Investigating the Challenges Mentors and Student Teachers Encounter During Mentoring Process in the Initial Primary Teacher Education (IPTE) Programme in Malawi: The Case of Enukweni Education Zone in Mzimba North

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By

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Dedication

To Sunganani, Kwangu, Mwayi, Mtende and Watipaso (my children).

Declaration (Statement of originality)

I, *Sautsani Mercy Tauzi,* declare that, the organisation and writing of this thesis, "Investigating challenges mentors and student teachers encounter during the mentoring process in the IPTE programme, is truly my own and has been carried at Mzuzu University under the supervision of Dr. Dominic Mapopa Ndengu. It has not been, nor is it concurrently submitted for any other degree than the degree of Master of Education (Teacher Education) of Mzuzu University.

All reference material herein has been duly acknowledged.

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Abstract

The phenomenological case study aimed at investigating challenges encountered by mentors and student teachers during the mentoring process in the IPTE programme, the case of Enukweni Education Zone in Mzimba North.

Twenty four participants were sampled as follows: eight (8) mentors and sixteen (16) student teachers. Total population sampling and snowball sampling techniques were used respectively. Individual semi-in depth interviews were conducted with student teachers and mentors. Focus group discussions involved mentors only. Document analysis was done on the School Experience Journal (SEJ) to triangulate data from the interviews and focus group discussion.

Data analysis followed a thematic approach that unveiled the following challenges: inadequate student teacher lesson observation; inadequate training for mentors; unprofessional behaviours of mentors; inadequate resources for student teachers; negligent and uncooperative student teachers; lack of collegiality in teaching practice schools; posting of mentors amidst the school calendar and lack of incentives for mentors.

In conclusion, the study found that the mentoring process in the IPTE programme is marred by a myriad of challenges which inhibit student teachers from learning in context. Most of the challenges are linked to inadequate training of mentors, hence lack of proper mentoring skills; lack of collegiality in teaching practice schools and lack of coordination amongst stakeholders. As such, training content should include cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies like modeling, coaching, scaffolding, articulation, reflection and exploration. Use of skill-acquisition methods during training equips mentors with the

desired mentoring skills, that promote learning in student teachers and who become authentic practitioners in their career life.

All stakeholders involved in primary teacher training must share useful databases; develop handbooks and conduct refresher courses for mentors, in order to have a central focus of providing a rich, smooth and meaningful transition to student teachers through the mentoring process.

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List of Abbreviations

CIDA : Canadian International Development Agency

CPD : Continuous Professional Development

DEM : District Education Manager

DTED : Department of Teacher Education and Development

EDM : Education Division Manager

FGD : Focus Group Discussion

GIZ : German International Cooperation

GTSR : Government Teaching Service Regulations

HMIE : Her Majesty Inspectorate of Education

IPTE : Initial Primary Teacher Education

KTTC : Karonga Teacher Training College

MIE : Malawi Institute of Education

MIITEP : Malawi Integrated In-service Teacher Education Programme

MOE : Ministry of Education

MOEST : Ministry of Education, Science and Technology

NCATE : National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education

NED : Northern Education Division

ODL : Open and Distance Learners

PEA : Primary Education Advisor

SADC : Southern African Development Community

SEJ : School Experience Journal

SMC : School Management Committee

SEN : Special Educational Needs

SNE : Special Needs Education

TDC : Teacher Development Centre

TPS : Teaching Practice Schools

TTC : Teacher Training College

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCING THE STUDY

1.1 Background to the study

Teacher education is the process of providing teachers with skills and knowledge necessary to teach effectively in a classroom environment. In Malawi, teacher education is categorized according to the level the teacher is being trained to teach. Universities train secondary school teachers, while Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs) train primary school teachers. Primary teacher education is critical for the achievement of universal access to effective primary education in developing countries (Coultas & Lewin, 2002) for it encompasses teacher preparation; *how many* teachers are trained to meet the required teacher-pupil ratio and *how* they are trained in order to produce quality teachers.

Teacher education normally begins with initial (pre-service) training and progresses throughout one's career life through in-service or continued professional development (CPD). The pre-service phase constitutes theory and teaching practice.

Teaching practice is an element of teacher education programmes that has evolved around training of teachers globally. It is an essential phase in training which enables prospective teachers to develop pedagogical skills. In order for student teachers to acquire the pedagogical skills, there is need for supervision. Supervision aims at observing student teacher's active involvement in examining instructional activities within the classroom so that improved student learning can result (Hopkins & Moore, 1992). Thus, there is great significance in supervising the student teachers.

Therefore, it is during teaching practice that the student teachers are provided with sustained school-focused support through locally resident supervisors called mentors, who

are trained in clinical supervision (Lefoka & Sebatane, 2003). The mentor teachers take the responsibility of facilitating learning of skills and adaptation to the new school environment in student teachers. There is need for a cooperative supervisory effort among student teachers and the supervisors so that a collaborative relationship is created which will assist the student teacher to transit smoothly into the teaching profession.

According to Steiner (2004) citing Loucks-Horsley et al. (2002), mentors may act as content specialists, guides, resource providers, advocates, facilitators, coaches and collaborators who should provide concrete guidance on how student teachers can improve learning. Perhaps this suggests why mentoring is being viewed as one of the major components of teaching practice which provides professional and social support to trainee teachers, as observed by World Bank (2010).

As noted in the training manual for mentor teachers, mentoring is an old practice in Malawi (Ministry of Education MOE, 2006). It has prevailed in the education system of Malawi for a long time. The recent primary teacher education programmes that used mentors was the Malawi Integrated In-service Teacher Education Programme (MIITEP) which was a distance training programme for primary school teachers. During MIITEP, mentoring was vital because student teachers stayed in their schools for a longer period of time than they stayed in college (Kunje, Lewin & Stuart, 2003). The programme, by its nature involved a number of stakeholders to support the student teachers professionally while undergoing the on-job training. These stakeholders assumed the roles of a mentor.

In the current Initial Primary Teacher Education (IPTE) training programme, mentoring is an acknowledged part of learning and development of professional skills where student teachers learn from experienced class teachers in primary and secondary schools (Her

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Majesty Inspectorate of Education HMIE, 2008). Mentoring provides emotional, safe and positive contexts which can lead to learning and growth. On the other hand, mentoring is also an appropriate way for experienced teachers and managers to acquire management and leadership skills that can lead them to assuming higher posts with wider responsibilities (Hansman, 2003). This implies that mentoring is a key factor to the success and professional development of both student teachers and mentors in teacher education.

However, reports indicate that mentoring in Malawi is not implemented on a sustained, continuous basis as intended and as operated in other developed countries. For instance, during the MIITEP programme, students complained to have stayed for a long period of time without being visited by tutors from the teacher training college or supervised by their mentors in schools. No wonder, Kunje, Lewin and Stuart (2003) recommended that MIITEP programme yielded quantitative results as opposed to quality results. This biasness to quantitative results can be attributed to the absence of knowledge and skills in mentors themselves or failure to impart the knowledge and skills to student teachers.

HMIE (2008) asserts that mentoring is most effective when mentors are selected on the basis of their knowledge and expertise and later on trained in skills required for facilitating adult learning and enhancing their ability to identify and communicate best practices to mentees within the mentoring process.

As the need for cost-effective models for training teachers increased due to high enrolments, the Malawi Government introduced another programme known as the Initial Primary Teacher Education (IPTE) which has been in practice for (nine) 9 years now. It is a (two) 2 years programme following a 1 + 1 model, whereby student teachers undergo a (one) 1 year residential college phase for acquisition of knowledge and skills in the

primary teacher profession and another (one) 1 year school-based phase for teaching practice (Malawi Institute of Education MIE, 2006). In this programme, a group of six (6) student teachers are assigned a mentor at the teaching practice school. This means that a mentor is an important person in the training programme whose role is to ensure that student teachers demonstrate an understanding of college coursework and internal teaching practice, as the student teachers blend practice and academic knowledge and learn by doing. Student teachers refine their teaching as they acquire new knowledge and skills from collaborations with the mentors. Thus, MOE (2006) clearly identifies mentoring as an important service in improving quality of teaching and education in the Malawian primary education system.

According to the training manuals for mentor teachers produced by the MOE in 2006 and MIE in 2012, mentors have been trained so that they are equipped with knowledge, skills, values and attitudes necessary for providing professional guidance as they take on the responsibility of assisting the student teachers during instructional delivery and other professional issues. Mentoring as the major component of the school-based phase ensures that the (six) 6 student teachers at each school are assigned to one mentor who is responsible for almost all of their professional guidance and assistance.

Student teachers look at the mentor as a role model and a colleague in partnership with whom they work together in lesson planning; lesson observation on experienced teachers; conducting demonstration lessons; reflecting on teaching and completing activities in the School Experienced Journals (SEJs) (MIE, 2006; MIE, 2012). In the SEJs, mentors assist student teachers in reflecting on the teaching skills. Mentors write comments in the

journals as formative evaluation that provides student teachers with opportunities for development and improving their practice (MIE, 2012).

According to Moir and Gless (2006) from University of Santa Cruz (as cited in HMIE, 2008), they have defined mentoring as a more structured, sustained relationship for supporting professional learners at the early stage of their career, through a career transition or when facing a particular challenge, where the mentor is a more experienced colleague with knowledge of the needs and professional context of the mentee. Zugelder and Nichols (2013) assert that a mentoring programme that is positive and appropriate is crucial in providing an enriching experience for both mentors and mentees. The process, which is usually time defined, has a significant emphasis on developing instructional skills and classroom practice in the less experienced colleague, who is the student teacher.

As alluded to earlier on, mentoring did not work perfectly with MIITEP (Kunje, Lewin & Stuart, 2003) despite its quantitative results.

It is not clear in literature if the Malawi Government has made some efforts to carry out a study or to monitor and conduct a formal evaluation on mentoring right from the MIITEP programme, to find out as to how it can be enhanced in an attempt to substantiate its relevance and significance in primary school teacher training programmes, sustain it and make it a continuous practice and an integral component of teacher education in Malawi.

With this limited literature on the mentoring process in Malawian primary teacher preparation context, this study sets its introductory point. Its focus is to investigate the challenges mentors and student teachers face in the Initial Primary Teacher Education (IPTE) mentoring process during teaching practice.

1.2   Statement of the problem

The current primary school teacher training model in Malawi has put the mentor at the centre of teacher preparation during teaching practice. The mentor has the responsibility to help student teachers plan good lessons; to give feedback for the lessons observed; to conduct reflective sessions with student teachers; to guide student teachers when doing activities in the school experience journals; and to provide a summary of performance for each student teacher at that particular teaching practice school (MOE, 2006; MIE, 2012). The production of better teachers is determined by the effectiveness of mentors (McDonald, 2004). During the mentoring process student teachers learn from the mentors and experienced others within the profession. One notable teacher training programme that used mentors was MIITEP. To the students' dismay, they stayed for a long period of time without mentoring services (Kunje, Lewin & Stuart, 2003).

In spite of the efforts by MOEST and development partners (GIZ and CIDA) in intensifying training of mentors to equip them with the necessary skills (MIE, 2012), the current IPTE programme demands the services of the mentor more than during the MIITEP programme, given the allocation of one (1) mentor against (six) 6 student teachers at a school. This tells that there is a big workload of the mentor to effectively assist each student teacher. However, it is not clear if there has been other intervention apart from the training to improve effectiveness of mentoring during the IPTE programme which was introduced in the year 2006.

It is for this purpose that a study was conducted in Enukweni Education Zone in Mzimba North, to investigate the challenges mentors and student teachers face during the mentoring process in the IPTE programme.

1.3 Critical research question

The study was guided by the following critical question:

- What are the challenges faced by mentors and student teachers during the mentoring process in the IPTE programme?

1.4 Research questions

- How are mentors trained?

- What roles do mentors play in supporting student teachers in the IPTE programme?

- What are student teachers' experiences with mentoring in the IPTE programme?

- What are the views of mentors and student teachers regarding the mentoring process in the IPTE programme?

1.5 Purpose statement

The purpose of the study was to investigate the challenges mentors and student teachers encounter during the mentoring process in the IPTE programme during teaching practice.

1.6 Rationale/Motivational statement

Most studies on mentoring have been carried out in developed countries. Literature from several of these studies revealed that successful teacher mentoring is correlated with teacher retention, increased teacher effectiveness, quality and greater career success (Ragins & Kram, 2007; Wasburn-Moses, 2010). Such study results might not be achieved in Malawi because teacher attrition rate is high, since many Malawians join the teaching profession out of desperation. As a result, they leave the profession earlier than anticipated when they find greener pastures. On the other hand, MacDonald (2004) argues that most

studies have focused on what mentoring can do on student teachers rather than on benefits to mentors. Such studies have overlooked the fact that the mentoring process is a reciprocal process which involves two colleagues working together in a mutual trust for their own professional development.

Much as there is general consensus regarding the importance of the mentoring in student teacher preparation, not much has been written on the mentoring process for teachers in Malawi.

Therefore, as a teacher educator, the researcher felt that there was a gap in literature on the subject matter in Malawian context. This study intends to contribute to the existing limited literature and knowledge of mentoring after investigating the challenges mentors and primary school student teachers encounter during the mentoring process in the IPTE programme during teaching practice.

1.7   Significance of the study

Since there has been little research done on mentoring in Malawian context, it was believed that knowledge derived from this study will have an influence on policy makers, curriculum designers, teacher educators, mentors and student teachers to reflect on the current mentoring practices. The researcher therefore highly anticipated the following points to be of significance:

- To provide knowledge and understanding on how to improve mentoring programmes.

- To provide appropriate information to MOEST and other stakeholders on how to design relevant mentoring programmes that can achieve the objectives of primary teacher education programmes that address the needs of the student teachers.

- To identify priority areas that requires immediate address.

1.8   Organisation of the thesis

The thesis has five chapters. Chapter one introduces the study by giving the background information. It explains the statement of the problem. It briefly states the rationale of the study. It also outlines the significance of the findings of the study. It outlines the organisation of the thesis. Chapter two provides related literature to the study. Chapter three has details of the research design and methodology. Chapter four discusses the findings of the study in detail with descriptions from participants. Finally, chapter five provides the conclusion of the findings from the study. It also gives the researcher's recommendations and identifies areas for further study.

1.9   Summary

Primary teacher education training programmes have a component of mentoring as a way of preparing prospective primary school teachers. Mentoring is a process where an expert provides professional assistance to a mentee. Mentoring has been used before in the MIITEP programme in Malawi. In the current IPTE training programme, a mentor is assigned to six (6) student teachers besides a teaching load. The researcher's rationale for the study was to contribute and add to the limited knowledge of mentoring upon investigating the challenges mentors and student teachers encounter in the mentoring process in the IPTE programme. The significance of the study is to inform policy makers, curriculum designers and actors in the mentoring process, with the aim of promoting good practices in the primary teacher education profession.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1   Introduction

This chapter outlines literature generated by some studies on what has been done in mentoring at national and international levels. The chapter has been organised into eight sub-sections which addresses the research questions of the study. First sub-section gives an overview of the significance of teaching practice because it provides the context and opportunity for student teachers to put into practice what they learnt in theory. Second sub-section explains the origin and definition of mentoring and how teacher education programmes have used the concept in training prospective teachers. Third sub-section describes the purpose of mentoring in teacher education. The forth sub-section is looking at the nature of the relationship between the mentor and the student teacher which has a strong impact on the latter's professional development. The fifth sub-section is exploring the issue of how mentors are selected and trained in order to carry out mentoring effectively. The seventh sub-section gives a brief overview of the gaps existing in mentoring literature and identifies areas require research as regards mentoring in teacher education. Finally, the last sub-section gives a summary of the chapter.

2.2   Teaching practice

Teaching practice is a pivotal component in training primary school teachers. It is an essential part of pre-service teacher preparation since it is the formative period where knowledge, skills and attitudes acquired during the theoretical and college-based phase is put into practice (McKimm, Jollie & Hatter, 2007). Darling-Hammond (2010) says "learning from the wisdom of practice is perhaps the central issue for teacher education" as quoted by Moran et al., 2012).

It is believed that this transitional period can be stressful as well as challenging because new demands are made as student teachers consolidate their skills in their respective schools. Student teachers expectations are usually unclear during teaching practice. They are often unsure of what and how to act. During this period, student teachers are in dire need of guidance and support in order to develop and enhance self-efficacy. Yost (2002) confirms that teachers with self-efficacy are confident, innovative and are more likely to adopt and implement new classroom strategies because their fears are gone and therefore can think positively and critically on the different situations and challenges they encounter.

