



STRATEGIES FOR MENTORING NEW SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS FOR GREATER PERFORMANCE IN ANAMBRA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract:

This study determined the strategies for mentoring secondary school new teachers for greater performance in Anambra State. Two research questions guided the study. Two null hypotheses were tested at .05 level of significance. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population consists of 257 principals of public secondary schools and 166 principals of private secondary schools in the State. The stratified random sampling technique was used to select the sample size of 126 Principals (77 principals of public secondary schools and 49 principals of private secondary schools). A structured questionnaire was used for data collection. The questionnaire was validated by two experts in education. To ascertain the internal consistency of the instrument, test re-test reliability was utilized. The tests were analyzed using Pearson product moment correlation to determine the degree of reliability. Reliability index obtained was 0.81. Data were analyzed using mean, standard deviation and t-test. The results showed that the principals rated collaborative curriculum alignment and classroom observation to a high extent in enhancing performance of new business teachers in secondary schools in Anambra State. The study further revealed no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals of public and private secondary schools on the extent collaborative curriculum alignment and classroom observation mentoring

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strategies enhances new business teachers for greater performance. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that the state government and educational authorities in the state should always provide high quality professional development programmes for new business teachers in secondary schools in the state. This will enable them acquire competencies and skills necessary for improved performance.

Keywords: mentoring, mentoring strategies, teachers' performance

1. Introduction

Education lies at the heart of every society. It is a key and a vital element in the broad development of the nation's youth's capacity to address and solve difficulties. Education forms the basis for the proactive and positive economic, social and political changes in the society. Education remains the key to empowerment of the people and the nations as a whole (Olawolu & Kaegon, 2012). Teacher education which relates to the production of teachers at all levels has been recognized as a major concern for the nation since no school whatever level, can be run without the teacher. Business teacher education is not left out in the task of producing potential teachers who would take up the challenges. Business teachers play prominent roles in preparing students to become responsible citizens, capable of making astute economic decisions that would benefit their personal and professional lives. Changes have been witnessed continuously due to technological advancement globally and as such, business education programme becomes increasingly important for preparing learners to imbibe these changes. The role of business studies teachers as a handy tool in the realization of self-reliance in a country cannot be over-emphasized. Noting this important role, Chukwurah (2011) stressed that business teacher education curriculum should be developed in response to the national demand for education reform. The Federal Government of Nigeria (2014) has it that teacher education will continue to be given a major emphasis in all educational planning because no education can rise above the quality of its teachers. It becomes obvious that the wheel of education carried out by the teachers, norms, values, laws, artifacts and other societal upheld tenets can be passed on from one generation to another.

The quality of teaching is the key factor in improving learner achievement in any academic set up. Dorgu (2015) stated that the aim of teaching is to effect changes in learners' which can only come as a result of effective teaching and learning through the adoption of suitable teaching strategies. Ajoma (2009) supported this by stating that for teaching and learning to be effective, relevant strategies must be adopted by the teacher, who is the distributor of knowledge, in order to capture and sustain learners' interest in the course being taught and learnt. These strategies are the tools of effective practice and teachers should plan for whole class, small groups and independent work. Within these contexts, effective teachers will provide a varying degree of support that reflects the needs of the students and the challenges in learning. It can also be maintained that discovering the best strategy for teaching will enhance students' learning process

through active participation in the classroom. The quality of teachers that work in a specific educational system help in the attainment of positive learning outcomes in schools

Teacher quality is a key determinant of student learning outcomes, and teachers will play a key role in closing the gap between poor and good quality education, by maximizing the benefits of learning in every classroom for every child (UNESCO, 2014; Bold et al., 2017). Therefore, to achieve quality education, more efforts should increasingly focus on teacher quality, as many teachers are unqualified or underprepared to meet the educational demands of the 21st Century (UNESCO, 2014). Teacher retention is a growing problem in the 21st century. New teachers entering the profession are leaving within their first 3 years, with half leaving the profession in the first 5 years which results in widespread shortages of qualified teachers. One common reason new teachers' report for leaving the profession is lack of support (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). Quality teachers are instrumental to the success of our public education; therefore, induction and mentoring programs that meet the needs of new teachers are essential components for schools to improve teacher retention and effectiveness. In the field of education, mentoring is one way new teachers may receive the necessary support they require as they develop within their first years.

