduction**

The Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) through the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) has completed a comprehensive review of the primary school curriculum. As a move toward reforming the entire Uganda education system in order to meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century a reform of the secondary school (SS) curriculum has also been initiated by the MoES and NCDC. A Road Map for the SS curriculum reform has already been developed (Clegg, 2009).

The Government White Paper on Education ([Ministry of Education and Sports] (MoES), 1992) and the Road map (Clegg, 2009) stipulate the cognitive, affective and psychomotor competences and skills an SS education graduate is expected to demonstrate. Secondary school

education in Uganda has two sub-components. First, in the first four years, also referred to as Ordinary “O” level, a student does sixteen subjects in Senior 1&2 (S1 & S2). These subjects reduce to a minimum of eight (8) and a maximum of ten (10) in S3&S4. Second at the Advanced (“A”) level, (S5 and S6), students take four subjects at the principal level. Sciences are now compulsory for all schools irrespective of the quality of their laboratories. The graduates of “A” level proceed to universities and other tertiary institutions. The ‘O’ and ‘A’ level students are rigorously prepared for the national examinations set and administered by the Uganda National Examination Board (UNEB). Many schools engage in cut-throat competition in order to attract more financially and academically capable students. This competition, as will be discussed later, adversely affects methods of teaching.

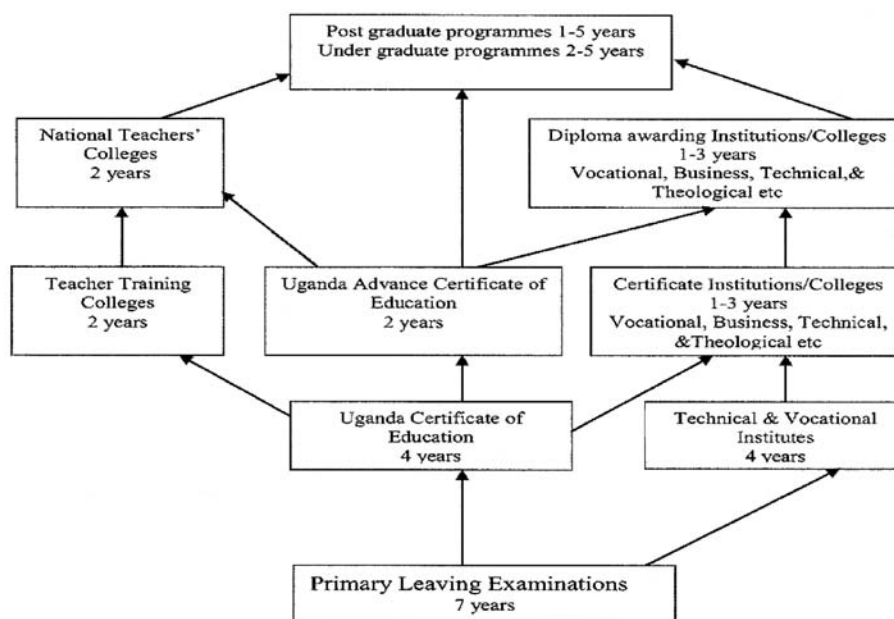
According to NCDC’s profile of SS graduates (also referred to as S4 and S6 exit skills) and the MoES (1992) aims and objectives of SS education, the “graduates” of SS education are expected to have acquired appropriate literacy, numeracy, moral, practical and scientific skills to enable them not only to become self-dependent, but also job-creators (Clegg, 2009 Okonye, 2007). Unfortunately, there is increasingly a general public concern about the behaviour and incompetence of these graduates in carrying out many of their daily chores (Opio, 2007).

Statistics show that a lot needs to be done to improve the SS curriculum. According to the UNFPA (2009) abortion is the leading cause of death among adolescents in Uganda. This is supported by a study by Makerere University School of Public Health in 2010 that found that out of 3,434 secondary school S3-6 students that were sampled, 28.8% of them were sexually active. One in every 50 female students had conceived; 21% of them had aborted (Nabatanzi, 2012). People expect the Biology and Religious Education (RE) subjects and school ethos to help these students avoid such problems.

The linguistic skills of many students are also wanting. For example, they can hardly write good application letters or fill in basic forms accurately. Similarly many students taking vocational subjects such as Fine Art, Agriculture, Woodwork, Needle work, Commerce and Home Economics hardly exhibit these skills when opportunities arise. Instead, it is artisans with less formal education that are producing tangible and excellent products. The “White-collar job” type of education, usually blamed on colonial education, persists today (Ssekamwa, 1997).

