

**The Manner Beginning Teachers are Mentored to Enhance
Pedagogical Skills in Government Secondary Schools in Rukwa
Region, Tanzania**

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Abstract

This study explored the manner in which the beginning teachers were mentored to enhance pedagogical skills in government secondary schools in Sumbawanga Municipality and Nkasi District Council, Rukwa Region. Under the qualitative research approach used, the study employed an exploratory single case study design. Data were collected through open-ended questionnaires from experienced teachers and semi-structured interviews with beginning teachers, Heads of Secondary Schools, Heads of Departments, and District Secondary Education Officers, and data were thematically analysed. The findings of the study show that mentoring practices were done through one-to-one mentoring, peer mentoring, and team mentoring where beginning teachers were attached directly to experienced teachers, and get support from experienced teachers across the departments and within themselves inside and outside schools. Furthermore, the pedagogical skills gained due to mentorship include the subject matter masteries, teaching and learning materials' preparations, teaching and learning methods' application, and students' assessment and feedback given. The study recommends that the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology should institutionalise mentoring in schools and provide circulars and guidelines to enforce its implementation in schools effectively.

Keywords: Beginning Teachers, Mentoring, Pedagogical Skills

1.0 Introduction

Mentoring service to beginning teachers is globally affirmed to be one of the cost-effective and sustainable professional support services, which is usually provided within the working environment, to keep new teachers updated with the ever-changing teaching and learning needs and make them competent and effective practitioners (Chikoyo et al., 2019; Floody, 2021; Wasonga et al., 2015). It is upon this significance that education systems worldwide consider mentoring as a relevant instrument in enhancing beginning teachers' pedagogical skills and hence increase their teaching performance and students' learning outcomes (Alam, 2018; Dachi, 2018; Faruki, Haque & Islam, 2019; Wasonga et al., 2015).

1.1 Development of Beginning Teachers' Mentoring in Schools

The development of mentoring in schools draws back from the *Odyssey of Homer* story in Greece when mentoring was understood from the apprenticeship system perspective whereby the apprentices learnt skills from the master (Comer et al., 2017). The meaning of mentoring has ever since evolved in many forms and practices, and it is now perceived as a process of facilitating career development in possessing relevant knowledge and skills for carrying out professional activities based on set standards (Agunloye, 2013; Clark & Byrnes, 2012; Darling-Hammond, 2013). Additionally, mentoring in the education sector largely is performed to support newly employed teachers to learn teaching responsibilities and hence grow personally and professionally (Smith & Finch, 2010; Wallace Foundation, 2007).

Since the 1980s, many developed and developing countries globally have paid interest in mentoring newly appointed teachers following the benefits obtained out of mentoring practices. Such benefits include employee

retention which reduces teacher attrition, and increase confidence and motivation among the teachers due to professional support provided by experienced teachers (Hamad, 2015; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Wasonga et al., 2015). For this case, mentoring for beginning teachers has been a driving force towards achieving educational goals, which have a positive impact towards students' academic performance in respective countries.

1.2 Mentoring Beginning Teachers in Developed Countries

The introduction of mentoring practices in the education system began in the United States of America (USA), specifically in New York and California in the second half of the 20th century (1980s) and later spread to other developed countries, such as Norway, Denmark, Sweden, and the United Kingdom (Dziczkowski, 2013; Mullen, 2012; Wallace Foundation, 2007). Canada and the USA began to spend money on the recruitment of other beginning teachers and worked out how to retain them. They largely adopted induction and mentoring strategies to support beginning teachers in performing better in their teaching careers (National Teacher Centre, 2011).

Research works have revealed that teachers who had not participated in mentoring or induction programmes were nearly twice as likely to leave the profession after their first three years of teaching following a lack of professional support from experienced teachers (Education Week, 2000). Mentoring for beginning teachers now is important as it helps them fill in the gap between theory and practice by acquiring professional competences that could enhance job performance and social adjustability in the new working environment (Hudson, 2012).

