Journal of
Education and Practice
(JEP)

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CARI
Journal

Journal of Education and Practice
ISSN 2520-467X (Online)
Vol.8, Issue No.9, pp. 1 – 19, 2024
www.carijournals.org

Empowering Novice Teachers through Mentorship and Supported Teaching in Schools: Implications for Education Policy and Practice

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Accepted: 3rd Nov, 2024, Received in Revised Form: 27th Nov, 2024, Published: 17th Dec, 2024

Abstract

Purpose: This study aimed to support novice teachers in teacher education institutions in Ghana on how mentoring and supported teaching in schools (STS) can be used to shape the novice teachers thought on the school profile dimension throughout the mentoring relationship. The purpose is to review literature on mentoring using Hudson's five factor mentoring model process and STS and think through how mentoring and STS can be improved in teacher preparation. The Hudson's five factor model of mentoring was used as the conceptual framework.

Methodology: The study was conducted using document analysis (secondary data sources), such as reports, online papers, or datasets that have already been gathered from Google, ERIC, Research gate, and Academia.

Findings: The findings of the study were that the STS has created an opportunity for mentors to spend time with their mentees and share their professional and pedagogical experiences. Again, it is believed that structured mentoring, feedback and reflections would enhance the student teachers capacity to succeed.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy: The study suggests that there should be on-going professional development for mentors, structured mentoring programmes, feedback and reflection mechanisms to check for coherence through assessment procedures and monitor students' progress. Case study research can also serve to illuminate both positive and problematic aspects of the STS mentoring.

Keywords: *Mentoring, Supported Teaching in Schools (STS), Learning, Pedagogy, Professional Development.*

1. Introduction

The needs of all students, including student teachers, were said to be the main emphasis of the global movement for educational reform (Darling-Hammond, 2017). To improve teacher performance and preparation, several educational policies have been implemented globally over the past 20 years (Avalos et al., 2010; Kruss, 2008). The "Professional development schools" in the USA (The Holmes Group, 2007), the B.Ed. teacher preparation programme in Namibia are typical examples of how some of these policies have targeted the relationship between teacher education and teaching in schools and how to prepare reflective and critical educational practitioners. Again, the establishment of new institutions in Uruguay to broaden the scope and focus on mentoring was seen as one of the ways to ensure academic performance during these reforms.

In Ghana, the partnership among the Ministry of Education (MoE), Transforming Teaching, Education and Learning (T-TEL), the Ghana Education Service (GES), the teacher education institutions (Universities and Colleges of Education) and other development partners in teacher mentoring and pedagogy training is a succinct example (Tengepare, 2020; Armah, 2018). Mentoring has its roots in ancient Greek mythology, when Ulysses entrusted Mentor, a devoted and trustworthy friend, with the care of his infant son Telemachus (Wong & Waniganayake, 2013; Irby, et al., 2020). In addition to serving as Telemachus's mentor and protector, the mentor also served as a tutor, adviser, and enforcer while his father was away (Doan, 2013; Eby, et al., 2007). This type of mentoring was intended to help Telemachus develop the abilities and information necessary to be a capable and responsible citizen (Agbamu, 2018; Ambrosetti, 2016).

The relationship between an older person and a younger person that lasts for a while and is focused on the needs of the younger person is the most popular definition of mentoring (Melocoton, 2017, cited in Ryan et al., 2002). Thomas et al., (2017) state that mentoring has been shown to increase student achievement and retention rates across all educational levels. Mentoring programmes are being promoted more and more as a way to encourage students academic success and ultimately, economic progress.

According to Haynes (2019), a mentor-mentee connection is crucial to successfully assist new teachers. These connections will enable new teachers to more effectively manage the difficulties they face in the classroom each day (Olsen, 2016). Not only do new teachers struggle to settle into their teaching roles, but experienced teachers also struggle to settle into their mentor roles (Wilson & Huynh, 2020). The effects of mentoring on student performance have been demonstrated to be favourable in terms of increased rates of achievement and retention, sociological and emotional support, improved skills and personal growth, and professional advancement (Dominguez & Kochan, 2020). Furthermore, a student capacity to learn is enhanced by ongoing and caring interaction with a mentor (Cullingford, 2016).

