Primary School Teacher Trainees’ Perceptions of the Quality of Support provided during Mentoring

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Abstract
This study examined the Ugandan primary teacher trainees’ perceptions of the quality of support provided to them during their school practice/mentoring. Questionnaires were administered to 155 participants who had just completed their first school practice and randomly drawn from two Primary Teachers’ Colleges in the Central Region of Uganda. Questionnaires and interview transcripts were coded until a saturation point of 55 was reached, when no new themes and trends emerged. The 55 questionnaires were then considered for content analysis. Teacher trainees’ lesson plans and schemes of work were analyzed to assess the quality of support provided. Teaching timetables, class registers, records of work covered, learners’ progress records and mentors’ reports about the student teachers were also analyzed. Results showed that teacher trainees rated highly the quality of the support received from their mentors. They valued the support they received as relevant, important and helpful. It enables them acquire knowledge, attitudes, pedagogical skills and self-confidence. Nevertheless, some of them reported dissatisfaction with the quality of support provided, particularly mentors’ reluctance to entrust them with some critical aspects of teaching, mainly assessment. They also cited mentors’ unavailability to support them.

Keywords: Mentor teachers; Mentee; School Practice; Teacher Trainee; Perceptions, Primary Teachers’ College

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Conventionally, mentoring was regarded as a “dyadic, face-to-face, long-term relationship between a supervisory adult and a novice student that fosters the mentee’s professional, academic, or personal development” (Donaldson, Ensher, & Grant-Vallone, 2000; Ragins & Kram, 2007: 3-15). Over the years, the definition of mentoring has expanded to include the possibility that a protégé can have multiple mentors, either concurrently or sequentially. More recent definitions of mentoring also take into account of differences in the length of the mentoring relationship (short- or long-term) and the type of mentor (individuals or groups). The process by which protégés are mentored has also expanded beyond face-to-face mentoring to include electronic mentoring (Ensher & Murphy, 2007; Single & Single, 2005). Further improvement of the definition of mentoring includes a model used to distinguish mentoring from other kinds of supportive relationships. This model uses measures of “intent” and “involvement” to determine the extent to which a relationship can be defined as a mentoring one (Mertz, 2004).

Perceptions of Mentoring

Recently, school-based mentoring has become an increasingly important aspect of the process by which student teachers begin to learn how to teach. For instance, Hobson (2002) examined student teachers’ perceptions of school-based mentoring in initial teacher training (ITT) experiences and found that, while student teachers consider mentoring to be a key aspect of school-based ITT their accounts of their school based experiences suggest that teacher-mentors are not always successful in creating conditions for effective student teacher learning. George & Neale (2006), in a study of perceptions of mentoring, found that faculty and students in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields had varied perceptions of both the definition and the perceptions of mentoring. Students viewed the mentor relationship as a personal one and both students and faculty articulated a distinction between academic advising and mentoring. George & Neale, (2006) also found that most focus group respondents in their study agreed with the following definition of mentoring “Mentoring is an interaction between a more experienced person and a less experienced person; it provides guidance that motivates the mentored person to take action” (George & Neale, 2006: p. 3). Based on this brief overview of the literature on mentoring, it is evident that additional research and scholarship will increase understanding of how students at all levels of the institutions of higher education perceive mentoring in terms of their educational and career advancement, hence increasing the possibility of enabling beneficial mentoring relationships. For this to happen there is a need to examine the perceptions of student teacher trainees of the quality of mentorship they receive from their mentors. This is the gap that the present study intends to fill.

In the context of teacher education, mentoring is often conceptualized as the individualized support, assistance, and guidance and challenges that one more experienced teacher provides to a teacher with little or no experience (Awaya, McEwan, Heyler, Linsky, Lum & Wakukwa, 2003; Rowley, 1999; Feiman-Nemser, 2001). The mentor may attend to the professional development of the beginning teacher through a variety of roles. For instance, a mentor may model lessons, jointly plan curricula, serve as a coach on subject matter, discuss school matters and issues, guide novices on using a variety of teaching approaches and methods (Achinstein & Athanases, 2006). In short, aside from his or her responsibility as a teacher, a mentor is also a friend, guide, coach and a role model for a beginning teacher. In practice, mentoring does not rely on hearty ideas about teacher knowledge, students or change. Rather, it strongly focuses on reducing beginning teacher’s practice shock (Veenman, 1984), consequently assisting the beginning teacher in initial survival. The ability of the beginning teachers to overcome the “practice shock” largely depends on the quality of the support they receive from the experienced teachers. It is against this background that this study sought to examine the student teacher trainees’ perceptions of the quality of the support they receive during the mentoring process.

Mentoring Roles and Benefits

In developing an understanding of the mentoring process, researchers have identified a series of roles or functions of a mentoring relationship. While there is some variation in the roles/functions identified
in the mentoring literature, majority of researchers include both psychosocial and career-related functions and roles in their frameworks. Other mentoring role categories include “professional development” and “role modelling” which some consider as mentoring roles while others yet regard them as media through which mentoring benefits arise (George, & Neale, 2006). Some researchers use the word “role” and others use the word “functions.” For the purposes of clarity and to avoid much debate about which word to use, I use “support activities” in this study, to include a variety of activities and communications that may occur between the mentor and protégé during the course of their mentoring relationship.

The benefits protégés receive from a mentoring relationship are categorized in a similar way to the roles/functions categories. Psychosocial (or socio-emotional) category is a common category of mentoring benefits. Most scholars also include a mentoring benefit category called “instrumental”, which refers to the benefits gained when a mentor provides opportunities for the protégé growth and development (Moody, 2004). Scholars also generally include a type of mentoring benefit termed “informational” (also referred to as “career”, career related” or “networking”). In summary, mentoring relationships have a potential to facilitate psychosocial development of the mentored individuals to enjoy higher self-confidence, self-efficacy, and self-assurance. Mentors too can benefit from enhanced self-confidence of their capabilities for reflective thinking and communication, as well as personal satisfaction of contributing to the discipline and the next generation (of teachers) (Daloz, 1996, 1999; Albom, 1997; Hansman, 2002).

