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Original Article

### Lesson Planning within the Uganda Lower Secondary Curriculum: Practices, Enablers and Challenges

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In response to dissatisfaction with an overloaded, exam-oriented curriculum that did not meet 21st-century needs, Uganda undertook a curriculum review, leading to the development of a Competence-Based Curriculum at the lower secondary school level. The Lower Secondary Curriculum (LSC), which was launched in February 2020, aims to facilitate the process of producing competent graduates for the 21st-century world of work. The implementation of the LSC, therefore, emphasizes lesson planning as a deliberate strategy to ensure that teachers intentionally contribute to the achievement of learner-expected outcomes from this curriculum. Most research on the LSC currently in Uganda has concentrated on establishing the challenges encountered during the implementation process and little has been conducted on discrete aspects like lesson planning. This qualitative case study explored teachers' practices for lesson preparation, enablers, and challenges to the lesson planning process. This study was guided by three research questions 1. What are the teachers' lesson planning practices within the LSC? 2. What facilitates the lesson planning process within the LSC? 3. What kind of challenges do teachers encounter during lesson planning? Data was collected through one-on-one interviews and documentary analysis. Purposive sampling was used to select the research sites and study participants. The findings revealed that lesson planning involved occasional development of lesson plans, development of schemes of work, utilization of the internet, and collaborative scheming. Further, the presence of school facilities and collaborative planning majorly facilitated the planning process. Lesson planning was tedious, constrained by inadequate time for preparation and, inadequate resources. This study recommends that teachers be provided with training opportunities and resources to optimize the lesson planning process.

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**INTRODUCTION**

Lesson planning, which is an integral part of the complex activity of teaching (Kanellopoulou, & Darra, 2017), helps teachers to organize the teaching and learning process (Louws *et al.*, 2017). Cicek, & Tok (2022) define lesson planning as the systematic process of deciding what and how students should learn. Clark, & Peterson (1986) conceptualize planning as that which teachers do when preparing for instruction. Savage (2014) contends that planning involves writing down strategies teachers would wish to employ in their lessons by focusing on such aspects as the number of students in their classrooms, learning needs, and the time when the lesson is to occur. A synthesis of these definitions demonstrates that lesson planning involves making decisions about the instructional process as well as mapping out the steps to be taken during the instructional process to ensure that the learners' expected outcomes are achieved by the end of the lesson. Indeed Khanum & Saeed (2020) argue that instructional planning provides clear lesson goals and objectives, making the teacher confident and well-organized in lesson presentation. The two scholars further assert that without planning, a teacher may fail to realize a fruitful lesson. Thus, lesson planning is a critical component of the teaching and learning process.

Uganda introduced a new curriculum known as the Lower Secondary Curriculum (LSC), a Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC) at the secondary school level in February 2020. While this curriculum prioritizes learner-centeredness during the teaching and learning process, the teacher has a crucial role to play in its implementation as a key executor of the learning process. According to the

implementation guidelines of the LSC, one of the major roles of the teacher is to plan, organize and facilitate learning (National Curriculum Development Centre [NCDC, 2021]). This is not to suggest that teachers did not plan for teaching prior to the introduction of the LSC. However, CBC emphasizes the need for intentional and deliberate planning to enhance learner outcomes. A gap, however, still exists in research on teacher practices, enablers and challenges regarding lesson planning as one way of informing and improving the enactment of the LSC. Most research on the LSC currently in Uganda has investigated challenges impacting on implementation of the curriculum as a whole (Atuhura, & Nambi, 2024; Kidega *et al.*, 2024) and teacher perspectives towards the LSC (Namubiru *et al.*, 2024; Wambi *et al.*, 2024) and a few works have been conducted on discrete aspects of implementation like lesson planning (Mbeya *et al.*, 2024). Yet, a detailed examination of specific aspects of the LSC implementation is more likely to yield deeper insights than a broad, widespread investigation. This is why this study focused on examining the lesson planning process within the LSC, specifically exploring teacher practices, key enablers to lesson planning, and the challenges hindering its effectiveness.

