TOWARDS TEACHER PREPARATION AT THE COLLEGE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION: MENTORS' CHALLENGES AND MANAGING STRATEGIES

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Abstract

This study was aimed at exploring mentors' experiences at the College of Distance Education (CoDE), University of Cape Coast. The study adopted qualitative approach to bring out mentors' insights into the mentoring process. Researchers employed census sampling techniques for the study. In all, 145 participants were used for the study. The main data collection instrument was open-ended questionnaire. The study revealed that mentors face professional-related, institutional-related and transportation challenges. Again, it came out that mentors adopted effective communication, guidance and counselling, orientation and sacrificial approach to manage the challenges they faced. The study recommended that the management of CoDE should consider adopting advance payment plan for mentors to reduce their financial burden. Also, College should consider adopting a cluster system where mentees are grouped based on their distribution in a particular location so that mentors would not have to travel far for supervision.

Key words: teacher preparation, distance education, mentors, mentees, mentoring, teaching practice

Introduction

The cardinal aim of teacher training is to mould pre-service teachers who are professionally prepared with the necessary pre-requisites to become a successful teacher (Hugo, 2018). At the heart of the training or preparation is the teaching practice or practicum that mentees or pre-service teachers must engage in. Worldwide, teaching practice has been an issue well researched into (Robinson as cited in du Plessis, 2013). Teaching practice refers to "the opportunity given to the trainee to develop and improve his or her professional practice in the context of the real classroom, usually under some form of guidance and supervision" (Perry, 1997: 3 as cited in Mpofu & Chimhenga, 2016). For the practicum to be successful, the pre-service teacher must be mentored in order to be effective in the teaching career. Hobson and Malderez (2013) defines mentoring as "... one to one relationship between a relatively inexperienced teacher (the mentee) and a relatively experienced one (the mentor) which aims to support the mentee's learning and development as a teacher, and their integration into and acceptance by the cultures of the school and the profession" (p. 90). Lutton (2012), defines mentoring as "a relationship-based process between colleagues in similar professional roles, with a more experienced individual with adult learning knowledge and skills, the mentor, providing guidance and example to the less-experienced protégé or men-tee. Mentoring is intended to increase an individual's personal or professional capacity, resulting in greater professional effectiveness" (p. 84).

Mentoring process is complex and as such should be given the attention it deserves. A mentor is an individual with expertise who can help develop the career of a mentee (Henderson et al., 2006). For the purpose of this study, Malderez's (2009) working definition of a mentor as teacher who is responsible for looking after students from university-based initial teacher-preparation during their programme of study was adopted. S/he is a teacher and guide who assist in the growth of the mentee to become successful in the teaching career (Stokes, 2003). In many teacher training institutions, mentoring has been incorporated into the training process as an effective method of preparing the student teacher to enter the teaching profession (Sundli, 2007). It helps the student teacher not only to easily take

the full responsibilities of the classroom, but also to serve his/her pupils effectively. Mentoring is also mutually beneficial for mentors and mentees (Hall, Draper, Smith & Bullough, 2008; Heirdsfield, Walker, Walsh & Wilss, 2008). Mentoring process is very important in the teaching profession since studies have shown that there is improvement of performance by students whose teachers were mentored (Frome, Lasater, & Cooney, 2005). It is in recognition of this that Hamlin (2011), says that mentoring is established as a powerful human resource development technique with the aim to providing inexperienced employees with career advancement avenues which is a kind of on the-job training.

Teaching Practice at CoDE

Teacher education programme at the College of Distance Education is hinged in the four elements provided by COL (2010) as improving the general educational background of the trainee teachers; increasing their knowledge and understanding of the subjects they are to teach; pedagogy and understanding of children and learning; and the development of practical skills and competences. Teaching Practice Unit at the College is responsible for development of the practical skills and competences. Students on education programme are supposed to do on-campus and off-campus to be able to develop the practical skills. Before the off-campus, students choose school for placement where they are assigned mentors for the period of four months. Mentees pursuing Diploma Programme are observed in Mathematics and English at the primary schools while the Degree mentees do the practice in their electives. Mentors are normally appointed and given orientation prior to the commencement of the exercise. Persons who participate in the exercise are those who have rich experiences and demonstrated abilities when it comes to the teaching profession. The mentors were therefore vested in subject matter and action system knowledge and could therefore execute their task with little or no difficulty. Data from the Teaching Practice Unit indicated that majority of the mentors worked at the education offices, teach at Colleges of Education while others were on retirement. They were often assigned at least sixty mentees to mentor within or supervise for four months and were supposed to visit mentees' schools at least three times within the period.