Challenges of Mentoring

Literature identifies many challenges of mentoring. First, mentoring is not a particularly structured relationship. This makes it harder to achieve real breakthrough results. There is no coaching contract or learning outcomes, rather than just periodic conversations between the mentor and mentee. Secondly, mentors are typically unpaid. Busy professionals find it harder to fit (spare time) mentoring conversations into their busy schedules while those being mentored naturally value free resources more than ones they pay for. Mentors may naturally require some form of motivation either pecuniary or otherwise that the mentee may not be able to provide. This ultimately affects the mentoring process and relationship.

The third challenge related to accessibility to a mentor. Mentors are also busy trying to live their purpose and achieve goals they have set for themselves. They also have to spend time with their family members, associates, and colleagues. So, having access to them and having their attention can be a daunting challenge. You will have to build your access to them around their schedule. Most importantly, you have to be straight to your points when you are with them. No time wasting. You may not need their physical presence all time, but you can find alternative ways of communicating with them, especially through email. Another challenge concerns high expectations on the part of the mentee. Mentees, usually have high expectations that the moment they are being mentored, things will begin to happen. But everything takes time; and some things take more time than others. Remember, mentors are not magicians. In fact, you are the magician because you make things happen by the actions you take based on the guidance of your mentor.

As a mentee, one of the challenges you will have is following through on your mentor’s instruction amidst your own personal priorities. If you do not follow through on your last mentor’s instruction, you do not deserve another instruction yet. Mentoring is guidance! And guidance is often instructions-inclined. When you do not follow through on instructions, the mentoring relationship will soon be broken. Very often there is a conflict in perspectives and values. A mentor has his or her perspectives to life, such as business, money. You will have to adjust into your mentor’s perspectives. But if you think his or her perspectives run contrary to how you see life, business, money, this mentoring relationship will run into collision. The same thing applies to your mentor’s values. If you do not appreciate his or her values, mentoring relationship will stall.
Understanding the purpose of mentoring may also become a challenge. We often have challenges in mentoring principally because some people do not actually understand the purpose of mentoring. Their understanding of mentoring and mentoring process may be inconsistent with the purpose and what mentoring should be. Mentoring is not sponsorship. Mentoring is not “God-fathering” or financing your desires and neither is it leaving all your worries at the door step of your mentor. Rather mentoring is a learning and development process initiated by two people with the foundation of guidance by the more experienced in order for the less experienced to achieve his or her goals, desires, dreams and live a better life. Principally, the mentor provides the guidance, while the mentee implements the guidance provided.

Theoretical Framework

Lave & Wenger’s (1991) work on legitimate peripheral participation provides a meaningful lens for research that addresses practice based learning in schools. A social and situated conceptualisation of the student teachers’ learning therefore, was at the heart of Lave and Wenger’s multi-national study. This may be understood in the context of situated learning within a community of practice (Maynard, & Furlong, 2001). Lave & Wenger (1991) conceived a community of practice as a site for social, situated learning by mutual engagement with other members, and negotiation of the enterprise and of the distinguishing inventory of that community. With reference to teacher education, and in particular initial and in-service teacher training involving school practice or practicum, the host of community members is diverse and includes head teachers, Higher Education Instructors (HEI), tutors, class teachers, and heads of department, school technicians and other student teachers. They induct the novice student teachers in Lave and Wenger’s process of legitimate peripheral participation within which a neophyte’s required learning takes place, not so much through the reification of a curriculum, as by means of modified forms of participation that are structured to open the practice to non-members (Lave & Wenger, 1991: 85).

In the present study student teachers are newcomers within this community and learn through becoming part of practice as a resource for learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991: 85), and through engagement (both formal and informal) with serving teachers – old-timers (in the parlance of these writers) – along peers and others. This is made possible through a combination of peripherality and legitimacy (Wenger, 1998). Wenger (1998) suggests that peripherality provides a guided and gradual exposure to full practice so that student teachers have:

- lessened intensity – for example, through periods of initial observation, pre and post lesson conferences followed by reduced teaching loads;
- lessened risk – for instance, through close supervision by experienced staff and mentors;
- Lessened production pressures – for example, through less administration, report writing.

Sufficient legitimacy is provided to student teachers to permit them to be treated, in many respects, like other teachers, with the support of a well-respected senior teacher. This is what is expected from the student teacher mentors during school practice. In addition, it is crucially important that student teachers be given enough legitimacy to allow their inevitable stumbling and violations to become opportunities for learning rather than cause for dismissal, neglect or exclusion’ (Wenger, 1998: 101). This study is therefore consistent with the above theoretical framework as it allows for situated learning where legitimate peripheral participation of students teachers on school practice provides a lens through which meaningful practice based learning is addressed in schools. Student teachers learn from the more capable and experienced teacher mentors. They become part of the practice in the real world.

Problem Statement

Teachers play a critical role in implementing any education curriculum. For them to do this, they need to be equipped with the necessary skills, competences, knowledge and attitudes. This can be achieved through proper training and mentoring. Although Ugandan teacher training colleges and universities
have established considerably robust teacher education programs, there is still a general nationwide outcry about the quality of primary school teachers graduating from the Primary Teachers’ Colleges. The newly qualified teachers tend to abandon the teaching and pedagogical practices they acquired during their initial training in the first few years of service. There is therefore a need to find out if they were adequately oriented and mentored during their training at college and their perceptions of the quality of this mentoring support they obtained. It is important to note that prior to this study, no information was found regarding the Primary School Teacher Trainees’ perceptions of the quality of support provided during school practice/mentoring in Uganda. This study therefore seeks to fill this gap. The purpose of this study therefore, was to assess the primary school teacher trainees’ perceptions of the quality of support provided to them during mentoring.

