Student Teachers' Perceptions and Experiences on Mentoring Practices and Competence Development at Makerere University in Uganda

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# Student Teachers' Perceptions and Experiences on Mentoring Practices and Competence Development at Makerere University in Uganda

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## Abstract

**Purpose:** This study explored the perceptions and experiences of student teachers on mentoring practices and competence development at Makerere University in Uganda.

**Methodology:** Basing on the three mentoring models of mentoring developed by Twoli (2011) as the analytical lens, this study explored the mentoring practices currently existing at Makerere University, the model of mentoring the University is aligned to and how it develops Student teachers' competences. The three mentoring models are the corporate model (traditional model), the more improved collaborative model and the emerging model of mentoring practices. Phenomenology was adopted as a qualitative research design anchored in the constructivist interpretivist paradigm. Data was collected using unstructured interviews from purposively selected twelve finalist student teachers and triangulated with review of documents and literature to cross validate the findings. Data was analyzed using the framework analysis.

**Findings:** Makerere University is still tagged in the corporate/ traditional model of mentoring student teachers basing on the way they organize, supervise and moderate their student teachers on practicum.

**Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy:** The Ministry of Education and Sports (MOE&S) in Uganda through the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) should include mentorship programmes as a formalized minimum standard in teacher education institutions. Universities and other teacher preparation institutions should introduce mentorship programmes for university staff and schools. The study also recommended that lecturers and senior teachers should be sensitized about the effects of relying on the traditional/corporate mentoring model through professional development courses.

**Keywords:** *Mentoring, student teachers, Competences, corporate, collaborative and emerging models of mentoring, school practice, lecturers.*

## Introduction

All over the world, from the commencement of the 21st century teacher preparation institutions are challenged in many ways with the recent complex demands of quality education envisaged in the SDG4 (UNESCO, 2015). Universities have to respond to global trends resulting from globalization and massification of higher education (Kasozi, 2015). The preparation of teachers has shifted from the academic drift to practical competence - based teaching and learning that can develop competent professionals who possess not only knowledge and skills, but also appropriate social attitudes and behaviour (Wronka, 2013).

Traditional methods of teaching and learning have been challenged seeking new and innovative pedagogical practices that promote collaboration and social relationships with students and knowledge transfer. Mentoring has been earmarked by some scholars and practitioners (MOE$S, 2007; Twoli, 2011; Wronka, 2013; Majoni and Nyaruwata, 2015; Makerere University, 2020), as one of the benefiting and innovative concept that could effectively be used as one of the pedagogical practices in teacher preparation.

Mentoring as a concept and pedagogical practice has been explicit to be effective in developing competent student teachers as it is commonly used in organisations, agencies (Bozeman &Feeney, 2008), as well as elementary and secondary schools (Rhodes, 2002). It establishes dialogue and collaborative relationships to provide ongoing support, communication and team work in teacher preparation and development (MOE&S, 2007). It provides also an opportunity for individualized attention and support thus has proved a very effective way of teaching and learning for competence development (Halai, 2006).

In Africa, it has been used in some colleges and universities as an effective competence-based concept in teacher preparation and professional development ((Majoni & Nyaruwata, 2015; Twoli, 2011; Crisp & Cruz, 2009).  For mentorship to succeed, a mentor and a mentee should each play their expected roles in the relationship. Mentoring, can therefore be defined as a relationship in which a caring qualified teacher (Mentor) provides support to a novice teacher (Mentee) in a one-to one relationship, to achieve a stated objective or solve a complex social problem (Olumbe & Kiarie, 2011). It is a concept that should aim at competence development of any mentee by the mentor.

Makerere University needs to use a competence -based model of mentoring her student teachers to effectively maintain the reputation it curved out in the production of competent teachers since its inception in the East African region to the present day (Kasozi, 2003). It is the oldest higher institution of learning in Uganda, established in 1922 by the Uganda British colonial Government. It served as the only University in the country until 1988. Its vision is "To be the leading institution for academic excellence and innovation in Africa "with the Mission "to provide innovative teaching, learning research and services responsive to National and Global needs." (Makerere University, 2020-2030).

Amongst its Colleges, is the College of Education and External Studies which oversees the preparation of student teachers towards a successful professional teaching career. The undergraduate teacher preparation takes a duration of three years. During their studies, the students are subjected to an intense academic and professional programme through teaching, course woks, assessments and a school practice exercise done at the end of year two and year three. Throughout their course of study, mentoring is important from lecturers at institutional level to senior teachers at school practice level. This research sought to explore the mentoring practices existing at Makerere University in order to find out the model of mentoring used to prepare student teachers. This could enhance the development of better innovative mentoring model at the university and other teacher preparation institutions.

Student teachers hold particular perceptions and experiences about pedagogical practices and in turn these form attitudes that can influence the way a person performs in a particular environment. The way an individual perceives success or failure often arises from his/her thoughts (Powell & Powell, 2007). Their perceptions in their learning process as the major beneficiaries are vital to examine how they think and how they can arrange what they know. This is the process of critical thinking about what they know, how they know it, and how they can process information to communicating what they know to others (Mulnix, 2012). Therefore, it is important that when designing and reviewing university programmes, student's opinions are solicited which is often less considered in Uganda. Therefore, this study sought to give a platform to student teachers' views on mentoring practices and competence development at Makerere University.

Competence development can be defined as the process of acquiring learning outcomes for a skill or a body of knowledge (Nyambura et al., 2011). When a student teacher is in the preparation process, there is need to get the learning outcome in terms of the expected performance, the conditions under which it is attained and the standards of assessing quality. The student teachers should demonstrate the ability to teach well (Competencies) and show the outcome of their learning process. Competencies are both generic or core and domain specific for a given course of study. A student teacher should be equipped with all the skills and knowledge critical for a competent professional. As one of the teacher preparation strategies to equip the novice teachers with the skills currently required in the competitive working world, mentoring ought to be given the attention it deserves to help in competence development of student teachers not only by Makerere University but also other Teacher Education Institutions elsewhere in the country and beyond.

### Statement of the problem

Mentoring is an innovative pedagogical practice in university learning and other organizations (Wronka, 2013). Makerere university aims at enhancing student advisory and

support services by providing a greater range of teaching and learning activities including mentorship (Makerere university, 2020-2030). However, there is lack of sufficient and well-structured framework that clearly guide on mentoring in Teacher Education Colleges in Uganda (MoE&S, 2005). This has created a vacuum in the mentoring process for both the educators as mentors and student teachers as mentees in all teacher preparation institutions including universities. In essence, anyone who is a qualified teacher is considered good enough to be mentor. The main research questions that guided the study were: (i) what are the mentoring practices at Makerere University and the secondary schools where student teachers are sent for school practice in Uganda? (ii) what is the model used for mentoring novice teachers at Makerere University? (iii) how do the practices enhance competence in the professional career of novice teachers? (iv) what challenges impact achievement of effective mentoring at Makerere University and school practice institutions in Uganda?

