

## **Circumventing Novice Teacher Imbroglio in Kenya: A Proposed Mentorship Program**

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### **Abstract**

Novice teachers, in primary and secondary schools, in Kenya face a myriad of problems and challenges in the early stages of their teaching career. As much as they have gone through the colleges, when they embark on teaching, they realize that they have inadequate knowledge, skills and attributes to handle learners. In most cases, there is little support from other teachers and with time, negative experiences erode the confidence of beginning teachers over time, leading to high attrition rate. Sometimes, beginning teachers a face reality shock as the theories learned during their training do not fit neatly into the real-world teaching practice even for though they have undertaken teaching practice. In the first year of training, many beginning teachers are given responsibilities out of the classroom which they have to undertake, even when they did not learn about the tasks involved. Sometimes, the veteran teachers have less responsibilities and they have time to informally supervise the beginning teachers. Most beginning teachers are enthusiastic about the work but after experiencing frustration and alienation from the veteran teachers, they gradually lack morale and end up having very little achievement as far as learning outcomes are concerned. When teachers are thrust into the profession without proper guidance in place, they struggle on their own to make learners to perform well in exams and other activities. A well-designed mentorship program can enable teachers to adapt well to the profession and be motivated enough to motivate the learners. This paper conceptualizes a plan for teacher mentoring in Kenya.

If adopted, the model can be used to improve the performance of beginning teachers or teachers on new assignments.

**Key Words:** Education, Mentorship, Novice/Beginning teacher, Mentor, Mentee.

### **Introduction**

Irrespective of the enormous investments in the preparation of teachers in Kenya, most new teacher education graduates are rated by the principals who supervise them as inadequately prepared, overly theoretical, and insufficient to meet the needs of diverse learners. It is not enough to just criticize beginning teachers, as such, there is need to establish a program for guiding and inducting novice teachers into the teaching profession in Kenya. In practice, such a program would have to be a mentoring one in which the new teacher is assisted to settle into the teaching career and be effective. Teacher mentoring has been found to be an important program in educational practice for beginning teachers (Beverly, 2007).

Teacher retention and impactful teaching depends upon strong support for beginning teachers because teaching is a demanding profession and involves much more than preparing lessons and delivering to learners. To be effective, teachers have to consciously and carefully select appropriate content, resources and instructional strategies that seek to attain the planned objectives. The experience of teaching also differs from one class to another. There are other important and relevant activities that teachers are also expected to undertake, apart from teaching. If not well handled, the acclimatizing process can be challenging, especially for novice teachers graduating from colleges and universities.

Apart from helping teachers to develop and improve their personal and professional capabilities, teacher mentoring is also a significant and useful leadership skill. Teacher mentoring motivates, helps young incoming teachers to learn, to grow and to become more effective in their job. Teacher mentoring has been practiced in many places since it is deemed a necessary process for all teachers entering into the teaching profession. Through teacher mentorship programs, new teachers become effective and also develop a positive attitude towards teaching. There is no officially functional system of inducting novice teachers in Kenya, so there is need for establishing a firm, official mechanism of helping teachers to gain a sound professional base so that, in turn, they can ensure acceptable learner development in the institutions that they are teaching. Teacher mentorship is practically applicable and it is a program whose benefits are far reaching, for the Kenyan education system.

### **Mentorship and Professional Support**

College bachelor of education programs that prepare prospective teachers have considerable variation from one institution to another, and country to another (Twoli, 2011). The goal is for the graduating teachers to handle learners with diverse characteristics towards social, economic, academic and emotional growth and well-being (Wasonga, Wanzare, & Dawo, 2015). Beginning teachers have some experience acquired from college training and teaching practice engagements that may influence their teaching. They already have some understanding about pedagogy which is appropriate for the level they are expected to teach. From their college studies, they have knowledge of the subject matter they are expected to teach, strategies, techniques and tools for creating and sustaining a learning community and the skills and abilities to employ these strategies. Their studies in educational psychology enables them to have knowledge about learners and learning, human growth and development, motivation and behavior, learning theory and

learning differences. Even with these qualifications, the teaching fraternity may be expecting performance beyond what the beginning teachers are equipped with. Because of the misconception about what the teachers can do, there is lack of professional support for beginning teachers, and hence isolation from experienced teachers and administrators, making teaching undesirable for many.