Statement of the Problem

Teaching practice has been the area of research interest to researchers, teacher educators and teachers (Laws, Çakmakb, Gündüzc and Busher, 2015). Organization of teaching practice in distance education could be very challenging because of the share numbers involved. Mentors play crucial role in the preparation of teachers through distance education. Their roles become more important when it comes to the teaching practice component of the programme. There are suggestions to the effect that teaching practice is bedeviled with challenges. For example, studies in South Africa by Du Plessis, (2011); Aldridge, Fraser and Ntuli, (2009) categorised the challenges into logistical and educational challenges. Because of the herculean nature of organizing teaching practice for distance programme, it was reported that some teacher training institutions have to end the teaching practice aspect of the programme (Mokoena, 2017).

Since its establishment in 2001, the College has been training teachers for the education system in Ghana. Mentors role in the preparation of teachers at the College cannot be under-estimated. However, little is known at the College of Distance Education, University of Cape Coast the challenges mentors go through during teaching practice. The study therefore intended to find out challenges mentors went through and the management strategies they adopted.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions;

1. What challenges do mentors faced during the mentoring exercise at the College of Distance Education, UCC?
2. How do mentors manage their challenge at the College of Distance Education, UCC?

Literature Review

Stages of the Mentorship Activity

The mentoring process at the College can be put into four stages or cycles – initiation stage, nursing or honey moon, cultivation/autonomy stage, and the separation/divorce stage. At the initiation stage, the mentor meets with the mentees at the start of the teaching practice exercise. This stage is also termed familiarization stage and at this stage rapport and trust must be established between the mentor and mentee (Hobson & Sharp, 2005). For mentoring to be effective, it must be characterized by key elements such as mutual trust and close intimacy in the relationship (Rosser & Egan, 2005). The mentor at this stage discusses the whole process and what is expected of the mentees. This stage is very crucial and Lewis (1996) suggested that during this cycle, mentors should take note of, one, ethos or moral dimension of the relationship by demonstrating consistency, congruency, integrity, honesty, sincerity, credibility, genuineness and values. Second, pathos or having a genuine interest in the other person as a person in his/her own right and accept that the other person brings human emotions, hopes, fears, ambitions in the relationship. Last, logos or substantive context of the essential conversations, the goals, techniques and outcomes of the conversations should be considered.

According to Lewis (1996), in the honey moon stage mentee may be anxious and lacking in self- confidence. This stage requires that, the mentee is given friendly support, a safe and secure environment to enable him or her identify and reflect on learning. To Lewis, this stage is characterized by development of an honest, trusting, sincere relationship based on open communication, a focus on learning and growth, getting to grips with business matters and finally, moving from plans to real outcomes.

The cultivation or autonomy stage is where the actual mentoring takes place in which time the mentee is expected to develop into matured apprentice. Others call this stage assessment stage since it is the period when the mentee is assessed for competency criteria. At this cycle, the mentor facilitation includes deeper learning by encouraging the mentee to reflect, to see things differently, to identify potential changes he/she might wish to make, possible goals he/she might wish to bring on board and a wider range of alternative avenues available to him/her (Ayodeji, 2015). Two relationships develop and the first relation has to do with career-related function that emerges first when the mentor coaches the mentee on how to work effectively and efficiently (Henderson et al., 2003). At this stage, the mentor and mentee work hand in hand to improve the teaching conduct of the mentee. The next is the psychosocial role the mentor plays where he/she accepts and confirms the mentee's professional identity and the relationship matures into a strong friendship. The mentor-mentee relationship goes beyond the classroom where issues relating to individuality are discussed.