The success story behind teaching practice depends much on mentoring programmes (McDonald, 2004 citing Mayer & Austin, 1999). Literature indicates that mentoring has been in practice for over a decade internationally, especially in the western countries as they strive to prepare quality prospective teachers.

Various studies have revealed that strong professional links between student teachers and mentors during teaching practice have had significant impact on teacher retention rates; quality and effectiveness, which are some of the major focused outputs from the mentoring process. An effective teacher has a greater impact on student learning.

Production of effective teachers is determined by how teachers have been prepared during training (National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education NCATE, 2010). Teacher education programmes aim at producing the best teachers who can continuously demonstrate improved learning throughout their professional endeavors, at the same time remain in the teaching profession for many years.

2.3   The origin and definition of mentoring

The genesis of mentoring dates back from the ancient Greek mythology, when Odysseus assigned a *"care taker,"* Telemachos, to his son in his wanderings. The care taker was called a *mentor*. With time, the nature of the mentor's roles and responsibilities has changed.

A mentor is chosen by looking at his/her caliber and potential to guide, support and bear witness on the development of the mentee through formative evaluation. A mentor is entrusted with the responsibility of facilitating the skills development process of another person (a less experienced person). Mentoring has therefore been practiced in many situations, vis-à-vis: academic, religious, work organisations and cultural settings across the world. In teacher education, forms of mentoring have existed for student teachers since the 19th century in many developed countries when schools were established to exemplify best practices (Moran et al., 2012). As such, mentoring was regarded as a strategy of individual and institutional support, where a learning relationship between a mentor and a mentee would provide opportunities for professional development of school teachers.

Although Koki (1997) asserts that a mentor is not a supervisor or evaluator but a helper, it can be argued through literature that mentoring is a supervisory activity which aims at student teacher involvement in the improvement of instruction. Obviously, mentors have the biggest influence on the student teachers' professional development. As such, mentors should strive to establish a cooperative supervisory effort among the student teachers and all stakeholders in the partnership. The discussions and feedback held after observing the student teacher are typical components of clinical supervision mentors carry on (Hopkins & Moore, 1992).

On the other hand, the nature of mentoring does not require mentors to provide summative evaluation. Mentors should provide formative decisions. Formative evaluation enhances the development of professional skills, through the provision of constructive advice to student teachers (assessment for learning). Student teachers therefore work on maintaining good practices while they also work on improving areas that they have not done well.

While there is considerable literature on mentoring in teacher education internationally, most definitions focus on the helping relationship between a more experienced teacher and a student teacher in order to help the latter undertake tasks and discharge responsibilities more effectively (Moran et al., 2012). According to Ragins and Kram (2007) mentoring is viewed as a developmental relationship that is embedded within the career context. In support, Durmus (2006) describes mentoring as an interaction between a student teacher and an expert (a mentor) which contributes to the novices learning.

Mentoring as a process provides a safe, emotional and positive context within which effective technical support and guidance can enhance student teachers' learning. As such, mentors have shown to be valuable resources to prospective teachers during teaching practice (Yost, 2002). Because of greater experience, the mentor can advise, coach and counsel a student teacher so the latter becomes more skilled and more effective in teaching, hence improved learning.

2.4 The purpose of mentoring in teacher preparation

The overall aim of mentoring is to provide support and guidance to student teachers during their school placements in such a way that their teaching practice and transition period are positive professional experiences (Moran et al., 2012; MIE, 2012; MOE, 2006). Based on research, supporting student teachers at the outset through strategies like mentoring,

contributes to retention. Mentoring is viewed as a strategy of improving teacher retention in recent years. There is an estimation of 40% to 50% teacher attrition in the first few years (Steiner, 2004). However, teacher retention depends on effective mentors and induction programmes. While it has worked elsewhere, such studies might not produce similar results in Malawian context due to a number of factors that contribute to early and high teacher attrition rate.

Along similar lines, Koki (1997) asserts that the purpose of mentoring is two-fold: to give novice teachers a strong start at the beginning of their career and to enable mentors receive recognition and incentives in their profession. While recognition has many connotations, mentors expect promotions as a form of recognition. In Malawian context, promotions follow the education system's protocols of career progression. However, procedures for promotion are stipulated in the Malawi Teaching Service Regulations when vacancies are available in the teaching (MIE, 2006). The promotion is offered upon being successful in an interview.

Internationally, current trends in mentoring require instituting mentoring programmes within partnerships established between primary schools and teacher education institutions (Durmus, 2006). This is being done with an aim of maximizing support on student teachers through collaborative and collegial approaches. In many developing countries like Malawi for example, formal mentoring and partnership policy is a new practice (MIE, 2012; Durmus, 2006) which is a requirement for school-based initial teacher education. Within the teaching practice schools (TPS), head teachers and experienced teachers also provide mentoring services based on their supervisory skills, as required from the programme. It is acknowledged that exemplary supervision and evaluation has the potential to facilitate

positive change in the entire school (Williams, 2007; MIE, 2012). The purpose of mentoring therefore is broad but holistic.

Empirical evidence supports the idea that, right on the onset of teacher preparation, the contextual application of college-based knowledge by student teachers in the classroom gives an opportunity for professional growth. Local support aims at strengthening delivery of training teachers through decentralized networks within teacher education (Mattson, 2006). Sweeny (2003) in his analysis on the research on transfer of learning done by Joyce and Showers in 1987 concurs with findings from other studies that training and practice which is done in the workplace (in this context, the classrooms and the teaching practice schools) enables the student teacher to integrate knowledge and skills into their daily work and build on current knowledge which improves their performance. Joyce and Showers (1987) also acknowledges that the mutual relationship between the mentor and student teacher sets a viable and conducive environment that can promote such desired growth.

However, from research-based literature the purpose of a mentoring program depends on the goals and objectives of the program such that different mentoring programmes may have different goals but probably with a common focus. In addition, the amount and type of support offered to student teachers will also vary.

On the other hand, mentoring is also viewed as an appropriate way for experienced teachers who are the mentors and the head teachers to acquire management and leadership skills that can lead to higher posts with wider responsibilities (Hansman, 2003). In other words, mentoring as a professional practice benefits both mentors and student teachers through continuous professional development.

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Besides conducting clinical supervision, mentors in the IPTE programme also sign and comment on completed weekly activities in the SEJ and conduct professional meetings with student teachers four times in a term (MIE, 2012). According to MIE (2012), the weekly activities and the professional meetings are kinds of support that serve the purpose of assisting student teachers in reflecting on their strengths and weaknesses and finding solutions to areas that need improvement by sharing experiences.

On the other hand, the SEJ as a document is a record of valuable source of evidence of student teachers learning and professional development (Rowley, 1999). Mentors record levels of achievement and give an evaluative comment which is justifies the level given.

2.5   Nature of the relationship

Koki (1997) reveals that the mentoring process is a "complex and multi-dimensional process of guiding, teaching, influencing and supporting beginning teachers or new teachers" p.4. It is an interpersonal and interactional process (McDonald, 2004). Consequently, the role of the mentor is multi-faceted and complex, for in addition to providing content and skills-focused advice and support; there is a large interpersonal and psychological dimension (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). The complexity of the process emanates from the fact that it involves two different and unique adults holding multiple needs and concerns. They have different developmental levels and issues in the profession.

As a matter of fact, student teachers have reasonable expectations of guided support from mentors. At the same time, mentors too have reasonable expectations of cooperation from student teachers, so that they work on the identified problems and agree upon areas of improvement. As an experienced, effective and sensitive professional, a mentor should be

knowledgeable of the student teacher's needs as they progress as professionals. Mentors should take into consideration how to support student teachers so that they progress from the current skill level to the next skill level (Dennen & Burner, 2004). Identifying the student teachers' needs on the onset establishes a working relationship between the mentor and the student teacher.

From their study, Dennen and Burner (2004) found that there is a correlation between mentor-mentee regular engagement in activities and mentee's professional development. In another study by Young and Perrewe` (2000) as cited by Dennen and Burner (2004), it was found that mentees valued the amount of social support they received from mentors, which determined a successful mentoring relationship.

From a different angle, the school culture also contributes to the complexity of the process. A school culture that does not encourage classroom observation reduces chances for promoting a collegial dialogue focused on enhancing teacher performance and student learning (Rowley, 1999). Simply put, MIE (2012) believes that a shared expertise among professional school staff has a significant impact when mentoring student teachers. Teaching practice schools ought to ensure that all stakeholders: the head teacher, the deputy head teacher and experienced teachers support student teachers' learning.

As such, data obtained from classroom observation enables a mentor and anyone who has observed the student teacher to provide an honest feedback because the mentor or experienced teacher criticizes from a formative evaluation perspective (Buwana & Jerich, 2007) that encourages the student teacher to make his/her own inferences and judgements about effective teaching. In support, Feiman-Nemser (2003) believes that student teachers can become good teachers if surrounded by a professional culture that encourages

classroom observation, team planning, collaboration and collegiality in the first years of teaching to support their learning. Lave and Wenger (1991) explains how student learning takes place when in partnership with others (as cited by Brill, 2014). The authors believe that when students are in partnership with assorted others, they learn through social interactions and generate new knowledge.

Empirically, teaching practice phase is a learning phase during which quality professional support is critically required for student teachers to get inspired and remain in the profession. Feiman-Nemser (2003) says "early years of teaching are special time in a teacher's career, different from what has gone before and what comes after" (p.27). Evidently, the mentoring relationship goes beyond the support and guidance notions. For any successful mentoring relationship, both mentor and student teachers must be committed to establish mutual trust and belief because such a bond has a big influence on student teachers' development (Rice, 2006). It is obvious from the definition of mentoring that, both mentors and student teachers expect high from each other. This requires concerted effort and understanding from both parties to establish a working professional relationship.

According to psychology of human development, people are different. This implies that, as teachers employ different instructional strategies when teaching to cater for a diversity of learners in the classroom, mentors too must understand and apply similar principles on student teachers. Each time a mentor is meeting a student teacher, it must be considered a unique session so that the mentor assists student teachers according to their unique needs. Giving regular feedback through conversations with student teachers is essential because it provides opportunities for student teachers to engage in critical reflections.

Evidently, effective mentors spice up their relationship with student teachers through motivation by finding out student teachers' learning needs, discussing their perceptions about teaching and modeling effective teaching practices (McDonald, 2004) from which student teachers can emulate. Citing Dennen (2000), Dennen and Burner (2004), found out that scaffolds motivate students and enable them to focus on learning goals. If there is limited motivation, student teachers put little effort and enthusiasm into learning which results in ineffective teaching (MOE, 2006). Since each student teacher is unique, mentors should aim at motivating them differently according to their needs and capacities.

However, Little (1990) as cited by Koki (1997) argues there is no real mentoring in what is termed as mentoring. Probably, the argument is unveiling from the lack of human face within the process. Borrowing Koki's stand that mentors are *"helpers"*, it implies that mentors may not be doing much help. Qualities and roles of mentors form the base for creating a working relationship between mentor and student teachers, where training promotes mentor quality. Mentors who are empathetic accept student teachers for what they are; their limited experience, nervousness, overconfidence, naivety and defensiveness as a pack of challenges worth working on as the mentors strive to provide meaningful support (Rowley, 1999). In support to Koki's stand, Steiner (2004) says:

> "Teachers who had a helpful mentor from same field, along with other components such as common planning time, opportunities to collaborate with other teachers on issues of instruction and a reduced number of preparations were more likely to stay in the teaching profession. (p.243).

In addition, Zugelder and Nichols (2013) confirms that both mentors and mentees applaud enriching experiences acquired through a positive and appropriate mentoring process, which is mostly possible within a healthy and sound relationship.

Yet there is a big concern from educationists on lack of research on formal mentoring programmes and school-based supervision that can help understand what happens to student teachers (Durmus, 2006) in their respective placement schools so that Little's assertion of no quality mentoring happening out there can be substantiated.

2.6   The issue of training and selecting mentors

Good mentoring programmes require formal training which provides specific description of mentor's roles and responsibilities, from record-keeping to issues of confidentiality (Rowley, 1999).   In the IPTE programme, the head teacher's role is to help student teachers in preparing schemes of work while the mentors are responsible for lesson plans (MIE, 2012). The head teacher and the mentor also have the responsibility of assessing student teachers by commenting and signing on the completed SEJ activities (MIE, 2012).

Where mentors are not trained, there are great challenges in the process even if they are given some form of support for their work. Essentially, mentors cannot perform if they do not have the knowledge and skills to do the job. In Malawian context, MIITEP teacher education programme provides a typical example where the mentoring process foiled due to lack of mentor training.   According to MIE (2012), the current IPTE training programme, has embarked on an intensive and continuous mentor training programme, whereby mentors are being trained each term once. The mentors are trained on how to use clinical supervision when observing student teachers lessons; how to evaluate completed SEJ activities using levels of achievements like excellent, very good, satisfactory and needs improvement. It also requires mentors giving comments which justify the level of achievement.   It also indicates how and when to conduct professional meetings with student teachers to reflect on their performance.

Formal mentor training equips mentors with qualities that evolve around commitment, empathy, effective coaching, interpersonal relationships, continuous life-long learning and optimism (Rowley, 1999). While training equips mentors with the desired skills, it should be acknowledged that mentors, as human beings, have unique personal traits and competencies. Formal training increases commitment of mentors to the mentoring process.

During training, it is important to specifically clarify the roles and responsibilities of the mentor to prevent excuses due to role conflict with other stakeholders. One such important responsibility for the mentor is to maintain simple logs or journals in which conferences with student teachers are documented, including all other professional meetings between mentors and student teachers (Rowley, 1999).

Record-keeping provides evidence-based knowledge of student teachers performance. It assists mentors to keep track on the professional development of the student teacher. It also assists mentors in planning on how best to provide the assistance. According to MIE (2012), mentors record a summary of performance for all lessons observed and the weekly activities in the SEJ. Since it is assessment, confidentiality of student teachers' records is an essential element that sustains student teachers' trust in mentors and binds the relationship (Sweeny, 2003).

Where necessary, Rowley (1999) clearly states that mentors should be given financial incentives for them to perform their roles and responsibilities well. Mentors need to be released from extra duties such as sports master. Instead, they should be given opportunities for continuous professional development so that they update their skills and knowledge. Contrary to Rowley (1999), MIE (2012) observes that mentors in the IPTE

programme have many responsibilities in their respective schools. This could affect the roles and responsibilities of mentors.

On the other hand, Fischer and Van Andel (2002) raise an important question on whether personal traits are enhanced through formal training. The question is worth scrutinizing. Other authors contend that mentors qualities can be realized if content for mentoring training is based on recognized adult basic education instructional skills, knowledge and strategies individualized to the needs of student teachers (Sherman et al., 2000). In other words, mentors should be trained in principles of adult learning because both mentors and student teachers are adults.

Collins et al. (1989) describe six key instructional strategies which mentors use in the mentoring process. The strategies are: modeling, coaching, scaffolding, articulation, reflection and exploration, which mentors have to be trained in. The content for training should enable mentors acknowledge that student teachers are internally motivated and self-regulated; prefer experiential learning; are goal oriented; are practical and like to be respected for what they are (QOTFC, 2005). Along similar lines, Dennen and Burner (2004), consents that productive mentor training programmes include guided learning strategies such as questioning, modeling and coaching, delivered through training workshops.

In a nutshell, training empowers mentors in knowing how to work with student teachers and provide relevant support, at the same time being committed to the kind of teaching that stakeholders expect them to implement (Cochan-Smith, 1991) as cited by Wang & Odell, (2002). To ensure that mentors are implementing what they were trained in, probably there is need to provide follow up support.

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Fischer and Van Andel (2002) also believes that time invested in training of mentors is an important issue, although it will depend on purpose of the programme. The understanding could be that whatever time has been allocated for formal mentor training, there should be effective training; relevant content taught through hands-on activities and not lecturing because prospective mentor teacher are adults who learn better through practice and experiential learning.

By weighing the impact of training, it is recommended that training of mentors should equally be taken seriously as that of training student teachers (Fischer & Van Andel, 2002). It requires government, colleges, universities and administrators being committed in the training of mentors (Fischer & Van Andel, 2002; Rowley, 1999). Unless the impact of mentoring student teachers is valued and prioritized, training of mentors will be a must-do activity treated with urgency. This is a calling for research on what mentoring has proved to do in Malawian context to substantiate the need to sustain and maintain mentoring as a core element in teacher training programmes.