Mentoring is a frequently used model in providing personal and professional development. Mentoring as a learning partnership, is one of the most effective ways to transfer skills and offer people the opportunity to learn needed skills that allow them to function at a more senior level. It provides workplace learning in a less stressful environment. Mentoring can also be seen as the personal guidance provided, usually by seasoned veterans, to beginning teachers in schools which is an ongoing relationship that extends throughout the first year of a new teacher's professional practice. Teacher mentoring fosters a relationship of ongoing support, collaboration, and the development of knowledge and skills that translate into improved teaching strategies (Cook, 2012). The relationship is a supportive one, with the mentor acting as a role model, facilitator, coach and advisor, and sharing experiences and knowledge with the new teacher (Lipton & Wellman in Nash & Hwang, 2012). In recent decades, teacher mentoring programs have become a dominant form of teacher induction (Strong, 2009; Hobson Ashby, Malderez, & Tomlinson, 2009).

Beginning teachers serve as a powerful workforce to support future development of a school. As they are new to the teaching profession and the school, mentoring and professional development are effective ways to integrate the beginning teachers to the learning community and its culture. Providing an accommodating environment to beginning teachers will help retain the best teachers in school. Principals assume a significant role in working with beginning teachers to facilitate their entry to the teaching profession. Mentoring programs provide beginning teachers with support during the transition into the classroom. These programs recognize the support needed by beginning teachers. Although many states require some form of induction program, many such programs fall short of empowering new teachers in the classroom. While

providing new teachers with a mentor is a step in the right direction, it is essential for schools to provide these teachers with an induction program that encompasses all aspects of the beginning years in the classroom. The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future identified mentoring as merely a component of a successful induction program (Bird & Hudson, 2015).

Today, organizations are embracing the concept of mentoring as a professional development tool through which improvements in efficiency, productivity and the passing of corporate knowledge and leadership skills can occur. The success or failure of any nation depends largely on the quality of its educational system. This in turn depends on the quality of her teachers (Asiyai, 2013). An effective mentoring programme has a positive effect on the quality of teaching, student achievement, retention of trained teachers and the teaching profession as a whole. The importance of mentoring beginning teachers cannot be overstated. Recently, there has been a shift in thinking on the most effective way to mentor beginning teachers. An important element of successful mentoring is the development of a positive relationship between mentor and mentee. Rusell and Rusell (2011) identified four strategies which are building relationships, extra motivation, firmer limits, and having a mentor to hold them accountable. Additional factors contributing to successful mentoring initiatives include active participation and recognition of success. Problems must be identified and resolved early on, requiring assurance of feedback and support between mentor and student (Gagliardi, Webster, Perrier, Bell & Straus, 2014). The focus of this is on two very important mentoring strategies which are: collaborative curriculum alignment and classroom observation.

The increasing diversity in classrooms requires a curriculum design mentoring strategies framework that allows mentors to work collaboratively with the new teachers on curriculum alignment for all learners to effectively support their progress in an inclusive context (Rose & Gravel, 2010). Curriculum embraces rich learning goals and achievement standards supported by a range of strategies, technologies, resources, activities, and assessments to meet the needs of diverse learners. Therefore, it takes the joint expertise and insight of all professionals to make sure that the diverse needs and strengths of students are understood and considered in the curriculum and instruction process. Developing curriculum is a comprehensive and multidimensional process, in which curriculum is planned, designed and then implemented in the classrooms (Oliva, 2009; Ornstein & Hunkins, 2009). There are a number of curriculum development models attributing teachers to an essential role as a curriculum designer. One of them is curriculum mapping. It is a new and innovative approach to curriculum development process in which curriculum planning, teacher-teacher collaboration, reflective inquiry, technology integration, and academic standards are included as important components (Jacobs & Johnson, 2009).