## Theoretical Perspective

## Mentoring practices

Shea (2002) defines mentoring as a process involving the mentor and mentee working together to discover and develop the mentee's latent abilities and ensure the mentee acquires knowledge and skills of teaching. Mentoring is a collaborative process in which new members of the teaching profession are provided ongoing assistance and support by one or more skilled and experienced teachers. This relationship should be collegial in nature and all experiences should be directed towards the development of and refinement of the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary for effective learning (MoE&S, 2007). This process is expected to be mutually beneficial for all parties involved and to result into improved instructional practice and professional performance.

According to Twoli (2011) different countries in the world have different ways in which they prepare novice teachers. These depend on a number of factors which include: economy, research knowledge and lastly the preference. These factors have been used by different institutions to come up with what Twoli, referred to as models of mentoring in the preparation of teachers. According to Twoli, there are three models used by institutions in mentoring pre-service teachers; namely the corporate model which is regarded as the traditional model; the more improved collaborative model which uses the concept of mentors, who are experienced teachers and finally the current emerging model which also uses the mentor concept but goes further by not just depending on the classroom experience of mentors but actually trains them in the mentoring skills. These are also acknowledged in Uganda as the Apprenticeship Model (learning to see), the Competency Model (Learning to teach together) and the Reflective Model (from teaching to learning) (MoE&S, 2007).

## The corporate model

The corporate model can be regarded as the basic and traditional model common in many countries especially developing countries because of its being economical in its operations. In Uganda, it requires working with experienced practitioners and learn by seeing his/her guide for articulating and presenting recipes (MoES, 2007). The model has limited structure in interaction and students do most activities according to their choice for instance, they select their role models basing on characteristics that captivate them; apply and get posted to schools of their request depending on the needs of schools and vacancies available. Thus, students opt for mentoring practices basing on their comfort zones. There is almost no interaction between mentors and mentees who are the lecturers, the teachers and administration in most cases. In a nutshell the corporate model is characterized by:

- Little or no interaction between the lecturers (supervisors), the practicing teachers, the school management and the student teachers.
- Limited feedback from lecturers (supervisors) on professional development of the novice teacher.
- Individual role model preferences.
- Limited guidance to the novice teacher by teachers in the school.
- Supervision mostly by generalists thus lack of adequate guidance in content and professional activities (Pungur, 2007).

These weaknesses in the end translate to poor quality professional guidance and school assimilation. The end product is teachers who lack collective responsibility in the profession, offer ineffective instruction and poor performance. This realization has prompted innovations in teacher education and one such and poplar innovation is the design and use of the collaborative mentoring professional model.

**The collaborative mentoring professional model**

The collaborative model advocates for and depends on the harmony established between the two institutions-the training institution (University or college) and the school of practicum. Each has a specific role to play in establishment of the working relationship with one another. As a teacher training institution, the university needs a number of stable schools that can absorb its student-teachers. There should also be prior arrangements for such collaborative relationship to succeed.

In Uganda this model is referred to as the Competency Model because it involves learning how to teach from others (MoES, 2007). In this model the concept of Mentor teachers is emphasized as crucial. Mentor takes his/her role as a systematic trainer based on the pre-defined competences or behaviours specified by others (MoES, 2007). Mentor teachers are experienced teachers responsible for providing support, advice, guidance and counselling through performance feedback to novice teachers. Using their experience, mentors assist novice teachers to plan and prepare their lessons, how to develop their lessons, using

resources and teaching aids, classroom management skills, gaining familiarity with methodology, assessment and reflective/evaluation practice.

It can be summarized that mentors generally provide guidance and model professional behavior through the development of supportive relationships and responsible for holding the key to evaluator (Twoli, 2011). Mentor observes the mentee based on pre-defined observation schedule and provides feedback (MoES, 2007). This needs to be established from the beginning of school practice placement between the university and the school staff where an agreement to work closely is fostered with the schools that host student teachers. Such schools should have cooperating teachers to commit themselves to mentoring the novice teachers. They should be ready to bond, connect and show genuine concern to develop the latent skills of their mentees.

The collaborative model gets this label because its operation forges the collaboration between the two key institutions, which are the schools and the teacher training institutions in form of universities or colleges. However, though it is viewed as the best in the world, it has been used with a lot of innovations which include improvement of the quality of mentors through training and offering skills in mentoring, incorporation of mentoring as a concept in professional courses of novice teachers among others. These innovations have culminated into the emerging model of mentoring.

**Emerging model in teacher development**

This is one that is developing as a result of many modifications and innovations from country to country, region to region and institution to institution. In Uganda, it is referred to as the Reflective Model that involves thinking through different ways of teaching to develop a deeper understanding of the learning process (MoES,2007). The main modification and emphasis is in the improvement of the mentoring skills for both the mentor and mentee. However, to facilitate this process, mentor needs move from the instructor to co-enquirer position in order to promote critical reflection. These modifications range from providing structured and Semi- structured courses to offer mentoring skills to mentors and mentees and providing incentives to motivate the mentoring process to be effective.

This has been tried out in different parts of the world and institutions for example in USA, mentors are trained and offered certification and incentives to even mentor their fellow staff members (Wronka, 2013), while in Africa mentoring has also been developed with its own characteristic in different countries for instance in Zimbabwe during school practice student teachers are attached to qualified teachers as mentors to grow professionally but their model is designed in its own emerging characteristics (Majoni & Nyaruwata, 2015). The main aspect that has characterized the emerging model is emphasis of mentoring courses to be integrated in the Course programmes and professional

