

## **The Link between Evaluations, Remedial and Extension Work: A Case of ZOU PGDE Secondary School Student Teachers in Harare**

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### **Abstract**

This qualitative study considers the importance of evaluation to teaching and learning specifically its link to remedial and extension work. It focused specifically on student teachers on the Post-Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) at the Zimbabwe Open University (ZOU). This study focused on determining the link that existed between evaluations of schemes of work, lesson plans and continuous assessment versus remedial and extension work in the curriculum subjects taught in secondary schools from Form 1 to Form 4. The study was carried out in High Glen and Glenview-Mufakose education districts of Harare Province. The population consisted of members of 11 Government secondary schools, one private secondary school and one community school in Glenview/Mufakose Districts of the Harare Metropolitan Province to the northwest of the capital city of Harare. The sample consisted of one, Heads of Secondary Schools, Heads of Departments and 50 student teachers doing PGDE) with the university and a district schools inspector. Document analysis focused on purposively selected students' remedial and extension work exercise books providing the researchers with evaluative data during. Open-ended questionnaires were used to collect primary data on how remedial and extension work in secondary schools was being managed. The major finding shows that teachers used lesson plan evaluations and test records to superficially link to remedial and extension work. The study recommended that the university develop a students' guide on teaching practice specifically on evaluation showing how student teachers should link it to remedial and extension work to enable the effective evaluation and implementation of remedial and extension work in the classroom.

**Keywords:** Evaluation, teaching and learning, remedial, extension, classroom

### **Introduction**

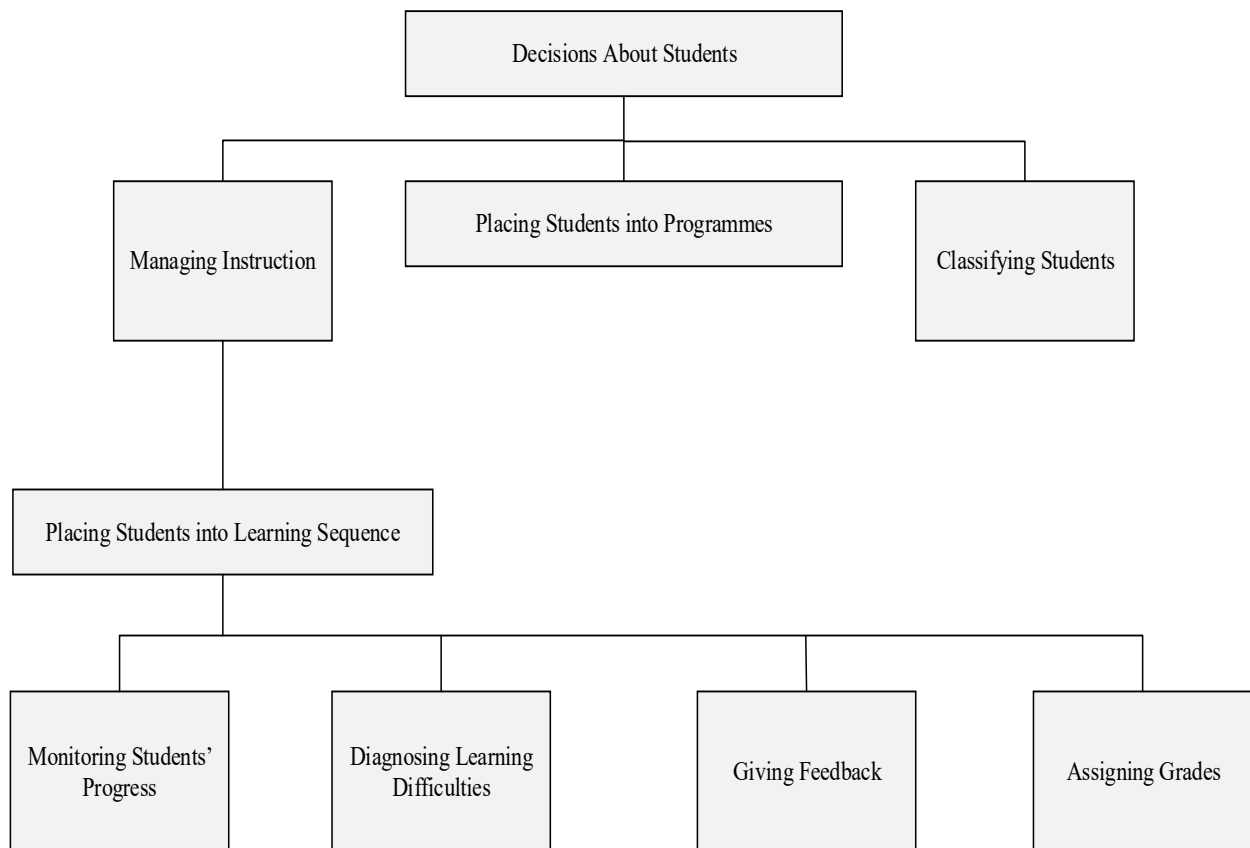
This study was on the link between evaluation, remedial and extension work as done by student teachers on the Post-Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) in an Open and Distance electronic learning University in Zimbabwe. It focused on determining the link that existed between evaluations of schemes of work, lesson plans and continuous assessment versus remedial and extension work in the curriculum subjects taught in secondary schools from Form 1 to Form 4 in the High Glen and Glenview-Mufakose education districts of Harare Province. Evaluation in education refers to the systematic process of assessing and appraising the quality, effectiveness and impact of educational programs, policies and practices with the aim of improving student learning outcomes, instructional practices and educational decision-making (Pawan and Neha, 2021). Different types of evaluations are used by the teachers, namely formative, summative evaluation, diagnostic, authentic and programme evaluation. Formative Evaluation is the ongoing evaluation that is done during the educational process to inform instruction and improve student learning. Meanwhile diagnostic evaluation is carried out to identify students' strengths, weaknesses and learning needs. Archer, et al., (2021) suggest that continuous or authentic assessment focuses on real-world application by evaluating skills over time in meaningful contexts. Summative evaluation happens at the end of an educational program or course to assess student learning outcomes. Program Evaluation is an assessment

