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Influence of Mentor-Mentee Interaction Patterns on Student Teachers' Learning to Teach in Public Secondary Schools During Teaching Practicum

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This study examined the contribution of mentor-mentee interaction patterns on student teachers' learning to teach during Teaching practicum (TP). The study objectives are: (i) to understand the interaction patterns between mentor teachers and student teachers during teaching practicum, (ii) to establish how those interaction patterns develop student teachers' learning to teach. This study adopted a qualitative research approach using in-depth face-to-face interviews conducted twice for each interviewee of not less than forty (40) minutes as part of data collection. The interviews were carried out to six (6) third-year student-teachers who were posted in two neighbouring public secondary schools as their TP sites. The study found that: Mentorship relies much on interpersonal relationships and interaction patterns between student teachers and their mentor teachers. Four (4) possible interaction patterns in TP stations were identified. In practice, there is mentor teacher – student teacher, student teacher – students, student-teacher - student teacher, student teacher – resources interactions. Teacher education programs, policies, and documents recognize and have been stressing the importance and role of mentoring in student teachers, as part of their professional development. Student teachers have had higher expectations of the teachers they want to be in the future, but their way through mentor support is unclear and once they face “reality shock” during TP their efficacy becomes low. This leads to less motivation for a teaching career and increases the attrition rate of future teachers. In-service teachers do not assume the crucial role of assisting student teachers in learning to teach. In such circumstances, some student teachers have been struggling to develop their professional future due to limited mentorship in secondary schools. The study recommends enhanced teacher training programs and continuous in-service professional development models to accommodate sensitive mentorship skills.

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INTRODUCTION

Teaching practicum (TP) is a fundamental part of teacher education that allows student teachers to apply the class theories to actual school practice (Mannathoko, 2013; Vagi et al., 2019) by applying theoretical knowledge in a real teaching environment, as among their graduation requirements. During TP exercise, student teachers are exposed to mentoring sessions as part of learning to teach (Neal, et al, 2013). Ralph and Walker (2014) point out that, TP is the most pivotal component of teacher education, and quality mentorship given by mentors to mentee teachers is a critical issue in this phase.

The term mentorship in this study, refers to a developmental process whereby a teacher with relatively more skills, knowledge, and experience (mentor) assists a novice teacher who is expected to have less knowledge, skills, and experience in the field (mentee) to develop in the teaching profession (Ralph & Walker, 2013). Mentorship process cements novice teachers' professional growth and future being (Trent, 2013). This is "the mediation of professional learning from experienced to novice teachers" (Orland-Barak, 2014).

Mentorship processes for student teachers rely much on interaction patterns and interpersonal relationships with mentor teachers. Recently, researchers have shown increased interest in exploring how student teachers struggle to develop their professional future figuring how they are going to be effective teachers on their own (Albakri et al., 2017) which reflects a lack of or limited mentorship in schools. The relationship from teacher educators during their college training connected to their mentor teachers during

TP makes roots for student teachers self-reliance in learning to teach (Humman & Romano, 2009). Such incidence of student teachers using their own present experiences to connect it with their future roles and expectations as teachers due to limited mentorship services limit student teachers' professional growth.

An increased number of studies around the world report positive effects of mentoring student teachers and mentor teachers such as increasing teacher retention (Yoon & Kim, 2019) and collaboration among them. Student teachers mentoring helps in getting feedback on their progress, developing their confidence and practice, and engaging them in a learning community of practices (Hobson, & Malderez, 2013; Ralph & Walker, 2014). Also, in the mentoring process mentor teachers develop their professional and administrative skills; they develop their job commitment and ensure efficiency and enhancement of the education sector in general (Hobson, & Malderez, 2013). Mentoring practices also develop strong self-efficacy among student teachers and mastery in planning and organizing effective teaching (Richter et al., 2013).