development courses as well as provision of incentives to mentors to motivate them perform as desired. Other innovations include using master's students to mentor undergraduates, designing short training programmes like workshops, conferences, seminars among others to equip the involved parties with skills for mentoring. The evolution and development of these models on mentoring can be illustrated in figure.
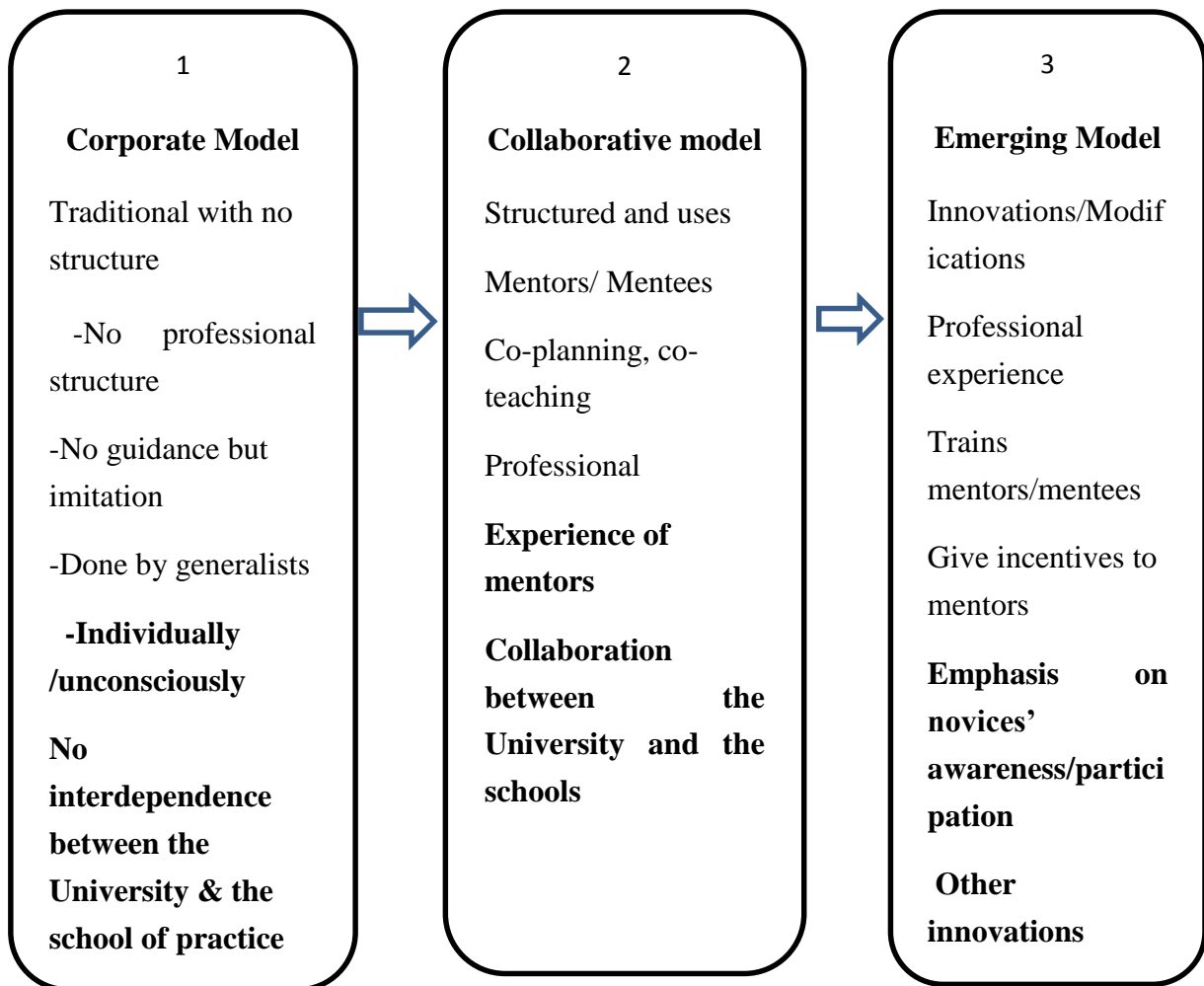
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
|---|---|---|
| **Corporate Model** | **Collaborative model** | **Emerging Model** |
| Traditional with no structure | Structured and uses | Innovations/Modifications |
| -No professional structure | Mentors/ Mentees | Professional experience |
| -No guidance but imitation | Co-planning, co-teaching | Trains mentors/mentees |
| -Done by generalists | Professional | Give incentives to mentors |
| **-Individually /unconsciously** | **Experience of mentors** | **Emphasis on novices' awareness/participation** |
| **No interdependence between the University & the school of practice** | **Collaboration between the University and the schools** | **Other innovations** |

**Figure 1: Theoretical Development of Mentoring models (Twoli. 2011)**

Figure 1 shows the development of mentoring models in regard to how it has evolved overtime. The corporate model was the traditional model common in most parts of the world because it is economical and convenient. It has no professional structure of operation and it happens naturally by imitation and goodwill. There is limited guidance and feedback and promotes master/student relationship or superior/subordinate relationship. The weaknesses of the corporate model translated into the collaboration model to have a structure of mentoring in place. The central part of it is the professional experience of a mentor that is used to guide, assess and give feedback to the mentee but this depends on the personality and commitment of the cooperating teacher as well as the response of the novice. However, some countries have become more innovative and initiated some modification to the collaborative model to make it more effective. For instance, in addition to the professional experience of the mentor, mentors are also trained to even help working teachers and given incentives to make them more productive in executing their duties.

Other innovations include the mentoring course unit in the curriculum, professional courses to offer skills to novices as well. This has culminated into the emerging mentoring model because of its innovations and improvements. These models of mentorship guided this study to unearth the mentoring processes apparently in practice at Makerere University and competence development.

## Methodology

The study was purely qualitative and adopted the Phenomenological research design to obtain the lived experiences of the participants. Phenomenology became the genre of inquiry to explore the perceptions and experiences of student teachers on mentoring practices and competence development at Makerere University. Phenomenology stems from the views of a German mathematician Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) (Creswell, 2007). Van Manen (2014) regarded phenomenology as "a method of abstemious reflection on the basic structures of the lived experience of human existence" (p. 26) characterized by absolute separation from bias and assumption (Moustakas, 1994). Van Manen's approach to phenomenology together with Heidegger (1927-2008) advocated for the need to include interpretations of experience into descriptions made by the individuals. It is related to the constructivist postmodern view that believes that knowledge constructed not socially inflicted. The target population was of twelve undergraduate student teachers in third year pursuing Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science with Education degrees from the College of Education and External Studies-Makerere University. They were purposively selected because they had more exposure as finalists who were getting ready for professional work. The sample size was reached at basing on the phenomenological stance of not using more than fifteen respondents in a phenomenological study (Mariwilda, 2015). Data was collected using unstructured interviews and documents/literature review. An interview guide was prepared to logically guide the themes and questions in order to systematically present the findings. The thematic framework analysis was used to analyze the data obtained from unstructured interviews while content analysis was used to analyze documents/literature data (Creswell, 2007). Appropriate ethical principles and guidelines were followed to protect the rights of participants Using the UNCST (2014) principles for conducting research among humans. Participation was voluntary ascertained by signing the consent form. The interviews were audio recorded for in-depth transcription and data analysis.

