

## Mentoring and the Plight of the New Teacher

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### **Abstract**

*The newly employed teachers lack professional competency in the conduct of their primary duties/responsibility especially those who did not go through the convention professional training to be qualified and competent teachers. Mentoring involves a professionally experienced teacher who is technically referred to as the mentor, spends time working or assisting a new teacher on one-on-one, teaching the latter the need, form/type of experience required for him/her for the personal development and empowerment of the beginning teacher including enhanced productivity in the teaching profession. Mentoring is a development tool at the disposal of the school authority to help nurture and grew beginning teachers. Problems militating against effective mentoring and recommendation such as provision of either social based or college based mentoring committee as well as distribution of pamphlets to helping teachers to serve as guide are proffered.*

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### **INTRODUCTION**

In a school system, the beginning teacher needs to be helped and encouraged to succeed, as well as find the profession rewarding. If left unguided, the teacher will be confused in the classroom setting and this could lead to misleading the students too. New teachers find themselves a drift in a new environment. Therefore to retain potentially talented and creative teachers, the need for mentoring and orientation of the beginning teachers are essential to ensure that the desired outcomes are eventually produced. The will help them grow in the system as career teachers with the required professional, pedagogical and teaching skills in line with global best practice because mentoring brings enlightenment into education. (Ohia (2013).

### **Concept of Mentoring**

Mentoring is often defined as a professional relationship in which an experienced teacher the "MENTORY" assists a less experience teacher known as the "MENTEE", in developing specific professional skills and knowledge that will enhance a symbiotic relationship between two adults who assist each other to meet mutual career objectives in an organization of professional disciples. The activity of mentoring is meant to be

1. Intentional
2. Process
3. A nurturing process
4. An insightful process
5. A supportive and protective process
6. A role modeling process i.e.

Mentoring is a nurturing process in which a more skilled or more experienced person for the purpose of promoting the latter professional and personal development. Mentoring functions are carried out within the context of ongoing, caring relationship between the mentor and protégé. Okpa (2016).

Mentoring is an individualized process which involves an experienced teacher guiding, coaching and supporting a novice teaching progression into greater levels of competence and confidence. Mentoring is a development tool at the disposal of the school authority to help nurture and grow the teachers. This is about showing areas of expertise and knowledge needed by the mentee. The essence of mentoring is to assist the mentee develop specific professional skills knowledge and abilities that will enhance the professional and personal growth of the mentee.

Teacher mentoring is the establishment of personal relationship between teachers having varying levels of professional skills and experience for the professional instruction and guidance of the less experience teachers. Uche (2008).

The beginning teacher needs to be oriented or trained by the school/organization to know the process and procedures as well as the right professional direction to meet the organizational objectives of the new job. Orientation as acquainting the beginning teacher with the demands of the new job/want which enables a review of the schools mission statement and ethical commitments, this helps the beginning teacher to become comfortable in his/her new working environment and both the mentor and the mentee should be given orientation. Uche (2000). Orientation enables the beginning teacher stand off smoothly on the job.

Ungram (2009) opined that mentoring provides an opportunity for the mentor to clarify challenges to the new teacher who is the mentee, Lunenburg (2011) in Ohia 2016 identified needs of the beginning teacher to include having feeling of isolation, poor understanding of expectations, workload, and lack of support from experienced teachers. After the initial orientation, there is need for continuous mentoring, as this will ensure professional development of the beginning teacher and make the work easier while instating the confidence to interact with colleagues Bierley (2011).

### **Importance of Mentoring**

Many beginners inexperienced or newly employed teachers emerge without being fully ready for the challenges and demands that await them in their new environment or place of work. It has been widely acknowledged that the initial year of teaching is very challenging for beginning teachers because novice teachers often face isolation. Most times, such teachers/lecturers lack teaching experience, knowledge of classroom routines, and do not know how to manage instruction smoothly as well as how to gain students cooperation in academic tasks. They also lack knowledge about research methods that prevent them from writing. Yet the department, college or university expects them to live up to standards and accomplish the same outcomes as their senior (Okpa 2016).

Lecturers/teachers are active agents entrusted with the responsibility of translating the curriculum to produce quality outputs. Mentoring is critical for inexperienced lecturers/teachers who the academic profession especially in higher institutions, as it provides a bridge between theory and the complex realities of the contemporary educational institutes. It need for quality is to be achieved, hence the need to empower lecturers/teachers to harness their unique talents and skills as well as promote their professional growth becomes imperative.