There are currently 46 colleges of education (Adu-Yeboah, & Kwaah, 2018) which are campuses of the traditional universities and fifteen (15) national public universities in Ghana (Eshun, et al., 2020). Nine (9) additional professional institutions have been accorded public

university status. Again, there are seven (7) institutions in the Chartered private tertiary institutions category (Gyamera, 2024). Through mentorship during classroom practice, student teachers in these higher institutions gain more teaching experience. They experience significant difficulties as well that impact their practice, which results in occasionally subpar instruction. Therefore, this study will be helpful to student teachers, educators, supervisors and concerned authorities in teacher education as it aims to highlight the gains and how to surmount the difficulties of mentoring in teacher preparation.

Statement of the Problem

Mentoring in the teacher preparation process has emerged as a critical component for developing effective, confident, and reflective teachers. Supported teaching in schools, where pre-service teachers receive guided instruction and feedback from experienced mentors plays a pivotal role in transitioning theoretical knowledge into practical classroom application. Despite its importance, there are significant challenges in implementing holistic and effective mentoring programme in the Ghanaian setting. These include inconsistencies in mentoring quality, poor structured mentoring framework, and lack of collaboration between teacher preparation institutions and schools of attachment. These often leave student teachers under prepared for the realities of the classroom. These obstacles in mentoring further hinder the development of practical teaching skills and professional growth, raising concerns about the overall effectiveness of mentoring and STS in student teacher preparation. Therefore, this article critically review literature and examines the mentoring process, framework and its impact on STS to ensure that future teachers in particular, are equipped with the skills and confidence necessary for success.

Purpose of the Study

1. To find out how the design and delivery of the STS mentorship programme impact the readiness of student teachers for the teaching profession.
2. To find out the perceived barriers to successful student teacher mentorship and STS, and what can be done to improve the overall quality of these programme.
3. Ascertain how technology can be used to create a more collaborative, and data-driven student teacher mentorship experience, and its implications for teacher education.

2. Conceptual framework

The study was conceptualised based on Hudson's five factor mentoring model process. Personal attributes, system needs, instructional expertise, modelling and feedback (Li et al. 2021). This study investigates the mentoring experiences of the mentor and mentee as a result of the need for student teachers of tertiary education in Ghana and quality supervision in the STS mentoring and the mandate to provide quality education.

