OFF-CAMPUS LESSON PLAN PREPARATION, SUPERVISION AND ASSESSMENT: 
TEACHER-TRAINEES’ PERSPECTIVES

Alex Tetteh 
Dept of Social Studies, Faculty of Education, Presbyterian University College, Ghana; P.O.Box 393, Akropong Akuapem 
Email: tettelex@yahoo.com

Abstract
This article explores teacher-trainees’ opinions about the issues of lesson planning and lesson supervision in OFCTP. The study is a descriptive survey that employed the mixed methods approach and collected data through document analysis and the use of a questionnaire. Through quota sampling technique, a sample size of 285 was selected from 449 UCC Level-400 teacher-trainees who engaged in the 2013 OFCTP in Zone 1. The study showed that teacher-trainees were most confident of their ability to prepare most of the aspects of the lesson plan except in some few but very essential areas. Among the misgivings that teacher-trainees had about OFCTP lesson assessment and supervision were the contradictory suggestions from supervisors and the subjectivity associated with lesson assessment and the grades awarded. It is concluded that though trainees had high confidence in lesson planning, the multiple contradictions among other things, did not allow them to demonstrate their personal high-rated confidence in lesson plan preparation; trainees have mixed feelings about the worth of supervisors’ directives on lesson planning. In view of these, methods lecturers are encouraged to hammer the essential areas of lesson planning that teacher-trainees were found to have low confidence and ability. The Centre for Teacher Professional Development (CTPD) should engage only dedicated supervisors in the OFCTP supervision. Supervisors should be entreated to adhere to the guidelines meant to streamline the OFCTP lesson assessment and supervision as proposed by the CTPD prior to every OFCTP supervision. All University Colleges running various education programmes affiliated to UCC are also encouraged to take the findings and recommendations into consideration.

Key words: UCC, TP, OFCTP, teacher-trainee, internal/external supervisors, Form B.

1. Introduction
It is usually said that anyone aiding another person to learn is in a sense a teacher. However, the teaching profession goes beyond aiding one to learn. Special teaching skills and abilities are necessary for one to succeed as an effective professional teacher and in the teaching profession. These special skills and abilities for teaching usually reflect in the programmes designed to train the prospective teacher. One of such essential programmes is the Teaching Practice (TP), which may be done in two phases: On-Campus (microteaching) or Off-Campus (internship). Whether it is On-Campus Teaching Practice (ONCTP) or Off-Campus Teaching Practice (OFCTP), the aim is to “…introduce prospective teachers to teaching and its routines under the guidance of qualified professionals to develop skills, attitudes and competencies in the profession” (Teaching Practice Handbook, UCC, 2013, p. iii). However, the OFCTP is relatively more dogmatic and rigorous in terms of the roles, rules, responsibilities and practices related to the ethics of teaching as spelt out by the University of Cape Coast (UCC) and, particularly, by the Ghana Education Service (GES).
Lesson Planning is a major component of all teacher education all over the world. During OFCTP, teacher-trainees are expected to demonstrate their pedagogical and reflective teacher abilities and characteristics for assessment and evaluation. Several researches have indicated that most teacher-trainees believe that they are competently trained to plan effective lessons. For instance, Ligadu (2004) found that the overall perception of the teacher-trainees was that they were well prepared in terms of lesson planning among other things. Nevertheless, OFCTP lesson planning has been found by others to be a heavy task for the novice teacher who is “…learning to teach and teaching to learn.” (Teaching Practice Handbook, UCC, 2013, p. 2). Faizah & Amir-Bin (2008) pointed out that most teacher-trainees lose confidence in their ability to prepare effective lesson plans because of the inadequate understanding of certain components of the lesson plan preparation. Apart from this inadequacy, Schunk (1995) opined that teachers with low self-efficacy may avoid planning activities they believe exceed their capabilities and may expend little effort to find materials. It is therefore expedient to ensure that the student who is being trained to become an effective teacher develops the skills of effective lesson planning and a sense of high self-efficacy and portrays these abilities confidently in every lesson taught. In view of this, in UCC, students who enrol to become teachers are taken through courses intended to efficiently equip them with essential skills including that of lesson planning rudiments. Nevertheless, informal comments from trainees who have participated in OFCTP, and reports from some supervisors and heads of schools on previous OFCTPs suggest that teacher-trainees have problems with lesson planning. Additionally, the fact that teaching is both a science and an art (Marzano, 2007) implies that people may have opposing views on ideal teaching procedures; and this has repercussions on the novice teacher. Consequently, this study was conducted to investigate teacher-trainees’ perspectives on the issues of Off-Campus lesson plan preparation, supervision and assessment that require more attention before, during and after the OFCTP.

2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The study sought to:

1. Examine the aspects of lesson plan preparation that teacher trainees are most confident of their ability.
2. Ascertain the opinions of teacher-trainees about OFCTP lesson plan assessment and lesson supervision.

3. UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST’S PHILOSOPHY OF TEACHING PRACTICE (TP)

In training teachers of high calibre, the University recognises the role that TP plays. It therefore creates the environment vital for student teachers to develop professional skills. The student undergoes both ONCTP (microteaching) and OFCTP. The ONCTP entails training students to learn how to teach by exposing them (in the third year) to peer teaching by practicing classroom skills. In the first semester of the final year, students are exposed to extended period of school teaching experience, popularly called, “Off-Campus” which is under the guidance of school authorities, experienced mentors and university supervisors.

Every teacher-training institution has its own philosophy of TP. For the University of Cape Coast, according to the Teaching Practice Handbook (UCC, 2013), the College of Education Studies believes that teaching is an activity intended to promote learning, and that there is no one best approach for achieving this. TP is a process of learning to teach and teaching to learn. The Faculty sees TP as an opportunity to share knowledge, experience, skills with students in a conducive environment that values and celebrates diversity. That environment should provide opportunities for problem solving, experimentation and discovery of proper teaching strategies. Thus, the trainee is to use a range of teaching and learning approaches and resources which are appropriate for learners and are effective in engaging, motivating and meeting the needs of individual learners. It further recognises the school and classroom settings as uncertain, dynamic and problematic environment, and therefore, envision a teacher who is a reflective practitioner (UCC, 2013). The foregoing position of the University is more in support of “teaching as an art” dimension than “teaching as a science”. The art dimension applies subjective judgments in decisions about teaching strategies, responses to student
misbehaviour and the selection of materials and assessment techniques. This brings to the fore the issue of “reflective practitioner” and how to assess it. There is a growing emphasis on reflective teaching (Posner, 1996; O’Donoghue & Booker, 1996; Borko, Michalee, Timmons & Siddle, 1997; Vieira & Marques, 2002), yet, the approach to assessing the reflective skills has not yet been explicitly spelt out by the College of Education Studies of UCC. Perhaps, this is due to what reflective teaching entails, and as Kemmis (cited in Vieira & Marques, 2002) pointed out, reflective teaching is very difficult to assess.

The supervisor and the teacher-trainee are the two main people of concern during the practice. Some of the duties of the teacher-trainee according to the Teaching Practice Handbook (UCC, 2013) are that, a trainee is expected to complete a minimum of 14 periods per week of practical teaching as well as participate in all relevant teaching-related events, in his/her school of practice throughout the TP period. This appears to be too much: Ross, Vescio, Tricarico, and Short (2011) suggest that there should be lightening of the teaching workload and co-curricular responsibilities of teacher-trainees. The trainee is supposed to be observed formally, on at least six occasions, by a minimum of two Faculty Supervisors, and should demonstrate advance preparation of the lesson plan and other teaching-learning resources. Detailed notes are to be prepared in a bound notebook and made available to all supervisors. After every observation by a supervisor, the teacher-trainee is to request a copy of the supervisor’s report (Form B), which enables the trainee to have a fair knowledge about his/her output. It is categorically stated that in the trainee’s own interest he/she should welcome advice and criticism from experienced staff and feel free to present problems in connection with their teaching to their supervisors. This has the capacity of encouraging supervisors to force certain directives down the throat of trainees.

The Lesson Plan
A lesson plan shows how a teacher puts the curriculum into practice (Duncan & Met, 2010). There are many approaches to lesson plan preparation. These include Gagné’s Nine Events of Instruction, Herbartian approach (traditional approach), Bloom’s approach, Madeline Hunter’s Approach, Slavin’s Lesson Structure, among others. The approach teacher-trainees in the University of Cape Coast are taught to use is more of an eclectic type. It takes into consideration the essential components of all the approaches mentioned above and can be put into two main formats: prose format and tabular format. According to Tamakloe, et al., (2005), the components of the lesson plan considered very important are: topic, objective(s), review of previous relevant knowledge, teaching/learning resources, introduction, presentation (teacher-learner activities), closure, evaluation, pre-lesson preparation and the remarks column. From this, it can be generally conceptualised that the lesson plan has three main parts: the beginning, the middle and the end. However, essentially, in writing, it begins from setting of the objectives (i.e. the relevant and specific purposes of the lesson stated in behavioural terms capable to be measured and achieved within the specified time).

**Beginning:** this is the opening of the Lesson. Generally, this is where the teacher reviews the RPK of the student; focuses student’s attention by sharing the purpose or objectives of the lesson with them amidst some motivations to gain their interest in what is going to be studied. **Middle:** this stage is normally referred to as the heart of the lesson. Through the varied and appropriate teacher-learner activities (teaching methods) with suitable TLMs selected, the teacher mainly engages in the guidance of the learner to practice initially. Then the teacher allows the learner to do independent practice where he/she makes inputs, demonstrates or models when necessary for the learner to observe. He/she checks for understanding and provides feedback without any serious formative assessment, grading or evaluation.

