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# Academic Leadership Journal

## [A Process Evaluation of the Mentorship Programme of the University of Education, Winneba](#)

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This evaluation of the mentorship programme of the University of Education, Winneba (UEW), is a part fulfillment of the requirements for the completion of a Postgraduate Diploma in Monitoring and Evaluation Methods course undertaken at the University of Stellenbosch, South Africa. The University of Education, Winneba (UEW) is a higher education institution mandated by the Act that established it to train teachers for the country's formal education sector. In line with this mandate, the University adopted the model that is made up of a 3-year on campus theory-based and one-year off-campus school-based. The one-year school-based experience is referred to as the Student Internship Programme (SIP). This is an intensive school-based student teaching-learning experience, which provides a structured, supervised and clinical experience for the student-teacher. The conceptual underpinnings of this programme is that teachers are supposed to be reflective decision makers who facilitate students' learning by reflecting on their practice, assess and improve their teaching behaviours.

The goals of the SIP through the School-University partnership include to:

- establish a reciprocal, collaborative and developing relationship with schools/colleges
- foster the development of a professional learning community through cross-fertilization of ideas
- facilitate school improvement through the development of a mentoring force in schools, whereby teacher mentors become change agents

With these the main objectives were to provide opportunities for interns to:

- apply and practice the principle of teaching and learning in the classroom setting and in the school context
- develop practical understanding and appreciation of the teachers' major roles as well as skills that are required to perform those roles
- broaden their experiences, understanding and awareness of the realities of teaching and working in a school
- develop professional attitudes and qualities and many more. (CETDAR, 2004)

Students on internship are supposed to fulfill some requirements which include: building a teaching portfolio over the period, write a statement of one's teaching philosophy and a reflective practice briefs and also carry out a classroom action research as a project work. Before students embark on their

internship, there are pre-placement negotiations with selected schools known as partnership schools, where the head of the institution identify experienced teachers to be mentors for the students.

It needs to be mentioned that the mentorship system in the partnership schools has been ongoing for some time now and it is supposed to be supporting the professional growth and development of student teachers as well as the experienced teacher-mentors in the field. In other words, training workshops organized for mentors by the university are supposed to serve as in-service training opportunities for the selected teacher-mentors. Also the mentorship system is supposed to help improve teacher quality through the acquisition of new knowledge & skills, new methodologies of teaching & learning, professional skills & concepts and build personal esteem and confidence in teachers' teaching profession. So the question is: are these objectives being fulfilled and to what extent?

## **Review of the literature**

From the literature, a common definition of mentoring is stated as:

*A nurturing process in which a more experienced or a more skilled person, serving as a role model, teaches, sponsors, encourages, counsels and befriends a less skilled or less experienced person for the purpose of promoting the latter's professional and/or personal development. (Anderson & Shannon 1988 p. 10)*

Taylor (1994) also states that:

*Mentoring involves a relationship in which the mentor, usually a more experienced individual, works closely with a protégé [mentee] for the purpose of teaching, guiding, supporting and facilitating the professional growth and development of a colleague. (Taylor, 1994 p. 48)*

This is what Matters (1994) has to say about mentoring; that it is:

*...a close relationship between two people where the mentor guides and assists the mentee to a level of personal and professional excellence not attained previously. (Matters, 1994, p. 4)*

What can be gathered from the above definitions is that mentoring is a sustained relationship and not a one-off or a casual relationship. The understanding we get from the definitions is that mentoring is a relationship, which should be established and developed for a period of time. This is because it is a period of nurturing, as stated in the first definition, and a process that takes time since you will be dealing with human beings. Mentoring requires certain traits or qualities from both parties for a successful and meaningful relationship. There are qualities and skills needed to be possessed by the one nurturing and the one receiving the nurturing. A trusting relationship would mean a degree of understanding shared by the two people.

It is commonly understood that a mentor is an individual who is usually more experienced, in a higher position in an organization/institution and sometimes older. The mentor is explicitly willing to assist others, more junior, the mentee, in developing their careers and to share his/her knowledge and experiences for the purpose.