Hudson's Five Factor Mentoring Model Process

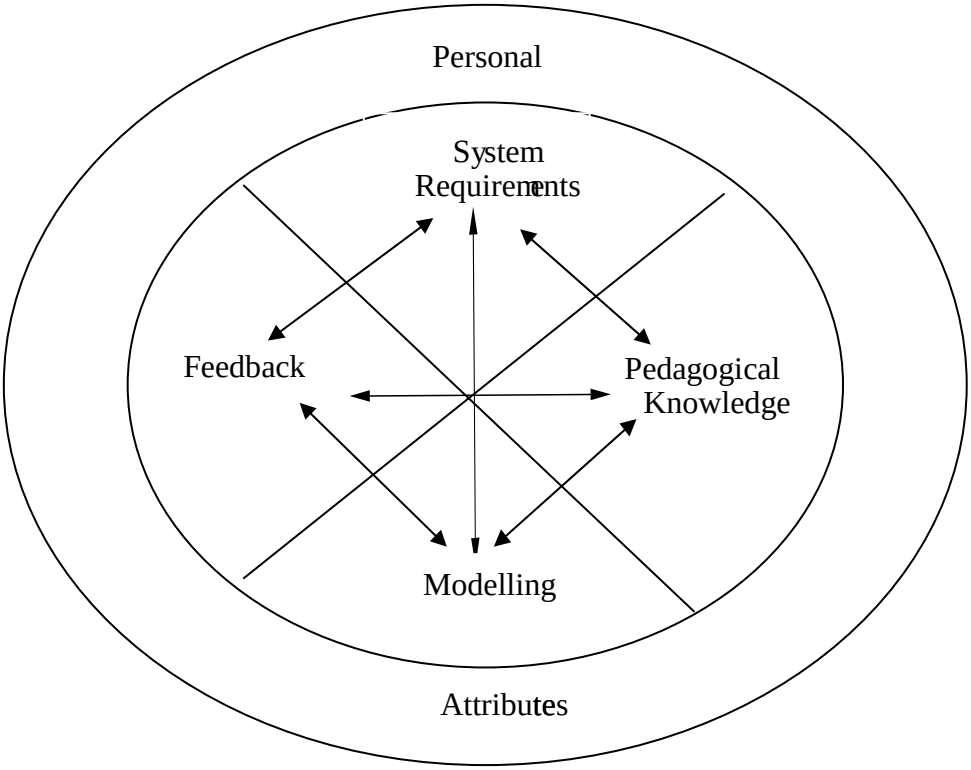


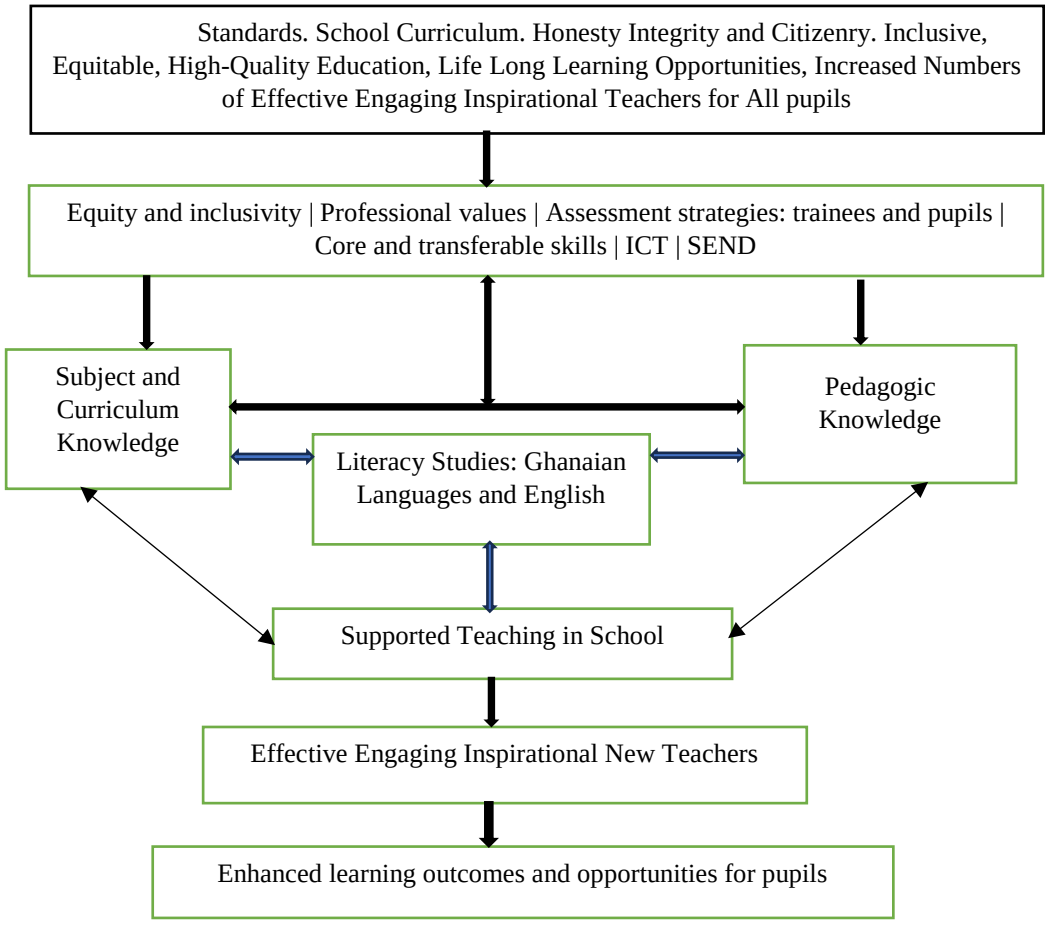
Figure 1. *Five factor mentoring model* ***(****Galamay-Cachola et al., 2018).*

According to Galamay-Cachola et al., (2018), ***personal attributes*** which is the first factor sought to inspire mentors self-confidence and good attitudes in the mentees and to urge the latter to reflect on their instructional methods. ***Systems requirements*** also require mentors to explain to student teachers that the educational system has standards, such as objectives, rules and curricula. ***Pedagogical knowledge*** indicates that mentors can practically create lesson plans for teaching. Mentors must talk about the preparation process, including how to use teaching learning resources, the appropriate pedagogical approaches and the mentees understanding of the subject matter (Sempowicz & Hudson, 2011). In situations where regulating student behaviour during classes presents challenges, the mentor must support the mentee since the mentor has earned the necessary experience in dealing with a variety of student personality types and behavioural peculiarities. The mentor can also help the mentee with the art of questioning by teaching them how to create a low-order or high-order thinking questions (Kohlmeier et al., 2011; Henning et al., 2015).