Very often, beginning teachers encounter an uphill task of engaging in quality teaching together with co-curricular activities (Kutsyuruba & Tregunna, 2014). In many instances, when the challenges abound, the majority of teachers choose to leave the profession within two to five years and in some extreme cases even drop out even before the end of their first year. Mentorship is necessary, to enable the beginning teachers to expel any fears, and gain enough courage to begin their career. Most of the time, the beginning teachers have many questions to ask but nobody is available to answer them. There is much that they don't know and they do not know how far they should go in their teaching engagements. Sometimes they make mistakes which may be irreversible or may take time to reverse. In the United States of America, school districts are working with teacher associations, universities, and others to establish mentoring programs to help beginning teachers, veteran teachers in new assignments, and teachers in need of remedial aid to build up to the challenges with the assistance of a guide. With time, most likely, the professional body as a whole will be able to tackle the challenges of the educational landscape. The mentoring program is very beneficial and assists in making the learner get the best learning experiences from the beginning teachers.

### **Formal Mentorship**

Mentorship programs have been done in different parts of the world with positive results (Koki, 1997; MacCullum & Baltiman, 1999; Msila, 2012; Prew, 2007; Samkange, 2015). A

mentorship program is a support system and enables recipients to develop their abilities to the fullest. A growing number of new teachers benefit from formal mentoring programs in their school districts and they are able to adequately plan for their career advancement (Koki, 1997). In education, mentoring is a complex and multi-dimensional process which includes but is not limited to guiding, counseling, teaching, influencing, and supporting a beginning or new teacher. A teacher mentor leads, guides and advises a newly employed or promoted teacher in understanding and discharging their duties and the relationship is characterized by mutual trust and belief. Educational mentorship can range from student mentorship to educational leader mentorship. Research articles on mentorship have identified mentorship as an effective tool for better development of the mentees. In a study by Cherian (2007), mentees stated that effective mentors acted as local guides to broaden not only their understanding of individual classrooms, but also understanding the culture of the communities in which their schools were located.

### **Teacher Mentorship in Kenya**

Mentoring in the Kenyan education system is still an unexplored phenomenon (Wasonga, Wanzare, & Dawo, 2015). Informal mentorships are done in schools through the schools' initiatives but are not very common. To date, no formal teacher mentoring programs have been introduced by the local or central government education ministries in Kenya. When teachers are employed in Kenya, they are given the tools of the trade, that is, the required books and stationery and are plotted in the timetable. The belief is that the teachers have been taught well in the universities and they are prepared to handle teaching duties and any other duties assigned to them in the school. Sometimes, the belief does not hold. A mentoring program can be a great inspiration to beginning teachers and even those in teacher training institutions and universities in Kenya.

Mentoring is an issue that can offer a platform for new teachers to express themselves and develop positive attitude towards teaching and education in general. A mentoring program also helps teachers to demystify many myths that are associated with the teaching profession at different levels. A teacher mentor is supposed to nurture the mentee so that by the end of the mentorship period, any challenges and barriers to effective teaching are clarified. The program's aim is to get positive outcomes and enable the mentee to fit in the system effectively. Mentoring programs have borne fruit in other countries in Africa (Msila, 2012; Samkange, 2015) and so Kenya should take the initiative in order to curb teacher attrition and low education standards. The objective of this paper is to give an overview of mentoring as an important part of teacher preparation for the teaching role and other roles in the education sector including educational leadership.

In different geographical regions, mentorship takes different dimensions. A mentoring program in Florida State University was aimed at helping black women in a collegiate setting to penetrate through workplace barriers which ranged from subtle racist attitudes and prejudices to blatant discriminatory practices (Greene, 2001). It was based on the seven African principles of umoja (unity), ujima (collectivity), ujamaa (cooperation), kuumba (creativity), Imani (faith), nia (purpose), and kujichagula (self-determination). The sisters mentoring sisters program as it was called, aimed at addressing the issue of representation in the university leadership roles. It was more like a support network for women.

### **The Mentoring Process**

In Zimbabwe, the selection of teachers to be mentors did not follow any specific pattern so it could not be said to be based on qualification or other demographics and this affected the process (Samkange, 2015). Research shows that organized mentoring is a more demanding process than classroom teaching, and that even experienced teachers cannot always objectively assess the

quality of teaching performance of beginning teachers (Bowman, 2014). The heart and soul of mentoring grows out of belief in the value and worth of people and a positive attitude toward education that focuses upon passing the expertise to the next generation of teachers. The mentoring process extends far beyond supporting the induction of new teachers into the school system through professional guidance and encouragement. It also involves a commitment to education, a strong support for its future, and a respect for those who join the school community.

Major aspects that contribute to the complexity of mentoring include the multiple needs of beginning teachers as well as their mentors, their developmental issues or concerns, their repertoire of teaching skills, the school culture that may impact positively or negatively on the mentoring process, and numerous other implicit and explicit variables (Gay, 1995). Mentoring programs pair beginning teachers with more experienced teachers who can ably explain school policies, regulations, procedures, share methods, materials and other resources including time. Mentors help mentees to solve problems in teaching and learning, provide personal and professional support, and guide the growth of the new teacher through reflection, collaboration, and shared inquiry (Twoli, 2011). The process of mentoring includes modeling because the mentor must be able to model the messages and suggestions being taught to the beginning teacher (Gay, 1995). Still, the mentor must serve as a role model of the teacher's role in education, having positive outcomes in their educational undertakings. The mentoring process includes coaching as an instructional technique and can be used in endeavors such as sports, clubs, music and drama in the school.