So some frequently mentioned qualities of good mentors include the following: willingness to nurture

another person, open-mindedness, being people-oriented, being flexible and empathetic. For a mentoring relationship to be successful, the onus lies on the mentor to have a willing spirit or the desire to help the mentee, otherwise the relationship will go sour. The ability to do this implies that the mentor should be able to transfer techniques and skills to the mentee in an open manner. This may include providing direct assistance, demonstrations and providing critical feedback to the mentee. It will also involve role-modelling, reflecting with the mentee and discussing issues formally and informally at all times.

The argument is that becoming a professional teacher requires more than just acquiring the knowledge or theory needed to operate in the classroom. Rather “it involves acquiring a deep understanding of complex practises, of ethical conduct and higher-order learning which occurs in schools and classrooms (Shulman, in Watson, 2005)”. This recognition of the complex nature of teachers’ work and the practical knowledge teachers use in their professional practice has resulted in the movement to incorporate practicing teachers as mentors in teacher education programmes (Field & Latta, 2001; Mewborn & Stanulis, 2000).

Huling-Austin (in Jonson, 2002) states that there are five commonly accepted goals of mentoring relationships in the school context. These are to:

1. improve teaching performance
2. promote the personal and professional well-being of beginning teachers
3. transfer the culture of the school system to beginning teachers
4. increase retention of promising beginning teachers to a school
5. satisfy mandated requirements related to the programme.

In addition, the goal of the mentor in the relationship is to help the new teacher develop and enhance techniques including:

- Competency – mastery of the knowledge, skills and applications that effective teaching requires
- Self-confidence – belief in one’s ability to make good decisions, to be responsible and to be in control
- Self-direction – the assurance and ability to take charge of one’s personal, professional and career development and
- Professionalism – an understanding and assumption of the responsibilities and ethics of the profession.

What can be realized at this point is that, the more experienced person will attempt to find out the strengths and weaknesses of the less experienced person so that he/she will be able to assist him or her better. The mentor is supposed to provide psychological and emotional support for the mentee, but this is in the context of work. A less experienced staff can be down-hearted when he/she encounters frustrations, challenges and problems on the job. But with the intervention of the mentor’s support, encouragement and direction, the mentee will be able to address all such issues.

Therefore, a conceptualization of the mentorship aspect of the SIP programme theory may be understood to be on the assumption that teacher-mentor quality can be improved through the acquisition of new knowledge & skills in mentoring, new approaches to inducting student teachers into a school culture and also enhancing their professional skills & attitudes. In this vein, it is implied by the theory that if activities are implemented and monitored as planned, then student-teachers will be effectively mentored and the goal and objectives of the SIP, as stated above, will be achieved. In addition, the professional skill and personal esteem of teacher mentors will be enhanced. Programme theory concept therefore, may be described as the special relationship between programme goals and the target group (Babbie & Mouton, 2001) where an intervention is introduced that aims at changing something in the social world for the better (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). And in this case, improving the knowledge and skills of teacher-mentors by empowering and improving their quality of life as teacher mentors (Babbie & Mouton, 2001 p.343).

With this background and with the mentorship system existing for about six years, and still ongoing, it was considered appropriate to carry out a process evaluation study of what is happening. The purpose of this evaluation was to inform implementers about aspects of the programme that are going on well according to the goals and objectives set and areas that would need improvement. Information was gathered on the programme's outputs for example, the number of trained mentors, the number of mentors attending workshops yearly, workshop training contents and many more; and outcomes such as mentors' new knowledge and skills in mentoring, their positive and negative experiences.

It needs to be mentioned again that the goal of this particular process evaluation is to explore and document achievements and challenges of the aspect of the mentorship system in partnership schools/colleges and the training of mentors. It is to be noted that this process evaluation is not evaluating the whole SIP. This is because there are other aspects such as the upgrading of supervisory skills of University lecturers, strengthening the on-campus teaching practice, which includes the peer/micro teaching carried out before internship and others, which this initial study did not cover within the timeframe. In reality, a holistic process evaluation where all stakeholders including University supervisors, student-teachers (interns) and other stakeholders such as heads of partnership schools would have been the most appropriate. However, for lack of resources and limited time, that could not be done now. A holistic process evaluation is therefore being suggested for a future study.

Evaluation questions guiding this study are:

1. What kind of knowledge and skills do mentors gain at training workshops to empower them as mentors and how appropriate are these knowledge and skills?
2. What problems/challenges do mentors and implementers encounter on the programme?
3. How satisfied or dissatisfied are mentors with the mentorship system?
4. What kind of support do mentors receive on the programme?
5. What are some of the achievements of the mentorship system in partnership schools?

