

Exploring Nature and Pattern of Mentoring Practices: A Study on Mentees' Perspectives

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Abstract : Mentoring is a structured activity which is designed to facilitate engagement between mentor and mentee to enhance mentee's professional capability as an effective teacher. Both mentor and mentee are important elements of the 'mentoring equation' and play important roles in nourishing this dynamic, collaborative and reciprocal relationship. Cluster-Based Mentoring Programme (CBMP) provides an indigenous example of a project which focused on development of primary school teachers in selected clusters with a particular focus on their classroom practice. A study was designed to examine the efficacy of CBMP as part of Strengthening Teacher Education in Pakistan (STEP) project. This paper presents results of one of the components of this study. As part of the larger study, a cross-sectional survey was employed to explore nature and patterns of mentoring process from mentees' perspectives in the selected districts of Sindh and Balochistan. This paper focuses on the results of the study related to the question: What are mentees' perceptions of their mentors' support for enhancing their classroom practice during mentoring process? Data were collected from mentees (n=1148) using a 5-point scale - 'Mentoring for Effective Primary Teaching' (MEPT). MEPT focuses on seven factors of mentoring: personal attributes, pedagogical knowledge, modelling, feedback, system requirement, development and use of material, and gender equality. Data were analysed using SPSS 20. Mentees perceptions of mentoring practice of their mentors were summarized using mean and standard deviation. Results showed that mean scale scores on mentees' perceptions of their mentors' practices fell between 3.58 (system requirement) and 4.55 (personal attributes). Mentees' perceives personal attribute of the mentor as the most significant factor (M=4.55) towards streamlining mentoring process by building good relationship between mentor and mentees. Furthermore, mentees have shared positive views about their mentors efforts towards promoting gender impartiality (M=4.54) during workshop and follow up visit. Contrary to this, mentees felt that more could have been done by their mentors in sharing knowledge about system requirement (e.g. school policies, national curriculum). Furthermore, some of the aspects in high scoring factors were highlighted by the mentees as areas for further improvement (e.g. assistance in timetabling, written feedback, encouragement to develop learning corners). Mentees' perceptions of their mentors' practices may assist in determining mentoring needs. The results may prove useful for the professional development programme for the mentors and mentees for specific mentoring programme in order to enhance practices in primary classrooms in Pakistan. Results would contribute into the body of much-needed knowledge from developing context.

Keywords : cluster-based mentoring programme, mentoring for effective primary teaching (MEPT), professional development, survey

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