On the other hand, the selection of teachers to become mentors is yet another jinx in the process. From various studies, mentors are chosen by individual school districts and principals on the basis of their professional competence and good reputation as well as interest in helping others and a desire to upgrade in the profession (Yost, 2002). However, Cohen et al. (2007) fears that choosing effective experienced teachers to become mentors results in loss of their teaching time. A similar situation has been happening in Malawian school-based mentoring programmes (Lewin et al., 2003). However, there are disparities on the criteria of teacher qualification and upgrading procedures between teachers in western countries, Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) region and Malawi

because the criterion of *"desire to upgrade"* when selecting mentors does not really apply in Malawian context as of now. In Malawi, head teachers choose one experienced teacher at the school to become a mentor.

It is equally important to note that within the practice of mentoring, there is matching of mentors and student teachers in majority cases in order to establish a personal relationship (Rowley, 1999; Fischer & Van Andel, 2002). Mentors fill forms indicating their qualities and likes, which colleges or universities use to match with the student teachers. It is surprising that amidst such matching; there is still a life of doubt as to whether quality mentoring is actually taking place.

Unlike elsewhere, there is no mentor-student teacher matching in Malawian context. The head teacher of the teaching practice school identifies a teacher. When the teacher has been identified, he/she awaits training from the teacher training college. The trained mentor is expected to work with a group of six student teachers at that particular school, besides the normal teaching and work load. The mentor has to balance each and every day's work as acknowledged by (MIE, 2012). Due to high enrolment of learners in Malawian primary schools against inadequate teacher supply, mentors maintain their classes and do their normal work as usual besides providing mentoring services.

2.7   Gaps in mentoring literature of teacher education

This sub section summarizes what some scholars believe are areas that require further research. To begin with, Ragins and Kram (2007) provide a detailed analysis of what most studies have done in mentoring as a strategy of preparing teachers. In the first place, Ragins and Kram (2007) assert that there is little research on effects of mentoring on mentors. This is to mean that studies have been one-sided by mostly looking at what

mentoring can do to student teachers. The benefits, challenges and the experiences of mentors are not considered pivotal in improving management, organisation, coordination and improvement of the mentoring practice.

Secondly, the authors' frank analysis on most research studies is that they have not examined *"relational outcomes"* between mentors and student teachers which are critical in establishing an effective relationship and enhance learning and growth for both. It seems interest is on what mentors can do to help student teachers rather than promoting a relationship that can necessitate a collaborative, collegial and working relationship.

On the third note, Ragins and Kram (2007) and Rice (2002) agree that theories underpinning mentoring are not enough. They argue that things are changing so are careers and professions, such that there is need to develop, integrate and incorporate new theoretical perspectives in order to offer new frameworks, models and theories that can relate to the changes.

Fourthly, according to literature the outcry is that there is a serious gap between research and practice (Ragins & Kram 2007; Rice, 2002; Koki, 1997). Ragins and Kram (2007) also suggest that mentoring theorists and scholars need to network and ensure constant connections in the practice so that they provide relevant research on new and emerging forms of developmental relationships to enhance mentor and student teacher positive interactions. This is from the international arena.

So far, in Malawian context, Moran et al. (2012) explain a case study report that aimed at strengthening mentoring partnership between universities and secondary schools where student teachers were registered for their teaching practice. The project used workshops as

fora to interact with participants who were teachers from selected secondary schools from Malawi and Mozambique. The methods used were group discussions, brainstorming and presentations in plenary. Findings from the project mainly focused on the participants' views on mentorship and its importance in teacher education. Such contribution towards literature in mentoring cannot be underrated. However, such trainings are taking place all the time but the real issues affecting both the mentor and the student teachers have a paramount impact in teacher education in Malawi.

Another contribution on mentoring in Malawian context, particularly on primary teacher education highlights the significance of mentoring Open Distance Learners (ODL) in the current IPTE training programme. According to Kruijer (2010), the availability of such support as mentoring, facilitates effective in-service upgrading of teachers at the school level. His assertion is that ODL student teachers should have mentors wherever they are. Currently, this is not the case. Kruijer's appeal is professional and commendable. The fact is that both conventional and ODL student teachers should have mentors. But the authenticity, sustainability and effectiveness of such programmes remain a task which Malawian scholars have to substantiate through systematic investigations, to ensure that mentoring is provided continuously across all primary teacher education training programmes.

2.8   Summary

This chapter was discussing teaching practice as an element and context in the initial teacher preparation of prospective primary school teachers. It is during teaching practice that student teachers require mentoring services, whereby mentoring is defined as the interaction between a student teacher and an expert who is a mentor. The purpose of

mentoring is to ensure that mentors support student teachers to excel and succeed in their teaching practice experience through establishment of a positive working relationship that is collaborative and collegial and also to enable mentors develop professionally. Mentors as helpers should possess traits that can foster the provision of meaningful support to student teachers. The acquisition of such attributes depends largely on good and comprehensive mentoring training that encompasses cognitive instructional strategies, adult basic education and learning. Head teachers choose hard working teachers to become mentors. Hard working spirit is primarily the major criterion for selecting mentor, alongside mentor-student teacher matching. However, there is lack of high quality research on mentoring that is marring potential innovations in the practice internationally and it is more of a concern in teacher education in Malawian context.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The chapter discusses the research design and methodology which was used to collect and analyse data in the study. It explains the paradigm in which the study was situated, elaborating how knowledge was viewed by participants. The chapter further explains the methods of data collection and instruments used in the study. It explains the theoretical frameworks and their tenets and how they guided and provided borders to the study. Finally, the chapter gives an overview of how data was analysed.

3.2 Research design

Research design is a blueprint which is guided by the research problem on how the collection, measurement and analysis of data will be carried out (Labaree, 2013). The study was a phenomenological study. According to McCaslin and Scott (2003), a phenomenological study reveals the shared meaning of experiences on a phenomenon from several individuals. Similarly, Lester (1999) describes a phenomenological study as a study which is concerned with studying experiences from the perspective of research participants. According to Hancock (1998), a phenomenological study is a study of phenomena. The significance of a phenomenological study is to understand several individuals' common and shared experiences of a phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). In this case, the study of mentoring phenomenon as experienced by mentors and student teachers. As a phenomenological study, it sought to describe the meanings of lived and concrete experiences of what mentors and student teachers regard as challenges in the mentoring process.

Therefore, mentoring as an observable phenomenon can be accurately described and assessed through the participants' experiences, understanding and knowledge, because it has an interpersonal and psychological dimension. This implies that the study took a qualitative case study approach which provides an in-depth study of the phenomenon using a diverse array of data collection methods. As such, it involved the examination of participants' perceptions in order to gain an in-depth understanding of social and human interactions in the process of mentoring (Williams, 1998).

As a phenomenological study, it gathered deep information and perceptions through inductive research methods which could accurately describe the meaning of lived experiences of mentors and student teachers about the challenges faced in the mentoring process better than quantitative methods. One of the major advantages of qualitative research is that it gives a holistic account of what is under study as a result of using multiple sources of data from which multiple meanings are drawn (Creswell, 2007). Berg and Lune (2012) argues that qualitative research enables people to understand and bring meaning to their lives, which may not be easily quantified. In particular, a phenomenological study provides the researcher with an account of participants' experiences, at the same time identifying perceptions of their social world.

Thus, the study followed a qualitative and phenomenological case study.

3.3 Research paradigm

According to Punch (2006) citing Guba (1990 p. 17), "a paradigm is a set of beliefs that guide action." Similarly, Mertens (2005) explains that the philosophical assumptions provide the researcher with guidance and direction in thinking and choice of activities to

do. In other words, a paradigm dictates how research has to be done and which research methods to be used in order to answer the research question.

Mentoring involves social interaction between mentors and student teachers. It is for this reason that the researcher situated the study in the interpretivist paradigm. Chilisa & Preece (2005) state that the interpretivist paradigm use human thinking and perception to understand human experience. In interpretivist paradigm, reality lies in the individual stories, experiences and feelings of people who are studied in their natural contexts. Agreeably, Creswell (2007) contends that in interpretivism, individuals give subjective meanings of their experiences in their lives from different perspectives. The researcher's role is to interpret other peoples' perceptions of the world.

The study was situated in the interpretivist paradigm because the participants' perceptions, experiences and meanings of what challenges are in the mentoring process could be best understood from the description of individual stories through such inductive methods as interviews and focus group discussions. Therefore, understanding of human thinking and perception might not be easily studied within the positivist paradigm.

3.4   Theoretical frameworks

The theoretical frameworks underpinning the study were the cognitive apprenticeship model developed by Brown, Collins and Duguid (1989) and the transfer of training model developed by Joyce and Showers (1987).

3.4.1   The Cognitive apprenticeship model

According to Brown et al. (1989), the cognitive apprenticeship model is an aspect of the situated cognition whereby relevant situations can produce knowledge through learning.

The cognitive apprenticeship values the physical and social context for cognition and learning to take place. Brown et al. (1989) asserts that the cognitive apprenticeship mould students into authentic practitioners through practice and social interaction.

Dennen and Burner (2004) describe cognitive apprenticeship as "the process by which learners learn from a more experienced person by way of demonstration, support and examples" (p. 427). It is a social learning theory. The learners' engagement in cognitive and meta-cognitive processes depends on expert demonstration (modeling) and guidance (coaching) during the initial phases of learning (Dennen & Burner, 2004). The tenets of the model are situatedness (contextualization); legitimate peripheral participation (student teacher observation); guided participation (tacit guidance to student teachers) and membership in a community of practice (all teachers with their mutual engagement, shared experiences and joint enterprise.

According to the theorists of the cognitive apprenticeship model, there are six instructional strategies that enable students to use, manage and discover knowledge through cognitive and meta-cognitive processes. The six instructional strategies are: modeling, coaching, scaffolding, articulation, reflection and exploration.

a) Modeling is when an expert demonstrates tasks explicitly (fully and clearly).

b) Coaching is when an expert gives feedback, tips or hints to student.

c) Scaffolding is when an expert uses temporary support techniques in the learning process to meet the learning needs of the student. Normally, the

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support fades with time once the student has reached the desired skill level according to standards.

d) Articulation is when the student verbalizes their reasoning or methods and results of performance during reflection sessions to demonstrate knowledge and thinking processes. Through articulation, students expose problem-solving skills. The expert asks a series of questions that allows students to rethink, refine and restate their learned knowledge.

e) Reflection is a process that allows students to compare their own problem-solving techniques with those of an expert or another student. During the reflective process, the students identify similarities and differences between their performances and that of an expert. Reflection enables students to appreciate the expert's performance and understand why they have to improve to meet the expert's skill level.

f) Exploration is when students are given opportunities to solve problems on their own. Students identify problems in their everyday activities. They also take the responsibility of finding the solutions. At this point, the expert slowly withdraws use of scaffolds and support.

Throughout these strategies, students are involved in observation, practice and reflection.

3.4.1.1 Situatedness (contextualization)

Situatedness refers to situated learning. According to Brown et al. (1989) and Dennen and Burner (2004), situated learning involves students participating actively in relevant tasks in

a relevant context. The authors believe that learning that occurs in context results in improved practice. They argue that all learning focuses on students becoming practitioners and not learning about the practice.

3.4.1.2   Legitimate peripheral participation

In legitimate peripheral participation, a student participates in the periphery by firstly observing a holistic learning activity. The aim of observing is for the student to learn good practices from the mentor and the experienced teachers. But, mentors and experienced teachers should consider demonstrating both smaller and whole task accomplishments. When the student has understood what and how the activity is done, then he/she can actively participate by completing smaller component part of a larger task, at the same time receiving feedback from more experienced colleagues (Brown et al., (1989); Dennen & Burner, 2004).

3.4.1.3   Guided participation

According to Brown et al. (1989), guided participation involves engaging students in activities that are situated or geared towards a relevant outcome. Guided participation is successful when the student's learning needs have been identified. According to Dennen and Burner (2004), there is a gap between the current skill level and the next skill level which a student cannot reach without assistance. This gap is what Vygotsky termed as the zone of proximal development, within which guided participation successfully materializes. Guidance comes from the experts and experienced others through collaborative learning. The theorists contend that student learning advances through collaborative social interaction. Experienced colleagues support students at various levels.

Through collaboration, conversations and narratives, there is an exchange of ideas which must be promoted if learning has to progress. As such, learning environments must ensure that colleagues are engaged through collaboration because there is knowledge construction.

3.4.1.4 Community of practice

According to Dennen and Burner (2004), the community of practice is "a group of people who are either formally or informally bound, engage in and identify themselves with a common practice" (p.428). Examples of a community of practice could be teachers within the school and members of a professional organisation. Brown et al. (1989); Dennen and Burner (2004) explain that there are three elements that bring people together in a community of practice, which are: mutual engagement (a shared task or interest and a resulting identity); joint enterprise (a common set of community standards and expectation) and a shared repertoire (a common vocabulary that differentiates the community of practice from others).

The implication is that mentors and experienced teachers demonstrate what is required in practice of teaching while student teachers observe, practice and reflect on their performance in their respective teaching practice schools. The mentor employs strategies like modeling; coaching, scaffolding, articulation, reflection and exploration to assist student teachers close the gap between the current skill level and the next skill level which the student teacher cannot reach without assistance.

3.4.2 The transfer of training model
The study also evolved around the transfer of training model. The transfer of training model is a developmental theory developed by Joyce and Showers in the 1980s as cited in

(Ehrich et al., 2001; Sweeny, 2003). Sweeny (2003) explains how Joyce and Showers (1987) revealed the extent of implementation on what learners have been trained on. The study revealed that 90% of the learners will transfer a new skill into their practice as a result of theory, demonstration, practice, feedback during training and in-situation coaching. In-situation and mentoring is done on an individual basis typically in the work place of the learners and about the learner's work. The in-situation support helps learners adapt theoretical training and integrate it into their daily work, while they build on knowledge, skills and strengths that are critical and which will make a big difference in their profession. It ensures that student teachers implement in practice what they learnt in theory and improve their practical performance.

Joyce and Showers (1996) also acknowledge that learners will take advice from mentors only if there is a relationship based on mutual trust between the two. When mentoring is provided, it is necessary to expect student teachers adapt their own specific needs towards the strategies learned. Student teachers solve the problems they encounter as they adopt and fit new strategies to existing settings, while integrating them with the mentor's skills. The outcome is that student teachers master the new strategies.

The cognitive apprenticeship model and the transfer of training model fitted in this study because during teaching practice student teachers are expected observe mentors and experienced others at various levels within the practice. Student teachers have to practise. Through practice, students put into practice the theoretical training aspects they underwent during the college-base phase and its assessment is done through lesson observation.

This means that the models are concerned with mentors and experienced teachers demonstrating fully and clearly what is expected in teaching according to set standards.

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Student teachers need to observe mentors and experienced teachers deliver lessons. These lesson observations should be done oftentimes.

Mentors should consider the student teacher's current skill level and plan when, how and what to observe in student teachers. Mentors should also offer more but various instructional support or scaffolds in form of chunking and sequencing tasks. For example, mentors can focus on observing each teaching skill at a time rather than observing whole lessons with all teaching skills present. Instructional support and scaffolds depend on the student teacher's needs in terms of current skill level.

Through lesson observations, mentors create learning environments from which student teachers learn new skills and strategies from the mentors and experienced others. Experienced teachers form a community of practice, full of experts who are available to support student teachers through shared tasks to meet a set of community standards and expectations.

When student teachers have been observed, the mentor or the experienced teachers must hold discussions with student teachers in a reflective manner, whereby the student teacher is encouraged to compare their performance with those of the mentors. The mentors should assist student teachers to highlight similarities and differences between their own practice and that of the mentor. Discussions between the mentor and student teacher focus on important elements in teaching.

During discussions, mentors ask probing questions that enable student teachers to use their cognitive abilities to respond to the questions and articulate their understanding on how the lesson was delivered. Mentors will demonstrate knowledge and expertise in teaching skills

and school professionalism which is useful for professional development of student teachers as they transit to experienced and qualified teachers. In the process, student teachers are encouraged to develop their own thinking and synthesize knowledge acquired from various mentoring sessions that can enable them to become professionally competent teachers.

The models thus fitted in the study in an attempt to unveil the challenges that mentors and student teachers encounter in this interpersonal and interactional process of mentoring.