**Problem Statement**

Lesson planning offers the teacher an opportunity to organize their teaching to ensure that the intended learner outcomes are achieved. Moscaya, & Magbanua (2021) assert that a teacher who is well prepared is on his/her way to a successful instructional experience. Munthe, & Conway (2017) further observe that effective lesson planning

is a complex combination of teacher knowledge, skills, attitudes, understanding, values, and desire. The Government of Uganda, through NCDC, has undertaken steps to train teachers to enable them to develop knowledge, understanding, skills, and attitudes for effective implementation of the LSC. However, there are observations that teachers are still grappling with implementation in the area of planning, applying the CBC pedagogical practices as well as assessment (Timothy, & Ssembatya, 2024; Wambi *et al.*, 2024). Since lesson planning contributes to successful teaching and, in turn, the attainment of learner outcomes at the end of an educational programme, teachers' planning processes must be studied to gain insights into how it is conducted for better teacher preparation processes. Moreover, the LSC is still new in Uganda; hence, the need to understand how teachers are engaged in planning in a bid to design informed strategies to optimize lesson planning within the curriculum. This study, therefore, focused on examining the lesson planning process within the LSC, specifically exploring teacher practices, key enablers to lesson planning, and the challenges hindering its effectiveness.

### Research Questions

This study was guided by three research questions:

1. What are the teachers' lesson planning practices within the Lower Secondary Curriculum?
2. What facilitates the lesson planning process within the Lower Secondary Curriculum?
3. What kind of challenges do teachers encounter during lesson planning?

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### The Lower Secondary Curriculum in Uganda

In response to concerns about an overloaded, exam-oriented curriculum that did not meet the 21st-century needs at the lower secondary school level (senior 1-4), Uganda undertook a curriculum review based on the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP,

2009-2018). The review, conducted by the Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES) through the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC), led to the development of the Lower Secondary Curriculum (LSC) (NCDC, 2018) a Competence-Based Curriculum. The LSC, which began to be implemented in February 2020, was designed to enhance the development of skills required for the modern workforce. The curriculum aims at producing secondary school graduates with the competencies necessary for 21st-century skills such as collaboration, critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, and communication, while also reducing unemployment among school graduates (NCDC, 2018). The curriculum framework includes 21 subjects, and within each subject, teachers are expected to foster values, generic skills, and address cross-cutting issues (NCDC, 2018). The teaching methods prescribed for teachers include, but are not limited to, research, presentations, media use, idea development, problem-solving, and learning through interaction (NCDC, 2020).

The LSC implementation guidelines stipulate roles and responsibilities for key stakeholders in implementation, including head teachers, learners, teachers, foundational bodies and the community, among many other stakeholders (NCDC, 2021). One of the crucial roles of the teacher is to plan, organize, and facilitate learning. In doing this, the teacher is expected to interpret the curriculum correctly, select, develop, and use relevant instructional materials, plan and organize activities for learners to extend learning throughout all class opportunities, and many more responsibilities (NCDC, 2021). The teachers involved in the implementation of the LSC are indeed carrying out their planning role, but little has been documented in research about this process.

#### The Concept of Lesson Planning

Planning is an activity in which a teacher prepares to perform their teaching role (Gentzler, 2015). It is a process of intentionally and distinctly setting up

various tasks and activities to engage students in the learning environment (Cunado, & Abocejo, 2018). Some scholars assert that planning for instruction provides a systematic means for developing lessons, in which teachers establish the lesson activities, objectives, strategies, and steps to take during the teaching and learning processes (Cruickshank *et al.*, 2006; Panasuk, & Todd, 2005). Cicek, & Tok (2022) view the process of planning for instruction as the systematic process of deciding what and how students should learn, which they regard as mostly a responsibility of teachers. During the planning process, teachers decide how much presenting, questioning and discussing should be done, how much material should be covered in the allotted time and how in-depth (Borich, 2007). Further, teachers engage in such activities as preparation of schemes of work and lesson plans, selection/use of teaching-learning resources, and assessment strategies (Abraham, 2016; Gentzler, 2015). On the whole, planning is a deliberate process that a teacher has to consciously engage in to ensure the teaching and learning process becomes meaningful.

### Teacher Practices in Lesson Planning

Research on lesson planning demonstrates that teachers get engaged in various practices to effect planning for instruction. Byrne *et al.* (2013a) for instance conducted a qualitative study to investigate teacher planning processes while planning for day-to-day competence-based lessons. The findings revealed that teachers designed schemes of work collaboratively according to the subjects they taught. Shen *et al.* (2007) reported that Chinese teachers carried out lesson planning at both macro and micro levels. The teachers began by mapping out the content for the whole semester and then went on to plan for the unit and finally for each lesson in the unit. Ball *et al.* (2007) in a qualitative case study on the nature and influences on planning among 15 novice and intern teachers found that teachers planned as a mental process and utilized a daily or hourly planning approach and such factors as teacher knowledge and experience, technology,

resources, teacher personality influenced their nature of planning.