### **Significance of mentorship**

Mentors have specific skills and have more than competence and ability; they have a desire to share their skills and knowledge with others (Msila, 2012). Mentoring is a process that opens

the doors to the school community and helps beginning teachers benefit from the wisdom of the older teachers in the profession. A mentor helps the beginning teachers to make sense of the realities that they face in teaching, learn their significance, and use what they have learned to improve their teaching skills. In reality, mentoring helps to ensure that new teachers have access to the accumulated instructional knowledge and expertise of their colleagues in ways that contribute to student success and school improvement. In this aspect, mentoring is a mechanism to articulate and share the genius of teaching.

Global policy trends now lend greater importance to mentoring programs than perhaps at any other time in history (Shnader, Westernmann, Downey, Thibodeau, 2016). Increasing student enrollments, an escalation of teacher retirements, and the popularity of class-size reduction efforts represent serious challenges to countries seeking to ensure the quality of classroom instruction. Mentoring assists both the beginning teachers and experienced teachers on new assignments. In order to raise teaching standards and expand the ranks of the profession at a time when many young people are not interested in teaching, mentoring programs can come in handy. Mentoring programs can help in several ways: First, mentoring can be used as a recruitment tool. This means that as a result of good mentorship, more young people can be motivated to train to be teachers. Secondly, mentoring helps to keep talented teachers on the job. The ministry of education can improve teacher retention rates if the program is a success in several schools. More teachers will want to continue to teach in the public sector hence raising educational standards to higher levels. Third, the program is useful as it can help to improve the skills and knowledge of both new and experienced teachers. Mentoring therefore, holds the potential to help the entire teaching profession to advance with time, to new methodology and technology.

Many of those teachers who provide mentoring assistance at least once a week also make substantial improvements to their practice (Gibb, 1999). All mentors are likely to change radically in terms of class management and involvement in co-curricular activities. As they impart the skills to the beginning teachers, they are likely to use their classes as the models for their mentorship. They gain more interpersonal skills in terms of relating with their colleagues, with the mentees and with the students. Mentoring is no longer seen as an option but it is an essential part of staff development and a part of envisioning schools as professional learning communities.

### **Mentor relationships**

A study by Hellsten, Prytula, Ebanks and Lai (2009) found that the compatibility of mentors and beginning teachers cannot be easily predicted and so the use of assigned mentors did not always result in favorable experiences. A good mentor relationship is an important relationship in the advancement of one's career and for proper preparation for roles associated with the career. The personalities of the individuals involved in the program are very crucial in their mentor-mentee relationship (Msila, 2012). Good relationships are important for any level of learning and significant for teachers in completely new cultural environments. Mentor teachers walk with their mentees to ensure that they have a strong footing in the profession. This is the basis of being an effective teacher, both in class and other on duty engagements. Mentorship enables the teacher to advance in their careers and to become future mentors. They may be motivated enough to seek appointments to positions of management in the school system.

Matching mentors and mentees is one of the most challenging aspects of mentoring. Different participants have different competencies, socio-economic backgrounds, learning styles and aspirations. Shnader, Westernmann, Downey and Thibodeau (2016) suggest that to identify a suitable mentor for a given candidate, a balance should be made between the interests and

specializations of the mentor and those of mentee. A great match for one teacher may be a bad match for another as a result of the differences. It is fair for the program planners to take care of each individual needs of the mentors and mentees respectively. This ensures a smooth relationship during the program implementation. Matching starts by deciding the type of matching necessary in the program that is, either self-matching or administration matching. At this point mentees can be given a say in the matching process by allowing them to select a particular mentor or submit their best three choices. Self-matching can be a huge plus for the administration because once one has made a choice, they cannot fail to oblige to the requirements or meet the expectations. Administration matching is applicable where mentoring involves large organizations or institutions such as universities or colleges.

A study by Wildman, Magliaro, Niles and Niles (1992) suggested that experienced teachers possess an extensive repertoire of assisting strategies and that, with opportunities for collaboration, they can develop and shape complex mentoring roles that meet beginning teachers' needs. There are several conditions that influence mentoring relationships which include but are not limited to school context factors, mentor factors and beginning teacher characteristics. Mentoring programs, however, should not attempt to rigidly specify the mentoring roles of the mentor. With administration support, experienced teachers can provide assistance tailored to the circumstances of beginning teachers in individual teaching schools in different parts of the country. Mentors should assist the mentees, not assess them because the beginning teachers are more likely to share problems and ask for help if mentors do not keep evaluating them.