3.5   Study site

The study was conducted in eight (8) primary schools of Enukweni Zone in Mzimba North district where IPTE student teachers were placed. Mzimba North is one of the three education districts (Karonga, Rumphi and Mzimba North) in the Northern Education Division (NED) where Karonga Teacher Training College places IPTE conventional student teachers to do their teaching practice. In total, Karonga Teacher Training College uses ninety-two (92) primary schools in fourteen (14) zones with 552 student teachers. The study site is 15 kilometres from the researcher's home. It was chosen due to its proximity to the researcher's home for convenience in traveling. During the period of the study, all primary schools had one (1) mentor and six (6) student teachers who could ably give adequate data needed for the study.

3.6   Study population

In research, a population is defined as the total of all individuals having certain characteristics which are of interest to the researcher (www.sagepub.com/upm-data/41398_80.PDF). The target population of the study comprised all eight (8) mentors and forty-eight (48) student teachers who were in the eight primary schools in Enukweni

education Zone in Mzimba North. Participants were chosen for their direct involvement in the mentoring process. The participants had information on the phenomenon and therefore would provide rich data for the study.

3.7   Sample size and characteristics

Sampling is selecting part of the population. The study involved twenty four (24) participants. Eight (8) were mentors and sixteen (16) were student teachers. Eight (8) male student teachers were sampled from four (4) TPS and eight (8) female student teachers were also sampled from the other four (4) TPS. According to the study, the gender balance factor was by default because the student teachers were placed in schools by the responsible training college, Karonga Teacher Training College (KTTC), without any external factor related to this study. But the researcher had an advantage of getting the views from both male and female student teachers. In other words, the researcher did not choose how many males or females to involve.

The study used smaller samples because of the nature of the study. Silverman (2011) asserts that it is not plausible to interview everyone, anywhere and anytime, especially in a qualitative research because of the data collection methods that are used. In addition, there are lower resource costs on a sample. Sampling possesses a possibility of better interviewing, more thorough investigations and it also saves time (Silverman, 2011). The sample of 24 participants was regarded large enough to provide adequate real-life stories that would accurately address the research question.

3.8   Sampling techniques

Sampling technique is the process of selecting participants and settings to be involved in the study. Snowball sampling technique was used to select the student teachers. In defining

snowball sampling, Berg and Lune (2012) states that snowball sampling is a non probability sampling which involves participants referring the researcher to other people with relevant attributes as sources of data.

Mentors assisted in identifying two (2) student teachers from each primary school basing on the student teachers' knowledge and potential in articulating issues. One of the advantages of snowball sampling is that it provides key informants because of the referring factor (Berg & Lune, 2012).

The study used purposive sampling technique, particularly, the total population sampling to select all eight (8) mentors. Total population sampling is a type of purposive sampling technique where the entire population under study is small and has the particular characteristics the researcher intends to examine (http://dissertation.laerd.com/total-population-sampling.php). The characteristics of participants include specific experience, knowledge, skills and exposure to an event, among other things. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique in which a researcher decides who to include in the sample basing on criteria like expertise and specialist knowledge on the phenomenon (Oliver, 2006). The major advantage of total population sampling is that possibilities for the researcher to get deep insights into a phenomenon are very high.

In this case, the mentors were chosen because they were directly involved in mentoring; had knowledge and skills and had the specific experience in mentoring for more than two years. They could therefore provide appropriate data in terms of relevance and depth.

3.9 Data collection methods and instruments

Data collection is the process of gathering information from the research participants in order to answer the research question. Creswell (2007) explains that data collection constitutes a series of activities which are interrelated, whose aim is to gather good information to answer emerging research questions. There are various methods used to gather information in the social science inquiry such as interviews, focus group discussion, participant observation and document analysis.

This study employed such inductive qualitative methods for data collection as individual semi-in depth interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis. A detail of how the methods were used to collect data is presented below:

3.9.1 Interviews

An interview is a one-on-one conversation between two people. It is a technique of gathering data by asking questions to respondents and getting them to react verbally or non-verbally. One of the advantages of interviews is that it helps a researcher to understand how participants develop meanings to phenomena (Berg & Lune, 2012). In this study, the researcher used semi-structured interview guides (see Appendices D and E), which had core questions and follow-up questions. The questions were asking for different aspects that participants responded to in addressing the research study question.

The interview guide contained open-ended questions. According to Merriam (1998) and Punch (2008), open-ended and probing questions are used to enable full expressions and flexibility of participants. During the interviews, the researcher was asking questions to individual participants each in his/her own session. While participants were answering the

questions, the researcher jotted down notes in the notepad. At the same time, the voices of the participants were being recorded using a sound recorder.

Before conducting the interviews, participants were warmly welcomed and briefly reminded of the title of the study. They were asked if the conversation could be recorded to capture their voices, which include vital quotations that could be missed while the researcher was taking down notes, to which participants gave their free consent (see letter of informed consent at Appendix B). At the same time, the voice recording would save as back-up data for the researcher.

The interviews were conducted in the participants' respective schools where a safe and quiet room was identified. This was done to offer a natural setting for the participants so that they were free and flexible in giving information. Each interview session lasted between 25 to 40 minutes. During the interviewing process, probing phrases such as *"how"; "why"; "what do you mean by ………"; "is there anything else to add?" "like what?" "what else?"* The probing phrases were used so that participants gave out in-depth information and/or tell out their individual stories.

3.9.2   Focus group discussions

According to Silverman (2011), a focus group discussion is defined as a method of collecting qualitative data where a small number of people with common characteristics engage in a group discussion. Similarly, Berg and Lune (2012) simply define a focus group discussion as a "guided, collective conversation" (p.170). One of the advantages of focus group discussions is that large amount of data is collected within a short period of time. However, during focus group discussion the researcher observed that some of the

participants were not free to express their feelings in the presence of their colleagues. This affected the quality of data collected.

Focus group discussions were conducted after individual interviews with the student teachers and mentors. They were used after individual interviews to triangulate data. There was one focus group discussion designed for all eight (8) mentors. On the day of the focus discussion, only seven (7) mentors participated. One mentor had gone home to attend to his sick mother. A focus group discussion interview guide was used (see Appendix F).

During the focus group discussions, the researcher asked open-ended questions while probing to enable participants to speak-up their minds. They were asked if the conversation could be recorded to capture their voices, which include vital quotations that might be missed while the researcher was taking down notes, to which participants gave their free consent (see letter of informed consent at Appendix B). The focus group discussion took 45 minutes. The participants were the very same mentors who were involved in the individual interviews. Throughout the discussion, the researcher moderated the process to ensure that the participants stayed focused on the issues being discussed.

English was the main language used during both the interviews and the focus group discussion. At some point, some student teachers asked if they could use Tumbuka to give an explanation. Such requests were being accepted since the participants felt they could explain much better and in detail using a local language. On the other hand, the researcher understands Tumbuka and could easily translate it in English, while avoiding literal translations and connotations.

3.9.3 Document analysis

Document analysis was done to triangulate data collected from individual interviews with student teachers and mentors as well as data from the focus group discussion conducted with mentors. The researcher employed the *"document as a resource"* approach to analyse the SEJ document. In defining *"document as a resource"* approach, Silverman (2011) states that the researcher focuses on what the content is representing. The content tells the researcher what is going on. The researcher focused on how correct the student teachers did the activities in the journal. The researcher also focused on the relevance of the remarks and comments made by the mentors to find out how mentors shared their experiences and professional guidance and support to student teachers. In this case, completed activities by student teachers and the mentors' comments on the activities were the content that was the source of data for the study.

The Year Two IPTE SEJ for Term 1, (2012) was the document which was systematically analysed. According to MIE (2012), the Year Two School Experience Journal for Term 1 contains weekly activities which student teachers had to work on and complete. Thereafter, the head teachers and the mentors give a remark like '*excellent', 'very good', 'satisfactory' and 'needs improvement'*. The remarks are followed by comments. Worth noting is that the SEJ also explains to the student teacher the significance of the mentors' comments which reflects on how well the task has been completed.

The researcher read and re-read content on the completed activities in the SEJs to collect data that represented what was going within the mentoring process as regards professional support and guidance to student teachers as well as student teachers' competence and effectiveness on doing the activities.

Table 1 show an overview of content in the SEJ in brief.

Document	Contents	Purpose
The IPTE Year Two School Experience Journal for Term 1, (2012).	• Activities student teachers have to reflect on teaching skills and whole school issues. • Head teachers' remarks and comments on the completed whole school issues • Mentors' remarks and comments on the finished teaching skills activities. • Each comment section has four descriptive levels of performance and these are: Very	• For student teachers to reflect on their performance. • For head teachers to provide formative evaluation through constructive advice and criticism. • For student teachers to acknowledge their best abilities and work on areas of improvement on whole school issues. • For mentors to provide formative evaluation to student teachers. • For student teachers to take note of areas of strength and maintain their performance and work on areas of

	Good, Satisfactory and Needs Improvement.	improvement. • For student teachers to monitor their own progress.

Table 1: Overview of the content in the School Experience Journal (SEJ) for document analysis

It should be noted that the SEJs that were analysed belonged to the student teachers who participated in the study. Out of the fifteen (15) SEJs, only eleven student teachers offered their SEJs. The remaining four (4) student teachers declined. The researcher used the SEJs for the interviewed student teachers to cross-check the oral accounts that were given during individual interviews and also to validate the mentors' oral account as regarding the skills acquired during training, their roles and their support to student teachers by going through the mentors' comments written in the SEJ.

The documents were very important in the study because they are an official basis for comparison with practice and a good source to triangulate data. The SEJ document was developed by departments of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST) in conjunction with development partners. They therefore bore a true meaning of the phenomenon under study. However, their significance depended upon how mentors and student teachers attribute to the phenomenon and to what extent the participants follow and apply the contents therein.

3.10   Data collection procedures

Data collection procedures involve what the researcher actually did to gather information from the research participants.

In the first place, the researcher got a letter of identification (see Appendix A) from the Coordinator of the Masters Programme at Mzuzu University, which was presented to the Education Division Manager (EDM) for the North, the District Education Manager (DEM) for Mzimba North, the Primary Education Advisors (PEAs) and eight (8) head teachers to get access and permission into the study site. The letter of identification also provided a justification for carrying out the study. Upon getting permission, the researcher collected data from participants as agreed on the schedule (see Appendix C).

During the period of entry into the schools, the researcher held brief discussions with the head teachers and the mentors of the schools under study. The main reason for the discussions was to clarify to school authorities on the purpose of the study, the participants targeted in the study, the methods to be used and the timeframe for the study. In addition, the researcher requested the mentors to identify two (2) student teachers at each primary school to participate in the study.

First data was collected from individual interviews with student teachers. Interviews with student teachers lasted for four (4) days. Later on, data was collected from individual interviews with mentors. Individual interviews with mentors took three (3) days. Focus group discussion was done in a day. Document analysis on the Year Two IPTE School Experience Journal for Term 1 was done after individual interviews and focus group discussions. This lasted for four (4) days. This was the last field activity and was done in

Term 2 when all SEJ tasks for Term 1 were completed. The contents of the completed SEJ activities captured all the possible trends done in Term 1 to make the analysis complete.

3.11   Ethical consideration

Ethical considerations aim at avoiding harm to research participants.

Studying peoples' experiences and lives is a delicate task which can easily lead to emotional and psychological harm if there are no ethical considerations. Agreeably, ASA (1997) and Punch (1994), as cited by Berg and Lune (2012) assert that harm, consent, privacy and confidentiality of data are the major concerns of ethics in research. Berg and Lune (2012) also confirms that negligence in addressing ethical issues affects the quality of any research involving people. This implies that no good research can be produced without considering ethics.

To address ethical issues, the researcher sought informed consent from participants. The researcher informed participants the purpose of the study and the research methods to be used in the study. Then, the participants read a letter of consent which included permission to record the interviews and focus group discussions (see Appendix B) and declared their participation voluntarily. Participants were also assured that they could terminate their participation in the study at any time and that no harm will be inflicted on them. One student teacher withdrew from participating because of lack of interest.

Participants were assured of confidentiality, whereby confidentiality meant concealing names of participants and using data collected solely for the study.

3.12 Data processing and analysis

3.12.1 Data processing

During the study, data from interviews and focus group discussion were recorded using a sound recorder of a laptop. At the same time, the researcher took down notes in a note pad. Sound recording was done in order to have full, original and complete sets of data. Thereafter, recorded data was transcribed. Transcribing is the process of translating recorded data into textual data. Data from document analysis was recorded in a notepad.

3.12.2 Data analysis on interviews and focus group discussion

Data analysis involved qualitative techniques that led to reducing and summarizing data in order to produce meaningful results (Creswell, 2003). Data analysis was done using thematic approach, after careful reading and rereading of all raw data (Miles & Huberman, 1984). Codes generated from the interviews were used to create meaning out of them. Thereafter, codes were organised, summarized and reduced to categories.

All data from semi-structured interviews and focus-group discussions was transcribed and then organised according to sources, kind and page number so that it could be easily coded. Data from the semi-structured interviews with mentors and student teachers was organized distinctly from each other. Each single transcript was read and re-read carefully in order to deeply understand it. Then, codes were assigned to different data according to its meaning. The codes were written along the margin.

Different coded data was further grouped together after identifying similarities and possible meaningful links which led to the development of categories. After categories were developed, a central theme was further developed that revealed the interconnectedness of various pieces of data.

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The process was repeated for all interviews and focus group discussion transcripts in order to develop codes, categories and themes. All data was now reduced to themes which had a cluster of sub-themes or categories depending on the meaning it brought to the study (see Appendix G).

Data collected from document analysis was read and re-read to identify codes. The coded data was further reduced to categories after establishing similarities in meaning found in the data. After establishing links and connections within the categories, themes were developed.

The interpretation of data involved reflecting words and descriptions of the mentors and student teachers while abstracting important understandings from their views in regards to what they experienced as challenges in the mentoring process in the IPTE training course.

3.12.3 Analysis of data from document analysis

The coded data from document analysis represented the state of the SEJ activities that student teachers attempted. A further analysis on the identified codes led into developing categories that represented a meaningful interpretation which were later reduced to themes (see Appendix H).

3.13 Issues of validity, reliability and objectivity (trustworthiness)

The researcher ensured that the issue of trustworthiness was achieved. The field visits were done starting from the near end of term one, during which in-depth semi-structured interviews were done with student teachers. Mentors were interviewed on the onset of second term. The subsequent visits were conducted during mid-second term for the focus group discussion with mentors. Document analysis was done towards end of second term.

The reason for the prolonged and varied field experience was for the researcher to get acquainted with the participants and strengthen relationship so that participants could open up and therefore provide rich and detailed data that was true to their voices (true value) in their context (Krefting,1991). Triangulation of data sources and methods from focus group discussion, in-depth semi-structured interviews and document analysis also ensured that findings from the study to be consistent, transferable and be free from the researcher's bias.

3.14   Summary

The study was a qualitative, phenomenological case study which was situated in the interpretivist paradigm. It was conducted in Enukweni education Zone in Mzimba North in Northern Malawi. The target population was eight (8) mentors and forty eight (48) student teachers. The study was guided by the cognitive apprenticeship and transfer of training models. Total population sampling was used for the eight (8) mentors and sixteen (16) student teachers were sampled using snowball sampling. Data collection was done using individual interviews, focus group discussion and document analysis.

Triangulation of data sources using individual interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis ensured trustworthiness of the study, because it helped in cross-checking and validating data hence reduce researcher's bias.

To gain entry into the study site, the researcher presented a letter of identification (Appendix A) from the coordinator of the Masters Programme in Teacher Education at Mzuzu University to the Education Division Manager (EDM) for the Northern Education Division (NED); the District Education Manager for Mzimba North (DEM); the Primary Education Advisor (PEA) for Enukweni education Zone and to head teachers of the eight primary schools in the zone. The researcher briefly explained to participants the aims of

the study. The researcher also assured the participants of confidentiality on their names and of data collected to address ethical issues.

Data collected from interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis was analysed through a thematic approach. Firstly, data from interviews and focus group discussions was transcribed. Data from document analysis and the transcriptions were read and re-read to develop codes. All coded data with similar meanings were summarized and developed into categories, which were further reduced to themes after establishing links and connections in the data.