of educational programs to judge their effectiveness and impact. This occurs in the teaching and learning process which occurs in the classroom. Misra (2021) defines teaching as the practice of imparting knowledge or and skills to students through instructions. On the other hand, Lansdown, (2025) sees learning as the attainment of knowledge or and skills through study, experience or being taught. It is in this context that teachers have numerous encounters with students with varying outcomes. In this environment teachers carry out many evaluations daily and make judgements on students but despite this many students are still performing below average in Zimbabwe. The main research question was: What is the link between evaluations, remedial and extension work in improving students' performances? This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How do secondary school student teachers generate their evaluations in the teaching and learning process?
2. How do secondary school student teachers use evaluations to determine students who need help?
3. What strategies do secondary school student teachers employ to remedy and extend students performances?

This study is of importance to student teachers and qualified teachers in secondary schools, as the findings will institute rigour in evaluations of scheme of work and lesson plans so that remediation and extension work are effectively instituted through a clearly defined school regulatory framework. Ultimately, students identified for remedial and extension work can benefit, as their performance would meet the correct assessment standards in school and public examinations.

This study was on how the student teacher can link their lesson evaluation to the student's learning. It was important that the evaluation process inform the student teacher's decisions. Ghaicha (2016) citing Nitko (1992) categorically point out that evaluation results in decisions about managing teaching and learning. Nikto's (1992) conceptual framework cited in Ghaicha (2016) which linked evaluation to decisions on identification, placement and diagnosis as shown in Figure 1 was the base of this study.



**Figure 1: Conceptual framework of the evaluation links.**

Adapted from Nitko (1992) in Ghaicha (2016:215)

The conceptual framework shows the different evaluations a teacher carries out from the initial stage of the teaching process. The formative assessment enables the teacher to appraise their syllabus, plan books, scheme books, record books of remedial and extension work for decision making. The aim is to classify and place students into either remedial or extension groups. Factors like class size need to be taken into consideration when assessing during instruction. Research in Africa has shown that class size affects teacher effectiveness in terms of teaching and evaluation (Adeyemi, 2023, Antoniou, et al., 2024).

*How secondary school teachers generate evaluations in the teaching and learning process*

Secondary school teachers generate evaluations in the teaching and learning process through various methods, like formative assessments which is the initial starting point. These may be in the form of observations. Observation of students' participation, engagement and behaviour in class enables the continuous noting of student's on and off task activities (Tunnell,2024). Another form is the giving of classwork and homework. Tripathi, (2023) points out that evaluation of classwork and homework assesses students' ability to apply concepts. The regular use of quizzes and tests helps to monitor students' understanding and progress. Research shows that the use of formative evaluations is varied due to other teacher factors like teacher knowledge and expertise in their use, attitude and resources inadequacy including class sizes (Summers, 2023).