Though teacher education programs, policies and documents recognize and have been continuously stressing the importance and role of mentoring student teachers, as part of professional development. However, mentoring is seen to lack practical commitment and practices in teacher training colleges and universities, during actual teaching and TP in Tanzania (Chilumika, 2013; Filipatali, 2013). For example, the Teacher Development Management Strategy (TDMS) of 2008 aimed to establish mentoring services for

student-teachers and in-service teachers to support and develop their professional growth by 2012 (MoEVT, 2008), the target which has not been materialized to date remains as unfulfilled policy initiative. Student teachers have always had higher expectations of who they want to be in the future, but their way through mentor support is unclear and once they face “reality shock” (Mwamakula, 2023). During TP student-teachers’ professional efficacy becomes low leading to increased attrition rate on their way to becoming expert teachers (Mwamakula, 2020; Pendergast et al. 2011).

Some available studies on student teachers during TP stress on; student teachers’ preparation (e.g. Binde, 2010; Darling-Hammond, 2005; Kelly, 2006; Orzolek, 2018; Rissanen et al, 2018; Starkey & Rawlins, 2012), student teachers’ self-efficacy and identity (e.g. Klassen & Durksen, 2014; Trent, 2010), but mentorship of student teachers is less considered in such studies. Researching mentor-mentee interaction patterns during TP is so resourceful to know how those interaction patterns help student-teachers to learn to teach. Though there is some existing research on mentoring during TP (e.g. Arshavskaya, 2016; Langdon, 2014, 2017; Yoon & Kim, 2019; Ralph & Walker, 2014; Sedumedi & Mundalamo, 2014), consideration of mentor-mentee interaction during the mentoring process is still thin, and little have been done on it. In trying to fill such gaps, the purpose of this study will be to establish how mentor-mentee interaction patterns influence student teachers’ process of learning how to teach. In executing such an objective, this study will be guided by the following research question; How do mentor-mentee interaction patterns during TP affect student teachers’ learning to teach?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Interaction Patterns During Teaching Practicum

Interaction as a social process of integration is crucial in teacher learning which allows active engagement and interpretation of ideas in teaching practices (Sedumedi & Mundalamo, 2014) into actions. During TP, interaction is a daily practice

for student teachers and students, co-student teachers, in-service teachers’ part of who are mentors, and the school community in general (Grossman, 2005). Interaction is also a core part and practice of the pedagogy in teacher education on preparing student teachers to teach (Zeichner & Paine, 2012). In TP, interaction includes; daily classroom instruction, relationships, and commitment among mentor and mentee teachers in jointly accomplishing teaching assignments, which influences student teachers’ future beings (Starkey, & Rawlins, 2012). However, Wong et al. (2015) point out that many researchers on student teachers’ education focus much on; course instruction and practices of teaching, while neglecting the influence of mentor-mentee interaction on their professional development, beliefs, and practices (Pendergast et al., 2011; Trent, 2013).

Granott’s (1993) models of social interaction developed three forms of “pedagogical interaction” namely: imitation, approximation and scaffolding, in which mentor teachers’ and mentee teachers’ collaboration and interpersonal relationships, can fall in. The first model, imitation refers to a situation where the collaboration is low, by the mentor providing limited help to the mentee and the student-teacher observing, and imitating the mentor teacher to develop their own character. Here the mentor is taking a passive role, less responsible, and less contributing to the student teacher’s growth. In the second model of approximation a mentor guides and treats a mentee as an apprentice. The mentor teacher actively engages in directing, observing and evaluating the mentee teacher’s learning to teach. The mentor teacher has goals and wants the student teacher to attain them accordingly; in this type of interaction if not well designed there is a danger for a student teacher to become less active and more dependent on mentors’ guidance. The highest level, scaffolding is a collaborative approach to learning to teach. The mentor and mentee teacher collaboratively select goals, then work and assist one another to explore the content and achieve the expected outcomes.