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of the study was to investigate the challenges mentors and student teachers encounter in the mentoring process in the IPTE training programme. The discussion of the findings directly addresses the critical research question of the study, which is: *What are the challenges mentors and student teachers encounter during the mentoring process in the IPTE training programme?* The themes and categories revealed challenges faced by mentors and student teachers as illustrated in Table 2.

Theme Number	Theme	Category
1	Professional guidance and support	1.1 Inadequate student teacher observation
		1.2 Mentors' preparation for student teacher lesson observation
		1.3 Inadequate resources for student teachers
		1.4 Unwillingness and negligence by student teachers
		1.5 Uncooperative and indisciplined student teachers
2	Nature of mentoring	2.1 Demanding and tough job
		2.2 A full time job
3	Collegiality	3.1 Work load for mentors
		3.2 School administration and experienced

		teachers not cooperative
4	Qualities of mentors	4.1 Professional expertise 4.2 Honouring appointments 4.3 Confidentiality
5	The School Experience Journal (SEJ)	5.1 Too much work for both student teacher and mentors. 5.2 Tough content
6	Induction of student teachers at the teacher training college	6.1 The roles of mentors 6.2 Mentors as resource providers for student teachers 6.3 Respect the mentor's decision
7	Recruitment and training of mentors	7.1 Identifying and selecting mentors 7.2 Mode of training
8.	Motivation	8.1 Mentor allowances 8.2 Student teachers' allowances
9	Coordination between Teaching Practice Schools, Teacher Training Colleges and the District Education Manager's Office	9.1 Posting of mentors 9.2 Housing of mentors 9.3 Varied information from College lecturers

Table 2: Themes and categories that emerged from data analysis

4.2   Analysis of themes and categories

Theme 1:   Professional guidance and support

One of the major roles of mentors is to provide professional guidance and support to student teachers through shared experiences. The process starts with student teachers observing mentors and experienced teachers in their respective classrooms. According to Brown et al. (1989), the main aim is to transfer knowledge, methods and skills from the mentor (expert) to the novice (student teacher). Student teachers can observe mentors and experienced teachers many times, so long as arrangements are made. Thereafter, mentors arrange and agree with student teachers on what to be observed. In the process, mentors assist student teachers to plan lessons. After observation, the mentor provides feedback to the student teacher in a reflective manner (Hopkins & Moore, 1992), by engaging student teachers in a dialogue and discussion on how they have performed in the teaching and learning process. Through turns in lesson observation, mentors and student teachers share their experiences. Mentors guide student teachers in comparing their performance with those of the mentor and experienced teachers whom they observed, in order to facilitate learning in the student teachers.

There were a number of challenges that affected professional guidance and support to student teachers. These were: Inadequate student teacher lesson observations, variation in mentors' planning for lesson observation, inadequate resources for student teachers, unwillingness and negligence from student teachers and uncooperative and indisciplined student teachers.

Category 1.1   Inadequate student teacher lesson observations

Most student teachers indicated that they had been observed twice. Others indicated that they had not been observed. *"The mentor signs the lesson plans daily but has observed us twice only during this term."* Another student teacher had this to say, *"Since we came to this school, the mentor has not come to our class to supervise us, even the head teacher." "Mentors should be supervising us frequently so that we know our strengths and weaknesses and advise us accordingly, rather than leaving us alone,"* said another student teacher.

Student teachers also indicated that their mentors were dealing much with the SEJ than observing lessons. Probably mentors felt that signing of journals was manageable considering the fact that they could do it after knocking off classes. *"Our mentor is dedicated to the job just on the part of the journal,"* said another student teacher. On the other hand, possibly mentors were doing more on the journals because it was written evidence that they were indeed assisting student teachers. This agrees with MIE (2012) and Rowley (1999), on the significance of documentation and record-keeping in order to keep track of student performance.

Agreeably, mentors also confessed that the lesson observations for each student teacher were inadequate. Mentors recommended that student teachers could be observed as many times as required because they create opportunities for reflection on the practice and improvement on weak areas. To emphasize on the deficiency, one of the comments from the mentors was, *"Even three lesson observations per student teacher are not enough."* Another mentor added, *"I have done it four times, but it is not enough. When we supervise only once, it is bad. But we should have frequent supervisions."*

Mentors acknowledged the effects of inadequate lesson observation on student teachers by comparing their own supervision from Primary Education Advisors (PEAs). Mentors valued the PEAs visits for the impact they had on their professional development.

It was also found out that after lesson observations, no feedback was given to student teachers. Student teachers said that discussions after lesson observations were sometimes not done. "*I was supervised by the mentor but I was not called for discussions. How do I know my strengths and weaknesses?*" complained one student teacher. Another student teacher also expressed concern towards inability of mentors to hold discussions after lesson observation saying, "*The supervision was done but it was out of my amazement to see that the mentor did not even sign the lesson plan and did not even call us to say these are the strengths and challenges in your lesson.*"

The findings indicated that student teacher lesson observation as one of the main components of mentoring was not being done effectively together with post-lesson observation discussions. Mentors did not supervise or observe lessons for student teachers regularly and frequently. As a result, student teachers were deprived of the much needed professional guidance and support critical for their learning and professional development. Student teachers were denied the opportunities for reflection on their practice that comes along with lesson observation during the discussion and feedback sessions. There was minimal guided participation and shared experience. Student teachers were deprived of using their meta-cognition on how best to maintain their best practices and work on the improvement areas.

Brown et al. (1989) argues that learning and cognition takes place within a physical and social context. Lesson observations and discussions that follow are appropriate and relevant situations in which student teachers learn how to improve their teaching skills.

Moran et al. (2012); MIE (2012) and MOE (2006), stipulate that the purpose of mentoring is to provide guidance and support to student teachers during their placements in schools so that student teachers' transition period is rich with positive experiences. In this case, inadequate student teacher lesson observations defeat the purpose of mentoring.

Category 1.2   Mentors' preparation for student teacher lesson observation

Planning involves the initial steps and activities a mentors engages in before observing lessons of student teachers. According to MIE (2012); Hopkins and Moore (1992), the guidelines for lesson observation follows the clinical supervision model, where the mentor agrees with the student teacher when and what to be observed before the actual lesson observation: *(pre-observation discussion* $\longrightarrow$ *observation* $\longrightarrow$ *post-lesson observation discussion).* After preparation, the mentor can observe the lesson which is followed by a reflective discussion where the mentor and student teacher engage in a collegial collaboration which assists the student teacher to maintain their strengths and work on the weaknesses identified.

It was found out that mentors prepare differently when it comes to student teacher lesson observation. Some mentors use experience for being a mentor for a long time. One mentor had this to say, "*Since I have experience, I just know that when I meet the student teachers, I will do this, this, and this.*" Out of eight (8) mentors, only two (2) indicated that clinical supervision was the way to go. This mentor explained in this way, *"Firstly, I consult the*

student teacher and discuss the lesson to be observed so that the student teacher prepares thoroughly." The second one added, *"I read guidelines for observing a student teacher as stipulated in The Year Two IPTE Mentoring Guide (2012)."* The mentors' variations in preparation for student teacher lesson observation suggest that mentors oversimplify or overlook the impact of clinical supervision on student teachers' learning.

From the findings, mentors prepare differently when it comes to observing student teachers. MIE (2012), IPTE Year Two Mentoring Guide provides guidelines to be followed when preparing to observe student teachers. Moreover, all supervisors are encouraged to apply clinical supervision procedures when observing student teachers (Hopkins & Moore, 2003). This indicates that student teachers were observed following different or varying approaches and conditions. In this regard, the results documented on the summary of performance of student teachers were compromised since the standardized formative assessment procedures were not applied uniformly.

Category 1.3   Inadequate resources for student teachers

Teaching and learning resources facilitates the teaching and learning process by assisting teachers in clarifying concepts. Student teachers indicated that teaching and learning resources were a problem especially for the weekly activities in the SEJ. Student teachers complained in this way, *"Sometimes we have to look for resources in the villages. Sometimes we have to buy, yet our up keep allowances do not come in time. The college takes time to supply us with resources."*

Student teachers gave an example of *"creating a print-rich environment"* as one of the activities in the SEJ which required a lot of resources to be completed. One student teacher

said, *"The activity called "print-rich environment" required a number of resources which we tried to buy using our salaries. The resources included magazines, newspapers, papers, markers, cartons, thread and glue amongst others."*

During document analysis, it was also found out that most student teachers did not complete the activity. Others managed to come up with labels for various objects in their classrooms and within the school. In fact, most student teachers did not complete the task. A typical mentors' comment on such an incomplete task was, *"Excellent. You are very good and with good creativity. Maintain this level of work in all the tasks."* One wonders how an incomplete task can earn a student teacher an excellent. *"Yet, when we ask the mentor to assist us, the response is good but not done,"* wondered one student teacher.

Mentors had similar sentiments on the inadequacy of teaching and learning resources. During focus group discussions mentors pointed out that *"There are inadequate resources for mentees to use during teaching practice."* In this regard, mentors were also not compelled to offer the much needed guidance to student teachers on how best resources could be found and made available for the teaching and learning process.

The findings indicated that some topics in the SEJ required more resources yet student teachers were failing to mobilize the appropriate resources to complete the tasks. On the other hand, mentors could not give the required assistance that student teachers needed to find teaching and learning resources.

Category 1.4   Negligence and unwillingness by student teachers

Student teachers are expected to cooperate with mentors and develop a mutual relationship aimed at maintaining and improving student teachers' performance. It was found that some

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student teachers neglected the advice mentors gave them. Mentors remind student teachers to put theory learnt in college into practice. Mentors bemoaned some student teachers who did not value mentor assistance. Some student teachers showed remorse when mentors wanted to observe their lessons. Mentors' complaint was, *"Some student teachers do not require mentors and hate mentors to supervise them."* Mentors also lamented that *"there is increased defiance in some student teachers who cannot get prepared to be observed even when told in advance."* Another mentor also added, *"Whenever student teachers hear that college lecturers have started supervising, the student teachers prepare fully and effectively, but when it is a mentor, the student teachers become reluctant. They come to school late and unprepared, without teaching and learning resources."* Against all odds, the creation of a mutual working relationship lies between both the mentor and the student teacher. The mentor should initiate and the student teacher must demonstrate willingness.

The findings indicated that unwillingness and negligence by student teachers eliminates opportunities of strengthening a working relationship where mentors could effectively and efficiently observe student teacher lessons; discuss on how the lessons were and provide the appropriate professional guidance and support. Rice (2006) contends that for student teachers to learn from mentors, they must commit to establishing a working relationship with their mentors. Perhaps, by allowing mentors to observe their lessons, student teachers would create opportunities for receiving the much needed professional support they required for improving their performance and learning from the mentors' experiences as they share ideas through discussions.

Category 1.5   Uncooperative and indisciplined student teachers

Mentors indicated that student teachers were uncooperative and indisciplined on two grounds. Mentors explained that some male student teachers were drunkards, who spent most of their time drinking beers after knocking off from classes. Mentors complained, *"Most of the times student teachers who drink heavily come home late and will report to school late again with little or no preparations."*

On the second point, mentors also said that when moderation is done, student teachers want to go home, contrary to the advice and directive from the teacher training college to stay in TPS until the term ends. On this point, one mentor emphatically said, *"Female student teachers are a problem. When moderation is done they create problems and exaggerate them so that they are allowed to go home, leaving their classes without teachers."* Another mentor also added in a simple manner that *"normally when student teachers are through with moderation, they go back home before closing of school."*

In the context of IPTE training programme, mentoring comes to an end during the end of the school year which is third term because it is a 1 + 1 programme. It means one year in the college and another one year in the teaching practice school. Perhaps this might be considered as voluntary withdrawal from the training.

The findings indicated that student teachers tend to be uncooperative and indisciplined. Student teachers were behaving unprofessionally through drinking beers and abandoning classes. One of the tenets of the cognitive apprenticeship model is situatedness and contextualization, whereby the school and the classroom is the context in which mentoring has to be done (Dennen & Burner, 2004). Abandoning the school means abandoning the

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classroom, therefore no mentoring. Worse more, student teachers left learners without teachers.

Theme 2:   Nature of mentoring

Mentoring has a complex and multi-faceted process involving two individual adults, each with different levels of knowledge and skills.   As such, the mentoring process requires mentors and student teachers to demonstrate full commitment towards the process in order to direct their efforts towards achieving desired outcomes. Views from both mentors and student teachers indicated that mentoring in its entirety posed as a challenge.

Category 2.1   Demanding and tough job

Mentoring itself was found to be a challenge in that both mentors and student teachers described it as tough and too much work. Mentors' complaint was, *"It is too much work and tiresome."* Another mentor said, *"To me, the work is very tough to fulfill my duties as a teacher and as a mentor, which are two different things at once."* Agreeably, student teachers felt mentoring is tough work for mentors. One student teacher said, *"I think mentoring is tough. It is tough work because the mentor is failing to manage."* This concurs with what Cohen et al. (2007); Koki (1997) and McDonald (2004) described about mentoring - a complex process, whereby mentors have to render professional, emotional and social support to each and every student teacher at their discretion.

Category 2.2   A full time job

Mentors considered mentoring as a full time job. Besides mentoring, teaching is another profession which requires even more effort from the mentor. Mentors were not relieved of

other extra-curricular activities in school. Worse still, some mentors were teaching Standard 8, a demanding class where they had to prepare learners for public examinations. Mentors lamented on how challenging it was to carry out too equally demanding jobs at the same time. One mentor emphatically said, *"A mentor needs one job."* Consequently, mentors could not observe student teachers adequately.

From document analysis, it was found that mentors did not sign and comment on some activities in the SEJ. One student teacher complained about the signing saying, *"....about the signing, mmm, that's where he is not good."* The main reason of signing and commenting is to produce a record of assessment that evaluates the student teacher's performance and provides guided support.

The findings indicated that mentoring was being compromised with the teaching load mentors were having, since mentors had to balance their teaching and mentoring loads. Mentors viewed mentoring as a stand-alone job which should not be carried out alongside other jobs, in this case the teaching load. According to MIE (2012), mentors in the IPTE programme have a lot of responsibilities. This contradicts with Rowley (1999), who believes that mentors can carry out the mentoring job effectively if they are relieved of some responsibilities.

Theme 3: Collegiality

Collegiality involves colleagues in the teaching profession working together as a team towards realizing and achieving the intended objectives. During teaching practice, the teaching practice school administration, experienced teachers and mentors need to collectively support the student teachers in various ways such as taking turns in observing

student teachers' lessons; allowing student teachers to observe their lessons; guiding student teachers in resource mobilization and facilitating development of positive community links and networks. Staff allocation and sharing of responsibilities is a key to collegiality at the school.

The theorists of the cognitive apprenticeship model, Brown et al. (1989), believe that student teachers learn through interaction with assorted others such as experienced teachers, head teachers and section heads in the real-world. In this case, the real-world is the classroom and the school. However, the study revealed that mentors expressed concern over a big work load. Both mentors and student teachers felt that the teaching practice school administration plus the experienced teachers were not doing much in supporting mentors and student teachers.

Category 3.1   Work load for mentors

Mentors indicated that they had a big work load due to inadequate teachers in the teaching practice schools. Mentors said that they had full classes to teach besides mentoring. Mentors expressed concern over how they found it challenging to teach their own classes at the same time observe six (6) student teachers regularly. One mentor had this to say, *"I am teaching a demanding class, and this class is Standard 8. I have had problems to observe all the six student teachers in a week at the same time balance my timetable in class."* Another mentor also said, *"I think mentoring can work where there are more teachers because a mentor will work as a mentor and not where there are few teachers because a mentor is also given a class. It is a very big challenge."*

The findings indicated that mentors were having big work load which they considered to be a big challenge that was crippling their mentoring job. Perhaps Steiner's (2004) beliefs on less work load for mentors might hold in this case. Steiner (2004) believes that student teachers who had a mentor with a less work load were learning more. The mentor manages to work with a student teacher from planning time and also facilitated sharing of experiences with other teachers on the teaching and learning process.

Category 3.2 Teaching practice school administration and experienced teachers not cooperative

Team work and cooperation among experienced teachers, mentors and the school administration was found to be a challenge amidst big work load of mentors. *"Other qualified teachers do not want to join in,"* complained one mentor. Student teachers also shared similar sentiments about experienced teachers. *"Sometimes when we consult other teachers, they say we are not mentors therefore we cannot assist you because mentors receive money on this job."*

According to MIE (2012), experienced teachers do have a role of assisting student teachers along with mentors. Sharing of experiences, mutual engagement and joint effort from all members of staff at a school provides an enriching and conducive environment within which student teachers feel accommodated and supported in their learning regardless of their differences. Student teachers develop a sense of belonging to a group of fellow colleagues in the profession. A school culture that does not encourage classroom observation reduces collegial dialogue which focuses on enhancing teacher performance and student learning, contends Rowley (1999). Similarly, Brown et al. (1989) asserts that conversations, sharing and discussions promote learning within any culture.

