ASSESSMENT OF MENTORING NEEDS FOR TRAINEE IN TEACHING PRACTICE

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Abstract

The paper examines mentoring needs in teaching practice exercise programme of student with respect to teaching. Since the student teachers in practicing school are not with practical experience. The experienced or cooperating teachers are expected to continue the training of the student teachers in the appropriate skills and attitude of teaching, the micro teaching experience does not absolutely prepare this cadre of teaching personnel for the challenges of teaching. At the inception of teaching, these students get confronted by various needs that range from appropriate lesson plan, breakdown of syllabus into scheme of work. The paper stresses the need for experienced teachers to be role model in preparing the student-teachers or mentees in teaching skills and attitude. The importance of teaching practice, objectives of mentoring, techniques need in mentoring, benefits of mentoring and conclusion are discussed in the study.

Keywords: Assessment, Mentoring needs, Trainee, Teaching practice.

Introduction

The academic training given to student in Colleges of Education is absolutely to prepare them for the challenges academic care may pose. At the inception of their training they are exposed to various needs that range from lesson plan preparation and micro teaching practices designed to build-up their confidence for real teaching during teaching practice period.

Teaching practice is the actual teaching experience which student teacher get involve as a form of real teaching. Adepoju, Okemakinde and Ojo (2008) expressed that teaching practice is an exercise designed for teacher trainees in designated institutions such as National Teacher Institute (NTI), Colleges of Education, Faculties of Education and Institute of Education in Universities for both pre-service and in-service teachers.

Teacher practice has then become a mandatory teaching exercise for all categories of students in higher institutions of education training. This exercise is equal to practice training of housemanship experience by the medical school as well as experience undergone by law students in Law school.

The essence of the practical teaching programme is to expose teacher training to the rudiments of teaching. The National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE, 2012) expressed in one of its publications that minimum standards for general education and graduation requirements is 30 credits in General Education courses, 6 credits in teaching practice and 18 credits in General studies totaling 54 credits.

NCCE guidelines emphasize the need for students to pass (EDU 213) Micro teaching theory and (EDU 223) Micro teaching practical the above expression of NCCE, importance of teaching practice exercise cannot be overemphasized.

In the past, teaching practice is expected to last for 24 weeks respectively at the second and third year. The contemporary practice ensures that student-teachers are expected to be in the school of practice for twelve weeks, this practice is to allow desirable training and appropriate acquisition of real teaching skills.

Despite the prescribed minimum standard for the production of quality teachers, it is unfortunate that most student-teachers have not been able to live-up to the expectation. During teaching practice, student-teachers are under the control of a supervisor who is expected to give adequate control and coordination and mentoring on the activities of student-teacher in College of Education.

Education mentoring is viewed as the assistance rendered by elderly or lecturer whose experience have spanned through different status to the level of a chief lecturer, who can assist new appointee into academic as lecturers, whose experience have not really matured from level of teaching assistant lecturer to lecturer in order to ground such new entrants or promoted entrants in order to make such fellows more experienced and well grounded in all areas that would engender and facilitate the quality delivery of teaching, research and community development which are the main expectation of Colleges of Education staff. In like manner mentoring at teaching practice schools deals with the purpose of guiding, teaching support and influencing a student-teacher or new teacher into teaching profession. It is a conventional conception that a mentor teacher leads, advises and guides would-be teacher or newly appointed teacher in experience in a work situation characterized by mutual trust and belief.

Ajayi and Ogunmola (2015) expressed mentoring as the process through which an individual is assisted in making significant transitions in knowledge, work or thinking. Emeraron (2008) defines mentoring as guiding, counselling and supporting the younger individual by an experienced member of the organisation to learn the rules in the organization so as to enrich his/her career progression and development.

This is a process of providing adequate advice and guidance to inexperienced teacher by the more matured and experienced colleague. Luna and Cullen (1996) affirmed in Archibong and Jame (2008) that mentoring is providing access to formal and informal networks of communication and offering professional stimulation to both junior and senior academics.

The student-teacher mentoring in the Nigeria secondary and primary schools is handled with uncommitted attitude of cooperating subject teachers, the experienced teacher in the practicing schools do not regard the training and mentoring of the student trainee in their custody as their responsibilities as many of these teachers are not aware of mentoring and could not perform the functions expected of them as mentors.