Mentoring plays a nurturing role in guiding those new lecturers/teachers through the critical years and in providing them tools and skills needed in actual practice. Good mentoring in educational institutions ensures from a culture that recognizes and supports the importance of mentoring.

The task of the school administration is multidimensional which including not only over seeing the general conduct of the school activities but also ensuring the training and

development of academic staff should be given the attention it deserves than ensuring adequate mentoring to the beginning lecturer/teacher for professional development.

### **Types of Mentoring**

Mentoring relationships can be formal or informal. A formal mentoring relationship shared admiration, aspiration, values and interest. The formal types are those created to ensure that more employees have the opportunity to reap the benefits of the relationship. They are formed through a planned matelly or assignment of mentors and menteres by the organization (Ragins & Cotton, 2009).

### **Formal Mentoring**

1. Goals are established from the beginning by the organization and the employee mentee.
2. Outcomes are measured.
3. Access is open to all who meet programme criteria.
4. Mentors and mentees are peured based on compatibility.
5. Training and support in mentoring is provided.

### **Informal Mentoring**

1. Goals of relationship are not specified.
2. Outcomes are not measured.
3. Access is limited and may be exclusive.
4. Mentors and mentees self-select on the bases of personal chemistry.
5. Mentors last a long time sometimes a life time.
6. The organization benefits indirectly, as the focus is exclusive on the mentee.  
There are various types of forms of mentoring which include:-
  1. Induction mentoring
  2. Peer mentoring
  3. Developmental mentoring

### **Induction Mentoring**

Induction mentoring is the mentoring of beginning teachers in a school system. A more experienced professional is either officially or unofficially assigned to guide and support the professional growth of a less-experienced teacher.

### **Peer Mentoring**

This is the kind of mentoring which older and experienced colleagues in the school system “peer mentor each other. This could be in a particular area or general knowledge, the whole essence is for the progress and development of each of the support partners. In this regard, the peer mentors hold each other for their action plans in the achieved of their collective goals.

### **Developmental Mentoring**

In this type of mentoring, two or more people usually colleagues can synergize to generate solutions that will enable them build and achieved success either in their professional or personal lives. There are also e-mentoring and academic mentoring. (Ohia 2016).

## **Types of Mentoring Models**

Preparing mentoring programme requires a lot of planning one of which is choosing and developing appropriate mentoring model. There are variety of these models which include.

- a. One-on-one mentoring
- b. Two by two mentoring
- c. Resource – Based mentoring
- d. Group mentoring
- e. Training- Based mentoring
- f. Executive mentoring

### **One-on-one Mentoring**

This type of model matches is mentor with one mentee; this kind of model gives room/appatuty for developing a personal relationship and also provides individual support for the mentee.

### **Two-by-two Mentoring**

Two mentors are poured with two mentees in this type of model and both participate in the mentoring activities together, the absence of a mentor will not hinder the process of mentoring since it's a collective work and can take place of other in case of any eventuality because mentor sorts only as a second ear for the other but also a valuable source of feedback.

### **Resource-Based Mentoring**

In this type of model, mentors agree to addition names to a list of available mentors from which a mentee can chose. This type of mentoring has limited support within the organization and many result in mismatched mentor-mentee pairing.

### **Group Mentoring**

This type of model requires of mentor to work with a number of mentees usually ranging from 4-6 at a time. And a time of meeting s fixed and this is composed of both senior and peer mentoring in which assistance is given to one another to learn and develop appropriate skills and knowledge.

The organization offers periodic meeting in which a senior meets with all of the mentors and mentees, who then share their knowledge and expertise.

### **Training-Based Mentoring**

This is a model that is directly tied to a training programme. A mentor is assigned to a mentee to help that person develop the specific skills being taught in the programme e.g. teacher development programme, as can for senior exclusive etc.

### **Executive Mentoring**

This is the top-down model which creates a mentoring culture as well ascultivate skills and knowledge throughout an organization. This type of model is an effective succession planning tool, because it prevents the knowledge “brain drain” that would other wise take place when senior management retires.