In another development, Rusman (2015) used a quantitative approach to study how teachers engaged in lesson planning while implementing a CBC in Bandung City. Rusman's study focused on identifying "best practices" about planning, teaching, and evaluating the curriculum. The findings revealed that some of the best practices teachers engaged in for planning were collaboration, making reference to the teachers' and learners' books prepared by the government, as well as the development of additional materials. Teachers also engaged in in-house training for the improvement of their planning practices. Similarly, teachers engage in designing schemes of work (Diffang, 2019; Feruzi, & Li, 2019; Wiysahnyuy, 2021), and use digital technologies when engaged in lesson planning (Adannur, 2024; Adu *et al.*, 2020). Kalinga's (2024) study on investigating teachers' integration of ICT in implementing a CBC in Tanzania demonstrated that the commonly used ICT tools for planning were smartphones, computers and laptops among secondary school teachers.

Conversely, research has shown that sometimes teachers occasionally engage in planning for instruction. Rauf, & Inamullah (2021) analyzed the methods teachers adopted for instructional planning and found that teachers occasionally engaged in lesson planning. Their findings echoed earlier findings reported by Khanum & Saeed (2020), whose study revealed that the majority of the teachers did not plan for their lessons on a daily basis. This study leveraged such scholarship to study the teachers' lesson planning practices from an etic and/or outsider perspective, to understand how teachers were engaged in planning using a new curriculum within the secondary school context in Uganda.



### Enablers to Lesson Planning

Besides requiring teacher decision-making and engagement in certain preparatory activities, lesson planning has to be supported by essential factors. Such requirements such as availability of teaching resources and school facilities, time, as well as teacher pedagogical and content knowledge need to be existent for effective lesson planning to take place. Byrne *et al.* (2013 a) established that the physical arrangement of classrooms in two comprehensive state secondary schools in England facilitated teacher collaborative planning practices. The teachers were able to share resources, plan for lessons together as well as make consultations with one another about planning. Further, collaborative planning itself is widely regarded as a “best practice” in CBC implementation and one factor that enhances teacher efficacy in planning, thereby improving teaching and learning (Chinofunga *et al.*, 2022; Rusman, 2015). However, for collaborative planning to be effective, school administrators need to intentionally establish supportive systems and structures within the school to facilitate it (Graham, 2007). For instance, time should be set aside for teachers to engage in collaborative planning. Public First (2021) further contends that the availability of school facilities such as textbooks lessens teachers’ stress during the planning process. On the other hand, research shows that poor conditions in low-resourced schools affect teachers’ efficacy in planning (Phelokazi, 2013). Most of the research on enablers to the planning process are within the context of developed countries, leaving a contextual gap in developing countries that this research set out to fill by exploring enablers to planning from an African context, specifically in Uganda.

### Challenges that Hinder Lesson Planning

Scholarship in the field of planning for teaching has provided insights on the constraints of lesson planning (Abbas *et al.*, 2021; Atuhura, & Nambi, 2024; Cunadol, & Abocejo, 2019). Abbas *et al.* study for instance found that teachers faced

difficulties using learning media and even the media was inadequate. Sahin-Taskin's (2017) research further reported that developing a lesson plan was considered a difficult task. This was because teachers found it difficult to organize activities that were appropriate to students’ learning interests and needs. Byrne *et al.* (2013a) echoed Sahin-Taskin study findings when they reported that lesson planning for competence-based lessons was a demanding task because it consumed much of the teachers’ time as they prepared learning activities and engaged in collaborative planning. Nsengimana *et al.* (2023) research further revealed that lesson planning for a CBC was demanding for teachers because it required the selection of teaching materials. Informed by the aforementioned studies on teacher challenges in lesson planning, this study also set out to establish the kind of challenges teachers experienced in planning for teaching a new curriculum.

## METHODOLOGY

### Study Design

This study employed a qualitative multiple-case study. Multiple case study allows researchers to contrast individual cases and represent a diversity of qualities to create an in-depth understanding of a broad phenomenon without losing the individuality of the single cases (Thomas, 2011 as cited in Adams *et al.*, 2022). A multiple case study design was considered appropriate for this study as it involved examining certain categories of schools, well-resourced, averagely resourced and low-resourced schools to be able to gain an in-depth understanding of the lesson planning processes within the LSC.