**End:** after going through all the activities, the teacher summarises the lesson and invites questions for clarification (just to consolidate the major points). The teacher then tasks the learner to engage in specific activities alone (formative test) and measures (determines) the performance along the line of the requirement(s) of the objectives set. The teacher evaluates the student’s outcome to know if the lesson objectives have been achieved or not.

**Lesson Objectives Achieved:** if the objectives of the lesson under consideration are achieved, then the teacher prepares both himself/herself and the students for the next lesson the next time.
teacher may give assignment on the current lesson or references for further reading or a preparatory reading assignment for the next lesson. The teacher prepares him/herself by preparing the lesson plan for the next lesson.

Lesson Objectives Not achieved: if the lesson objectives are not achieved, the lesson is revisited with some sort of remediation strategy (with same or different procedure). But, immediately after determining whether the lesson objectives have been achieved or not, the teacher has to do critical reflection on the lesson, the learners and himself before an intervention or no intervention is made. That is, the teacher asks him/herself some thought-provoking questions that led to the success or failure of the lesson and tries to provide answers to enable him/her take decision(s) for the next line of action. If the lesson objectives were not achieved, then, depending on the extent to which the objectives were not achieved and on the result of the teacher’s reflection, the remediation of the lesson may start by re-setting new objectives or from the heart of the lesson.

Lesson Plan Assessment and Lesson Delivery Supervision

An integral part of TP is teacher-trainee supervision and assessment (Ngara, Ngara, & Ngwarai, 2013). In most cases, the work of the teacher-trainee that is supervised has four dimensions: Evidence of Planning; Evidence of Instructional Competence; Evidence of Classroom Management and Evidence of Reflection. In some other institutions, these dimensions are slightly different. For instance, in Nigeria, the areas of interest supervised are broadly three in number, namely; Personal Qualities, the Lesson, and the Class Activities (Adu, 2006). For UCC, the TP Assessment Form “A” contains three main areas of development that reflect the four dimensions aforementioned above: (1) Objectives and Core Points in the Lesson Plan (2) Classroom Organisation and Management, and lastly (3) Teaching Methodology and Delivery. These “macro” areas of development have specific items under each of them, which must be supervised, assessed and evaluated. However, the work of the supervisor as an observer is divided into three, which are: pre-observation discussion, the observation itself, and post-observation counselling (Teaching Practice Handbook, UCC, 2013).

It is during the pre-observation discussion that the trainee has the opportunity to reflect and discuss his/her professional practice and proposed lesson plan with the supervisor. The supervisor gains a clear idea of trainees’ intentions for the lesson and recognizes the background to the lesson that the trainee is going to teach and how it fits in with previous teaching and learning with the group of students. Through the supervisor’s comment at this time, the trainee has the opportunity to make changes before delivering the lesson. During the observation itself, the observer has no role to play in the lesson; he/she is there to look at the trainee’s teaching and learning with the group of students. However, he/she may take the opportunity to talk to the teacher-trainee where necessary. It is mainly at this time that the supervisor assigns marks to the teaching done by the teacher-trainee. On this issue, Ligadu (2004) and Wambugu, Barmao and Joel (2013) suggest that scoring should not only be done during the teaching period, but should also be done during the oral discussion between the supervisor and the supervisee. Therefore, after the observation itself, the post-observation discussion is held. This is where the supervisor arranges a specific time and place for a feedback discussion of the observed lesson. The purpose of discussion is to enable the trainee to critically reflect on the lesson in relation to his/her professional practice. The Teaching Practice Handbook (UCC, 2013) emphasises that every supervisor is supposed to engage the trainee in all the stages of observation.

In a study conducted by Acquah and Anti (2013) in UCC, many issues emerged from the focused group discussion held. These include inadequate supervision, some supervisors marking only the lesson notes; some supervisors not sitting throughout the lesson, yet manage to find faults with students’ teaching; some supervisors delegating their responsibilities to others who appeared not to know what they were doing; and some supervisors not scoring teacher-trainees while they were teaching, and bias on the part of supervisors. Other important issue that confirms Al-Mahrooqi (2011) and Bhargava’s (2009) study was that some supervisors overemphasised the inefficiencies of the trainees, which greatly discouraged the trainees. That is, their comments remained limited to flimsy developments and practices rather than emphasis on gradual improvement of trainees, development and adoption of new approaches, the effectiveness of the use of stimulus variations and how all these
are planned in the lesson notebook. Most of these foregoing TP supervision issues, among others, have been confirmed and exposed by this study.