Correspondingly, some university students seldom demonstrate intellectual ability that is consistent with the excellent grades they obtained at the ‘A’ Level (Aguti, 2010). Consequently the Uganda Law Society Uganda has, in addition to the ‘A’ level results, introduced pre-entrance university examinations for students intending to study law at the university. The Psychology department at Kyambogo University has also introduced a Basic English language course in the Bachelor of Guidance and Counseling programme. These measures are a reaction to the dissatisfaction with some of the graduates of the SS education in Uganda.

Secondary school education is important in the Uganda education system because it forms a critical bridge between basic education in primary schools and higher education in universities as shown in Figure 1



**Figure 1: The Ugandan Education and Training System**

Source: Lubaale G. (2010)

## 2. Factors Affecting Secondary School Curriculum Implementation

Many factors affect the implementation of SS curriculum. One of such factors is the quality and competence of school administrators (MoES, 2007). Schools with laissez-faire type administrators do not perform well. Good administrators are able to mobilize resources or optimize the limited resources they have (Passi et al, 1996). Good administrators also develop and enforce school ethics, which in turn shape the personality of students. Educational administration is one of the professional studies courses taught in universities in Uganda.

The government's input in terms of inspection, professional teacher development and teachers' financial motivation (salary) play a big role in achieving SS educational aims and objectives. At times government policies and innovations may create new challenges in schools. For example, when in 2007 the Government of Uganda (GoU) introduced in some schools free Universal Secondary Education (USE) there were 161,396 USE students. The number rose to 316,652 in 2008, an increase of 96.2%. In 2009 the number went up to 452,137, representing a 42.8% increase. As a result of large classes arising from the USE intervention, there is pressure on the limited school infrastructure. Inadequate continuous assessment is also partly associated with large classes. In one of the schools of this study, 90 students were herded in a classroom with a capacity of 40 students. The teachers' official salaries cannot be topped up locally (i.e.

from parents' direct contributions) because, in USE schools, such contributions were abolished. To make ends meet, teachers are forced to do part-time teaching in other schools, at the expense of quality and commitment in their full-time schools.

The teacher factor is one of the most important factors in any curriculum innovation, (Bishop, 1990). Teachers are described as a kingpin in the education system (Nacino-Brown et al, 1982). Students' learning achievement is largely dependent on the teachers' effectiveness. The teacher's role is not only "academic content delivery" but also to mentor and model the entire personality of a student. Therefore when the public expresses dissatisfaction with the SS graduates, they are directly and indirectly expressing dissatisfaction with the teachers' performance.

The quality of the SS curriculum cannot be exhaustively discussed without addressing the university teacher education curriculum factor. Aside from training SS teachers, universities are expected to carry out research-evidenced interventions or Continuous Professional Development (CPDs) courses for in-service teachers. By doing this, that is, "coming down and getting actively involved in SS issues" universities could overcome the "Ivory Tower" mentality (Maani, 2010). Therefore any dissatisfaction with the performance of secondary teachers is partly, dissatisfaction with university teacher-education curriculum. Consequently the NCDC and MoES SS Curriculum Review Task Force comprises of university representatives from Kyambogo and Makerere. On their part, university teacher education curriculum managers need to be up-to-date, innovative and flexible so as to produce teachers who will not only cope with but also manage the revised SS curriculum.

### **Objectives of the study**

This study investigated the quality of teacher performance at secondary school in view of the quality of training teachers receive at the university level.

The specific objectives of the study were to:

- i. identify practices that influence the quality of the teacher education programme at university level.
- ii. investigate factors that affect teachers' performance at the secondary school level.
- iii. establish the relationship between training at the university and teacher practices in secondary schools.
- iv. identify strategies for improving university teacher education curriculum.

### **Research Questions**

This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What practices influence the quality of university teacher education programs?
2. What factors affect teacher performance at the secondary school level?