Mentoring style using imitation type of interaction is usually passive in enhancing student teachers' learning unlike approximation and scaffolding types, in which mentor teachers play an active role in guiding the process of learning to teach (Sedumedi & Mundalamo, 2014). The teaching efficacy of cooperating mentor teachers is said to be higher than the passive teachers (Goh & Matthew, 2011). Student teachers who experience greater collaboration with mentor teachers report and tend to have greater teaching efficacy (Warren, 2017). The interaction between pairs of mentor and mentee teachers is a vital means through which mentor teachers influence student teachers' beliefs and works in schools, classrooms, and society at large (Goh & Matthew, 2011). The interaction pattern developed during TP is acquired and influences the lifelong teaching practices of student teachers.

Mentoring During Teaching Practicum

Quality of mentoring has proved to have successful career motivation and start rather than its frequency. The constructivist mentoring approach seems to be more productive for student teachers' job satisfaction, self-efficacy, and reducing emotional anxiety unlike the transformative mentoring approach (Klassen & Durksen, 2014; Richter et al, 2013). Granott (1993) postulated a constructivist framework for analysing interaction patterns based on the form of Piaget's and Vygotsky's cognitive theories of learning which rely much on social interactions. During TP, student-teachers require careful support in teaching skills and emotional issues (Wong et al., 2015). Student teachers as novice professionals rely on mentors' guidance, care and support. The most influential people to student teachers' development in teaching expertise during TP is the mentor teachers, who spend most of their time with student teachers.

Novice teachers learn more about professional practices during TP placements from their mentors in the actual school situation than in university classes where a more theoretical part is learnt (Goh & Matthew, 2011). Mentor teachers have influential impacts on student teachers'

attitudes development toward teaching careers and daily classroom practices (Md Yunus et.al, 2010). Studies also provide that, during learning to teach, student teachers face a set of challenges, difficulties, or problems in their TP programs due to limited mentoring support from experienced teachers. Thus, researchers need to consider the continuing TP challenges, to maintain the positive features and by work to remove the limitations that are identified in the whole process of TP (Zhu & Zhang, 2014).

Mentoring during TP gives student teachers opportunities to reflect on their beliefs, assumptions, and knowledge of practical teaching and learning (Wong et al., 2015; Zhu & Zhang, 2014). Mentor teachers are to be equipped with standardized constructive and developmental mentoring practices with productive feedback for student teachers (Kelly, 2006). It is also necessary to deal with feedback on issues and challenges they encounter in the mentoring process within the school and classroom teaching contexts. The type of mentorship relies on several factors carried out by mentor-mentee interaction nature. Some common factors include; gender, age and interest or expectations, communication network, trust, and appreciation. Others are the nature of learning, institutional rules, culture, and regulations (Starkey & Rawlins, 2012). It is suggested to set ground rules for the counterparts to follow and achieve common goals, as among efforts to have balanced interests in mentor-mentee interaction and mentorship.

Different countries have diverse modalities for student-teachers to attend TP. For example, in the USA there is no national guideline for TP placements, each state determines its requirements. The same applies to Canada where the Provincial Teacher Certification Requirements provide a guideline for TP in each Province. In Australia, student teachers attend TP for a total of 100 days; with a minimum of 80 days under the supervision of a school counsellor plus 20 days internships. In Portugal, student teachers are to teach 24 hours combined with face-to-face pedagogical interventions and field observations. Turkey and England's TP time is 120 days equal

to four months, while in Malaysia TP is for two months. Hong Kong, takes 12 weeks for practical teaching in schools, while in Greece, student teachers take 4 years of learning and do TP in their last 2 years by observing first how experienced teachers teach and later start teaching independently (Tekel et al., 2022). In Tanzania, certificate, diploma and bachelor's degree student-teachers attend TP twice within two to three years of study for about 56 days in each placement. However, in recent years some Tanzanian universities have started going for TP three times, once every academic year in the program study schedule (Mwamakula, 2020).