4. MATERIALS AND METHODS
The study is a descriptive survey and the mixed methods approach was employed. Through quota sampling technique, a sample size of 285 was selected from 449 UCC Level-400 teacher-trainees who engaged in the 2013 OFCTP in Zone 1^A. Data were collected through document analysis and the use of questionnaire. A pilot test of the questionnaire was conducted using 30 teacher-trainees drawn from University Practice SHS, Effutu SHS and Jukwa SHS. The questionnaire’s reliability was tested and found to be reliable as maintained by Fraenkel and Wallen (2000) that if the co-efficient alpha value is .70 and above then the instrument is reliable and of good quality for collecting useful data for the study. The Cronbach’s alpha was established for each of the sections that fell under the Likert-type scale (Section A=.798; Section B=.756). The data were collected within one month (from the last week of November to the first three weeks in December, 2013). Descriptive statistics (Frequencies (%), Means (M), Mean of Means (MM), Standard Deviations (SD) and Mean of Standard Deviations (MSD)) were employed to analyse the data collected. However, data collected through the open-ended items were “qualitised” (Miles & Huberman, 1994) and put into categories, transcribed and the emerging themes were interpreted.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Aspects of lesson plan preparation that teacher trainees are most confident of their ability.
Ideally, teacher-trainees are to be able to efficiently prepare the whole lesson plan effectively, to proof their confidence in the ability to write-up each of the areas. In view of this, trainees were required to rank their confidence beginning from Very High (VH) to Uncertain (U). Table 1 shows their responses.

Table 1: Aspects of Lesson Plan Preparation that Teacher-Trainees in the University of Cape Coast are Most Confident of their Ability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>VH %</th>
<th>H %</th>
<th>M %</th>
<th>L %</th>
<th>U %</th>
<th>Total %</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carving out a teachable topic or subtopic from a unit or chapter in the syllabus:</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stating instructional objectives in taxonomic categories and behavioural terms:</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introducing the topic (linking previous knowledge to the new topic):</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choosing the right teaching method (logical teacher-learner activities) in relation to the content and objectives:</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stating the core points to clarify the main ideas, concepts, skills, knowledge:</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summarising the lesson:</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessing student learning:</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluating the lesson:</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing references for the lesson:</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field survey, Tetteh (2013). MM=1.52; MSD=.78; N=279; Very High (1), High (2), Moderate (3), Low (4), Uncertain (5)
In all, the information in Table 1 shows that majority of the trainees, ranked their confidence in their ability to effectively prepare the whole lesson plan as “high” (MM= 1.52; MSD= .78). Thus, between 67%—92% of the 279 respondents gave “high” as the minimum rating for their confidence in their ability to prepare all the aspects of the lesson plan. This is very encouraging and confirms Ligadu’s (2004) study that found that the overall perception of teacher-trainees (mentees) used in his research showed that they were well-prepared in terms of lesson planning among other things. In Table 1, 50%—56% of the respondents rated “very high” their confidence in their ability to prepare the following aspects of the lesson plan: carving-out a teachable topic from the syllabus; stating instructional objectives; stating the core points; summarising the lesson; assessing student learning and evaluating the lesson. By this, it can be said that trainees are most confident of their ability to prepare six aspects of the lesson plan excluding very essential areas like linking the previous knowledge to the new topic in the introduction, and choosing the appropriate teaching method. Writing references for the lesson was a low confidence area: 33% of the respondents believed that their ability to cite references in the APA format for their prepared lessons was less than “high” (which is not the best).

These ratings denote a lot. The fact that majority of the trainees ranked their confidence in their ability to prepare all the aspects of the lesson plan as “high” and “very high”, implies that from their own perspectives, they taught with quality lesson plans. This confidence has positive effects on the learners’ understanding of the lesson and their achievement of the lesson objectives as maintained by Koomson, Frimpong, Amuah, Anyagre and Brown (2002) and Tamakloe, Amedahe and Atta (2005). They contend that in most cases, the success of any lesson depends upon the quality of its plan and the expertise with which it is carried out. In the same vein, scholars such as Guskey and Passaro (1994); Guarino, Hamilton, Lockwood, and Rathbun (2006); Guo, Connor, Yang, Roehrig, and Frederick (2012) believe that there is a positive correlation between teachers’ beliefs about their own level of competence, sense of self-efficacy and practice and their students’ performance. Nevertheless, to what extent did these self-rating of confidence in lesson planning reflect the true ability of the teacher-trainees and the resultant translation into students’ performance? So, to appreciate the true ability of the respondents, I went further to find out what the supervisors wrote in the lesson notebooks and on the Form Bs to ascertain whether the trainees’ ratings of their ability were endorsed by the comments of the supervisors. This was done using Document Analysis and the results have been presented below.

