

Influence of the Pedagogical Content Knowledge of Mentor Teachers and College Tutors to Classroom Practice of Student Teachers

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Abstract The study surveyed student teachers (n = 130) from two Colleges of Education in northern and southern Ghana who reported a significantly greater influence by school-based mentors on their teaching practice when they had been with them for 10 weeks. The study is correlational that employed a questionnaire that sought the opinions of student teachers on the influence of school mentors and college tutors on their classroom practice. Descriptive and correlational data analyses were performed on the data collected. Independent t-test was used to test the null hypothesis of research question 3 at .05 level of significance. The results of the study revealed that the correlations between student teachers' perceptions of their school mentors' PCK in planning and preparation of lessons, cordial relationship with the student teacher, feedback received, and methods of teaching and how these influenced their classroom practice were all statistically significant at $p < .05$. The results also revealed that the correlations between student teachers' perceptions of their college tutors' PCK in planning and preparation of lessons, cordial relationship with the student teacher, feedback received, and methods of teaching and how these influenced their classroom practice were all statistically significant at $p < .05$. However, t-test results indicated that student teachers related well with their school mentors than college tutors. The difference in this cordial relationship was statistically significant ($t = 6.045, p < .01$). The student teachers also perceived that they received more feedback from their school mentors than from their college tutors during their internship. The difference was again statistically significant ($t = 4.565, p < .01$). These findings have important implications as they suggest a greater transfer of learning from the school to the classroom than from the college, producing student teachers who are willing to incorporate and implement school-based practices in a new context. Colleges of education need to have closer links with partnership schools than it is now. There is a growing need to rethink of student teaching and how to tightly link the university with the school system for effective and qualitative training of student teachers.

Keywords: *mentor teacher, college tutor, teaching practice, student-teacher, classroom behaviour*

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1. Introduction

The education of prospective teachers is all-important for establishing high quality teaching. The aim is to develop teachers' professional knowledge, competence and qualifications in line with recent views on learning and teaching: for example, the view that teachers should initiate and stimulate students' own thinking processes rather than just passing knowledge on to them (Vermunt & Verloop, 1999 cited in [39]). A vital aspect of teacher education is practice teaching. It occupies a key position in the programme of teacher education and it is the common professional element in the preparation of student teachers (Kudiewu, Osei, Agyei, & Amenya, 2013 cited in [29]). Teaching practice serves as the student teacher's initiation into the real-life world of the school

and enables the student teacher to put into practice the theories they have been taught in their preparatory classes [10,29,40]. To facilitate student teachers' learning during practical training, they are supervised by school mentors and supported by their lecturers. Partnerships between universities/ colleges of education and senior high schools for internships, and the organisation of pre-internship and post-internship seminars are among the efforts to reform and improve the student teaching experience [10] in Ghana and in other countries [24]. Prior research indicates that mentor teachers are seen as the most important figures in student teaching [6] because student teachers often emulate their mentors. Most often, instructional methods of mentors conflict with strategies employed by the university [6,14,41]. Student teachers often believe that the mentors have craft knowledge, have real experience of the classroom and know better than their lecturers [23] and that the much PCK of lecturers is suited and related to

the tertiary classroom. However, there is no study in Ghana to find out who among the two supervisors (mentor teacher and college tutor) have significant influence on the learning-to-teach classroom practice of the student teacher. This study intends to fill that gap.

2. The Scope of the Study

The overarching aim of the study was to find out who among the two teacher educators (school mentor and college tutor) significantly influences the student teacher classroom teaching. Only four specific variables were considered. They include planning and preparation of lessons for instruction, cordial relationship between student teacher and instructor, feedback from school mentor/college tutor to the student teacher, and methods of teaching (lecture, discussion, inquiry or demonstration) used by the two educators when training the student teacher. The study did not consider other classroom management practices such as class control, assessment and evaluation of lessons.

3. Literature Review

This section reviews literature on the central issues identified for investigation. This includes the influence of school mentors and college tutors on student teachers behaviour in the classroom during teaching practice.

