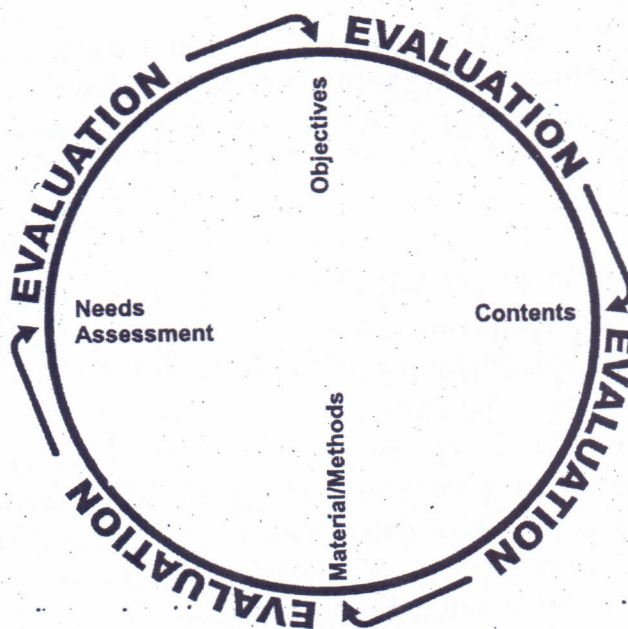


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# UNDERSTANDING MENTORING: REFLECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR SCHOOL-BASED ADULT AND TECHNICAL TEACHERS' PREPARATION

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## **Abstract**

*This study takes on the issue of understanding mentoring: reflective strategies for school-based adult and technical teacher preparation. Survey design was adopted for the study and the population included all the lecturers and students of adult and technical education in University of Lagos, Akoka; Lagos State University, Ojoo; Federal College of Education (Technical) Akoka; and Yaba College of Technology, Yaba. A sample of 30 lecturers each was randomly selected from Federal College of Education (Technical), Akoka and Yaba College of Technology, Yaba making a total of 60 respondents. All the lecturers in adult education from University of Lagos (15) and Lagos State University (12) making a total of 27 were used for the study. Thirty students (30) were sampled from each of the institutions making a total of 120 student respondents and 57 lecturers. Five research questions were raised, mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the data. The findings of the study are: mentoring programme is not effective in schools, schools do not adopt any strategy in mentoring students, and reflective strategies enhance and enrich mentees' teaching. It was recommended that: institutions should establish mentoring programme, fund and monitor the progress, teachers to cooperate with the school authority to make the mentoring programme succeed, the mentees should be encouraged to always use reflective strategy in their teaching and institutions to keep record of mentoring programme in the school.*

## **Introduction**

Education remains the transmission of worthwhile knowledge from the adult to the young generation, from the better informed persons to less informed individuals. Teachers are key actors in the education process and every meaningful activity in education should always pay due attention to the teacher factor. Teacher preparation programs across the country have faced criticisms



regarding the quality of their programs. It therefore became necessary that student-teachers and newly employed teachers undergo mentoring to enable them adequately deliver their lessons. The current move to school-based mentoring offers the possibility of considerable improvement over traditional arrangements for initial teacher preparation. But this opportunity will only be realized if old assumptions about theory and practice are modified and new practices based on a better understanding of ways in which effective teaching may be acquired. Just as other professionals need support to improve and reduce turnover, there are specific forms of support that help keep teachers in their schools after their first year of teaching.

Starting from the assumption that practicing teachers already possess many resources relevant to mentoring, understanding mentoring offers practical strategies and programmes for mentoring in the context of recent work on intelligent skills development, professional thinking and learning, counseling and helping strategies, and the nature and assessment of teaching competence. It should therefore be a useful resource for teachers taking on a mentoring role, and for those engaged in training and academic courses on school-based teacher education. Mentoring is to support and encourage people to manage their own learning in order that they may maximize their potential, develop their skills, improve their performance and become the person they want to be (Eric, 2013 ).

It is a partnership between two people (mentor and mentee) normally working in a similar field or sharing similar experiences. It is a helpful relationship based upon mutual trust and respect (Eric, 2013) A mentor is a guide who can help the mentee to find the right direction and who can help them to develop solutions to career issues. Mentors rely upon having had similar experiences to gain an empathy with the mentee and an understanding of their issues. Mentoring provides the mentee with an opportunity to think about career options and progress.