## **Methodology**

## **Evaluation design**

During process evaluation, information is usually gathered on programme outputs and outcomes; and in this particular case, it will include workshop products, teacher-mentors new knowledge, skills and attitudes gained and any improvement in their professional skills. Babbie and Mouton (2002) are of the view that programme monitoring which is part of process evaluation serves at least three functions: information on programme delivery, coverage (of target population) and information on programme implementation. Again, that process evaluation seeks to verify whether intended activities have been delivered and to the appropriate target group or not. In this vein, there are different verifications that have to be carried out; some using statistical data others inferences, others interpretations and reading meanings of responses to evaluate.

In this study, a qualitative methodology using interviews and documentary review methods were used in collecting data from teacher mentors and some project team members. A semi-structured interview guide designed with the focus on the objectives and outcomes of the programme were used in eliciting data from purposively sampled teacher-mentors and key project members. Part of the data collected were triangulated with data from the reviewed project documents including the project proposal, annual reports and workshop reports.

Although the mentorship programme is spread around several basic and senior high schools in Ghana, this study focused on four schools in the Winneba municipality. This is because of the proximity of the schools to me and the limited time to carry out the study.

Purposive sampling method was used in selecting two basic and two senior high schools that have been partners since the inception of the school-university partnership. The University is also noted for carrying out innovative studies in these schools. And in purposive sampling, respondents who are considered to be 'information rich' respondents (Bryman, 1988) are sampled to divulge useful information to inform a study. Thus, the selected mentors fit the purpose. Ten mentors and two implementers constituted the sample size.

## **Data Analysis and Discussion**

With the goal of this evaluation study being to inform implementers about aspects of the programme that are going on well and areas that need improvement, themes from the interview data were sorted out with that focus. Key phrases from the evaluation questions were used as initial code categories and then from the content analysis the codes were expanded. The analysis process may be described as highly iterative with reflexivity as the main characteristic of the researcher. I had to move forward and backwards in reading the transcripts to understand what interviewees were implying in their responses.

### **Training workshops**

It was evident from mentors' responses that there are three main types of training workshops organized for them at different times of the year. These are: the generic or new mentors training, re-training and subject specific training. These were confirmed by the project director and the lead facilitator as what should be done for mentors but it had not been possible most of the time for lack of limited resources. In all about 500 mentors are trained at each new mentors' training workshop and in all over 2,000 mentors have been trained though the number is not definite. All mentors interviewed had attended at

least two or all three of such training with the exception of one mentor who had attended only one. It was however noted that her subject specific area which is 'Special Education' did not receive attention during the period from 2003 to 2006, when Carnegie Corporation of New York supported the training workshops at UEW. All the training workshops were commended highly by interviewees as useful and appropriate. They indicated that the contents met their needs professionally and personally. The SIP components, which were the key aspects of the training sessions were adequately addressed to the understanding of all mentors who had participated in workshops. Some even went further to state the kind of new skills and knowledge gained at the workshops. Preparations and selection of mentors to training workshops were done by heads of partnership schools/colleges as intended by the programme. The criteria for selection, which included being an experienced teacher in his/her subject area, seemed to be followed by the heads. So the project design and standards were being delivered as intended.

### **Knowledge and skills mentors gained at training workshops to empower them as mentor**

All interviewees indicated in their responses that they had gained a lot of insight into the components of the SIP, though they could not remember exactly some of the topics taught at the workshops. This is what two respondents said:

I remember we were taking through topics on mentor & mentoring, qualities of a mentor, roles and responsibilities of a mentor and a mentee and how to conduct the mentoring process. I can't remember exactly the themes but the aspects that were emphasized included these. Then, because they were students we were also taught how to assess and score the students ... We were taking through the standards for teaching which had certain requirements and so when the student is teaching and exhibits those criteria or indicators you score 1, 2 or 0. I also remember we were taking through counseling [Mentor 1]

They really took us into so many things. They gave us insight into the programme ... On the counseling and Action Research and many other topics we gained insight into them. In fact, we had a deeper knowledge into what we knew just the surface like the Action research ... I think the courses [sessions] on Action research and Philosophy of teaching and the Reflective Practice have helped me a lot. In fact, I've had an experience so with that I'm able to help my mentee in the writing of their Action Research. [Mentor 5]

Again, almost all mentors interviewed indicated that they acquired skills in mentoring and particularly how to score a teacher teaching.