**Significance of the Study**

This study is important to a variety of stakeholders. First, as the immediate beneficiaries, proper and well conducted mentoring programs will enable student teachers acquire the best pedagogical practices that they will use in the field after graduating from college. They will also be able to handle the teaching and learning processes in their schools better, hence improving the academic and professional standards in their schools. Well mentored novice teachers are also more likely to be more motivated and remain in the profession longer (Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). Secondly, the learners in the primary school, as the primary beneficiaries, will gain a lot if their teachers are well mentored during their training. They benefit from better and modern instructional methods and assessment their teachers gained from their mentors. Thirdly, training institutions strengthen their linkages and collaboration with the cooperating schools. This is likely to improve on the quality of teacher education programs offered in the training institutions and ultimately improve on the academic and professional standards in the country. Fourthly, practicing teachers and mentors will benefit from mentoring novice teachers as they learn, develop and practice their own mentoring skills. Knowledge is power. Mentor teachers are more likely to improve on their practice and become more effective teachers and counselors. In addition, they will enrich their curriculum vitae and open more professional and academic opportunities for themselves. Basing on the benefits of mentoring and induction of new teachers (Ingersssol & Smith 2004) particularly in improving academic and professional standards in the country, this study will inform and guide policy makers to make policies that institutionalize mentoring in schools, teacher education colleges and intuitions in the country.

**Objectives of the Study**

This study examined the perceptions of Primary School Teacher Trainees of the quality of support provided during mentoring. This study was interested in finding out:
- Whether or not student teachers are oriented to their schools prior to their school practice assignments, if so, how and by who?
- Whether student teachers are given any support during their school practice, the nature of this support and who provides it.
- The kind of professional activities student teachers carry out during school practice period

**Research Questions**

This study was guided by the following questions:
- Are student teachers oriented to the school prior to their school practice assignments and if so, by who?
- What support do student teachers get from the cooperating school teachers/mentors and how do they perceive the quality of this support?
- What kind of professional activities do students teachers carry out during school practice?
Methodology
The study participants were selected from two Primary Teachers’ Colleges (PTCs) all located in the Central Region. All the students who join the PTC have attained Uganda Certificate of Education Certificate of Education (UCE) or its equivalence with the minimum entry requirements as follows:
A: At least a Credit in following subjects:
   (i) English Language
   (ii) Mathematics

B. A Pass in two of the following Group of subjects:
   (i) Biological Science
   (ii) Agriculture
   (iii) Physical Science

Graduates of the Primary Teachers’ Colleges in Uganda qualify with a Grade III teachers’ certificate and are licensed to teach in the primary schools. Participants in this study were pre-service teacher trainees undergoing a two year teacher training course in the sampled colleges in the central region of Uganda. As part of the requirements for the award of the teachers’ certificate, student teachers are required to do two supervised school practices each lasting for six (6) weeks in the primary schools. Student teachers are posted to the schools of school practice where they work with the cooperating teachers (mentors) by the PTC. The cooperating teachers are experienced teachers who volunteer to guide the student teachers for the period they are with them in their classroom. College tutors conduct support supervisor of the student teachers during the school practice period.

This study used a qualitative research design. Denzin & Lincoln (2005) describe qualitative research as a process involving an “interpretive naturalistic approach to the world”. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.” (p. 3). Qualitative research designs have been effectively used to examine perceptions of various stakeholders toward educational issues. For example, Hobson (2002) examined secondary postgraduate certificate of education (PGCE) students’ perceptions of their school-based mentoring experiences. The data were collected using in-depth interviews with 16 student teachers and self-complete questionnaires completed by 224 student teachers from four different training courses in Central and Northern England. The findings indicate that whereas majority of student teachers consider mentoring to be a key aspect of school-based initial teacher training (ITT), some accounts of their school based experiences suggest that teacher-mentors are not always successful in creating conditions for effective student teacher learning.

Similarly, Yates (2007) used qualitative study design to study teachers’ perceptions of their professional learning activities regarding the principles of effective professional development for teachers, Yates administered a survey based on these principles to 395 primary and secondary teachers at the conclusion of a variety of curriculum, topic or Information Communication Technology (ICT) based professional learning activities ranging from seminars and workshops to longer courses. Results indicated that while teacher age, gender and school level were not significant, teachers’ ratings indicated ICT activities and longer courses contributed significantly to their professional renewal. Teachers also perceived longer courses to be more applicable to their work. These examples of studies show that qualitative research designs can be effectively used to study educational issues.

Qualitative research design was considered appropriate for this study mainly because it allows the researcher to investigate the meanings that people, and in this case student teachers, attribute to their behavior, actions, and interactions with others and indeed their perceptions of issues and events. While student teachers are in their schools during school practice, they interact with learners, teachers, and communities. Therefore qualitative research design can be used to gain an in-depth understanding of the attitudes, perceptions, behaviors, interactions, events, and social processes that comprise everyday life of the student teachers.
This study was done in the Central Region of Uganda. Simple random sampling was adopted in selecting student teachers on their first school practice from two Primary Teachers’ Colleges (PTCs). The two PTCs were continently selected due to their proximity to the researcher. Questionnaires were administered to a total of 155 participants (PTC student teachers) who had just completed their first School Practice. The questionnaires were collected by the researcher the following day. This maximized the return rate of the questionnaires as all of them were received back. The questionnaires contained both open and closed items that required the participants elicit and rate their perceptions of the quality of the support they received during the school practice (mentoring) exercise.

In order to triangulate the data obtained from the questionnaires (Denzin, 2009; 2012) and to capture the nonverbal expressions, including excitements and frustrations of the participants, interviews were conducted with 38 participants. Each interview session lasted for 20 minutes. The interviews were designed to give the participants opportunity to articulate their experiences and perceptions of the quality of assistance they received during the school practice. The interview tapes were transcribed, read, and re-read by the researcher and one research assistant to discern the patterns and trends about student teachers’ perceptions of the quality of mentoring support provided to them during their school practice.