Learning plans have a set framework and mentors can go through the various components and how they are carried out. Mentors can also share their pedagogical expertise on how to evaluate learning and how it relates to curriculum, pedagogy and assessment (Bird & Hudson, 2015). With ***modeling***, the mentor must set an example of appropriate classroom teaching techniques suitable for student learning. These include; instruction, effective teaching, classroom

management, hands-on learning, and well-designed lessons, if the emphasis on the mentor's readiness as a teacher can foster the development of desired teaching traits in the mentee (Bird & Hudson, 2015). ***Feedback*** explains how the mentee is supported in examining lesson plans, watching how the mentee teaches, giving oral and written comments and providing additional guidance on the mentees appraisal of their teaching and how the mentees create a learning environment, effective mentors guiding the mentee and explain expectations (Bird & Hudson, 2015). According to Hudson's methodology, practising teachers who receive effective mentorship can strengthen their pedagogical strategies and help their students learn more (Tomlinson, 2019). The learning that takes place in the classroom can be significantly impacted by skillfully analysing the teaching performance of practising teachers. Effective mentoring and oversight of education are essential since student learning is the main goal of schools.

The role of STS within the National Teacher Education Curriculum Framework (NTECF) of the 4-year B.Ed. Programme



Source: Adopted from T-Tel (2018)

Figure 2 illustrate the role of STS within the NTECF of the 4-year B.Ed. Programme and how mentors and link lecturers as part of STS assist student teachers apply and enhance the information, skills and knowledge gained in university-based training in the classroom.

Demystifying supported teaching in school

Ghana's teacher preparation programme should be seen as an applied professional certification that calls for student teachers to use the theories and techniques, they are concurrently studying in their course work in real-world situations (Amakyi & Ampah-Mensah, 2014). The core of the current Ghana's teacher training programmes, that is, Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) degrees, is the STS (Dankwah et al., 2021). The STS requires the student teachers to spend a number of hours in the classroom based on the dictates of the curriculum. The STS is designed to place student teachers in the teaching and learning environment, based on the programme of study of the prospective student teachers (NTECF). For the first time in the history of teacher education in Ghana, student teachers are required to be available in the schools throughout the four years they spend in the university or college. In every semester, students are required to visit their placement schools once every week for a minimum of six weeks and maximum of twelve weeks to observe what goes on at the various schools and thus, study the school profile dimension, and report in their journals for assessment. The STS is based on the constructivist philosophy and aligns with situated cognition (Margevica-Grinberga & Odina, 2021). At the first year, the student teachers are called beginning teachers. At the second year, the student teachers become developing teachers. At the third year, they are referred as embedding teachers, whereas they are extending teachers when they get to the final year.

The first three years require the student teachers to systematically use observation technique of data collection to be abreast with the daily activities that take place in and around the school. During this period, the student teacher is expected to reflect on the things observed and discuss in meaningful ways the extent to which they agree or disagree based on their own teaching and learning beliefs as informed by research. At the end of the third year, the extending student teachers, under the STS, are to demonstrate the actual teaching and learning in a selected school for one semester. Through STS, student teachers can put their newly gained information, skills and understanding into practice, with the help of mentors and link lecturers. The pillars of the NTECF, which include subject and curriculum knowledge, literacy studies in Ghanaian languages and English, pedagogic knowledge and STS outline the knowledge, abilities and understanding required for effective teaching (Buabeng et al., 2020). The B.Ed. Curriculum places a strong emphasis on providing student teachers with strong support and mentoring throughout the school-based components in each year of their training. To satisfy the National Teachers Standards (NTS) of Ghana, this necessitates the presence of certified mentors in all partnering schools who can provide assistance and evaluate student teachers development.