The use of evaluation in its different guises is a common practice in Zimbabwe This is supported by authorities like Earle, (2019) who confirm that teachers use summative

assessments at the end of a teaching unit to measure progress. These are usually in the form of tests or examinations given periodically to evaluate students' mastery of learning objectives. In Zimbabwe standardised tests are also administered to evaluate students' performance against national or international benchmarks (Tarusikirwa and Mafa, 2013). This is done by educational psychologists in both urban and rural schools (Nkoma, and Kufakunesu, (2024). Their evaluations suggest appropriate remedial or extension work for the identified students, then place the identified students in special classes or in inclusive classrooms.

Current new modes of evaluations are being used like authentic assessments which are in the form of portfolios and performance tasks (Archer et al, 2021). In Zimbabwe these portfolios which are part of continuous assessment take the form of reviews of students' collections of their best work are used nationally to assess their progress and achievement over time based real-world tasks and scenarios (Ngulube, 2024). It is important that student teachers use these new forms to come up with realistic evaluations. Menon and Castrillón (2019), summarise that technology-enhanced evaluations are another new mode ushered in by the fourth industrial revolution. The most popular are online quizzes and tests. Digital portfolios and badges on digital platforms are used to showcase students' work and award badges for achievement (Funa, (2024).

However, teachers in Zimbabwe use summative assessment in line with Maharajh and Musikewa, (2022) who say it is more to check on the student abilities in the learning process. The main disadvantage of summative assessment is that it is limited in scope (Fovet, 2021). In Zimbabwe a significant number of teachers have little knowledge of evaluation. This is a gap which needs filling.

#### *How secondary school teachers use evaluations to determine students who need help*

Secondary school teachers use evaluations to determine students who need help in various ways, as research has revealed (Wei et al, 2023). Linking the evaluations to their classroom practices helps in identifying learning gaps in both the teaching and learning processes. First by analysing assessment data they review assessment results to identify areas where students are struggling especially during formative assessment. Classroom observations and dialogues during instruction enable the teacher to note inconsistencies in learning. Secondly by comparing student performance. Comparing student performance to benchmarks, standards, or peers helps to identify those who need additional support be it remedial or extension work. Thirdly monitoring progress of each individual student. Regularly monitoring student progress enables the detection of early warning signs of struggling (Gan, et al., 2014). Recognition of early warning signs is depicted by low grades or test scores. Identifying students with low grades or test scores, may indicate a need for additional support. Conversely the opposite may portray a student who needs extending. Another sign may be incomplete or missing assignments. Thus, noticing students who consistently submit incomplete or missing assignments, may indicate struggles with time management or understanding. In most cases students with learning difficulties may show signs of disengagement or lack of participation. Observing students who appear disengaged or lack participation in class, may indicate a need for additional support or motivation (Mabhoyi and Seroto, 2019).

According to Summers (2023) evaluation data is used to inform instruction, although its success depends on several teacher factors which need to be taken into consideration. Evaluation data is used to inform instruction and differentiate teaching strategies to meet the needs of struggling students. Also, in providing extra support. Offering extra support, takes the form of tutoring or small-group instruction, to students who need additional help. There was

need to find out how student teachers were evaluating for remediation and extension work in their classes.

*Strategies teachers use to remedy and extend students after evaluations*

After or even during the evaluations, teachers use various strategies to remedy students who need additional support or provide extra interventions for fast learners. Studies have been done on strategies that may be used for remedial interventions (Dowker, 2017; Niyibizi and Kazinyirako, 2024; Pathak, 2025). Remediation strategies generally can be done in several ways depending on the teacher's knowledge (Chikwature, and Oyedele, 2016). The use of individualised instruction which focuses on one-on-one instruction tailored to the student's specific needs and learning style is crucial. A teacher can also use small-group instruction dwelling on specific skills or concepts, allowing for more personalised attention.

According to de Jager (2023) differentiated instruction is used to teach diverse students in an inclusive classroom. Kaputa and Ndoro (2001) teacher use Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) to develop instruction to accommodate students' different learning styles. Nugent, 2005 and Kaputa and Ndoro (2001) provide detailed procedures of how IEPs are developed and implemented by teachers. These processes show the IEP links evaluation to remediation and extension work for the student in the subject enabling the offering exercises that cater to different levels of complexity and difficulty. Thus, providing learning menus that allow students to choose from a range of activities or projects that cater to their interests and learning needs. The use of technology can be used effectively to augment the IEP for both remedial and extension work. Research in developed countries has shown technology's effective use in regular progress assessments to monitor student progress and adjust instruction accordingly (Miller,2022).

