

Collaborative Mentoring Support Model for Improving Effectiveness of New Teachers in Upper Basic Level Schools in South East, Nigeria

By

Aguwa, Henry Chukwuemeka Ph.D
henryaguwa@yahoo.com

Department of Educational Management
College of Education
Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike
Abia State, Nigeria

Gloria Nwanneka Aniemeka Ph.D
aniemekan@yahoo.com

Department of Adult and Continuing Education
Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike
Abia State, Nigeria

Abstract

The study was carried out to determine the collaborative mentoring support model for improving the effectiveness of new teachers in the upper basic schools in South East, Nigeria. It utilized a descriptive survey research design. A sample of 638 newly employed teachers who are currently serving under the government's N-power programme were drawn from a population of 6315 newly employed teachers in three out of five states of the South East, Nigeria. The sample which represented the 10% of the population was drawn using multi-stage sampling. The instrument for data collection was 10-item researcher-developed questionnaire titled; Collaborative Mentoring Support and Teacher Effectiveness Questionnaire (CMSTEQ). The questionnaire was validated by three experts, two in Educational Administration and one in Measurement and Evaluation. The reliability of the instrument was determined using test-retest procedure and it yielded a reliability index of 0.76. Mean was used to answer the research questions and standard deviation was used to determine the closeness of their responses, while t-test statistic was used to test the two null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The results among others showed that planned conversation and coaching of mentees by mentors enhanced the effectiveness of new teachers to a high extent. It was suggested therefore that newly recruited teachers should make themselves available to the more experienced colleagues for mentoring. Principals and other school administrators in various schools should encourage and educate both the new and more experienced teachers on the need for regular mentoring, especially in the area of planned conversation and coaching.

Keywords: *Teaching, collaborative mentoring, planned conversation, coaching, new teachers*

Introduction

Teaching is an excellent profession for sustaining human society and promoting human development. It is the one profession that improves and expands the possibilities of all others. Teaching is the profession on which all other professions depend (Hammond (2018). Simply identify any career that is not tied to the efforts of outstanding teachers. Teaching is an important profession in the development of both individuals and communities. Great nations have cherished and continue to value their teachers, education, and educational institutions. In the teaching profession, just as there are great experienced teachers in the profession, who have toiled in supporting the education of the youths; of the nation for some years, great and experienced veterans in the field of teaching; there are also neophytes who would in the present as well as in the near future hold the baton of the profession in continuing the education of the people in the present as well as in the years to come.

Given the foregoing, numerous scholars have noted that the majority of new teachers who leave the teaching profession do so during their first few months or years (Kathleen, Hudson & Hudson in Aguwa, 2020). When these new instructors lose the passion they had when they were hired to become teachers, they depart, necessitating the need for mentors to provide them with the support and encouragement they require as first-year teachers. Denise, Leanne, Jill, Rebecca, Elizabeth, and Peter (2017) believe that new teachers require extensive assistance and support if the educational system truly wants them to stay in the field and teach in accordance with best teaching practices. If teachers are given opportunities for mentoring, they will be able to acclimate to the teaching profession more smoothly and without feeling overwhelmed. During such mentorship programs, new teachers are taught how to get started in the profession in order to fulfill the targeted objectives of every teaching and learning exercise, which include teacher work satisfaction and student academic achievement. As a result, if there are trained veteran teachers and expert teachers assigned to guide these neophytes (beginner teachers) over time, directing the teachers on the path forward in terms of better teaching practice, the new teachers will receive the necessary support for effective professional growth. With this support, rookie teachers will undoubtedly receive the necessary guidance to help them get off to a good start, as well as to steadily improve at a regular rate in their practice as professional teachers.

Collaborative Mentoring Support is one of the most significant advantages for new teachers. Mentoring new teachers is critical to their development, and the benefits cannot be overstated. Collaborative mentoring is a methodology for teacher mentorship that aims to help new teachers master their teaching practice. Ann (2013) defines collaborative mentoring as a mentoring relationship built on critical communication between the mentor and the mentee. Mentoring is defined as the art and science of purposefully leading and directing another person to a new level of cognition. Mentoring, as a structured component of collaborative partnerships between schools and individuals, is seen as an effective technique for teacher development. As a result, the collaborative relationship or partnership between the instructor (veteran teacher) and the mentee (student teacher) is often seen as critical to the personal and professional growth of novice teachers (Richard & David, 2014). Expanding on the concept of collaborative mentoring, Aderibigbe (2013) stated that mentoring is all about a collaborative process and engagement in which both mentors and mentees can profitably participate in professional activities aimed at fostering their personal and professional development, allowing them to teach as recognized experts. This engagement, so to speak, has the potential to broaden the range of chances for professional learning, influencing the professional experiences of teachers and student teachers and, as a result, improving the availability of excellent learning opportunities for schoolchildren. Mentoring in teacher education is thus a vehicle for increasing all teachers' abilities to learn from experience as well as through involvement with others in order to promote professional development and advancement in the teaching profession (Aderibigbe, Gray, & Gray, 2014).