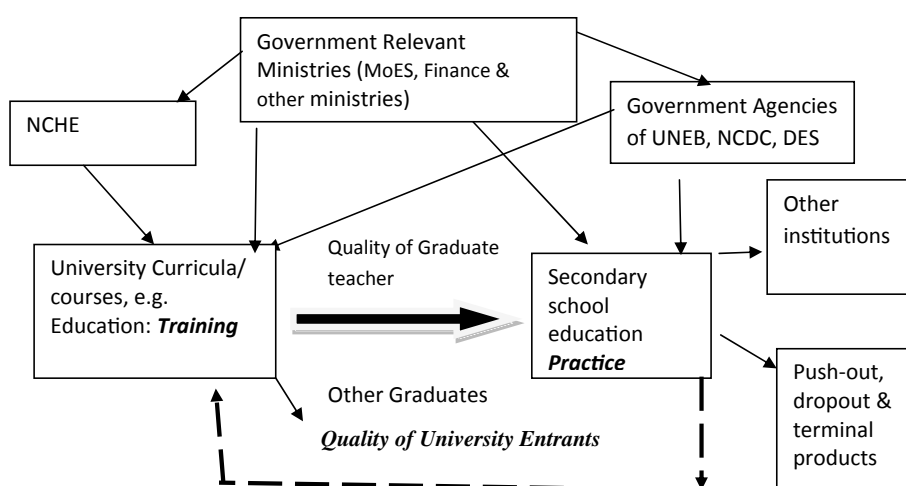
3. To what extent is the university curriculum effective in producing competent SS teachers?
4. How effective are the methodologies SS teachers use to implement the SS curriculum?

### 3. Conceptual Framework

There is no consensus among scholars and administrators on who an “effective” teacher is. This lack of consensus stems from the fact that the teachers’ role is “polymorphous” (Peters, 1972). Therefore, any facet of a teacher can be used to appraise them. In an examination-dominated education system teacher effectiveness is mainly judged by the grades their students score in the national examinations. Aggarwal (2001) posits that although a few people take the trouble to assess a teacher holistically, many agree that an effective teacher is one who helps a child improve in all the three domains of learning, i.e. cognitive, affective and psychomotor.

The university SS teacher education curriculum needs to be comprehensive if student-teachers are to come out of the university as effective teachers. The effectiveness of the university teacher education curriculum depends on many factors such as the quality of students who join the university, the curriculum itself, class size, infrastructure, commitment and competence of the teaching staff.

The personality and academic characteristics of S4 and S6 graduates can be used to determine the effectiveness of the SS curriculum (Clegg, 2009). When the SS learner profile is unsatisfactory the blame goes not only to SS teachers, but also to universities that trained them. However, other stakeholders such as the MoE and parents also need to play their roles. The Directorate of Education Standards (DES), as an agency that falls under MoES, helps in maintaining the quality of SS education. The interrelationship of all these factors is summarized in Fig.2



**Figure 2: Interrelationship of factors that influence Teachers’ performance (Source: Researchers’ Reflection)**

According to the conceptual framework, in Figure 2, Secondary School education is impacted by many factors. One of these factors is the training university. The challenge therefore is about the quality control of the teachers Kyambogo University produces. Is there a mechanism to follow up these teachers in the field as a way of quality assurance? There is a vicious circle of the pedagogical relationship between universities and secondary schools. A good university teacher education curriculum trains competent teachers who in turn help universities admit academically and morally strong students that they (universities) “turn” into competent teachers.

The controversy about who an effective teacher is also arises from the fact that people understand the word “teaching” differently. While some people narrow “teaching” to the face-to-face interaction between a teacher and his or her students, others broaden it to include all that a teacher does, even outside the classroom, including his or her personal life style. In Uganda, teaching has been reduced to an activity where a teacher transmits ready-made knowledge to the learners to help them pass national examinations (Bishop, 1985; International Extension College, [IEC] 2002).

Another important but also contentious concept is “curriculum”. Is curriculum only the academic subject content or all the experiences a learner acquires in an educational setting? Whatever meaning one adopts there will be a debate on what kind of SS curriculum a teacher is responsible for. For our purpose, if a child is to acquire holistic education from school, then the latter meaning of curriculum becomes the right choice.

If universities are to train effective teachers then their teacher education curricula must incorporate both specific and broad concepts of an “effective teacher”, “teaching” and “curriculum.

#### **4. Literature Review**

Contrary to the common views, teaching is a complex and demanding activity (Cooling, 2003; McBer, 2000). It is a complex process that requires the use of professional judgment as well as specific knowledge and technical skills (McBer, 2000). Teaching may appear simple to those who misunderstand it to mean the “transmission” of knowledge from the teacher to the learner (Bishop, 1985; IEC, 2002). This contrasts with Davis’s (2007) definition that “teaching is the interaction of a student and a teacher over a subject”. It is a planned, purposeful interaction, geared to cause specific changes in the learners. Teaching involves many activities and dimensions (Good & Brophy, 2008; Perrot, 1996) to the extent that Peters (1972) referred to it as a polymorphous activity, implying that teaching has many “faces” and variables.