Curriculum mapping is particularly effective for collaborative curriculum planning and standards alignment. Shilling (2013) recognized that teachers think positively and specified numerous benefits of curriculum mapping. In secondary school context, Dogan (2012) demonstrated that teachers having five or more years of teaching

experiences and taking one or more professional development trainings (teacher mentoring program) have positive views of curriculum mapping and they consider curriculum mapping as having positive effects on collaboration and standards alignment. Thus, it is important to reveal what teachers think about this process. If a newly employed business teacher wants to map curriculum, the best way will be to work with experienced teachers (mentors). Mentors may have the responsibilities to keep curriculum alive by providing continuous curricular feedback for beginning teachers, small in service trainings and instructional leadership. It is important to note that using curriculum mapping ensures coherency in both daily and yearly planning. The very advantage of this dual planning is that teachers have a structure for planning curriculum according to academic standards. It takes some time for beginning teachers to adapt to changes in their daily routines, which in turn, have positive effects on their professional development, instructional choices and dialogue with other teachers.

Classroom observation mentoring strategies enables a mentor to collaborate with the beginning teacher to conduct classroom observations and gather general data on practices and have a brief reflective conversation with the beginning teacher regarding knowledge gained from the data. Observation is a powerful strategy in supporting the professional learning of teachers. The professional conversations that we undertake as part of the mentoring relationship are an opportunity to carefully look at students as they go about their learning and to observe what teachers actually do as part of their classroom practice. Visiting the classrooms is an opportunity to learn and share teaching and learning, collaborate, reflect, share best practices, and support each other to live the shared commitments (Hillsdale High School, 2012). It is not evaluative but rather an indispensable component of productive collaboration. Newly employed business studies teacher does not only have an opportunity to get concrete feedback, but also naturally reflects on his or her own practices and gets ideas from the observed teacher. Providing feedback to teachers about the results of their observations and helping them reflect on this feedback in productive ways provides the bridge between knowledge about what matters for students and changes in teachers' actual practice. Both the content and style with which feedback is communicated are important areas to consider.

Feedback is most effective when it is focused on increasing teachers' observation, promoting reflection and self-evaluation skills, promoting intentionality around behaviors and patterns of interaction with students, helping teachers see the impact of their behaviors more clearly, and assisting teachers in improving their implementation of lessons and activities (Ingersoll and Strong, 2011). Doing this means providing feedback that is very specific and behavioral in nature and balances attention to positives/strengths with providing constructive challenges. Use of video cameras and video taping can be an extremely effective tool in providing specific, constructive feedback to teachers about their behaviors with students (Danielson, 2010). When video footage is available, it allows consultants to not only tell teachers what they saw, but to watch the interactions alongside the teachers in a highly objective way. Teachers are

better able to share their perspectives when they are able to watch interactions on video after the fact.

Considering the above views, it seems that professional development is most effective when it is constructed around helping teachers make improvements in areas of their job that really matter for students, when those areas targeted for observation and improvement are clearly defined, and when all participants agree that the targets of the observation are valid goals to work towards. To support new teachers, mentoring seems to be a common solution and one of several strategies that may be deployed in order to support beginning teachers. Employed business teachers in government owned and private secondary schools need to be provided with continuous professional development and support in order to bring them to acceptable standard. To improve teaching and learning, both beginning teachers' emotional and professional needs as well as their students' needs should be addressed (Timperley, 2010), which is the overall aim of mentoring. However, in a changing society, there is a need for continuous professional development since all teachers have to adapt to changes. Therefore the focus of this study is to determine the strategies for mentoring new secondary school business teachers for greater performance in Anambra State.