### Cases of the Study and Study Participants

The study participants included 17 teachers drawn from either a well-resourced, averagely resourced, or low-resourced school in Mbarara City, South Western, Uganda. In this study, a well-resourced school (School A) was identified as one that has a considerable number of facilities that aid the

implementation of the LSC, with a focus on the computer laboratory, library, science laboratories, and ample classroom space. The well-resourced school in this study is a government-aided single-sex secondary school with two libraries, adequate classroom space for most classes, a computer laboratory, three science laboratories (Physics, Chemistry, Biology), and a room for WIFI access, ICT materials, as well as teachers for consultation. The averagely resourced school (School B) is a private mixed day and boarding school located about 2 km from the city centre. These school facilities are fairly adequate in terms of supporting the implementation of the LSC. The school has one room for a computer laboratory with about 45 functional computers connected to the internet, a library that has about 80 seats, three science laboratories, and fairly adequate classroom space. The low-resourced school (School C) is a government-aided day and mixed school located approximately 12km from the city centre in a semi-urban area. The school has one science laboratory and a computer laboratory with about 25 functional computers connected to the internet but with an unstable power supply and internet availability. The bookstore, which also serves as a “library” and is about 457cm by 304.8 cm, too small to accommodate students, who consequently use it mainly to borrow books. The classroom space is generally inadequate to accommodate the number of students in a class.

The different school categories in this study were purposively selected to provide varied insights about the lesson planning processes within the LSC and to offer multiple avenues from which the lesson planning processes within the LSC could be examined. Thirteen of the 17 study participants were teachers of Mathematics and English who had used the LSC for more than two years. Mathematics and English are allocated more lessons on the timetable within the LSC; hence, it was assumed that teachers of these two subjects engaged in lesson planning more than their counterparts teaching other subjects. Thus, the teachers of Mathematics and

English would offer a broader opportunity for examining the lesson planning processes within the LSC. The other 4 participants were Directors of Studies (DOS) who supervise the teaching and learning processes within the LSC and, hence, would provide data to corroborate the teachers’ responses.

### Methods of Data Collection

Data were collected through documentary analysis and one-on-one interviews. The interviews elicited information on teacher planning practices, the factors that facilitated planning and the challenges that hindered it. The documentary analysis, on the other hand, provided additional insights, which in turn helped to corroborate the interview findings.

### Data Analysis Procedure

Data were analyzed following the procedures of qualitative data analysis for multiple case studies (Adams *et al.*, 2022; Creswell, & Creswell, 2018). Each case was first analyzed individually, followed by a cross-case analysis. Interview data were first transcribed and then reviewed to get a general picture of the data. This was followed by organizing the field notes from the documentary analysis. Open and axial coding was then conducted to identify emerging patterns and to understand the interconnectedness within the data and develop themes, respectively. A cross-case analysis was performed to establish the similarities and differences across the categories and themes (Yin, 2017). Finally, the research findings were interpreted.

## FINDINGS

The presentation of the findings follows the order of the research questions.

### What are the Teachers’ Lesson Planning Practices within the LSC?

The findings revealed that schemes of work were developed as a tool to plan for teaching with a focus on the whole term in Schools A and C. Schemes of

work refer to a drawn-out plan showing how much of the subject syllabus content will be covered within a given period, which in this case was a term. The teachers in this study used the NCDC template which has the following components: period, competency, learning outcomes, methodology, teaching resources, and remarks. Indeed, Mawami a female teacher of Mathematics from School A, for example, explained that she made schemes of work at the beginning of each term: *"We draw schemes of work to guide us throughout the term"*. This was corroborated by Nadu, a male teacher of Mathematics from school C when he explained that it was mandatory to undertake scheming before teaching, *"before you go to class, you have to scheme."* The documentary review data showed that teachers from schools A and C generally developed schemes of work, as these were availed for the documentary analysis.