Results from the Document Analysis: In all, 96 assessed or supervised lesson plans and their respective Form Bs from 12 schools were examined. Table 2 shows the compilation of supervisors’ comments in the form of ratings as “Good” [+] , “Satisfactory” [-], and “Needs Improvement” [-] that the supervisors used to either commend or query the teacher-trainees on their lesson plans or lessons delivery. From Table 2, it can be seen that majority of the trainees were good at stating the topic or subtopic, writing the core points, summarising the lesson and assessing students’ learning. By the supervisors’ commendation on the Form Bs, more than 70 lesson plans out of 96 I scrutinised confirmed the trainees’ claim of highest confidence in the above-mentioned areas. However, on these same aspects, there were some adverse comments made by the supervisors in some few lesson notes and on the Form Bs. For example, they usually stated, “Lesson too loaded or too much for the time”, “Learn how to assess students’ learning”, among others. My observation, however, was that sometime trainees frequently wrote single words as topics, e.g. budget, demand, supply, national income which are too vague and not self-explanatory as stressed by Tamakloe, et al. (2005). Tamakloe, et al. insist that for the learners to comprehend these topics easily, they should be stated, for example, as “The concept of budget”, “The meaning of demand”, “Measurement of national income”, and so forth. Most supervisors did not comment on this, though.

In terms of topic introduction by linking previous knowledge to the new topic, 30 lesson plans were found to be good, 27 were satisfactory while the majority (39) needed improvement. These data show that in sum, majority of the trainees are not good at linking students’ previous knowledge to new lessons. For example, the supervisors made comments such as “Learn how to link RPK to new lessons”, “You did not introduce the lesson well”, “Stop asking the students questions that appear to
suggest that they already know what you are yet to teach”, and so on. This confirms the information in Table 1 where about 24% rated below “high” and only 24% rated above “high” in terms of their confidence in linking previous knowledge to the new lesson. Indeed, this is an area that confronted many teacher-trainees and supervisors frequently commented on it. Twenty six of the lesson plans analysed had their objectives well stated (good), 37 were satisfactory and 33 were not well-stated and therefore, needed improvement). Most recurring supervisors’ comments on this aspect of the lesson plan (especially, on those that were found to need improvement) include “These objectives are not easily measurable”, “Lesson objectives not specific in terms of time and task”, among others.

Table 2: Analysis of Supervisors’ Comments in Teacher-Trainees’ Lesson Notebooks and on Form Bs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect of the Lesson Plan</th>
<th>Comment [+]</th>
<th>[±]</th>
<th>[-]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statement of topic or subtopic (well-carved, well-worded, time):</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objectives (specific, measurable, relevant &amp; achievable within the duration of the lesson):</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic introduction (preview of previous knowledge &amp; linkage to new topic (interesting and captivating)):</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching methods (varied &amp; appropriate teacher-learner activities showing student involvement):</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TLMs (appropriate, time &amp; stages of usage):</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core points (reflecting set objectives and logically presented):</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary of the lesson (tidy and interesting based on the objectives and linked to the core points):</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment of student learning/Lesson evaluation (appropriate questions to depict the achievement of lesson objectives):</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing references for the lesson (follow the APA format):</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field survey, Tetteh (2013). Good [+], Satisfactory [±], Needs Improvement [-] N=96

Out of the 96 lesson plans analysed, 42 were found to have appropriate (good) methods of teaching stated for each stage of the lesson, 28 were seen to be only satisfactory while the remaining 26 lesson plans needed improvement in terms of the selection of appropriate teaching methods. By this, it can be inferred that majority of the trainees were not good at deciding on which method(s) of teaching was (were) appropriate for each lesson and type of students in class. Supervisors commented that some trainees usually stated appropriate methods of teaching in the lesson plan but tended to use different method(s), especially, the lecture method, when they got into the classroom. Some other comments include the following: “Each step or activity should have a time period and teaching methods(s) to be used”, “Your lesson plan did not indicate how the learners would be involved”, “Lesson plan depicted class involvement but that was lost during lesson delivery, why?”

On trainees’ ability to select appropriate TLRs, 32 of the 96 lesson plans observed needed improvement, 44 were satisfactory, with only 20 being good. Comments of the supervisors show that some trainees did well by stating the TLRs in the lesson plan, but they never brought them into the classroom. Other trainees stated the TLRs alright but there was no indication of when to use them. By the comments of the supervisors, some even forgot to use the TLRs brought to the classroom. Others did not state or use TLRs at all. This implies that trainees do not only find it difficult accessing appropriate TLRs but also, they lacked the skill of choosing and using appropriate TLRs appropriately during the lesson delivery. Majority (49 out of 96) of the lesson plans observed were satisfactory while 32 needed improvement in terms of writing references in the APA format. In some few cases, the following supervisors’ comments were found in both the lesson notebooks and on the Form Bs
gathered: “It is not what is in the lesson notebook that you have taught”, “Be consistent in your choice of lesson preparation format”, “You must improve upon your lesson planning generally”. These comments show that there is problem with some teacher-trainees in terms of lesson planning, though majority rated their confidence as “high” in Table 1. As a matter of fact, my personal observations were that it seemed some supervisors had predetermined what to write about trainees’ lessons in the Form B; this is because same comments were written on the Form B of all teacher-trainees’ in some particular schools in the study area by some same supervisors. The other thing is that some supervisors’ comments were not legible; trainees found it difficult to get what the supervisors wanted to put across. When I asked them to tell me what the supervisors meant there, they could not tell me anything other than that, some of the supervisors left before the lesson ended and so they could not have post-observation discussion.