2. Statement of the Problem

In the education sector, guiding younger teachers toward skills has become more important than ever before. Employed teachers in public and private secondary schools need to be provided with continuous professional development and support in order to bring them to acceptable standard. According to Ingersoll (2012), approximately 40 to 50 percent of new teachers leave within the first five years of entry into teaching profession. There are many reasons, ranging from high stress levels, heavy workload, or poor working conditions. Many teachers experience physical, mental and emotional exhaustion especially those who are working in low performing schools. Major problems for beginning teachers including classroom discipline, student motivation, student assessment, dealing with individual differences, and insufficient planning time, have been well documented in educational literature. Beginning teachers who are unable to meet these challenges experience a feeling of inadequacy often resulting in high levels of attrition. New teachers often find themselves isolated, they are often assigned students with the most difficult challenges, with no mentor, and without professional learning to further develop the skills they began to acquire as student teachers. It is important to disrupt the institutionalized isolation of the new teacher. When new teachers engage in professional development and mentoring that promotes collective participation, focuses on content and encourages coherence to and alignment with standards and assessments, they are more likely to develop and practice a classroom pedagogy that emancipates their students and themselves new teachers can feel less pressure from legislative mandates, reinforce student-centered methodologies and master practices learned as pre-service teachers when supported in their new profession. The problems and issues faced by

many new teachers during their first year of teaching in secondary schools prompted this research study. The researchers are therefore poised to investigate the strategies for mentoring new secondary school business teachers for greater performance in Anambra State particularly on their knowledge of subject matter and reflective ability.

2.1 Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to determine the strategies for mentoring new secondary school business teachers for greater performance in Anambra State. Specifically, the study determined the extent to which:

- 1) Collaborative curriculum alignment mentoring strategies enhances new business teachers' performance in secondary schools in Anambra State.
- 2) Classroom observation mentoring strategies enhances new business teachers' performance in secondary schools in Anambra State.

2.2 Research Question

The following research questions guided the study:

- 1) To what extent do collaborative curriculum alignment mentoring strategies enhance new business teachers' performance in secondary schools in Anambra State?
- 2) To what extent do classroom observation mentoring strategies enhance new business teachers' performance in secondary schools in Anambra State?

2.3 Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

- 1) There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals of public and private secondary schools on the extent collaborative curriculum alignment mentoring strategies enhances new business teachers for greater performance in Anambra State.
- 2) There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals of public and private secondary schools on the extent classroom observation mentoring strategies enhances new business teachers for greater performance in Anambra State.

3. Method

The design adopted in this study was the descriptive survey. The area of the study was Anambra State. The population of the study was 422 consisting 256 principals of public secondary schools and 166 principals of private secondary schools in the State. The stratified random sampling technique was used to select the sample size of 126 Principals (77 principals of public secondary schools and 49 principals of private secondary schools). A structured questionnaire was used for data collection. The questionnaire was validated by two experts in business education. To ascertain the internal consistency of

the instrument, test re-test reliability was utilized. The instrument was administered on 10 principals of public and private secondary schools in Asaba, Delta State who are not included in the population of the study. After a time frame of two weeks, a second test was administered and collected by the researcher. The two tests were analyzed using Pearson product moment correlation to determine the degree of reliability. Reliability index obtained was 0.81.

The data collected in relation to the research questions were analyzed using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation. Decision on the questionnaire items was based on the real limits of numbers. Any mentoring strategy with mean rating between 4.50-5.00, enhanced new business teachers to a very high extent, an item with mean rating of 3.50-4.49 enhanced new business teachers at a high extent and an item with 2.50-3.49 enhanced new business teachers at a moderate extent. Furthermore, an item with mean ratings of 1.50-2.49 and 0.50-1.49 enhanced new business teachers to a low and very low extent respectively. T-test was employed to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. Where the calculated p-value is less than the stipulated level of significance (0.05), it meant that there was significant difference, and the hypothesis was rejected. On the other hand, where the calculated p-value is equal to or greater than the stipulated level of significance (0.05), it meant that there was no significant difference, and the hypothesis was not rejected.

4. Results

Research Question 1: To what extent do collaborative curriculum alignment mentoring strategies enhance new business teachers' performance in secondary schools in Anambra State?