3.1 The Role and Influence of the College Tutor/Supervisor during Practice Teaching

Tutors and university supervisors teach student teachers subject matter and also prepare them in methods of teaching prior to teaching practice. During teaching practice, student teachers are observed by university or college supervisor where remarks are given to provide information on the strengths and weaknesses of the student teacher and the various areas that need improvement. These remarks are referred to as *feedback* and are very necessary to student teachers' professional development and growth. Student teachers love feedback both oral and written. They can go home and look at it and reflect on the feedback and when they are planning they can refer back to the comments. Oppong [29] opined that, observation remarks (feedback) are bound to have considerable uplifting (positive) or demoralising (negative) impact on student teachers in terms of their self-image, self-efficacy and their academic standing within the teaching profession. Good remarks boost student teachers' self-image and confidence level while poor remarks usually damages the self-image and confidence level and relationship with supervisors as well as his/her reputation in the classroom. Indeed, Kiggundu [20] acknowledges the importance of both positive and negative remarks of supervisors as they lead to effective learning of student teachers.

However, it has been increasingly noted that college supervisors' remarks could be more demoralizing than constructive (Sternberg, 1998 in Oppong [29]). This in most cases cause student teachers to react in diverse ways towards the remarks given by supervisors/tutors during

teaching practice. Hence, the role and influence of the university or college supervisor within the student teaching process is frequently discounted, often by both the student teacher and the school mentors [23]. Instead of providing additional insights and support, university faculty is seen as superfluous and is less qualified than mentor teachers to assess and grade student teachers [41]. Le and Vasquez [22] have recorded that analysis of mentors' feedback and follow-up interviews with student teachers have revealed that they appreciated more the mentors' strategies in giving them feedback. Also, research on improving communication among the triad of student teacher, university/college supervisor, and mentor teacher, or balancing this triad's power structure, has often indicated that the university or college supervisor is the weak link [31,33,37].

On the other side of the debate, Fernandez and Erbilgin [13] posit that university or college supervisors are very important in supporting student teachers' implementation of recent reforms and theories learned in their coursework. Supporting this view, Asplin and Marks [5] citing Marks [23] opined that, this transfer of learning from the college to the classroom can only be impacted by university supervisors when there is a positive relationship between the student teacher and the supervisor; when the student teacher recognises the supervisor's expertise and professionalism; when the supervisor is easily accessible to him/her; and if the supervisor consistently holds the student teacher to university expectations as they are expressed in university education classes. Additionally, university supervisors appear to provide emotional support needed for student teachers to acclimate to the initial hurdles encountered in student teaching [8,9].

An effective and cordial student teacher-supervisor relationship can have great impact on the social, emotional, cognitive, and behavioural lives of students. Student teachers often consider their university supervisors' personal features, including being supportive, non-judgmental, and helpful, to be essential to overcoming obstacles and maintaining their emotional balance during student teaching [8] Irrespective of the type of profession, a positive, warm, welcoming and supportive environment combined with collegiality certainly help settle student teachers better at school.

A key part of teacher development is supporting teacher trainees to reflect on their teaching [12]. Reflection as a process involves recall of experience, evaluation, decision making and planning and action. Mentors support their mentees to have regular reflections on what they practiced to teach. The results of a thesis [6] on student teachers' perceptions of their mentors suggested that student teachers gained ample experiences of reflection for action and on action. Experiences for reflection in action was, however, appeared to be lacking during the practicum. Reflection in action is critical because it could change teacher's instructional behaviours almost instantly and have effects on their future action [38]. Mentors' failure towards aiding their interns to reflect on their learning to teach have been reported by Hudson [16] and Hudson, Usak, and Savran-Gencer [17]. Reflective practice is to help student teachers develop a coherent philosophy of learning to connect their philosophy to classroom practice.

University or college tutors teach student teachers to practise reflective thinking and practice in methodology

courses prior to practicum. During micro-teaching, student teachers are often taught the concept of teaching philosophy and are guided by college tutors to practise reflections as part of their preparations for their teaching practice. The students are taken through video-stimulated recall of lessons during which they analyse their development of pedagogical content knowledge (PCK), their students' learning, their failures and challenges and the way forward. Hence the style of student teaching adopted by the student teacher is influenced by the college tutor or supervisor and mentor guiding practices.