The curriculum also emphasises how crucial it is for university lecturers to prepare student teachers for their field experiences and incorporate in-school learning into their entire education. The curriculum places a strong emphasis on the value of placements that are supported, assessed and used to gradually improve novice teacher. In the first year, there is a huge emphasis on structured, directed and school-based learning activities where students report on teachers instruction and the learning of the younger pupils. As a result, there is an increased emphasis on school-focused training where the student teacher, with the mentor's assistance, assumes increasing levels of responsibility for lesson design, assessment of the

learners in their care and classroom inquiry and action research. For the four years of training, STS placements last for extended lengths of time in schools. Thirty percent (30%) of new teachers training is spent in the classroom. The training period for the kindergarten and primary (KG-P3 and P4-6) specialisations will be spent in classrooms with the assistance of mentors. Mentors and lecturers will evaluate aspiring teachers growth in the competencies and abilities outlined in the NTS document and will assist them in moving forward in that direction. According to Stronge (2018), student teachers will gain skills in learning planning as part of the STS component of the curriculum.

Gaitas and Alves Martins' (2017) research suggest that primary school teachers felt it was challenging to adopt diverse instructional strategies such as planning to teach the basic school curriculum, teaching the curriculum and demonstrating differentiated instruction practices for diversity and inclusivity, demonstrating support for the learning and development of learners. With the STS, preparation of teaching learning resources (TLR) is part of the training in student-teacher mentoring. Again, evaluation of students progress is another focal area. Here, performance assessments as part of learning and for learning, addressing common misunderstandings and misconceptions in assessments, and recognising students progress are quite key. Supporting transitions to higher grades while promoting inclusion and equity for all learners, regardless of their background, reflective practice and classroom inquiry. These include, engaging in critical reflection on practice as learners and with colleagues, performing organised observation, collecting data, assessing and publishing reports. Furthermore, action research which borders on investigating teaching and learning and other areas of the school and its community to enhance students learning and advance teachers practices are carried out (McNiff, 2013). Professional portfolio building that includes the student teachers reflective journal (SRJ) with evaluations of their teaching and target setting for personal and professional growth is a good place to start for continuous professional development (CPD). Another key component of the STS is professional ethics. Upholding the legal and ethical standards of behaviour set out by the profession while consistently exhibiting the professional ideals and conduct required of a teacher (Ampomah, 2021). Leadership and management skills on how to lead in the classroom and the larger school community, including morning assemblies, school and cluster-based in-service training, staff meetings, parent-teacher association (PTA) and school management committee (SMC) meetings, forums and durbars for the larger community are fundamental and adaptable abilities which require critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, innovation, teamwork, and ICT/media to support learning are critical under the STS (Connor & Pokora, 2017; Casely-Hayford et al., 2013).

Mentoring a strategy for modifying practices

Due to the complexity of teaching, teacher preparation programmes must offer both the mentor and the mentee intensive instruction, such as mentorship by experienced teachers (Asuo-Baffour et al., 2019). The pre-service experiences of student teachers in teacher education programmes must include mentoring (Hudson, et al., 2024). Since experienced mentors offer vocational and emotional support to comparably less experienced mentees, the student teachers proper and effective mentoring is crucial to the student teaching programme (Menges, 2016;

Cakir & Kocabas, 2016). Student teachers gain an understanding of the teaching process, particularly the learning of the necessary fundamental abilities and professional information, through mentoring (Mena et al., 2017).

Academic mentoring entails assisting students in raising their test scores, accruing more credits, maintaining their motivation and remaining enrolled in their courses (Campbell & Campbell, 1997; Masehela & Mabika, 2017). In addition, academic mentoring, in the words of Masehela and Mabika (2017), "involves a mentor who is skilled in a specific academic area of competence and should share that knowledge and abilities with their mentees" (p. 170). To examine precisely the academic performance of at-risk university students, Sorrentino (2006) assessed a mentoring programme called Search for Education, Elevation and Knowledge (SEEK). The findings showed that at-risk students who had mentors had GPAs that were higher and were less likely to be expelled from school. In their assessment of the mentoring programme at the University of Venda, Masehela and Mabika (2017) discovered comparable outcomes.

Benefits of mentoring to the novice teacher

The benefits that mentoring can have on those involved are frequently taken into account when designing higher education programmes (McConnell et al., 2019; Tinoco-Giraldo et al., 2020). Those who participate in mentoring relationships frequently gain a variety of advantages, including increased access to advice and pertinent information, improved self-assurance, the chance to encourage practice-based reflection, more personal support, increased effectiveness, knowledge of the organisation's culture, politics and philosophy and the ability to confide in someone about worries or ideas. Other frequent links with mentored mentees include "greater job satisfaction, higher compensation, faster promotion, tighter career objectives and the increased likelihood that a mentee will also become a mentor" (Long,1997, p. 204). Mentoring can help with career growth, networking, professional development and personal identification traits for mentees in higher education. Mentors who provide advice on the development of writing, research and analytical skills can draw attention to professional growth.