Student teachers also indicated that some head teachers and mentors were in the forefront of widening the gap between experienced teachers and student teachers. One student had this to say about the school administration *"Administration itself shows that it is weak. Imagine that since we student teachers came in, we are conducting the assemblies and following the duty roster on our own."*

Student teachers also indicated that sometimes teaching practice school administration was sidelining them in other school activities. For example, student teachers had this to say, "*During meetings with other organisations, we see that experienced teachers are invited and not us."* Another student teacher also said, *"When teachers are needed at the Teacher Development Centre (TDC), they say mentees should not go there. This other day, the Primary Education Advisor (PEA) wanted Standards 5, 6, and 7 English teachers to attend a meeting at the TDC, out of which student teachers were not picked despite the fact that some classes were being handled by student teachers."* Professional support has to be understood from different perspectives. If school and classroom policies are to be implemented in the schools, it means that the whole school has to implement the policies regardless of the fact that other classes are handled by student teachers. Feiman-Nemser (2003) observed that student teachers who were surrounded by a professional culture that encourages collegiality in their first years of training, turned out to be good teachers.

The findings indicated that there is insufficient collegiality between teaching practice school administration and experienced teachers in order to professionally assist student teachers in their early career practices and support mentors. Student teachers were operating on their own in most school activities. Sometimes they were sidelined from

attending other professional meetings which were conducted away from teaching practice schools.

Theme 4:   Qualities of mentors

As teachers, mentors need to exhibit qualities of an effective teacher which translates one into an effective mentor. An effective mentor adheres to professional ethics all the time. The Government Teaching Service Regulations (GTSR) provides the professional ethics with which all teachers have to follow, including the mentors. Findings from the study revealed challenges concerning mentors with regard: professional expertise, keeping appointments and issues of confidentiality.

Category 4.1   Professional expertise

Student teachers indicated that they were not satisfied with the professional support mentors gave them. Student teachers felt that mentors were not competent enough on some professional issues. For example, most student teachers said that when they consulted the mentors on how to prepare schemes of work in some subjects, mentors mostly said, "*They do not know either.*" Some student teachers wondered if the difference in teacher training programmes between them and mentors could be a major reason for the incompetence by the mentors. Student teachers said, *"There is a difference between the way we were taught at college and here. The mentors are using the old style and we are using the new style. Sometimes we fail to use what we were taught at the college because mentors are trying to teach us the styles that were used sometime back and not recommended right now."*

However, during document analysis it was found out that head teachers were responsible for assisting student teachers in preparing schemes of work. Probably, there is some role

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conflict. The SEJ clearly indicates the roles of the mentors and head teachers towards student teachers (MIE, 2012). Even so, mentors as qualified teachers needed to be knowledgeable of all professional issues and documents.

In addition, student teachers' concerns might be genuine considering the fact that mentors and experienced teachers have very limited opportunities for refresher courses after they graduated from teacher training colleges. Most of the trainings they were undergoing were mounted to orient them on curriculum change in primary schools. As such, mentors and experienced teachers were disadvantaged in terms of knowledge and skills updates within the profession.

Category 4.2   Honouring appointments

It was found that mentors could neither honour appointments nor live up to their promises with student teachers. Student teachers lamented that most of the times mentors made empty promises. One student teacher said that an empty promise from a mentor was like, *"I will assist you, but the mentor never comes. I will supervise you, but he did not come to our classes to supervise us. If you ask why not coming to supervise as promised, they say I am busy, but they do not explain what makes them busy."* Another student teacher was bewildered saying, *"Our mentor never denies. He always vows to come but he never does."* Student teachers made such judgements as, *"Mentors are good at saying but not good at doing what they say."*

Category 4.3   Confidentiality

Student teachers indicated that they were not comfortable with behaviours that some mentors exhibited. Student teachers bemoaned negative qualities about their mentors,

which were more related to professionalism. The ineffectiveness of mentors affected their crucial role in mentoring student teachers by failing to develop a smooth, rich and motivational transitional period in the teaching profession.

Student teachers said, *"Some mentors cannot be trusted. We discuss issues with our mentor very well. But later on, the mentor tells the experienced teachers negative things about us. There is no confidentiality."* This other student teacher observed the following, *"A mentor should be able to keep secrets."* Another student teacher also said, *"It is very difficult for one to trust such a person who does not keep secrets."* Possibly, this suggests why student teachers were found to be mostly uncooperative with their mentors.

In the transfer of training model, Joyce and Showers (1987) as cited by Ehrich et al. (2001) and Sweeny (2003) supports the presence of mutual trust between mentors and student teachers. Lack of mutual trust inhibits learning in the mentoring process. Student teachers may not be willing to interact with their mentors regardless of what challenges they are facing because they have lost trust in the mentor. This situation retards the professional development of both.

Student teachers also indicated that some male mentors came to work while drunk. Student teachers wondered how such mentors can assist them effectively. *"I cannot relate well with a mentor who comes to work drunk. How effective can he assist me in a drunken state?"* wondered one student teacher?

Overall, the findings from student teachers indicated that most mentors were not performing according to the standards expected from them. Most mentors displayed qualities that diluted the essence of training. While Rowley (1999) and MIE (2012)

acknowledge the significance of training mentors by strengthening mentor traits, Fischer and Van Andel (2002) gives a thought of doubt. Perhaps, Fischer and Van Andel (2002) might be right according to the findings of the study. Non committed mentors fail to assist student teachers effectively.

Theme 5:   The School Experience Journal (SEJ)

The School Experienced Journal (SEJ) contains weekly activities the student teachers have to work on to reflect on good teaching skills used in every teaching task in general. Some activities focused on specific areas like special needs education (SNE), teaching vocabulary, managing the classroom, creating a print-rich environment and assessment of learners among others. Mentors make remarks and comments on the completed activities in relation to the level of performance of the student teacher. The study found that the SEJ had tough content and too much work for both mentors and student teachers.

Category 5.1   Tough content for mentors

Student teachers indicated that mentors offered minimal assistance on how to do the activities in the SEJ. *"There are some difficult questions in the SEJ like the 'print rich environment' activity,"* said one student teacher. On the same activity, another student teacher said, "*We were supposed to discuss with the mentor on the 'print rich environment' activity, but the mentor did not come such that instead of doing the activity in two days. We did it in four days."* Student teachers wasted a lot of time on a single activity at the expense of other equally important activities like preparing lesson plans and sourcing teaching and learning resources to be used during the teaching and learning process. The challenge was further aggravated by lack of assistance from the mentors. Student teachers

complained that mentors told them that *"they were busy"* as a major reason of failing to assist adequately.

During document analysis of the SEJ activities, it was found that most student teachers did not complete this 'print-rich environment' activity. In some cases, it was partially done. Worse still, remarks and comments were not available in some instances. Some remarks and comments available were not constructive. For example, a mentor commented, *"Good, keep it up,"* for an incomplete activity. This comment was misleading. A student teacher was being encouraged to continue submitting incomplete and partially correct activities.

Besides the 'print-rich environment' activity, there were other activities in which both mentors and student teachers found challenges. For example, in the vocabulary activity, a student teacher used wrong reading methods to assess reading skills in learners. The student teachers used think-pair and share and discussion methods instead of using typical reading methods like whole-word and reading words in context among others. The mentor's remark and comment was, *"Good. Good focus on the task."* Another student teacher did one step out of three steps on the same activity. The mentor's remark and comment was, *"Excellent. You have really taken your time to collect important words. Try to apply this approach to the other task."* Similar unhelpful comments were also observed on the special needs education (SNE) activity. A student teacher provided irrelevant assistance to a slow learner who did not finish work on time and did not understand the concepts being taught. The student teacher provided two things: pre-teaching activities and training the slow learner to finish work on time. The mentor's remark and comment was, *"Satisfactory. Managed to fill the works."* This comment gives the student teacher no clue on how well the activity was done.

Another student teacher made the following observation in relation to the mentor, *"It is tough work for the mentor. No wonder the mentors do not write comments in the SEJ."*

In addition, student teachers also indicated that professional meetings were not being held as per required times in a term. Some student teachers complained of late professional meetings while others complained of lack of professional meetings. *"Our mentor is dedicated on the part of the journal by commenting and signing on the activities we have done, but there is lack of guidance. We have never had a meeting with our mentor,"* said one student teacher. Another student teacher said, *"This is the last week of the term. The last professional meeting for the term was scheduled on week 10 which we started but did not finish. I don't know if we are going to finish because schools are closing tomorrow."*

According to MIE (2012), professional meetings are fora where mentors and head teachers discuss and collaborate with student teachers where they had done well or need improvement in professional areas such as lesson planning and use of teaching skills during lesson delivery.

Category 5.2   Too much work for mentors and student teachers

Student teachers indicated that there was a lot of work to do in the journal plus teaching. *"The SEJ has weekly activities which student teachers have to complete. Other activities are longer and much more demanding than others. It is difficult to manage all SEJ activities,* complained one student teacher. *"The SEJ is a problem. One needs more time and resources,"* said another student teacher. Student teachers frankly said, *"The SEJ is too demanding for us. Let's say we have to write five lesson plans for tomorrow. We need to search for teaching and learning resources then we also need to work on the activities*

in the SEJ on the same day. So it is difficult for us to manage all these things per day."
Another student teacher also said, *"The SEJ require a lot of resources."*

During document analysis of the SEJ activities, it was found that student teachers either did not complete or did not do some of the activities. Some activities were done incorrectly. Possibly, the activities could be difficult and too demanding such that they needed more time and proper guidance and assistance from the mentors.

Category 5.3   Mentors minimal assistance on journal activities

Student teachers indicated that mentors either signed but did not comment or did not sign and did not comment on the completed SEJ activities. Document analysis on SEJ also showed that some completed activities were evaluated and others were not. The completed activities that were evaluated were further found to be evaluated incorrectly. Table 3 below shows an analysis on the state of some completed SEJ activities with the mentor's comments.

SEJ activities	State of the done activities	Comments given
Print rich	• Incomplete; done labels only	• Excellent. Maintain this level of work in all the tasks. • Well done • Keep it up
Vocabulary	• Correctly done without cancellations and well recorded.	• Excellent. Try to take more care when recording your work

		next time.
	• Completed task	• Good. Continue to take more time to finish the task.
		• Keep it up.
		• Good. Good work.
		• Excellent. He will be a strong teacher.
	• Student teacher fails to create new vocabulary	
	• Incomplete activity, student teacher did step 1 out of three steps of the activity.	• Excellent. You have really taken your time to collect important words. Try to apply this approach to the next task.
		• I can see that you think positively but next time try to be more observant.
		• Good. Continue, it will be helpful to your learners.
Special Needs Education	• Slow learner identified	• Satisfactory. You

	who does not finish work on time; does not understand the concepts most of the time. • Assistance given by the student teacher is through pre-teaching activities and training the learner to finish work on time.	managed to fill the works. • Keep it up in improving your writing
Classroom rules	• Correctly done. Student teacher followed all the steps in the activity. Analysed the set of rules given critically and developed own rules correctly.	• Excellent. Take time to find more ideas with your partner. • Good. Good at praising learners. You should use more teaching and learning resources.

Table 3: Analysis on state of completed School Experience Journal for Term 1 and
written comments made by mentors on the completed activities by student teachers

The findings indicated that mentors have challenges in assisting and assessing student teachers on the SEJ activities. Most of the comments made were erroneous and unconstructive. They could not guide the student teacher on what to improve or on what to maintain. According to MIE (2012), the comments mentors make should facilitate professional development. There is a lot of work in the SEJ which both mentors and

student teachers were failing to manage effectively. There is need for more time and resources to effectively complete and sign the SEJ activities

Theme 6:   Induction of student teachers at the college

Induction of student teachers at the college is done in the first week of the second year, before dispatching them to teaching practice schools. Through presentations, college lecturers orient student teachers on academic, professional and social conduct and expectations while they will be doing their class work and continuing their training. The aim of inducting student teachers is to provide guidelines for proper conduct during teaching practice in relation to teaching and cooperation with school staff members and the local community. The findings indicated three challenges that were connected with induction of student teachers at the college.

Category 6.1   Role of mentors

Student teachers indicated that during induction they were told that apart from providing professional guidance and support, mentors and experienced teachers would assist student teachers in providing food stuffs. Student teachers described good mentors as those who supplied them with food stuffs. Student teachers said, *"Our mentors are good. When we have problems like shortage of food, they find food for us."*

Some student teachers expressed dismay towards some mentors who discouraged fellow experienced teachers and learners from giving student teachers gifts in form of food stuffs. This student had this to say, *"Our mentor is good but there is too much pretence. Whenever we express our problems, for example lack of food, there is a positive verbal response. But then, we hear from experienced teachers that they cannot assist us. The*

learners have also been told not give us anything because the mentor says student teachers are not responsible. They fail to make a budget."

Agreeably, mentors are also care-takers of student teachers. Mentors are responsible for the emotional, physiological and psychological health of student teachers. Unfortunately, the study found that mentors were not aware of the role of providing food stuffs to student teachers. Mentors wondered as to why student teachers used threats on mentors if food was not provided. Mentors complained, *"Student teachers threaten us that they will leave for home to get food, if we do not assist them.*"

Category 6.2   Mentors as a sole provider of teaching and learning resources

Student teachers indicated that mentors were responsible for finding resources for them. *"We had the print-rich activity which required a lot of resources. We thought that our mentor is going to find the resources like magazines and newspapers for us from the community because we do not know the community well."* It was also discovered through document analysis that most student teachers either did not complete or partially completed the activity. This suggests that student teachers relied much on mentors to find the teaching and learning resources for them. This conflicts with the expert model where mentors have to model good practices by demonstrating to student teachers how they can find the resources. After learning from the mentor, student teachers can apply the skills in their daily tasks appropriately.

Category 6.3   Respect the mentor's decision

It was found that student teachers indicated that their major responsibility is to respect the mentors' decision, *"Do as I say"* attitude. One student teacher said, *"I do what the mentor*

tells me to do." Whatever I do, I do to impress the mentor." Other student teachers said, *"Whatever the mentors says, I have to follow because that is what we were told at the college as we were coming here."*

The findings indicated that during induction student teachers were told to fully rely on mentors professionally and socially without clear explanations. In the mentoring process, the student teachers are not *'tabla rasa',* empty tins or recipients of knowledge, rather the student teachers are critical and reflective practitioners who have to think and synthesize knowledge as they are practicing teaching. That is according to the cognitive apprenticeship model explained by Dennen and Burner (2004). Meta-cognition allows a learner to be critical of their own thinking and learning. Student teachers should be guided into thinking on how best they can transfer or adapt their learning to new contexts, tasks and to solve the challenges they meet during this transition period of becoming professionals and qualified teachers. While mentors are regarded as experts, student teachers learn very little if they just listen and observe. Rather they must be engaged in thinking activities through discussions and action through practice. Professionally, student teachers can construct their own knowledge or find solutions to their day to day challenges in the teaching process.

Theme 7: Recruitment and training

Mentor recruitment involves the identification of prospective mentors, who are later trained in mentoring skills. From literature, head teachers are given the authority to identify teachers who can become mentors. Other studies explain on mentor-mentee matching. It is believed that matching mentors with mentees facilitates establishment of a working relationship between the two. Training equips mentors with appropriate mentoring

knowledge, skills and values. The study found that there are challenges relating to identification and selection of mentors. There were also challenges in relation to teaching practice school administration monitoring the mentors' performance. It was also found that the training mentors went through did not simplify the mentoring process in most mentors.

Category 7.1   Identification and selection of mentors

Mentors indicated that they were not aware of the criteria which the teaching practice school administration used to identify mentors. Mentors said, "*May be hardworking spirit or may be experience. Can you ask the head teacher that question?*" On the other hand, student teachers wondered as to how mentors were identified. *"Is it the college that chooses mentors?"* asked one student teacher. Still wondering, another student teacher asked, *"What if they advertise so that interested teachers meeting the required criteria can apply for the position?"* Due to the standard of support that most mentors provided, some student teachers said, *"It is better to change mentors after one to two years because the mentors are not committed. Worse more, is that the school administration also is not doing a lot to check on the mentors' work."*

The practice of choosing or selecting mentors by the school administration is popular and common in most formal mentoring programmes (Yost, 2002). Yost (2002) highlights professional competence, good reputation, interest in helping others and the need to upgrade as the criteria for selecting mentors. Probably, mentors in the IPTE programme qualified but were not told why and how they were selected and what was expected from them.