3.2. The Issue of Cordiality between Mentor, Tutor and Student Teacher and Classroom Practice

Establishing cordial relationship with student teachers has been fundamental to their ongoing development as novice teachers [18]. During teaching practice the type of rapport established between mentor and student teacher determines the motivation and enthusiasm put forward by the mentee in the classroom. Close ties between the student teacher and the mentor or tutor influence positively the student's life and consequently lead to an increased amount of transfer from that mentor's teaching to the student teacher's own classroom practices. This bond may be especially important because the social and emotional frustrations, disappointments and physical stress upon entering student teaching are often unexpected by the student teacher. Their self-view as teachers change due to the real shock [9] they experience in the classroom. In general, the higher the perceived self-efficacy is, the more time and individual will devote to a difficult task without giving up entirely. Their high self-confidence and efficacy beliefs that they know and control all the facets of the profession and of the school ethos [13] are challenged by the realities of the classroom. These changes in self-perception leading to teacher socialisation can be attributed to the Sociocultural Theory of Learning (Vygotsky, [34] cited in [38]). Vygotsky suggested that learning takes place through the interaction students have with their peers, teachers and other experts. Consequently, teachers can create a learning environment that maximizes the learners' ability to interact with each other through discussion, collaboration and feedback. Student under mentors in school setting also employ observational learning (Bandura, 1977 in [38]).

Observational learning can help the student teacher in practicum to learn the skills of the profession by observing the mentor in the classroom. Its applications by the mentor in mentoring novices include teaching new behaviours and skills, encouraging and persuading previously learned behaviours, drawing the attention of learners (student teachers), creating strong and emotional responses or weakening the effects of deterrents. The student teachers do not only observe the performances of the expert teacher but they also see the interactions between the mentors and pupils and other stakeholders of the learning community. Student teachers' first social environment is the college or university from which they construct knowledge. At the college, this social environment consists of faculty, peers, and other associations. Once in the school classroom, he/she interacts with teachers, pupils, parents and other school workers; thus the social context /setting that the

student teacher operates in has changed. The mentor models behaviour and the student teacher imitate the behaviour. The mentor reinforces the behaviour [21] repeatedly. The reinforced behaviour if positive is learned by the student teacher who may abandon previous learned behaviours. Thus the change in community settings can and may cause a change in the behaviour patterns of student teachers expected by their college tutors in the classroom. The concept of legitimate peripheral participation highlights the importance of the changes in social settings that are often inherent in an extended learning process as occurs in teacher internship in schools. Progressing from novice to competent teacher and to expert involves many learning settings and the picking up and discarding of many different roles and behaviours [25]. The study therefore sought to investigate whether certain school procedures can increase the influence and effectiveness of the student teaching experience in the schools. Three intermediate questions became the focus of this study.

The questions tried to address perceptions of student teachers who had previously taken a class with their college tutor as compared to their interactions with school mentors in regard to planning and preparation for instruction; cordial relationship; likelihood of using tutor's feedback; reflection and practice and overall perception of the college tutor's knowledge of pedagogy, the real classroom. Also, is there is correlation between student teachers' relationships with their college tutor and their likelihood of reflecting on the methods in their classrooms, accepting their tutors' feedback, and valuing their tutors' knowledge? Answers to these questions, should show how the college taught strategies are transferred to the school classroom and thus shed light on the effectiveness and impact of tutors' strategies on teacher trainees' professional development and practice. Questions about the student teachers' perceptions of their mentor teachers were included to provide a comparison group. Prior research has reported positive relationships between teacher mentor and mentees with a strong influence of mentor teachers [14,32] on student teachers' classroom work

3.3. Statement of the Problem

Stakeholders of education have expressed concern over the recurrence of poor performance of basic school pupils in local and internal competitive examinations [3]. Some questions have been raised about the success of the preparation of effective and qualified basic science teachers in Ghana [2]. If Junior High pupils are to learn science and develop better attitudes and values towards it and excel in it, they must be taught by teachers who exhibit high levels of pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) and have positive attitude towards science in the context in which learning takes place [30]. However, teaching strategies used in science classrooms often engage learners as passive listeners and at best, as part of whole class discussion (Scott & Fisher, 2002 in [11]) and notes copying [28]. The situation is not different in Ghana [11]. It is expected that pre-service teachers who are taught content and methods of teaching in the college, and they also go on teaching practice in schools for a whole year, they should be well prepared to teach their pupils to

excel in their academic work. Student teachers' perspective of the role of school mentor and college tutors on their practice teaching in schools is the focus of this study.