In England, mentoring was introduced and practised as a central feature of early university-school partnership programmes, such as the Oxford University Internship Scheme, which reported a record in enhancing beginning teachers' pedagogical skills (Rogers et al., 2019). In addition, educational policy-makers in the United States of America have encouraged and, in some cases, required the introduction of mentoring arrangements, for a variety of reasons one being the desire to increase the pedagogical skills performance among the new teachers (Mullen, 2012).

The second related reason, according to Malisa (2015) and Potemski and Matlach (2014), was to encourage the retention of newly and recently qualified teachers in the profession through workplace adaptation and encouragement as explained earlier. Since then, policymakers and educational leaders have pinned high hopes on mentoring practices being an instrument for reforming teaching and teacher education as it helps novices learn new pedagogies and socialise them to new professional norms and practices (Shabani, 2016).

The research by Darling-Hammond et al. (2010) provides evidence that induction programmes such as teacher mentoring are mandatory in many developed countries, such as Australia, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, and Switzerland. Mentoring programmes in high-achieving nations are conducted by allocating ample time for beginning teachers and experienced teachers to participate in mentoring and other induction activities. It is further revealed that in countries such as Denmark, Finland, Hungary, Italy, Norway, Switzerland, and Flemish Belgium, schools provide substantial time for regular collaboration among teachers on issues of instruction. Teachers in Finnish schools, for example, meet one afternoon each week to jointly plan and develop a

curriculum, and schools in the same municipality are encouraged to work together to share materials. Darling-Hammond et al. (2010) further reveal that in Scandinavian countries, such as Finland, Sweden, Norway, and Netherlands, teachers meet at the district centre for reflective practice groups twice a month with an experienced teacher who facilitates their discussions of common problems for beginning teachers. The research confirms that beginning teachers finally become aware of the professional demands, and become competent and confident in teaching their students in and outside the classrooms.

1.3 Mentoring Beginning Teachers in Developing Countries and Sub-Saharan Africa

Beginning teacher mentoring is now widely practised globally as it started in the USA and later spread to European countries and finally to developing countries located in Asia, Latin America and Africa including Tanzania (Bhalalusesa et al., 2011). Scholars such as Kunje (2002), Komba and Nkumbi (2008) and Hamad (2015) provide evidence on the teacher mentoring experiences in Malawi and Mozambique whereby heads of schools and other senior and experienced teachers visit classrooms where beginning teachers teach, where after classroom sessions feedback is provided for beginning teachers on the areas that need to be enhanced.

Additionally, Eshun and Ashun (2013a) report on the teacher preparation programme in Ghana namely, “In-In-Out Programme of Colleges of Education”. The government of Ghana reduced the number of years in training student-teachers from three to two years. Student-teachers spent two years in teacher colleges/universities and the third year was spent in schools where they were mentored by experienced teachers to acquire

teaching skills. Eshun and Ashun (2013b) assert that most of the beginning teachers enjoyed the support of their mentors in preparation of their lesson notes, teaching and learning materials, during and after teaching.

In Zimbabwe, Margaret (2016) exposes that the teacher education system adopted school-based mentoring in training both primary and secondary school teachers to replace the long-established Zimbabwe Integrated National Teacher Education Course (ZINTEC) and conventional four-year programme that stipulated that student-teachers are allocated a class under their sole responsibility with the head or deputy head playing a mentoring role. During the teaching practice phase, the school-based mentors are accountable for the student-teachers learning. Mentors are expected to practically and professionally develop student-teachers in collaboration with both the training college and the University of Zimbabwe, particularly the Department of Teacher Education (DTE) which is responsible for teacher training (Ngara & Ngwarai, 2012). In addition to Zimbabwe mentoring practices, a study conducted by Mukeredzi et al. (2016) reports that unlike beginning teachers in urban areas who had access to mentoring services, the majority of beginning teachers in rural secondary schools were neither inducted into the profession nor mentored but were left alone to explore and discover the new environment and its operations.

The study by Godda (2018) reports the experiences of school-based mentoring done to part-time Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) students from KwaZulu Natal University who attend Teaching Practice (TP) in community schools during their second year of PGCE. The TP was conducted over six weeks, within which university tutors

visited students to support and assess them in their teaching of those subject specializations for which they were registered at the university. The PGCE students were also expected to be mentored by experienced teachers in the school with the appropriate specialization. Mentoring was done first by giving the opportunity for PGCE students to observe lessons taught by experienced teachers and later on comes the time for mentors to observe lessons taught by PGCE students. Thereafter, post-conferences were held to discuss the successes and failures so that they could make improvements in future lessons. School heads were responsible for the mentors' selection.