Student teachers’ lesson plans schemes of work and assessment (supervisor) reports) were also analyzed to assess the quality of help provided during the mentoring process. Other documents that were analyzed included teaching timetables, class registers, record of work covered and student progress records and reports from the class teachers about the student teachers. All these documents provided useful information about the quality of mentorship provided to the student teachers. In order to ensure the validity of the instruments, the questionnaires and the interview protocol were thoroughly discussed with university research methodology experts. This enhanced the instrument clarity and comprehensiveness. Suggestions and modifications were incorporated in the final instruments prior to their administration.

Results

Qualitative analyses typically require a smaller sample size that should be large enough to obtain feedback for most or all perceptions of the participants. Obtaining most or all of the perceptions will lead to the attainment of data saturation (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Guest et al. 2006; Denny 2009; Sparkes et. al. 2011; Fusch, & Ness, 2015; Morse, 1995; Leininger, 1994; Morse et. al. 2002). Data saturation is reached when there is enough information to replicate the study (O'Reilly & Parker, 2012; Walker, 2012), when the ability to obtain additional new information has been attained (Guest et al., 2006), and when further coding is no longer feasible (Guest et al., 2006).

In the present study, all the 155 questionnaires and interview transcripts were analyzed by the researcher and research assistant. However, after analyzing the first 55 questionnaires and interview transcripts there were no new themes and trends that emerged from the rest of the questionnaires. This was the saturation point of the data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Morse, 1995; Given, 2016: p. 135). Consequently, the researcher considered the first 55 questionnaires and interview transcripts for data analysis and reporting.

A total of 55 PTC student teacher trainees produced 20 different statements about their perceptions of the different aspects of mentoring support they received during their school practice. The data were categorized into three main categories and summarized in Tables 1 to 3. To enhance the interpretation and understanding of the narrative qualitative data presented, the following acronyms are used:

OJ: Interviewer;
ST: Student teacher.
Table 1: Student teachers’ perceptions of the orientation and support from teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student teachers are introduced to administrators, staff, co-teachers and other school employees</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>U</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student teachers are taken around to see the physical set up of the classrooms, school buildings and grounds</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>U</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student teachers are given copies of teachers’ guides, manuals, teaching aids and reference books</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>U</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student teachers are provided a place to keep their personal materials and property</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>U</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student teachers are introduced to pupils in the class by class teachers</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>U</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class teachers share with student teachers information about learners’ interests and abilities</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>U</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student teachers get explanations about school rules, routines and policies</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>U</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: A – Agree; D – Disagree; U = Undecided

The results indicate that majority (44 or 84.6%) of student teachers were introduced to the school administrators, staff and other school employees. This is critical if the new staff is to be able to get help and assistance in case of challenges and scholastic supplies. They should know who to turn to in order to reduce stress and obtain support (Booth, 1992). Aside from being introduced to the school administrators and staff, student teachers were taken around the school establishments. This enables them to get to know their environment. It is important for the new staff be able to find their way through their place of work. Majority of the student teachers strongly agreed that they were oriented to their school environments. A significant minority, however, differed and argued that they were not helped to get to know their school administrators and the school environment. They were just left on their own. For example, one student teacher lamented:

For me in my school, there was nobody to take me around not even to show me where I could get chalk and duster to use in my class. I’d ask pupils to keep getting the chalk. It was even worse when I needed the books to use say science books. My class teacher was not there and I had to do things on my own and by myself (ST 37).

Another student had a similar impression

As soon as I reported to the school my class teacher left. So I didn’t see him until after one week. So during that time I was just doing things on my own. This was a big school it wasn’t easy for me to find what I needed to use in my class. We’d only warden who also was a librarian. He couldn’t help all of us to prepare instructional materials and apparatuses and so forth. So I’d to learn the hard way. But I eventually managed it. But I think orientation is very useful for one to get used to the system (ST 54).

A small minority (2 or 3.8%) of the student teachers were not sure if they were oriented. For instance, one student claimed to have not participated in the orientation,

Personally, I have never heard of any orientation done in my school. You know I was in a private school where the school director does not value such things. He calls it a waste of
valuable time. As soon as I arrived at school I was given the timetable and told to go to class and that was it. The rest I had to learn and find out by myself. (ST 25)

During the orientation, nearly 72% of the student teachers were given copies of the teacher’s guides, manuals, syllabi, instructional materials and all the necessary literature and reference materials to enable them get on task as comfortably and quickly as possible. However, in some schools, this was not the case as 24.5% of the student teachers reported they were never given any of these materials. They had to rely on their college lecture notes as references.

You know…. I was posted to a peri-urban primary school where there was no textbook of any kind. The school is poor and cannot even afford books, so I had to rely on the lecture notes I made and given by the tutors at college. That’s how I managed the school practice. (ST 40)

I remember the only documents I received from the DOS (Director of Studies) were the syllabus and timetable. The rest I had to find by myself. I was a bit lucky that I’d a friend in the neighboring school who helped me with some teachers’ manuals for my subject. But of course, I’d also done some research and was able to compile some notes while I was at the college. Oh… I was forgetting, I also got the teachers’ code of conduct from my friend in the primary school. Imagine even the school did not avail us with the teachers’ code of conduct. (ST 11)

Two (3.8%) student teachers were not sure if they got any of these documents from the schools. In order to facilitate their planning there is a need to provide student teachers and indeed all other teachers with a place to do so. This could be in form of office space, or staff room. In this respect, nearly all of the student teachers (94.3%) were provided with planning and storage space.