In school settings, those in higher ranks are supposed to mentor those below them (Twoli, 2011). The principal for example should mentor the deputy principal and the deputy principal should mentor the heads of departments and teachers. In the ministry, the seniors should mentor

the juniors depending on their job descriptions so that they are able to clearly understand their duties and perform effectively. The principals have the senior ministry officials as their mentors. Professional mentorship is needed at every level because all the staff require promotions to new roles.

### **Characteristics of Good Mentors**

The crucial characteristic of mentors is the ability to communicate to the mentee that they are capable of transcending present challenges and of accomplishing great things in the future (Lasley, 1996). Good mentor teachers capitalize on opportunities to affirm the human potential of their mentees. They do so in private conversations and in public settings. Good mentors share their own struggles and frustrations and how they overcame them. And always, they do so in a genuine and caring way that engenders trust.

Principals and education officers can ensure that beginning teachers are supported by mentors who can communicate effectively, have hope and are optimistic. Quality programs take the necessary precautions to avoid using veteran teachers who have lost their professionalism and positive outlook. If principals and administrators value mentoring highly and take it seriously, mentoring will attract caring and committed teachers who recognize the complex and challenging nature of classroom teaching. It will attract those teachers who demonstrate their hope and optimism for the future by their willingness to help a beginning teacher discover the same joys and satisfactions that they have found in their own career. They will select teachers who can ensure that the professional and personal aspects of the mentee become a priority in their time.

### **Innovation Configurations**

An innovation configuration map provides a clear and specific description of what the new program or practice should look like (Hord, Stiegelbauer, Hall, & George, 2006). The innovation

configuration focuses on the key components of the program or practice and describes variations for each component of a new program in terms of the actions and behaviors that are expected. It guides in identifying the components of the program and how they are connected.

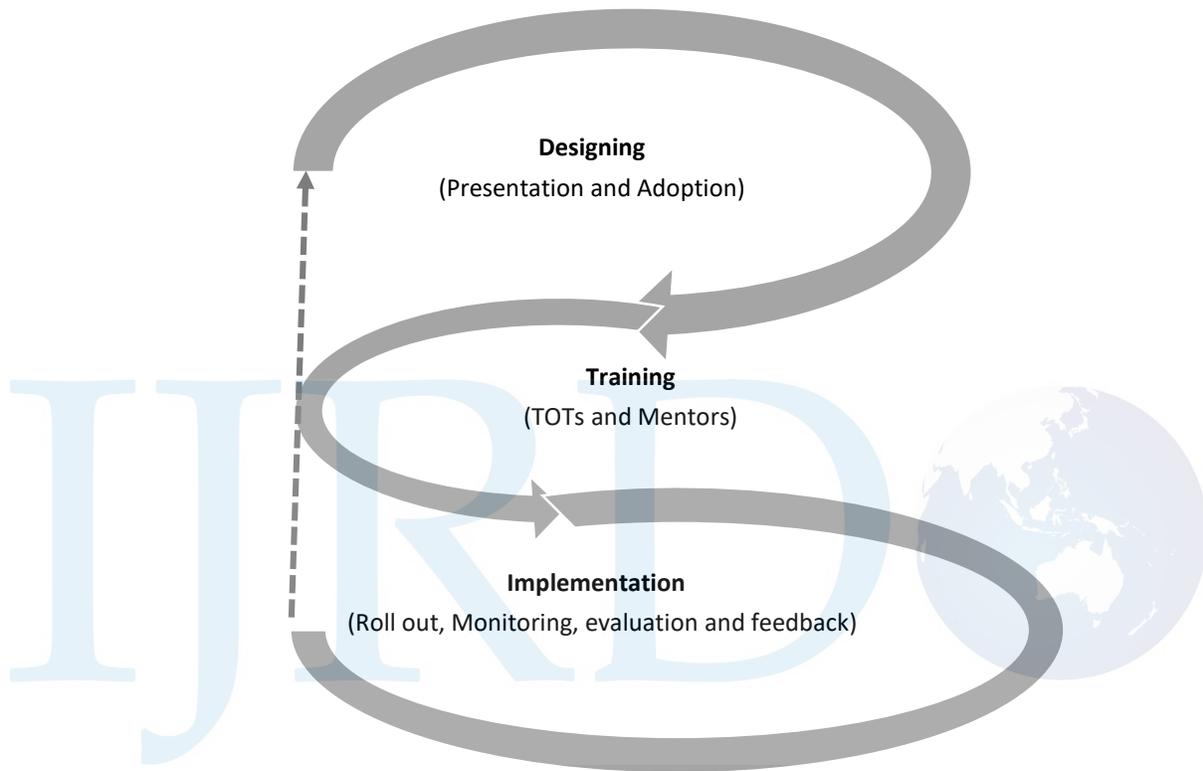


Fig 1.1 Establishing a Teacher Mentorship Program

Figure 1.1 is an innovation configuration map which presents the conceptualized process of implementing the mentorship program in the Kenyan education system. The mentorship consultant first presents the designed model to the education officials to examine and possibly adopt. Before launching the mentorship program, education leaders will go through the change facilitator guide and acknowledge it as a guide in establishing teacher mentorship in Kenya. After adoption, the education officers will be involved identifying the trainers of trainers who will undergo training from the consultant. The trainers of trainers (ToT) who will then be the ones to

train the county trainers. The county trainers will train the teacher mentors and also give seminars to the mentees. The mentors will then embark on the program implementation in the schools.