As indicated by the supervisors on the Form B, the trainees generally wrote detailed lesson plans. However, for some trainees, it appeared they merely recycled previous lesson plans by altering or making minor changes on the content column of the lesson plans to suit the current one. I observed this from the fact that certain thing(s) that clearly did not pertain to a particular trainee’s lessons, for example, RPK, TLMs, and even dates had to be either cancelled, circled or corrected by supervisors. Critical analyses of these “errors” did not give the impression of mere mistakes. But rather, an indication that some of the teacher-trainees resorted to copying copiously from old lesson notebooks gathered from their predecessors. This situation, if unchecked has the likely impact of legitimating the use of fraudulent lesson plans as maintained by Boikhutso (2010), and encouraging complacency on the part of the student-teachers thereby undermining the noble idea behind lesson planning in the OFCTP.

Having some trainees rating their confidence in their ability to write-up some of the aspects of the lesson plan as medium, low or uncertain, and further supported by the document analysis, implies that there is more to be achieved. However, this menace seems to be justified by Joice and Harootunian (1964), Vogler (1991), and Boz and Boz (2006) who found that teachers in their early practices find it puzzling to state instructional objectives in behavioural terms. They unanimously ascribed the reason to the fact that novice teachers do not fully understand the conceptual distinctions between aims, goals and objectives and so have difficulty matching goals, objectives, instructional activities and evaluation procedures. In the same vein, the result supports the findings of Lampert (1985), Kagan and Tippins (1992), and Calderhead and Shorrock (1997) that many teachers especially, the neophytes, have difficulty integrating subject topics, understanding the concepts or tasks embedded in curriculum materials and manipulating conflicting goals when there is uncertainty about how to achieve multiple desired outcomes. There are two main possibilities that can be drawn as the causes of such low ratings that some of the respondents assigned to their confidence and the shortfalls that the supervisors found: It is either they did not get much time to practise those areas very well during the ONCTP or they simply did not take the ONCTP seriously. This inference is based on an observation made by Bhargava (2009) that a batch of students which had more practice in microteaching performed confidently and in better way in comparison to the group which had less preparatory time. Similarly, Al-Mahrooqi (2011) found in his study that students who often practised lesson planning during their microteaching felt that they were adequately prepared to write effective lesson plans without any assistance. A worth-noting issue is that the problematic areas happen to be the most important sections that GES guiding principles (cited in Koomson, et al., 2002) expect teachers to be confident and competent of their ability. Some of these trainees, by their own ratings, fell short of the requirement expected of them by their probable employer, the GES.

2. Opinions of teacher-trainees about OFCTP lesson plan assessment and lesson supervision.

During OFCTP, trainees consider supervision as the most important factor that determines their success. Table 3 gives what teacher-trainees’ think about supervisors’ supervision and assessment of lessons they planned and delivered. From Table 3, a mean of means of 2.76 with a standard deviation of .90 shows that generally, trainees were uncertain about whether OFCTP lesson supervision is helpful to them or not helpful.
Majority of the trainees (78%) disagreed variously (M=3.78; SD=1.11) on the claim that supervisors’ assessment or suggestions did not give them new ideas on lesson planning. To them, the “new” ideas offered by different supervisors and mentors might be right but those ideas were simply “alien” to them as novice teachers. This made them wonder if the new things they were being told to do were the right way to go; and even if they were, the contradictions with what their methods lecturers taught them and what other supervisors were recommending, made them very doubtful. In the open-ended section of the questionnaire, one respondent wrote, “I don’t really know what to do now: whether I should provide answers to the evaluation questions or not; because, one supervisor comes and says this, tomorrow another comes and refutes what the first person said. The supervisors are confusing me”.

Table 3: Teacher-Trainees’ Opinion about Supervisors’ Assessment and Supervision of their Lesson Plans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>SA %</th>
<th>A %</th>
<th>U %</th>
<th>D %</th>
<th>SD %</th>
<th>Total %</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supervisors’ directives on lesson planning are quite different from what I was taught in the University:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some supervisors are not interested in the lesson plan I prepare rather, they are interested in the teaching I do:</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When supervised by two or more supervisors at the same time in a lesson, their comments on my lesson plan vary on same issues:</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My mentor prefers that my lesson notes cover more lessons at a time in order to complete the whole syllabus early:</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External supervisors complain that my lesson plans are too detailed or loaded for the period:</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are some complaints from the supervisors concerning the lesson planning format I use:</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>1.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggestions made in the lesson notes and on the Form Bs are not supportive or helpful:</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisors’ assessment does not give me new ideas on lesson planning:</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>1.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some comments made in my lesson note and on the Form B by some supervisors are offensive to me:</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>1.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some supervisors’ comments make me feel like I was not taught anything on lesson planning in UCC:</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>1.37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field survey, Tetteh (2013). MM=2.76; N= 279; MSD=.90; Strongly Agree SA=1), Agree (A=2), Uncertain (U=3), Disagree (D=4), Strongly Disagree (SD=5)