Rationale: What is Teaching Practice?

Teaching practice is practical exposure of teacher trainee in the act of teaching in a conventional classroom as part of criterion for award of certificate to a would-be teacher. Adepoju, Okemakinde and Ojo (2008) affirm that teaching practice is an exercise designed for teacher trainees in designated institutions such as National Teacher Institute (NTI), Colleges of Education, Faculties of Education and Institutes of Education in universities. Teaching practice is compulsory experience which all undergraduate of all educational institutions of learning must be exposed to. Salami (2014) expressed that teaching practice is an important aspect of Teacher Education in the Colleges of Education and Faculties of Education in Universities for both pre-service and in-service teacher. The exposure of teacher-trainee to practical training session during teaching practice is of paramount importance and an important segment in teacher training right from the establishment of the first teachers' training college in Nigeria.

Importance attached to teaching practice exercise

Teaching practice is an experimental programme designed to equip the standard teacher put into practice all the theories he/she had undergone both in the lecture room and in learning environment.

Emeka (2010) opined that since teacher education represents a set of events and activities which are deliberately intended to help assist students acquire skills, dispositions, knowledge, habit, attitude, values and norms which will enable the prospective teachers enter into the occupation of teaching, the adequate preparation of the teachers through the platform of practical teaching should be taken with all the seriousness that it deserves. No effort should be spared at ensuring the would-be teacher is taken through all the rigors of what it takes to be a professional teacher.

During teaching practice the student teacher is exposed to the real situation in teaching and general outlook of the school environmental variables such as the school staff,

students, teaching learning processes, the school rules community, interactive session with the school etc.

Apart from supervisors from the college of training, the internal supervisor or cooperating teacher offers advice to assist student-teacher to develop the ability to diagnose the behaviour problem of pupils/students they are teaching with view to helping them solve such problems.

Concept and Rational for mentoring during teaching practice

A mentor is a trusted counsellor or guide whose wealth of experience is expected to guide to aid the career development and advancement of less experienced individuals to an organization.

Mentoring refers to a process of providing information about explicit and tacit aspects of surviving and thriving as a scholar at a particular institution (Yale Women Faculty Forum 2009). The process of gaining roles, behaviours and the teaching skills and abilities is more than exposure to theoretical information gained in the classroom. Teaching practice exercise enrich student-teachers with essential teaching skills while it also expose differences between theory and practice and allow opportunity to define and redefine teaching skills. Cooperating teacher whose roles are defined as the supervisor, the mentor, the observer, the role model in the teaching service and supporter is important to assist them to gain the essential skills and teacher identity during the stage. Mentoring is that relationship between an experience and inexperience staff in whichmy latter receives guidance and role modeling that transcends classroom teaching.

Ajayi and Ogunmola (2015) define mentoring as the process through which an individual is assisted in making significant transitions in knowledge, work or thinking.

Equally, Stella-Martin and Yabotrudip (2008) described mentoring in education system as a relationship in which Head of Departments or any senior academic officer assists an individual in the earlier stage of hiscareer. In the opinion of the scholars, it involves conveying of technical, political, interpersonal and academic skills from the elder to the younger one.

According to Anderson and Shannon (1988), mentoring is described as a nurturing process in which a more skilled or experienced person counsels, teaches, serves as a role model, encourages, sponsors and be-friends to a less experienced or less skilled person for teaching skills development.

Objectives of Mentoring

There seems to be a general belief in the academic industry that mentoring is beneficial to the entire system, and objectives of mentoring of student include:

- i) The career progression and development of student-teacher is enhanced.
- ii) To assist student-teacher with their teaching skills and enhance their teaching and learning process.
- iii) To ensure high morale and productivity and hence, retention of student-teacher in teaching sector so as to ensure the education industries is not collapsed or hijack by the non-professional teacher, thosewho receive mentoring are more likely to remain in

- teaching, satisfied hold better teaching attitudes, and implement more effective instructional practices and long-term planning, (McCaughtry et al. 2005).
- iv) To promote the effective realization of institutional goal and objectives.
 - v) To assist the juniors in academics in the area of intelligence, self-regulatory behaviour, dedication, and unflinching support to the course of their institution (Ajayi and Ogunmola, 2015) to ensure production of high quality teachers.
 - vi) To provide opportunity for the student-teacher to relate, interact and socialize with somebody that is more experienced than him.
 - vii) To guide, correct and supervise the less experience teacher in gaining mastery of the job after series of guidance, correction and tutoring from the mentor.
 - viii) To allow for continuing as the experience teacher will be able to provide his model for replacement after retirement.