The teaching experience that student teachers acquire during TP and after is reliable on their relationship with mentor or host teachers (Britzman, 2003). Mentoring practices must, therefore, help mentees negotiate, reflect, and practice professional qualities. Accommodative work environments and interpersonal interaction patterns between mentors and mentees are to be enhanced in TP fields (Agustiana, 2014). A successful practicum mentoring process is one that exposes student-teachers to supportive teaching practices. This is because, learning to teach is a social interaction activity, and in-service teachers as mentors should take special charge of learning to teach for student-teachers to help them acquire and develop professional and practical skills (Starkey & Rawlins, 2012).

Theoretical Perspectives

Banking on Granott's (1993) three-level model or forms of pedagogical interaction (imitation, approximation and scaffolding), the study will particularly be grounded on Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of human learning. The theory believes that learning occurs intentionally in deliberate and goal-oriented activity (Vygotsky, 1978) through social interaction. To him, learning is a social process dependent to two levels; social interaction and Zone of proximal development (ZPD). First, learners learn through social interaction with others, and later integrate the skills into their mental structures.

“Every function in the child’s cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, between people (interpsychological) and then inside the child (intrapsychological). This applies equally to voluntary attention, to logical memory, and to the formation of concepts. All the higher functions originate as actual relationships between individuals” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 57).

Second, the learner's cognitive development is dependent to a zone of proximal development (ZPD). Vygotsky defines Zone of proximal development as “the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 57). Scaffolding from a teacher or more experienced peer attached to social interaction is vital in supporting student's development of knowledge and skills. Thus, students and teachers take an active role in student's learning. Though teacher's intervention in student learning is necessary, the quality of teacher-student interaction is more crucial to assuring efficiency in learning (Vygotsky, 1978). The principles of social interaction and ZPD are used to gradually develop students' skills through reciprocal teaching which involves teacher and students' dialogues, peer collaboration, and apprenticeship programs to develop a shared understanding and meaning-giving.

Though this theory was primarily developed by Vygotsky aiming at students' learning it can be integrated for student teachers' learning to teach during TP (Johnson & Golombek, 2016). Social interaction between mentor and mentee teachers and zone of proximal development of the mentee are pivotal aspects to be considered. In a practical way of this study, and student teacher's learning to teach engages mentor and mentee interaction and collaboration in developing mentee's profession during TP. Through ZPD, the assistance and mediation (scaffolding) given by mentors to mentee teachers act as the bridge

between the theories acquired in classroom learning and their practice in actual field of teaching mediating the mentee teacher's learning to teach (Johnson & Golombek, 2016). Successful mentors use mentee's ZPD to assist them become effective teachers too in their teaching community of practice (Wenger, 1991, 1998), by responding to mentees' needs while mentees respond to mentors' mediation.

In mutual interaction, mentors play a great role in nurturing and developing student teachers' capabilities in teaching culture. During mentoring process, a mentor teacher has to be attentive to the cognitive and emotions of student teachers, to help, develop and nurture the student teachers' prior perceptions and balance with what really happens "reality shock" in actual teaching field (Mwamakula, 2023; Pendergast et al., 2011). The need to Manage, shape and balance teachers' prior beliefs, present challenges and the future necessitates this study on mentor-mentee interaction patterns and their influence on student teachers learning to teach during TP.

METHODS

The study focused on third-year student teachers in the Bachelor of Education (BAED) program from one private-based teacher training university in Tanzania. In this three-year program, all BAED student teachers take their TP twice; 56 days at the end of the first and second year respectively. Third-year student teachers had had their second TP, so were expected to have crucial inputs to this study. Though mentors are not officially charged with assessing and awarding grades to mentees, however, they play a great role in guiding, assisting, and making sure that mentees accomplish their duties to achieve the TP goals.

