



CHALLENGES TEACHER-MENTEES FACE IN TEACHING PRACTICE AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS AVAILABLE TO THEM

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Abstract:

This study was conducted to find the possible challenges that confront mentees in their teaching practice programme and support systems that are available. The main instruments used in gathering the data were a structured questionnaire and a semi – structured interview. The population included 152 teacher-Mentees with sample size of 76 selected through multi-stage sampling technique. The data collected from the questionnaire was analyzed using descriptive statistics with the aid of frequencies and percentages. The interview data on the other hand was analyzed through the thematic approach. It was revealed that the mentoring programme equipped mentees to be independent and objective in the ways of thinking about issues in the teaching and learning environment. However, several challenges such as absenteeism among mentors, lack of respect for mentors and inadequate teaching and learning materials militate against the success of the mentoring programme. The study recommended that there should be periodic orientation to help remind mentors on the need to be patient with their mentees. Mentees should not be complacent and disrespectful to their mentors and other staff in the school. This will help mentees to receive the appropriate guidance from their mentors as well as the support other teachers on the staff.

Keywords: mentees, support system, teaching practice, mentoring, supervision, challenges

1. Introduction

Teacher training in Ghana began with a four-year teacher training programme, followed by two- year Certificate-B and Post-B programmes that were designed to meet the growing need for more teachers in the country. Later, the Certificate-A (Post-Secondary) and the two-year Specialist Programmes were introduced. In 1978, all of

these programmes were phased out giving way to a 3-Year Post-Secondary Teacher Training Programme, which has since undergone different reforms. The rationale for the various restructurings was, first and foremost, to produce enough teachers to reduce the high numbers of untrained teachers in the system, and secondly, to upgrade the qualifications of teachers to meet the standards required to teach. In 2004, teacher-training colleges were converted into Diploma awarding institutions with a new structure that still operates today. The current structure of basic teacher training is a three-year pre-service Diploma in Basic Education programme, which is divided into Programme A and B to prepare teachers for teaching in primary and junior secondary schools respectively. The strategic mission of teacher training in Ghana is to provide comprehensive Teacher Education programmes that would produce competent committed and dedicated teachers to improve the quality of teaching and learning in Ghanaian classrooms (TED, 2003). To achieve this vision, the Government of Ghana reformed the ITT programme, creating an innovative mentoring component in “Out” stage of the new teacher-training programme dubbed “In-In-Out programme”.

According to the Teacher Education Division (TED, 2003), the In-In-Out Scheme is a reconstruction of the existing teacher curriculum. It was initially designed for three-year Post-Secondary Teacher’s Certificate-A, which was later (in 2004) upgraded to the three-year Diploma programme as part of a national policy strategy to raise teachers’ entry-level skills. The first two years are spent on the college campus, when teacher trainees are taught a range of subjects including Mathematics, English, Science, Vocational skills, Social studies, Music and dance, Religious and moral education, Physical education, Ghanaian language and Educational studies. The rationale for this taught-programme is to refresh the knowledge of the teacher trainees and equip them with the requisite knowledge, which they need to use when they go for the one-year practicum in the ‘Out’ –segment in their third year. In the first two years (In-In Stage) the trainees are ‘filled’ with a large amount of subject content knowledge to which they will be expected to ‘apply’ the ‘theory’ of teaching during their practicum and also when they become fully- fledged teachers. In the ‘Out” stage, trainees spend the full year in a school under a mentor.

1.1 Objectives

The study sought to:

1. Examine the benefits of the mentoring programme to the mentees.
2. Identify the challenges facing mentees of the Offinso College of Education during their mentoring programme.

1.2 Research Questions

- 1) What are the benefits of mentorship activities to mentees?
- 2) What challenges do the teacher-mentees face during their mentoring programmes?

1.3 Theoretical Framework of the Study

The main theory on which this current study was grounded is the constructivist paradigm of learning. Constructivism, according to Richardson (1997) is the lens that is used to examine the world and thus provides a manner in which the events of teaching and learning are described and understood. In the early 19th and 20th century the role of the teacher was seen as being to impart knowledge to the learner, whilst constructivism provides the platform to create knowledge and understanding (Richardson, 1997). Knowledge and skills were thought to be obtained through formal education and training. The constructivist viewpoint considers what happens “*inside the minds*” of individuals (Klasen & Clutterbuck, 2002:12). In this study the constructivist theory of learning was deemed appropriate because, Gagnon and Collay (2005) revealed that constructivist learning is grounded in learners constructing their own meaning to achieve a particular task. Campbell and Brummet (2007) posits that to cultivate the culture of learning in a mentoring context, teacher educators should reposition their way of thinking in line with constructivist perspectives of learning.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Models of Mentorship Guiding This Study

Furlong and Maynard (1995) came out with a model in mentoring. They stated that there are many models of mentoring. The selection of the best suited model should be based on the protégé’s needs and organizational contexts. This section aims to provide an overview of the different theoretically and empirically derived models. The models discussed here are:

- 1) The Counseling Model for Effective Helping;
- 2) The Competence-Based Model and the Mentor as Trainer;
- 3) The Furlong and Maynard Model of Mentoring;
- 4) The Reflective Practitioner Model, and
- 5) The True and Pseudo Mentoring Relationship.

