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MENTORING STRATEGIES AVAILABLE FOR NOVICE TEACHERS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN KENYAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT: *Initial Teacher Education is aimed at equipping preservice teachers with appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes or values about teaching. It is expected that some critical elements of teaching are learnt when newly recruited teachers commence their professional careers, through mentoring by more experienced teachers. A study on the mentoring strategies available in Kenyan schools for novice secondary school teachers of English language revealed that there were informational, emotional and professional mentoring strategies in schools. This paper reports on the professional support strategies which involve provision of support and coaching in effective performance in classroom related activities and other critical facets of professional practice, the purpose of which is to increase knowledge and skills that are important for good teaching – what some scholars of mentoring refer to as the nuts and bolts of teaching. The findings revealed that most of the activities engaged in were ad-hoc and not based on any documented, research based best practices. Therefore, there are recommendations the Ministry of Education, the Teachers Service Commission and school principals to ensure that sufficient resources: human, physical and financial are provided to enable adequate support for Continuous Teacher Professional Development (CTPD). The findings contribute to research literature in English language teacher education in particular and teacher education in general by providing a basis for streamlining mentoring as an important component of CTPD.*

KEYWORDS: mentoring strategies, novice teachers, continuous teacher professional development

INTRODUCTION

The use of English as a medium of communication nationally and internationally makes it an important subject in Kenyan schools and colleges. English language is a compulsory subject and continues to be used as the medium of instruction. It is made even more critical by the fact that,

other than Kiswahili and other foreign languages, it services all other subjects in the curriculum. It therefore follows that there is a huge demand on the teachers of English to perform their teaching duties with utmost expertise that can only arise from Continuous Teacher Professional Development (CTPD).

CTPD in a broad sense refers to the development of a teacher in his or her professional role. More specifically, it is the professional growth a teacher achieves as a result of gaining increased experience and examining his or her teaching systematically. It includes formal experience (such as attending workshops, professional meetings and mentoring) and informal experiences (such as reading professional publications and watching television documentaries related to the particular academic discipline (Ganser, 2000). A teacher is conceived of as a reflective practitioner, someone who enters the profession with a certain knowledge base, and who will acquire new knowledge and experience based on the prior knowledge (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2001). In so doing, professional development is thought to help teachers build new pedagogical theories and practices and to develop their expertise in the field.

CTPD comes from various sources and agencies, and takes various forms: orientating teachers to curriculum or examination changes; upgrading qualification levels; donor-funded projects, and professional teachers' associations in developing subject teaching (e.g. Science Teachers' Association of Nigeria [STAN], Strengthening Mathematics and Science Education [SMASE] in Kenya), or sometimes teachers' unions school-based improvement initiatives, or individual teachers working to improve own qualifications on individual initiatives, career prospects or teaching skills. Continuing teacher professional development may be regarded as all forms of 'in-service', 'continuing education', 'on-the-job-training', 'workshop', 'post-qualification courses' and so on. These could be formal or informal, structured or unstructured, teacher-initiated or system-initiated, accredited or not (Muhammed, 2006).

In this paper, we examine some of the school based mentoring strategies for professional development available for Newly Recruited Teachers (NRTs) of English in Kenya for purposes of CTPD. Mentoring is the most widely used professional development activity by many traditional professions; teaching is one of the traditional professional fields. Mentoring activities are aimed at acculturating beginning professionals into their new roles as fully fledged practioners. It is a nurturing process, in which a more skilled or experienced person (mentor) serving as a role model, teaches, sponsors, encourages, counsels and befriends a less skilled or less experienced person (mentee) for the purpose of promoting the latter's professional development. Mentoring functions are carried out within the context of an ongoing, caring relationship between a mentor and the mentee in the work place.

Mentoring Functions

As research in the field has progressed, four key insights about mentoring functions have emerged. First, career and psychosocial functions have different roots and outcomes. In her early work, Kram (1985) observed that career functions depend on the mentor's position and influence in the organization, while psychosocial functions rely on the quality of emotional bonds and

psychological attachments in the relationship. Subsequent research has indeed found that career and psychosocial functions constitute two relatively independent dimensions of mentoring behaviours. Nevertheless, some studies have found that role modelling may represent a third dimension of mentoring. Mentoring scholars have also discovered that different mentoring functions predict different protégé outcomes. For instance, career functions are a stronger predictor of protégés' compensation and advancement, while psychosocial functions have a stronger relationship with protégés' satisfaction with the relationship (Allen, Eby, Poteet, Lentz & Lima, 2004). However, both career and psychosocial functions predict protégés' job and career satisfaction.

Career functions of mentoring, which are the target of this paper, involve a range of behaviours that help protégés "learn the ropes" of the profession and prepare them for hierarchical advancement within their organizations. These behaviours include coaching protégés, sponsoring their advancement, increasing their positive exposure and visibility, and offering them protection and challenging assignments. Such instruction-related support addresses the beginning teachers' need to navigate their way through multiple tasks and problems that, in the future, will be seen as standard activities associated with teaching but, at first, are important hurdles for the novice. This kind of support focuses on the nuts and bolts of teaching, from locating materials and other resources available in the school, to organizing classroom space, to adding to his or her still-limited repertoire of instructional strategies.