The last stage is the separation/divorce/termination stage. At the end of the teaching practice exercise, the whole exercise is brought to a close and the mentoring process is complete. So, at the end of the exercise when there is nothing left, the mentor sends off or ends the mentoring process. The mentor- mentee recognizes that their relationship can continue but that it will not be the same as their mentoring relationship. This may imply that the relationship that is formed between the mentor-mentee lasts beyond the exercise to the extent that, the mentee can contact the mentor concerning professional or personal issues.

Types of Mentoring

Mentoring process has various types. According to Wang and Odell (2002), there are three types namely; humanistic perspective, (where primarily the intent is to provide emotional support and guidance and counselling), the situated apprentice perspective (helps to develop practical teaching skills and knowledge) and critical constructivist perspective (mentor acts like a change agent). The College adopted humanistic and situated apprentice types of mentoring. In humanistic type the mentor is supposed to give guidance and counselling support for the mentee while development of practical skills is the domain of situated apprentice. There are other types like flash mentoring, group mentoring, peer mentoring, situational mentoring, reverse mentoring, team mentoring and e-mentoring.

Flash mentoring is a phenomenon where the mentor and mentee meet for an hour session where the mentor shares his/her knowledge and life experiences so that the mentee can learn a lot from it. After the interaction, the mentor and mentee could decide to continue the relationship or not (Ayodeji, 2015). In group mentoring, a number of mentees are assigned to a mentor to be mentored. This is the type of mentoring process adopted at the College of Distance Education. The mentor meets with the mentees on individual basis and sometimes depending on the situation, mentors interact with mentees so that they learn from their colleagues. Peer mentoring is a process where individuals within the same grade or organization, support and learn from each other. Peer mentoring is not hierarchical, prescriptive, judgmental or evaluative (Ayodeji, 2015). The other type of mentoring is situational where assistance or help is given at the time it is needed by the mentee. It is an ad hoc solution to a problem at hand and the relationship can end there or go further depending on the circumstance. Reverse mentoring is the process in which senior person (in terms of age, experience or position) is mentored by a junior (in terms of age, experience or position) person. The purpose of reverse mentoring is to help older and more senior people learn from the knowledge of younger people. For instance, according to Ayodeji this can be seen in the field of information technology, computing, and internet communications. Supervisory mentoring connotes a leader follower relationship where the mentor tells what the mentee must do. In the case of team mentoring, a group of mentors work with one mentee or a group of mentees. Team mentoring allows mentors to work together or separately to help the mentee or mentees o improve teaching. Lastly, virtual or e-mentoring is where the mentor uses videoconferencing, the internet, and e-mail to mentor mentee (Ayodeji, 2015).

This study was underpinned by two theories – **traditional mentoring theory and temporal theory of mentoring.** The former described the mentor's function as guide, counsellor, and sponsor in terms of the professional growth of the mentee (Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levinson, & McKee, 1978). The researchers understanding of this description of a mentor is that mentoring should be based on trust and good interpersonal relationship. In this theory, Ragins and Scandura (1999, p. 496) described mentors as "influential individuals with advanced experience and knowledge who are committed to providing upward mobility and support to their protégés' careers". Time has been considered crucial in the temporal theory of mentoring which is believed to pass through four stages including initiation, cultivation, separation and redefinition (Kram, 1983).

It was revealed in a study by Samkange (2015), Mapolisa and Tshabalala (2013) that mentors faced challenges such as lack of resources and incentives packages from those who hired them. Mapolisa and Tshabalala (2016); Young, Cady and Foxon (2006), found out that interpersonal problems in mentoring is a challenge when the relationships moves from a professional one to a personal encounters, e.g. sexual relationships. Again, it was found that slow learning mentee may pose problems to the mentor (Samkange, 2015; Noe, 1991). Lack of time is also a major challenge mentors have to grapple with (Ayodeji, 2015) owing to the fact that mentoring process for most mentors is par time job.