Heeralal (2014) conducted a study at a South African University involving student teachers who were asked to identify the mentoring needs of pre-service teachers so that mentors could assist student teachers in meeting their needs and overcoming some of the challenges that they may face in entering the teaching profession. The study found that the greatest mentoring needs of pre-service teachers lie in the areas of assessment (87.2%), lesson preparation (84.6%), administrative matters (82.0%), classroom management (79.5%), lesson presentation (79.5%), and discipline (76.9%). The other areas include professional development (64.1%), time management (56.4%) and extra and co-curricular activities (48.5%) also need attention. Dealing with diversity (41.0%), dealing with change (38.5%), relationships (38.5%) and adapting to a school environment, cannot be ignored as areas of need amongst pre-service teachers.

DeRosa (2005) further reports that school-mentoring practices for newly qualified teachers in Zambian secondary schools are still at the infant stage, still unorganized and mentors are not professionally trained to carry out mentoring services in secondary schools so that teachers can

confidently teach stay and enjoy teaching. Furthermore, Mtitu (2014) claims that in Zambia, there is ample evidence that most teachers have not received mentorship because mentorship programmes for newly qualified teachers were virtually non-existent in Zambian schools. Equally, Mulkeen and Chen (2008) reported that the practice of teacher mentoring in Uganda was done through local coordinating centres, which acted as in-service training centres. Teacher mentors provide mentoring services to untrained teachers so that they acquire pedagogical skills, which enable them to teach effectively in classrooms. The programme has positive effects on both experienced teachers and beginning teachers by cultivating mutual relationships, shared spirit, collective responsibilities and common understanding in the teaching process.

Koda (2006) also exposed the in-service school-based training programmes in Kenya which were offered through mentoring, coaching, classroom observations, collaborative planning and team teaching which has shown the greatest impact on classroom practices and students' academic performance. Indoshi (2003) using a qualitative method of study of new graduate school teachers in Kisumu District in Nyanza Province of Kenya during their first 2 years in teaching (probation period) discovered that beginning teachers wished to learn school organization, curriculum, teaching methods, student discipline management, interpersonal relationships, school rules and regulations, and school vision and mission.

1.4 Empirical Studies on Mentoring Beginning Teachers in Tanzania

According to the United Republic of Tanzania (2018), from the early 1960s, the government, and local private agencies conducted in-service training, mentoring being one of the learning activities in the programme for their teachers. In the 1970s and 1980s, the Government implemented

a countrywide Continuous Professional Development (CPD) initiative for teachers called Tanzania UNICEF and UNESCO Primary Education Reform which was also known in Kiswahili as “Mpango wa Tanzania UNICEF na UNESCO” - MTUU. In this initiative, teachers in the community schools were mentored by tutors in the nearby teacher colleges. The initiative also focused on strengthening school and community partnerships for socialization purposes.

Alongside MTUU, there was the Universal Primary Education (UPE) initiative in 1977 that recruited paraprofessional teachers who received tailor-made training done in the ward centres where they were mentored by experienced teachers to get teaching skills while working. Another CPD initiative was implemented under District-based Support for Primary Education (DBSPE) in the 1990s, which supported whole school development planning through a network of Teachers’ Resource Centres around the country. Through the DBSPE programme, teachers were coached and mentored on conducting school mapping or school situational analysis and were guided to prepare Whole School Development Plans for their schools.

In 1998, the then Ministry of Education and Culture in collaboration with Stockholm Institute of Education of Sweden instituted a Teacher Educators Programme (TEP) for teacher educators’ professional development in Tanzania. The programme was introduced to coach and mentor Teacher College tutors to the major educational paradigm shift, which demanded teachers change teaching strategies, from a teacher-centred approach to a learner-centred approach, which was the learning-by-doing approach. Through this approach, students were encouraged to participate actively during the teaching and learning processes and the

role of the teacher changed from being a master of everything during the teaching and learning process to a facilitator. Therefore, the TEP programme was designed to empower Teacher College tutors to use participatory techniques and cooperative learning methods as described earlier.