Different scholars define teacher effectiveness and teacher competence differently (Gore et al, 2009). Similarly measuring teacher effectiveness is a “thorny issue”. Many theorists agree

that teacher effectiveness is demonstrated when student learning improves (Good & Brophy, 2008; McBer, 2000). In the Ugandan context an effective teacher is one who helps students get good grades on the national (UNEB) Examinations (Weerhe, 2007). By contrast, society expects effective teaching to impact positively the whole personality of the student; that is, to offer holistic education (IEC, 2002; Odongo, 2007).

Restricting teacher-effectiveness to the academic performance of learners in national examinations is to under-estimate the overall impact teachers have on students' lives (Kaahwa, 2002). The aims and objectives of the Uganda SS education as outlined in the Government White Paper (MoES, 1992) cannot fully be achieved if teachers and students are pre-occupied with national examinations (Odongo, 2007; Rutayisire, 2007).

Any discussion on SS teacher effectiveness is incomplete unless it includes university teacher education programmes because this is where teachers are trained (Kasoozi, 2003). To become competent and effective teachers, Kyambogo University education students cover the following four main components in their programme:

- General pedagogy. This includes professional studies such as educational psychology, the philosophy of education, the sociology of education and curriculum studies.
- Subject pedagogy. This equips students with the philosophy and skills of teaching.
- Subject content. Students cover academic content in their teaching subjects. This gives them the competence and confidence to teach their subjects at the SS level.
- School practice. In their 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> years, education students do supervised school practice lasting six weeks in each year (Kyambogo University, 2005; McBer, 2000).

There are many criticisms on how universities are training teachers. It is observed that some university lecturers continue to depend on their “yellow notes”, dictate the same notes or give them out as “hand-outs” year after year, (MoES, 2007). If lecturers are not innovative and creative, they cannot expect their students to be different. Some lecturers contradict themselves by teaching about learner-centred methods using the lecture method (Aguti, 2010). At such a university, students are not exposed to adequate hands-on and minds-on opportunities in preparation for field (SS) experiences (Kasoozi, 2003) such as teaching large classes, (Nakabugo, et al, 2008) and coping with inadequate instructional materials, i.e., improvisation (Bishop, 1990). Kyambogo University needs to learn from other universities about the importance of using senior teachers in the schools as co-supervisors (Sentamu, 2008) during school practice.

One of the most influential factors that affect methods of teaching at the secondary school level is the external examination (Aggarwal, 2001). A teacher is under pressure to “produce distinctions” (Odongo, 2007). Teachers are therefore forced to use methods that help students cram and pass national examinations (Weerhe, 2007). Such methods include dictation of

notes, drilling, and lecturing. These methods do not help students to think, internalize, own and apply the acquired content to new situations (IEC, 2002; McBer, 2000). One of the most glaring examples of the inadequacies of crammed knowledge is the dilemma as to why school adolescents still engage in risky sexual behaviour despite having “solid knowledge” about the causes and dangers of HIV and AIDS (UNAIDS, 2011; Rabusic & Kepakova, 2003). Universities should not only participate in theoretical debates on who effective teachers are, but also strengthen their programmes and research-based interventions, in training such teachers.

## **5. Methodology**

### **Research Design**

A descriptive survey research design was used to explore the behaviour and performance of secondary school teachers. Descriptive studies are not only for establishing facts about the phenomenon being studied but also to suggest solutions to the problems identified in the study. This research used both qualitative and quantitative aspects of research so as to incorporate many aspects of the teaching-learning process both at SS and University levels.

### **The study Area**

The study was carried out in the central region of Uganda, within Kampala Metropolitan city area and two other neighbouring districts of Wakiso and Mukono. This study area was selected because of the variety of schools and teaching/learning environments. The area provides an opportunity to identify varying factors that affect secondary school education. Sixteen schools from urban, pre-urban and rural settings were purposively sampled for the study. This sampling technique is consistent with Patton’s (2002) argument that “the logic and power of purposive sampling lie in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth” (P.169). Sixty-four teachers, drawn from different categories of subjects participated in the study. From each school, two Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with students were conducted to share views about their learning experiences in their schools.

Kyambogo University was selected as a case from thirty-two nationally accredited and licensed universities in Uganda. Teachers trained from these other universities may not be significantly different from those trained at Kyambogo University since teacher-education programmes from all the Ugandan Universities are, for quality assurance, approved and accredited by the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) a government-funded agency responsible for the accreditation, licensing and maintenance of the quality of programmes in Ugandan Institutions of higher learning. Fifty lecturers with teacher education background and currently teaching Education courses participated in the research. All departments and faculties having education programmes were represented. Similarly, 100 Education students, sampled from all departments and faculties offering teacher education courses participated in this study.