Research Methods

In this study we adopted the qualitative research approach because we aimed at exploring mentors experiences during the teaching practice supervision. Qualitative methodology was employed because the researchers wanted to dig deep into the phenomenon under study (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). In other words, we wanted the mentors to share their own experiences with regard to challenges and the management approach.

The participants selected were educationists some of whom were active in the service and others retired. The inclusion of the retired teachers was very useful in sharing their rich and valuable experiences with the up-coming teachers who were to mould children of next generation. All the mentors (245) were targeted (census sampling technique) from the ten regions to provide their responses. However, 145 participants (constituting 59 percent) provided responses to the items.

Data was collected using open-ended questionnaire from mentors across the country. This was done by Senior Members of the College during an orientation programme for the mentors at the regional offices. The open-ended questionnaire provided opportunities for the participants to reflect on their experiences and evaluate their roles during the mentoring process.

The data was first transferred unto spreadsheet after which the researchers coded the responses provided by participants. For example, if the first participant was a male, he was   given [PM 1] and if the fifth participant was a female, she was given [PF5]. This was to enable the researchers identify who said what. Minor themes were generated after which they were put into major themes. We did this by reading through the items several times and then pulling together the major issues being raised by the mentors. This was done for the three research questions the researchers posed.

Findings/Results

The results of the study were put into two parts – the bio-data of the participants and the findings of the research questions.

Table 1: Bio data of mentors

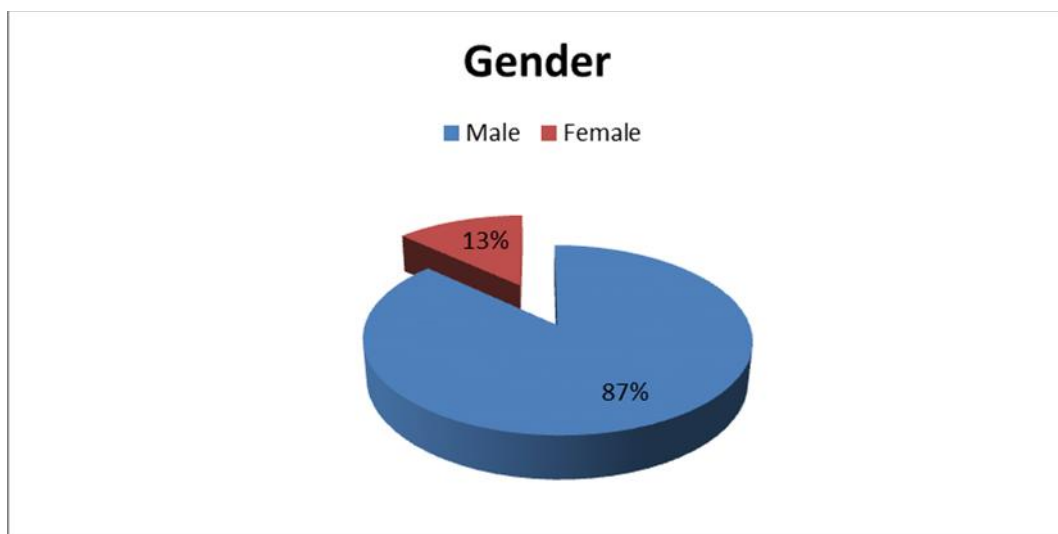| er			of experience					
				Number				
	Number	**%**	Less than 5 years	58	40		**Number**	**%**
Male	126	87	Between 5 and 10 years	32	22	Active	85	59
Female	19	13	Above 10 years	55	38	Retired	60	41
Total	**145**	**100**		**145**	**100**		**145**	**100**