McMullen, (2022) mentions that after evaluations, teachers use various strategies to extend students who have demonstrated mastery or advanced understanding of the material. For example, common strategies used in extension work are in the form of enrichment strategies like assigning independent projects that allow students to explore topics in-depth and demonstrate their knowledge and skills after they have completed their allocated exercises.

Extension work can be implemented in various ways. Acceleration strategies have also been used with precocious learners (VanTassel- Baska, 2005). Guilbault (2023) provides various acceleration strategies as mentioned here. These are grade or class level advancement by allowing students to advance to the next level in a particular subject area. In a similar vein subject acceleration of students in a particular subject area, to provide more challenging content can be done. Sometimes early entrance to special programmes is carried out to allow identified students to enter special programs, such as gifted and talented programmes, to provide them with more challenging and enriching experiences.

Teachers need to provide feedback and guidance to help students set goals, monitor progress and adjust their approach as needed. This encourages students to self-reflect on their learning and progress to identify areas for improvement. By using these strategies, teachers can provide challenging and enriching experiences for students who have demonstrated mastery or advanced understanding of the material.

The literature has shown that there are gaps on evaluation linkage to remediation and extension work.

## Materials and Methods

The study adopted the qualitative approach (Creswell, 2014) in which a case study of one education district in Harare Province was conducted. The population under study comprised of 11 Government secondary schools, 1 private secondary school and 1 community secondary school in Glenview/Mufakose District of the Harare Metropolitan Province to the northwest of the capital city of Harare. The purposive sample was made up of one District Schools Inspector, 5 Heads of Secondary Schools, 10 Heads of Departments and 50 student teachers doing Post-Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) with the Zimbabwe Open University (ZOU) who were purposively selected to participate as the respondents. Remedial and extension work exercise books for 100 students from Form 1-4 were purposively selected to provide the researchers with evaluative data during document analysis. Open-ended questionnaires, document analysis and observations were used to collect primary data from student teachers and interviews were used to collect data from the District Schools Inspector, School Heads and Heads of Departments on how remedial and extension work in secondary schools was being managed.

The researchers carried out the study during their teaching practice assessment obligations hence conflict of interest affected data collection. The teaching practice assessment requirements by the researchers worked against freedom of expression from the student teachers as respondents. To address the challenge researchers were granted data collection time by school authorities after the post-observation conference. The teachers' fears of being supervised and researched upon by the supervisors as researchers was addressed through assurance of confidentiality of responses, as this had no bearing with their assessment ratings. Qualified teachers engaged as mentors to PGDE student teachers were not selected as respondents in the study since their mentorship capabilities influenced schemes of work and lesson plan evaluations and ultimately students selected for remedial and extension work. Thus, the exclusion of mentors safeguarded the study against bias. Advanced level students and qualified teachers teaching lower sixth and upper sixth forms were not part of the respondents. Data generation proceeded until it reached the saturation point after seeing 48 participants. Data was coded and patterns and finally themes developed.

## Results

The developed themes presented below are in line with the research questions that guided the study.

*How do student teachers generate their evaluations in the teaching and learning process?*

Teachers used a variety of sources for their evaluation to come up with the correct decisions on their teaching and the learning expectations as shown in Table 1. The data patterns show that the most significant primary sources, as shown by the ticks, were lesson plans, exercise books and secondary to these were test records and progress records. Although teachers kept a host of other records, these were not used to evaluate the teaching and learning process. This means that teachers spend a lot of time on unimportant record keeping instead of dwelling on work that should contribute to better teaching and learning activities.

**Table 1: Sources of evaluation used**

<b>Record books</b>	<b>Other</b>
Lesson plans ✓	Club register
Register	Inventory
Scheme	Counselling record
Remedial work	Test record ✓
Extension work	Notebook

Social	Progress record ✓
Sports	Circulars
Exercise books ✓	Minutes of meetings

*How do the student teachers use evaluations to determine students who need help?*

Teachers used evaluations to make decisions on the students in their classrooms. The findings from Boxes 1 to 4 show the following themes that revealed how the evaluations determined the students who needed help. The teacher, through continuous assessment, determined students' participation in the classroom as shown in Box 1. The teacher checks for non-participants. The teacher tags these students for possible signs of failure later. The teacher also establishes all students' levels of participation and comprehension of concepts. As shown in Box 1, the teacher's observation meets two objectives, to identify those who need help or remedy and those who finish early and need extension work.