A mentor should help the mentee to believe in herself and boost her confidence. A mentor should ask questions and challenge the mentees, while providing guidance and encouragement. Mentoring allows the mentee to explore new ideas in confidence. It is a chance to look more closely at themselves, their issues, opportunities and what they want in life. Mentoring is about becoming more self aware, taking responsibility for ones' life and directing the life in the direction he decides, rather than leaving it to chance.

Educational leaders must be able to establish expectations or norms of teaching and learning for administrators and teachers alike while building organizational systems to support them while maintaining a climate that encourages teachers to continue learning (Harris, 2002). Schools that provide mentoring programmes assign a veteran teacher to act as adviser, teacher, and



coach to beginning teachers with their schools. The roles and responsibilities undertaken by the mentor vary from programme to programme. In all cases, however, it is the mentor who plays an essential role in achieving the goal of the induction programme. Using strategies such as consultation, demonstration, and observation, the mentor can act as the primary source of assistance for the new teachers. Teacher-Mentors are experienced teachers who are highly skilled practitioners, who are life-long learners, who are dedicated to promoting excellence in the teaching profession and who are trusted professionals willing to take a personal and direct interest in the development of a colleague.

Reflective strategy is a metacognitive strategy to help learners as individuals or organizations reflect upon experiences, actions and decisions taken. More technically, metacognition is the ability to evaluate one's own comprehension and understanding of subject matter and use that evaluation to predict how well one might perform on a task (Mayer, 2003). This is the process where the student takes conscious control of the learning. The learner thinks about how he is thinking in a cognitive sense. For example, the learner is using metacognition if he realizes that he is having more trouble learning how to complete a fraction problem than a multiplication problem. (Monica 2013) An awareness and understanding of how one thinks and uses strategies during reading and writing Blakey, E., & Spence, S. (1990). Developing metacognition. ERIC Digest a practitioner engages in reflection when problem in practice arises and an attempt is made to understand and resolve it. Reflection as a pedagogy can be seen as an application of Dewey's experiential learning theories and extension to problem-based learning based on constructivist values. Reflection involves an active exploration of experiences to gain new or greater understanding. Reflective Practice in Training Peer or Self-Assessment must be supportive competency-based approach standard's orientated teacher observation rubric process peer assessment instructor assessment leading to award Iterative (pre-, post- / in situ). Overall Objectives Reflective practice is important to improving effectiveness in teaching, learn from our experiences of teaching and facilitating learning, review our own teaching so we might continuously develop as trainers of others. Reflective strategies are competency-based framework for assessing trainer competencies. (Mayer, 2003).

Technical teacher is an individual who had undergone or is training in any tertiary technical institution to acquire knowledge, attitude, and practical skills in any trade of his or her choice to subsequently transmit the same knowledge, attitude, and practical skills to the less knowledgeable individuals. Technical education teacher prepares people for specific trades, crafts and careers at various levels from a trade, a craft, technician, or a professional position in engineering, accountancy, nursing, medicine, architecture, pharmacy, law etc (Wikipedia,



2013). Mentoring student teachers in technical and vocational education, therefore, become necessary to adequately prepare them to be competent.

Adult education denotes the entire body of organized educational processes whatever the content, level or method, whether formal or otherwise, whether they prolong or replace initial education, schools, colleges or universities as well as in apprenticeship whereby persons regarded as adult by the society which they belong develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, improve their technical or professional qualifications or turns them in a new direction and bring about changes in attitude or behaviour in a tool- fold perspective of full personal development and participation in balanced independent social and cultural development (UNESCO, 1972). Implicit in the above definition is the fact that adult education is comprehensive, involuntary and caters for a wide range of audience in terms of age, sex, profession and social status. It is not rigid and there are no criteria for its operations as well as for those to benefit from it. It is undertaken for different purposes deliberately or unconsciously for individuals and groups development. Adult education teacher preparation must include mentoring to help them to be effective, progress in their careers and become increasing popular in the teaching profession.