During the implementation process, the principals will be the main change agents. They will monitor the running of the program with a view to compiling a detailed report on the running of the program. Sometimes the mentor teachers may discover that they need to understand some of the parts of the program which were not clear during the training. Often times, the practice differs with what one faces in training. Innovation Configurations (ICs) solve this problem by providing a well-defined picture of what constitutes a proper method of implementation and what stages are involved. When they go per the innovation configurations map, they are likely to experience few in their mentorship role.

### **Mentorship and Stages of Concern**

Hord, Stiegelbauer, Hall, and George (2006) identify the Stages of Concern (SOC) which comprise of several categories of some possible concerns about an innovation. When an innovation is in the earlier stages, people will most likely have more self-focused concerned about how the program will affect them and their professional engagements. The concerns become broad as the innovation becomes clearer. The Stages of Concern process in this program will involve addressing the concerns of the education officers, the principals, the mentees and the mentors.

To counter some concerns, the education officers should put some effort in explaining the program to the principals who will in turn explain to the teachers. Too often, personal concerns are dismissed as irrelevant or, at worst, more about resistance but the fact is that resistance to change, whether demonstrated by asking hard questions, displaying selfishness, dragging of heels, showing indifference or outright belligerence, is a natural phenomenon.

It is normal to want to know how a new program will affect the individual, and to feel a threat to their competence, comfort, control, and confidence. How long an individual's personal concerns remain, however, is another matter. The principal can help diminish resistance by applying knowledge about the Stages of Concern, for example, if very few teachers are at the awareness level, the plan can be to start the program at the next level (task).

### **Awareness**

There will still be need to provide some kind of support for those few who are identified to be at the unconcerned/self-level. They include those who are barely aware of the program's goals or even need. Such support might include a small group advance meeting for those teachers who have been identified in order to introduce them to the characteristics of the program. An informal chat session, access to a web site or handout which presents the information needed may be necessary to expose these few teachers to the program and to prepare them for the start of the program at the next level of the program stage with everyone else. Creating the readiness for learning at the level where the group is, raises the level of awareness about the program. Within a mentoring program, each prospective mentor can be assisted to simply adjust their plans and schedules to see how they fit the level of need of the prospective individual mentees and most important, change their attitude.

### **Task**

The prospective mentor in this case should be someone who is able to explain what they do and see and who finds it important to show a new colleague the ropes to move on. They are able to better understand the needs of the beginning teacher and will give all the explanations in a

manner which is easy for the beginner to pick up. The teachers in this case can suggest the method of choosing their mentees because they would like the program to take off.

Although the teacher in this stage has other engagements, they are interested in the program and may seek information about it from the principal or education officers. Teachers in this phase can be incredibly productive if the principal and education officers give them opportunities to express their views. They think less about themselves and they are interested in thinking about others' welfare. Their attention is now more directed to the task at hand. The quality of the work is what matters most. They want to prove that they can put their profession before everything. This means that the attention they pay to the task is strongly content directed and technical. In this phase, they may make variations and proposals for improving the program. Teachers who are in this stage of concern may compete with themselves to make the program work for them. They require a lot of performance-orientated feedback to know what was well done, what went wrong and on which points they could improve their performance.

They are ready to give feedback about the program to others and want to learn different models of the new program tasks such as testing, class control, methodology and even public relations. The principal and education officers can come in to motivate them. Teachers in this phase are satisfied and take credit in the fact that their mentees have mastered a few specific tasks specified in the program. Repeatedly improving the performance of a task leads to a smooth implementation of the program and that is why it is important that from the start, a number of tasks occur very regularly in the program implementation process. It is the duty of the principal to identify the mentor teachers who are in this phase and hold meetings with them to discuss different methods of undertaking the program.