Teachers from schools A, B, and C also occasionally developed lesson plans, which entailed writing out a blueprint showing how a lesson was to be taught. The lesson plan template of the NCDC stipulates that the teacher indicates the learning outcomes, generic skills, values and cross-cutting issues to be attained by the students in that lesson; teaching methods to be employed, instructional materials, and the lesson procedure. Indeed, teacher Majani, a male teacher of Mathematics from school B, explained that he developed lesson plans before going to class, *"I design a lesson plan."* Zawadi, a female teacher of English from school A, added that for her, lesson planning was conducted regularly: *"I prepare daily the lessons."* The documentary review data showed that most of the teachers in schools A, B, and C did not regularly develop lesson plans, as a few of these were availed for documentary analysis. This was also corroborated by the DOS from school C, when he affirmed *"...schemes they do, but lesson plans they sometimes go to class without them."* Teacher Mambo, a female teacher from school A, further confirmed this: *"...the planning, most of the time it is not on paper like a format way."*

Collaborative scheming was largely undertaken in School A where teachers of both Mathematics and English met before the beginning of each term to decide on content coverage for the forthcoming term as teacher Mawami explained: *"We usually meet as teachers of different subjects before the term begins to plan for our term to agree on what we are going to teach and for how long... we draw a scheme of work to guide us."* Teacher Momo, a female teacher of English from school A, confirmed this, asserting, *"Before every beginning of term, we meet as a department, and particularly the teachers of the new curriculum. We call ourselves cohorts. So, the senior 3 cohorts with their four streams come together and carry out scheming."*

Lesson preparation also entailed the use of reference materials such as LSC course books, particularly the syllabi, teachers' and learners' books. This, in turn, guided the teachers on how to select teaching materials or conduct the teaching process as Teacher Momo from school A explained: *"We use the syllabus, teachers' guide, and learners' book. The syllabus guides you on the methods to use and what instructional materials you need."* Teacher Imeyisha a male teacher of English from school A further affirmed: *"My planning is guided by the available textbooks. The teacher's guide, and then there's the learner's book which will guide you on what to do when you get to class."* Muwa, a female teacher of English from school B, explained that the LSC course books helped her to select the teaching materials: *"I go to the learner's book, then the teachers' guide I read through. I compare in case I need any aid, like maybe a magazine, or a recording. I prepare early."*

The use of the internet for lesson planning was also taken up as a tool to support teaching and learning, as stated by teacher Imeyisha from school A, *"We also use the internet occasionally to better the teaching and learning process."* Maisha, a female teacher of Mathematics, added that she frequently used the internet to search for methods of teaching certain topics and their application: *"I use the*

*internet...mostly to find out new techniques of teaching particular topics...the application of this topic”.*

### **What Enables the Lesson Planning Process within the LSC?**

Collaborative planning, which was largely undertaken in school A, was considered an inspiring factor and a source of support. Teacher Momo from school A expressed her view: *“There’s that motivating factor when people work together, see how we are going to cover this and for how long...when there’s a team that is the biggest support that can ever be when we are planning.”* This was affirmed by Imeyisha, from school A, asserting: *“...because sometimes you meet a topic and you feel there’s some part you will not be able to deliver well, then you get back to your fellow teachers and share out. When you share out, planning becomes quite easy.”*

Teachers further regarded the availability of school facilities as an enabler to accessing the resources required to carry out planning. Rwami, a male DOS from School C, was of the view that schools with inadequate ICT facilities may pose difficulties to teachers in accessing sources of reference during planning: *“...so I think schools which don’t have ICT facilities are getting it hard during planning because teachers have nowhere to refer to.”* Teacher Imeyisha from school A further explained that the availability of a photocopying machine in his school made it possible for him to have reading materials rolled out for his students: *“If you came across a very good text and you think it will benefit the learners. It is very easy to have it rolled out with ease using the school photocopying machine.”* Teacher Nyanzi, a female teacher from school B, corroborated this, explaining: *“Since we have the textbooks in the library, that one I think makes my planning very simple.”*

Relatedly, the LSC course books assisted the teachers in making decisions about how they were going to conduct the teaching. Teacher Momo from

school A for instance explained that because the syllabus was easy to follow, she was able to decide on which teaching methods to employ in her class and the instructional materials to use: *“The planning because of having a syllabus that is very direct, sometimes it’s very easy to see the method of teaching to use, what instructional materials you need.”* Kafu, a male teacher of Mathematics from school B, reiterated: *“...the design of the activities and the content that I’m supposed to teach. I just look at them and they help me to know what is supposed to be taught.”*

The use of the internet for lesson planning was also considered a tool that supported teaching and learning. Some teachers use the internet to decide on the methodology to use in their classes as stated by teacher Maisha from school A: *“I use the internet...mostly to find out new techniques of teaching particular topics...the application of this topic”* Teacher Imeyisha reiterated, *“We also use the internet occasionally to better the teaching and learning process.”*