Teacher preparation programs across the country have faced criticisms regarding the quality of their programs. Additionally, these programs now compete with non-traditional programs when their graduates seek employment in public schools. Adult and technical education teachers are not exonerated from the issue of poor performance in lesson delivering. It becomes necessary to need mentorship for the student-teachers. Most teachers today are not performing creditably because they have not been mentored. Worst still most schools do not have mentoring programme neither couching. When student-teachers are not well mentored they may become poor teachers and cannot deliver. Classroom activities are not well coordinated, wrong teaching method will be selected and classroom management very poor. A Student-teacher who do not pass through mentoring is likely to cause havoc in teaching profession because he has no teaching ethics.

The study is understanding mentoring: reflective strategies for school-based adult and technical teachers' preparation. Specifically, the student tends to find the:

1. Challenges of mentoring student-teachers in adult and technical education.
2. Extent of mentoring student-teachers in adult and technical education.
3. Roles of schools in mentoring student-teachers in adult and technical education.
4. Effectiveness of mentoring student-teachers in adult and technical education.
5. Strategies for mentoring student-teachers in adult and technical education.



**The research Questions for this study are:**

1. What are the challenges of mentoring student-teachers in adult and technical education?
2. What is the extent of mentoring student-teachers in adult and technical education?
3. What are the Roles of schools in mentoring student-teachers in adult and technical education?
4. How effective is mentoring student-teachers in adult and technical education?
5. What are the strategies adopted by schools in mentoring student-teachers in adult and technical education?

**Method****The design adopted for this study was the survey.**

The population for the study comprised the lecturers and students of adult and technical education in University of Lagos, Akoka; Lagos State University, Ojoo; Federal College of Education (Technical) Akoka; and Yaba College of Technology, Yaba. A sample of 30 lecturers each was randomly selected from Federal College of Education (Technical), Akoka and Yaba College of Technology, Yaba making a total of 60 respondents. All the lecturers in adult education at University of Lagos (15) and Lagos State University (12) making a total of 27 were used for the study. Thirty students (30) were sampled from each of the institutions making a total of 120 students respondent and 57 lecturers.

A total of thirty-four (34) questionnaire items were generated to seek information from the respondents. These items were divided into five sections. Section 1 addressed the issue of challenges of mentoring student-teachers in adult and technical education. Section B. sought information on the extent of mentoring student-teachers in adult and technical education while section C elicited information on roles of schools in mentoring student-teachers in adult and technical education. Sections D and E addressed the information on effectiveness of mentoring student-teachers in adult and technical education and strategies for mentoring student-teachers in adult and technical education respectively. A four point response mode was adopted in the questionnaire as medium for respondents to express their opinions. The four point response mode is Strongly Agree (SA) = 4, Agree (A) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2, Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1.

The instrument was face validated by two experts in Department of Science and Technology and Department of Adult Education of the University of Lagos. The questionnaire items were administered on 30 lecturers from Adenirun Ogunsanya College of Education, Ijanikin. The value of the reliability coefficient obtained is 0.74.



The instrument was administered on the respondents and collected by the researchers themselves. The mean was the statistical tool used for the analysis. Any mean equal or above 2.50 was accepted while a mean below 2.50 was rejected.

## Results

**Table 1. Responses of the respondents on the challenges of mentoring student-teachers in adult and technical education**

S/N	Items	Lecturers (N= 57)		Students (N=120)		Remark
		SD	Mean	SD	Mean	
1.	No existing mentoring programme in my school	0.93	2.36	0.86	2.22	Disagree
2.	Lecturers are not ready to mentor students	1.02	2.36	0.79	2.32	Disagree
3.	Mentees don't submit to mentor's instructions	0.92	2.36	0.91	2.19	Disagree
4.	Mentees don't submit to mentor's instructions	0.63	2.00	0.77	2.15	Disagree
5.	My school is not interested in establishing mentoring programme	0.94	2.09	0.64	2.10	Disagree
6.	Mentors see mentoring as added responsibility	0.50	2.64	0.67	2.51	Agree
7.	Mentees see mentoring as having no positive effect on them	0.82	2.46	0.65	2.33	Disagree

Table 1, revealed that all the mean values of the items except item number 6 are below 2.50. This implies that the respondents disagreed with all the items except item number 6.