## Data collection

Questionnaires with both closed-ended and open-ended items on the various aspects of the teaching-learning process such as the curriculum content, methods of teaching, infrastructure and instructional materials were administered to university lecturers, university students and SS teachers. Researchers together with teachers pre-planned lessons in which teachers agreed to teach in their usual way in the absence of researchers. Lessons were then observed and data collected using lesson observation checklists and anecdotal records. Post-lesson conferences with teachers were held. Therefore the lessons observed were real and typical. Focus group discussions were conducted with students in which we explored their views about their teacher preparation experiences including program contents pedagogical issues, school practice and all other aspects of their training. Interviews were also conducted with SS teachers and university lecturers. All these were meant to enable researchers to triangulate the data obtained.

## Data Analysis

Qualitative and quantitative data were analysed to establish respondents' views, reactions and suggestions about SS teachers' performance and effectiveness. Responses from the open-ended items, the FGDs and the post-lesson conferences were coded, categorized and analysed thematically according to the objectives of the study. The quantitative data were expressed in percentages to show the magnitude of the response.

## 6. Results and Discussion

The process of establishing the effectiveness of secondary school teachers in this research, was started at the university level, where they are trained. Following objective one of the study, the quality of the university teacher education programme, from lecturers' and students' assessment, was analysed based on five aspects. These were: curriculum content, methods of teaching, infrastructure and instructional materials, school (teaching) practice and co-curricular activities. The strengths, reservations and challenges associated with each aspect are presented and discussed concurrently.

### 6.1 University Teacher-Education Curriculum Content

Most university lecturers (92%) observed that the academic subject content students study at the university was adequate enough to enable them (students) to teach confidently and competently at both 'O' and 'A' levels. This is what two lecturers (one Biology and one chemistry) asserted when asked what they thought about the relevancy of their curricula to teacher effectiveness:

*R: Do you think the content you teach your students is adequate to enable them teach Biology at the SA- level?*

*UL 9: "...yea... our current biology curriculum here at university is based on the sec ed*

*general syllabus recommended by the NCDC. We also spot the key and most difficult topics at A-level that teachers find hard to teach and we make sure we give our students enough background knowledge about how to handle these topics so that when they go out there, they're comfortable.*

A chemistry lecturer had a similar observation:

*UL15: ... we concentrate on the topics that are really hard and often dodged by beginning teachers and much worse by students on SP.*

*R: which ones are these topics?*

*UL 15: they're organic chemistry, for example, and also inorganic chemistry. These topics are quite hard and most teachers dodge them by giving them to student teachers. So in order to help the situation, we go over these topics with our students before they go out for their SP.*

A majority (82.5%) of university students agreed with the lecturers' opinion. Students (97.5%) claimed that professional courses (pedagogy) enable them become competent professional teachers. For instance, one student claimed:

*"... the psychology and methods courses are really really helpful. The knowledge I obtained has enabled me handle the difficult students during my previous SP. It is also handy when it comes to classroom management. I can handle the stubborn students well with the psychology skills..." (Interv. S10)*

The academic content university education students cover was rated highly by lecturers and students themselves because the courses were designed and developed in view of the academic content at SS level. Education students, therefore, unlike non-education students studying the same subjects, are restricted to particular courses (papers) in those same subjects. Additionally, students' testimony cannot be underrated because their memories of what they covered in SS are still fresh. Based on their first SP experience students also evaluated the relevancy of the academic content covered at university. For example: one student, when asked to comment on the relevancy of courses taken at the university asserted that:

*"... in my opinion, the content we cover at university prepares us well to teach at both O and A levels.*

*R: How..Why?" Give an example*

*S: "mmm ... In A level history, we teach about European history and the rise and fall of Napoleon and his contributions. Also here at university we do the same topics even in depth so that we really get to know the subject very well. This enables us to teach with confidence and much knowledge." (Int. S5)*

The students complained about the heavy course load at the university and suggested a reduction of courses or an extension of the programmes to four years from the current three years.