### **What Kind of Challenges do Teachers Encounter during Lesson Planning?**

Inadequate teaching resources were one of the hurdles that hindered the planning process in terms of limiting teachers’ access to reference materials or preparation for lesson delivery, as the DOS from school C explained: *“...the teaching materials are not enough, both teachers’ guides and learners’ books. You find it hard now for the teacher to do planning when you have nowhere to refer to.”* This was reiterated by teacher Muwa from school B when she expressed her frustration as a result of failing to access an ICT tool for lesson preparation: *“Sometimes you need something and it’s not there-like a laptop to watch a video for your class, so it’s a disturbance when you are planning. You can’t tell them to watch what you haven’t watched.”*

Time constraints were also a hindrance to the teachers in a way that they required a lot of time to carry out planning. Teacher Momo from school A,



for instance, recounted her experience: *“I would prepare up to 1:00 am, and I would tell the community I live in that this time I need more time because during the day it wasn’t possible to make sure everything is in place before morning.”* Teacher Maisha from school A affirmed: *“Getting materials where students are going to see the practicality of a topic, especially in Mathematics takes a lot of time.”* Teacher Kafu from school B also stated: *“You find some of the materials can be obtained but they require a lot of time, which I may not have.”* In school B, however, sparing time to engage in planning was a struggle for the teachers as explained by Teacher Meru, the DOS: *“Encroaching on teachers’ time to make them do those schemes and lesson plans is a very big challenge. They don’t have time to sit down and do what is expected.”*

Similarly, finding time to engage in collaborative planning was problematic for teachers from school A. Teacher Mambo stated that finding time to engage in collaborative planning was difficult, although the practice was beneficial: *“We have different ideas, so if we combine those ideas during planning, it is good, but the problem is time. Time is not there.”* Teacher Mawami, the DOS from school A, added that some teachers were very busy, which made it impossible for them to create time to plan with fellow teachers: *“You find you need to be there for one another, but some teachers are very busy, they don’t have time. You hear someone saying. ‘For us, we sit here and plan together, but one person on the team is never with us.’”*

The commitment to lesson planning was affected by the inadequacy of scheme books in school B. Teacher Nyanzi reported, for example, *“...the administrators have not provided us with books for scheming.”* Teacher Muwa further said: *“For scheming, for now, I told you that we don’t...they said they would give us the scheme books ...that we wait, so we are waiting.”*

## DISCUSSION

The finding that school facilities were an enabler in accessing resources for planning in CBC implementation resonates with previous studies that have reported the role of school facilities in aiding teachers’ planning processes (Byrne *et al.*, 2013a; Chemagosi, 2020; Sitienei, 2020). Byrne *et al.* for instance, reported that the physical arrangement of classrooms in two comprehensive state secondary schools in England facilitated teacher collaborative practices during planning for competence-based lessons, including sharing of resources, lesson plans, and making consultations about planning. The presence and availability of school facilities in CBC implementation motivate individual teachers to perform their duties (Mgaya *et al.*, 2022) and lessen the teachers’ stress during the planning process (Pubic First, 2021).

On the contrary, the inadequacy of scheme books, which constrained teacher engagement in scheming in the averagely resourced school, illuminates the variations in implementation of CBC among teachers from different school contexts as a result of inadequate teaching resources (Nsengimana *et al.*, 2023). This further highlights the critical role of school support systems in providing teachers with the necessary materials to carry out planning for effective implementation of the LSC and CBC at large (Timothy, & Hollan, 2024; Isaboke *et al.*, 2021; Tumuheise *et al.*, 2023).

Consideration of collaborative planning as an inspiring factor and a source of support corresponds to previous research in other educational contexts implementing CBC (Byrne *et al.*, 2013a; Rusman, 2015; Tumuheise *et al.*, 2023). In this study, teachers from the well-resourced school considered collaborative planning as a motivating factor that helped them make collective decisions about the “how, when, and what” to cover in their classes. Previous research on planning for CBC implementation shows that teachers in well-resourced schools considered collaborative planning an inspiring factor as it enabled them to

design instrumental schemes of work (Byrne *et al.*, 2013a). Collaboration has been considered a “best practice” in planning for teaching during CBC implementation (Rusman, 2015). Further, Chinofunga *et al.* (2022) concluded that collaborative planning enhances teacher efficacy in planning and, in turn, improves teaching and learning.