3.4. Research Questions

The study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. Is there any relationship between student teachers' perception of their tutors' pedagogical knowledge (PCK) and their classroom practice during internship?

Hypothesis 1. There is no statistically any significant relationship exists between student teachers' perception of their college tutor PCK level and their classroom practice.

2. Is there any relationship between student teachers' perception of their mentor teachers' pedagogical knowledge (PCK) and their classroom practice during internship?

Hypothesis 2. There is no statistically any significant relationship exists between student teachers' perception of their school mentor's PCK level and their classroom practice.

3. Is there any significant difference in student teachers' perception of their tutors' and school mentors' PCK levels during their internship?

Hypothesis 3. There is no statistically any significant difference in student teachers' perception of their college tutor and the school mentor PCK levels during their internship.

3.6. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore, identify and describe student teachers' perceptions of their mentors' and college tutors' PCK levels and how their mentors and tutors influence their practice during their teaching practice.

3.7. Significance of the Study

It was imperative that student teachers' opinions of their mentors' and tutors' PCK levels and how it influences their practice as developing teachers be reviewed. The information will help our colleges of education to structure and improve their curricular materials and instructional strategies to accommodate for the needs of student teachers in our present day technological drive. It will also be useful to teacher training universities in Ghana to decide on what steps to take and provide a new model for effective teacher preparation at the graduate level. The Ghana Education Service (GES) will also be informed of the minds of its newly employed teachers.

4. Method

4.1. Population and Sample

The accessible population consisted of two Colleges of Education chosen by convenience. One was at the Northern and the other at the Ashanti regions of Ghana. Stratified sampling was then used to select 130 final year students on teaching practice from the two colleges during

the 2013/2014 academic year. Simple randomisation was then used to select sixty five students from each college.

4.2. Instrument

The survey was a 30-item questionnaire adapted from that of Asplin and Marks [5] that surveyed interns' relationship with their college tutors, their perceptions of their tutors' pedagogical content knowledge, and the amount of influence they felt their tutors had on their practices in the classroom. The study sought to know further, if their perceptions were more positive if they had been taught by the tutor prior to practice teaching. A 7-point Likert Scale used by Asplin and Marks [5] was modified into a 5-point Likert Scale and labeled Strongly agree (5), Agree (4), Uncertain (3), Disagree (2) and Strongly disagree (1) and used to collect data from the student teachers. A mean of 3 stands for uncertainty and below 3 means disagree. Mean values above 3 stands for agreement. Survey items were pilot-tested using a sample of 60 students from two colleges that run the same programmes as the two participating colleges for the study. Pilot test of the instrument produced an internal consistency coefficient alpha of 0.77. The statements were randomly ordered as not to force consistency from the students. Likewise, statements were written in both positive and negative language so that the desired answer could result either on the left or right end of scale responses.

4.3. Data Collection Procedure

Participants from the two Colleges (n = 130) completed paper copies of the survey during seminars that followed their student teaching placements. All surveys were anonymous, and it was assured the student teachers that their responses would not be shared with their college supervisors and would not affect their grades.

The participants responded to various statements on a five-point Likert Scale. These statements were combined into four areas of opinion regarding their student teaching experience. For each area, the students' opinions of their two types of teacher educators was measured, specifically their college tutor and their school mentor. The four areas were the student teachers' perceptions of their educators' knowledge of lesson planning and preparation, the student teachers' relationship with them, the student teachers' acceptance of their feedback and application of same in the classroom, and the student teachers' use of various teaching methods learned from their college tutors or school mentors in the classroom.