The findings indicated that mentors did not know why and how they were chosen. Most mentors thought that hard working and experience were factors behind their selection. The identification process was done secretly and it was not clarified to the mentor. Consequently, most mentors were performing contrary to the expectations of stakeholders. Again, the teaching practice school administration was not making efforts to monitor the mentors' performance.

Student teachers were not contented with the quality of support from mentors. To concur with Yost (2002) and Cochan-Smith (1991 as cited by Wang & Odell, 2002), they argue that mentors should provide relevant support to student teachers and be examples of good practice as expected by stakeholders which include student teachers.

Category 7.2   Mode of Training

Mentors indicated that they got trained once in every term. The training took a period of one week. Other mentors said that the training took two to three days. Mentors said, *"There is too much training material which is done within a short period of time."* One mentor's comment was, *"There are long topics but less time for training."* Mentors emphasized on time for training being little. Another mentor said, *"The trainer of trainers go to Lilongwe, stay there for two to three weeks. But they come here they train us like in two to three days."*

Through document analysis, it was discovered that most of the comments mentors contributed offered minimal opportunities for learning and progress in student teachers. The comments did not guide student teachers into reflecting on their own practice. At the same time, student teachers did not have the opportunity to compare their performance

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with that of their mentors or experienced teachers. Writing constructive and meaningful comments was one of the major areas mentors were trained in (MIE, 2012).

In addition, mentors also indicated that the methods used during the training contributed to mentors not understanding some of the topics. *"Trainer of trainers teaches fast. Some topics we don't understand. Some topics are skipped,"* said one mentor. Teaching fast had its effects on mentors. Another mentor frankly said, *"If I have not understood during training, I fail to assist student teachers effectively." "When evaluating the completed SEJ activities, you discover that this topic was not done during training,"* added another mentor. Perhaps, incomplete, incorrect, misguiding comments, unsigned and uncommented activities in the SEJ could be an effect of mentors not understanding what they were trained in. Through document analysis, activities on the following topics: 'creating a print-rich environment', 'identifying special educational needs (SEN) learners' and ' teaching vocabulary' appeared to be challenging to both student teachers and mentors.

Due to the mentors' performance, student teachers wondered if ever mentors undergo training. *"You see, often times the mentor does not observe our lessons,"* said one student teacher. Another student teacher added, *"Sometimes they do not assist in the SEJ activities, yet they say they are trained."* Student teachers doubted the mentors' capabilities. Another student teacher said, *"Are they trained? What are they trained in?"* Probably, training of mentors needs reviewing by all stakeholders concerned with mentor training as recommended in literature. The review of the training may have to do with content, period and methodology so that it becomes more effective.

The findings indicated that training of mentors is given little time such that most content is taught fast and sometimes content is skipped. Probably, this led to trainer of trainers to use

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knowledge-dissemination strategies against skill-acquisition approaches. As a result, mentors did not acquire the desired skills required for providing relevant professional guidance and support to student teachers. It is believed that formal training in mentoring strengthens personality traits, qualities and skills that are essential for building and providing sound professional guidance and support to student teachers (MIE, 2012; Rowley, 1999). Rowely (1999) also argues that if mentors are not properly trained, they meet great and special challenges in the process even if the mentors can receive a token as an incentive to support their work.

In addition, Sherman et al. (2002) commends training mentors using basic educational instructional skills, knowledge and individualized strategies that can assist in addressing needs of student teachers. For example, mentors should be trained in modeling good practices, coaching, scaffolding, reflecting, and exploration and facilitation skills. Once mentors are empowered, they can assist student teachers to learn and solve problems. Student teachers can do most of the work on their own if given the relevant and appropriate direction in doing the task.

Theme 8: Motivation

According to the study, motivation invoked interest and commitment in mentors. Mentors considered allowances as a key motivator in the mentoring process against upgrading and career development. Mentors have to be given financial tokens (Rowley, 1999). The study found that with regard to motivation, mentor allowances, professional upgrading and student teacher allowances were the major challenges.

Category 8.1   Mentor allowances

Mentors indicated that they were not receiving their allowances as regards their contract with the Department of Teacher Education and Development (DTED). Mentors in the IPTE programme described mentoring as, *"A volunteer work, a job for nothing, yet we have a lot of things to do in mentoring."* Another mentor said, *"I have stayed for almost two and a half years without getting paid. I just do it out of dedication."* Without mincing words, mentors told student teachers that they were demoralized because they were not being paid.

Student teachers also indicated that experienced teachers often times failed to assist them because they were not the ones who were going to be paid for the mentoring job.

Category 8.2   Professional upgrading

Mentors indicated that there were no refresher courses for them to enroll in so that they broaden their professional knowledge and skills. Mentors said, *"Since we graduated from the teacher training college many years ago, we have not received any refresher course apart from orientation of new curriculum."* In support, Koki (1997) asserts that major benefits of mentoring in mentors are to receive recognition and to upgrade; the best incentives in the profession. Mentors have a clear vision of their career path in the profession as they carry out mentoring responsibilities which are supervisory in nature.

The findings indicated that mentors were not motivated in their role as mentors because they were not being paid as per their contract with DTED. In addition, mentors felt that in the absence of refresher courses, they could not perform their duties of mentoring effectively, because they felt there was a knowledge gap.

Category 8.3   Student teachers' up-keep allowances

Mentors indicated that late payment of student teachers' upkeep allowances led to misunderstandings in the teaching practice schools. One mentor said, *"It is not healthy for one to go to work without eating because there is no food."* Another mentor added, *"Student teachers always excuse themselves to go and look for money for buying food. This leads to conflicts at school."* Mentors also indicated that when student teachers had no money and food; they threatened to stop teaching because they would be hungry. During interviews, one student teacher said, *"We told our mentor that since we do not have food and money, we would like to go home and get food and money. When we said this, our mentor talked to the head teacher and members of staff, who went to the School Management Committee (SMC) and explained our problem. This is when we were assisted with food."* In most literature on mentoring, mentors are the only players who get allowances and not student teachers. While it is working for developed countries, student teachers in IPTE programme might not accept to struggle with rural lifestyle while on training. Most of them would withdraw and join other training professions like nursing which are being supported.

The findings indicated that late student teachers' upkeep allowances reduced their concentration on learning and performance because they were staying without food. Student teachers were getting disturbed. Their focus was shifting from learning to finding the basic necessities. Student teachers were losing focus from their mission which was teaching practice. As a result, they resorted to leaving the teaching practice schools for home in search of food and money. Student teachers were becoming de-motivated.

Theme 9:   Coordination between teaching practice schools, teacher training college and the District Education Manager's office

Developing links and networking among stakeholders in the mentoring process is crucial for quality assurance and assessment of the practice in teaching practice schools. Ideally, coordination among TPS, TTC and DEM's office ensures data sharing and monitoring of mentoring services to student teachers. The study found that posting of mentors, varied information from college lecturers and housing for mentors were some of the main challenges regarding coordination among stakeholders in the mentoring process.

Category 9.1   Posting of mentors

Student teachers indicated that trained mentors were being posted away to other schools in the middle of the school year. *"We have a new mentor. The old mentor has been posted away to another school because of the church,"* lamented one student teacher.

Student teachers held trained mentors in high esteem. They valued mentors who were trained more than the untrained. One student teacher said, *"This new mentor is not trained I understand. This gives us problem. We got used to the old one."* Student teachers expressed concern as to whether the TTC was aware that the trained mentor of this particular school had been posted away. *"Does the college know that we have a new mentor?"* wondered one student teacher.

The findings indicated that posting of mentors during the school year was affecting the operations of mentoring, more especially if the new mentor is not trained. Student teachers had some respect and trust in mentors who were trained.

The findings also indicated that there was lack of coordination among stakeholders who were involved in training student teachers in their second year. Removing trained mentors from teaching practice schools means breaking the already established relationship between mentors and student teachers. A break in the process slowed down student teachers' learning and progress since they had to start all over again to get acquainted with the new mentor. The situation posed big challenges if the new mentor was not trained.

Category 9.2   Varied information from college lecturers

Mentors indicated that some college lecturers bring to TPS conflicting information which confuses the mentors. *"Some college lecturers come here and tell us not to do this but that, change this, it should be like this,"* explained one mentor. Mentors indicated that with such varied and conflicting information, they fail to assist student teachers appropriately because they are not sure of what is right and proper.

The findings indicated that coordination and common understanding of issues among college lecturers was a challenge right away at college level. Probably, college lecturers show minimal commitment to achieving set standards of teaching practice and mentoring student teachers. As a result, each one tells mentors their personal views. It is believed that formal mentoring programmes are instituted within an established partnership between teacher training colleges and teaching practice schools with an aim of maximizing support to student teachers through collaborative and collegial approaches (Durmus, 2006; MIE, 2012). Maximization of support works well when all involved stakeholders have a common understanding, have shared beliefs and focus on implementing same principles and standards of practice. College lecturers, mentors, experienced teachers and head

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teachers have to work together as a team in providing sound professional support to student teachers.

Category 9.3   Housing for mentors

Student teachers indicated that due to inadequate houses at the teaching practice schools, some mentors stayed in their respective villages. Although, the villages were nearer to the schools, student teachers expressed their concern about spending long periods without being in touch with the mentor. Student teachers felt insecure. *"Our mentor is our mother. Therefore, there is need for the mentor to stay at the school close to us so that we are in touch regularly,"* said one student teacher. Another student teacher said, *"Imagine, we meet our mentor on Sundays at church."* Inadequate houses in teaching practice schools hampered the growth of the mentor and student teacher relationship.

The findings indicated that student teachers were feeling insecure if mentors were accommodated in their villages and not at the school. From the origin of mentoring, the mentor as a care taker looks after the less experienced professional and guides wherever necessary (Moran et al., 2012). Student teachers felt that mentors who stayed away from the school had less professional and social interaction with student teachers. Student teachers wanted their mentors to stay at the school so that they were able to interact regularly.

4.2   Summary

The mentoring process in the IPTE programme is marred by numerous challenges which have significant negative impact on quality and amount of professional support and guidance on student teachers. The challenges are either primary or secondary. Primary

challenges directly affect the mentor's role of providing professional support and guidance through meaningful learning experiences. From the findings of the study, recruitment and training; mentor preparation for student teacher observation; inadequate teaching and learning resources; the School Experience Journal; mentor qualities; lack of collegiality; posting of mentors; delay or no allowances and negligent and uncooperative student teachers are primary challenges. Some challenges have an indirect impact on the mentoring process such as: housing of mentors in their villages and varied information from college lecturers are secondary. Primary challenges require immediate solutions in order to effect good practices in the mentoring process.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION OF THE MAIN FINDINGS, IMPLICATIONS AND   RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1   Introduction

This chapter provides a conclusion of the main findings and its implications. It also provides recommendations which, if taken aboard would improve the conduct of the mentoring process and also improve the overall effectiveness of mentoring.

5.2   Conclusion of the main findings

The aim of the study was to investigate the challenges mentors and student teachers encounter during the mentoring process in IPTE programme in Enukweni education Zone in Mzimba North. The conclusion presents the findings from the research questions.

The first research question was: how are mentors trained? The study found that mentors were not effectively trained. The training was more of knowledge-dissemination than skill-acquisition which is possible through individual practice. Mentors complained of inadequate time for training such that sometimes trainer of trainers taught fast and could skip topics, leaving some sections not taught.

The second research question was: what roles do mentors play in supporting student teachers? The study found that mentors gave inadequate professional guidance and support to student teachers in three ways. Firstly, there were inadequate lesson observations per student teacher. Mentors admitted that they did not observe student teachers' lessons regularly. Student teachers also complained that they were observed only once. Others were not observed. Student teacher lesson observation provides a situation on which the student teacher learns from the mentor's guidance, during discussions and collaboration. Through guided participation, the student teacher plans, monitors and assesses his/her

performance in order to move from one level to another. Otherwise, without the mentor's guided support, the student teachers faced challenges in adapting and integrating theory into their teaching practice.

Secondly, mentors prepared differently when it came to observing student teachers' lessons. Some mentors followed the clinical supervision model of lesson observation while others did not. This situation meant student teachers being assessed differently, because mentors failed to use the clinical supervision which sets equal standards for assessing the student teachers.

Thirdly, there were few or no professional meetings conducted between mentors and student teachers. During these professional meetings, mentors encouraged progress of student teachers through constructive criticism in classroom teaching skills, which is a learning point.

Lastly, the comments written by mentors in the SEJ were found to be meaningless because they did not give any direction on what student teachers must maintain and improve on.

The third research question was: what are the student teachers' experiences with mentoring in the IPTE programme? The study found that student teachers were highly affected by the unprofessional qualities that mentors displayed such as lack of professional expertise, lack of confidentiality and failure to honour appointments they made with student teachers. Student teachers found it challenging to relate and develop a professional and working relationship with unprofessional mentors. Student teachers felt mentors were not well equipped with mentoring skills. As a result, student teachers doubted the process and criteria of identifying and selecting would be mentors. Student teachers felt mentors were

not adequately trained. In the transfer of training model, a working relationship between mentors and student teachers is built upon mutual trust, which enables the novice to take advice and constructive criticism from the more experienced colleague (the mentor).

Inadequate housing in teaching practice schools led to mentors staying in the villages. Student teachers felt insecure because this meant meetings with the mentor were irregular.

Lack of collegiality in the teaching practice schools made student teachers to complain of minimal assistance from the school administration, mentors and experienced teachers. Student teachers felt sidelined in some meetings and workshops organized at the school or TDC. Student teachers felt clueless and lonely in situations where school activities were entirely left at their discretion.

Furthermore, lack of coordination between TPS, TTC and the DEM's office led to posting of trained mentors away from TPs in the middle of the school year without the knowledge of the teacher training college, who are the sole trainers of mentors. Student teachers experienced frequent break on the provision of timely professional guidance and support.

Delay in student up-keep allowances made student teacher to boycott classes in search of food and money. Student teachers felt good when mentors could provide food and other basic support services despite the mentors' big work load.

The last research question was: what are the views of mentors and student teachers regarding the mentoring process in the IPTE programme? The study found out that both mentors and student teachers felt that mentoring was a demanding and tough job. Mentors felt that mentoring was too involving such that it should be a stand-alone job. Worse

enough, lack or delays in payment of allowances was de-motivating. The mentors termed mentoring as voluntary work.

Mentors observed that negligent, unwilling, uncooperative and indisciplined student teachers were blocking opportunities conducive for developing a mutual relationship with stakeholders in the mentoring process. The physical and social contexts of learning no longer existed to promote construction of knowledge through collaboration, coaching, scaffolding, exploration and reflection.

The SEJ was labeled as a burden by both mentors and student teachers. Student teachers felt the SEJ was too involving while mentors found that the content was too much and tough. Mentors felt the need for refresher courses and upgrading opportunities in order for them to keep abreast with new knowledge and changes in the world of teaching and mentoring.

5.3   Conclusion of the study

The purpose of the study was to investigate challenges mentors and student teachers encounter during the mentoring process in the IPTE programme. The researcher's rationale for the study was to contribute and add to the limited knowledge of mentoring, especially in Malawian primary teacher education. The significance of this study is to inform policy makers, curriculum designers and actors in the mentoring process, with the aim of promoting good practices in the teacher education profession.

According to Brown et al. (1989), the cognitive apprenticeship model allows mentors and experienced teachers to model good practices, which student teachers have to emulate. Mentors provide various kinds of support and scaffolds to enable student teachers progress

from the current skill level to the next skill level. Student teachers learn through observation, articulation, exploration and reflection. However, the findings from the study indicated that the mentoring process in the IPTE programme has been crippled by numerous challenges. The challenges suffocate the whole essence of preparing authentic and effective teachers through mentoring.

The mentoring process failed to create a conducive learning environment which necessitate social interactions and learning through collaborations in a community of practice. Guided support was minimal. Most of the challenges had a link to mentors' low performance. The findings indicated that mentors were inadequately trained in terms of content. The training methodology used was not skill-based. Frequency of trainings and inadequate time also affected the quality of training.