As part of their orientation, student teachers and indeed any other teachers assigned to a new school or class need to be introduced to and shown their class. A little over 94% of the student teachers were introduced to their classes by the class teachers. These results seem to indicate that primary school class teachers are keen in introducing their student teachers to their pupils. This could have a significant impact on the new teachers’ ability to “settle down” to work quickly. During the course of their school practice, class teachers seemed to be generally free to share their experiences, information, interests and abilities with the student teachers. In fact, 90.7% of the student teachers reported having free and fervent sharing with their class teachers. Again primary school class teachers were more enthusiastic in this aspect as they did with introduction of new student teachers to their classes. This is what some of the student teachers attested to:

My class teacher was able to freely narrate to me his experiences as a beginning teacher on the way he started teaching and how he was able to maneuver his way and got to know the rules of the game of teaching. He discussed with me how he managed to control his class and overcome the fears of facing the class and delivering the lesson concepts to a large class. I thought this was helpful. I was able to learn a few tricks from him (ST 51).

In order for the new staff to quickly get acclimatized with the working conditions in a new environment, there is a need for them to be abreast with the rules and regulations that are in place so that they are not only caught off guard, but also know their rights and privileges. Schools and any organization must have these rules and regulations in place and any new staff needs to be aware of them. In this regard again primary schools seemed to have done well as 83.3% of the student teachers reported having very clear explanations about school rules, routines and policies.

As soon as we arrived at the school, we had a meeting with the head teacher. In this meeting the head teacher and the teacher in charge of discipline and senior woman teacher and man teacher briefed us about the rules and regulations of the school. They showed us the punishment books in which children who were misbehaving were recorded and the types of punishments they were given. Their parents also signed the punishment book to acknowledge the punishment given to their children. … one more thing, the head teacher told
us that if we were to punish a learner, their parents must be informed to avoid problems of parents going to police to report a teacher. The head teacher then gave us copies of the school rules and regulations and other documents for our references (ST 10).

**Table 2: Type of support to student teachers provided by the teachers/mentors**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cooperating teachers demonstrate for the student teachers different methods or techniques of teaching</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>57.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperating teachers always share with student teachers ideas, discoveries and innovations in education</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>64.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperating teachers demonstrate and/or inform the student teachers about techniques that work best in classroom management</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>72.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student teachers are guided on how establish close rapport with students</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>64.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student teachers are guided on how to prepare lesson plans, schemes of work and other records</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>81.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperating teachers observe student teachers’ lessons</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>90.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They give full charge of their classes to the student teachers for lesson presentations</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>75.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: A – Agree; D – Disagree; U = Undecided

Student teachers encounter a myriad of challenges while in their schools of practice. In order to survive they need support from the experienced teachers they work with, head teachers, parents and the community as a whole. One of the objectives of this study was to assess the kind of support student teachers get from the cooperating school teachers. Results indicate that support obtained varied from demonstration of lessons by the class teachers and heads of department, or mentors to allowing student teachers to take full charge of their classrooms. In fact teachers provided student teachers opportunity to scaffold within their zones of proximal development (ZPD’s) (Vygotsky, 1978; Wood & Middleton, 1975).

It can be inferred from the Table 2 that majority of the student teachers agreed that their class and subject teachers actually demonstrated to them the various teaching methods and approaches including those that work best in classroom management. Precisely, 57.4% of the student teachers confirmed that demonstration of methods and approaches took place.

… in my case, there was a method of teaching called snowballing. I had heard about it at college but I didn’t know how to use it. So my class teacher demonstrated how to use it in class and I thought it was cool. I also tried it as he observed. We discussed how to improve on it next time and I was really happy about it. I can now use it in my class during my next school practice (ST 13).

Similarly, nearly the same proportion of student teachers (57.8%) agreed that their teachers always shared with them ideas, experiences and innovations. This is very important as it enhances student teachers’ self confidence (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). Student teachers can learn a lot from their mentors. It also says a lot about the confidence the student teachers and their mentors developed of each other. Another type of support student teachers received from their teachers included guidance
on how to establish and maintain rapport with their learners. In fact 64.2% of the student teachers indicated they were guided on this aspect. On the contrary, 24.5% of the student teachers disagreed, while nearly 11% of the student teachers were undecided whether or not they received this guidance.

Student teachers also received considerable amount of guidance in planning lessons from their mentor teachers. In fact 81.5% of them were guided in lesson preparation. Having prepared their lessons with their teacher mentors, 90.2% of the student teachers were observed teaching. This could be interpreted that primary school teachers were keen in helping their student teachers improve on their teaching skills. All of the student teacher participants reported benefiting from the post lesson conferences with their class teachers. They were able to identify their mistakes, challenges and areas that needed improvement during these conferences.

I was really very pleased with my class teacher. He observed me teaching and made some very useful notes about my lesson. When we discussed the lesson, he was very open and gave useful comments that I was to implement. So when my tutor came to supervise my lesson, I was really confident because of the help I had received. So the post observation conferences are really good. They help one improve on his teaching (ST 9).

You know, when you teach and there is someone you trust can give you useful comments like my subject teacher, you feel confident and the urge to perform even better comes automatically. After teaching my science lesson, the teacher and I had useful discussion where we shared the strengths, weaknesses in my lesson and we agreed on how I can improve on this lesson. This was good. The discussion was friendly and I realized my own mistakes and that the teacher was genuine in pointing them out and giving workable suggestions of improvement. So these conferences are useful and should be encouraged (ST 13).

Having provided the student teachers with the necessary support, it is deduced from the data in Table 2 that, overall, mentor teachers had developed considerable confidence in their mentees. Class teachers were inclined to give full charge of their classes to the student teachers. In fact 75.5% of the teachers were confident enough to give full responsibility of their classes to the student teachers.