4.4. Data Analyses

A 95% confidence interval was established and two-tailed tests of significance were performed in order to make appropriate generalisation to the population associated with the study. Pearson product-moment of correlation was employed to find the strength of relationship of students' perceptions on the four target variables (planning and preparation, cordiality, feedback and methods of teaching) treated vis-a-vis their college tutor and school mentor. Independent t-test analyses were used to compare student teachers' views of their school

mentor and college tutor on the four target variables (see Table 3).

5. Results

5.1. Research Question 1

Is there any relationship between student teachers' perception of their school mentors' pedagogical knowledge (PCK) and their classroom practice during internship?

Hypothesis 1. There is no statistically any significant relationship that exists between student teachers'

perception of their school mentor's PCK level and their classroom practice.

This research question and related null hypothesis were examined and tested using Pearson's product moment correlation. All correlations were tested at the .05 level of significance (see Table 1).

5.1.1. Student Teachers' Use of School Mentors' Mentoring Strategies in the Classroom

Table 1 provides the correlation matrix between the four mentoring strategies employed by the school mentor and student teachers' use of such strategies in the classroom during internship.

Table 1. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation on investigating the Relationship between Student Teachers' Perceptions of their Mentor's PCK level and their Classroom Practice during Internship

	Planning	Cordiality	Feedback	Methods	
	Pearson's correlation (r)	.383*	.555**	.520**	.435**
Student use of mentor's strategy in the classroom	Significant (2-tailed)	.045	.013	.033	.001
	N	130	130	130	130

Note: * correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed)

**correlation is significant at the .01level (2-tailed).

Table 1 shows that there was positive correlation between student teachers' perception of their mentor's planning and student teacher's classroom practice. The correlation was statistically significant ($r = .383, p < .045$). This means that student teachers perceived that their mentors were very good at lesson planning and preparation, and they used the mentor's planning strategies in their lesson planning and preparation for the classroom. This may be due to the presence and frequency with which the mentor often sit in to observe what student teacher was doing in class. There was also positive significant correlation between the student teachers' perception of the mentor's cordiality with them and how they (student teachers) related with their pupils in the class ($r = .555, p = .01$). It means that they implemented this good gesture of their mentor in their classrooms by having good rapport with their pupils (see Table 1). It was also observed that, when student teachers viewed their mentors as being very cordial in relationship, they were more prone in incorporating the mentor's feedback -taught management practices in their classrooms. Thus the mentor's influence on their classroom behaviour increased. This is indicated by the positive correlation between the mentor's feedback ($r = .520, p < .01$) to student teachers on subject specific teaching and their implementation of such feedback in the classroom. Also student teachers who accepted implementing mentors' feedback were also more likely seen to be using mentor's teaching methods ($r = .435, p < .01$) in their classrooms.

The school mentors were always present with them in the classrooms and gave them guidance on what to do in

certain situations. The mentor's teaching strategies and philosophy of teaching were thus reinforced from time to time; hence certain behaviours of the school mentor were strengthened in the student teacher with the continuous practice. College tutors on the other hand, came on visits once a while and disappeared. The non-continuity of their recommended teaching styles which might be at variance with that of the mentor became weakened with time. Thus the law of use and disuse that leads to perfection or distinguish becomes operational in this case of school and college-taught strategies.

5.2. Research Question 2

Is there any relationship between student teachers' perception of their tutors' pedagogical knowledge (PCK) and their classroom practice during internship?

Hypothesis 2. There is no statistically any significant relationship that exists between student teachers' perception of their college tutor PCK level and their classroom practice.

The research question and the related null hypothesis were examined and tested at the .05 using Pearson's product moment correlation at the .05 level of significance.

5.2.1 Student Teachers' use of College Tutor's Training Strategies in the Classroom

Table 2 provides the correlation matrix between the four training strategies employed by the college tutor and student teachers' use of such strategies in the classroom during internship.