Student teachers can benefit from working on research projects together and then co-authoring articles to get experience with the challenges of academic research (Betteney et al., 2018). Networking can happen when mentors bring their mentees to conferences or meetings of professional educational associations. When obtaining socialisation through professional growth, a mentor can best explain to a mentee the "unwritten or ambiguous conventions" that exist within academics. Barrett et al., (2017) gave the qualities of mentors that mentees who had received mentoring in higher education enumerated. Mentees indicated that mentors were supportive and accessible to them. They further remarked that they were first, knowledgeable about the culture and expectations at their institution. They were respected as members of the institution and thought to be outstanding researchers and scholars, and last but not least, mentors shared a similar philosophical orientation with the mentees (Obeng, 2019). Although most people think that mentees are the only ones who benefit from mentoring relationships, mentors also benefit from them. For instance, the mentee and mentor could both benefit from

a great deal of support with various obligations. Additionally, the mentor can use the gathered experiences to broaden the mentees experience (Lin et al., 2021). Other gains for the mentor include a renewed perspective of his or her career, improved job satisfaction, self-reflection, new professional connections, peer recognition, and a proactive approach to learning and development (Afolabi et al., 2015).

When discussing the benefits of mentoring in higher education; networking, professional and career growth and personal identity traits come to the fore. Scholarly thinking of mentors is revitalised or provocatively stimulated. Research and teaching skills and expertise may be imparted together with academic information and experiences. (Hanawalt & Hofsess 2020). The costs of mentoring are frequently lower than those of other employee development activities (Lindsay et al., 2016). Institutions might also observe a rise in staff loyalty and productivity across the board, a decline in employee turnover and an improved capacity to attract or hire scholars who are eager for this academic career development opportunity. Enhanced collaboration, improved communication and better networking are other institutional advantages (Johnson, 2015).

Barriers to mentoring in teacher preparation

In spite of the numerous gains that mentoring offers to teachers, and student teachers, there are numerous challenges that potentially bedeviled its implementation. First, the availability of prospective mentors with the requisite knowledge could be a source of worry (Mullen, & Klimaitis, 2021). As it is embedded in the mentoring process, the mentor should have a specialised knowledge in the areas to provide the mentoring services to the would-be mentee. Such expertise is not always available in all the schools and institutions where the mentoring has to take place. For this reason, there are times people who are not qualified granted the permission to provide the mentoring services, which invariably defeats the purpose of the mentoring programme. Second, prior to the introduction of the national teacher education curriculum framework and the national teachers standards, teacher education institutions prepared their own curricula based on their vision of an ideal teacher education programme and the available resources to support its implementation.

The different visions by the teacher education institutions required serious training for the prospective mentors to be abreast with content to be inculcated into the mentees. These training programmes were expensive and for that matter impacted negatively on the quality of the mentorship programme. Again, remuneration has been an unsettled issue when it comes to mentorship in our schools (Ayalon, 2023). Within the Ghanaian educational context, mentorship is not a mainstream programme that falls under the job description of the average classroom teacher when hired. As a result, any attempt to request a teacher to be a mentor comes along with financial obligations. In situations where institutions fail to provide what has been agreed upon as remuneration for the prospective mentor, it serves as a disincentive to the mentors to participate in the programme. More so, there are sometimes issues of power struggle that lies between the veteran teacher (mentor) and the novice teacher (mentee). In spite of the wealth of knowledge possessed by the mentor, is required to find ways to relate to the mentee

as a colleague and as such provide the necessary respect and support. This ideal situation does not happen all the time. Instead, some mentors see themselves as being the experienced (bosses) and as such would want to make all decisions and prove to the mentee that there is virtually nothing good that might possibly come from him or her. This situation becomes a power struggle between them and does not augur well for the mentor-mentee relationship (Garvey et al., 2021).