Table 1: Mean responses of principals on collaborative curriculum alignment mentoring strategies for enhancing new business teachers' performance in secondary schools (N = 114)

S/No Collaborative curriculum alignment	Mean	SD	Decision
1. Assists in planning and organizing instruction	3.58	.49	High Extent
2. Assists in aligning curricula to standards and assessments	3.59	.49	High Extent
3. Assists in interpreting the provisions of the curriculum	4.40	.51	High Extent
4. Assists in discussed problem solving in teaching and learning	4.06	.58	High Extent
5. Assists in classroom management	4.50	.55	Very High Extent
6. Assists in providing for the diverse needs of the students	4.48	.50	High Extent
7. Assists in recommending suitable textbooks on the subject	4.60	.56	Very High Extent
8. Assists in obtaining and using resources effectively	4.40	.52	High Extent
9. Assists in building staff capacity	4.36	.51	High Extent
10. Assists in developing relationship and communicating with stakeholders	3.75	.50	High Extent
Cluster Mean	4.17	.52	High Extent

Data in Table 1 show a cluster mean of 4.17 which reveals that the principals rated collaborative curriculum alignment mentoring strategies to a high extent in enhancing

new business teachers' performance in secondary schools in Anambra State. Item by item analysis shows that in item 5 and 7 principals rated collaborative curriculum alignment mentoring strategies to a very high extent in enhancing new business teachers' performance with mean ratings of 4.50 and 4.60. Items 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9 and 10 with the mean ratings ranging from 3.58 to 4.48 rated collaborative curriculum alignment mentoring strategies to a high extent. The standard deviation scores of 0.49 to 0.58 shows homogeneity in the responses of the respondents.

Research Question 2: To what extent do classroom observation mentoring strategies enhance new business teachers' performance in secondary schools in Anambra State?

Table 2: Mean responses of principals on classroom observation mentoring strategies for enhancing new business teachers performance in secondary schools (N = 114)

S/No Classroom observation mentoring strategies	Mean	SD	Decision
11 Assists in building the skills and capacity of beginning teachers	3.48	.49	Moderate Extent
12 Assists in providing opportunity for new teachers to indulge in self-reflection	3.45	.48	Moderate Extent
13 Assists in widening new teachers' professional competence	4.43	.53	High Extent
14 Help stimulate and develop new practice	4.18	.58	High Extent
15 Assists in identifying ideas and strategies for effective teaching practice	4.65	.60	Very High Extent
16 Provides professional support during the transition from theory to practical	4.48	.58	High Extent
17 Helps teachers see the impact of their behaviours more clearly	4.30	.56	High Extent
18 Assisting teachers in improving their implementation of lessons and activities	4.70	.65	Very High Extent
19 Use of videotaping allows discussions to home in on specific behavioural sequences	3.36	.46	Moderate Extent
20 Helps identify personal learning needs	3.75	.50	High Extent
Cluster Mean	4.08	.54	High Extent

Data in Table 2 show the cluster mean of 4.08 which indicates that the principals rated classroom observation mentoring strategies to a high extent in enhancing new business teachers' performance in secondary schools in Anambra State. Item by item analysis in shows that in 15 and 18 principals rated classroom observation mentoring strategies very high extent in enhancing new business teachers' performance with mean ratings of 4.50 to 4.60. Items 13, 14, 16, 17 and 20 with the mean ratings ranging from 3.75 to 4.48 indicates that the respondents rated classroom observation mentoring strategies to a high extent, while in items 11, 12 and 19 with mean ratings ranging from 3.36 to 3.48 indicates that respondents rated classroom observation mentoring strategies to a moderate extent. The standard deviation scores which ranged from 0.46 to 0.65 shows that there is homogeneity in the mean ratings of the respondents.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals of public and private secondary schools on the extent collaborative curriculum alignment mentoring strategies enhances new business teachers for greater performance in Anambra State.