Table 2. Pearson Product-Moment Correlations on investigating the Relationship between Student Teachers' Perceptions of their College Tutor's PCK level and their Classroom Practice during Internship

	Planning	Cordiality	Feedback	Methods	
	Pearson's correlation (r)	.411**	.359*	.759**	.377*
Student use of college tutor's strategy in the classroom	Significant (2-tailed)	.001	.048	.000	.045
	N	130	130	130	130

Note: * correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed)

**correlation is significant at the .01level (2-tailed).

There is a significant positive relationship between student teachers' perception of their college tutor's PCK level in planning and preparation for instruction and student teachers' use of such planning and preparation strategies in practising to teach ($r = .411, p < .001$). This means that students did not abandon the skill they learned from their college tutor in planning for instruction but employed in their field of practice. It is also observed (see Table 2), that there is significant positive relationships between student teachers' perceptions of their college tutors' PCK in being cordial with the student teacher ($r = .359, p < .045$), feedback to the student teachers ($r = .759, p < .000$) and instructional methods ($r = .377$) respectively. Again, it implies that students teachers valued the strategies they learned under the tutorship of their college tutors and did use such learned skills in practising how to teach. They have learned their lessons very well; that being cordial with your students/pupils help you to succeed in your daily classroom practice. Also that giving prompt feedback to your pupils motivate them to learn what is taught them; and that pupils become interested in your lessons based on the kind of instructional strategies you use with them in the classroom. The lack of students' involvement in tasks is commonly described as a deficit of motivation [4]. When there is good rapport between the teacher and students/pupils, the pupils interact freely with the teacher and can ask for clarification of certain points that they may not understand well during instruction. This is confirmed by Goh and Khine [15] who reported that a good teacher-student relationship is superior to the creation and maintenance of a positive classroom environment. Thus being cordial with students/pupils, giving prompt feedback to them of their performance and using effective teaching methods serve as intrinsic motivation to students/pupils and subsequently their full participation in the teaching and learning

activities and execute their responsibility as good students [36].

The correlations between the student teachers' perceptions of the four aspects of their college tutors' PCK levels were comparable to the correlations between their perceptions of these aspects of their school mentors. The use of the skills/strategies they learned from both the school mentor and college tutor in the classroom were compared to find out if there were significant differences.

5.3. Research Question 3

Is there any significant difference in student teachers' perception of their tutors' and school mentors' PCK levels during their internship?

Hypothesis 3. There is no statistically any significant difference in student teachers' perception of their college tutor and the school mentor PCK levels during their internship. Independent samples t-test were computed to find out the differences between school mentors' and college tutors' PCK levels in the four target variables and the results are shown in Table 3.

5.3.1. Comparisons of School Mentor and College Tutor Attributes

As indicated under Table 3, the student teachers ratings of the knowledge of planning and preparation of lessons of the mentor ($M = 4.91, SD = 0.55$) and their college tutor ($M = 4.62, SD = 0.49$) were equivalent, $t(128) = 1.012, p = .211$. According to the student teachers they related well with school mentors ($M = 4.85, SD = 0.85$) than their college tutors ($M = 4.02, SD = 0.54$). This difference in perceived cordiality between them and their school mentor and college tutor was significant, $t(128) = 6.05, p < .01$.

Table 3. Comparison between Mentor and Tutor on the Target Variables

Variable	Mentor		Tutor		T	p
	M	SD	M	SD		
Planning and preparation	4.91	0.55	4.62	0.49	1.012	.211
Cordiality	4.85	0.85	4.02	0.54	6.045	<.01
Feedback	4.78	0.85	4.09	0.63	4.565	<.01
Teaching methods	4.22	0.43	4.14	0.30	-1.129	<.01

$p \leq .05$.

The student teachers also perceived that they received more feedback from their school mentor ($M = 4.78, SD = .85$) than from their college tutor ($M = 4.09, SD = 0.63$). This difference in perception of receiving and implementing feedback from the school mentor and college tutor was significant, $t(128) = 4.56, p < .01$. Again, the student teachers perceived that they were more likely to use their school mentors' teaching strategies ($M = 4.22, SD = 0.43$) in the classroom than those teaching methods they learned from college tutors ($M = 4.14, SD = 0.30$); the difference was however, not significant, $t(128) = -1.129, p < .01$. The null hypothesis that, 'there is no statistically any significant difference in student teachers' perception of their college tutor and the school mentor PCK levels during their internship' holds true for only planning and preparation of lessons and teaching methods; but not for cordiality and feedback. Therefore the null hypothesis to

research question 3 was rejected at .05 level of significance.