The first model is The Counseling Model for Effective Helping. Effective mentors will use counseling skills to enhance the achievements of protégés. Egan (1998) describes the three stages of counseling as: (1) identifying and clarifying problem situations and unused opportunities; (2) goal setting with the developing of a more desirable scenario; and (3) action and moving towards the preferred scenario. These three steps can be used when giving protégés guidance and support in working out their own action plans. Integral to the process is the concept of client self-responsibility, which is strengthened by success, modeling, encouragement and reducing fear or anxiety. In the context of teacher training, mentoring is essentially about classroom craft and articulating the knowledge, theory, skills and experience which make trainees into good teachers.

The second model is the Competence-Based Model and the Mentor as Trainer. As stated by Brooks and Sikes (1997), this model is based on the view that teaching involves the acquisition of a specific set of competencies. In this approach, the mentor’s

role is fundamentally to act as a systematic trainer who observes the trainee with a pre-defined observation schedule and who provides regular feedback upon the progress made by the trainee in mastering the required skills. This is in effect, the role of a coach. This approach has the advantage that standards and expectations are clear to both mentor and trainee.

The third model is The Furlong and Maynard (1995) Model of Mentoring, which is empirically based. They propose that good-quality mentoring is a complex, sophisticated and multifaceted activity incorporating different strategies and requiring high-level skills. Furlong and Maynard's Model is a staged one, which depicts learning to teach as a series of overlapping phases in which mentoring strategies need to be carefully matched to protégé's developmental needs as stated in Table 2. Therefore, the stages need to be interpreted flexibly and with sensitivity. The model is grounded in the conviction that: Like any form of teaching, mentoring must be built on a clear understanding of the learning processes it is intended to support protégés. Mentoring cannot be developed in a vacuum; it must be built on an informed understanding of how protégés develop (Furlong & Maynard, 1995).

The fourth model is The Reflective Practitioner Model states that teaching involves values and attitudes, which are largely ignored in the competence models. They note that the terms reflection and critical reflection are used in many descriptions of approaches to teacher education. It should, however, be noted that there is no one specific set of strategies constituting the reflective practitioner approach. Some writers stress that the reflective practitioner should be concerned with the moral and ethical dimensions of teaching as well as the pedagogical and practical ones. Hence, the term reflective practitioner has been used in different ways. Also, it is worth noting that research by Tann (1994) suggests that many protégés want mentors to just give them their opinions on their teaching, rather than to question them and encourage them to reflect. However, it has also been argued that by reflecting on practice, protégés can derive 'personal theory' from experience and may relate this to formal theory which they have acquired from reading and other sources.

The fifth model is The True and Pseudo Mentoring Relationship. Classical mentoring and contract mentoring can be considered as true mentoring, as both contain the vital elements essential to mentoring, namely the helper functions, mutuality and sharing, and identified stages and duration. Pseudo-mentoring or quasi-mentoring approaches have probably occurred due to the initial lack of understanding of the roles, purposes, processes and formal applications of mentoring (Cooper and Palmer, 1993).

2.2 Professional Context of Learning

Learning as a process is a vital feature of peoples' everyday lives. Learning is multidimensional as revealed by Elliot and Calderhead (1993) who state that irrespective of where or how learning occurs, it always remains the same phenomena. To Tomlinson (1995), learning is the process of acquiring abilities which may include values, attitudes and methods of behaving. Klasen and Clutterbuck (2002) believe that learning can provide the competitive edge to sustain global competition which is on the

increase and 'learning to learn' is regarded as the most significant skill of life that enables individuals to achieve increased effectiveness in the world of work and to lead lives that are fulfilling.

2.3 Assisting Mentees to Learn Through their Own Teaching Attempts

All students learn by doing (Schön, 1987). Doing is therefore essential for learning. Tomlinson (1995) supports that learning is achieved by doing. Echoing a similar sentiment, Klasen and Clutterbuck (2002) argue that it is a myth that mentors need to teach the mentee at all times, but that learning comes from doing. The mentor should give the mentee an opportunity to learn from their mistakes and take initiative to implement their own strategies to rectify their mistakes.

