

# Enhancing Teacher Preparation Programme to Minimize Challenges of Mentors in the In-In-Out Programme of Holy Child College of Education

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to find out how the teacher preparation programme was responding to the challenges of mentors and mentees in playing their roles so as to employ the appropriate strategies in addressing them to enhance the programme.

Enhancing teacher preparation programme to minimize challenges faced by mentors in the out programme of Holy Child College of Education through selected intervention strategies was the aim of the study.

The specific objectives were to assess the role of mentors in the out programme and put in place relevant interventional measures to improve its effectiveness. The research questions include; to what extent were mentors providing support and guidance needed? And to what extent would the selected interventional measures implemented minimize the challenges of mentors.

The sample size of the study was 30. This was made up of 18 females and 12 male mentors. They were randomly and purposively selected respectively. The instrument used for collecting the data for the study was questionnaire. The intervention used were; series of lectures by out programme coordinator on the qualities of mentors, organisation of a three day training course for mentors on their attitudes towards mentees and inclusion of weekends on the study cycle meeting by link tutors.

During the pre-intervention stage, the data collected revealed the following: absenteeism of mentors, lack of regular discussion and supervision by mentors, lead mentors and lack of appropriate teaching and learning materials. Mentors did provide support and guidance needed after the intervention in the areas of lesson planning, facilitating mentees' learning and offered suggestions.

**Keywords:** Mentor, Mentee, Challenge, intervention

## Introduction

All young people and children have the potential to succeed in life and contribute to the development of society. However, not all children get the support they need to enable them thrive.

According to Little (1992), an astounding 17.6million young people nearly half the population of young people between 10 and 18 years live in situations that put them at risk of living up to their potential. Without immediate intervention by caring adult they could make choices that not only undermine their future, but ultimately the economic and social well being of the nation. The past role of teachers in the supervision of students was concentrated on socializing the students into the profession and was one of pastoral care more than anything else. This is an important role and will continue, but in the change to a more school based Teacher Education programme, it is not sufficient and must now be augmented.

As part of upgrading Teacher Training Colleges into Diploma Awarding Institution levels, the In-In-Out Programme was established, to expose trainee teachers to learn on the job, get used to the realities on the ground and above all, for effective teaching practice. This has brought a shift, where one year extensive training is required to equip the students for the task ahead under the supervision of a Mentor, a Lead Mentor and a Link Tutor (Department for Education, 1993).

It must be mentioned that the new Teacher Education Programme emphasises the need to give general training to teachers at the initial Training Colleges. It therefore departs sharply from the trend of specialisation in the 3-year Post Secondary Programme. The products of the curriculum could therefore specialise in any one of the following areas: Pre-school Teaching, Primary Education, Junior and Senior High School Teaching, as they climb the professional ladder (Department for Education, 1992). This arrangement will ensure that the available resources would be concentrated on the training of one category of quality teachers. The main goal of the new

curriculum therefore, is focused on the production of generalist teachers capable of teaching all subjects at the basic level.

Field (1992) says the process of the supervision of pre-service student teacher when they go into schools for practicum has been transformed markedly in the United Kingdom and in the United States. In the United Kingdom, the task of supervising teachers in schools has changed. They are now asked to be real partners with the Department of Education in Universities in the task of pre- service Teacher Education. The need to enhance teacher preparation programme to minimize the challenges facing mentors in the In-In-Out Programme of Holy Child College of Education is of paramount interest to the researcher. In order to achieve this, mentors are to observe mentees' work regularly throughout the lesson and discuss identified weakness and strengths of mentees after every teaching. In addition, they should use appropriate motivation for mentees' strengths and suggestions for remedies of their short coming. Mentors are also to ensure that lesson notes and other teaching learning materials prepared by mentees are adequate and appropriate (Department of Employment, Education and Training, 1993).

Mentees on the other hand, are to listen to suggestions from their mentors and establish a cordial relationship with them. The relationship should be based on trust and confidence. Mentees are to go by the laid down rules and regulations of the In-In-Out Programme. During our supervision exercise to the schools of attachments of Holy Child College of Education the researcher observed that the above listed responsibilities of the mentors and mentees were not done.

Through further observation, interviews and questionnaires the following causes of the problem under study were identified; lack of guidance and support from mentors, very critical and demoralising comments on identified short coming of mentees. On the part of mentees there was lack of commitment to work. They were not cooperative and they were disrespectful, above all, they were not ready to listen to suggestions from their mentors.

Tisher (1995) commented that student teachers generally do not learn much although there is a great deal to be learned from experienced teachers, because they do not know what to look for and because the teachers often do not recognise how much there is to be learned from their own teaching. According to the Department of Education and Science (1992), teachers have now realised that they have to become teacher educators rather than supervisors in the former sense. The word being used to describe them and their new task is 'Mentor'. Teachers in school are now entrusted with the lion's share of educating student teachers in the teaching profession. Teachers need to know what skills and competencies should be developed by the student teachers in their care in order for them to be equipped to begin teaching in a full time capacity, and what skills and competencies they themselves need in order to be able to mentor the student teachers appropriately and adequately. Teachers also need to study the live experience of student teachers as they practice in schools so that they understand the feelings, fears and stresses that the student teachers are experiencing as embryo teachers.