Last but not least, in many cases, mentoring requires some element of assessment and evaluation of the mentee. This responsibility of the mentor sometimes create uneasiness on the part of the mentee since the mentee is at the mercy of the mentor for better grades at the end of the mentoring experience. This situation has led to extortion of monies from mentees and inappropriate requests for favour (Akinrotimi, 2021).

Breaking barriers in teacher mentorship

After discussing some merits that mentoring offers, one must wonder why more programmes are not offered. There must be some unanswered questions among higher education institutions inhibiting the wider adoption of mentoring programmes if mentoring may offer such significant benefits (Johnson, 2015). Mentors frequently cite the fact that mentoring is only offered to a "selected few" people who are on the "fast track" to promotion as the biggest impediment. Another disadvantage that a sizable percentage of prospective mentors frequently mention is how much time and effort such connections need (Lakind et al., 2015). Because of what can be done, the merits frequently outweigh the costs in terms of time and energy. Mentors may even believe that if they help their mentees reach their full potential, the up-and-coming mentees will take their place.

The school as an organisations can lessen the stress associated with this thinking by proving that both persons learn during the process and replacement is exceedingly rare within the organisation due to mentoring (Allen et al., 2006). Instead, organisations, mentors and mentees should think of this as a tool for professional development in their succession planning (Neely et al., 2017). Moreover, a lot of potential mentors experience the impression of being overloaded with obligations due to the requirement to plan and teach classes, publish, participate in professional learning community (PLC) sessions, mentor students and handle other duties on campus. As a result, they miss the chance to act as a mentor.

Obeng (2019) adds that other hurdles include counterproductive connections. There are five potential bottlenecks of mentoring that can hinder its use in higher education. According to Margolis and Romero, (2002), as referenced in Einolander et al., (2024) these bottlenecks are; "(a) the mentor may lose power or influence, (b) the mentee may only be able to view things from one point of view, (c) the mentor could leave the organisation, (d) the male mentor may desire sexual favours from the female mentee, and (e) the mentee could become attached to a poor mentor" (p. 206).

In order to overcome obstacles to mentoring and STS in our teacher education setting, it is proposed that organised and continuous training programmes can prepare mentors with the necessary skills for successful mentorship. Feiman-Nemser (2001) advocates for the inclusion

of mentorship training within teacher education programmes to enhance both competence and confidence. It is often argued that educational institutions should allocate time and resources for mentoring initiatives. Hobson et al. (2009), reiterate that incorporating mentorship into workload management, offering financial rewards, and granting release time for mentors are effective strategies. Additionally, creating systematic matching processes based on common objectives, educational philosophies, and professional requirements can enhance the quality of relationships.

Long et al. (2012) emphasise the importance of utilising insights from both mentors and mentees when establishing matching processes. Again, it is crucial for mentors to undergo training focused on cultural awareness and sensitivity to effectively meet the varied needs of mentees. In this regard, Achinstein and Athanases (2006) suggest mentorship frameworks that take cultural context and adaptability into account.

Technology enhanced mentoring in STS

One of the things that is not usually heard in the mentoring discourse is technology. Öberg and Nouri (2021) and Jonassen (2006) explained that technology can always be used as partners in the educational arena. Traditionally, the mentor mentee interaction has been more face-to-face, which has its own challenges, especially when the mentee does not stay closer to the mentor. In many cases, there is limited amount of 21st century technology use in mentoring. However, there are different ways that modern technology use can help to make the mentor mentee relationship effective, efficient and less stressful. There are several digital tools and software applications that can better align with mentorship.

The provision of feedback is essential in mentorship and for that matter, instructional audios could be used to that effect (Lunt & Curran, 2010; Gould & Day, 2013; Pearson, 2018). The use of video conferencing applications (Zoom, Google Meet, Blue Button, etc.) provides opportunity for the mentor and mentee to have comprehensive discussion without necessarily being physically present. Second, the use of the voice recorder, whether from the smartphone or a voice recording device allows the mentor and mentee to exchange information in meaningful ways. Third, the various storage devices and media create opportunity for the mentor and the mentee to store the artifacts that come up as a result of the mentorship programme. Morrison and Lowther (2010) reported on the 21st century digitals and applications that were available in the school system. With emphasis on the use of computers, peripherals, mobile and storage devices, different aspects of the mentoring process can be accomplished with the use of these technologies. Many of the tools identified by these researchers can be incorporated into the mentorship to make it more meaningful. Another area that technology can play a serious role is the supported teaching in schools.