## Findings and Discussion

This part presents the findings and discussion of the study. They are categorized into four themes following the research questions. The first theme explains the mentoring practices at Makerere University, the second theme brings out the model of mentoring used in relation to the existing practices, the third theme explains how the mentoring practices

develop competences and finally the challenges faced by novice teachers in the process and recommendations**.**

**Mentoring practices at Makerere University**

From participants' perceptions and experiences, no formal practices on mentoring are carried out either at the University or schools where they carried out school practice. There is no structure/organisation or any guidelines on mentoring as a process for both the student teachers and the host teachers at school level who would be mentors. Anyone who is a qualified teacher is considered good enough to be mentor but does it unconsciously according to his/her personality and individual traits. Student teachers learn by seeing the work of experienced practitioners as they articulate and present their recipes. Participant 1 expressed that,

> *I would say that mentoring is relative; there is nothing in place to show that mentoring should be done; like say a number of sessions to carry it out. It is self-driven where a student identifies good practices into a lecturer and decides to act like him/her. And you know some lecturers are not good role models, others do it differently for example those who organize group teaching, do it in form of guidance and counselling during lectures I can say it is not done at all. At the school practice level, the teachers we help to teach try but it also depends on the personality of the teacher. Some are cooperative, others are indifferent.*

R2 also expressed that mentoring at the University mainly is done for the whole group in form of orientation in the first week of reporting in year one by the college administration and staff and then in classroom interactions through guidance and counseling especially as a lecture begins when students are still settling down for it. At the school practice level, she pointed out that maiden teachers make an introduction to the class and also help to provide with the teaching sequence and introduction of new teacher to the class but the rest it is up to the student teacher. She expressed,

> *The host teacher is just there to ask how far the teaching has gone*.

Likewise, R4 expressed that,

> *At Makerere, students' mentor each other because lecturers are overloaded with big classes and do not have time to teach the student teachers practical classroom teaching because they have a syllabus to cover as well as other issues of their own to attend to. In secondary schools like in ……where I went for school practice, some teachers even leave all the work to the student teacher. Some tease student teachers in front of their students.*

Efforts have been made in other Colleges at Makerere University but mentoring generally is still not well developed at policy level for instance at the College of Health Sciences,

while presenting results of a study on the 'Status of Mentorship at Makerere University College of Health Sciences', Dr. Damalie Nakanjako pointed out that the lack of a specific mentorship program, along with adhoc methods of choosing mentors and limited mentorship skills, have affected the quality of delivery on mentorship at the College of health Sciences (CHS) Makerere University. Her study team recommended the establishment of a mentorship program, training mentors on the mentorship process and mentoring good practices. They also recommended instituting protected time for mentorship. This clearly depict lack of a mentoring framework in the whole University; although some colleges are laying strategies on how it can be enhanced in teaching and learning. The College of Education and External Studies is not yet into any formal mentoring process especially at Undergraduate level because of the soaring numbers resulting from massification/liberalization of university education in Uganda. Due to large numbers in classes, the staff is limited to run the programmes as lecturers take on big teaching loads to large classes leaving them with no room to conduct additional activities like mentorship (Munene, ND).The mentoring practices at Makerere University led this study to establish the model of mentoring existing at the university.

## The model of mentoring at Makerere University

The perceptions and experiences of participants on practices of mentoring at Makerere University and the schools where they carried out teaching practice pointed to lack of process or policy or system in place to mentor undergraduate student teachers. R1 expressed that,

> We *talk of mentoring but it does not exist in real sense at Makerere University"*. This was reinforced by R6 that: "*senior teachers are expected to mentor us into the teaching life but each does it his /her way according to the character......some are good but others are negative.*

Students are driven by idealism to regard lectures and senior teachers in both the university and schools as their mentors to discover the truth, beauty and goodness of the teaching profession. These three values determine three types of activities-intellectual, aesthetic and moral virtues in teaching. Student teachers have come to believe that working with experienced practitioners enables them to learn by seeing how they do things here and there. According to pragmatism whatever fulfils one's purpose and develops his life is true pragmatism. In pragmatism Dewey (1939) emphasize that students should be helped to confront the real situations to adjust to the changing situations, through constant dynamic interactions with experienced teachers. And for that matter, many lecturers and senior teachers influenced by the perennial philosophies behave in a way of, "let student learn from me ideology". However, there is lack of guidance from the Uganda national policy

which provided a mentor's guide to only primary teachers college (MOES, 2005) leaving behind other teacher education institutions. R3 mentioned that,

> *Lecturers and teachers are always indifferent, show less concern of student teachers and instead it is the student teachers to look up to them for professional assistance.*

Participant (R5) expressed the issue of soaring numbers that resulted from massification of university education in Uganda. From 1988 Makerere University liberalized university education and over the past three decades student numbers in university enrollment have increased beyond the capacity increased. From 2010 the enrollment in Higher Education Institutions in Uganda leaped from 183,190 (5.4%) to 260,000 (6.9%) in 2016 (NCHE, 2014). Due to soaring numbers, this has resulted into some institutional challenges notably high student-staff ratio and staff inefficiencies among others (Matovu, 2018). R5 expressed this as follows,

> *The issue of lecturer: students' ratios at the university makes it difficult for mentoring due to the heavy workload involved. Lecturers are not able to do quality work even in lecture room teaching, so how can they shoulder more workload to mentor student teachers?*

Likewise, this was expressed by R10 as lack of time resulting from overloads of staff and unequal distribution of the student numbers with the available staff members. These practices depicted the existence of the corporate model assumed to be the traditional and currently unproductive in teacher preparation. It is an informal type of mentoring that naturally is occurring where lecturers and also senior teachers provide supporting relationships to student teachers but not necessarily mentor them. R2 mentioned that,

> *Mentoring done at Makerere University is normally for the whole group of student teachers during orientation in the first week of reporting in year one.*

This was also explicit in the semester one time table for year one student teachers August, 2019 done by the administration and staff of the Makerere University College of Education and External Studies. The first week was clearly labeled: "Orientation Week". At the school practice level, R2 also mentioned that,

> *Maiden teachers introduce student teachers to the classes, provides them with the teaching sequence and few moderate the planning, preparation and tips on classroom management.*

Therefore, there is general guidance and support, in some instances, this helps students learn something new, while in most instances it is an aspect of "Every man for himself and God for us all".