Six (06) participants were selected as mentees to get their experience on mentor-mentee interaction patterns from their TP placements in two neighbouring public secondary schools. The six participants were not the only significant ones to become the sample of this study. However, their accessibility, placements or allocation in the neighbour public secondary schools and experience from their TP learning as mentees and

being TP group leaders was considered pivotal. The 6 student teachers started collaborations during TP and went on collaborative interactions with their mentor teachers even after TP. Thus, the researcher had close supervision to their TP and after TP interactions, collaborations with their mentors and continuing professional learning. The participants were labelled ST1, ST2, ST3, ST4, ST5, and ST6 to hide their identification and observe ethical issues.

This study was qualitative in nature using in-depth interviews to collect data. Face-to-face interview sessions of not less than forty minutes (40) for each interviewee through semi-structured questions were administered to 6 third-year student teachers. The researcher conducted two sessions of interview for each interviewee, one interview during TP and the other one after TP. In some cases, the interviews were repeated in order to reach the saturation point. An in-depth interview is a qualitative research method that seeks to explore the meaning that people make about their experiences, and the way they carry out and develop the experiences within their setting (Kvale, 1996). The method allows researchers to gather rich narratives, emotional feelings, and perspectives of the social contexts (Seidman, 2006). The use of in-depth interviews aims at establishing trust between researcher and interviewee by allowing the participants to translate knowing into telling (Van Manen, 1990).

During interview sessions; informed consent, anonymity, and confidentiality were carefully considered whereby the researcher first introduced himself and explained the research purpose. The interviewees were made clear about the purpose of the study and the confidentiality extent of data that would be provided by them could be used to fulfil the goals of this study only and in no way would be used against them. Then, upon agreement, each interviewee was asked to be involved in the study.

Data analysis is the process of making a meaningful structure of the collected information (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003) considering careful thematic screening of data. Data analyses

followed the following steps: First, the transcripts recorded in each interview were listened and read repeatedly. Key concepts and phrases that focus on key themes were identified and examined to develop data that were analysed thematically. Participants' emotions, reactions, and some direct quotations were closely considered in understanding the nature of the mentor-mentee interaction patterns and their influence on learning to teach among student teachers. Then, grouping of data into similar themes was done, followed by reviewing each theme, defining, naming, and explaining the themes in a meaningful way to produce a final report. In the whole process, confidentiality and anonymity were assured, and all characters mentioned in narratives were covered with pseudonyms.

FINDINGS

Through our analysis, we found that there are four (4) possible interaction patterns in TP stations. In practice, there is mentor teacher – student teacher, student teacher – students, student-teacher – student teacher, student teacher – resources interactions.

Mentor Teacher – Student Teacher Interaction

The study found that, in most cases, in-service subject teachers are assigned student teachers (mentees) who teach the same subject. Mentor teachers are charged to assist student teachers' induction to the actual teaching environment as a crucial part of professional development. The type of interaction a student teacher receives from a mentor teacher develops the kind of teacher one is. For example, a student teacher who has received mutual interaction pattern is expected to improve his or her day-to-day teaching practice, and interpersonal relationship with fellow student teachers, parents and the community at large. ST4 commented:

Before teaching practice, I used to know that my major role is just classroom teaching. However, my TP experience from my mentor's modelling extended my understanding of who is a teacher. Now I define a teacher as a researcher, leader,

consultant, counsellor, doctor, or judge. He or she is a role model to students and the entire community.

Some student teachers develop their skills in learning to teach through imitating their mentors because some mentor teachers were evidenced to be passive, irresponsible, and with low collaboration. Passive mentor teachers ignored mentorship to be part of their responsibilities. They developed limited interactions and feedback to mentees. It was also evident that student teachers used trial and error in teaching as if they had no mentors. Some mentor teachers displayed no attributes to foster novice teachers' learning. As ST1 mentioned:

I mostly used the imitation method to get teaching, but no feedback I received from my mentor. He was always busy and out of reach when I needed his assistance. It was not the same to my friend, her mentor was friendly, a good listener, easily approachable, and always ready to serve. My friend was always receiving feedback; I wish that one could be mine.