For a mentee to acquire the skill of teaching encompasses the ability to choose, decide flexibly and put together aspects of particular teaching methods (Tomlinson, 1995). Mentees therefore need more than just taking action to acquire the skill of teaching. To learn by doing requires the mentor to assist with planning the lesson and providing support with the actual teaching activity. Moreover, the mentor needs to give feedback after the lesson presentation and to encourage analysis and reflection (Tomlinson, 1995). Reflection provides the mentee an opportunity to make sense of the situation in which teaching occurs and to develop different viewpoints of teaching (Loughran, 2002).

2.4 Assisting Mentees in Collaborative Teaching

Tomlinson (1995) asserts that while supporting mentees 'learning from others' teaching' and 'learning through their own teaching' is useful strategies on their own, it can be more powerful to combine the two. Collaboration between the mentor and pre-service teacher can play a vital role in the pre-service teacher's pursuit to learn to teach. Campbell and Brummet (2007:98) summarised collaboration in the following context of mentoring:

"Collaboration with the school-based mentor is key to the learning process and is necessary if student teachers are to refine their teaching role orientation and move from knowing about teaching to knowing how to teach, and ultimately knowing why they teach. This is especially important for connecting pre-service teacher learning to inquiry in the highly contextualized situations that classrooms provide".

Collaboration is possible if the pre-service teacher works jointly with one or more mentors according to a structured way over a particular time frame (Tomlinson, 1995). The mentee will jointly plan with the mentor a particular lesson and co-teach. Mutual monitoring of the lesson presentation will take place and they will jointly analyse and reflect on the presentation (Tomlinson, 1995).

A valuable learning experience for mentee during teaching practice is possible if collaboration between mentor and mentee takes place and this will contribute towards the *"development of theories and philosophies of teaching"* (Frick, Arend& Beets, 2010:425).

Collaboration between the mentor and mentee will enhance mentoring during teaching practice. Added to this the pre-service teacher will view collaboration as an opportunity to establish a partnership with the mentor. To create a culture for mentoring, it will require a stance that is based on the conception that mentees and their mentors are both learners and collaborators (Campbell & Brummet, 2007).

2.5 Mentees Learning to Teach by Exploring Basic and Background Issues of Teaching

Literature revealed that teaching is a skill that requires an in-depth understanding of issues that are broader than planning and presenting lessons. In this light Tomlinson (1995:54) alludes to the fact that mentees' learning requires three sub-forms, namely: directly investigating specific issues relating to teaching and broader aspects of the school context; accessing literature relating to issues of teaching and, to arrange discussions which entail the aforementioned sub-forms. It is thus essential for pre-service teachers to critically engage in the exploration of the proposed sub-forms provided by Tomlinson to develop their skill of teaching.

Klasen and Clutterbuck (2002) sum it up by stating that mentees should be provided with the opportunity to practice, adjust and to think carefully about their intentions and procedures in the place of work. This must be done in a protected manner to ensure that confidence and competence is developed. In light of this, mentees' self-awareness and interpersonal skills should be developed in order for the mentees to operate effectively in the world of work.

Furthermore, this will enable the mentees to develop a professional viewpoint in terms of positioning their performance in a broader context of society and place of work. In conclusion, the mentee will develop autonomy with regards to learning, which will enable the mentee to derive maximum benefits from all learning experiences and to explore on their own other avenues of learning initiatives.

2.6 Concept Mentorship

Eby (1997: 126) provides an appropriation of the Kram conceptualization that is quite typical:

"Mentoring is an intense developmental relationship whereby advice, counselling, and developmental opportunities are provided to a protégé by a mentor, which, in turn, shapes the protégé's career experiences. This occurs through two types of support to protégés: (1) instrumental or career support and (2) psychological support."

Other researchers (Chao, 1997; Ragins and Scandura 1997) use close variants of this definition. To be sure, there has been a great deal of refinement and articulation of mentoring concepts and measures. Eby (1997) expands the Kram (1985) conceptualization to the idea of peer mentoring, moving away from the original focus on the mentor-protégé dyad. Whitely, Dougherty, and Dreher (1991) distinguish

between “*primary mentoring*” (i.e. more intense and longer duration) and more ephemeral “*secondary mentoring*,” but still beginning with the Kram conceptualization.