At Makerere or Ugandan secondary schools, mentoring from the students' perceptions and experiences was neither an event nor a process. There is no common ground agreed upon for any mentoring process to take place in any of those settings, no specified abilities and virtues let alone any policy guidelines in the country's education system for mentoring to happen in educational institutions (MoES, 2005). The Ministry of Education and Sports (2005) developed a Mentors' Training Guide for Teacher effectiveness while already in teaching service but it was only meant for primary teacher's colleges excluding universities which prepare the tutors of PTCs. Therefore, right from national strategies to institutions of teacher education, there are no mentoring guidelines and initiatives put in place for the process of mentoring novice teachers. Thus, mentoring is not personal but occurs as a general aspect.

Twoli (2011) argues that most pre-service training programmes in developing Countries especially in Africa follow the corporate model when it comes to teacher preparation and this is exactly what was discovered at Makerere University. While mentorship is becoming a core element of teacher education elsewhere in the world, at Makerere University it's still challenged by institutional challenges like high student teacher ratios and teaching demands resulting from massification of university education in Uganda (Mamdani, 2007; Kasozi, 2003).

Pungur (2007) further argued that the corporate model is flexible for some teacher training institutions because "it allows for students to perform many tasks according to their selection for instance, they select schools of their choice for school practice placement. They are assessed by tutors or lecturers from a college or university without less collaboration with the host teachers. There is normally very little structure in the interaction with the teachers in the schools in the corporate model. However, this model has been criticized as lacking a professional structure to guide pre-service teachers during their preparation (Twoli, 2011). It falls short of constructivist pedagogy which is an emergent epistemological stance informed by the ideas of John Dewey and William James; the later work of Jean Piagets; and the socio-historical work of Lev Vygotsky, Jerome Bruner and Ernest Von.

Constructivist pedagogy emphasize the social and contextual nature of learning that is student-centred and departs from traditional pedagogies where corporate mentoring is situated. It strongly advocates for the collaboration mentoring model where student teachers work with experienced practitioners to construct knowledge and skills through inquiry and engagement (Kablan & Kaya, 2014). Reflection on teaching is at the heart of this kind of preparation as student teachers need to move beyond routines and rituals to develop a deeper understanding of the learning process; thinking through different ways of teaching. UNESCO (2015) on Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4) contends that learning throughout life and participation in the society of learning are key factors in

meeting the four pillars of education which are learning to live together, learning to know, learning to do and learning to be. The (SDG4) is a continuation of the Millennium Development Goal 2 and global Education for All (EFA) 2000-2015 commitment "to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all" by the year 2030 (UNESCO, 2015) To achieve this, traditional pedagogies need an overhaul to more engaging student-centred teaching and learning. Subsequently, this required an exploration on whether student teachers regard mentorship as a vital aspect in teacher preparation.

**The influence of mentoring on student teachers at Makerere University.**

All participants were in support of mentoring as an important aspect in the process of teacher preparation. R1 mentioned that,

> *It builds self-motivation and changes one's negative attitude on teaching as a profession if it is well done.*

Student teachers vehemently argued that during the pedagogical sessions in classrooms at the University they are equipped with theory work but mentoring is an opportunity to grow professionally under the guidance of qualified teachers especially in the school setting. The mentor teacher is able to impact practical knowledge to the mentee as well as inducts the student teacher to school culture. According to the MOE&S (2007) One of the most important functions of the mentor teacher is to prepare workspace and a conducive environment for the student teacher to teach and learn as well as orient the student teacher to the school culture, facilities, staff and policies. This was expressed by R4 that,

> *Student teachers need to be oriented into the practical school system to build confidence in them and that requires an experienced teacher.*

Similarly, R3 stated that,

> *If it is done professionally, it molds teachers to fit in the process with the required coping skills but if it is poorly done may also cause burn out.*

R4 equally mentioned the influence of the mentoring process as,

> *An innovation that can help in the provision of professional and social support by mentors to the student teachers.*

Some student teachers are always demoralized about the teaching profession and its pressure demands. They need to be introduced to the real world of teaching, by helping them to adjust to classroom teaching, ensure learning takes place and above all accepting the conditions of service in the teaching profession. Many student teachers have abandoned teaching for other low-grade jobs because they are not mentored to fit in the teaching world.

R5 also expressed how mentoring builds confidence, comfort and enables the mentee to be accepted in the teaching world. She said

> *When one is mentored, it bridges the gap between the new teacher and the old teachers. This results into a conducive work environment for the mentee.*

One other respondent (R8) acknowledged the need and influence of mentoring in a student teacher's preparation journey thus,

> *I would say that mentors are very necessary to inducts the student teacher to school Culture because mentors are versed with subject matter knowledge as well as professional knowledge. They can be able to harness the potentials of students to teach very well.*

R7 noted that,

> *Mentoring builds self-esteem and confidence into a student teacher as well as team-work and networking. It can help one to put in actual practice what they learnt.*

The MoE & S (2007) acknowledges the importance of mentoring as promoting sharing of ideas, fosters unity and harmonizes the teaching among the novice and experienced teachers". Among its aims, mentoring creates collaborative contexts where both mentors and mentees learn (MOE & S, 2007). This enables all fit in the system to offer effective practices and work as colleagues by minimizing unbecoming habits.

R10 urged that,

> *Mentoring helps one to point in the correct direction and become a better teacher but at the same time felt that teaching is a calling from God and once one is in the preparation, he/she can find ways to fit.*

Mentoring involves shared goals, opportunities, motivation and rewards. The mentoring process is a cooperative agreement between peers in which new members of the teaching profession are provided ongoing support and assistance by one or more skilled and experienced teachers. This relationship should be collegial in nature, and all experiences should be directed towards the development of and refinement of the knowledge, skills. And dispositions necessary for effective learning. This process is expected to be mutually beneficial for all parties involved and to result in improved instructional practice and professional competence.

However, he also acknowledged the importance of a mentor in ones' life.

Mentoring is the most effective way of training quality teachers and it has been applied with success in the areas of medicine, building and the military (Strong and Baron, 2004). According Majoni & Nyaruwata (2015) mentoring is crucial in the growth and

development of a student teacher and the mentor has the greatest influence on the professional development of the student teacher. The mentor is able to impact practical knowledge to the mentee. According to Majoni & Nyaruwata (2015) professional development of the novice teacher is the responsibility of the qualified and ex-renewal teacher. Mentors provide professional and social support to the student teachers. The mentor inducts the student teacher to school culture. Mentors are competed in subject matter knowledge and practical teaching and are sensitive to the needs of student teachers. Mentoring makes mentees feel free to ask for help, encourages transfer of skills from experienced teachers to less experienced ones and in turn individuals strive to do their best (MoES, 2007).