Table 3: Professional Activities student teachers are involved in

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student teachers are involved in planning teaching time tables</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>U</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student teachers participate in co-curricular activities</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>U</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student teachers are involved in advising and assisting students in their subject areas</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>U</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student teachers are involved in organization of examinations and other forms of assessment</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>U</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student teachers are involved in maintaining discipline outside the classroom</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>U</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student teachers attend and actively participate in staff meetings</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>U</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: A – Agree; D – Disagree; U = Undecided
During school practice student teachers are required to get involved in all of the activities that take place in a school. This study examined the kind of professional activities student teachers were involved in during their school practice since this would give them a feel of the kind of activities they will be doing throughout their professional lives as teachers. These activities are summarized in Table 3 and range from planning through active participation in staff meetings. It can be clearly observed from Table 3 that majority of the students teachers were involved in planning timetables. In fact, this is what every teacher is ought to do. Student teachers were also enthusiastic about participating in co-curricular activities, advising and assisting their students in their subject areas. Student teachers again did well in maintaining discipline outside of the classroom. By contrast 43.4% of the student teachers were less involved in attending staff meetings. Interestingly, it seems that majority of the primary teachers do not entrust student teachers with organizing examinations and other forms of assessment in their classrooms, yet this is part of the duties any teacher is supposed to perform. One student teacher commented:

ST 2: My class teacher would not allow mw even to invigilate and administer the end of month exam. He told me that the DOS (Director of Studies) does not trust anyone when it comes to examination issues they fear that the exam will leak and pupils will cheat. that’s why it is only the class teachers who set, administer and mark the examinations and nobody else does it.

So the class teachers seem not to trust anyone and certainly student teachers with examinations. They have their genuine reason, but it is not good enough to deny the student teachers the opportunity to learn how to set, prepare, administer, and mark tests and examination.

Discussion and Conclusions

Question 1: Are student teachers oriented prior to their school practice assignment, if so how and by who?

There is recognition that the induction and mentoring period of the first two or three years of teaching, is critical in developing teachers’ capabilities, and that beginning teachers should not be left alone to sink or swim (Clement, 2011). There is no doubt that new employee orientation (NEO) is one important component of an employee’s total on-boarding experience. A successful NEO program introduces new employees to the organization and provides information that helps them transition into their new role. It is a customized training program that specifically identifies an institution’s structure, mission, core values, and workplace expectations for employees.

The results of this study show that student teachers participated in orientation program prior to their school practice assignments. Induction and orientation programs were conducted mainly by the class teachers and head teachers. Student teachers were taken around the school environment and introduced to their classes. Student teachers’ perceptions of the orientation activities and the quality of support they received during school practice varied across the school levels. They cited introduction to administrative staff and other school staff and employees as being important in enabling them fit in the school system. Student teachers in this study rated the quality and benefits of orientation very highly. They appreciated that participating in the orientation programs enabled them to settle down to work, since they were able to find their way in the school, knowing who to go to for help on various issues, including pedagogical, academic, social issues and guidance and counseling. This ultimately results in improved psychological wellbeing and confidence, for instance, reduced work-related stress through work discussion groups (Warman & Jackson, 2007), reduced feelings of isolation for the new teachers who particularly appreciate mentors who provide emotional support and reassurance (Hobson & Sharp, 2005), and increased confidence for mentored teachers early in their careers (Moor, Halsey, Jones, Martin, Stott, Brown, & Harland. (2005). Feeling confident in their new professional identity and leaving behind previous roles seems to be an important outcome for mentored teachers.

Student teachers also confided that participating in the orientation helped them to demystify the concept of and misinformation and stereotypes about school practice they had acquired from their peers. For instance, one student claimed:
My friends used to scare me that school practice is really very tedious. You work all the time and you are always watched by everybody who will be looking for the mistakes you make. I was really scared. But when I was oriented by the head teacher and my class teacher, I realized it was not the case (ST 25).

Another one could not hide her excitement about orientation program in her school:

Orientation has made me know the school buildings, such as the library, book stores, where I can get the chalk and also that I can approach the head teacher, senior woman teacher Director of studies or even the cooks in case I have a problem. It was really good to have the orientation. It made me gain confidence in myself that I can manage to teach. (ST 5).

This finding is consistent with Barr (2011) who summarized the benefits of having a thorough and well thought out orientation. She argues that as one of the benefits, staff orientation enables a new employee (teacher) to start out on the right track. Staff orientation encourages employee confidence and helps the new employee adapt faster to the job and contributes to a more effective, productive workforce. Other benefits of the orientation programs are that the new employee (teacher) feels comfortable more quickly. This is more likely to result in the employee being more satisfied, and that in turn results in improved employee job satisfaction, retention and improved outputs.

Correspondingly, Wang & Wei (2005) summarized the benefits and quality of orientation to employees (new teachers) as providing them with a roadmap to success, increased productivity and organizational performance. This implies communicating the subtleties and nuances of the school and performance requirements of the job. Conducting orientation with new teachers is not enough. According to Scherff, Kershaw, Benner, Suters, Barclay-McLaughlin, & Broemmel (2004), objectives and quality of the orientation activities is important if the benefits are to be realized. In sum, accelerated learning, relationship building, increasing engagement and performance, while reducing turnover are just some of the many benefits of new employee orientation.

The results of this study indicate that student teachers appreciated the quality and relevance of the activities they did during their orientation. It is therefore not surprising that student teachers perceive orientation as an important aspect of their training to become teachers. Student teachers can therefore benefit from well thought out and planned orientation programs as they provide them with a roadmap to success. Student teachers also revealed that their head teachers, Directors of studies and class teachers (mentors) were very instrumental in orienting them to the school activates and culture. Carver (2002) and Lunenburg & Irby, (2006) summarize some of the key role of a head teacher as:

- Assign novices to subject areas and grade levels for which they are qualified
- Secure classroom placements that optimize the novices’ chance for success
- Distribute challenging students among classrooms
- Protect novices’ time by limiting extra duties and responsibilities
- Providing site orientation and resource assistance
- Facilitate introduction and welcome to the site
- Offer site orientation to highlight available resources, procedures, and policies
- Assign in-building mentors (if not already provided)
- Provide needed resources and supplies

The head teachers of the cooperating schools in this study did exactly as Carver (2002) and Lunenburg & Irby, (2006) claimed.