This complaint is confirmed by the majority’s (82%) strong agreement in Table 3 that supervisors’ directives on lesson planning were quite different from what they were taught in the University (M=1.22; SD=.55). Similarly, 99% of the trainees, in sum, agreed (M=1.28; SD=.50) that when supervised by two or more supervisors at the same time in a lesson, the supervisors’ comments on the lesson plan varied on same issues. In this situation the question then is whose directive is to be taken into consideration? This is making most teacher-trainees complete the TP without being certain of the
right thing to do in lesson planning and in lesson delivery. Consequently, the respondents desired to be certain by seeking some clarification on these issues when they returned to campus.

Some school authorities preferred that lesson plan for teaching their students and the procedure employed meet their own standards, which in most cases contradicted what the teacher-trainee was taught in the university. In total, 96% of the respondents agreed (M=1.64; SD=.68) that while their mentors preferred that their lesson notes cover more lessons at a time in order to complete the whole syllabus early, external supervisors on the other hand complained (M=1.75; SD=.74) that their lesson plans were too loaded for the time period that they taught. The teacher-trainees further reported that mentors usually called them to find out the number of topics they had covered so far; and always entreated them to work faster to cover more. For example, in the course of the data collection, one teacher-trainee complained that the first school she wanted to do her OFCTP rejected her letter because the proprietor said trainees always come and make their students lag behind, as lessons trainees teach per period are too small. When this happens, usually, the trainees find themselves in a serious dilemma as to the kind of lesson that must be planned to satisfy both internal and external supervisors so that they do not lose some marks. For trainees, because they are under supervision and diligently teach for marks (among other things), they have to exhaust every step of the lesson delivery including areas that are not usually considered by their mentors. For instance, while the teacher-trainee has to explore and connect RPK appropriately, share lesson objectives with students, use appropriate pace to the benefit of each student, the mentor may ignore most of these things without any direct effect on him in terms of marks. For the mentors, the announcement of the siren may end his/her lesson abruptly and nobody will query him/her on that. However, the teacher-trainee under supervision has to draw learners’ attention to the end of the lesson before using questions, summary or differentiated practices linked to the objectives to consolidate or reinforce major points learned before formally, he/she finally closes the lesson. So, while the veteran teacher usually spends all his/her time on treating more subject matter at a time, the teacher-trainee has to use some of the time to always do the other important things as stated above.

All along, a section of the teacher-trainees who have undergone OFCTP complained, informally, that some supervisors’ comments made them feel like they were not taught anything on lesson planning in the University. On this issue, majority (61%) of the respondents were uncertain (M=3.43; SD=1.37) as to whether that happened to them or not. Similarly, majority (64%) of the respondents variously disagreed to the assertion that some comments made in their lesson notes and on the Form Bs by some supervisors were offensive to them (M= 3.55; SD= 1.22). However, trainees’ comments in the open-ended section of the questionnaire indicated that there were some provocative acts by supervisors, e.g. when the supervisor cancels or writes something in their lesson notebooks before or during the teaching. According to them, seeing this gave them some emotional imbalances before or during the instructional period. A similar case was observed by Bhargava (2009, p. 2) that “…mental and emotional stress was felt by trainees when not very favorable comments were written on their record books by supervisors”. This has the impetus to kill their high-rated confidences.

From the responses given by the trainees in Table 3, lesson plan format was not a bother to the supervisors. In all, 83% of the trainees either simply disagreed or strongly disagreed that there were some complaints from the supervisors concerning the lesson plan format they used during the OFCTP. Nevertheless, some trainees wrote in the open-ended section that supervisors insisted on the use of one format. A large number of the respondents (70%) also strongly disagreed (M=3.56; SD=.95) that some supervisors were not interested in the lesson plan they prepared and rather interested in the teaching they did. Some trainees stated in the open-ended section that some supervisors assessed only their lesson plans and not their teachings. It can be inferred therefore, that some supervisors take the lesson plan more seriously than what goes on at the instructional time (maybe, because assessing the lesson plan somehow showed some record of supervision). In the open-ended section of the questionnaire, trainees’ common comments were: “Some supervisors do not come to observe us in class, they only assess our lesson plans”; “Supervisors finish awarding marks and leave before the
Lesson gets to a closure”; “Some supervisors do not do any pre- and post-observation discussion for us; “Others come in late but manage to assess areas of the lesson that they did not come to meet.”;“Awarding of marks is too subjective and bias.” Azeem (2011) and Acquah and Anti (2013) found similar issues that external supervisors did not visit trainees timeously or frequently. In this study, trainees further indicated that some supervisors forced them to organise classes and teach for assessment when they did not have any lesson on the school timetable; and they had such lessons taught and assessed with already used lesson plans, contingency lesson plans or without any lesson plan at all. It is against this backdrop that the trainees believed that awarding grades in the OFCTP is too subjective and bias. Therefore, generally, the teacher-trainees had a mixed feeling about the essence of OFCTP lesson supervision.