Planned conversation aids new teachers by allowing them to clearly communicate their objective for the session while also learning about how each student learns or responds to the learning opportunity presented to them (Dunne et al in Aguwa, 2020). In this dialog between the mentor and the mentee, it is proposed that mentors in mentoring the mentee should aim to avoid delivering direct guidance, as well as a corpus of indirect ideas, around one-third of which create detailed responses from the inexperienced teacher. The major goal of the planned conversation, which takes place prior to the mentorship portion, is to determine learning objectives for the new instructor. The attempt is made to answer the following questions: what will you work on, what do you want the new teacher to learn, how will this (mentoring) benefit his teaching, and what will it look like if the instructor improves? What teaching standards are these related to, and where is the instructor on the growth continuum?

In addition, contemplation is essential in this form of connection. It is considered as having the objective of helping us grasp the relationship and existing links between our own and other people's experiences. Mentors are taught to support new teachers through the stages of teacher development and to enable self-motivated professional improvement through persistent reflective conversion (Jenkins, 2012). It is firmly thought that if the discourse between the experienced teacher and the novices is at the greatest level of reflection, it will improve instructional practices, hence the importance of new teachers induction and coaching programmes by the older teachers.

Coaching simply mean assisting the new teacher in designing his classroom activities. Following the initial planned conversation, the mentor observes the novice teacher in the classroom environment. While doing so, the mentor collects relevant data that will be utilized to encourage the new teacher to assess his or her teaching method or strategy (reflecting in statements as: how many students asked engaging questions). This observation is meant to be objective so that the mentees are sufficiently aided in looking thoroughly into specific parts of what actually transpired during the lessons, places one has to hold on to, and areas needing improvement (Aguwa, 2020). Furthermore, when sharing statistics during conversations, the objective has always been to improve teachers rather than to pass judgment. In analyzing the collected data, prudence is advised in the use of body language; also, the tone of voice and uttered words must be nice and courteous (David, 2016). The need for intentional collaborative mentoring among teachers in upper basic level schools cannot be overrated as new teachers sometimes find themselves groping in ignorance and frustration for lack of support, hence the need for this study.

Statement of the Problem

When new instructors enter the teaching profession, they typically come to terms with a lot of the realities of the job. One such truth is that classroom teaching practice differs significantly from the numerous theories and principles taught in teacher preparation programs. As a result, the material students obtained during teacher training programs differs significantly from their typical daily practical teaching experiences. However, instructors who are very successful in their field and continue to develop their teaching practice are always of the opinion that mentoring for teachers is quite important, as it would undoubtedly increase both the quality of teaching and the quality of staff. This will also assist new teachers establish a balance between teacher preparation programs and initial teaching experience. This will presumably boost kids'

academic attainment levels (Aguwa, 2012). The presence of experienced teachers who are friendly and well equipped to mentor these novice teachers through their initial teaching days, weeks, months, and years, as the case may be, appears to be inadequate in carrying out their mentoring activities on the new teachers. These new teachers do not appear to be receiving appropriate professional support. This could explain the difficulties that new teachers face as they try to integrate into the profession, as well as the seeming lack of zeal and commitment that some of them exhibit. This may have also resulted in inadequate instruction delivery and influenced the retention of would-be competent and reliable teachers, both of which have a negative impact on students' academic achievement. Hence, this study on Collaborative mentoring support model for improving effectiveness of new teachers in upper Basic Level Schools in South East, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to determine the extent collaborative mentoring support model enhances effectiveness of new teachers in upper basic level schools in South East, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

- 1) find out the extent planned conversation between mentor and mentee enhances effectiveness of new teachers in Upper basic level schools.
- 2) determine the extent coaching of mentees by mentors enhances effectiveness of new teachers of Upper Basic level school.