Figure 1: Mentors' gender

From figure 1, it shows that majority 126 (87%) of mentors selected by the College of Distance Education were males. The female constituted only 19 (13%) which was rather too low. The reason for the low number might probably be due to their disinterest in the exercise. It was observed that most of the students were in the rural areas and travel to these places was sometimes difficult.
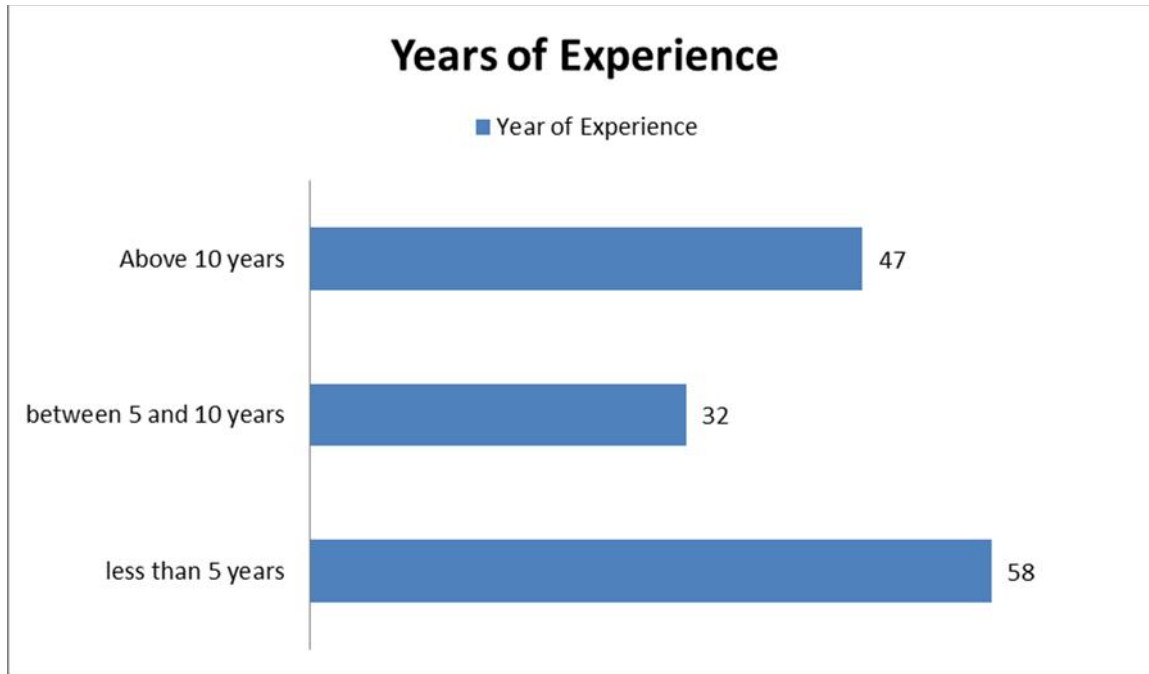

Figure 2: Years of mentors' experience in supervision

The figure shows that majority (49 representing 40%) of the mentors had less than five year experience in the teaching profession. This could be explained in two ways. Studies show that the young ones have a lot to offer since they have energies compared to older hands in the job (Hagger & McIntyre, 1994 as cited in Samkange, 2015). The longer one stays in a profession, the more experienced the person becomes. The fact that those who have more than ten years in the service constitute (47 representing 38%) of the mentor population is an asset because prospective teachers stand to gain from their rich experience.
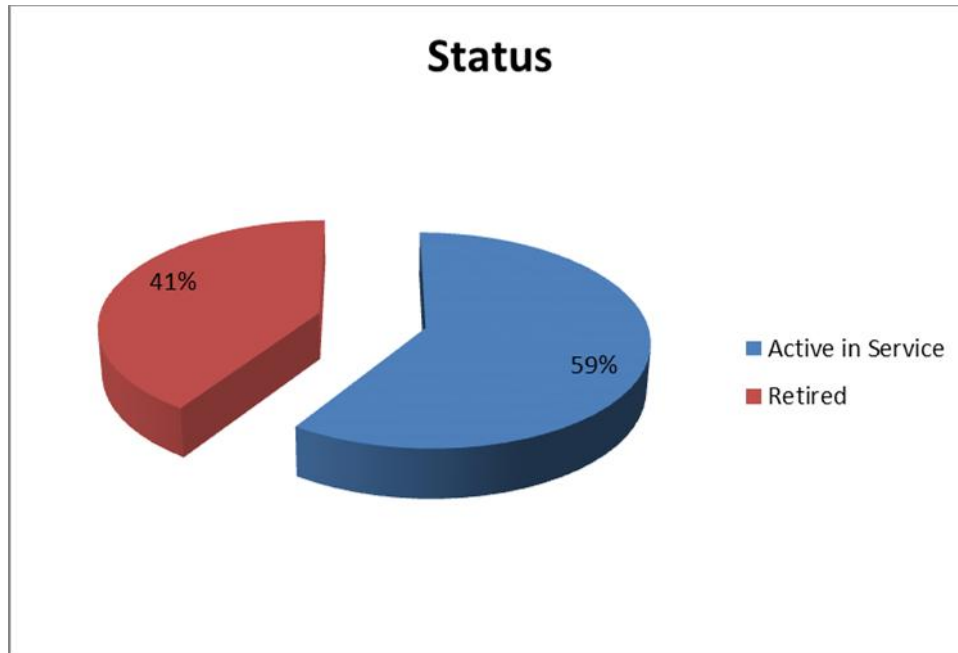
Figure 3: Status of Mentors