S: *“At university, we have too many course units.*

R: *How many is many?*

S: *You see, in Professional subjects we’ve about six components,... Research, psychology, econ of educ, philosophy,...; then in our teaching subjects, two of them, we also have a large number of course units.... This’s too much. By the end of the day you’re really tired*

R: *How do you think we should address this challenge?*

S: *Two options: reduce the number of courses and have only the basic ones or extend the length of the program from 3 to 4 years.*

However, students’ suggestions of either reducing the course load or extension of course length are not acceptable by the University management and NCHE. The maximum total B.A with Education (BA/Educ) course load of 180 credit units (CUs) is comparable to other programmes. Of the 180 CUs required for one to graduate, 30 CUs are for professional education courses while 10 CUs are for the two school practices [Kyambogo University (KYU, 2005)]

## **6.2 Methods of Teaching**

The data obtained indicate that the most commonly used method of teaching at the university is the lecture method. In fact, 74% and 77.5% of lecturers and students, respectively claimed that lecture method was commonly used in their classes. The term “lecture method” is here used loosely to include the dictation of notes, talk and uninterrupted and prolonged dictation and issuing out of hand-outs. Lecturers defended the lecture method on the grounds of large classes (100 – 800 students) for Arts and professional courses on the ground of lack of equipment and materials for vocational and science subjects. This is what one Arts lecturer asserted in defense of the lecture method:

*...realistically, lecture method is my method of choice. In a situation where you’ve more than 800 students in any one lecture, you do not have enough space even to walk around and glued to the small space around the chalk board, you don’t talk about you experimentation, group work ... because you don’t just make it. Where will you get the space, materials, someone to help manage the groups? Yet you’ve to cover certain, in content before the semester ends? So realistically, lecture method is the way to go (UL 20.)*

A lot needs to be done on this aspect of pedagogy because this is one of the factors that differentiate trained from untrained teachers and effective from ineffective teachers (Good &

Brophy 2008; McBer, 2000). Currently the university has increased its student enrollment by admitting more privately sponsored students on both day and evening programmes. This enabled the university to raise more funds for the badly needed resources. However, the infrastructure still remains the same yet the numbers of students has increased. Accordingly therefore, caution must be taken not to compromise the quality of instruction.

Many teachers in the field justify their over reliance on teacher-centred methods by quoting the same approaches that were used to train them at the university. The study also revealed that 72% of lecturers were not familiar with the concept and skills of “reflective practice”. It is now widely accepted that an effective teacher must be a reflective practitioner (Ferraro, 2004; MoES, 2007).

Students expressed their dissatisfaction with the pedagogical aspect of their training in many ways. While 90.5% of the students expressed satisfaction with the academic subject content, 58.7% indicated that methods used by lecturers to help them to become competent teachers were inadequate. For example:

*S: we're just beginning to know what it is to learn how to teach. But some lecturers do not even teach us how to teach.*

*R: What do you mean?*

*S: we need to be taught the methods that we can use to teach students, to enable us deliver content. Some lecturers just give notes notes and notes. So really we need much help here.*

This shows that methodology is given relatively given less attention. In reaction, most students (76%) suggested that only lecturers who were teacher-trained should teach them. Most students (81.8%) think that the lecture methods cause lecturers to ignore academic differences among them. Based on this response, it can be argued that student teachers and SS teachers will ignore individual differences among SS students because they were not given individual attention while at university.

Students also suggested that “micro-teaching” be used to give them more practice before they go for their school practice. The reaction against lecture methods was summarized by Kasozi who suggested that lecturers who rely on the lecture method as the only method of teaching should be sacked (Baligidde, 2009; Kasozi, 2003). “Sacking” may be an overreaction. Researchers agree with students and other critics that instead of “sacking them” university lecturers should be more pedagogically empowered through CPDs.

### **6.3 Instructional Materials and Infrastructure**

The use of instructional materials varies from faculty to faculty. The materials used (according to lecturers) in a descending ranking order, are: chalkboard and chalk (38%), charts (36%), overhead projectors (31%), textbooks (21.6%), internet (19%) and hand-outs (12%). Instructional materials are commonly used by science and vocational studies lecturers. However, due to intermittent power supply, and inadequate stocks of supplies, students do not get enough hands-on experiences as often as they should.

The claim by lecturers that they use instructional materials, though modestly, was actually challenged by university students. According to university students (92.5%), there is a lot of theoretical talk about instructional materials by lecturers. To correct this 91.3% of the students agreed that university lecturers should lead by example and also use instructional materials during their teaching. Students' criticism was mostly directed towards lecturers of Arts (humanities) subjects and professional education courses.

As observed with methods of teaching, students emulate their lecturers on the use of instructional materials when they graduate as teachers. During their SP students may try to use instructional materials for the sake of getting a good grade. Needless to say, many abstract points, in any course or subject, can be presented using illustrations, pictures or models. Instructional materials immensely enhance students' learning (Aggarwal, 2001; McBer, 2000)

### **6.4 School Practice**

Lecturers and students regard SP as an important component of training. However, lecturers expressed their concerns about the challenges students encounter during SP, such as large and overcrowded classes, lack of instructional materials, specimen equipment and the lukewarm attitude by administrators towards subjects such as Fine Art, Home Economics and Agriculture. Despite these challenges, students valued school practice in many ways. In fact, 81% of them said that they were adequately guided while on SP.