2.7 Characteristics of a Good Mentorship Programme

Frick, Arend and Beets (2010) described three characteristics of a good mentor programme. First, a mentor programme requires formal training for all mentors, it provides specific examples of the roles and responsibilities expected of a mentor, and it requires mentors to document all conferences and activities involving the mentee and mentor. If a mentor does not have clear expectations and high quality training then it minimizes their ability to help and support beginning teachers. According to Huling-Austin (1992), research has also shown that teachers should be trained in schema theory, how to discuss the subject matter with the mentee. The mentor should focus on how they solve problems and try to explain the organization of their thinking to their mentee. Records indicate that in the beginning stages of the mentee/mentor relationship focus on providing information about the system rather than curriculum and instruction (Korthagen, 2004). As a result, mentors need to be trained in how to incorporate subject matter in their conversations with their mentees. Mentors may also need to be trained in how to collaborate with other teachers. After years of working in isolation they need to work on developing the skills to mentor novices (Korthagen, 2004).

2.8 Importance of Mentoring Programme for Student Teachers

The rationale for mentoring rests within the benefits that both mentors and mentees receive during or as a consequence of the mentoring process. These benefits motivate and encourage the recipients to partake in a mentoring programme (Long, 1997; Miller, Thomson, & Roush, 1989). In general, both mentors and mentees find professional and personal benefits associated with mentoring. Many researchers have investigated the impressions of mentor-teachers concerning their roles, and the professional and personal benefits gained from assuming these roles, for both mentors and mentees (Ganser, 1996, & Long, 1997), which are further discussed in the following.

2.9 Mentoring as a Change Agent

During the 1990s, mentoring became a feature of many organizations. Mentoring is now established as a collaborative programme for developing teaching practice, which occurs within professional experiences in schools. As mentoring programmes are designed to “*induct novice teachers, reward and revitalize experienced teachers, and to increase professional efficacy*” (Huling-Austin, 1989:5), educators (Mullen, Cox, Boettcher, & Adoue, 1997) have pushed for new patterns of mentoring within student teacher education. Mentoring can be a means of guiding change by constructing knowledge about the curriculum, teaching, and learning (Little, 1993).

Mentoring can also act as an agent of change where mentors and their mentees can learn together by using collaborative teaching to parallel professional development within school settings. “*The result is improvement in what happens in the classroom and*

school, and better articulation and justification of the quality of educational practices” (Van Thielen, 1992, p. 16). Mentees generally rely on their mentors for learning experiences in teaching subjects, such as primary science. Therefore, learning current teaching practices from mentors will require strategic planning for enhancing the pre-service teachers’ practices (Jarvis et al., 2001). However, for mentors to be effective, mentoring programmes need to focus on specific objectives for developing teaching practices. Mentoring can be a change agent but will require a readiness from mentors to guide pre-service teachers towards effective teaching.

2.10 Professional Benefits for Mentors

A teacher can grow professionally as they engage in dialogue with mentees and assume the role of a pre-service teacher educator. Bellm, Whitebook, and Hnatiuk (1997) states that, *“mentor programmes strengthen the voice of practitioners in efforts to improve services for children and to enhance the professional growth of adults”*. Furthermore a mentoring programme can promote growth, recognition, experience-enhancing roles, and collegiality for mid- to late-career teachers who serve as mentors. Additionally, the mentor’s professional reputation can be enhanced (Newby & Heide, 1992). Mentors can develop a sharper focus on teaching by increasing the amount of time spent on reflecting on practice for both themselves and their mentees (Hagger, 1992). Also, mentors’ professional lifelong learning can be enhanced, as they constantly reflect and assess the knowledge, values and beliefs that guide teaching practice. *“This re-examination and reassessment, combined with the exposure to new ideas in subject matter pedagogy and effective teaching research often brought by the beginning teacher, stimulates professional growth on the part of the mentor as well”* (Loucks-Horsley, Harding, Arbuckle, Murray, Dubea, & Williams, 1987, p. 90).

2.11 Personal Benefits for Mentors

Mentors can gain personal benefits through a mentoring programme (Huling & Resta, 2001). Mentors can develop strong connections with mentees and a sense of esteem from the mutual efforts and satisfaction in what they create together. A mentoring partnership can increase the mentor’s confidence in their own teaching abilities, which in turn can motivate the mentor towards risk taking for new teaching strategies (McCann & Radford, 1993).

Furthermore, mentoring not only results in improved teaching skills and further risk taking, but also has the personal benefits of increased self-respect, and a renewed enthusiasm for teaching (Huling & Resta, 2001). Some educators claim that many teachers are often discontent because of the somewhat repetitive nature of teaching and that these teachers need new experiences to continue educational growth. Again, teachers who become mentors can benefit with a rejuvenated interest in work, contributions to professional development, assistance on projects, and friendship. There may also be a sense of having input into developing and extending the teaching profession through the mentoring process with the excitement of discovering new teaching talent and nurturing this talent as a “coach.” Generally, mentors gain personal

benefits from mentoring and, as a result, mentors are usually willing to continue their involvement in mentoring (Scott & Compton, 1996).