Within the career function of mentoring is the development aspect which mentorship scholars and researchers distinguish as a focus by the newly recruited teachers (NRT) on building a personal understanding of pedagogy: the art and science of teaching and learning that allows a teacher to continually refine and adjust his/her practice in order to consistently and effectively help students master content and skills. Mentoring for development centres on helping novices begin to craft a professional identity through their struggles with and explorations of students and subject matter (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). The ultimate goal is for the novice teacher to gain independence as a professional who is empowered to draw from a foundation of experience-based knowledge and collective wisdom about good practice.

A key aspect of mentoring for professional development is for teachers to become skilled at independently identifying and addressing the idiosyncratic learning problems of their students. It is suggested that teachers gain these skills through critical self-reflection based on their students' behaviour, student products, and other evidence of the effectiveness of their own teaching practices. The increasing diversity of students in all school contexts globally makes the building of this kind of expertise even more important and presents an additional challenge in mentoring. Newly prepared teachers tend to hold assumptions about the learning and thinking of others that fit with their own cultural experience (Feiman-Nemser & Remillard, 1995). For those who have had limited contact with students whose ethnicity, language or culture is different from their own, mentoring for development may thus require some relearning as well as new learning: in order to build bridges between students and subject matter, teachers need to know how their students think about what they are learning.

Some mentoring researchers and scholars argue that despite the important role that the development function of mentoring seems to play in the whole process, it does not at all appear to be implemented as frequently as the other two support functions. Indeed, surveys of new teachers have found that they are more likely to credit mentors with providing moral support or enlarging a pool of material resources than with exerting direct influence on their curriculum priorities or instructional methods. Second, there is significant variation in the range and degree of mentoring functions within and across relationships. Like other relationships, no two mentoring relationships are alike. Some relationships provide either career or psychosocial functions, while other relationships offer a broad range of behaviours that incorporate both types of mentoring functions. For example, mentors may offer high, medium, or low levels of a specific function in a given relationship. The range and degree of functions provided by a mentor may be driven by the needs of the protégé, the mentor's ability to meet those needs (i.e., their interpersonal skills, resources, and power), the mentor's needs, the "chemistry" in the relationship, and the organizational context. Because mentoring relationships may represent a "fit" between the needs of the protégé and the mentor's ability and interest in meeting those needs, the same mentor may offer different functions and degrees of functions to different protégés.

Third, mentoring functions may vary across the phases of the relationship. Mentoring relationships are not static, but evolve through phases that reflect different functions, experiences, and patterns of interactions. Kram's (1983) study of 18 mentoring relationships revealed that functions vary across four distinct phases in the relationship: initiation, cultivation, separation, and redefinition. Some career functions may be offered in the initiation phase, but career and psychosocial functions usually peak during the cultivation phase.

Literature on Mentoring for Beginning Teachers in Kenya

In Kenya, the Ministry of Education has not designed procedural induction programmes for beginning teachers. However, schools have come up with certain informal induction/mentorship programmes that have assisted the novice teachers to get some bearing in their new roles. Some of these programmes involve even experienced teachers. Some universities, on their part as teacher educators, have also put in place mentoring programmes for those undertaking a three months practicum usually immediately after completion of the third year of study. Occasionally, the same is done at completion of the course. This normally is the case when there was a delay necessitated by the numerous industrial strikes that time and again hit mainly the public universities.

Namunga and Otunga (2012) point out that, apart from the traditional institutionalized in-service education, teachers are also trained through mentoring and learning relationships between two individuals who work together in the same or similar organizations. The model is also called peer coaching or bench-marking. Mentoring programmes are established primarily to provide support to beginning school teachers or school administrators. It is, for example, common to see teachers and/or students from school X visiting school Y, particularly if school Y performs well in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE). Newly recruited teachers are also in-serviced by the old members of the staff into the life of the school. They cite Daresh and Playko (1993) who found that mentoring relationships can serve as strategies to promote on-going dialogue and

collaboration between educators at all levels. In-service education in Kenya is on the increase at all levels.

Dawo (2011) argues that induction is a complex activity whereby diverse approaches may be used by varied organizations whether it is programmed or not. She observes that one thing that is common to all induction programmes is that there is some form of mentoring in which an experienced teacher provides support to the beginning teacher in a variety of ways. Secondly, induction begins once the teacher commits himself to a teaching environment and ends sometime in the future depending on how fast the protégé is successfully enculturalized to the profession.

Simatwa (2010) explains that seminars, workshops, in-service training, classroom observation, informal guidance, attachments to career teachers, appraisal and discovery methods are prevalent induction practices in Kenya. Similarly, Indoshi (2003) indicates that teachers on probation, that is, teachers newly recruited by the Teachers Service Commission, are often assisted by senior teachers, school inspectors, and Teachers Advisory Centres, the latter being the least useful. He nonetheless reports that such teachers prefer face-to-face discussion methods to demonstration of lessons, and provision of relevant literature.

Ong'ondo (2010) brings out mentoring in the practicum perspective in his discussion of the role of the cooperating teacher during the school-based practicum for student-teachers from universities. He reports that the Teaching Practice Guide written by the university whose students and educators participated in his study stated that the cooperating teachers were expected to be like the mentor of the student teacher. They were to guide the student and the student was to observe what such regular teachers did.

Statement of the Problem

The problem that prompted the study concerned the current teacher recruitment formula. The period lapse between graduation and recruitment may create room for regression in attitude, skill, knowledge and enthusiasm for teaching; besides, possibility of curriculum modification. This provides dire need for quality induction (and specifically mentoring) for Newly Recruited Teachers (NRTs) (Dawo, 2011; Indoshi, 2003). A major problem with Kenyan teacher education is that it has no documented activities for the incubation period. A teacher gets a degree or diploma (for the case of secondary school teachers) and when he/she gets a job placement by the TSC, sometimes with a long absence from hands-on experience, he/she is expected to start teaching immediately. This is in direct contrast to other professions like medicine, law, engineering or architecture where there is a formal induction period between the time someone enters the profession and when they begin working autonomously. The truth here is that there is very little professional assistance available on the job.