## Impact

Teachers in this phase of mentoring mostly have other teachers and students around them to whom they act as role models. In this phase, they see that the process-related aspects of the work have a great influence on teaching and learning and perhaps an even greater influence on the general school atmosphere. If the teachers they have mentored are effective and satisfied with the work, they have a sense of achievement and positive attitude towards the program. They want to discuss the process-related aspects with others and become interested in their own motivation with a view to getting to know how best they can undertake the program and thereby also wanting to reveal more of themselves to their colleagues and bosses. When teachers are in the impact phase, they desire to learn, but this time the learning is more directed at the process-related aspects of the program. They can come up with original models which help them better to understand and undertake different tasks required of them by the program. They can organize workshops to involve other teachers in the implementation of the program and hold motivation sessions in the staff room during breaks. Teachers in this phase enjoy working in a team and so will be part of the peer mentor group formation in the school district. They will invest time and energy in the formation of alliances between the group members in other schools. They would like to participate in the selection of the mentees. They are always glad to answer any questions regarding the program and to guide those who are interested in being part of the mentoring program.

Teacher mentors in the impact phase also examine themselves to establish their strong and weak areas (Kutsyuruba, & Tregunna, 2014). They aim at finding out how much they can achieve and the difference they can make in their teaching engagements. They prefer person-directed feedback. Often, they organize their own feedback by participating in an inter-vision group or participating in a work group with professional colleagues from other schools in the district. They

pride in evaluating relationships with their colleagues in other schools and those at home. Due to their increased interest for the other, these teacher mentors feel the need to pay attention to activities which will bring other teachers into deeper contact with each other and which can lead to greater impact to their prospective mentees. They stimulate the exchange of personal feedback in the group and very much want to contribute to solving their problems and those of those they mentor.

Dissent may arise if the stage of concern of the mentor or does not match with that of the mentee. In this regard, the principal and education officers should be clear when spelling out the process of the program implementation. The mentors who are in the impact phase are very important to the program. They should be consulted on many matters regarding the program implementation and should be given freedom to establish the peer mentor groups. The principal should hold face to face meetings with them to motivate them and to give them an opportunity to air their views. If possible, they should be the ones to make the pairing once the beginning teachers report to the schools. Because they are in the highest stage of concern, they are able to make informed choices and make the program a success, hence low teacher attrition rates and effectiveness in teaching.

The model below is conceptualized with the aim of getting the mentorship program to run on a schedule that makes it possible to evaluate the stages of implementation.