2.12 Benefits for Mentees

Although mentors receive benefits from mentoring programmes, the mentoring process is primarily for the mentee's benefit. Mentees need to make sense of teaching and it appears undisputed that careful and systematic assistance for learning how to teach can aid a mentee's development as a teacher (Berliner, 1986). Essentially, professional experiences are opportunities for mentees to emulate many of the mentor's positive attributes and aim to make mentees feel significantly better prepared in tasks most critical to their careers. Mentoring is an important career start by providing professional contacts. For example, the mentor can provide increased collegial networks for the mentee which makes mentoring a *"powerful training tool and the one that [may provide] mobility within the organization"* (Fleming and King, 2007).

Apart from learning how to teach, mentees are known to receive personal benefits from mentoring as well. Mentees emphasize the importance of mentors for emotional support and insights (Scott & Compton, 1996). Indeed, a study by Ganser (1995) reports that encouragement and support, particularly emotional support affirms the mentee's value and worth as a human being. Mentoring was found to be most helpful to mentees in the areas of self-image and self-confidence and learning some leadership behaviours and skills (Crow & Matthews, 1998). Such mentoring benefits may also apply for developing behaviours and skills in teaching.

2.13 Pedagogical Benefit

The provision of effective mentoring by supervisors and mentors may be enhanced by a reappraisal of the professional learning opportunities open to these key personnel. The literature often makes reference to the need for training of mentors (McIntyre, Hagger and Wilkin 1993). However, mentors come to the role with a wide range of professional experience and, consequently, they have different needs and expectations. An alternative approach is to provide opportunities for mentors to meet and engage in a professional dialogue focused on professional practice and the development of new understandings about learning and teaching.

Furthermore, the relative professional isolation of teachers in schools and classrooms means that experienced teachers often value opportunities to learn about professional practice elsewhere and to make comparisons with their own experience and practice. This requires collaboration in the development of shared understanding of, and insight into, mentoring and teacher competence. Beginning teachers had a high regard for mentors' professional expertise, assistance and support and mentors were valued for providing personal practical knowledge and situational specific assistance in a diversity of teaching roles.

2.14 Impact of Activities on Mentees

It might be expected that some more confident and capable beginning teachers and more committed and enthusiastic mentors, would be likely to produce knock-on gains for these teachers' pupils and schools, notably in terms of enhanced pupil teaching (Moor et al., 2005). The evidence on this particular outcome is however limited, partly, we feel, because of the complexity of researching it. There is a growing body of evidence, though, largely from the USA, which tells us that mentoring programmes for beginning teachers promote increased retention and stability: teachers who are mentored have been found to be less likely to leave teaching and less likely to move schools within the profession (Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004).

2.15 Challenges of Mentees

Another challenge faced by mentees is that they are compelled to emulate the mentor. According to Zanting and Verloop (2001) mentees were compelled by their mentors to emulate their teaching style. For example, a pre-service teacher complained that her mentor wanted her to model his method of teaching and she refused as it did not suit her personality and her belief that there is not only one suitable method of teaching a particular subject. Hence pre-service teachers found it difficult to develop their own initiative for lesson preparation and other teaching duties (Zanting & Verloop, 2001).

First of all, mentees are challenged with conflicting role expectations during their mentorship programme. Bradbury and Koballa (2008) explored the difficulties that arose in a mentoring relationship during a one year internship and claim that tension between the mentor and mentee is inevitable during an internship. School-based mentors and mentees had different expectations of the mentoring relationship and thus problems arose because they did not communicate their expectations at the beginning of the mentoring relationship. The mentors, on the one hand, expected the mentees to assume more responsibility of classroom duties and eventually become more autonomous as they would be when they become qualified teachers. The mentees on the other hand wanted the mentors to give them 'prescriptive advice' on how to teach. These findings are given weight by Hamel and Fisher (2011) whose study revealed that mentors appeared frustrated when the pre-service teachers expected the mentors to take initiative for planning lessons. Moreover, the mentors wanted the pre-service teachers to be more inquisitive about how to improve their teaching skills, while the pre-service teachers wanted the mentors to give ongoing feedback of their teaching without being requested to do so. To avoid conflicting role expectations, Portner (2003) recommends that setting ground rules at an early stage of the mentoring relationship will prevent confusion regarding the role expectation of the mentor and protocol to adhere to in the relationship.