### **Areas of Mentoring to the New Lecturer/Teacher**

In addition to helping the new lecturers/teachers acclimate to the new classroom environment, experienced teachers should help specifically in the following areas

- Lesson planning
- Classroom management
- Students motivation
- Assessment of student's work
- Dealing with diverse student's in help
- Organizing teaching time and classroom space (Aubreaclit, 2010).

### **Qualities of an Effective Mentor**

Mentoring task is all encompassing and an experienced teacher who wants to mentor a beginning teacher is expected to exhibit the following characteristics

- \* Willingness and natural interest to help others develop and succeed.
- \* Ability to clearly pass on expertise encouragingly without criticizing negatively and seeing the mentee as a non-performer.
- \* Openness to answer questions from and proffer solutions to the mentee.
- \* Have a high level of patience to listen to the mentee(s).
- \* The zeal to enter the classroom to teach with the mentee observing, and make out time to periodically watch the mentee teach.
- \* Consistency in meeting with the mentee at agreed times and venues.
- \* A mentor should also have a positive learning attitude, not seeing himself as a guru in all areas but, a learning leader available to facilitate a learning process.
- \* Have up-to-date pedagogical knowledge and skills.

### **Expected Qualities of the Beginning Teachers as a Good Mentee**

A beginning teacher is also expected to exhibit certain qualities such as

1. Absolute humility which is evident in a show of willingness to listen and learn.
2. Unafraid to ask questions.
3. Hardworking, resourceful and adaptable
4. Unwillingness to accept corrections.
5. Readily to accepts suggestions and change.
6. Exercises his/her initiative when faced with certain challenges.

The newly employed and even those with inadequate in the teaching learning process mentoring improves self confidence, affaies professional development, provides advice and uinforma, encourages reflective practice provides personal support, improves effectiveness, develops awareness of organizational culture, politics and philosophy of the organization it (mentoring) also gives access to a "sounding board" for concerns, issues and ideas, professional benefits are related to getting more familiar with the job, networking, developing managerial skills and establishing better communications. (Okpa 2016).

### **Impediments to Mentoring**

Mentoring can only be successful if the parties involved share an equal commitment to the process and the outcome especially in the activities directly related to sharing knowledge and expertise in communication which is central to the success of any mentoring relationship a number of things inpeduts mentoring and this include lack of interest, commitment, passion and vision which could emuite form either parties. This hinders effective mentoring relationship in such situation; the beginning lecturer/teacher encouraged to develop relationships with colleagues outside school or department, and try to figure out things themselves, as part of the initiation into the academic system.

Another impediment is inadequate time which most often results in superficial contact with mentors/mentee. Time is an important resource in this regard, and lacks of the far the

mentoring process threatens the depth of mentoring sessions and life span of mentoring programme.

Mentoring relationships requires trust from both parties mentor and mentee as lack of trust could hinder both the process and the success of such programme. Expenditure teachers/lecturers could set leaving objectives, and supporting progression in the cause of mentoring, more experienced teachers/teaches most often do not relate the guidance they give in convincing evidence from practice and research which will enable the teachers concerned to grasp underlying meanings and not just the skill.

### **Conclusion**

Mentoring is a relationship building strategy which is beneficial to the beginning teacher, having a mentor is one of the restest and surest wags to make forward professionally, mentoring provides a unique opportunity for both the mentor and the mentee. The quality of teaching is tremendously improved by mentoring, which is built on mutual trust, commitment, willingness, interest as well as emotional maturity. Mentors must model effective practice, and possess practice knowledge and competence, which facilitate the building of an environment conducive to professional growth.

### **Recommendations**

It is important to set up an academic career development scheme and the administrative board of the school/college/university should formulate and release functional mentoring policy, which will ensure that there is regular meeting between the beginning lecturers and their senior colleagues.

The school administrations should create a school/college-wide culture that reflects support, open communication collaboration and continuous learning supports for newly employed lecturers/teachers to grow on the job.

The schools/colleges should develop a well structured mentoring programme for young or new teachers as a means of providing professional development, preparing and training future leaders, through mentoring programmes, the new teachers will have a deeper understanding about the role of educational leadership, the opportunity to discuss latest issues and to gain problem-solving skills.

The school/college should establish a clearing house to match potential mentors with mentees based on areas of specialization and research unit.

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