Techniques employed in mentoring include:

Accompany: This is a technique whereby the student-teacher and cooperating teacher engage in learning preparation side-by-side, the mentor and the mentee actively involve in curriculum planning, classroom management, working with parents, reporting to parents or project work participating as fellow learner. The mentor is expected to understand that mentee is a learner and should develop a good rapport that will allow free flow of ideas without expressing the mentee. Mentor is not expected to present him/herself as Mr. know-all but a co-learner with the mentee.

Catalyzing: This technique is used to provoke way of thinking of mentee, a change in identity or a re-ordering of values. In teaching practice, the mentor should create a safe and open atmosphere in which mentee can both learn and try things for him/herself. To catalyze learning, the mentor motivates the learner under his/her mentorship.

Showing: This is a technique used in mentoring using oneself as an example. To demonstrate a skill or activity, a mentor engages in demonstration activity of values traits, behaviour or skills to be emulated by mentee. The student-teacher during teaching practice is expected to observe the co-operating performing teaching, the mentor does not abandon the classroom for the student-teacher but take charge of the classroom. The mentor shows good example for the mentee to follow which include understand his responsibility with respect to the preparation of lesson plan, use of instructional materials, record keeping, use of different teaching techniques, keeping to the time allotted to each subject in time-table.

Harvesting: This is a situation in which an awareness is created on what has been learnt by the experience teacher and to draw conclusion about the student performance. Mentee is given opportunity to perform teaching activities after thorough observation by the mentor. During this period the cooperating teacher observes, guides and points out mistakes where and when necessary. The mentor provides adequate information to enhance classroom performance, help student – teacher to perform a professional identity and be aware of his/her professional development, provide moral support and facilitates socialization of student-teacher.

Sowing: This is building confidence in the mentee by the mentor, it is often understood that most student in Colleges of Education are not interested in teaching but find themselves in the profession as a last resort, their attitude to profession is always repulsive in this situation. Mentor must be ready to go a long way in sowing what may be understood or even

acceptable to the mentee at initial stage but make sense and have value to the mentee when the situation requires it.

Benefits of Mentoring are During Teaching Practice as follows:

- Assisting in understanding the structure and culture of the profession and professional network.
- Long-range career planning support and advocacy from the experience colleague.

Oyebamiji (2015) highlights the benefits of mentoring:

- It helps young academics to learn the in his/her institution, thereby resulting to the skill development of mentee.
- It promotes and builds interpersonal relationship. Mentee tends to have stronger bonds connection and broader interaction with his/her mentor;
- It facilitates mentor and mentee career development, growth, efficiency and level of competence.
- It helps the mentee to grow in self-confidence, self-efficacy, self-assurance and development, independence, autonomy and maturity in his/her work;
- It promotes honest criticism and feedbacks.
- It can serve as a vehicle to discuss and address challenges that confronting young academic in an innovative manner;
- It promotes greater networking and professional recognition when mentee perform well.

Conclusion

Good teaching aims at inducing learning , teaching practice which is organised to allow student teacher experience the art of teaching in the school which is placed under the guidance and supervision of the cooperating teacher is been found useful in the training of teachers. It is quite understand that teaching practice expose student teacher to practical details of teaching learning process. The student teacher is directed, mentored and supervised by an experienced teacher. Mentoring is usually a learning and development partnership between a professional with in-depth experience and in a specific area and protégé seeking and coaching in the same area.

Some of the experience teachers in practice school do not see training or mentoring of student teacher posted to their school as their responsibilities or some even are not aware of the concept of mentoring as their roles. Teaching practice should be another training ground for teachers in training while they should be attached to a more experience teacher who will assist the student teacher in learning all they need to know to be competent and effective in the art of teaching and learning.

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