Further, Ong'ondo (2010), notably reports that at the level of Initial Teacher Education, the supervision during practicum is not intense. He attributes this to the large number of students in the universities today. Ochanji, Twoli, Bwire and Maundu (2015) echo this, arguing that some of these student-teachers get into the teaching profession immediately after the practicum,

particularly in the less endowed schools under Board Of Management. Some of these schools do not have long serving teachers to induct or mentor these beginning teachers. This situation again demands for a programme that would place the novice teachers in the right perspective with regard to demands associated with effective teaching and tailored to suit a specific school.

Research concerning the experiences of novice teachers has documented the difficult and stressful nature of the beginning years of teaching (Boone & Boone, 2007). From reviewing these sources, several barriers can be identified that prevent beginning teachers from having successful teaching experiences. Many of the barriers deal with relationships (teacher-to-student, teacher-to-parent, teacher-to-peer, teacher-to-administration, and teacher-to-self), management (time, people, and resources), and instructional strategies (motivation, assessment, and methods). Additionally, all of these barriers seem to be in the context of major adjustment, professional self-definition, and personal pedagogical development.

In addition, most novice teachers face challenging work conditions and insufficient support from the experienced colleagues when they report to their work stations. Unfortunately, a common practice is to assign beginning teachers to the most challenging classrooms and expect them to perform like the experienced teachers largely in isolation from colleagues (Ingerssol & Smith 2004). This is especially consequential for many beginning teachers who then leave the classroom within the first five years. The novices are left to their own devices to succeed or fail within the confines of their individual classrooms: an experience likened to being 'lost at sea'. Indeed, critics have long assailed teaching as an occupation that 'cannibalizes' its young and in which the initiation of novice teachers is a kin to 'swim or sink', 'trial by fire' or 'boot camp experience' (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004).

To be more specific, some ELT scholars have identified a number of challenges faced by teachers in this field. Kembo-Sure (2003) explains the challenge of cultural diversity in most Kenyan classrooms. This is even compounded by the fact that new teacher recruitment is open for all anywhere in the republic. Kembo argues that teachers of English are then faced with the challenge of upgrading their social consciousness as well as that of their students. Trudell and Schroeder (2007) add the fact that teachers are usually trained in Western approaches and methods of ELT. Realities in African classrooms prohibit the application of knowledge got during ITE. This is therefore a point at which mentoring in the specific work places becomes a necessity.

Finally, majority of the existing studies on mentoring mainly cover activities the engage student-teachers during the practicum. By exploring the various school contexts, using qualitative approaches and involving newly employed (beginning) teachers, experienced teachers (mentors), heads of department-languages and school deputy principals/principals as respondents, it might be understood how the novice English language teacher is acculturated into ELT in particular and the teaching profession at large. With this understanding, various stake holders could plan workable and cost effective activities for this phase of teacher education and development. This is what made this study viable and of necessity.

METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out in Uasin Gishu County in Kenya. It used a qualitative multiple case study design. The target population comprised newly recruited secondary school teachers of English, practicing teachers of English who had taught for 5 years and above, heads of subject or heads of department all of whom were teachers of English and school deputy principals/principals in secondary schools in Uasin Gishu County. These were from 47 secondary schools that had recruited English language teachers in the years 2015-2017.

Public secondary schools were selected using stratified random sampling method. The strata were based on the categories – extra county, county and sub county schools. The only national school in the county was purposively selected. There were 5 private schools that had NRTs as well. From this category, two were also purposively sampled. The two sampling techniques used gave a total of 18 schools to participate in the study. The sample size used in the study was 54 participants distributed as follows: 18 newly recruited teachers (mentees), 18 heads of department – languages/heads of subject (English), and 18 deputy principals/principals (mentors) drawn from all the categories of schools. The study data was generated through the use of individual interviews, focus group discussion and document analysis. Table 1 below provides the demographics of the study.

Table 1: Distribution of Schools and Respondents

School category	No. of schools that recruited Eng/Lit teacher 2015-2017	No. of schools sampled based on recent employment	No. of respondents	Respondent type
National	1	1	3	2Mentors/1 Mentee
Extra-County	7	3	9	6Mentors/3Mentees
County	14	5	15	10 Mentors/5 Mentees
Sub-County	20	7	18	14 Mentors/ 7 Mentees
Private	5	2	9	4 Mentors/ 2 Mentees
Total	47	18	54	36 Mentors/18 Mentees

Source: Uasin Gishu County Education Office (2018)

Within this qualitative approach, the emphasis during the collection and analysis of data was on understanding and interpretation. During data analysis, the interview sessions were transcribed for accurate interpretation of emergent patterns and themes. The data was categorised through analytic induction. This technique involved scanning the data for categories of phenomena, and for relationships among these categories. The mentors and mentees read, suggested some amendments, and then authenticated the final draft of the transcriptions. This study adopted thematic analysis, a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting recurrent patterns referred to as themes within data.