Active learning became the phrase of the time, and TEP had to take the lead in these transformations. URT (2018) adds that the initial design of TEP was a three-month residential/college-based course. However it was later redesigned into a semi-distance learning course conducted in zonal settings that were able to accommodate more college tutors and larger populations. Teachers' College tutors graduating from these zones conducted TEP courses and were later the mentors and coaches of both primary and secondary school teachers based in their zonal localities. This TEP design was deemed a success in supporting primary and secondary school teachers, particularly in inculcating skills in the effective use of cooperative teaching and learning methods.

Between the years 2002 and 2016, the Tanzania Government embarked on huge education reforms at both primary and secondary education levels through major sector development plans: Primary Education Development Program (PEDP 2002-2011) and Secondary Education Development Plan (SEDP 2004-2016). Through PEDP and SEDP programmes, the Government managed to establish new schools (primary and secondary) up to ward levels, which both demanded new teachers to teach in those newly opened schools following to increase in students' enrollment.

At this departure, the Government came up with a two-tier system for diploma teachers. Mentoring practices were designed to support diploma student-teachers who were posted to teach in secondary schools. In the first part of the course, student-teachers spent one year in the colleges, mostly learning the theoretical part of the course. The second part, which demanded mentoring from senior teachers, was when student-teachers were posted to secondary schools to put theory into practice. The programme achieved less because there was neither training conducted for experienced teachers to become mentors nor a mentor's guide distributed to help them practice mentoring (Bhalalusesa et al., 2011).

1.5 Study Purpose and Specific Objectives

The purpose of the study was to explore how beginning teachers were mentored in government secondary schools to enhance pedagogical skills. Specifically, the study addressed: i) the manner through which mentoring was organised in government secondary schools, ii) the identification and prioritisation of key areas for mentorship in schools, and iii) the professional support services offered to beginning teachers in schools.

2.0 Materials and Methods

Theoretically, the study adopted a socio-cultural theory, which describes school-based mentoring as a demanding social interaction in communities of learning to enhance pedagogical skills (Ayot & Patel, 1992). Whilst, the application of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) theory as described by Bhowmik, Banerjee and Banerjee (2013), and Kamarudin et al. (2020) suited this study because it showed the role of experienced teachers (more knowledgeable ones) in mentoring beginning teachers to enhance pedagogical skills. This study was a qualitative inquiry, which presumed the participants' personal constructs and interpretation of the

phenomena under investigation (Creswell, 2007; Yin, 2011); hence, the exploration of the participants' experiences, perspectives and views in their natural contexts (Silverman, 2013).

The study was conducted in Rukwa Region in Sumbawanga Municipality and Nkasi District Council. The study covered seven government secondary schools: where schools 1, 2, 3, and 4 were found in Sumbawanga Municipality and schools 5, 6, and 7 were found in Nkasi District Council. A total of 63 equivalents to 96.9% out of 65 planned respondents participated, the participation based on categories of experienced teachers (28 participants), beginning teachers (15 participants), Heads of Departments (11 participants), Heads of Schools (7 participants) and District Secondary Education Officers (DSEOs, 2 participants).

The study administered open-ended questionnaires to experienced teachers, who responded to obtain the perspectives and acceptance in the manners of mentoring beginning teachers in schools; this is because experienced teachers were best positioned to provide situations and experiences in guiding the interviews with the rest of the respondents who took interviews. Nevertheless, during the interviews with the beginning teachers, Heads of Departments, Heads of Schools and DSEOs directed the interviews to what they found important and expressed the meaning they attached to concepts (Taylor et al., 2016). The information collected through semi-structured interviews was recorded with a digital recorder and manually through note-taking. All the interviews and discussions were conducted by mixing English and Kiswahili languages, and direct quotations were translated into English by the researcher. The average time for individual interviews took between 40 and 50 minutes

respectively. All participants who participated in the study gave informed consent and agreed to be interviewed.