Therefore, it's explicit that mentoring is a vital component of teacher preparation and is vital for orientation, induction, motivation and competence. It makes work easy in the teaching profession and reduces stress and burn out. Teachers and lecturers who shun the importance and contribution of mentoring in the preparation of novice teacher are using the old philosophy (the banking) approach because student teachers will not actively and constructively be engaged in the teaching profession. Student teacher's acknowledgement of the importance of mentorship necessitated the inquiry of the challenges they face given the way it is being practiced at Makerere university.

**Challenges faced by student teachers in the mentoring process.**

The dominant challenge given by all participants was that there is no process or policy or system in place at all levels to guide any mentoring process. R1 said,

> *We talk of mentoring but it does not exist in real sense. Senior teachers are supposed to mentor student teachers but they are not guided on how to mentor and as such they are not aware of what is expected of them and each helps her/his way*

Since it is inadvertently happening, accounts given by participants' revealed differences in challenges faced in two different settings -university and school setting. However, the common feature is that in both situations mentoring just occurs traditionally without any defined procedures and guidelines. R2 expressed that lecturers and teachers are always indifferent,

> *Mostly show less concern of student teachers and instead it is the student teachers to look up to them for assistance.*

Likewise, R3 mentioned the problem of lack of planning for the mentoring process in both situations, less commitment and time and the issue of student: lecturer ratios at the university which makes it difficult to mentor each student because of the work load as he said,

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> *Mentoring at Makerere is like the process of burning charcoal, like charcoal. At first logs of trees that are wet are burnt, but the burning is incomplete and at the end these trees form charcoal, so relating this to mentoring at Makerere, in year one lecturers try to mentor the freshers by attending to them and their problems but eventually they lose interest and students also in the end just want to get their paper and either become teachers on their own style or leave the profession to do other things.*

This was reinforced by R1 that, *Mentoring can at the same time deter ones' interest, if it is done poorly by incompetent people.*

R5 and R10 pointed out the failure of senior teachers to create time to attend to student teachers' mentoring needs as R5 said,

> *When I started school practice, the teacher I taught for was always absent and left me with the whole class. I am the one who set the examination and marked and gave her results. So, she did not mentor me at all apart from showing me where she stopped and introducing me to the class that I would be taking over her.*

Another challenge that was expressed by participants/student teachers was that they are always overloaded as senior teachers relinquish their responsibilities to them and assume that they will shoulder it all. Some student who do school practice in private schools are given load that belongs to senior teachers by administrators aiming at cutting operational teaching costs and renumerations. This leaves them all the work load and autonomy to be the overall decision makers of their classes thus no mentoring takes place at all. R8 said that,

> *There is a lot expected from us during school practice; one must be at the station from morning to evening and is expected to take part in all activities at school including co-curricular activities yet the senior teachers are always absent.*

R9 added the problem of superiority complex of some senior teachers and lecturers. This was a recurring aspect with R6 who expressed failure to communicate with lecturers and senior teachers because of the gap that is always created by other social factors like sex, gender, age, seniority, status, tribe, religious affiliations among others. The senior teachers are not aware of their mentoring roles and expect the student teachers to submit to them as superiors. Some may even humiliate the novice teachers Infront of students. Mentoring therefore depends on the character and personality of the individual senior teacher because all educators feel they are not obliged to carry it out. R9 pointed out that,

*Instead of assisting us some rebuke and minimise students even some ask for sexual favours and you find many students fear to consult because they don't want to be frustrated and disappointed.*

Mentoring as a process is always associated with some of its own shortcomings in Uganda. Twoli, (2011) explored that Many senior teachers, do not bother to recognize the student teachers. The student teachers expect an orientation where senior teachers are expected to assist them but unfortunately, they do not bother to assist as expected. Maphalala (2013) asserts that in addition to the supervisor or the 'attached' teacher (cooperating teacher), other teachers can be of great help to mentor the student teachers. They can also give a student teacher a good picture of what teaching is actually like. However, Majoni and Nyaruwata (2015), express that senior teachers are likely to be busy and preoccupied with their classes and should not be pestered unnecessarily.

Majoni & Nyaruwata, noted that in the African setting, many student teachers on school practice are given a big load in some schools to cover up the lost time and cost efficiency especially in private owned schools where teachers are paid wages per hour. This creates a poor and challenging working relationship with senior teachers who begin viewing them as their competitors. This assertion coincided with the experiences of some participants in this study.

Rogers (2007) identified aspects that could render mentoring ineffective and one of them is misunderstanding between the mentor and the mentee. Which can result into poor working relationship between them. Majoni and Nyaruwata (2015) in their study "Challenges in achieving effective mentoring during teaching practice in Teacher Education in Zimbabwe expressed that the mentor might not be trained on how to nature or mentor student teachers and are not sure of what to do. Lack of respect between the mentor and the mentees has negative consequences on the effectiveness of the mentoring process. Lack of professionalism on the part of the mentor can results in most of the work being done by the mentee without learning taking place.