Then at the re-training, I realized that in the past we were just given huge, huge marks to students so the re-training put us on our toes to be very realistic because if you give a student 92%, 95% or 100% then that means there is no room for improvement or further development so in fact we were made to be very critical in awarding marks. So I learnt a lot and really enjoyed that session. [Mentor 3]

It has also help me a lot to use that as part of my teaching that is how to prepare, plan and assess what I have taught and also able to assess the students. If a lesson was not successful I have to find out why and what caused it and with this training I know how best to solve classroom problems. [Mentor 6]

Besides the knowledge and skills gained and mastering the components of the SIP, some

interviewees in addition learnt new things from the training, which they did not know before. This is what three of them had to say:

There were things that I learnt that I didn't know before ... especially on the assessment sheet. Hitherto we've been assessing but didn't know what we were doing ... [Mentor 2]

Indeed, building teaching portfolios and pre- and post- observation supervisions were all new to me. For instance, under the clinical supervision topic what you expect the student to do before entering a class to teach are all discussed with the student before and then what you expect from him when in the class too and a reflection of the lesson, you meet and discuss areas that need improvement afterwards and a lot of many things. [Mentor 3]

In fact, I didn't know that GES [*Ghana Education Service*] has a lesson note template because I hadn't seen one before. So it was there that I learnt about the GES structure and that of the University and that we should use the University one to assist mentees when they come I also learnt a lot from the facilitators on how to assess our lessons and lesson plan what to look out for etc. [Mentor 7]

What can be gathered from the above statements is that some in-service teachers though experienced lack certain knowledge and skills in the profession. It could be that they did not know and had not been using them or they were not practiced them at all. These revelations seem to call for frequent in-service training for all teachers in the field.

### **Mentors' satisfaction of training and the mentorship programme**

Every mentor interviewed as well as the project director and the lead facilitator, all recognized the enormous gains from the training. The project director and the lead facilitator based their evidence on workshop evaluation reports and other informal discussions they had had with mentors. Figure 1 below shows a network of quotations from interviewees expressing their views on the kinds of gains from the training and the programme.

It was evident that mentors gained diverse satisfaction and benefits from the training workshops and by taking part in the mentorship programme. Specific mention was made of the insight gained into the components of the SIP, which they needed most to be able to perform their roles effectively and efficiently as mentors. They specifically mentioned the use of the assessment criteria to assess mentees' teaching; how to observe and obtain evidence for certain indicators to grade students as useful knowledge gained at the training. As teachers, being reminded of techniques and skills learnt at the university was like a reminder and a refresher course for them. In addition, new knowledge and skills gained as professional teachers made most of them to rate the training contents highly satisfactory. Again, as professionals in society with other leadership roles and responsibilities, the gains from the workshops had equipped them to perform those other roles better. Also it was evident that the programme was influencing mentors positively in their involvement in school activities and co-curricular activities. As heads of departments, housemistresses and role-models for mentees, they were being re-oriented positively in their attitudes towards all school activities. For instance, being punctual and regular in school and taking part in almost all co-curricular activities were cited as some of the re-orientations. As family heads and women group leaders, sessions on counselling and reflective practice were deemed as appropriate and very useful for them.

It was evident from the responses that interviewees (mentors) were using the knowledge gained from the training in their mentoring work as well as in their everyday life as family heads, women group leaders and in various leadership positions in society.

This was very practical and I've been using what I learnt in my own house and even on my students in the school. As a housemistress some of the things we learnt there could be used in the society, in the church as a women's leader and so we learnt a lot for our own good as we were helping the mentees. [Mentor 1]

I take a few tit-bits from here and there and apply them to my situation as a family head, I mean the knowledge from the workshop like counseling and reflective practice, and use them in life – society is complex and for some of us, the knowledge we gained at the workshops have helped us. [Mentor 4]