Research Questions

The following research questions were asked that guided the study:

- 1) To what extent does planned conversation between mentor and mentee enhance the effectiveness of new teachers in Upper Basic level Schools?
- 2) To what extent does coaching of mentees by mentors enhance effectiveness of new teachers in Upper Basic level schools?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 significant level:

HO₁: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female teachers on the extent planned conversation enhances the effectiveness of the new teachers of Upper Basic level schools.

HO₂: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female teachers on the extent coaching by mentors enhances the effectiveness of the new teachers of Upper Basic schools.

Methodology

The study was conducted to develop a collaborative mentorship support model for increasing the efficacy of new teachers in upper primary schools in South East Nigeria. The study used a descriptive survey research design. A sample of 638 newly employed teachers currently serving under the government's N-power project was taken from a population of 6315 newly employed teachers in three of Nigeria's five South East states. The sample, which represented 10% of the population, was obtained using multi-stage sampling. The instrument for data collection was 10-item researcher-developed questionnaire titled; Collaborative Mentoring Support and Teacher Effectiveness Questionnaire (CMSTEQ). The questionnaire was evaluated by three specialists, two in educational administration and one in measurement and evaluation. The instrument's reliability was determined using the test-retest approach, resulting in a reliability index of 0.76. The researcher administered and collected data with the help of three briefed research assistants. The mean was utilized to answer the five research questions posed in the study, and standard deviations were used to evaluate the closeness of their responses, while the t-test statistic was used to test the two null hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance.

The real limit of numbers: (0.05-1.49=Very Low Extent, 1.50-2.49=Low Extent, 2.50-3.49=High Extent, 3.50-4.49= Very High Extent) guided the decisions made on the results in research questions while the null hypothesis was accepted only where the P-value is greater than the alpha level of 0.05 and was rejected where the P-value was less than the alpha level of 0.05.

Results

Research Question 1

To what extent does planned conversation between mentor and mentee enhance the effectiveness of new teachers in upper basic schools?

Data for answering research question 1 are presented in Table 1

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation on extent Planned Conversation between Mentor and Mentee enhance Effectiveness of the new Teacher (N =638)

S/N	Planning conversation	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
1.	Planned conversation between mentor and mentee enhances effectiveness of new teachers	3.01	0.34	High Extent
2.	The practice of planned conversation creates opportunity for mentor to know what mentees really need	3.11	0.77	High Extent
3.	Planned conversation serves for enriching mentoring, and enhances new teacher effectiveness	3.20	0.68	High Extent
4.	Openness on the part of mentor and mentee is required for effective planned conversation that leads to new teacher effectiveness	2.98	0.85	High Extent
5.	Mutual trust between mentor and mentee creates room for gainful planned conversation	3.04	0.70	High Extent
	Grand mean	3.07	0.67	High Extent

Data in Table 1 show that respondents' mean responses to all items (1-5) varied from 2.98 to 3.20 and fell within the real limit range of 2.50-3.49, indicating high extent mean responses. The grand mean of 3.07, which is likewise within the true range of 2.50-3.49, confirms that planning conversations between mentor and mentee significantly improve the efficacy of new teachers in upper basic schools. The grand standard deviation of 0.67 indicated that the responses of the respondents were near to the mean and to one another.

The hypothesis that answers the aforementioned research question is:

Hypothesis I

There is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female teachers on the extent planned conversation enhance the effectiveness of the new teacher of Upper basic schools.

Data for testing hypothesis I are presented in Table 2

Table 2: t-test analysis of Male and Female Teachers on the extent Planned

Conversation enhances the Effectiveness of new Teachers of Upper basic

Schools							
Gender		\bar{X}	SD	Df	t-cal	P-value	Remark
Male	329	15.35	1.33	636	0.30	0.77	NS
Female	309	15.32	1.39				

The data in Table 2 show a P-value of 0.77, which is greater than the alpha-value of 0.05. This means that the hypothesis of no significant difference has been accepted. As a result, there is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female instructors about the extent to which planned conversations improve the effectiveness of new upper elementary school teachers.

Research Question 2

To what extent does coaching of mentees by mentors enhance effectiveness of new teachers in Upper basic schools?

Data for answering research question 2 are presented in Table 3

Table 3: Mean and Standard deviation on extent coaching of Mentees by Mentors enhance Effectiveness of new Teachers in Upper basic schools (N=638).