However there are many challenges associated with the Kyambogo University SP exercise. The six-week period allocated to each SP is not usually fully utilized because of interruptions in the schools. According to some students, supervision by lecturers was inadequate. Students (65%) therefore suggested that school-based co-supervisors (senior and experienced teachers) be engaged to help them as it happens with other internship activities. Some lecturers (35%) wondered why they were not involved in the school practice supervision even though they have the experience of supervision. They therefore could not guide students competently on SP issues due to their lack of involvement. The other challenge associated with the SP is the misinterpretation of the phrase "school practice". Most students and supervisors alike, concentrate on lesson presentations (teaching practice) instead of looking at all issues in the schools. Kyambogo University management should consider students' suggestions about co-supervisors because their contribution can mean a lot to the improvement of SP (Sentamu,

2008).

## 6.5 Co-Curricular Activities

Lecturers (50%) and students (75%) expressed their awareness and satisfaction with the co-curricular activities at Kyambogo University. The fact that 75% of the students agreed with the questionnaire item about the importance of co-curricular activities to university undergraduate students shows that with guidance and encouragement students would eventually contribute a lot to co-curricular activities in schools after graduating as teachers. Some student-teachers and teachers ignore these activities because they are optional at university level. Given the importance attached to co-curricular activities by MoES (1992) and many educationists it is time universities, SS, MoES and UNEB developed strategies to strengthen these activities among the various educational programmes at all levels.

**Table 1. University students' rating of Kyambogo University Teacher Education Programme**

| Main component                  | Specific aspects                                                       | Rating (%) | Remark                                                                                            |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Curriculum content              | -Subject academic content is adequate                                  | 82.5       | Good confidence building<br>Professionalization is important<br>Hands-on needs beef up            |
|                                 | -Professional/pedagogical content is adequate                          | 97.5       |                                                                                                   |
|                                 | -There is a lot of theory in the training of teachers                  | 82.5       |                                                                                                   |
| Methods of teaching             | -Lecturers use a variety of methods                                    | 32.5       | Ultimately teachers emulate lecturers<br>Cause: big numbers and/or indifference                   |
|                                 | -Lecturers rely on lecture method                                      | 77.5       |                                                                                                   |
|                                 | -Lecturers ignore academic differences among students                  | 83.8       |                                                                                                   |
| Instructional materials (IM)    | -Lecturers use Instructional materials                                 | 22.5       | More hands-on needed on IMs to improve teachers' effectiveness                                    |
|                                 | -Lecturers theoretically talk a lot about Is                           | 92.5       |                                                                                                   |
|                                 | -Lecturers should also use IMs                                         | 91.3       |                                                                                                   |
| Personality of lecturers        | Lecturers are very professional                                        | 63.75      | CPDs for lecturers is urgent                                                                      |
| Examination and school practice | -University exams demand critical thinking                             | 52.5       | Rote learning also exists at universities<br>More effort is needed on SP planning and management. |
|                                 | -SP gives us real taste of field experiences                           | 68.8       |                                                                                                   |
|                                 | -Senior S. school teachers should co-supervise university SP students. | 65.0       |                                                                                                   |

## 7. University-Linked Factors that Affect Teachers' Effectiveness

### The Reality in the secondary schools (SS)

Over 70% of the teachers claimed to be using learner-centred methods of teaching and instruction materials. They were able to educationally justify the use of such methods and

instructional materials in teaching. However, this claim could not be confirmed from the lessons observed, the post-lesson conferences held and observations made during the student FGDs. Teachers largely lectured and dictated notes. They rarely used instructional materials. In one lesson where a science experiment was being performed, about 50% of the students could not see what was happening because of overcrowding. Generally, the major reason for using teacher-centred methods was to produce good UNEB results.

Due to external examination pressure and the desire to compete with or out-perform other schools, school administrators and teachers devise all sorts of strategies, some of which are unconventional, to enable students to pass UNEB examinations “with flying colours”. Some of the unconventional methods include extra teaching periods before dawn and after dusk and expelling or causing to repeat S.3 for students whom the administration suspect will not pass in Grade One in their first attempt at ‘O’ level final examinations. Teachers confessed that their jobs were at risk if school expectations were not met. In violation of the Teachers’ Code of Conduct (MoES, 1996) most teachers (82%) avoided making lesson plans because, according to them, it was a waste of time. Without lesson plans teachers cannot reflect meaningfully on their lesson presentation (Ferraro, 2004). Over concentration on UNEB examinations has caused schools and teachers to ignore or underrate non-examinable aspects of SS such as co-curricular activities (Odongo, 2007; Okonye, 2007).