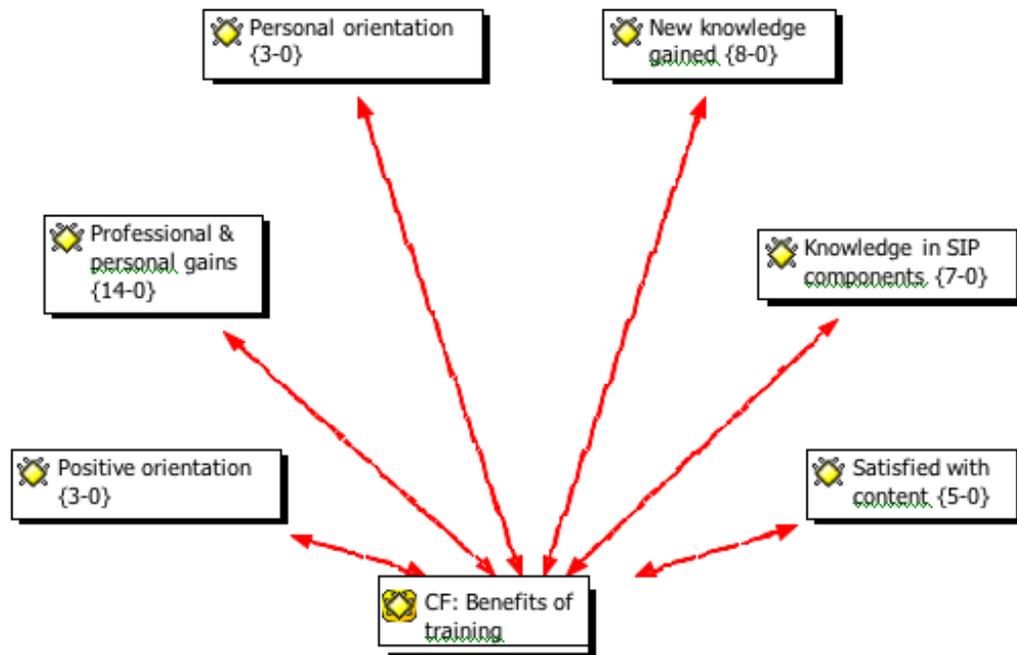
These responses were at least reassuring that the training sessions were holistically benefiting teachers who are supposed to be change agents in the society. The gains were positively orienting them personally and professionally. This is what one interviewee had to say:

Oh yes, I benefited a lot as I'm just saying as a mentor and for my personal dealings in society and in the school. As a teacher, my own teaching methods have changed positively. I now vary my teaching technique & skills. Because we were taking through teaching techniques and technical teaching skills... most of us realized that we were not using a variety of the techniques that we learnt at the University so after the workshop I've reformed and gone to use a lot of what I know and learnt from there. I will also say that due to my mentoring role, I've become a good supervisor and my supervision skills have improved. The point is from that time every year I get students to supervise and even supervise other teachers and assistance who work under me so as a Head of department and as a Housemistress my work has improved greatly. I know and can testify to that. I know as a mentor, I'm a role model too so I report to class regularly and punctually since I expect the mentee to emulate the same example. I can also say that because of my role as a mentor, it has helped me to take part in almost every co-curricular activity in the school. I mean, if I tell my mentees that I look at all their involvement in school activities then I have to be there and watching them. So in actual fact, it has played a positive role on my mentality of the whole professionalism of the teaching career. [Mentor 9]

It needs to be mentioned that there were overlaps in the satisfaction derived and knowledge and skills gained from the training and the mentorship programme. These have been put together as an overall benefit derived in figure 1 below

#### *Satisfaction and/or benefits mentors derive from the mentorship training and the system*

It was evident that mentors gain diverse satisfaction and benefits from the training workshops and by taking part in the mentorship programme. Specific mention was made of the insight gained into the components of the SIP, which they needed most to be able to perform their roles effectively and efficiently as mentors.



*Figure 1: A Network of benefits mentors gained from the training workshops & the programme*

They specifically mentioned the use of the assessment criteria to assess mentees' teaching; how to observe and obtain evidence for certain indicators to grade students as useful knowledge gained at the training. As teachers, being reminded of techniques and skills learnt at the university was like a reminder and a refresher course for them. In addition, new knowledge and skills gained as professional teachers made most of them to rate the training contents highly satisfactory. Again, as professionals in society with other leadership roles and responsibilities, the gains from the workshops had equipped them to perform those other roles better. Also it was evident that the programme was influencing mentors positively in their involvement in school activities and co-curricular activities. As heads of departments, housemistresses and role-models for mentees, they were being re-oriented positively in their attitudes towards all school activities. For instance, being punctual and regular in school and taking part in almost all co-curricular activities were cited as some of the re-orientations. As family heads and women group leaders, sessions on counselling and reflective practice were deemed as appropriate and very useful for them.