Table 3: t-test comparison of the mean ratings of Principals on the extent collaborative curriculum alignment mentoring strategies enhances new business teachers' performance

Source of Variation	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	P-value	Decision
Principals in public schools	71	4.17	1.07	112	.292	Not Significant
Principals in private schools	43	4.15	1.01			

The analysis in Table 3 shows the p-value of .292 which is greater than the significant level of 0.05. This is an indication that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals of public and private secondary schools on the extent to which collaborative curriculum alignment mentoring strategies enhances new business teachers for greater performance in Anambra State. The null hypothesis was therefore not rejected.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Principals of public and private secondary schools on the extent classroom observation mentoring strategies enhances new business teachers for greater performance in Anambra State.

Table 4: t-test comparison of the mean ratings of Principals on the extent classroom observation mentoring strategies enhances new business teachers' performance

Source of Variation	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	P-value	Decision
Principals in public schools	71	4.06	1.05	112	.387	Not significant
Principals in private schools	43	4.05	1.04			

The analysis in Table 4 shows that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals of public and private secondary schools on the extent to which classroom observation mentoring strategies enhances new business teachers for greater performance in Anambra State. This is indicated by the p-value of .387 which is greater than the significant level of 0.05. The null hypothesis was therefore not rejected.

5. Discussion

The findings of the study indicated that mentors assist new business teachers in classroom management and in recommending suitable textbooks on the subject to a very high extent. They also assist in interpreting the provisions of the curriculum, discussing problem solving and in obtaining and using resources effectively to a high extent. This implies that collaborative curriculum alignment offers an environment in which beginning teachers in secondary schools develop their curricula by working with their mentors, they have opportunities to share opinions about curricula on what they plan, teach and assess. This finding is in consonance with that of Dogan and Altun (2013), who

stated that the teachers who have more experience, spend more time and prior knowledge about curriculum mapping consider curriculum as an effective tool for collaborative curriculum planning and standards alignment. In addition, Dogan (2012) opined that the best way newly employed teachers map curriculum is to work with experienced teachers (mentors) who may have the responsibilities to keep curriculum alive by providing continuous curricula feedback for beginning teachers. This ensures coherency in both daily and yearly planning. The testing of the first hypothesis revealed that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals of public and private secondary schools on the extent collaborative curriculum alignment mentoring strategies enhances new business teachers for greater performance.

The results of the study revealed that mentors assist the new business teachers in identifying ideas and strategies for effective teaching practice and implementation of lessons and activities to a very high extent. They also assist in widening new teachers' professional competence, help stimulate and develop new practice, help teachers see the impact of their behaviours more clearly and identify personal learning needs to a high extent. They equally assist in building the skills and capacity of the beginning teachers, providing new opportunity to indulge in self-reflection and in the use of videotaping to a moderate extent. Classroom observation is a powerful strategy in supporting the professional learning of teachers which provides feedback on the behaviour of the beginning teachers' performance in teaching and learning environment. This is supported by the view of Rizza (2012) that new teachers seem to have specific needs in terms of professional development in comparison with the more experienced teachers. In addition, Hudson (2010) stated that professional development is most effective when it is constructed around helping teachers make improvements in areas of their job that really matter for students. Providing feedback to teachers about the results of their observations and helping them reflect on this feedback in productive ways provides the bridge between knowledge about what matters for students and changes in teachers' actual practice. Findings from the second hypothesis indicated that there was no significant difference among the mean ratings of principals of public and private secondary schools on the extent classroom observation mentoring strategies enhances new business teachers for greater performance in Anambra State.

6. Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that collaborative curriculum alignment and classroom observation mentoring strategies are effective strategies for supporting new teachers and their instructional practices. Good quality mentoring in secondary schools makes an important contribution to developing the professional skills of new teachers and ensuring the best quality learning experiences for students.

6.1 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- 1) The state government and educational authorities in the state should always provide high quality professional development programmes for new business teachers in secondary schools in the state. This will enable them acquire competencies and skills necessary for improved performance.
- 2) The state government should step up their game in finding better strategies for mentoring programmes in secondary schools for greater performance of teachers.
- 3) Ministry of Education should ensure the enforcement and implementation of teaching guidelines and regulations for teachers through school authorities. This will help business teachers adopt and practice the real strategies which will increase their pedagogical competencies.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interests.

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