RESULTS

In an attempt to identify the professional support strategies available in schools for beginning secondary school teachers of English language, the activities targeted were particularly for the very initial days. Professional support strategies involves provision of support and coaching in effective performance in classroom related activities and other critical facets of professional practice, the purpose of which is to increase knowledge and skills that are important for good teaching. It dealt with specific classroom teaching activities- what some scholars of mentoring refer to as the nuts and bolts of teaching. The findings from both the mentors and the mentees were consolidated since there were many similarities in their responses. Additionally, information gleaned from minutes of staff or departmental meetings has also been incorporated.

Based on the interviews with all the study participants and analysis of the documents available, two sub-themes were identified here: classroom management and pedagogical skills. For each sub strategy, a general finding is presented, followed by the evidence: excerpts from the voices of the participants. In order to maintain anonymity of the participants, symbols to indicate the sources of data which are letters of the alphabet such as A, B, C, D, E alongside the letters N, EX, C, SC and PR were used to identify the various categories of schools: ME for mentor and P for protégé which is synonym of mentee to avoid mix up. For clarity purpose, AMEN refers to mentors while APN are mentees or protégées from the national school category; BMEX and BPEX mentors and protégées from extra county schools; CMEC and CPC mentors and protégées from county schools; DMESC and DPSC mentors and mentees from sub county schools and finally EMEP and EPP mentors and protégées from private schools. These symbols are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Symbols used to refer to Mentor and Mentee/Protégé Interviewees

Mentors/Mentees	Reference Symbols
Mentors	AMEN 1-2: First and Second Mentors National School
	BMEX 1-6: First to Sixth Mentors Extra County School
	CMEC 1-10: First to Tenth Mentors County School
	DMSC 1-14: First to Fourteenth Mentors Sub-County School
	EMP 1-4: First to Fourth Mentors Private School
Mentees/Protégé	APN 1: First Protégée National School
	BPEX 1-3: First to Third Protégé Extra County School
	CPC 1-5: First to Fifth Protégé County School
	DPSC 1-7: First to Seventh Protégé Sub-County School
	EPP 1-2: First and Second Protégé Private School

Classroom Management Support

Classroom management refers to the teacher's ability to lead students and to create a quiet and organized learning environment, which involves dealing with misbehaviour, as well as establishing rules and routines applicable to the class and perhaps for a particular subject, among a host of other teacher activities. Emphasis on classroom management is consistent with the perception that it is

an important characteristic of good teaching. However, the participants' reports of what classroom management activities entailed varied considerably.

The first scenario, which seemed to be the practice in the higher categories of schools (the national and extra county schools), was one in which the NRT was not given problematic classes. In cases when that had to happen, the novice would be coached on how to deal with such classes. Below is what one mentor quipped. The same experience was also mentioned by a beginning teacher.

> In some schools, mine included there are classes that are known to be difficult. If I know there is such a class that is not a class to give a new teacher. I always want to give a new teacher a soft landing though. Unfortunately I have heard that in other schools; when a new teacher arrives the old teachers want to give their difficult classes to them... Personally I believe we should give the new teacher a soft landing because as we have seen earlier the challenges are more, the emotional challenges need to be taken care of so you will just be compounding the problem if you decide to give them the difficult classes (BMEX1).

> I was given the lower classes – forms one and two – and was even helped by being orientated on what to do ...Yeah. The HOD told me to insist that each student showed me his school ID which I verified before issuing a text book. I was assisted in classroom management and even just the general classroom discipline (BPEX3).

Still, there were unfortunate cases in which the NRTs were given classes that had difficult students. These were classes with undisciplined students and such students are also normally poor academically. Some mentors reported that older teachers saw the coming of the novice teachers as an opportunity to drop such classes. The quotations below provide evidence for this as reported by mentors and mentees alike.

> They leave the teachers to find out on their own ...I have seen something that is not so good usually when such a teacher arrives, people would want to dish out that class which has very weird students, undisciplined, those who are always absent most of the time don't do their work. They are just given a class to find out then after one week the teacher will be complaining about the class then that is the time they will talk to the teacher this is how you go about, this is what you do if they are on the extreme you push them to the administration or this is the way to go Exactly, those are the classes we give them in my school ones who are a bit weird… (DMESC3).

> Unfortunate. (laughter)I was left to find out on my own. It looked like I was given a class that had very undisciplined students and nobody told me anything about them. I realized that it was a rather difficult class. That was a form 2 class. I also had a form one class but form one had no problem. So I kept my tribulations about this class to myself for quite some time then one day I opened up to a colleague what I was going through. He laughed and I wondered why. So he told me that that is the bullying for a new teacher.... a class that people have been waiting to damp. So when I got myself in

> that situation I decided to use my own devices. No one actually mentored me on how to go about it (DPSC6).

In this area again there was a marked difference between the higher category of schools, which seemed proactive in the manner they handled strategies for classroom management. A lot of care was taken when allocating classes to the NRT. On the contrary, the lower cadre schools were reactive in that the problem of classroom management is dealt with if the NRT raises difficulties experienced. Still, some NRTs go it all alone. In this last sub section, we report the strategies that were put in place for subject content delivery.

Support towards Pedagogical Skills

Pedagogy refers to the ability to create a powerful learning environment in which students can develop skills and obtain the required knowledge. The core business of any school revolves around the specific classroom activities that add up to the achievement of the expected skills and knowledge as stipulated by the educational objectives.