### **Data Collection**

The instruments used for data collection for both pre and post intervention were questionnaires. The questionnaires were on general information of mentors and mentees, information on observation of work, listening to suggestions, trust, respect and guidance given by mentors.

To ensure the validity of the project instruments, a draft was developed based on personal observation and informal interaction the researchers made with the mentees and mentors.

The draft instrument of the questionnaire for mentors was pre-tested to improve its validity and reliability. These provided the needed feedback, which enabled the instruments to be developed properly for mentors.

### **Research Methodology**

#### **Sample**

In order to make data collection and analysis handy and economical without sacrificing accuracy and the dependability of result, thirty students were selected and used for the study. The students were randomly selected. The random selection was made as follows:

The names of all mentees in each class were written on small strips folded and placed in a box. This was shaken to ensure mixing. Seven names were selected from the box, one at a time, recorded and each one returned into the box before picking the next one, that is random sampling with replacement. Any time a name was picked a second time it was put back, the box was juggled, and a replacement was picked in place. . The

random sampling method was used because here every member of the population stands an equal chance of being selected. Thirty mentors were selected purposively for the research.

The total number of respondents to the questionnaires was thirty. The breakdown is as follows;

Number of female respondents	18
Number of male respondents	12
Total	30

The schools of attachments were, Holy Child Practice, Mpintsin Zion, Ankyernyin District Assembly, Benso Oil Palm Plantation, Subri Industrial Plantation Limited school complex, Adum Bansa Anglican and Assorko Essaman Catholic Primary schools

## Results

Descriptive analyses supported by tables are the main tools used. Table 1 indicates that mentors did not provide much of the needed support and guidance to the mentees at the pre-intervention stage. Others also offered very critical and demoralizing comments on identified shortcomings of mentees. The result shows that the mentors needed help to enable them go through their mentoring exercise. This made the researcher put in an intervention in the form of a talk and seminar for mentors and in- service training for the mentees.

Table1 Support and Guidance Provided By Mentors at the Pre-Intervention Stage

Support and Guidance Provided by Mentors	Yes		No		Total Frequency	Total Percentage
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage		
Lesson Planning.	9	30	21	70	30	100
Facilitating mentees learning.	11	37	19	63	30	100
Lesson demonstration.	7	23	23	77	30	100
Assessment of mentees work.	9	30	21	70	30	100
Supervising mentees teaching throughout the lesson.	8	27	22	73	30	100
Offering suggestions	12	40	18	60	30	100
Offering demoralizing comments	25	75	5	25	30	100
Sharing of experience after observation of teaching	11	37	19	63	30	100
Being trusted and respectful	10	33	20	67	30	100

Table 2 Mentors Providing Support and Guidance at the Post- Intervention Stage

Mentors Providing Guidance and Support	Yes		No		Total Frequency	Total Percentage
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage		
Lesson Planning .	24	80	6	20	30	100
Facilitating mentees learning.	26	86.7	4	13.3	30	100
Lesson Demonstration.	27	90	3	10	30	100
Assessment of mentees work.	26	86.7	4	13.3	30	100
Supervising mentees teaching throughout the Lesson.	29	96.7	1	3.3	30	100
Offering suggestions.	27	90	3	10.0	30	100
Offering demoralizing comments.	0	0	30	100	30	100
Sharing of experience after observation of teaching.	25	83.3	5	16.7	30	100
Being trusted and respectful.	28	93.3	2	6.7	30	100

Table 2 above reveals from the observation and questionnaire that 93.3% of mentors were trusted and respected. This conforms to what Smith and Alford (1993) said that a mentor had to be a father figure, a teacher, a role model, an approachable counsellor, a trusted friend, a challenger, and encourager to young ones.

The table also revealed that 83.3% of mentors shared experience after observation of teaching whilst 0% offered demoralizing comments, 90% of mentors offered both suggestion and lesson demonstration.

### Discussion

As clearly seen in Table 1, at the pre-intervention stage mentors did not provide the support and guidance mentees needed. For instance 9 out of the 30 mentees' lessons were planned with their mentors; also 7 out of the 30 demonstrated their lesson during teaching.

In Table 2 at the post-intervention stage it could be seen that all 30 mentees said they had benefited from the programme whilst 28 of them now listen to suggestions from mentors. This confirms what Johnson (1993) said that mentoring provides significant benefits.

The responses above go to buttress what Harris and Winner (2004) said on mentoring skills that mentors should try to listen carefully and offer possible solutions without passing judgment. In addition practical suggestion rather than criticism or preaching, are usually most helpful. Table 2 reveals from the observation and questionnaire that 93.3% of mentors were trusted and respected. This conforms to what Smith and Alford (1993) said that a mentor had to be a father figure, a teacher, a role model, an approachable counsellor, a trusted friend, a challenger, and encourager to young ones.

The table also revealed that 83.3% of the mentors shared experience after observation of teaching whilst 0% offered demoralizing comments, 90% of mentors offered both suggestions and lesson demonstration. The data from the respondents indicates that the interventions employed by the researcher have been very effective and have minimized the challenges of mentors in the in-in out programme of Holy Child College of Education.

### Conclusion

The general conclusion that can be drawn from the findings of the study is that mentors' attitude changed towards the whole programme, a healthy relationship has developed between them and they are now competent in doing their work.

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