**Table 2. Responses of the respondents on the extent of mentoring student-teachers in adult and technical education**

S/N	Items	Lecturers (N= 57)		Students (N=120)		Remark
		SD	Mean	SD	Mean	
8.	I mentor my students.	0.60	3.18	0.57	2.67	Disagreed
9.	My students respond to mentorship	0.47	3.32	0.76	3.01	Disagreed
10.	My school has a mentoring programme For student-teachers.	0.75	3.18	0.70	3.24	Disagreed
11.	Only the final year students are mentored.	0.87	1.82	0.88	2.00	Disagreed
12.	Every lecturer is involved in mentoring students.	0.93	2.45	0.94	1.89	Disagreed

Table 2, above, all the mean values of the items are above 2.50 except item numbers 11 and 13 with mean values of 1.82, 2.00 and 2.45, 1.89 respectively. It implies that the respondents agreed with all the items except item numbers 11 and 13.



**Table 3. Response of the respondents on the roles of schools in mentoring student-teachers in adult and technical education? of mentoring student-teachers in adult and technical education**

S/N	Items	Lecturers (N= 57)		Students (N=120)		Remark
		SD	Mean	SD	Mean	
13.	The school authority finances mentoring Programme .	0.83	2.09	0.77	2.25	Disagreed
14.	School authority assigns students to their mentors.	0.79	2.27	0.82	2.10	Disagreed
15.	School often organizes workshops for the mentors.	0.81	2.36	0.78	2.26	Disagreed
16.	School authority integrates mentoring into her educational programmes.	0.90	2.27	0.88	2.14	Disagreed
17.	School authority makes mentorship compulsory for every student.	0.94	2.09	0.94	2.18	Disagreed
18.	School authorities compensate mentors for their external responsibility.	1.00	2.00	0.71	2.11	Disagreed

Table 3 showed that all the mean values of the items are below 2.50. Therefore, it showed that the respondents disagreed with entire items.

**Table 4. Responses of the respondents on the effectiveness of mentoring student-teachers in adult and technical education**

S/N	Items	Lecturers (N= 57)		Students (N=120)		Remark
		SD	Mean	SD	Mean	
19.	Senior lecturers are used for mentoring.	1.12	2.36	0.89	2.30	Disagreed
20.	Specific information about mentoring programme is always available in the school.	0.67	2.36	0.88	2.20	Disagreed
21.	References can be made on past mentoring Programmes.	0.67	2.36	0.76	1.89	Disagreed
22.	Mentoring programmes are blossoming in the school.	0.75	2.18	0.91	2.00	Disagreed
23.	School authority do assess the progress of the mentoring programme.	0.75	2.18	0.71	1.99	Disagreed
24.	School authority do assess the progress of the mentoring programme.	0.75	2.18	0.68	2.02	Disagreed

Table 4 indicated that mentoring student-teachers in adult and technical education is not effective in the school under study. This is shown in mean values of the responses which are below 2.50.



**Table 5: Response of the respondents on the Strategies adopted by schools in mentoring student-teachers in adult and technical education**

S/N	Items	Lecturers (N= 57)		Students (N=120)	
		SD	Mean	SD	Mean
25.	It is a part of the school programme.	0.75	2.81	0.68	2.4 Disagreed
26.	There is a continuous assessment of the programme.	0.82	2.14	0.72	2.23 Disagreed
27.	Proper records of past mentorship programmes are kept for references.	0.60	2.18	0.88	1.89 Disagreed
28.	Every mentee do keep logbook of instruction of their mentors.	0.75	2.18	0.81	2.03 Disagreed
29.	Mentors do write report on their mentees.	0.65	2.27	0.72	2.18 Disagreed
30.	Reports on mentors and mentees are treated with dispatch by the school authority.	0.87	2.18	0.68	2.06 Disagreed
31.	Reflective teaching strategies enhance and enrich mentees in teaching.	0.64	3.34	0.56	3.22 Agreed
32.	Reflective teaching strategies enhance mentees' methods of students assessment.	0.59	3.50	0.76	3.46 Agreed
33.	Reflective teaching strategies help mentees Improve their classroom management.	0.69	2.58	0.68	3.00 Agreed
34.	Reflective teaching strategies help mentees Improve on their lesson plan and delivery.	0.71	3.03	0.66	3.66 Agreed

Table 5 showed that item numbers 32, 33, 34, and 35 have mean values above 2.50 while the rest have their mean values below 2.50. This implies that the respondents agreed with the former and disagreed with the later.