### **Box 1: Participation in the lesson**

- 'Do not participate in discussion'
- 'Establish level of participation and comprehension'
- 'Failure to understand a concept'
- 'Attention seekers, late comers, absentees'
- observation – need help (remedial) finish early (extension)

Box 2 shows how the evaluation of exercise books helps to identify the students. Teachers pointed out that the written exercises check the effects of the teaching encounter and show those students who are struggling to manage.

### **Box 2: Written exercises to identify**

- 'Check after teaching'
- 'Do poorly in exercises'

This is a prelude to the written evaluation at the end of the lesson. It, therefore, is the formative aspect of the evaluation as it involves the ongoing checking of students written performances. The teacher does the written lesson evaluation at the completion of the lesson; either at the end of the lesson or later in the day at the completion of all lessons and students are occupied with other activities.

### **Box 3: Lesson evaluation as a record of accomplishment**

- 'Check objectives'
- 'Assess in class performance'
- 'Lesson evaluation shows areas of difficulty'

Box 3 captures teachers' experiences as they view written evaluations as a process of checking the achievement of lesson objectives, assessing whole class performance and identifying areas of difficulty and strengths. Most teachers tended to focus on the students' deficiencies and strengths rather than also looking at their craft competencies. Teachers do not see their teaching to be a cause for students' failure. Teachers did not involve children in evaluating themselves. Continuous assessment which combined all types of evaluation to self-assessment was not evident in this study.

Teachers to confirm the decisions made after the evaluation used secondary sources of evaluation. Box 4 captures the role tests played in confirming and diagnosing students' strengths and weaknesses. Thus, teachers placed students in categories. Despite having this amount of information teachers failed to develop individual education plans (IEPs) to adequately remedy or extend the students.

**Box 4: Test records evaluations to confirm**

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|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Analysing low performers'</li> <li>• 'Low performers'</li> <li>• 'Low marks are remedial'</li> <li>• 'Check class average – below is remedial and above extension work'</li> </ul> |
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During the evaluation process, the teachers generate labels that they attach to the students. Both failing and passing student are named as shown in Table 2 and these labels to many intents help in formulating the type of provision the teacher will give to each identified student.

**Table 2: Labels given to students after evaluation**

<b>Remedial labels</b>	<b>Extension labels</b>
Attention seekers, late comers, absentees, slow learners, non-participants, least performing students, lagging	Active participants, bright but doing nothing, those who score high marks,

For example, teachers view remedial students as having behaviour problems and fast learners as bright even though they may have behaviour problems that go unnoticed due to their good performance.

Table 3 shows how teachers link evaluation to remedial and extension work by identifying the students and planning for them. They view this process as part of continuous assessment.

**Table 3: Evaluation links to remedial and extension work**

<p><b>Use of lesson evaluations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Identify slow learners and fast learners'</li> <li>• 'Help to plan for remediation'</li> <li>• 'Use for remediation and extension work'</li> <li>• 'Continuous assessment of learners'</li> </ul>
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Despite the above observation, the evaluation links to remedial and extension work are curtailed by the factors indicated in Box 5. Of note are large classes and teacher inexperience in the host schools. The large classes negatively affect the implementation of most teachers' activities. The teachers' inexperience as depicted by their status as PGDE students exacerbate these barriers. For example, the shortage of teachers with knowledge and skills of students with special needs in their placement schools means that they do not have models to mentor them in this area. The finding has shown that even the qualified teachers are not prepared in the evaluation of their lessons, assessment of students at the secondary level and the development of IEPs. Student teachers, therefore, use their common sense to carry out evaluations and develop the remedial and extension activities. The findings show that the host university is not preparing students to handle such students during their preparation for teaching practice.

### Box 5: Barriers to the Link

- Large size of classes beyond official norms
- Shortage of qualified teachers – Lack of knowledge and skills
- Congested weekly work coverage per subject (learning area)
- Irregular remedial and extension work (Untimetabled)- records scrutinised
- Inconsistences- subjects, quality of remedial & extension work, frequencies – evaluations
- Lack of a clearly defined policy on remedial and extension work

*What strategies do the student teachers employ to remedy and extend students' performance?*

Table 4 shows the strategies teachers used to remedy and extend students' performances. These are low-level type of activities, as they do not need the teacher to extend themselves in the preparing and teaching of the students. Thus, most of the activities were superficial and of little benefit to the students and are only meant for the supervisors and other officials. Evaluations in most cases must translate into meaningful teaching and learning activities linked to the curriculum, accordingly, enabling the teacher to give meaningful remediation and extension work to the students.