2.16 Support and Systems Format to Help Mentees

Some studies have also suggested that successful mentoring is dependent on the 'willingness' to be mentored on the part of the beginner teacher-mentee a matter over which policymakers and teacher educators may appear to have only limited influence.

Nevertheless, though research on this particular question is scarce, it seems likely that a mentee's willingness and openness to getting the most out of a mentoring relationship will be influenced to at least some extent by the context within which the mentoring takes place, the suitability and characteristics of the mentor allocated, and the preparation received and strategies employed by that mentor (Wang & Odell, 2007).

Research shows that the success of mentoring programmes and mentoring relationships is influenced by a range of contextual factors. The most consistent finding in this area is that, other things being equal, mentoring is more likely to be effective where teacher-mentors are provided with additional release or non-contact time to help them prepare for and undertake the mentoring role while successful mentoring is further facilitated where timetabling allows mentors and mentees to meet together during the school day (Gagnon & Collay, 2005). Some studies have also suggested that mentoring is more likely to lead to positive outcomes where mentors receive financial reward and/or some other form of incentive or recognition for their work where it takes place in contexts which are relatively free from excessive emphases on externally determined goals and agendas such as prescriptive criteria for teaching practices where mentors are involved in the design and evaluation of, and are committed to, the broader (ITP, induction or early professional development) programmes of which mentoring is a part and where such programmes are coherent and not characterized by 'fragmentation' between different (e.g. school-based and university-based) contributors (Altricher, Feldman, Posch, & Somekh, 2008).

3. Methodology

3.1 Population

Population is the entire aggregation of cases that meet a designated set of criteria'. The target population is the aggregate of cases about which the researcher would like to make generalisations (Polit, Beck & Hungler, 2004). The target group for this study was the 2018 mentorship group with a population of 152 (92 males and 60 females). All the 152 students consented to their participation.

3.2 Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

In this study, a sample size of 76 mentees was selected through multi-stage sampling and stratified sampling techniques. Multi-stage sampling approach requires the use of more than one sampling technique when selecting sample size in a particular study (Cresswell, 2003).

A proportion of 50 per cent was drawn from each strata using simple random sampling. Simple random sampling, also a probability sampling approach, ensures that each unit of the two strata has equal probability of inclusion in the sample. The lottery method, one of the strategies used in simple random sampling was used. In this regards 46 pieces of paper with the inscription, "YES" were folded while another 46 with the inscription 'NO' were also folded for the male mentees to pick. With the females, 30 pieces of papers with inscription 'YES' were folded and another 30 pieces of papers

with 'NO' were also folded. All those who picked 'YES' were the people who participated in the study. This selection process was done on the day all the mentees reported to school immediately after their internship programme. This approach, according to Howit and Cramer (2011) is appropriate as it ensures fair representation of the sample and it also generates a sample that reflects the population that it purports to stand for. Again, in the interview phase, judgemental sampling technique was used to select 20 male teacher mentees and 10 female teacher mentees from the sample size. Judgmental sampling is a [non-probability sampling technique](#) where the researcher selects units to be sampled based on their knowledge and professional judgment.

4. Presentation of Findings and Discussions of Results

Research Question 1: To what extent are teacher-mentees benefiting from the mentoring programmes?

From the responses to the questionnaire and interview, the following benefits were revealed. Both the questionnaire and the interview revealed some benefits of the activities mentees were exposed to in section one. According to the questionnaire data the benefits of the mentorship programme to mentees were acquisition of new teaching skills, enhanced self confidence in dealing with challenges in the classroom, experience in handling co-curricular activities, enhancing networking opportunities, equipping mentees with the skill to set their own goals and striving towards achieving them, ability to do multiples of assignment at the same time, ability to use variety of TLMs, developing skills in assessment, and acquisition of social skills. The findings are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Benefits of Activities to Mentees

	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Total
	F %	F %	F %	F %
1. Developed skills in assessment	0 0	0 0	72 100	72 100
2. Developed of new teaching skills	3 4.2	2 2.8	67 93.0	72 100
3. Skills in handling extra-curricular activities in schools	5 7	0 0	67 93.0	72 100
4. Enhanced of self-confidence in dealing with challenges	5 7	1 1.4	66 91.6	72 100
5. Equips mentee to set own goals and strive towards achieving them	4 5.6	4 5.6	64 88.8	72 100
6. Able to do multiples of assignment at the same time	5 7	3 4.2	64 88.8	72 100
7. Able to use variety of TLMs	7 9.7	4 5.6	61 84.7	72 100
8. Enhancing networking opportunities	12 16.7	- -	60 83.3	72 100
9. Acquired social skills	12 16.7	3 4.2	57 79.1	72 100

Source: Fieldwork 2018.