Figure 3 shows that majority 85(59%) of the mentors are in active service in various capacities. Those on retirement constituted 60(42%) of the mentor population. The blend of active and retired mentor groups would benefit mentees since they would each bring their expertise to bear on the mentoring process. Institute of Education Sciences (2017) observed for instance, that retired teachers have more flexible time with mentees and are potentially of high-quality.

Findings from the Main Data

The first question sought to find out the challenges mentors face during the teaching exercise at the College of Distance Education.

Challenges Mentors Encounter during the Mentoring Process

The following themes emerged from the data we gathered from the participants with regard to challenges mentors faced. These were put into three main themes – professional-related (weakness of mentees academically, unpreparedness of mentee) interpersonal related (hostility from mentees and heads of institutions) institution related (low remuneration, financial constraints) and transportation problem.

Professional-related

A number of mentors mentioned that some of their challenges has to do with low nature of some mentees thereby making their work a bit demanding. Some mentors shared their insights:

Some students too are academically weak especially the Diploma students and can barely speak good English or deliver a good lesson. By this, you have to take your time as a mentor to coach the mentee so that he can deliver the lesson a bit effective [PM24].

Again, another mentor stated it more bluntly by saying that:

Some students seem to be "tabula rasa" in the preparation of lesson plans. You have to virtually take them through the whole process of how to write proper lesson notes [PM98].

We also found out that the mentors have to grapple with most students not being ready to be seen on agreed day. Mentors responses were revealing:

Sometime, a number of students do not prepare themselves before I arrive at their schools of practice. It is frustrating for me and sometimes I have to reschedule the meeting date and it delays the whole process [PM29].

Additionally, a mentor also shared his experience about the unpreparedness of mentees:

Sometimes inadequate preparation on the part of the mentees in the area of lesson notes preparation and the general preparedness to teach effectively becomes my greatest worry. It tells me that the mentee is not serious [PF74].

Related to unpreparedness is the lack of time which resulted from having to meet with mentees for another time. Understandably, most mentors do this exercise as a part time job. This participant said:

Most mentees were not punctual during the exercise. Though these mentees were called and informed that the mentor will be coming for supervision. This affects me because I still have to go to education office for my job [PM55].

Hostility came up strong as a challenge from the mentee and the heads of the host schools. *Hostile behaviour from some of the mentees especially when I insist on the proper thing in the lesson notes preparation* [PM31].

Some head teachers and proprietors are not cooperative especially towards practicing students. They treat them as professional teachers instead of helping them in the mentoring process [PF3].

Institution-related

Relating to some of the institution-related challenge is the issue of finance. Some complained about the delay and the low remuneration. A participant stated:

I cover large areas. It becomes tiresome, tedious and necessarily expensive. Since the exercise is pre-financed, you do not go if you do not have the money. So, if the allowance delayed, it is frustrating [PM64].

One of my main challenges is difficulty in getting funds to buy petrol for moving about the schools [PM35].

Transportation

Another issue mentors raised has to do with transportation difficulties.