More importantly, the criteria for examining the rigour of the study have traditionally been internal and external validity, reliability and objectivity (Creswell, 2007; Golafshani, 2003). Gall et al. (2007) point out that the term trustworthiness is appropriate for judging the quality of study in qualitative paradigms. The elements of the criteria for trustworthiness include credibility, dependability (consistency), transferability (applicability), and conformability (neutrality). These elements were employed alongside other strategies to ensure the quality of this particular study. Credibility is parallel to internal validity (Cohen et al., 2000; Creswell, 2007). This was achieved, first, by the use of two methods (interviews and questionnaires) to collect data. Second, peer reviews were used to ensure credibility, where fellow researchers were given the tentative data and findings for their reviews and comments.

Dependability corresponds to the reliability of the findings in quantitative studies (Cohen et al., 2000; Creswell, 2007). The dependability of the conclusions was guaranteed by asking clear questions, triangulating the data, reducing biases and subjectivity during the data collection, peer reviews, and audit trail, and reporting the study process and the findings transparently. In conformability, parallel to objectivity criteria in the quantitative approach (Cohen et al., 2000), the researcher confirmed the study's findings and grounded them in raw data evidence. The integrity of raw data was maintained by using participants' words, including quotes, liberally.

Further, the transferability of the findings was equivalent to the generalization of the findings in the quantitative study (Cohen et al., 2000; Creswell, 2007). Although the location of the study might be similar to other places in Tanzania, the researcher's aim was not to generalize the findings of the study; instead, it was to explore how beginning teachers were mentored in schools to enhance pedagogical skills. However, if readers find sufficient similarities between their contexts and the context of the study, then it would be reasonable for them to transfer the findings to their contexts. Finally, the data collected were analysed using the principles of thematic analysis.

The approach involves six steps: familiarisation with the data, generation of tentative codes, elucidation of themes, review of themes, delineation of themes and production of the written report as presented by (Bricki & Green, 2007). From questionnaires and interviews, three themes were deductively developed as per study objectives. Before each interview and to each questionnaire respondent, the researcher described the purpose and benefits of the study and steps to be taken to maintain confidentiality and anonymity. In addition, the researcher assured the participants that the information collected were for research purpose only, and in addition, the names of the participants and school names were not mentioned in the report of the study.

3.0 Findings

3.1 The Manner through which Mentoring was Organised in Schools

In the manner through which mentoring was organised in schools, findings show that all the 15 beginning teachers had attachments to

experienced teachers once they reported in schools. Such that one respondent stated:

We were attached to the experienced teachers who have been our focal persons for mentoring services in school (Interview with the Beginning Teacher₁, School₁, 2020).

This suggests a one-to-one mentoring approach which was reported the most practiced in schools and preceded other approaches in the practice. One beginning teacher stated:

When I reported to my working station, I was attached to the experience Teacher, in which mentorship was planned in the one-to-one meetings; we shared teaching and learning resources directly in person and this is mostly practised in this school (Interview with the Beginning Teacher₅, School₂, 2020).

This implies that the one-to-one mentoring approach had support in making the good working relationships evidenced in the fields. As opposed to its strength, one-to-one mentor and mentee teachers were reluctant to produce sufficient program records, only a few produced the templates of the lesson plans, schemes of work both from 2017 to 2019 and some mentoring records to show evidence of mentorship. One head of school reported:

You know mentoring in schools is informal, and is not guided by any by-laws underpinning, thus, it has been very hard to make track records of the mentorship activities (Interview with the Head of School₄, 2020).

The lack of sufficient programme records implies that one-to-one mentoring was privately arranged and there was limited enforcement of mentoring laws and by-laws in schools. Another mentoring approach found in practice among schools under the study was peer mentoring. The findings show that beginning teachers and experienced teachers from different departments had peer working cultures within and across the departments. One beginning teacher was noted saying, “*We have a culture of consultations with peer teachers within and across the departments*” (Interview with the Beginning Teacher₄, School₂, 2020).

