

The Connection between a Mentor and a Mentee in Higher Education: A Case of a Primary Teachers' Training College in Zimbabwe

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ABSTRACT This study sought to establish the nature of mentoring relationships that exist between a mentor and a mentee during teacher training. The main focus of this study was on the connections that existed during the teaching practice (TP) mentoring of trainee teachers from one primary school teacher training college of education in Zimbabwe. The study examined the experiences and perceptions on Teaching Practice mentoring by student teachers and classroom mentors as key stakeholders in process. A purposive sample of 17 student teachers and 10 mentor teachers from the schools that the teachers' college collaborated with in training student teachers was selected. The study employed a qualitative case study research design in which one-on-one interviews, focus group discussions were used to collect data. Data were analysed for content and conclusions were drawn. The main conclusions of the study were that various kinds of relationships exist between mentor teachers and student teachers these are either positive or negative. The study concluded that good mentoring relationships benefit both the mentor and the mentee. The main recommendations are that mentor teachers and trainee teachers be made aware of the importance of mentoring relationship for a successful mentoring process. The roles of a mentor need to be clearly defined according to the job specification to avoid overloading mentees. Lastly the study concluded that mentor teachers should be equipped with skills of establishing mentoring relationships for positive results.