Movement to unmotorable centres or schools becomes unbearable. Some roads leading to certain centres are dusty, leading to a lot of havoc. You would return home looking very tired, dusty and sick [PF56].

Some of the roads leading to their locations are not motorable. So I sometimes end up becoming stranded in certain localities [PM69].

Some areas are unmotorable and I would have to walk some distance before getting to the said mentee. Just imagine visiting such places not less than three times. So, we mentors are doing a lot for the institution and the mentees [PF58].

Management Strategies Mentors adopt to address the Challenges they faced

This part of the study sought to find out the coping strategies mentors adopt to address the challenges. Themes that emerged were in in the area of sacrifice, guidance, orientation given to mentees, effective communication strategy.

It emerged that mentors make a lot of sacrifice in line with the mentoring process. Sacrifice in terms of their life, time and money.

For attacks from armed robbers, I always pray before I go out trusting in God that He will take me out and bring me safely. Thank God so far, there has not been any attack on me despite the rise in armed robbery cases in the area [PM5].

I sometimes slept for two or three days at one station and went round to meet with the mentees before going back because of transport problems [PM71].

In terms of hostility, I have to apologize on behalf of the university that letters will be sent later to seek permission for the exercise. This was done to calm heads who did not want to cooperate with the process [PM111].

In the area of guidance, mentors stated that:

If the lesson plan is not well prepared I teach them to re-write. Study centre should also take lesson plan very serious [PM97].

I give counselling services to mentee to take the teaching practice seriously by preparing detailed lesson notes. This way, they would become effective teachers [PM139].

Another participant stated that:

I guide and advised them on how to use the local/popular materials to prepare innovative lesson plan [PM68]

Mentors also mentioned that they resort to orientation to deal with some challenges that relate to mentees' weaknesses.

I give mentees orientation before the actual teaching – orientation with regard to lesson notes preparation, vetting of the prepared lesson notes and having pre and post teaching discussions with mentees [PM44].

In terms of adopting effective communication to address some of the challenges, these were what mentors stated:

A participant said:

Calls were made three days before time to make them ready for the exercise. Quality time was spent on students with difficulties in objectives setting and good lesson delivery [PM42].

Another participant indicated:

I arranged with mentees to select one volunteer to take information and to link with his/her colleagues use persuasions and education for those who do not understand situations [PM15].

Another mentor wrote:

I created whatsApp platform so that other students were able to contact colleagues in order to get up to date information concerning the exercise. Some mentees also could discuss their challenges with regard to the problems they face in teaching [PM42].

Discussion of Results

The first research question sought to address challenges mentors experienced in the course of mentoring or teaching practice exercise. It is interesting to note that the challenges mentors talked about can be put into professional related,

interpersonal related and institutional related. The professional related challenges are weakness of students academically and unpreparedness of mentees. Mentors reported that some mentees especially the Diploma students are weak thereby posing a challenge to the mentors. This was in confirmation of earlier finding by Samkange, (2015) and Noe (1991) who revealed that slow learning mentee posed a serious problem to mentors. What it means is that if a mentee is weak academically, he/she would not assimilate information easily and the mentor has to take lots of time to explain issues. Also, unpreparedness of mentees raised serious concern for mentors. Some mentors indicated that most at time when meetings are scheduled, they go to the school to find mentees not ready. The reason probably might be that, quite a number of pre-service teachers are not permanent teachers and they engage in some other activities thereby taking them away from the schools they supposed to practice.

Another challenge that was brought to the fore was lack of time for the mentoring exercise. Lack of time is major challenge mentors have to grapple with (Ayodeji, 2015) and probably it was due to the fact that mentoring process for most mentors is par time job. Again, at the College, a mentor is supposed to attend to at most forty mentees. This definitely would require a lot of time to be able to cover all mentees within the period.

It also came up that mentors faced interpersonal-related problems during the teaching practice exercise. These challenges came from two fronts – the mentees and some heads of institutions. The mentors alleged that some mentees showed hostile attitudes towards them when they insist that mentees do the right thing especially in the area of lesson preparation. Again, mentors mentioned that some head teachers also put on their way impediments by preventing mentees from being seen. According to the mentors, the head teachers claimed that they were unaware of the exercise and that the mentees institution should write to them beforehand. This revelation was reported earlier by Young, Cady and Foxon (2006), when they found out that interpersonal problem in mentoring could affect the essence of the mentoring process.