The practice of occasionally developing lesson plans in CBC implementation, as shown with this case of the LSC parallels with other educational contexts within the East African region and the rest of Africa (Chemagosi, 2020; Manquele, 2017; Mutua, & Waweru, 2023). The majority of the teachers who participated in this study have more than five years of teaching experience and probably did not write out their lesson plans because of their “experience” in teaching. Research shows that experienced teachers make extensive mental plans than written ones (Leinhardt, 1983; Moradan, & Pourasadollah, 2014); yet mental planning is not recognized in educational theory and practice (Bagaya *et al.*, 2020). DiPaola, & Hoy (2008) affirmed that a written lesson plan offers more coherence in objectives/competencies, activity, and evaluation. This suggests that the process of executing the lesson more effectively is limited as a result of mental planning, which may not provide a clear visualization of the lesson. In-service teacher training needs to emphasize teacher development of lesson plans for CBC implementation to facilitate the process of executing CBC lessons more effectively in the Ugandan context.

Whereas some studies within the context of implementing a CBC have reported that teachers were reluctant to use competency-based textbooks because they required lengthy periods of lesson preparation (Mosha, 2012; Tumuheise *et al.*, 2023), teachers from the averagely and well-resourced schools in this study on the contrary majorly used the CBC course books for selection of teaching materials and guidance on how to conduct the instruction process. Rusman (2015) identified

reference to curriculum books for lesson planning in CBC implementation as a “best” practice. The LSC is new, hence, the most and first handy resourceful guide would be the curriculum books. More so, this finding probably indicates that the LSC course books are enabling the teachers to plan for their lessons. Smart, & Kingdom (2024) explained that in CBC implementation, textbooks can provide a practical way of supporting new pedagogical approaches. Hence, the lack of mention of the use of the LSC course books during planning by teachers in the low-resourced schools raises questions about how the teachers in that school are planning for teaching. While the LSC books are instrumental in lesson planning, teachers mustn't solely depend on them for CBC implementation advocates the use of more authentic instructional materials (Atuhura, & Nambi, 2024). Teacher training in the use of instructional materials in CBC implementation would be helpful in the context of the LSC to augment proper and appropriate use of instructional materials during planning for teaching.

The use of the internet to support teaching and learning in this study aligns with previous research that indicates the utilization of digital technologies as an advocated practice in CBC implementation (Adannur, 2024; Mugabe, 2023). In the present study, teachers from the well-resourced and averagely resourced schools used the internet to search for possible teaching methods to apply in their lessons, select video clips and other materials during planning. Similarly, previous research on CBC implementation has demonstrated that schools with better ICT facilities tend to have higher levels of functionality than schools with limited resources (Rahmi *et al.*, 2023). Makoye (2003) further explains that internet access is a gateway to a wide range of resources, knowledge, wealth of information, and innovative teaching opportunities. Thus, teachers in the low-resourced schools had limited opportunities to use the internet for accessibility to teaching materials, searching for information about teaching like their counterparts in the well-resourced and averagely resourced schools.

On the whole, despite the emphasis on ICT integration in teaching and learning while implementing the LSC in Uganda (NCDC, 2018), the inadequacy of access to ICT infrastructure is still a significant obstacle in Africa at large (Adnnur, 2024). Hence, as recommended by other researchers in contexts implementing CBC where ICT integration is still a challenge, teachers must be provided with adequate and up-to-date ICT infrastructure such as software, hardware, and connectivity, to enhance teacher accessibility and engagement with digital technologies (Mugabe, 2023; Murithi, & Yoo, 2021; Wanga, 2014)

The development of schemes of work as a lesson preparatory practice in this study is one way of fulfilling the expected teacher responsibility of planning for learning as stipulated in the LSC implementation guidelines (NCDC, 2021). Like in other educational contexts across the African continent and the world at large, implementing CBC (Byrne *et al.*, 2013a; Diffang, 2019; Feruzi, & Li, 2019; Wiysahnyuy, 2021), teachers in this study developed schemes of work as a guiding tool to prepare for teaching to last for a certain period and in this case, a term. Kimwarey (2022) asserted that the preparation of a scheme of work is a critical foundation for successful instruction, implying that teachers in the well-resourced and low-resourced schools were more likely to engage in worthwhile classroom instruction as a result of prior preparation for their lessons.