Participants' views indicated that the current structure of mentorship in Uganda requires an overhaul from corporate mentoring to collaborative mentoring model. This could be developed along interdependence and partnership between Teacher education institutions and schools of practicum. The success of this model highly depends on the level of harmony established and maintained between the two institutions-the teacher Training Institution and the school of practicum. The collaborative mentoring model is illustrated in figure 2:
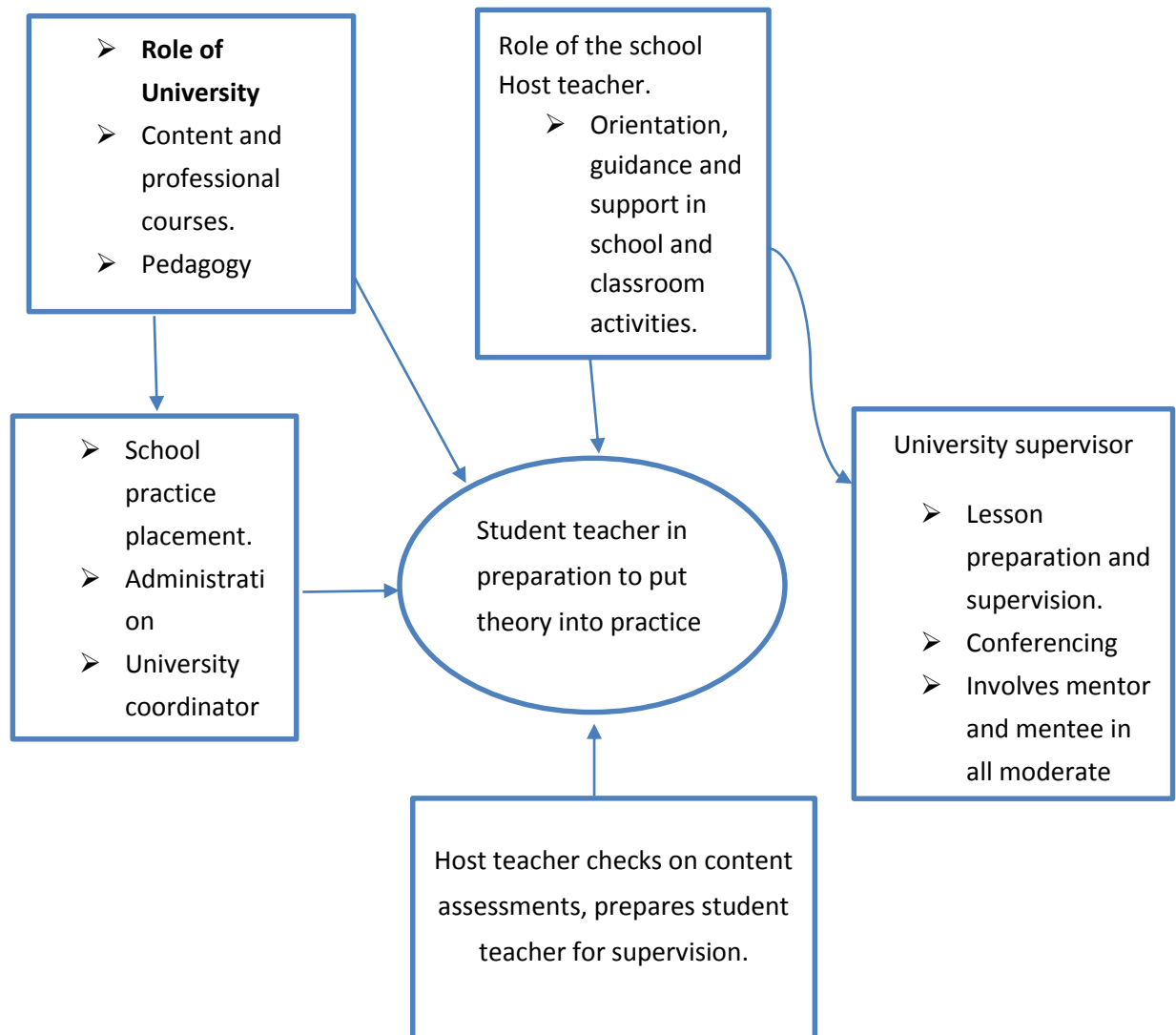
**Figure 2: School-University partnership in a collaborative mentoring model.**

The thesis behind the framework of collaborative mentoring is that student teachers' theory content from their subject combination and professional courses obtained from the University curriculum through, pedagogy, andragogy and finally school practice placement are put to practice at the school. Mentors/cooperating teachers/teachers who are replaced by the student teachers should be linked up to lecturers coming for supervision to work hand in hand. The mentor teachers guide student teachers at the schools of practice through the school culture and class activities while lecturers come in to supervise the lessons taught. Guided by the school mentors, the lecturer and the student teacher should be interdependent to prepare and arrive at the final grade suitable for the student teacher. This collaboration can enhance the production of a competent intern student teacher with

copying and soft skills for professional life. The components of the framework can be explained in details in the following segments.

## *Student teacher's theory content and professional subjects*

Students at the university study both theory and professional courses. The theory part forms a central part of teacher's knowledge of the subject content that should be mastered for application. Theories draw from a range of disciplines like history, geography, biology among others. In Ugandan setting, a student teacher should have two subjects that form his/her combination for instance History/ Geography; Economics/ geography among others but subjects can be in form of double main of a core subject for instance in Fine Art, English, Agriculture among others.

Professional courses/subjects involve subjects that uplift the professional and academic development as well as strategies, approaches and methods that involve soft skills for instance communication skills, problem-solving, looking at future career aspirations, leadership and team work. These include Philosophy of education, sociology, psychology, economics of education among others. Professional courses usually involve school practicum to put the learning into practice in a real-world environment. With the help of the curriculum, all the above components are realized through pedagogy and andragogy. Student teachers must learn through their own reflection, thinking and experiences and be able apply the strategies to translate the content to their learners. Regarding pedagogy, Makerere University aims at innovative teaching and learning to provide the desired human capital. The university is committed to create an appropriate environment and support to students to meet their academic and professional aspirations (Makerere University, 2020-2030).

## *The role of the University*

The University commits itself to offering learning that is responsive to both academic and practical students' needs and expectations. With the help of the curriculum, the university provides community oriented and competence- based learning that can prepare student teachers to take on societal challenges. The pedagogy/ andragogy is expected to promote critical, intellectual dispositions and build capacity of independent thinking and analysis of unchartered and complex issues (Makerere University, 2020-2030). For a holistic students' experience, Makerere accredits all its courses with NCHE and creates a conducive institutional environment to enhance effective teaching that meet the academic and professional aspirations. Regarding school practicum, the University is responsible for student teacher's placement although students are given utmost good faith to choose schools of their convenience. At the College of Education and External Studies, the school practice committee is in charge of this task. Duties of committee members include ensuring placement of student teachers into schools for teaching practice, field supervision and first

line respondents in times of crisis at host schools. It is suggested that committee members' contact information be made available to students on teaching practice should they need advice and support at any point during their field experience. In the above model suggested, the university should establish a formidable solidarity with schools where student teachers are posted for school practice and the University works in collaboration with the school to be able to follow the performance of student teachers together.

## *The role of the school of practice*

School practice is an opportunity to develop and evaluate the competence of novice teachers. The headteacher makes arrangements to place student teachers in their areas of specialization and, provides them with adequate resources to meet their teaching needs. In case they are to take up any extra duties and responsibilities in the school, they need to be informed early enough to adequately prepare for their fit in. However, extra duties and responsibilities should be limited to allow them streamline their teaching practice duties. As new teachers, students need to become acquainted with the school culture thus headteachers need some orientation to explain key policies and procedures. This is the time when mentor or host teachers can establish a supporting relationship to the intern teachers and with the lecturers to able to interdependently moderate the exercise. Schools should also help student teachers to acquire the necessary resources, accommodation and supplies.

An enabling environment by facilitating a disciplined and orderly school environment enable the student teachers to focus on teaching students, rather than just managing them. The school administration needs to streamline such routine administrative tasks so as to avoid disruption and confusion that can result from such. There is need to establish working professional relationships with the student teachers for instance, attending to their needs, welcoming them to the school, maintaining an open-door policy as this will facilitate their team spirit as well as rapport that enables coaching to take place if need be. Host teachers/mentors should be visiting classrooms, reviewing lesson plans, and providing immediate feedback to their student teachers. They can help them set reasonable goals, and routinely engage in "pedagogical talk" with their teachers They can co-plan and co-teach and observe each other to share experiences and engage in professional dialogue.