The other challenge has to do with the institution. Some mentors indicated that there is low remuneration for the work they do despite the fact that they do lots of sacrifice. This was earlier found that low incentive and resources for mentors could affect their efforts in the mentoring process (Mapolisa & Tshabalala, 2013). Mentors work is arduous and tedious implying that they should be appropriately recognized in any form necessary because sometimes they put their life on the line. Some mentors revealed that they went for loans to pre-finance the whole process and to worsen the situation is the delay in the payment of their expenses.

Finally, mentors outlined that one of the bottlenecks as far as the mentoring exercise is concerned was transportation issue. Students of College of Distance Education are dotted across every nook and cranny of Ghana. So, mentors have to go to the remotest village to attend to mentees. This becomes a headache for most mentors who have to either trek for long distance because the roads are unmotorable. Some mentors have to resort to the use of motor cycle themselves or hire the services of motor riders (*Okadaman*) to be able to meet with mentees.

The second research question of the study was to find out the management strategies mentors adopted to address the challenges they faced. From the observation, it appeared that good number of mentors adopted the sacrificial approach to dealing with some challenges they encountered in the course their work. For example some mentors indicated that they go for loan to be able to move round the mentees otherwise they would not be able to see all of them for at least the three times within the four month period.

It also emerged that a lot of the mentors resolve their challenges by giving mentees guidance and counselling as a measure for mentees' mistakes especially the academically weak ones. They need to be encouraged in their challenges so that they can pull up themselves. Encouragement is one of the key qualities of a mentor ((Phillips-Jones, 2003). The understanding is that sometimes, certain behaviours are put up because of lack of understanding. If a mentee is faulted, the best way is to guide and counsel such mentee rather than condemning and confronting in an aggressive and bossy manner. This way, the mentee can easily benefit from the mentoring process.

Giving orientation (aligning expectation) to mentees definitely would be beneficial to the essence of the mentoring process. During the orientation, lots of things happen. It is the time sometimes the mentees and mentors meet for the first time to fashion out how the exercise should be done and the expectations from both parties are aired. A lot of clarifications are done by both parties and they share information on the teaching practice exercise. The mentor takes opportunity to allay the fears and anxieties of mentees so that they (mentees) could relax and face the exercise. It is good that mentors establish cordial relationship at this stage since trust and genuineness is significant at the beginning of relationship. This was in line with the earlier work by Branchaw, Pfund, and Rediske (2010); Handelsman, Pfund, Lauffer, and Pribbenow (2005) that aligning expectations which can be done during orientation is core imperatives for mentors.

Communication is important in any relationship. Mentors reported that they adopted various forms of communication strategies to be able to surmount challenges relating to accessibility to mentees. For instance, they indicated that they created social media platforms where information is quickly shared among mentor and mentees. Sometimes volunteers were also appointed to be in charge of relaying information to group members. Again, mentors also indicated that to avoid missing mentees, calls were made days before the meeting time. It would be very frustrating to travel all the way to meet a mentee only to be informed the mentor was not ready to be seen or absent. Communication is so critical that it is argued to be one of the core principles mentors must develop (Handelsman et al., 2005; Branchaw, Pfund, & Rediske, 2010).

Conclusion and Recommendations

There is no doubt mentors play critical role in the lives of pre-service teachers in the teacher preparation process at the College of Distance education. They make lots of sacrifice in connection with the mentoring process. It is encouraging for mentors to adopt effective communication strategy to reach out to the mentees. Effective communication is critical in any relationship, mentoring process is no exception. The study therefore recommended that CoDE management considers advance payment system for mentors to cushion especially the retiree since most of them rely on their meager pension allowance during the exercise. Also, College should consider adopting a cluster system where mentees are grouped based on their distribution in a particular location so that mentors would not have to travel far for supervision.

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