

Mentor and Mentee Conceptions on Mentor Roles and Qualities: A Case Study of Masvingo Teacher Training Colleges

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Abstract

Mentoring has been increasingly recognized as a key strategy in professional training and development in education. In teacher training, mentoring may be regarded as a relationship and a process whose aim and purpose is to induct student teachers into the community of practice of teaching. It is a process in which professional support is given by and within school. The mentor role was that of an elder, trusted loyal friend, responsible for the growth and development of the protégé, whose characteristics were integrity, wisdom and personal involvement. However the notion of mentoring is not clear as it seems, considering how it is performed and there are challenges affecting mentoring. In Zimbabwe, in teacher education, mentoring is one of the Teaching Practice training strategies which is largely employed by schools in conjunction with teacher training colleges. A survey was conducted in Masvingo urban to determine mentor and mentee conceptions on mentor roles and mentor qualities in mentoring student teachers from two teachers' training colleges in Masvingo. The study established that there were some differences in the way roles and qualities of mentors were conceived by student teachers and the mentors but the key roles of an effective mentor were conceived as a guide and a helper in purely teaching matters. Opinions were divided on the assessor role of mentors but being highly knowledgeable about teaching children in the primary school, warm and being trustworthy were most commonly identified traits of effective mentors. The study recommended that workshops be run conjointly by training colleges and appointed school mentors so that mentors and colleges speak the same voice on mentor roles and qualities.

Keywords: *mentoring, mentor, mentee*