More so, the practice of collaborative scheming as demonstrated by teachers from the well-resourced school could have equipped the teachers with teaching competencies as a result of sharing knowledge and learning from each other (Gilbert, & Gilbert, 2013). Byrne *et al.* (2013a) explained that as a result of collaborative efforts during scheming, teams of teachers from two urban well-resourced schools in England were able to design “good” schemes of work when planning for competence-based lessons. Further, Rusman's (2015) study showed collaborative planning as one of the “best”

practices identified by teachers when planning for the implementation of a CBC. The well-resourced school, therefore, seems to be engaged in more beneficial practices than their counterparts in the low-resourced and averagely resourced schools during planning, which is likely to positively influence instructional practices. On the other hand, the poor conditions in low-resourced schools affected teachers' efficacy in planning (Phelokazi, 2013). It should be noted that school support is responsible for enhancing teacher “best” practices in planning for teaching using a CBC (Byrne *et al.*, 2013). This is because teacher collaboration as a beneficial practice, for instance, is dependent on school leadership, organizational practices, collaboration activities, and developing a collaborating community among other factors (Graham, 2007). Thus, various stakeholders need to facilitate teachers' profound planning activities for the effective implementation of CBC.

The challenges that constrain planning for teaching during the implementation of CBC as shown with the case of the LSC in Uganda, resonate with other educational contexts on the continent of Africa (Diffang; Kinyunyu, 2020; Nsengimana, 2021). In the present study, teachers revealed that inadequate teaching resources limited their access to reference materials or preparation for lesson delivery in average and low-resourced schools. Similarly, Phelokazi's (2013) study revealed that poor conditions in under-resourced schools, which included insufficient resources, affected teachers' efficacy in planning for teaching in CBC implementation. The significance of teaching resources to enhance teacher planning competency cannot be overlooked, especially in implementing the LSC that requires teachers to use a variety of teaching materials for lesson delivery. Equitable accessibility to teaching resources must be enhanced to enable teachers to engage in worthwhile planning.

Furthermore, planning for teaching in CBC implementation is time-consuming as demonstrated

in previous research (Gruber, 2018; Micheni, 2021; Waweru, 2018). In the present study, teachers from well-resourced and averagely resourced schools required a lot of time to organize for teaching as well as select relevant teaching materials. Similarly, Byrne *et al.* (2013a) study revealed that finding time to plan effectively for teachers in well-resourced schools was challenging for teachers who had to deliver a classified curriculum in addition to the CBC one. In a related study on CBC implementation in Uganda at secondary school level, Atuhura, & Nambi (2024) revealed that planning was time-consuming for teachers across different school contexts in Uganda because they needed time to ensure that the activities enhance higher-order thinking skills. In contrast to the knowledge-based curricula, which focused on the delivery of content where teachers majorly dictated notes to the students, planning for competence-based teaching requires that the teacher thoughtfully engages in various activities, making it a complex process and, in turn, time-consuming. As mentioned earlier, education agencies need to design strategies that would alleviate the difficulties that teachers encounter to facilitate the implementation of the competence-based approach (Timothy, & Hollan, 2024; Wiysahnyuy, 2021).

Additionally, the constraint of limited time for collaborative planning in well-resourced schools parallels what happens in similar settings (Byrne *et al.*, 2013a). The teachers might be grappling with a heavy teaching workload due to large classes because they mentioned that they were busy, and this could have limited their participation in collaborative planning. Similarly, Byrne *et al.* (2013a) found that teachers engaged in CBC implementation in well-resourced schools in England were overwhelmed with teaching load, and this affected their participation in collaborative planning. Nonetheless, when groups of teachers work together to plan, observe, and analyze lessons, they are encouraged to solve instructional problems (Ozer, 2013; Aquino, & Bautista, 2023). By pooling their experiences, knowledge, and perspectives

during the collaborative engagements, teachers develop more effective teaching techniques and strategies for implementation (Aquino, & Bautista, 2023; Bayram, & Bikmaz, 2021). Thus, considering the gains that come with collaborative teacher practices during planning for teaching as advanced in research in CBC implementation (Byrne *et al.*, 2013, Rusman, 2015), the constraints that limit teacher collaborative practices must be mitigated to enhance effective planning in well-resourced schools. Enhancing the practice in other school categories should also be thought about.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study demonstrates that school facilities and resources aid the process of planning for teaching by providing avenues for sources of reference during planning and aiding decision-making for lesson delivery. However, planning for teaching using the LSC requires commitment on the part of the teacher, selection of teaching materials and availability of time. The MoES in Uganda should allocate more funding to teaching resources, ICT infrastructure, and expansion of physical structures, especially in the low-resourced schools, to mitigate the demanding nature of planning due to inaccessibility to resources. Further, teachers should be provided with regular, intensive in-service training opportunities and collaborative support structures to enhance their competencies in lesson planning.

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