Generally, with regard to classroom-specific activities, the NRTs were directed to offices from which they would collect instructional materials and any other materials needed for classroom activities. These included mainly stationery, class texts for the teacher both the students' copy and the teacher's guide and any other material as need may be. After that, for majority of the public schools of the various categories, the NRT proceeded to the allocated class to start actual classroom teaching activities and at this juncture the NRT consulted teachers of their choice in case of any difficulties. As mentioned by one of the mentors, there was mainly reactive action on handling the NRT with regard to the start of active actual teaching duties.

> I must be candid here that we don't do that. Maybe one reason we don't is to make the teacher comfortable when it is still very early you allow them first to get to class, have a feel of the room, and get to know the students. Maybe after a while you can go out of your way to find out. Sometimes it comes from the students that maybe they have an issue with the teacher. It is very easy to come out especially through students. That way you can call the teacher and discuss the issue with them. I don't think we have prioritized going to class because of what we fear might be the negative effect that this is a new teacher and there you are. To the teacher it may appear like you want to find fault and you don't really trust them. So that prevents us from going at the very beginning. So this teacher will settle for a week or a month before we can now want to gauge using that method. I think the general impression could be that we don't want to unsettle them. I think that is true even for us older teachers. When someone sits in your class you are... you really have to be strong (BMEX1).

The mentees on their part corroborated this same scenario. It was the mentee who approached a friendly looking teacher for assistance as indicated in the first of the excerpts below. In the second excerpt, the mentee reveals his survival tactics that encompass use of his teaching practice experiences as well as a discovery he made that the school being relatively new, encouraged laxity.

There was not so much strictness in terms of adhering to the demands of the handling of the professional documents.

> The only thing I was told was "you'll get the text books sand so forth in the library" (DPSC1).

> You see with regard to classroom specific activities, I had to find a way out more or less on my own. In this relatively new school a lot of things were not looked at keenly. Once I had been introduced I just went ahead to do the teaching activities the way I knew but again I want to say that I was lucky to have gone for TP in a big school that was very organized so I just relied on some of those practices that I had got in that school. I decided to use my TP file. Fortunately one of the TP schemes of work fitted well because it was for second term so I just modified a few things here and there and for record of work covered I asked a colleague to give me his so that I could use it as a sample (DPSC6).

One thing that featured prominently with regard to classroom-specific activities was Teacher Performance Appraisal and Development (TPAD), a TSC requirement for all teachers whether old or new. The programme spells out a clear understanding of effective teaching which calls on various stake holders to focus on improving teaching and to have a clear vision of what effective teaching looks like. Performance Standards for Teachers outline what teachers should know and be able to do. These Standards present a comprehensive picture of the elements of effective teaching organized around the domains of professional knowledge, professional practice and professional engagement. The mentors reported that this was the only impetus for classroom observation in majority of schools in the country. However, it really did not serve any useful purpose as it was just for mere fulfilment of some requirement by the employer, TSC.

As mentioned earlier, teachers in the field do not take TPAD seriously. Both mentors and mentees from public schools shared the same sentiments with regard to this. The citations below present those sentiments.

> I really don't know what to say but there is this thing called TPAD that the TSC has brought in. I was informed that it is a requirement by TSC and so every teacher must have an appraiser. So I was told that before that particular term during which I had been employed ended, I would be involved in a lesson observation. Mmmmh not much, not much…there wasn't any meaningful conversations after that. I have since learnt that that lesson observation for purposes of TPAD is a mere fulfilment of the requirement by TSC that it does not mean much and is not taken seriously by the teachers (CPC2).

> ...but nowadays we do that due to the TPAD issue that the TSC has brought in. Once in a while we do some observation to see how they teach. There is no such arrangement I think we do what we do for the purpose of meeting the expectations of our employer in TPAD (laughs) but as a school we don't make this arrangement of observing a teacher first, creating a situation where they can observe the teachers teaching. Yeah.

> not much even if there are discussions, they are very minimal. They don't really engage the two participants the appraiser and the appraisee maybe just make a few comments during observation but they are not very strong or meaningful conversations after that (CMEC1).

In one interesting case, the NRT herself initiated classroom observation. She did not feel confident enough after a short stint of teaching in Rwanda. She reported that a number of them had been sent there through some joint arrangements between the Kenya and Rwandese governments. On coming back she needed to remind herself and restore confidence. She had this to say:

> The last teaching experience was outside the country, the time they had given opportunities we went there for quite a while ...The Rwandese style, so real teaching experience was before I left for Rwanda because in Rwanda we were teaching, yes but in different manner from the way we do it here. Because I was not really confident of myself I just asked them to let me just come and sit at the back and assume am just a random teacher on practise and observe me if am doing the right or not. For around 20 minutes they are the ones who did the observation and I didn't do any for myself (CPC2).

In the private schools in particular, classroom observation was handled with the seriousness it deserved. The NRTs were exposed to observation of teachers who had served in the field. There was much order in such schools. After the lessons there would be follow-up discussions with specific details about the students' abilities and strategies that would be in bringing out the best out of them. The following excerpt attests to this:

> I was only tagged to a teacher for English. The one I went to class with for the first one week. Yeah and I did not watch him teach he watched me teach for one week. Yeah, all the lessons for that one week. After the lesson we would go to his office then we discuss. aah... you know I had come from a school that was very low so he would tell me here we do not expect you to start telling them what is a verb you would not given them such basics he would tell me to engage the students more let the students do most of that work in fact just put them in groups get them discuss let them present and all that. So he told me most of these things let the students do. Those are some of the instructions he gave and then when I had my first literature lesson, we were reading the River and the Source he told me you don't read the book with the students in class. They have already read just come get to plot analysis, finish the characters, discuss the themes and yes… (EPPI).