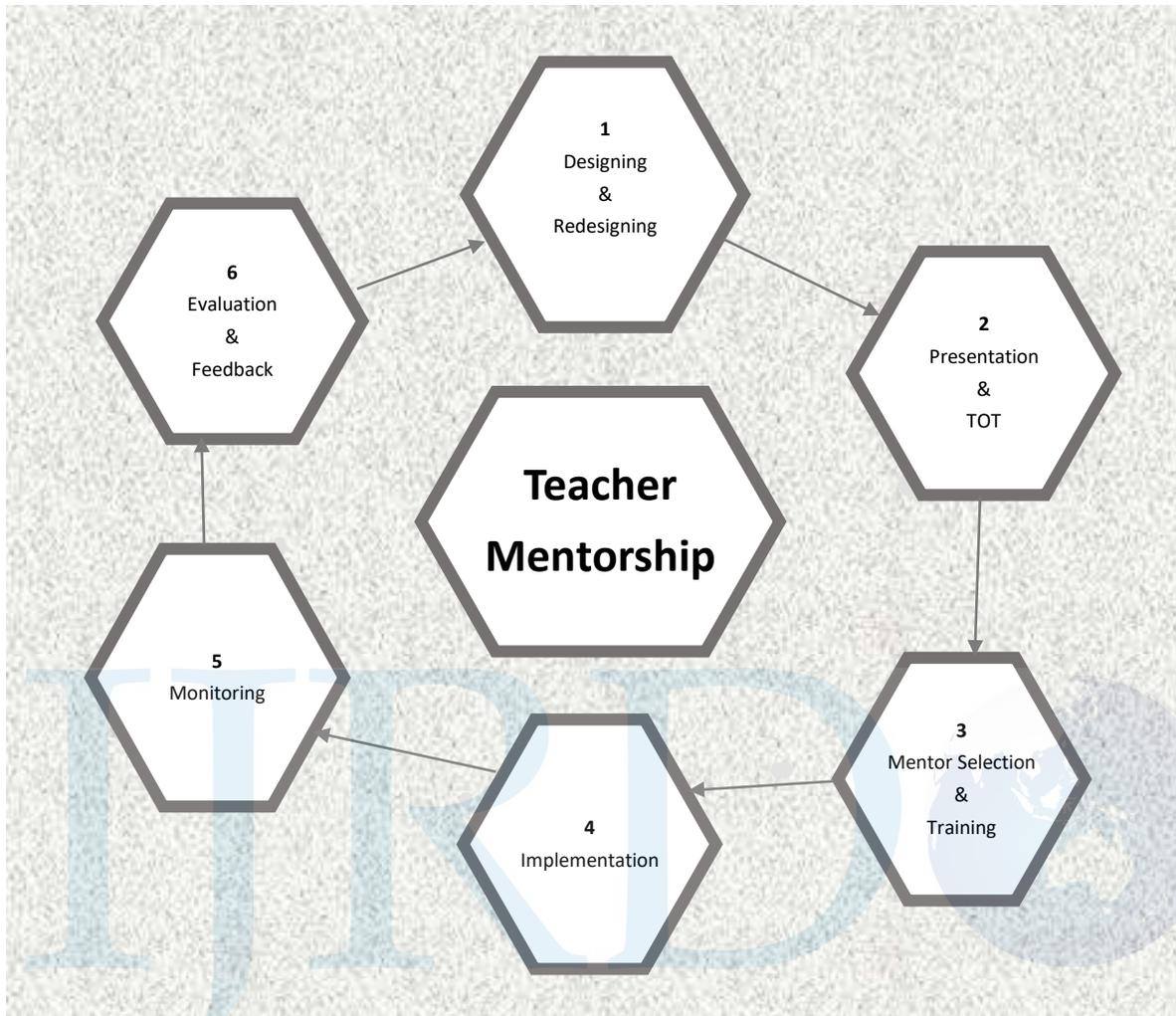


Fig 1.2 The proposed mentorship model

## Utilizing the Model

### Build

Figure 1.2 represents the proposed model for teacher mentorship in Kenya. The first step is the designing of the mentorship model. This is done by the mentorship consultant and then it is approved by the Ministry of Education. The consultant then explains the need for the program using the guide so as to enable the education officials to see the need to initiate the program in schools. They then point out the particular areas and needs that the mentorship initiative should

address. Most beginning teachers need support at almost every aspect of their professional and personal growth. The mentorship model addresses these needs and encompasses different ways of interaction between the mentor and mentee.

After designing, the next stage is presenting the model to the county education officers who establish the validity of the process and identify major areas of concern. Since the county education officers are the ones on the ground, they are aware of the needs of the teachers. They therefore make the necessary amendments depending on the needs in their specific counties. By so doing, the program is adopted and ready to be rolled out. The county education officers identify the trainers who undergo training from the consultant in order to be the ones to train the teacher mentors. During this time of training of trainers (ToT), the county education officers should meet with the principals and discuss the program implication and process.

The next step is the selection of the mentors. This is done by the school principals in collaboration with the school board. The principals can use different methods to select the mentors by sampling methods or by volunteering. The different departments in the schools should be represented. This depends on the school needs and also the rate of staff turnover. Once the mentors have been identified, the next step is to train them. This is done by the trainers of trainers (ToTs) assisted by the mentorship consultant. The mentors should first seek to understand the teachers' needs, goals and objectives.

Mentor teachers be encouraged to be more accepting of beginning teachers through a well-designed mentor training program. A thorough training program that engages prospective mentors in reflecting on the qualities of committed helpers is an excellent place to begin. Reading and discussing different aspects of the mentorship program can raise levels of consciousness about important attributes of mentors. Equally important in the training protocol in helping prospective

mentors understand the problems and concerns of beginning teachers as well as stages and age theories of learner development. Training exercises that make the mentors to thoughtfully revisit their own early years of teaching in light of such research-based and theoretical perspectives can help engender a more accepting disposition toward beginning teachers regardless of their age or prior life experiences.

A thorough training program has several advantages: First, mentor teachers become stronger reflective practitioners and are more active in improving their own instructional practices while in the process of helping the mentees. Second, trained mentors understand the many roles of a mentor and learn when to move in and out of these roles to best assist the mentee. Third, well trained mentors help to create a professional growth environment which will sustain and encourage the mentees as well as other staff members through a collaborative climate. Fourth, trained mentors become skilled at recognizing attitudes, behaviors and skill levels in themselves, and in their mentees, propelling each other towards improvement. Fifth, mentors learn to identify the needs of the mentees and know how to modify their support engagements to meet these needs. Last, mentors learn various tools that help the mentee in their profession and beyond. Training opens doors for new options to assist the newest members of the teaching profession to adapt with as few hitches as possible. Through the assistance of the principals, the approved mentorship model can be introduced to schools in a way that is rooted in local standards and aligned to other key talent management and leadership initiatives.

### **Support**

In the implementation step of the program, the mentors and mentees engage in supporting each other, assisted by the school administration. The program proposes that to begin with, mentors and mentees collaborate the best way to match each other instead of being assigned by the

principal. Once the mentees know who the mentors are, they can be given time to associate and then give feedback to the principal on who their mentors are to be. In case of a situation where there is no association, the principal can link them up and then they can begin by establishing a rapport and then begin the mentorship program. The mentors need to be supported by being provided with the required resources and incentives. They should be well facilitated because they will devote their time for the cause of the mentorship, apart from other duties assigned to them.