This finding implies that teachers had freedom of interaction as colleagues as evidenced in the fields. Through peer mentoring schools cooperated with peer schools in education weeks. One head of the school stated:

I always stand steady on peer networking with neighbouring schools, through ward education week, and district education week we work as peers and teachers get to network with peer teachers, where they support one another in challenges in academic issues (Interview with the Head of School₇, 2020).

This finding implies that through interactions peer teachers mentored each other in private and or in schools’ arrangements to enhance skills in the implementation of the schools’ syllabus. On the contrary, peer mentoring is challenged with limited accessibility among peers due to the workload and area locations of the peers. In addition, team mentoring was also found in practice in schools under the study. One beginning teacher commented:

Team mentoring was arranged to allow observations in classrooms to understand what other teachers did in

classrooms, discuss and sort out challenges about pedagogical skills together, plan together and formulate teaching strategies together (Interview with the Beginning Teachers, 2020).

This approach involved demonstrations and observations of the teaching methods' applications. Being the least in practice among other approaches; this approach was characterized by limited democracy in its implementation because it only compromised on the work ahead to be fulfilled.

3.2 Identification and Prioritisation of Key Areas for Mentorship in Schools

In the identification and prioritisation of key areas for mentorship in schools, the study found out that beginning teachers were mentored in areas relating to the implementation of the subject matter masteries. There were major areas raised for mentorship in the mastery of the subject contents, geared towards ensuring that beginning teachers were setting the teaching and learning competencies based on the new curriculum requirement. The head of the school stated:

The logbook was filled generically; he did not make it clear how he made progress in the classroom activities. You know approving the teaching practices requires the teacher to be specific in the determination of the classroom activities undertaken that specify the competencies gained during the teaching process, the follow-up process was necessary to ensure that beginning teachers fill in the logbooks accordingly, by identifying the classroom activities and hence the teaching and learning competencies (Interview with the Head of School₁, 2020).

This statement signifies that beginning teachers initially were presenting the generic contents of the teaching and learning practices; they were not able to set the flow of classroom activities and fill in the logbooks with the specific teaching and learning competencies. Further findings show that beginning teachers were mentored in manners of teaching and learning materials preparation skills. One head of department from the school stated that:

At the department level, we urge experienced teachers to mentor beginning teachers on the proper preparation and preservation of specimens to ensure high-quality specimens which can bring the expected results in the laboratories (Interview with the Head of Department₆, School₆, 2020).

The statement provided implies that under the arrangement of the department offices, beginning teachers were mentored on how to properly prepare and preserve specimens to increase the quality of information the specimens contained. In addition, findings show that beginning teachers were mentored in the teaching and learning methods application skills. Evidence regarding this inference included a typical statement provided by one beginning teacher as follows:

Following the large number (over 120 students) I had in the classroom, coupled with a huge workload (4 to 8 periods per day), I could not properly engage every student's attentiveness in the learning process, in many occasions I applied the lecture teaching method, but it turned outdated when students were getting much more jaded with the teaching progress and I had to change the teaching style to classroom discussions and presentations. Again, this probed problems in the implementation due to students

overcrowding in the classroom and limited time which was assigned for a given subject period. I had to seek support from experienced Teachers (Interview with the Beginning Teacher¹⁴, 2020).

The quotation above signifies that there were several reasons why beginning teachers failed to actively apply participatory teaching methods. Finally beginning teachers were mentored in the students' assessment and feedback given in schools. The respondent stated that:

The beginning teacher was less competent in designing learning activities as inputs for assessment, marking and awarding scores, hence for effective students' assessment, marking and awarding scores mentoring was the better option as a remedy for enhancing pedagogical skills and general teacher professional development (Interview with the Head of Department⁸, School⁸, 2020).

The statement provided implies that experienced teachers incorporated beginning teachers in the marking panels and collaboratively engaged them on how to provide feedback to students.

3.3 The Professional Support Services Offered to Beginning Teachers in Schools

The findings show that beginning teachers were offered some materials and non-materials as professional support services in schools during the mentorship practices. The professional support included the provision of textbooks, reference books, lesson notes and online links to empower beginning teachers to enhance their pedagogical skills. In textbook support, one participant reported that:

The school had no physics textbooks in the library. I talked to a friend whom I knew earlier before my placement at this school. She supported me with the textbook and I produced a photocopy. The book was important to me as it provided me with organized units of work in the form of topics and competencies to be achieved (Beginning Teacher₇, 2020).