**Table 4: Strategies used to remedy and extend students' performance**

Remedy	Extend
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On-the-spot remediation which demands lesser recordings than the expected standards</li> <li>• Corrections</li> <li>• Extra lessons after school (for free)</li> <li>• Peer tutoring</li> <li>• Homework activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On-the-spot extension which demands lesser recordings than the expected standards</li> <li>• Extra lessons after school (for free)</li> <li>• Peer tutoring</li> <li>• Homework activities</li> </ul>

### Discussion

This section dwells on how student teachers generate their evaluations in the teaching and learning process. Student teachers generate their evaluations in the teaching and learning process in several ways. In most case student teachers used lesson plan evaluations and test marks from the records on the different subjects. They used this to link to remedial and extension work which was conducted whenever they got the opportunity. Student teachers also kept an allay of records on all their subject however, these were not used to evaluate the teaching and learning process. Although student teachers focused on students' participation in the lessons as part of their evaluations this did not translate to remediation and extension work. This meant that student teachers spend a lot of time creating many records instead of analysing their data to contribute to better teaching and learning activities. This finding is not in line with the appropriate way of generating evaluations.

We also wanted to establish if student teachers linked evaluations to remedial and extension work. There was no clear link between the three processes. This is contrary to the assertion that continuous assessment combines all types of evaluation including self-assessment. Despite having this amount of information teachers failed to develop individual education plans (IEPs) to adequately remedy or extend the students. No meaningful IEPs were used in their evaluation and interventions. The use of IEPs by the student teachers would have enabled them to link the evaluations to the remedial and extension work. This is contrary to the assertion by Nugget (2005) and Kaputa and Ngoro (2001) as students did not have any knowledge of IEPs. IEPs by

their nature need to be taught and practised as preparation for the teaching practice. This showed lack of prior preparation of the student teachers by the university. The student teachers' inexperience as depicted by their status as PGDE students exacerbated these barriers. For example, the shortage of teachers with knowledge and skills of students with special needs means that they did not have models to mentor them in this area. The issue of class size and lack of a clear policy also curtailed the students' performance in evaluation, remediation and extension work. This concurs with Summers (2023) findings that teacher factors are crucial in the processes. The findings show that the host university is not preparing students to handle such students during their preparation for teaching practice. There is need for the university to set up clear guidelines on how student teachers should carry out realistic lesson evaluations, remedial and extension work.

Lastly the student teachers employed ways to remedy and extend students' performance. However, the student teachers did not employ effective strategies to remedy and extend students' performance. Instead, low-level type of activities, which did not need them to extend themselves in the preparing and teaching of the students were used. The finding on strategies is divergent to the plethora of strategies cited by Pathak, (2025) that can be used to enable the teacher to give significant remediation and extension work to the students.

Based on these conclusions the implications for teacher development policy are that pre-service and in-service teachers must undergo courses, workshops and teaching practice where they learn and practice several forms of formative, summative evaluations and their relationships to remedial and extension work.

### **Conclusion**

Student teachers used specifically lesson plan evaluations and test records to link to remedial and extension work at a superficial level. They had no knowledge of IEPs and hence did not use them to link evaluations to remedial and extension work. Most of their time was spent generating records which did not translate into effective remedial and extension work for their students. Student teachers faced many barriers which curtailed their remedial and extension work. They focused on basic remedial and extension work strategies which were below the required standard affecting their failing students' potential to succeed.

The following recommendations were made:

- The University must develop a students' guide on teaching practice specifically on evaluation and how teachers could link it to remedial and extension work. This would focus on the generation of IEPs in the inclusive classroom. Lectures and practical sessions would be held before embarking on the teaching practice.
- The University and Schools must equip teachers with knowledge on inclusive education and skills on teaching all the learners. This will ensure that teachers do not focus on only the able students.
- School heads must reduce high teacher- pupil ratio in secondary schools (1:35- form I -4) in line with the national policy. This will enable teachers to meet the needs of all the students without stress.
- The Ministry of Primary and Secondary must formulate a clearly defined policy on remediation and extension work and the time schedules and subjects to be used for pre-service, in-service programmes for new and practicing teachers.

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