Exam setting and marking was one area that there seemed to be some serious mentoring of the school based exams. In almost all schools, the report was that there were several activities engaged in that assisted the NRTs with information as well as practice on how to go about the exams. Many mentors reported that there is significant amount of coaching that goes on in terms of guiding the NRT on setting as well as the marking of the school based exams. The older teachers reportedly co-set the exams with the NRT. Members are allocated the various sections of the paper after

which they sit as a panel to moderate the question paper as well as the marking scheme. Apparently, the mentees do not take some of the activities positively. The comments were thus:

> They are taken through setting and marking. Apparently we have examiners in all the three papers, being an examiner for paper 1, I am given time to sit with them and take them through what is required for paper 1 and how to set and possibly how to distribute the marks. On many occasions we have been training them it really takes them long to get into the system. Most of the questions they set are rejected because of the quality but we keep on encouraging them but there are those who feel that we intimidate them by rejecting those questions (AMEN1).

> When it comes to exams we, really don't assume. We give them past papers and when they set their first exam, the HOD goes through it or their counterpart most of the time they are given an opportunity to co-set with their counterpart. The counterpart will be able to tell this newly employed teacher knows what to do or does not. It is not assumed. So next time they'll set and HOD looks at it and corrections are made (CMEC7).

On issues related to marking, again the NRT is coordinated and taken through some indirect training in marking by the Kenya National Examinations Council examiners. These examiners are teachers in the respective schools or teachers who have gained the skills through attending seminars and workshops organized by the county or sub county education offices. The mentors and mentees were in agreement on this and the quotes below illustrate it.

> ...it's like we take them through like an indirect training on marking. So I want to say although we don't have direct training, through departmental meetings which are consultative such an issue is raised so the new teacher cannot claim that they totally do not know, so...Usually, the senior teachers in the department will do it or the HOD and we believe that these are teachers who have benefited from seminars, regular seminars and of course in our school we believe in going for these seminars whenever they are organized so the senior teachers are to pass on this information… (BMEX1).

> I can say that I was taken through some form of training on marking. Particularly the marking of functional as well as imaginative compositions. These areas have certain technicalities and I must say that the highlights that I was given set me on the right path because during university time and even teaching practice nobody gave me such skills. I think these were teachers who most likely were examiners of the various papers of English language. So I could be shown the skills by the different senior teachers and sometimes I could see other teachers also consulting them from time to time (BPEX1).

> ... exams we were all mentored; even my mentor was also mentored. The school had organized the team leaders…..From Kenya National Examinations Council to train the teachers. It is something that is done yearly. After exams we mark paper one, two days paper two, then paper three Then we'll be taught on how to mark; standard marking.

> And new trends…. In marking among us we are six; four are markers but they still sit in for the training. They like it, they say it is refreshing... (EPP2).

Finally, there were also the co-curricular activities particularly those related to the English subject. One of the mentors reported that the older teachers willingly delegated or to be more precise, abdicated their responsibilities and left the mentees to carry on the activities of such clubs like debating, journalism/writers and so on. The mentees were to do the bulk of the work and the mentors to benefit if any. The novices said that in most cases there was very little mentoring done. This was because in some cases, the older teachers did not have interest in such activities. There is also a remark by one mentee that his best experiences were in the co-curricular activities. These three excerpts below; one by a mentor and two by mentees capture the varied practices reported:

> Debating club or journalism club whoever will be in charge of them would be quick to ask them; what is your area of interest? And mainly, sorry to say, but the motive is that this one does the donkey work (laughter)So it's not so much to recruit them to help… I will reap the benefits and because the teacher is new in the profession and wants to prove their worth they will do that donkey work (laughter) so that is what happens (BMEX4).

> My experiences in the co-curricular activities I would say were one of the best. As I said earlier this is a rather young school so a number of things are not yet established so I have had a good time. Actually the few TSC teachers who are there do not have interest in the activities so I have been given so many of those clubs and even games... Uhmm for games there is somebody we work with but the others music and drama to be specific I just use my own skills at least I participated in them as a high school student and also the school in which I did TP was active in co-curricular activities so while there I gathered some skills (DPSC3).

> Clubs and societies were there and very active. Now the problem was the older teachers wanted me to take over. Every patron was talking to me to do that. It was like everyone wanted to relieve himself from those responsibilities. So eventually when I settled on journalism because it looked the most active the patron officially handed over to me after inviting me a number of times to attend the meetings. He actually coached me on what to do and how the club operated (BPEX3).

In contrast to the above responses, which mainly pointed towards lack of mentoring for co-curricular activities, one respondent from an extra county school, reported at least some supervision of the NRT with regard to co-curricular activities. There would be an older member of staff working with the new teacher. This type of arrangement is actually the ideal. The respondent had this to say:

> The only area I have seen new teachers taking professional responsibilities immediately is in the area of maybe clubs, or a teacher may have interest in say drama or music or a teacher is talented in sports. So, in such a situation you allow that teacher

> to assume that position immediately but under the supervision of an older or seasoned member of staff in that area... (BMEX1).

One shocking submission was that in yet other schools the older teachers guarded the clubs jealously. This was because the positions had some monetary implications. The teachers taking the students out for these activities would sign imprests and this was a source of extra income for those involved. It is on account of such money that if a novice showed interest, they could have everything that was donkey work but none that touched on money. The older teacher would be willing to provide mentoring so that after a short while the NRT would do all the tedious work. The remark was:

> Mmmm what do I say? In my school those clubs and societies were like heavily guarded by the older teachers. It was like a teacher who was in charge of one was not very free to welcome someone else. I later learnt that there was money involved particularly in games and these clubs that are related to English drama, music and the like. So I kept off except for when occasionally I would be asked to assist in accompanying the students for an outing... (CPC2).