The statement shows that there were limited textbooks in the school libraries. The findings show that beginning teachers had to make some personal initiatives to source the materials since the textbooks helped interact with subject topics and designing the lesson notes. Further, the findings show that beginning teachers similarly sourced textbooks from peers on their initiatives.

In the case of reference books, the findings show that experienced teachers provided beginning teachers with experience and knowledge on how to get the reference books. Having learned that tip, the beginning teachers exposed to have sourced reference books from fellow teachers from within and the nearby schools. One beginning teacher reported:

I used personal efforts to get friends in town who had some reference books so that I produce photocopies to keep for my reference in lesson notes making (Interview with the Beginning Teacher₁₁, 2020).

The statement provided indicates that due to the remoteness of some schools, beginning teachers had to make some personal initiatives to source reference books; hence, the findings show that reference books in the respective schools were limited in supply, and therefore, beginning teachers had to work out on their initiatives to get the reference books to produce the quality lesson notes. Findings on lesson notes show that

experienced teachers provided beginning teachers with readymade lesson notes, which acted as helping tools so that beginning teachers could go through and see how best lesson notes could be modified and prepared for classrooms. One head of school stated that:

The good thing with the beginning teacher was that we were teaching the same subject (Mathematics). I could not be such mean to him knowing he was a newcomer. I supported him with everything including my personal lesson notes, so that he could catch up so fast with the pace I set in Mathematics teaching (Interview with the Head of School, 2020).

The foregoing excerpt implies that the beginning teachers were provided with readymade lesson notes to support them with the exposure to the structures and details of the notes and to easily cope with the teaching prerequisite to a competent curriculum.

Based on the online links, the findings show that experienced teachers supported beginning teachers with the website-based education links, which contained useful information concerning subject contents, videos, animations and so many illustrations depending on what the beginning teacher needed. Thus, the experienced teachers coached, demonstrated and mentored beginning teachers on how to search for relevant information regarding the topics stipulated in the syllabus. One DSEO cemented that:

At Ward Education Week, I always coached beginning teachers on how to identify and use official sites containing the genuine contents of the curriculum (Interview with DSEO₁, 2020).

The statement given indicates that the DSEOs used online services in mentoring the beginning teachers; hence, the findings show that the DSEOs coached teachers on the use of ICT and integrating ICT in the teaching and learning processes.

4.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on findings in the first specific objective, the study makes the following conclusion; first, the beginning teachers had attachments to experienced teachers for mentorship, it was voluntary and was conducted in an informal arrangement between the experienced and the beginning teachers; second, mentorship in schools involved peer networking and consultation with peers, where beginning and experienced teachers interacted from within and across the departments, in private and or in schools' arrangements to enhance pedagogical skills; third, beginning and experienced teachers mentored one another through team teachings, in which they conducted classroom observations, demonstrations, enquiries and discussions in teaching pedagogy.

Fourth, key areas identified and prioritized for mentoring in schools involved subject matter mastery, teaching and learning materials preparation, teaching and learning methods application and students' assessment and feedback-giving skills implementation in schools; and fifth, beginning teachers were supported with professional documents by the experienced teachers including templates of schemes of work, lesson plans, lesson notes and some reliable academic online links, which were supportive in replication and production of standardized teaching and learning documents. Hence, the manner in the beginning teachers were mentored involved organising mentoring arrangements, identifying key

areas for mentorships and provision of school-based readymade professional documents.

In consideration of the importance of school-based mentorships, DSEOs, Heads of Schools, Heads of Departments and experienced teachers worked collaboratively with the beginning teachers, in a high trust, self-commitment, and non-institutionalised formats characterized by voluntary actions. From this basis, the study recommends that it is vital for the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology to institutionalise school-based mentorships by releasing policies, enacting laws, and producing and supplying circulars and guidelines to enforce schools implement mentoring in specific and systematic procedures, which could stand as best practices in the education system, instead of depending on personal desires and commitment.

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