The study found that interactions deliver feedback on the practices, both oral and written feedback. Written feedback was mentioned to be part of future reflection and planning and developing of their pedagogical content knowledge. Mentor teachers using an approximation mentorship style were evidenced to be effective consultants and role models for their student teachers and students. ST6 raised the concern on how positive feedback is valued and accepted by student teachers and enhances their motivation and self-efficacy about their profession.

Before assessment day my mentor teacher encouraged me to have confidence on how I am teaching because she had attended and observed my teaching several times. I was using her feedback to improve my day-to-day practices.

Confident and competent mentors produce competent student teachers, they had higher efficacy and responsible in mentoring student teachers. Such teachers are good models that

student-teachers are to identify with. Commenting on the nature of mentors ST2 had this to say:

My mentor was too directive and wanted me to watch and do exactly what he does. There was no room for me to challenge in other way. Sometimes, I was feeling bored repeating the same now and then, but I had nothing to do against because it was the course demand.

Such mentors model their teaching practices, administrative and management skills together with the mentoring skills to student teachers. In such student teachers are also expected to develop similar attributes and competency.

Student Teacher - Students Interaction

Student teachers and students were found to interact in day-to-day teaching and learning, within and out of the classrooms. Whatever teaching skills are acquired by a student teacher (mentee) are targeted to student learning and behavioural change. ST3 had this to say:

Working with students is complicated because each student has his or her own attitude, mood and behaviour. However, my mentor was always encouraging me to accommodate students' differences and make sure I helped each student according to his or her needs.

The study found that there are some cases where mentees were found to be disappointed by students' ill behaviour or misconduct, but mentors encouraged them to be focused. Continuous consultations with mentors improved the way student teachers interact and view students.

Student Teacher – Student Teacher Interaction

Student teachers used reflective feedback to see how they work and develop in their learning to teach. Student teachers pre-assessed themselves before school and university assessors and got feedback on areas for improvement. Also, student teachers interact to share and exchange the experiences they acquired from their varied mentors. ST5 argued:

Assessment was always challenging and fearful. My fellow student teachers pre-assessed my teaching one day before our university assessor. They shared their inputs on my sample scheme of work, lesson plan, and lesson development. From them, I learnt that we vary in approaching our classes, but this might be the influence of host teachers as our mentors.

Through day-to-day interactions student teachers share and exchange experiences derived from their mentors. Student teachers do teach among themselves by providing feedback on their practices. Thus, they learn from each other and plan for their pedagogical and professional improvements. This has a tremendous impact on their future teaching and development.

Student Teacher – Instructional Resources Interaction

The study found that instructional resources are operational catalysts for effective learning to teach and development. Designing and operating instructional resources requires student teachers to examine and re-examine the accessibility, affordability, and usability of the resources. Through such instruction, student teachers developed flexibility and wide understanding and improvisation of instructional resources that suit the learners as well as teaching and learning contexts.

DISCUSSION

TP is a professional ladder through which student teachers interact with mentors, students, among themselves, and with instructional resources. Effective combination and operation of such entities develop a qualified professional teacher. Good mentors are genuine, understanding, affectionate, and supportive, and provide constructive challenges to their mentees. They provide psychological support for mentees to develop acceptance and confirmation of their professional selves. Well-mentored student teachers also develop a problem-solving mindset, self-guidance and professional modelling.

Through mentor/mentee interactions student teachers develop collaborations, personal and interpersonal friendship networks. They develop communication and interpersonal skills. Mentees coach and guide others and in some cases mentors by giving them new perspectives to cope with the current generation's transformations. For example, the younger generation (mentees) is well equipped in technological innovations than the older generation (mentors). Thus, mentors get room to learn new inputs from their mentors on education technology.

Student teachers come to TP cites with varied expectations, experiences and skills. Mentor teachers play important roles in nurturing, integrating, and developing pre-existing experiences to enhance teaching practices. The nature of interaction and mentorship style they receive from school-based supervisors is a complex endeavour varying from one set of mentor-mentee to the other (Starkey & Rawlins, 2012). Learning to teach experience among student teachers is also different and determined by supervision, feedback and the nature of mentorship received. Student teachers do learn and develop skills to teachers depending on the exposure and support they get during their TP. From a well-arranged, monitored and accommodating placement of practice qualified and competent student teachers are expected to be developed.