### **Challenges encountered by mentors**

Despite the benefits and satisfaction of the training workshops, there are challenges that interviewees encounter. These challenges can be seen from the perspective of the mentors during the process of mentoring and from the perspective of the project team's inability to effectively and efficiently implement activities to the satisfaction of mentors. I will highlight challenges from both perspectives but again there are overlaps with the grouping.

What mentors considered as challenges or problems, project team considered as source of worry or concern since they want to see a very successful implementation of the project. One of the challenges mentioned by most mentors was the lack of frequent visits by university lecturers. As a whole year programme, mentors were expecting to see university supervisors frequenting the schools and

interacting with them but it was not being done as expected. Almost all interviewees commented that university lecturers do not visit them as they expected. They seemed to have left the work on them as stated below:

I can say that poor communication between the university coordinators and supervisors and we the mentors is one of the major challenge. As I said earlier, we were expecting that the University coordinators will be visiting us to see what is going on but they seem to leave the work on us and do not come at all. [Mentor 7]

... they should come for interaction and see what is being done. For example, Prof ... came once and did supervision and later met the class teacher and mentee; sat together and discussed things together. You see this gives us the motivation that what we are doing is correct and that we are on course. So they should come and supervise. Last year they did not come at all. [Mentor 4].

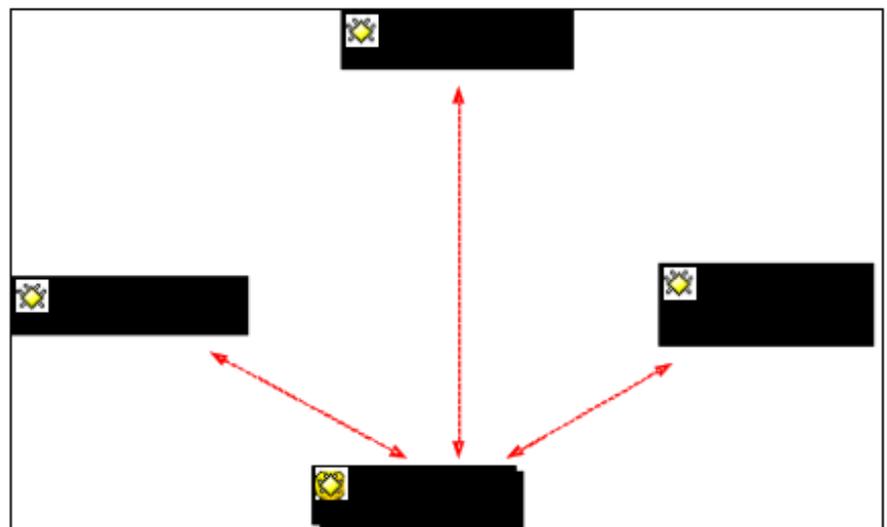
But explanation from the project team indicated that the model being practiced does not require university lecturers to be frequenting the schools. Rather mentors and the heads of schools were expected to play their roles in preparing the student teacher since they are partners in the training of teachers. There seems to be a misunderstanding or misconception of how this model operates from the traditional teaching practice. This implies that partnership schools and all stakeholders need to be educated well about the model. Again, it was evident that the lack of financial resources to continuously organize training sessions to empower mentors and reorient their thinking about this new model has resulted into some of these misconceptions. The inability of stakeholders to meet together and share or receive feedback from mentors was a source of concern to both implementers and mentors.