In the mentoring process, mentors need to use the following cognitive apprenticeship instructional strategies: modeling, coaching, scaffolding, articulation, reflection and exploration (Brown et al., 1989; Dennen & Burner, 2004). Training workshops should empower mentors with these cognitive and meta-cognitive skills that influence student teachers' professional development. Effective mentors apply these cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies in assisting student teachers to use, manage and discover knowledge. Student teachers who go through these cognitive and meta-cognitive processes are able to solve problems they encounter in their everyday career life.

Amongst the strategies, scaffolding is believed to be a source of motivation for student teachers. Dennen (2000) as cited by Dennen and Burner (2004) found that structuring a learning task motivated students. Scaffolds such as chunking and sequencing among others assisted students to focus more on their current learning needs. Through chunking and

sequencing, mentors can let student teachers work on one component of the task at a time. Contrastingly, the study found that mentors were engaging students in whole tasks such as observing all teaching skills in a single lesson delivery.

During the mentoring process in the IPTE programme, student teachers got support from their mentors during reflective sessions which were done after mentors observed their lessons. This depended on the frequency of the lesson observations. Reflective sessions corresponded with frequency of lesson observation. Surprisingly, the study found that this pattern was not followed because some student teachers were observed but did not have reflective sessions, while other student teachers were not observed.

In contrast, the cognitive apprenticeship model recommends that student teachers observe mentors and experienced teachers often times and at various levels in the profession. Student teachers can also observe the head teachers and the section heads in their primary school sections (infant, junior and senior sections). It is evident that the mentoring process in the IPTE programme requires some modifications to improve practice.

Therefore, content for training mentors should equip mentors with skills described in the cognitive apprenticeship instructional strategies. Mentors and experienced teachers should model good teaching practices. Student teachers should observe mentors and experienced teachers' lessons frequently, as they model best practices. During such lesson observations, student teacher can observe small components of the lesson each one at its own time. Later, they can observe all components in the whole lesson. Similarly, mentors should observe one teaching skill per student teacher as a way of scaffolding. In this way, student teachers can focus on a specific teaching skill. As a result, student teachers are motivated

and maximize their learning. This is an outline of a new mentoring model for an effective mentoring process.

5.4   Recommendations

The researcher came up with the following recommendations to address the challenges that were found from the study, aimed at improving the mentoring process:

a) It was found that mentors were not adequately trained. As a result they fail to provide rich learning experiences through which professional support and guidance could be offered to student teachers. The researcher recommends that stakeholders should design a training model which can equip mentors with cognitive apprenticeship strategies such as modeling, coaching, scaffolding, articulation, reflection and exploration. The training model should use skill-acquisition approaches like demonstration, role-plays, simulations, discussions and brainstorming.

Stakeholders must provide adequate resources for training in terms of time, finances, human, material, physical and emotional support throughout the training and follow-up sessions. Adequate time for training will ensure that mentors are empowered with knowledge and skills that will strengthen their personality traits and qualities so that they assist student teachers effectively.

If mentors are trained effectively, some challenges associated with provision of professional guidance and support will be solved. Such challenges include: mentors' preparation for student teacher lesson observation; qualities of mentors and handling of the SEJ. In addition, training without follow-ups is not enough.

Follow-up is done to measure the delivery and impact training of mentors make in the field. Therefore, appropriate monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems must be put in place to ensure that trained mentors perform according to expected standards.

b) It has been found that provision of professional guidance and support was inadequate because of insufficient student teacher lesson observation. The researcher recommends that teaching practice school administration should liaise with the DEM's office to send adequate experienced teachers to teaching practice schools to reduce work load for mentors. Mentors should therefore, dedicate their efforts towards mentoring student teachers. In the case of inadequate staff, the researcher also recommends that mentors should design action plans and timetables to ensure proper utilization of their time so that they are able to assist all student teachers.

c) It was found that selection of mentors was done by head teachers who did not clarify the criteria for identifying the mentor. The expectation was that the chosen mentors were going to do their work effectively. Unfortunately, the head teachers could not evaluate the mentor's performance on mentoring. The researcher recommends that the teacher training college should seek approval from DTED to advertise the post of the mentor. This can ensure that only successful candidates with the required requirements are screened, interviewed and selected for the role.

d) It has been found that the SEJ has a lot of work; some work is tough and too demanding to both the mentors and student teachers. The researcher has two recommendations. Firstly, teacher training institutions should intensify teaching of

such topics as print-rich, SNE, reading and vocabulary activities at college level. For example, the vocabulary activity and the print-rich are topics taught in the Literacy and Languages while SNE is taught in the Education Foundation Studies department. College lecturers should engage student teachers in hands-on activities using participatory methods so that student teachers have a lot of practice, before going to TPS.

Secondly, teacher training institutions and DTED should design refresher courses for mentors and develop supplementary material with all challenging topics in the SEJ. The supplementary materials will be used as sources of important additional information, which all stakeholders in mentoring can use as references.

Finally, the SEJ topics which were found to be tough to both mentors and student teachers should be reviewed and simplified.

e) It was found that there was lack of collegiality in the teaching practice schools. The teaching practice school administration was weak. It did very little to encourage a professional culture of observing each other's lessons including providing assistance to student teachers. The researcher recommends that teaching practice school administration should have plan of action for experienced teachers in mentoring student teachers and monitor how they are working with student teachers. In the plan of action, experienced teachers should be attached to specific student teachers for specific expertise.

On the same, it was also found that student teachers were being sidelined in other school meetings without genuine reasons. The researcher recommends that teaching

practice school administration should ensure student teachers are included in all school meetings. If the meetings are irrelevant to student teachers, effective communication should be made to the student teachers to ensure transparency and accountability.

f) It was found that there was minimal coordination among TPS, TTC and the DEM's office. As a result, trained mentors were being posted to non-teaching practice schools in the middle of the school year without the knowledge of the teacher training college, which is the sole trainer of mentors. The researcher recommends that the teacher training college should compile data for all teaching practice schools on the state of mentors. The data must be shared by all stakeholders involved in mentoring.

Tenure of office is another recommendation. Mentors should be given a certain period of service before they are posted to another school. Such data should be shared among all stakeholders.

Teaching practice school administration should ensure that a mentor is accommodated at the school, so that there is increased social interaction between the student teachers and mentors.

g) It was found that college lecturers bring conflicting information to mentors. The researcher recommends that DTED and TTCs should develop a teaching practice handbook which all stakeholders can refer to in order to avoid giving conflicting information which leads to contradictions and confusions.

h) It was found that both mentors and student teachers faced delayed or unpayment of allowances which was a dis-incentive. As a result, they were demoralized. The researcher recommends that the Malawi Government through DTED should design and put in place a viable payment system that will ensure quick and timely payment of allowances.

i) It was found that sometimes student teachers were unwilling, negligent, indisciplined and uncooperative. The researcher recommends that there should be consistency in disciplining student teachers throughout the student teacher training process. Discipline issues should be taken seriously during teaching practice. During induction, student teachers should be clearly told their responsibilities when they go to TPS. A simple and easy to use hand-out with the responsibilities and penalties should be designed and given to student teachers. TTC and all college lecturers should treat induction sessions seriously. Induction sessions should not be left to the teaching practice committee and few selected lecturers. Every college lecturer must play a positive role in the process of induction.

It is the belief of the researcher that the above recommendations, if implemented, would assist in improving the conduct of mentoring and make the teaching practice exercise more effective in the training of teachers. However, this requires common understanding and concerted effort among all stakeholders in the process for success.

5.5   Limitations of the study

During individual interviews with both student teachers and mentors, most of them felt that the researcher was a fault finder since the researcher was a teacher trainer at the responsible teacher training college. Consequently, some of them responded that

everything was going on well. Some of the student teachers said their mentors were good. This had an effect on quality of data. However, document analysis on the School Experience Journals (SEJ) assisted in unveiling how student teachers and mentors were interacting in the mentoring process. The quality of work of student teachers on the completed activities in the SEJ and the relevance of the remarks and comments made by the mentors provided appropriate data in addressing the research questions.

The research design had limitation in terms of generalization of results to regional and national level. The findings from the case of one zone out of fourteen zones might not be generalized. The challenges from one zone might not be exactly similar to those of other zones and education division. This is because the contexts may differ in terms of mentors and student teachers' personalities and availability of resources among other factors. Therefore, generalization of results may not applicable.

5.6   Issues for further research
The researcher suggests the following issues as areas of further research.

a) A similar research using a larger sample.

b) A similar research done in a different education division.

c) A similar research with a combination of head teachers and mentors as participants.

d) A research on issues of college induction versus mentoring.

5.7   Summary

The major challenges in the IPTE programme evolve around training, roles of mentors and coordination amongst stakeholders. Ineffective training approaches prevented mentors from acquiring the relevant mentoring skills. Student teachers' views and experiences in the mentoring process simply reflect the challenges encountered during the mentoring process and how the mentoring process has been mishandled by stakeholders. A training model incorporating the instructional strategies of the cognitive apprenticeship model can be a better way of training mentors. The instructional strategies include modeling, coaching, scaffolding, articulation, reflection and exploration.

With availability of adequate resources and commitment from stakeholders, well trained mentors can be a solution to the myriad challenges unveiled in the study.

There should also be better coordination among key institutions involved in the process, viz: TPS, TTC, DEM's office as well as DTED who are responsible for payment of allowances as well as other logistics to make the mentoring process meaningful and successful. The success comes if the overall goals and objectives of mentoring are met. And the goal of mentoring is to build a wholesome, professional teacher who is committed to the service after learning from the mentors and experienced teachers through the mentoring process. The situation as of now is that there is no effective mentoring.

In the final analysis, it is the hope of this study that improvements in the student teacher mentoring process will be made if the recommendations which have been suggested will be considered by the appropriate stakeholders.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Letter of Identification from Mzuzu University

Yours Sincerely,

Sam D. Dumba Safuli (PhD)
COORDINATOR MEd. PROGRAMME

Cc: District Education Manager – Mzimba North
      Primary Education Advisor (PEA), Enukweni Education Zone,
      Head Teacher, Encongolweni Primary School,
      Head Teacher, St. Kizito, Primary School,
      Head Teacher, Embombeni Primary School,
      Head Teacher, St. Monica Primary School,
      Head Teacher, Katula, Primary School,
      Head Teacher, Enukweni, Primary school.
      Head Teacher, Holera Primary school
      Head Teacher, Kavula Primary School.

Appendix B

Letter of informed consent for the participants

I am Sautsani Mercy Tauzi, a Master of Education student at Mzuzu University. As a post graduate student, it is recommended that I write a thesis to complete my studies. As such, I intend to carry out a study in eight (8) primary schools in Enukweni Zone in Mzimba North education district. My target populations are all mentors and student teachers. From these eight (8) primary schools, I will only require one (1) mentor and two (2) student teachers from each school to participate in the study.

My study is about investigating challenges mentors and student teachers face in the mentoring process during teaching practice in the Initial Primary Teacher Education programme (IPTE).

I intend to use interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis to collect data from participants. Both student teachers and mentors will be interviewed. A focus group discussion will be conducted will mentors only. Interviews and focus group discussions will be recorded so as to provide back up for data. The School Experienced Journal for Term 1 will be used as a '*document as a resource'* for document analysis.

The findings of the study will help notify stakeholders on areas that need immediate address to improve the mentoring practice, hence offer quality learning for the student teachers and primary school learners.

I humbly request for your consent to participate I the study. To ensure security and confidentiality, participants' names will be concealed throughout the study. Data collected

will be entirely used for the study. As a participant, you are free to withdraw from the participating at any phase of the study. No harm will be inflicted on you.

<div align="center">Declaration</div>

I, _____, declare that I will participate in this study to contribute towards positive change in primary school teacher education.

I, _____, declare that I may decide to withdraw from participating in the study at any point I feel uncomfortable to proceed.

Appendix C

Schedule for Data Collection

Site	Visit number	Date
Engcongolweni	1	December 3, 2013
St. Kizito	1	December 3, 2013
Embombeni	2	December 4, 2013
Katula	2	December 4, 2013
St. Monica	3	December 5, 2013
Enukweni	3	December 5, 2013
Kavula	4	December 6, 2013
Holera	4	December 6, 2013

Table C1: Individual interviews with student teachers

Site	Visit number	Date
Engcongolweni	1	January 20, 2014
St. Kizito	1	January 20, 2014
Embombeni	1	January 20, 2014
Katula	2	January 21, 2014
St. Monica	2	January 21, 2014
Enukweni	2	January 21, 2014
Kavula	3	January 22, 2014
Holera	3	January 22, 2014

Table C2: Individual interviews with mentors

Site	Visit number	Date
Enukweni TDC	1	March 10, 2014

Table C3: Focus Group Discussion with mentors

Site	SEJ from	Quantity	Visit number	Date
Enukweni TDC	Engcongolweni	2	1	March 24
	St. Kizito	2	1	March 24
	Embombeni	2	2	March 25
	Katula	2	2	March 25
	St. Monica	1	3	March 26
	Enukweni	2	3	March 26
	Kavula	2	4	March 27
	Holera	2	4	March 27

Table C4: Schedule for Document analysis on the School Experience Journal (SEJ)

Appendix D

Interview Guide for Student teachers

Core question

What can you tell me about mentoring during teaching practice?

Follow up questions depending on responses from student teachers:

1. How can you describe relationship with your mentor?

2. How do you mentors guide you?

3. As a student teacher, what do you consider to be your role in mentoring?

4. What qualities would you expect your mentor to possess?

5. Who is a mentor to you?

6. What should the mentor do to effectively provide support and guidance in mentoring?

7. What activities can enhance a working relationship?

8. What do you think of your mentor?

9. What do you feel about mentoring?

Appendix E

Interview Guide for Mentors

Core question

What can you tell me about your experience with mentoring student teachers?

Follow up questions depending upon responses to the core question:

1. How do you prepare for mentoring student teachers?

2. What do you consider to be your roles as a mentor?

3. Did you undergo any training to qualify for the mentoring job?

4. Ho were you identified for the mentoring for the mentoring of student teachers?

5. What can you say about your relationship with the following:

    a. Student teachers

    b. College lecturers

    c. Teaching practice school administration

6. What are your views regarding mentoring student teachers?

Appendix F

Focus Group Discussion Guide

Questions

1. How did you become a mentor?

2. What is your role in teacher preparation?

3. Apart from training, what other factors enables you to perform your duties as a mentor?

4. What can you say about the nature of student teachers?

5. What is the purpose of mentoring?

6. How do you work towards fulfilling the purpose?

7. What do you feel about mentoring?

Appendix G

Codes	Categories	Themes
Lob Pl Tlm St negl St qualities	• Inadequate lesson observation • Mentor preparation for lesson observation • Inadequate teaching and learning resources • Unwillingness and negligence by student teachers • Un cooperative and indisciplined student teachers	Professional and academic guidance and support.
Un cop TPs admin & exp trs Wkld	• Teaching Practice school administration and experienced teachers not cooperative • Big work load for mentors	Collegiality
Jn content Tghwk	• Too much content in the journal • Tough work for mentors and student teachers	School Experience Journal (SEJ)
Mentor qual	• Professional expertise	Qualities of mentors

	• Lack of confidentiality • Honouring appointments with student teachers	
Orient ResourceProvdr Do as I say	• Roles of mentors • Mentor as sole resource providers to student teachers • Respect the mentor's decision to impress the status quo	Induction of student teachers at the teacher training college
Demand job Ft job	• Demanding and tough job • A full time job	Nature of mentoring
Incentive	• Mentor allowances • Professional upgrading • Student teachers' up-keep allowances	Motivation
Mentor id	• Identification and selection of mentors • Mode of training	Recruitment and training of mentors

Training		
Posting	• Posting of mentors	Coordination between Teaching Practice Schools, Teacher Training College and the District Education Manager's Office
Lecturer info	• Varied information from college lecturers	
Mentor accmd	• Housing of mentors	

Table G1: Codes, categories and themes that emerged from Interviews and Focus Group

Discussions

Appendix H

Codes	Category	Themes
Unsigned, uncommented	• Demanding and tough job	Nature of mentoring
Undone; incomplete activities Activities done wrongly	• Tough work for student teachers and mentors	The School Experience Journal (SEJ)
Unconstructive comments	• Mode of training	Recruitment and training

Table H1: Codes, categories and themes that emerged from document analysis of the
School Experience Journal (SEJ)