During the step of monitoring, the principal and officials at the county offices are charged with the duty of monitoring the effectiveness of the program. They should address the needs of the mentor and mentee as they arise. They should be able to adjust the program accordingly, in case there happens to be reason to. While the principal does the day today monitoring, the county officers can do a fortnight monitoring and each time write a report to the ministry headquarters. Monitoring strengthens the program because the mentor and mentee feel supported and can go the extra mile to ensure that the program runs successfully.

The mentorship program motivates teachers from within, supporting their partners at every step of the way (Sanders, & Rivers, 1996). It is a results-oriented program for new teachers. It is a collaborative approach, combining partners' context-specific knowledge with a broad and deep understanding of educational research and best practices. The school administration provides an enabling ground for the program to take place, coming in whenever required by the mentor or mentee during the program implementation.

### **Sustain**

When the program has been going on for six months, it is time to find out if it is a viable program. This does not mean stopping the program. The evaluators can do formative evaluation any time and then summative and is done at the end of the period. The six-month period is the time

allocated to the program but it can still go on for another two months as the evaluation takes place. When the evaluation period is over, then the mentor mentee partnership comes to an end theoretically. In practice, there is still much consultation and partnering that may still go on. The evaluation can be done by all the involved parties, including the mentor and mentee. The county education officials, the principal, the mentor, the mentee and the other teachers can give their input as far as the program is concerned. This feedback can be used to redesign the program for the next mentor-mentee partnership. Feedback will also show the need to continue with the program or to abandon it altogether. The allocation of the resources for the program can also be reconsidered.

The ministry of education and county governments' education offices help schools to sustain a high-quality program over the long term, by building the schools' ability to assess and amend the program implementation process. The ministry of education officials learn to develop and deliver the key elements of the program, first alongside the consultant, then independently. Through forums, peer networks and consultation, the program model gives talent at every level a space to share challenges and successes and a way to learn how to adjust the content for greater impact. As a result, the partners continuously improve, and individuals across the education sector become aligned in their understanding of the mentorship model, the approach and the goals of the mentor-mentee partnership.

### **Program Benchmarks**

First, the mentoring program should be well designed, with a clear vision of the program scope in mind. The data from the ministry of education can determine the numbers of the novice teachers each year and their individual characteristics. The program participant size should be defined and the program expectations clearly stated. The available resources are then secured

beforehand, balancing the program expectations and support. Much of the designing can be done by the mentorship consultant, together with the ministry of education.

The second mentoring benchmark is that mentoring incentives, which are deemed appropriate to the circumstances can be utilized. Incentives provide an intrinsic desire, which is the fundamental motivating factor for the mentor, and they ensure that peer support is provided. The incentives can also be used for training if appropriate to the circumstances. Mostly financial support is the major incentive, whenever necessary, during the program implementation. The budget for the ministry of education should come in handy for the program to be successful.

The third standard is that mentors should be thoroughly prepared for the mentoring experience. They should understand the program expectations and receive adequate learning theory training which is important for their mentorship roles. Because it is a new program in the Kenyan situation, the mentors should receive advanced training in pedagogical approaches and co-curricular activities. If possible, mentors can also receive some technical training especially in the use of technological devices.

The fourth standard concerns strategies for mentor selection and matching which should be done with the consent of the beginning teacher and the experienced teacher. It is not compulsory that all mentors have mentees but it should be compulsory that all mentees have mentors. Mentors selection criteria should be clearly defined to ensure an efficient and effective mentor/ mentee relationship. The selection can be formal, informal or both, depending on the circumstances. The last benchmark is that any information regarding the effectiveness of the mentoring experience should be collected, analyzed and evaluated by the administrators. A clear assessment method should be designed to focus on criteria related to successful mentoring experiences. An assessment

rubric can be schemed to evaluate information that has been collected while the mentors, mentees and program administrators provide feedback on the program effectiveness.

These mentoring program benchmarks represent a guide for establishing an effective mentoring partnership and they offer a framework against which the program can be evaluated. As staff developers and program administrators in Kenya continue to learn more about successful and applicable mentoring programs, refinements and adjustments to these standards and benchmarks can be expected.

### **Conclusion**

Teacher mentorship in Kenya is an idea whose time has come. Fresh graduate teachers need to be guided in learning about the intricacies of the teaching profession. It is not enough to learn in the college classroom. Lecturers only guide the prospective teachers in the acquisition of knowledge about content, pedagogy, and the skill sets necessary for teaching. There is much to do with the teaching profession that prospective teachers do not learn in colleges. Mentoring has to do with supporting the teacher to acclimatize with the teaching profession and find satisfaction in their work. If well utilized, the conceptualized model can make the beginning teachers learn more about different aspects of the job and have a platform to forward any challenges they face as they interact with the learners and learning resources.

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