## *Mentors and mentees*

**Mentor: Lecturers and Host** Teachers are integral to successful professional teacher training or teacher education programme. They are field mentors due to their experience in the classrooms or those who relinquish of their work load to student teachers. They are expected to guide and model student teachers during their teaching practice in areas of instructional design, classroom management, assessment and broader notion of being a teacher. Different institutions may have different established standards that cooperating teachers must meet in order to host their student teachers. For example, cooperating

teachers should have a minimum of three years of teaching experience at their current school. This will provide them enough knowledge about the school and the system to guide student teachers. Cooperating teachers should be required to complete a course or seminar in supervision of student teachers. They should also hold some kind of teaching experience or be registered as professional teachers. Nevertheless, the mentors are expected to be seniors to help induct the new teachers fit in the new professional life

**Mentee:** Student teachers get to know the school community which includes school administrators, mentor teacher, students, classroom and school routines as they are posted to the school. Gradually they begin taking over some daily classroom and school responsibilities. Work with the school individuals and groups, and classes as assigned by headteacher and eventually the teachers they help. Mentees are expected to develop a communication plan with their mentor as well as field supervisor (e.g., calls, emails,). They should get involved into the school activities for instance attend staff and other school related meetings, begin to take over more daily responsibilities and teach whole class lessons. They should develop team work like plan and co-teach with mentor teacher as scheduled in the time table, fulfil the designated time tables each day. Where need be, they can develop and present schemes of work and lesson plans to a mentor teacher in advance for guidance. Both the mentor and mentee should take complete responsibility for the classroom, do evaluation together and plan and prepare for the supervisor's visit based on feedback from mentor teacher. This is how the novice teacher can adequately undergo supervision by university supervisor(s) in a collaborative relationship.

### *Nature of collaboration between lecturers and mentors in the framework*

Collaboration between the university lecturers and cooperating teachers in secondary schools begins with the placement of the student teachers. Lecturers can obtain a swift school practice exercise if they work together in the enhancement of practical teaching skills to novice teachers. As they induct, guide and assist the student teachers to perfect their instruction, lecturers would help to steer student teachers to perfection thus this will ease the supervision process. Moreover, the school mentors would act as watch men to put things right before supervision. That's why it is vital that a collaborative working relationship is established between the lecturer who moderates the school practice exercise and the mentor teacher who is being helped. A joint moderation and assessment would also yield the best results that are free from prejudice. Therefore, the exercise should foster a positive interdependent relationship between the university supervisor, the school host teacher and the intern/ student teacher. The three players should be interdependent and meet to discuss and determine the quality of the aspiring teacher to build a strong professional identity, growth and development of the student teacher as well as develop a positive attitude towards the teaching profession.

## Conclusion

The development of a knowledge-based economy necessitates the search for new methods and tools for enhancing effective teacher education learning processes. Mentoring as a tool to support learning could be beneficial to the student teacher if the mentoring process is well organised. Some researchers (Majoni & Nyaruwata, 2015; Maphalala, 2013; Wronka, 2013; Twoli, 2011) have reported positive benefits derived from an effective mentoring experience for the student teacher. These include getting opportunities to teach and reflect their teaching with the help of the mentor. It was therefore evident that mentoring as process for teacher preparation has not been given great attention in laying out policy guidelines and emphasis for Universities and secondary schools to carry it out in Uganda.

The main weaknesses have been linked with poor quality professional guidance and school assimilation. The end-product is teachers who lack collective responsibility in the profession. This concern has been reflected in a number of reports (Makerere University, 2008/2019; Makerere University, 2020-2030; MOES,2005; MOES, 2007; MOEDS, 2014; Majoni & Nyaruwata, 2015; NCHE, 2014; Twoli, 2011;). One reason in less developed counties Uganda inclusive, schools, colleges and universities have not managed to prepare teachers well, has been due to the corporate model which is viewed as defective at modern times (Twoli, 2011). Philosophically and pedagogically, it was important to listen to learners in order to know their thoughts and emotions. This in turn could help to package relevant interventions to uphold the requirements of quality education envisaged in the Sustainable Development Goal 4 (UNESCO, 2015).

## Recommendations

- The government of Uganda through the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoE & S) and the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) should introduce a well-structured framework to replace corporate (Traditional) mentorship with collaborative mentorship. Collaborative mentorship should be adopted and developed as the next mentoring model. The structure should regulate the practicum and induction of novice teachers in teacher Education Institutions, curriculum, support systems and staffing to formalize and improve mentorship programmes. This calls for traditional mentoring in teacher education to be transformed to collaborative mentoring model which stress harmony, interdependence and networking between the two key institutions- the schools and the teacher training institutions.
- At the school practicum stage, the collaborative model advocate for prior planning and partnership on placement of student teachers between the university and school of practicum. Mentors are identified and committed to the school practice exercise as host teachers and preferably these should be the teachers who hand over their

classes to the student teachers. The mentor teachers should be ready to connect, bond and guide the student teacher throughout the supervision exercise. This view is consistent with Mallison (1998 Pg. 87) who contends that: "*The ideal mentor is a functional mentor responding to the needs of mentees in varying situations*". A mentor should adopt the supportive role to upraise the confidence and self-esteem required into the student teacher. The success of this model highly depends on the level of harmony established and maintained between the two institutions-the teacher training institution and the school of practicum.

- Universities and all Teacher Education Institutions should work out mechanisms which will enable them to work interdependently with school practice institutional staff to promote collaborative mentorship programmes.

- Lecturers and senior teachers should be educated and sensitized by employers and other stakeholders about the weaknesses of the traditional (Corporate) mentoring model which promotes inadvertent and unconscious mentorship of student teachers. They should be mobilized to adopt their role as mentors and more practical means of training student teachers who could cope with the current 21$^{st}$ century demands of work. This could be through refresher courses, seminars, workshops and other professional development innovations. The collaborative mentoring model earmarks the concept of the mentor as an experienced teacher in the University and the school who provides front line advice, support and feedback to the student-teacher. The student teachers would learn from them professional copying skills for instance classroom management skills, methods of teaching, efficient use of teaching aids, lesson planning and development, assessment and reflective practice.

- Student teachers too should be sensitized on mentorship opportunities and their roles as mentees. They should be ready to cooperate and be involved into the training activities like meetings, communication, evaluation among others.

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