Some trainees also pointed out that the supervisors who did not have content knowledge of the subject they supervised were rather interested in looking for petty mistakes like handwriting, spellings, punctuations, marker-board management, etc. without looking at the content and the teacher-learner activities of the lesson. Some also claimed that when two or more supervisors assess one lesson plan consecutively, one supervisor’s comment(s) especially, that of the first influences the rest (hallo effect). The trainees further wished that supervisors could be friendlier and reduce the frowning. Often, some of them had to grapple with what they called “illegible handwriting” or “meaningless comments” from some supervisors who will not also wait until the end of the lesson and have post-observation discussion with them. All these show that trainees had most of their questions unanswered and were indifferent with respect to the usefulness of OFCTP supervision. One observation I made during this study was that, due to the nature of supervision offered to trainees, it appeared that most teacher-trainees were preoccupied with issues of supervision and underestimated some important issues that could have made their professional development sufficient. For instance, most of the trainees failed to attempt to introduce or try-out something new or creative in the lesson prepared or in the presentation since such attempt could lead to his/her downfall in marks obtained. Hence, they planned the lessons to meet the status quo (which is what most supervisors expected) rather than being creative, experimental and initiative, as indicated. This has actually stifled the development of the reflective teacher practitioners which the College of Education Studies sought to produce. According to Benson (2000), critical reflection should facilitate teacher autonomy, especially through the mediation between pedagogical goals and situational constraints within a research-like approach to teaching, whereby educational contexts are questioned, scrutinised in order to be understood and changed. This trait could be partly cultivated if one month to the end of the OFCTP, teacher-trainees are made to work in close association and under the guidance of senior teachers acting as mentors. This practice will give ample time to teacher trainees to act as innovative, creative and experimental teachers (without fear or favour).

5. CONCLUSIONS
The teacher-trainees generally mastered lesson plan preparation, but some trainees could not synchronise their confidence in lesson planning with the real writing of the lesson plan in their lesson notebooks. Supervisors had misgivings about trainees’ level of mastery of some of the areas. Trainees’ confident areas were not so essential as compared to the areas where they had low confidence in their ability. It is therefore, concluded that lesson planning ability of teacher-trainees in the study area was quite inadequate.

The teacher-trainees obtained new ideas on lesson planning and lesson delivery but such ideas were conflicting. Assessment was highly subjective and bias and trainees sometimes suffered emotional imbalances from supervisors’ comments and actions. They saw supervisors’ directives on lesson planning and lesson delivery as a requirement to enable them pass OFCTP but not the ideal opportunity for them to obtain the best training on lesson planning or lesson delivery. The conclusion is that teacher-trainees, to some extent, did not have complete trust in the quality, validity and reliability of the assessment of, and directives on the lessons they planned and delivered during the
OFCTP. It could further be inferred that the confusion did not allow the teacher-trainees to demonstrate their personal high-rated confidence they had in lesson plan preparation.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Trainees’ complete confidence in their ability to prepare the whole lesson plan and deliver it effectively in the class can be ensured if methods and microteaching lecturers emphasise very essential but problematic aspects of the lesson such as the reviewing RPK and linking it to the new topic (introduction), choice of appropriate teaching method, stating lesson objectives, how to improvise and use appropriate TLMs and citing references in the APA style. Additionally, methods lecturers and supervisors should give demonstration lessons for teacher-trainees to observe and emulate. During microteaching, trainees should be made to, at least, prepare lesson notes in their minor subject areas as well. Also, the CTPD should petition the academic board through the College of Education Studies to extend the periods allocated to the ONCTP to make lessons planned in the ONCTP have a greater positive correlation with that of the OFCTP in terms of time and other requirements. UCC should collaborate with GES so that the format which applies on the field (the GES approved format) be the one that should be taught mostly in the University. Other universities who are running education programmes especially, those affiliated to UCC, should take a cue from the results, conclusions and recommendations of this study and make the necessary arrangements to enable them minimise such issues during their Programme.

2. The College of Education Studies of UCC should increase the membership of the TP Monitoring Team and the number of times the team visits each school during the period. Visiting each school at least once in the whole TP period as stated in the Teaching Practice Handbook (UCC, 2013) is woefully inadequate to ensure that supervisors do the right thing. Supervisors should be entreated to adhere to the guidelines meant to streamline and ensure consistency in the OFCTP lesson assessment and supervision as proposed by the CTPD. Mentors should be made to take active part in the supervision. The experienced and good-standing mentors should rather take over the assessment of trainee’s subject-matter knowledge during the pre-observation, observation itself and the post-observation discussion times. Again, mentee University Colleges to UCC should consider these recommendations.

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