As part of the requirements of the STS, the student teachers are to create portfolios and do weekly journals of their observations and reflections to serve as evidence of the level of exposure and growth that have taken place within their professional training journey as student teachers. In the 21st century, it will be appropriate to use electronic journals and electronic portfolios to make sharing of the information less difficult. With the use of the electronic journals and portfolios, supervisors (link lecturers), lead mentors, mentors as well as the student

teachers can have the opportunity to review the electronic artifacts and offer the needed feedback. However, before this important task can be done, it requires both the supervisor, lead mentor, mentor and the mentee to have some level of proficiency in technology use.

3. Methodology

The study was conducted using document analysis or secondary qualitative research. O'Leary (2014) notes that document analysis allow researchers to engage with large volumes of data without the need for primary data collection, which is particularly useful for reviewing policies, frameworks, or historical data. According to Flick (2022), document analysis describes qualitative research that is mostly carried out using secondary data sources, such as reports, forums, online papers, or datasets that have already been gathered. Bowen (2009) highlights the role of document analysis in qualitative research, as it helps in reviewing and evaluating documents to extract meaningful data and insights.

Smith and Turner (2022) contend that because researchers may access a wide range of data so urces remotely, it is more economical and time efficient than traditional fieldwork. However, information gathered from secondary sources like the internet cannot be contextualised, which makes it challenging to completely comprehend the motivations or cultural quirks underlying particular beliefs or actions (Bryman, 2007). In this study, data on mentorship and STS were obtained from prominent databases such as; Google, ERIC, Research gate, Academia etc. The data obtained were reflected upon and analysed under various themes, to give understanding and direction in fostering effective mentoring practice in the Ghanaian setting.

4. Conclusion

In what way does this article help to understand and encourage reflection about mentoring, STS and educational policy for Ghana? First, the study offers ample evidence for developing conditions that may help to attract good senior high school (SHS) leavers into the profession. It is crucial to hire the best candidates because teacher educators frequently lack the time and efforts to build on inadequate prior content knowledge. This necessitates making the teaching profession appealing, particularly in terms of mentoring, ongoing professional development, and working conditions, among other things. Secondly, teacher education institutions in collaboration with the MoE, and the Ghana Tertiary Education Commision (GTEC) need to review their programmes periodically to check for coherence. They need to craft good assessment procedures that follow and monitor students development throughout the programme, check for problems encountered in learning (subject and pedagogical contents, during mentoring and STS), and provide compensatory learning opportunities when needed. For the first time in the history of Ghana's teacher education, the STS has created opportunity for mentors to spend more time with their mentees and share their professional as well as pedagogical experiences. Under this arrangement, mentees have extensive period of time (three and half years) to reflect on the teaching and learning process. This approach can foster critical thinking and provide students with an engaging learning environment. Mentoring in STS therefore, help students develop learning, reflective thinking and self-study skills in the teaching and learning of many subjects as well as the learning of pedagogies in teaching.

Hence, through structured mentoring, feedback and reflection mechanisms in universities and other institutions that train teachers, the novice teacher is expected to be well prepared for the teaching task.

5. Implications for education policy and practice

Notwithstanding the alignment between mentoring and STS, and the assurances provided, there are challenges that policy makers and leadership of schools have to deal with. First, there should be a clear policy direction to define how mentoring should be conceptualised in the Ghanaian school context. Such knowledge will provide better understanding of the expectations for the mentor as well as the mentee and how the leadership of the schools should create enabling environment for the programme to be effective. This means that, policy-makers, school leadership, and teachers, should have a serious conversation on the STS philosophy due to the enormous task it places on the participating schools. Such discussions will help schools to see the presence of the student teachers as nurturing grounds instead of a mere nuisance to disrupt the activities of the school, especially in cities and towns with many teacher education institutions. The STS programme requires the movement of students on weekly basis to their schools of attachment, which thrives on effective transportation system. At a time that many of the newly established universities are struggling to provide the requisite academic and residential facilities, the government and other development partners should come to the aid of these universities and provide means of transport solely for the STS programme. There is the need for some level of remuneration for all participating mentors, heads of schools and lecturers directly involved in the programme to ensure proper accountability. Again, case study research can also serve to illuminate both positive and problematic aspects of the STS mentoring in the B. Ed. Curriculum programme as a whole at the university.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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