**In this study, it was found that:**

1. Every student is mentored though not all lecturers are involved in mentoring students.
2. Mentors have some challenges in mentoring student-teachers in adult and technical education. These include:
  - i) Added responsibility
  - ii) No existing mentoring programme in the schools
  - iii) Lecturers are not ready to mentor students
  - iv) Mentees don't submit to mentor's instructions
  - v) Mentees don't submit to mentor's instructions
3. Schools do not play encouraging roles in mentorship programme.
4. Mentoring programme is not effective in schools.
5. Schools do not adopt any strategy in mentoring students.
6. Reflective strategies enhance and enrich mentees' teaching.



## Discussion

It is evident from the study that though students are mentored but it is not formalized programme. The information gathered from the respondents revealed that the institutions under study have no formalized programmes for mentoring student- teachers. The reason why the institutions are not keen to establishing mentoring programme was not mentioned however, it could be an added responsibility and with financial implications. Also there must be tools for designing and planning, managing a mentoring program for success. Lewis, (2013), indentified some of the common challenges to the mentee-mentor relationship which include:

- Providing inadequate direction.
- Taking advantage of greater power.
- Dealing with conflicting demands.
- Dealing with conflicting advice.
- Lacking commitment.
- Neglecting the mentee or the mentor.
- Crossing boundaries.
- Discovering a mismatch between mentor and mentee.
- Breaching confidentiality

In research question 2, it can be inferred that though mentoring is going on in these institutions, but the programme is not formalized. It is a skeletal services rendered to students to support and encourage them manage their own learning in order that they may maximize their potential, develop their skills, improve their performance and become the person they want to be. Bingenheimer & Behrendt (2005). Opined that in most basic level, mentoring helps because it guarantees a young person that there is someone who cares about them. Also mentoring programme is not effective in schools as a result of some factors as identified by Jeatte, (2013)

- Assessing mentee's background (knowledge and skills)
- Identifying mentee's motivation
- Dealing with mentee's inexperience (knowledge and skills)
- Addressing mentee's misconceptions about science
- Setting reasonable goals for the project
- Keeping mentee engaged
- Supporting the mentee financially
- Building mentee's confidence
- Fostering mentee's independence
- Deciding on the best solution to a given mentoring challenge
- Setting limits and boundaries for the mentor/mentee relationship



- Addressing lack of planning
- Giving negative feedback to the mentee on lack of progress
- Allocating time
- Finding resources
- Remaining patient

The finding of the study revealed further that reflective strategies enhance and enrich mentees' teaching. Similarly according to Linda (2012) educators that use reflective teaching strategies in their classrooms find they are able to enhance and enrich their teaching. Reflection utilizes various means in assessing why and how we teach as well as what the outcome of the teaching is. Reflecting on our teaching opens the doors of learning. While reflective teaching has many benefits, the least of which is allowing a teacher to enhance his teaching skills, in today's world with the constant pressure of mandated student assessments and standardized testing. Many teachers find reflective teaching to be simply another weight on a scale that is already off balance. To be realistic, reflection in any form takes time. If teachers are given the time to be reflective, then they will be able to reap the benefits. Educational administrators would be wise to realize that reflective teaching strategies are, as teacher Jack Richards (2012) states, "a powerful impetus for teacher development."

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

All good teaching is about transformation. The essence of mentoring is to prepare a teacher who shall be effective, efficient and competent. Obanya (2013), opined that teachers are key actors in the education process and every meaningful reform of education should always pay due attention to the teacher factor. The creativity of teachers can apply to ensure positive transformation in learners largely depends on their preparation to become efficient. It is clear to that critical reflective strategy is a step beyond reflective practice. Being critical is a stance that involves internalized habits of seeing the complexity of schools, seeing one's own assumptions and identity, and seeing the need for collaborative knowledge making practice that interrupts the dysfunctional and generates uncommon solutions. Equipped with this stance, new teachers are less likely to be co-opted by the status quo and more likely to see ways they can make a difference in the lives of the students they teach. Based on these the following recommendations are made:

- 1) Institutions should establish mentoring programme, fund and monitor its progress.



- II) Teaches should cooperate with the school authority to make the mentoring programme succeed.
- III) Institutions should remunerate mentor as an encouragement.
- IV) The mentees should be encouraged to always use reflective stratagem in their teaching.
- V) Institutions should keep record of mentoring programme in the school.

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