From Table 1, out of the 72 respondents who responded to the questionnaire, all of them agreed that they had developed skills in assessment of students as one of the benefits of the activities they were exposed to during the mentorship programme. Secondly, development of new teaching skills according the table was another benefit of the activities mentees were exposed to during their mentorship programme. In this

regard, out of the 72 respondents, 67 (93.0%) agreed to having the benefit, 3 (4.2%) of them disagreed, while 2(2.8) of the respondents were neutral. Furthermore, the table points that out of the total respondents, 67 (93.0%) agreed to have developed skills in handling co-curricular activities as teachers, while 5 (7%) disagreed.

Another benefit of the activities mentees were exposed to was enhanced self confidence in dealing with challenges. In this regard, out of the total respondents, 66 (91.6%) of them agreed to the benefit, 5 (7%) disagreed while 1(1.4%) was neutral. The table again reveals mentees being equipped to set their own goals and strive towards achieving them was another benefit of the mentorship programme. In this respect, 64 (88.8%) of the respondents agreed to the benefit, 4 (5.6%) disagreed and 4 (5.6) of the respondents were neutral. Again, according to the table, out of the 72 respondents, 64 (88.8%) of them agreed that through the mentorship activities, they are able to do multiples of assignment at the same time, but 5 (7%) disagreed while 3 (4.2%) were neutral. Similarly, the table reveals that out of the total respondents, 61 (84.7%) of them agreed that the mentorship programme had equipped them to be able to use variety of TLMs, 7 (9.7%) disagreed and 4 (5.6%) were neutral. Not only that, the table also pointed out that from the total respondents, 60 (83.3%) of them agreed that the mentorship programme had enhanced their networking opportunities, but 12 (16.7%) of the respondents disagreed. Finally, the table reveals that 57 (79.1%) out the total respondents, agreed that through the mentorship programme they had acquired social skills, 12 (16.7%) disagreed while 3 (4.2%) of the respondents were neutral.

Commenting on the participants view regarding the benefits of the activities mentees were exposed to during their mentorship programme, two themes emerged from the interview data. First, improvement of teaching skills emerged. The majority of the participants believed through the mentorship programme they had acquired practical teaching experience and it had enhanced the skills in teaching, as evident in the comments of some participants:

“I am proud to say that the mentorship programme has helped me to acquire practical teaching experience in the real teaching environment. This experience has equipped me with sufficient teaching skills which would in turn enhance my teaching in the future”.

MP3

“The mentorship programme has benefited me. A lot of things we had studied in the classroom in abstract, through this programme, I have experienced them practically. Besides, the programme has sharpened my teaching skills”. FP2

It came to light from the interview that participants had acquired social skills through their involvement in the mentorship programme. These skills included how to relate with people from different background, the behaviours of people and how to effectively relate with students. These are evident from the comments of two of the participants:

"...travel and see they say. The mentorship programme has helped me to understand behaviours of people and how to adjust with people in order to live with them without quarrel. The programme has also helped me to understand the different behaviours of students". FP8

"The mentorship programme has enlightened me on how people behaved under different situations. Through this programme I have studied the attitude of teachers, students and people in the larger community as well learned how to relate with different people". FP2

This section revealed that the internship programme was very beneficial to teacher mentees. Among these benefits mentioned include, developing new teaching and assessment skills, building self-confidence and being able to use variety of TLMs.

Research Question Two: What challenges do the teacher mentees face during their mentoring programmes?

According to the data, mentees faced various challenges during their mentorship programme. The challenges which the questionnaire collected data on included difficulty in lesson delivery, regular absenteeism of mentors, challenges with goals set by mentors, resources for teaching not provided, distance learning materials and manuals not provided on time, unavailability of electricity in attachment area, lack of access to library facilities in the school or area and teachers unpreparedness to work with mentees. The findings are presented in Table 4.4.

Table 1: Challenges Facing Mentees

	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Total
	F %	F %	F %	F %
1. Difficulty in lesson delivery	52 72.2	0 0	20 27.8	72 100
2. Regular absenteeism of mentors	45 62.5	0 0	27 37.5	72 100
3. Mentors do not set clear and achievable goals	30 41.7	5 6.9	37 51.4	72 100
4. Sufficient resources for teaching were not provided	22 30.6	0 0	50 69.4	72 100
5. Distance learning materials and manuals are not provided on time	17 23.6	0 0	55 76.4	72 100
6. Lack of electricity in attachment area	42 58.3	0 0	30 41.7	72 100
7. No library facilities in attachment area	22 30.6	0 0	50 69.4	72 100
8. Some teachers are not prepared to work with mentees	25 34.7	2 2.8	45 62.5	72 100

Source: Field work, 2018.