Following the foregoing, seemingly, it is in this area that the NRTs were left to go about on their own mainly in the public schools. The TPAD demands were just superficially addressed: however, in the private schools there was classroom observation. One area in which there was real mentoring that had a lot of input was in the setting and marking of school based examinations. For the co-curricular activities there were schools in which there was nil mentoring and some with some minimal mentoring.

The findings on this aspect can be summarized as: in low cost, sub-county, county and some extra county schools beginning teachers enter the job ready to teach as solo practitioners in a stand-alone setting, with little or no expectation for continuous growth. Occasionally, they are orientated to school policies and procedures through an informal buddy system that provides only emotional/survival support. On the contrary, their counterparts in a few extra county, national and high cost private schools are oriented to the school community, emotional supports provided and there is focus on developing teaching skills/expertise of the new teachers by veteran teachers and thus more chances of growth in the profession.

DISCUSSION

The general picture that arose from the findings of the study was that professional development received only limited support, which concurred with the literature on programmes' content in the USA (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). In general, the results of the present study concerning the mentoring programmes' for novice teachers were in line with these findings. Teachers experienced an important influence on their well-being and much less influence on their professional development. That professional development received only limited attention is in line with criticism expressed throughout the years that professional development receives too little attention. The mentoring programmes typically seemed to be centred on the (individual) teacher. Most mentors focused

strongly on beginning teachers' concerns and support mostly focused on the teacher's questions, well-being, and personal development. This is markedly different from support by programmes in, for example, France, Shanghai, and Japan, where the programmes are much more directive (Britton, Paine, Raizen & Pimm, 2003). However, programmes in the Netherlands seem to focus on providing emotional support and practical information just as those investigated in the study.

The results of the present study concerning the mentoring strategies available in schools are in line with the literature in majority of the mentoring handbooks as well as the mentoring researches reported in journals reviewed. Portelli, Solomon, Barrett, Mujawamariya, Pinto and Singer (2010) observe that while mentoring has been "officially" framed as a means to increase teacher competence, its purposes in other jurisdictions vary, ranging from support, socialization, adjustment, assessment, and teacher retention. This is a view earlier shared by Ingersoll and Kralik (2004). The format, structure and content of mentoring programmes vary in different jurisdictions. However, most teacher mentoring programmes tend to be hierarchical, and concerned with acclimatizing new teachers to existing school procedures. Namunga and Otunga (2012) also support the view that mentoring programmes are established primarily to provide support to beginning school teachers or school administrators. Newly recruited teachers are in-serviced by the old members of the staff into the life of the school.

The findings of the study did not reflect uniformity in this area. There was much variation occasioned by the category of schools. The more endowed schools, that is, national, some extra-county and high cost private schools had similar scenarios as those expressed above. On the contrary, the less endowed ones had very little if not negligible professional support. This kind of support is the educationally supportive process of scaffolding the learning of the core skills of professional learning, thinking and action: noticing, learning from experience, and informed planning and preparation. In this kind of 'help' it will usually not be appropriate to do things for the mentee, rather it is the mentee who must not only learn to teach (better) but also learn to review and assess their work independently.

In some studies and even mentor handbooks, it is referred to as instrumental, career or instructional support. The activities here involve a range of behaviours that help protégés "learn the ropes" and prepare them for hierarchical advancement within their organizations encompasses teaching, advising, coaching, sponsoring their advancement, guiding, advocating, and dispensing and sharing resources increasing their positive exposure and visibility, and offering them protection and challenging assignments. These activities have direct and measurable consequences for the protégé. Mentors provide opportunities to the protégé, and remove barriers to progress, advancement, or success. Instrumental mentoring can also be protective and reduce risks faced by the protégé. An instrumental mentor serves as a coach and advisor, helping the protégé negotiate the environment.

Further, this kind of support addresses the beginning teachers need to navigate her or his way through multiple tasks and problems that, in the future, will be seen as standard activities associated with teaching but, at first, are important hurdles for the novice. It focuses on the nuts

and bolts of teaching, from locating materials and other resources available in the school, to organizing classroom space, to adding to his or her still-limited repertoire of instructional strategies. Researchers and teacher educators suggest, however, that it is not enough for mentoring programmes to provide support. Noting that beginning teachers are learners as well as teachers, they assert the importance of another function of mentoring programmes: development which begins during the first year of teaching but extends into that stage of teacher growth that mentoring researchers refer to as experimentation and consolidation.

Development focuses on building a personal understanding of pedagogy – the art and science of teaching and learning that allows a teacher to continually refine and adjust his/her practice in order to consistently and effectively help students to master content and skills. Mentoring for development centres on helping novices begin to craft a professional identity through their struggles with and explorations of students and subject matter. The ultimate goal is for the novice teacher to gain independence as a professional who is empowered to draw from a foundation of experience-based knowledge and collective wisdom about good practice (Feiman-Nemser, 2003).