**Question 2: What support do student teachers get from the cooperating school teachers/mentors and how do they perceive the quality of this support?**

The results of this study indicate that student teachers had a substantial amount of support from their teacher mentors. This support ranged from lesson demonstration to actually helping in planning,
observing and discussing the lessons taught as presented in Table 2. Literature on Clinical Supervision is inundated with the benefits and importance of conferencing with teachers regarding their lessons in order for them to improve their practice, (Greene, 1992). Student teachers in this study indicated receiving considerable support from their mentor teachers. This support ranged from demonstration to the student teachers of different methods or techniques of teaching to actually giving the student teachers full autonomy to handle their classes as presented in Table 2.

Universities and Teacher Education Colleges are understandably interested in improving the quality of their teacher education graduates. One of the ways to do this is by adopting the apprenticeship model (Ryan & Unwin, 2001; Fuller & Unwin, 2003) of training in which student teachers are encouraged to work with the more experienced teachers, tutors, and professors. This is the mentoring model in which the mentors are encouraged to provide support, guidance and information so as to enhance the student teachers’ chances of acquiring the necessary pedagogical skills and knowledge to teach effectively. Numerous authors (Earnshaw 1995; Booth, 1993; 1995; English National Board for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting [ENB] 1995; Wenger, 1998) emphasize the importance of guidance and support for students. In the same vein, it is important to observe that new teachers need feedback and encouragement experienced teachers can provide. Peer coaching or mentoring is gaining support as an effective supervision tool (Lieberman, Hanson, & Gless, 2011; McDermott, 2011). Peer coaching/mentoring takes place when classroom teachers observe one another, provide feedback concerning their teaching, and together develop instructional plans (Burley & Pompfrey, 2011). The results of the present study show that majority of teacher mentors or cooperating teachers demonstrated this effectively.

Based on the testimonies of the student teachers in the present study, mentor teachers performed their mentoring roles well as espoused Joyce & Calhoun (2010). These roles comprise: (a) companionship: discussing ideas, problems, challenges and successes; (b) technical feedback: particularly those related to lesson planning and classroom observations; (c) analysis of application, integrating what happens or what works as part of the beginning teacher’s repertoire; (d) adaptation: helping the beginning teacher adapt to particular situations; and (e) personal facilitation: helping the teacher feel good about self after trying new strategies.

Mentor teachers in this study ultimately developed a reasonable degree of confidence in their student teachers to the extent that they allowed them to take full charge of their classrooms unaided. In short, they were able to exhibit the progression of the student teachers through the ZPD (Vygotsky, 1978; McLeod, 2012). Student teachers shared similar views about the type and benefits of the support they received from their mentor teachers as summarized in Table 2. This is consistent with the findings of Luft & Cox (2001) and Hobson (2002) in which they found out that student teachers and their mentors rated highly the advice, guidance and information they received during mentoring as the main benefits to protégés, followed by friendship and support. Although role modeling and advocacy were rarely mentioned in this study as some of the activities and benefits of mentoring, both of these are frequently mentioned in the mentoring literature (Campbell & Campbell, 1997; Allen, Poteet, & Burroughs, 1997; Chao, 1997; Jacobi, 1991; Franke & Dahlgren, 1996). In this study, student teachers generally mentioned receiving academic and professional benefits from their mentor teachers. This is similar to Franke & Dahlgren’s (1996) findings of the conceptions of mentoring during school-based teacher education in England. It can therefore be inferred that student teachers in this study appreciated the benefits of the various types of support they received from their mentor teachers. In contrast, based on the data presented and discussed, a significant number of student teachers were not entirely pleased with the mentoring support they received during their school practice. This is again consistent with Hobson’s (2002) study of secondary postgraduate certificate of education (PGCE) students’ perceptions of their school-based mentoring experiences. Hobson’s findings indicate that whereas majority of student teachers consider mentoring to be a key aspect of school-based initial teacher training (ITT), some accounts of their school based experiences suggest that teacher-mentors are not always successful in creating conditions for effective student teacher learning.
Question 3: What kind of Professional Activities do student teachers carry out during school practice?

The result of this study shows that student teachers were involved in a variety of professional activities ranging from planning of teaching timetables through participating in staff meetings, as summarized in Table 3. While at school during school practice, student teachers are expected to be part of the “whole” school. This is the more reason this experience is termed school practice. Student teachers are expected to run the activities and programs of the school both inside and outside of the classroom including community activities. In this context, therefore, it is not surprising that three quarters of the student teachers participated in planning timetables. In fact as they reported for their school practice exercise, they were involved in timetable planning, attending and participation in meetings chaired by the directors of studies and class/mentor teachers. Student teachers were positive about their involvement in planning of timetables. Many of them agreed that it is part of their training because when they graduate, timetable making is part of their duty either individually or as a department. Some of them revealed that in the primary schools where they did their school practice, there is no post of a timetable master. It is either the Deputy Head Teacher or Director of Studies who makes the timetable. Due to the volume of work involved, these officers, delegate this responsibility to individual class teachers. So when the student teachers arrive, the class teachers sit with them to draw out a timetable that suits them so that everyone is happy and comfortable.

Describe your role in the planning of the class teaching timetable (OJ).

…. planning or making of the timetable in our school was done mainly by the class teacher who is the overall boss. However, to make an acceptable timetable, he coordinates with both of us who were assigned to his class and each one comes up with their suggested times of teaching and we discuss this and come up with a working time table for everyone. Then each one is given a copy. We can change the time table if we find it not working and inform the head teacher, director of studies and our college tutors accordingly who must also have copies of our timetables (ST 3).