#### *Other challenges of mentors: mentees' attitudes to criticism*

Few mentors commented on the behavior of mentees and the attitude of some of them towards correction and constructive criticisms as a challenge sometimes. They mentioned the dressing code of mentees and how some of them talk back to authority as sometimes unacceptable to the school culture. It was not explicitly clear in their responses that the workload

was a challenge to them, though this had been stated in some workshop reports. However, it seemed implied in their emphasis on the remuneration being woefully inadequate as compared to the workload, that the amount of work involved in mentoring was a challenge. However, three of them indicated that some individual mentees in the past proved difficult by not submitting their lesson notes for marking and another not accepting corrections or effecting changes suggested to him. They lamented that:

Sometime some of them don't take instructions and corrections from mentors. Apart from that they do



*Fig: A network of challenges of mentors*

very well. After guiding them in the pre-observation conference they take it but sometimes they bring in their lesson notes late. They take 3-4 weeks before bring the bulk. [Mentor 3]

... after going through the components with him and correcting his lesson notes he'll go and make the same mistakes and I've to go through everything again. Those experiences can be tiresome. There are some difficult students who don't want to be corrected. [Mentor 5]

### *Inadequate remuneration*

All interviewees reacted to the meager allowance they were receiving at the end of the mentoring period, which is one academic year. Their views may be summed up in the statement below:

I'll also like to stress the point that the payment or allowance given to mentors is woefully inadequate. It doesn't attract new teachers to get themselves involved in the University-School partnership so the university should do well to pay mentors on time; and mistakes in paying mentors should be brought to the barest minimum. [Mentor 1]

Both the project director and the lead facilitator expressed the lack of financial resource as a challenge to fully meet the needs of mentors in terms of continuous training and retraining for them as well as motivating them financially.

For the increasing number of students, we are getting more mentors but then because of the limited resources we can't train many of them at a time. So instead of just abandoning the training, we are training them in bits at a time. Whatever money the university can afford, we use that to train them. [Lead facilitator]

The first challenge has been financial, how to get enough money to do the training because these people are accommodated by the programme, fed by the programme and their T&T is also covered by the programme so virtually it is free for the mentors and finding money for all these is not easy. [Project Director]

Organizing frequent training to upgrade the knowledge and skills of mentors and interacting with them to collect feedback from the field are some of the challenges faced by implementers.

For a long time now too no workshops are organized to upgrade our knowledge and skills and even the process of mentoring. If after training us you leave us on our own and we don't meet to give you the feedback how do you know we are doing the work well. So I think IEDE [*the university*] should be organizing workshops from time to time to refresh our knowledge, upgrade our skills and knowledge in mentoring. [Mentor 1]

This confirms the concerns of the project director and his team who see the increased number of students and the spread of schools all over the country with the limited number of mentors as a difficulty of the programme. It appears the closer look should be taken about the implementation activities.

### **Provision of support for mentors**

All mentors interviewed acknowledged that material support provided for the work was sufficient. These were in the form of the detailed handouts from workshops which they saw as a resource to be

consulted from time to time, internship handbooks which served as guides and the intern record book, which had different coloured leaflets used in assessing the performance of mentees. However, all of them were dissatisfied with the financial support they receive as remuneration for the work they do. In fact, the inadequacy of the allowance coupled with the delay in payment was demotivating and repelling other teachers from joining the programme.

We had handouts from them at the workshop so from time to time one can consult the handouts to refresh his mind. Also we had the internship handbook and the IRB for instance, when we had the problem with the philosophy and reflective practice I had to go through the chapters and explained it to my mentees and the steps he should follow and I think it helped them. Also the handouts from the workshops are very detailed and helpful [Mentor 5]

However, one interviewee was of the view that the support was not enough and that teaching learning materials should be included to assist the students.

If we can get some teaching materials from the University to enable us teach because when the students come on practice sometimes it is not easy to get some of these materials to work with or to teach with. They use their own money to prepare TLMs and it is a problem for them so support from the university will help a lot. [Mentor 6].

### **Suggestions for improvement**

All interviewees had something to say about the improvement of the programme and an expansion of the training session to cover other topics. Most of them suggested that more teachers should be trained to fill in the gaps of the retired ones and also heads of schools should be given similar training. They all commented that the programme should be continued since it was beneficial to all stakeholders – mentors, mentees, and the school as a whole.

I'd want it to continue but it looks like those of us who happened to be experienced mentors are all retiring, or on the retirement list and so if there could be regular training of new mentors; those in their 40's and early 50's who will last longer. [Mentor 3]

The programme is fantastic and it should continue but regular training for mentors should also be encouraged. At least, if the 2<sup>nd</sup> one which gives concrete standing should always be done and the first should be intensified [Mentor 4]

Some mentors suggested that ICT should be included in the contents of the training to enable mentors access knowledge from the internet. This is because students do a lot of search on the internet before coming for a lesson; so mentor-teachers ought to do likewise otherwise, they could be embarrassed in class if students happen to know more than the teacher. Therefore, they realized that they need to be upgraded in their knowledge and skills through frequent training and meetings to share feedback with implementers, as well as train more mentors as the experienced ones are retiring from active service and being promoted to the office.