S/N	Coaching of mentees	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
6.	Effective coaching of new teachers equips them for effective teaching	2.87	0.67	High extent
7.	Every new teacher really needs a coach to overcome initial fright new teachers experience	3.26	0.65	High extent
8.	Respect for mentee is a great and veritable ingredient for effective coaching and mentoring	2.61	0.89	High extent
9.	Coaching that promotes teacher effectiveness demands docility on the part of mentee	3.11	0.85	High extent
10.	Effective coaching demands thorough knowledge of what mentees really need-individual needs of each new teacher	3.17	0.70	High extent
	Grand mean	3.00	0.75	High extent

The data in Table 3 show that the mean responses in all items (6-10) ranged from 2.61-3.26 falling within the real-limit range of 2.50-3.49. These indicated high degree replies in all of those items. The grand mean of 3.00, which falls within the real limit range of 2.50-3.49, indicated that respondents felt that mentor coaching of mentees significantly improves the efficacy of new teachers in upper basic schools. The grand standard deviation of 0.75 indicated that respondents' replies were close to the mean and each other.

The corresponding hypothesis that addressed the above research question is.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference between the mean response of male and female teachers on the extent coaching by mentors enhances the effectiveness of the new teachers of Upper basic schools.

Data for testing hypothesis 2 are presented in the Table 4

Table 4:t-test analysis of Male and Female Teachers on extent coaching enhance Effectiveness of new Teachers in Upper basic schools.

Gender	N	\bar{X}	SD	Df	t-cal	P-value	Remark
Male	329	14.96	1.80	636	-079	0.43	NS
Female	309	15.07	1.77				

Data in Table 4 shows a P-value of 0.43, which is higher than the alpha value of 0.05. This shows that the null hypothesis was accepted. As a result, there is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female teachers on the degree coaching by mentors boosts the effectiveness of new teachers in upper basic schools.

Discussions of Findings

The findings of the study were discussed in relation to the study's major findings. According to the study, planned conversations between mentor and mentee significantly improve the efficacy of new instructors in upper basic schools. Furthermore, the findings revealed that there is no significant difference in the mean replies of male and female teachers to the extent that planned conversations between mentor and mentee improve the efficacy of new teachers in upper basic schools. Respondents specifically agreed that organized conversations between mentor and mentee provide a high level of opportunity for mentors to learn what mentees truly need, as well as foster mutual trust between mentor and mentees, among other benefits.

The findings are consistent with the views of Dunne and Villani in Aguwa (2020), who stated that the practice of planning conversation greatly benefits new teachers by allowing them to clearly state their intentions for the lesson as well as have knowledge of how each student learns

or responds to the learning opportunity provided to them. The finding is highly important because a prepared chat between the mentor and mentee before to the mentoring section will help to detect and fix some problems that the new teacher may meet in the course of teaching. The faster such issues are detected and addressed, the more effective the new teacher will be in carrying out his or her daily teaching routine.

The findings demonstrated that mentor-mentee coaching significantly increased the efficacy of new teachers in upper basic schools. The findings also revealed no significant difference in the mean replies of male and female teachers about the amount to which mentee coaching improves the efficacy of new teachers in upper basic schools. These findings are consistent with Costa and Garmston in Aguwa (2020) and David (2016), who believe that effective coaching creates a low-stress or stress-free environment in which colleagues (new teachers) feel comfortable enough to create, experiment, reason, and solve problems without fear of being judged.

It is believed that competent mentoring of new teachers could go a long way toward identifying their professional deficiencies and equipping them with better skills to carry out their teaching duties efficiently. Furthermore, effective coaching of mentees (new teachers) by mentors (other older teachers) allows them to identify potential issues early on and how to address them when they arise. This will provide new instructors with not only problem-solving skills, but also the opportunity to easily overcome such obstacles as they arise.

Conclusion

Based on the data obtained and the findings of such analysis, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Planned conversation between mentor and mentee significantly improves the effectiveness of new teachers in upper basic schools, and there was no significant difference in mean responses from male and female teachers on the extent to which planned conversation between mentor and mentee improves the effectiveness of new teachers in upper basic schools.
2. Coaching of mentees by mentors enhances the effectiveness of new teachers in upper basic schools to a high extent, and there was no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female teachers on the extent coaching of mentees by mentors enhances the effectiveness of new teachers in upper basic schools.

Recommendations

Based on the study's results and conclusions, the following recommendations were issued:

1. To overcome problems in the teaching profession, freshly hired teachers should make themselves available to senior colleagues for mentorship, including organized conversations and coaching.
2. Government and education stakeholders should organize seminars and workshops to improve mentoring skills.

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