### **The relationship between university teacher education curriculum and teacher practice at the secondary school level.**

Generally, university lecturers, university students and SS teachers observed that the academic content covered in the universities enhances teachers’ ability to teach competently at the SS level. Teachers largely use teacher-centred methods at the SS level partly because lecturers also used the same methods to teach them at university. The learner-centred methods “talked” about by lecturers and attempted by students on SP are never fully internalized and owned by university students. Even if students were fully convinced about the effectiveness of learner-centred methods, the status quo in the field such as senior teachers’ conservative attitudes, low morale, limited resources and examination pressure meant that a few teachers would sustain their interest and practice of learner-centred methods. The same arguments apply to the use of instructional materials in teaching. Therefore as universities plan to improve their teacher-education curriculum, other SS education stakeholders need to tackle other intervening variables over which universities have no control. One of such interventions is to help UNEB improve on the assessment and examining styles and strategies (Odongo, 2007; Okonye, 2007; Weerhe, 2007).

## **8. Strategies of Improving University Teacher-Education Curriculum as a Precursor for Improving Teacher Effectiveness at the Secondary School Level**

The following strategies for improving university teacher education programmes must be put in place. They are derived from suggestions and observations made by various respondents during the study. These strategies will ultimately contribute to teachers' effectiveness at the SS level:

- i. Every academic topic covered in each of the students' teaching subjects should be linked to the pedagogy of teaching that topic. For example after covering "Landforms in East Africa" as a topic (at the university level) the methodology of teaching "physical features in East Africa" (at the 'O' level should immediately follow. The current practice of separating subject academic content and its related methodology into exclusive courses, (papers) tempts university students to lecture the content they learn to SS students.
- ii. Increase "hands-on" and "minds-on" activities, in all subjects. Micro-teaching should be given more emphasis. A nearby secondary school, i.e. Kyambogo College School should be used more for demonstration, because that was the original purpose for establishing it. In short, demonstration schools should be re-established.
- iii. The concept and "practice of learning" to learn needs to be emphasized both at university and SS levels. The dependency syndrome, perpetuated by teacher-centred methods at all levels, needs to be tackled head-on from universities.
- iv. A lot needs to be done on the school practice component to make this valuable experience less artificial and mere routine. The six weeks allocated for each school practice must be intensively utilized. Co-supervisors may be able to give more assistance to student than the irregular on-and-off university supervisors. Some external moderators (examiners) for SP should be appointed from outside Uganda so as to give a more neutral, objective and enriched assessment of the SP activities.
- v. University lecturers should attend CPDs to increase their pedagogical skills. A short pedagogical course should be organized for non-teacher-trained lecturers. The concept of "Reflective practice" should be one of the urgent items to include in the lecturers' and SS teachers' CPDs.
- vi. Universities need to follow up their products (alumni) in the form of surveys, CPDs research and interaction and assess their performance in view of the training their alumni received.

## **9. Conclusion**

Universities contribute to the transformation of society through research and the generation of new knowledge and skills. Kyambogo and other universities will contribute to secondary school curriculum reform by training competent and effective teachers. So far, results from this



study indicate that teachers were academically well prepared by universities.

Kyambogo University needs to do more on methodologies and the use of instructional materials. The old adage that “Actions speak louder than words” is very applicable in teaching and the training of teachers. Student-teachers emulate what lecturers do and ignore what they tell them to do. One of the solutions to this problem is to subject all lecturers to short pedagogical courses and CPDs. Innovativeness, creativity and independent self study skills must be developed among university education students so as to help them cope with any curricula reforms once they are in the field. This implies that the hands-on approach at the university must be stepped up.

Other education stakeholders need to do their part instead of heaping blame on the university teacher education curriculum. UNEB needs to reform its assessment and examination strategies to discourage cramming and rote learning. The Inspectorate Agency of the MoES (DES) should ensure that all aspects of SS education, including co-curricular activities, are implemented.

There is much more Kyambogo University can do for secondary schools through research and CPDs. By so doing, Kyambogo University (and other universities) would avoid the criticism of being an “Ivory Tower”. By training quality teachers, organizing and conducting CPDs for teachers, universities also serve their own interests because this ultimately helps them get quality students. By actively participating in the SS educational reform Kyambogo University would be operationalising its motto of “Knowledge and Skills for Service.”

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