There was also the suggestion from two interviewees that mentors should be evaluated from time to time for the University to know exactly what and how teachers were mentoring. The project team members were of the view that an independent body should be engaged to evaluate the programme.

Again, all interviewees stressed the need for more training to be organized for them to be able to update their knowledge and skills in the work they were doing. Some also suggested that whilst the allowance was to be reviewed upwards other incentives such as awards could be given to mentors as a source of motivation for hardworking mentors. It was suggested that the programme should be upgraded to an accredited course for all mentors and teachers to access the programme.

I think that mentors should be trained in ICT as well because we are in a global world. If you are training someone who is a computer literate and you yourself you are not literate you'll always give your work to a secretary to type. In fact mentors should be introduced to ICT during workshops at least how to type, search for materials, emails etc. because these students they are mentoring are computer literates and presently students are critical. Some of them before you enter the class they have gone and search for what you are about to teach and so if you don't take care you can be disgraced. [Mentor 3]

But there should be a lot of retraining and then random sampling of mentors for evaluation, a questionnaire to these mentors to find out how did it go, did it meet the needs of mentors, how effective were the handouts and books, all these will help and to get some insight because some of the mentors don't know how to use the assessment instrument. [Mentor 5]

Every interviewee reacted that the allowance should be reviewed to motivate teachers to be dedicated and committed and at the same time for other teachers to participate. One interviewee was of the view that alternative form of motivation should be sought.

The other suggestion is that mentors should be motivated not just financially but maybe they should be recognized and rewarded either by promotion or whatever and that can help them work very well and give of their best and be committed to the programme. [Project Director]

I'll recommend that this programme continues because when the students come ... even the new face in the class is a source of motivation for the children to learn and at the same time when these students come they motivate the children so that they do their best. Again, they can honour some mentors by giving them some incentives. [Mentor 2]

But despite these achievements from the training workshops, mentors believe that they still need more training sessions with additions or modifications. They argued that most experienced teachers were aging and therefore retiring from active service. As such, they have to be replaced with new ones who have to be trained. At the same time, those already in the system needed to have their knowledge and skills frequently updated and consolidated. Also mentors need to give feedback to the University after a year or a period of mentoring for them to know what is happening in the field. A workshop session will help achieve such a suggestion. This will be in line with one of the goals of the SIP, which is to: 'establish a reciprocal, collaborative and developing relationship with schools/colleges'. From the recommendations, it was suggested that a session on ICT should be included in training contents. Three people were of the view that the programme could be modified and upgraded to a regular credit course for mentors to gain accredited certificates and diplomas. This would be an incentive for salary adjustment and for obtaining promotion in the service. At the same time it will increase the number of mentors in the system to address the shortage issue. These need to be considered by the project implementers.

## **Conclusion and Recommendation**

On the whole, the study found that the mentorship system in partnership schools and colleges is being implemented as described in the project design. As a partnership programme with schools and colleges, heads of schools play their roles by selecting mentors for training by the university. Mentors admitted gaining the necessary knowledge, skills, attitudes and dispositions from training given to perform their duties as mentors. They also receive support in terms of materials needed for the work, for which they are satisfied. As such recommendations to help improve the programme may include the following, that:

- it will be necessary for the university authorities to consider improving the motivation of mentors in the form of revising their remuneration for work done. This would ensure their commitment and dedication to duty.
- the authorities should also consider other forms of motivation such as awards and recognitions during celebrations.
- it will be necessary for implementers to organize more training workshops, particularly to consolidate and update what mentors gained during earlier training sessions and even introduce new sessions such as computer learning skills in their subject specific areas.
- Heads of schools should engage new experienced teachers to be trained as mentors as the older ones retire or are promoted
- There should be seminars or forums or conferences organized for stakeholders to share knowledge and feedback from their experiences
- It is clear from the findings that if the programme is benefiting mentors, schools and student-teachers as highlighted, then if mentors' needs are addressed the programme will continue to be outstanding and would benefit many more in-service teachers who participate in the mentoring system. Therefore, implementers should explore the needs of mentors and try to address them.

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