As part of other institutional responsibilities, student teachers actively participated in co-curricular activities. These activities ranged from coaching athletics, football or netball teams to advising and assisting their students on academics and general discipline. Student teachers were pleased with the opportunity given to them by their teachers to take part in co-curricular activities. One of the student teachers described her involvement in coaching her school netball team:

It was very exciting for me to be given the chance to work and train with the school netball team in preparation for the district championship. In fact, I started the team from the scratch. The girls were afraid of and looked intimidated by the size of the ball and goal posts. So when I reported to the school, the games master assigned me to help the girls because the school had registered for the county netball championship but had no teacher to coach the girls. I accepted the responsibility. When we won our first game, I got even more excited and developed more confidence in myself. I even think that when I graduate, I’ll take on coaching netball in my school I’ll be posted to teach. I really thank my games master for giving me the opportunity to discover my other talent (ST 51).

In executing these responsibilities, student teachers were rated highly in their involvement and motivation by class teachers. They claimed that although the student teachers advised their learners, they also needed valuable advice from those who have ever done it before. This is consistent with the principles of apprenticeship and mentorship (Vygotsky, 1978; Wood & Middleton, 1975).

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to examine Primary School Teacher Trainees’ perceptions of the quality of support provided during mentoring. The results presented and discussed show that primary
school teacher trainees participated in the orientation programs in their schools of school practice. The orientation programs were mainly conducted by the head teachers, directors of study and class teachers. Orientation activities ranged from introduction to the school administration and support staff to their learners in their classes. Student teachers appreciated the benefits of orientation as it enabled them find their way through the school buildings and settle to work and become part of the school community. During the orientation, student teachers were also provided with copies of school rules, regulations and policies, teachers' guides, manuals, teaching aids and reference books and space to work from. However, not every student teacher was positive about their orientation program at school. Some of them reported not benefiting from the program as their mentor teachers left them to swim on their own, while a few others were not sure if they participated in the orientation.

Student teachers also received considerable support from their mentors and the school administration. Cooperating teachers (mentors) demonstrated the best practices to the student teachers, shared ideas and innovations with them and guided them in planning, conducting and assessing learning activities. Student teachers reported gaining a lot from their mentors particularly because they were involved in observing their lessons and carrying out conferences before and after the lessons were conducted. This helped to improve on their practices. There were also some student teachers who were not satisfied with the mentoring assistance they received from their mentors, For example, one student teacher lamented:

Unfortunately I had a bad mentor in my school … she was not supportive… I don’t know how she was a mentor. The girl that was there first didn’t ‘get on with her either. I didn’t get on with her too, nobody got on with her. That’s not the college’s fault particularly, it’s just unfortunate that if you're in that position where you are relying on that one person for your course, it’s a bit difficult really … She just kills your confidence and you just wouldn’t want to go into the classroom. She would undermine you all the time … I didn’t have any meeting with her at all… (ST 4).

Would you have liked some? (OJ).

Well I would have but I was scared of her so I didn’t ask … And I knew if I went to speak to her she would just shout at me so I stayed out of the way... What she’d do, in the middle of a lesson she’d open the door, shout at the kids, “I can hear you down the corridor” and walk out again. She would come to me and say “what happened? It didn’t seem like you were in control of that lesson”, and it was just a little bit noisy. I just didn’t teach in the same way that she did. (ST 4).

As teachers to be, student teachers were involved in a variety of professional activities including making school timetables, day to day running of the school and conducting assessment and evaluation of learning. Student teachers were also involved co-curricular and community activities. In short, they were immersed in their school communities. However, 43.4% of the student teachers were less involved in attending staff meetings. Interestingly, it seems that majority of the primary teachers do not entrust student teachers with organizing examinations and other forms of assessment in their classrooms, yet this is part of the duties any teacher is supposed to perform.

Overall, students rated highly the quality of the support they received from the cooperating/mentor teachers. Student teachers valued the support provided to them as relevant, important and helpful to them as it enabled them acquire knowledge, attitudes, confidence in teaching and pedagogical skills that they will apply to become effective teachers.

Limitations of this study

There are fifty government and privately owned Primary Teachers Colleges in Uganda. This study was conducted in only two of the government owned PTCs located in only one region. This effectively limited the sample space. Furthermore, the perceptions of the participants were limited to
only those in the central region from which participants were selected. Secondly, the participants had done their school practice in urban schools in the city with generally better facilities and probably with better motivated teachers than those in the rural schools. This could have influenced mentor teacher availability, motivation and the need to create an impact on the novice teachers in terms of mentoring. Thirdly, this study relied on only one study design. It would have been better if a mixed study design was used as this would improve triangulation. Fourthly, the study was carried out with limited personal financial resources. This limited the choice of colleges to those for easy accessibility to the researcher/author.

**Implications**

There is a need to orient and induct student teachers in the school programs and culture so that they learn to find their way through. This could be done by everybody in the school or community. If orientation and induction is done well, new teachers are more likely to quickly settle down physically, mentally and morally to do their work.

Policy makers, including teacher training intuitions and stakeholders need to institutionalize orientation and mentoring programs in schools for easy monitoring and evaluation of its impact. There is a need to develop mentoring guidelines for teacher mentors. The Ministry of Education and Sports recognizes the importance of mentoring particularly to the beginning teachers (Ministry of Education & Sports [MoES], (2009).

Mentor teachers need to work closely with the student teachers (mentees) so as to model them to become effective teachers that continue to develop and apply the best pedagogical practices they acquire from the training institutions rather than abandoning their during the first few years of service as observed by Otaala, Maani, & Bakaira (2013).

Schools could find a way of remunerating mentors for the extra effort they put in mentoring student teachers. This could be done at school level. Currently, mentoring is done on voluntary basis.

There is also a need to give the student teachers a little more guided autonomy for them to consolidate the skills in class management, planning and orchestrating learning in their classes. School administrators need to plan special and continuing in-service activities with topics directly related to the needs and interests of beginning teachers and eventually integrate beginning professional development activities with regular professional development activities.

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