Unfortunately, clear strategies or activities related to this very important mentoring function were lacking in all the mentoring relationships that were available for the study. Many mentoring sessions tended to concentrate on practical information and emotional support. This would support my argument that my study points out the failure of school establishments to set the NRTs on the right footing with regard to the core business of any school, that is, academic excellence. This is the greatest opportunity missed in the CTPD.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the study concludes that mentoring as currently practiced demonstrates a lack of clear strategies. Kenya, like most developing nations, has yet to establish a formal teacher educational policy on mentoring for beginning teachers. At the secondary school level in which this study was based, schools, sub counties, counties, regions and even the nation hardly offer any organized orientation on the least for the beginning teachers. Additionally, if there are any, there are not formal and thus do not meet the threshold expected. Attempts by individual schools at some form of mentorship as exhibited by the findings of the current study revealed that from one mentoring programme to another, much variance existed.

In order to effectively serve beginning teachers, mentoring alongside other induction programme activities must possess certain attributes that are aligned with a national vision for teacher support and preparation which currently is not given the attention it deserves. Such essential attributes include providing support in a bundled format, offering beginning teachers available and reliable mentors from the same field, affording opportunities for professional collaboration), affording opportunities for lesson observations and supporting psychological, instruction-related, and development needs. Additionally, all of this support should be offered in a format that works to alleviate additional stress for beginning teachers.

The study contributes to research literature in English language teaching in particular and teacher education in general by providing a basis for streamlining mentoring as an important component of Continuous Teacher Professional Development. Indeed, this phase of teacher education is very critical and opens an avenue for subsequent professional development. Some of the revelations made by the study findings hint at these opportunities that are worth exploiting.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the findings of the study, the recommendations target the Ministry of Education, the Teachers Service Commission and the school principals. To begin with, the MoE has a number of roles to play in the teaching profession; however, with regard to the concept under study, four roles that are relevant include taking full control of policies, making decisions and planning of activities, ensuring careful utilization of the budget, providing macro guidance to all educational institutions and setting teaching regulations. In view of these roles above basing on the findings of the study, the MoE should:

- Encourage and provide support for teacher preparation programmes that develop extended intern/residency models that cover enough time before confirmation of appointment on permanent position. That period should work as a probation time of at least one year as opposed to the current 6 months.
- Try to ensure that sufficient resource is provided to enable adequate support for teachers' CTPD, and to support and invest in mentoring across the education sector.
- Given the variable quality of institution based mentoring and the difficulties many teachers experience in acknowledging and seeking support for their CTPD needs within their institutions in the current climate – all teachers should have the opportunity to access an external mentor (a subject-specialist teacher who has recent experience of teaching within the sector and who is a trained mentor. This should, in fact, be additional to the quality assurance personnel in counties.

Second, the Teachers Service Commission, one of the semi autonomous bodies under the MoE has many mandates. The relevant ones to novice teachers are: registration of trained teachers, recruitment, employment and assigning of NRTs to any public school. It is also mandated with remuneration of teachers and it reviews demand for and supply of teachers. In addition, one of its policies is to elevate the teaching profession by increasing the quality of teaching, advancing teaching as a career and improving the welfare of teachers. These mandates touch on beginning teachers who are the main target of this study; consequently the following recommendations are deemed fit for this body:

- Make sure that mentors receive appropriate training (especially on how to share their expertise in pedagogy and curriculum development), meaningful incentives, and time to do their work well.
- Establish a professional status (a higher job group) for teacher mentors that ensures that holders of that position are trained for the role, and have subsequent opportunities both to undertake refresher mentor training courses and to network with other mentors particularly those in different categories of schools.

- Stop placing novice teachers in high-need schools and leaving them to "sink or swim". The alternative to this is to develop incentives for teams of experienced teachers to work in challenging schools, and, if new teachers are assigned to these schools, it becomes easy to pair them with experienced teachers.
- Work with teacher preparation institutions to establish model mentoring programmes for newly recruited teachers that can benefit the entire school community and develop online networks (E-mentoring) for new teachers that provide anytime, anywhere support and opportunities for facilitated discussion and reflection.

Third, school principals play a critical role in facilitating the professional development of novice teachers. They are the agent of the teachers' employer, TSC. They work very closely with the NRTs and it is their word that the commission relies on for confirmation of NRTs employment to permanent and pensionable status. Proper management practices by them lead to discipline and excellent performance in a number of areas which come in handy in the professional development and well-being of the NRT. The principal is charged with the responsibility of planning, budgeting and ensuring appropriate use of all teaching and learning resources. They also manage staff to sustain high morale, motivation, high integrity and appropriate work ethics and ensure school/community relations, health, security and welfare for harmonious and peaceful co-existence based on acceptable conduct and behaviour of all in the school community. Therefore, school principals should:

- Set up school structures that enable mentors, and experienced teachers to work together with new teachers. Create regular opportunities for interaction between new and experienced teachers. This kind of interaction, which includes both formal and informal exchanges, is characterized by classroom observations currently provided for by TPAD, spontaneous advice, and group meetings. NRTs value and benefit from group conversations with colleagues, which are facilitated if veterans and novices are placed in close proximity. This calls for improved infrastructure in terms of subject offices which enable members to sit together.
- Pair new teachers (one-to-one) with experienced teachers who have the relevant skills, content knowledge, expertise and willingness to serve as coaches or mentors.
- Cultivate a professional culture that recognizes the needs and skills of new teachers and promotes ongoing interactions of teachers across experience levels.
- Minimize non-teaching responsibilities for novice teachers so that they have time for a full range of induction activities, more importantly mentoring.
- Recognize the difference in skill levels between novice and veteran teachers and adjust responsibilities accordingly so that new teachers are not given the most difficult teaching assignments.

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