According to Table 2, one of the difficulties the respondents faced was difficulty in lesson delivery. The table reveals that out of 72 respondents, 20 (27.8%) agreed to the difficulty while 52 (72.2%) of them disagreed. Another challenge the respondent responded to was regular absenteeism of mentors. Out of the total respondents, 27 (37.5%) agreed the challenge existed, but 45(62.5%) of them disagreed. Furthermore, out of the 72 respondents, 37 (51.4%) agreed that mentors not setting clear and achievable goals was a challenge they faced during their mentorship programme, 30 (41.7%) disagreed while 5 (6.9%) were neutral.

Also, according to the table sufficient resources for teaching not being provided was a challenge respondents reacted to. In this regard, 50 respondents (69.4%) indicated the challenge existed, while 22 (30.6%) disagreed. Another challenge was distance learning materials and manuals not provided on time. From the table, while 55 (76.4%) agreed they experienced the challenge, 17 (23.6%) disagreed. Again, out of the 72 respondents, 30 (41.7%) of them agreed to lack of electricity in attachment area as a challenge that they experienced during their mentorship programme while 42 (58.3%) disagreed. Similarly, from the table, 50 (69.4%) of the respondents were challenged with no library facilities in attachment area while 22 (30.6%) respondents were not challenged. Some teachers are not prepared to work with mentees was another challenge respondents faced. According to the table, 45 (62.5%) of the total respondents agreed to the challenge, 25 (34.7%) disagreed, while 2 (2.8%) were neutral.

Also from the interview, the participants shared their views on the challenges they faced during their mentorship programme. Two themes merged from the data which include attitude of teachers towards mentees and scarcity of teaching materials. With regard to attitude of some of the teachers, the participants revealed some of the teachers on the staff were not friendly.

“Some of the teachers were not friendly. To some, if you talk to them they would not respond, others too if you asked them a question, they would answer you rudely. Any time I go to school and my mentor was not around, it was difficult to chat with any other teacher”. MP1

“Some of the teachers were not friendly. When you speak to them they are reluctant, if you ask them questions, they hardly respond. I feel that some of the teachers just do not like you”. FP10

The second challenge according to the data was the scarcity of teaching materials. These scarce teaching materials include chalks, drawing tools and text books. These were evident in the comment of some of the participants.

“There were instances chalk was very scarce to get. You prepare for lesson but because there were no chalks, you would either go and talk to the students or sit without teaching”. FP2

“It is difficult to do effective drawing on the black board. There were no drawing tools such long rule, compass, set squares to demonstrate drawing on the board for students to see and replicate”. FP1

It is clear from the findings that, the challenges mentees faced during the internship programme were numerous and really affected the mentees in their internship programme.

5. Summary of the Main Findings

- 1) The first research question sought to find out the activities the mentees were exposed to. It came out that the mentees from Offinso College of Education, were exposed to various kinds of activities. Predominantly, mentees were exposed to activities such as lesson planning and lesson delivery, as well as assessment of students, which aimed at developing mentees' professional skills.
- 2) Basically, the benefits the mentees derived from the various activities they were exposed to during their mentorship programme were related to the improvements of mentees teaching skills and social life.
- 3) Mentees who went through the mentorship programme faced various challenges in relation to attitudes of mentors, some teachers as well as community related challenges.

6. Conclusions

Mentees from Offinso College of Education were exposed to various activities which focused on the enhancement of their teaching profession in the future and benefits of these activities to the mentees have led to the acquisition and practice of various teaching skills as well as the enhancement of mentees social skills. Again mentees from Offinso College of Education were faced with various challenges during their mentorship programme but they were not left without support but rather both the authorities of their college and the school they had their mentorship programme did provide some support for them.

6.1 Recommendations

Looking at the findings above, the following recommendations were made:

1. Critical attention should be paid to the selection of mentors for students on mentorship programmes. Those chosen as mentors ought to be teachers with high experience of teaching in addition those with acceptable behaviours. To achieve this, the authorities of Colleges of Education should set out clearer procedure in the selection of mentor for their teacher trainees.
2. There must be a cordial relationship between Mentees and their mentors so that they can work together collaboratively to achieve the purpose of the mentoring programmed. This will help mentees to receive the appropriate guidance from their mentors as well as the support other teachers on the staff.
3. There should be periodic orientation to help remind mentors on the need to be patient with their mentees.

6.2 Suggestion for Future Study

Future study can focus on the challenges facing mentors who provide assistance to teacher-mentees.

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