Student teachers had their pre-dispositions and characteristics that they expected mentors to possess. For example, student teachers expected their mentor teachers to have passion, flexibility, sympathetic, accessible and friendly. Similarly, previous studies expose that, for effective mentor-mentee interaction and mentorship, mentor teachers are supposed to have a sense of humour and love their job (Trent, 2010). In a natural setting, TP is based on a mutual interpersonal relationship between mentor and mentee teachers who comprehend each other.

The findings reveal that good interaction between mentors and mentees provides wide opportunity to motivate student teachers. Active mentors do

always deal and consider student teacher's emotions, values and needs. They are open for discussion and criticism, with the friendly communication and interpersonal relationships that support student teachers' reflective practices for enhanced teaching and professional development. However, the practical realization reveals that, TP is not a free activity, it is a heavy-duty attached and going through various challenges (Zhu & Zhang, 2014). TP is attached to a number of individuals, social and institutional issues that require attention in addressing them to enhance mentorship. Some of the mentioned challenges are such as assessment pressure that student teachers have right from their beginning of teacher training, time constraints in balancing the school timetable and individual schedules, lack of feedback from mentors and colleagues, reluctance to give or receive feedback and poor relationship and collaboration among mentors and mentees.

Lack of mentor-mentee trust raises another challenge during TP. There are cases whereby mentors do not trust student teachers to possess adequate skills to teach. Such mentors due not assign duties to student teachers, are less supportive, add anxiety and lower efficacy for student teachers. Such negligence in assistance and poor collaboration lower student teachers' creativity, satisfaction, and motivation to teach and lead to worrying about failing their TP assessment.

Student teachers are expected to bridge the theory-practice gap, with limited mentorship they fail to integrate classroom theory to practice, self-perceptions of competence in teaching, differences in personal characteristics, and motivation for teaching. Also, student teachers face troubles in dealing with their values, previously constructed images and beliefs of the teaching profession, and their current understanding of the whole curriculum and subject knowledge. Integration of theories into practice is a challenging issue that student teachers severely face and once they fail their motivation and efficacy are lowered (Pendergast et al, 2011).

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

There is a high need for professional training and insistence on enhancing mentoring skills among experienced teachers who are all-time mentor teachers during TP. Mentor teachers require motivation and to be equipped with; pedagogical skills to have competency and expertise to be used in the mentoring process. Mentor teachers are supposed to be role models to student teachers. They are expected to have sound ethics, values and morals necessary to impart high professional standards and excellence to student teachers. On learning to teach, student teachers require enhanced reflective skills to empower self-analysis and reflection so as to raise their understanding and awareness of teaching practices. This will motivate and encourage innovation and creativity among student teachers through the constructive demonstrations by their mentors. Reflective practices are also expected to enhance the interpersonal relationship between student teachers who are the focal point of the study with; teacher educators, fellow student-teachers, mentor teachers, parents and students. Mentor teachers are also expected to provide formal, informal, formative, or summative feedback.

Among the strong TP contributions to student teachers is the feedback that one gets. Feedback is a mirror for looking back and forward on their teaching practice and performance progress. Feedback may also act as a criterion for setting future goals and developing ways for self-management skills. During teaching practice, mentorship practices improve student teachers' qualities and skills in; lesson planning, teaching and learning to teach, curriculum evaluation and development interpersonal relational skills, decision making, communication or interpersonal relation, and educational problem-solving. Student teachers' innovations and teaching professional development are sorely dependent on and much influenced by their mentors. Therefore, this study has a positive contribution to teacher training programs to include and enhance in-service professional development models on mentorship skills and sensitizing mentor teachers

to execute their roles responsively and in user-friendly mode.

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