6. Discussion

The study found that in many areas the student teachers' perceptions were higher for their school mentors than for college tutors. The student teachers rated the perceived PCK knowledge level of the school mentors for planning and preparation of lessons higher than the knowledge level of the college tutors. They also reported of being more willing to implement feedback or advice from the school mentor than feedback from the college tutor. Further, they reported relating well with their school mentors than college tutors; and perceived that they helped them plan and prepare lessons better than college tutors in their training as teachers. These findings are in

agreement with reports of studies carried out in different countries, locations and settings. Some studies carried out in Western and European countries indicated that student teachers viewed their mentors as being more knowledgeable than their university/college tutors and did implemented their mentors' recommended strategies [23,27] in classroom situations than their tutors. It should be noted that, at the school of practice, the mentors repeatedly reinforce certain strategies with the mentee, sit in class with them, and give them feedback on classroom management, classroom discipline, style of asking questions etc. Again, Waghorn and Stevens [35] citing Katz and Raths (1985) reported that the theories of teaching held by student teachers are overlooked during teaching practice component of their programme and that theories of teaching and learning can be reversed by prevailing conditions in classrooms. The current behaviour of student teachers is confirmed by Waghorn and Raths [35] report. However, college supervisors and school mentors in such countries may have the same or similar professional teacher qualifications. Secondly school mentors in such countries may even have more years of teaching experience and craft knowledge than college tutors. In another development, University of Northern Colorado's (UNC) supervisors and cooperating teachers were asked to rate each other on their mentoring and coaching practice. Overall, the university supervisors rated mentor teachers higher than themselves [27]. In the same UNC's (2010) rating, student teachers rated their school mentor teachers' mentoring practices higher than the university supervisors.

In the present study the college tutor visited the student teacher only twice; sometimes it was not the same college tutor, hence feedback might differ. Also communication between the school mentor and the college tutor did not go past the initial formalities of introduction. Most school mentors do not like to sit in with the college tutor to observe the mentee and critical issues the student teacher face during the internship are never discussed with college tutor. The school mentor is always reluctant to reveal certain weaknesses of the student to the college tutor. Lack of clear communication between the school and college has been reported in earlier studies (Bullough & Draper, 2004; Carlson et al., in [19]). But many contemporary authorities in education believe that an effective teacher training programme can only be ensured when both the school and the college (department of teacher training) work in tandem. It is argued that whereas the college plays a leading role during the days of classroom-based theory exposition, this leading role is subsequently ceded to the school-based mentor. In the college, students are fed with theoretical concepts of teaching and learning processes [26]. But these theories mean nothing if they do not guide practice. Traditionally, teaching practice was often organised without the involvement of school mentors as we know them today. However, in this study most participants felt that both the college tutor and the school mentor (an experienced and knowledgeable person in the school compound) should supervise student teachers on internship (teaching practice). In this study, student teachers agreed that school-based supervision is of great value as it plays a critical role in their professional development as teachers;

but still it requires enough resources and the complementary role of the professional college tutor.

7. Conclusion

In this study student teachers implemented the modelling practices of both college tutor and their school mentor. However, they played more attention to their school mentors' mentoring practices than the college-based theories. Previous studies have indicated the difficulties student teachers face in closing the gap between theories learned at college and practicing to teach in classrooms under school mentors [1,35]. The theories student teachers learn in college are easily overlooked under prevailing classroom situation. The teaching philosophies held by individual student teachers may be sacrificed under field conditions in favour of the philosophies of their mentors. Hence there is the need for college and schools to work closely together in the supervision of student teachers on teaching practice. This holistic approach could help reduce or bridge the theory-practice gap that has long persisted. College tutors by working closely with school mentors will help avoid segmentation and isolation of supervisory process that is likely to occur when partnership happens to be loose. Collaboration and blended supervision will harmonise the diversity of supervisory belief-systems between and among school mentors, college tutors and student teachers.

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