MENTORING OF NEWLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS; A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

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Abstract

This paper has one primary objective. It sets out to critically reflect on different facets of mentoring of newly qualified secondary school teachers in Zambia so that readers may have a better understanding of the concept of mentoring, its benefits and how and why mentoring works. For purposes of this paper, a newly qualified teacher (hereafter referred to as NQT) refers to a certified teacher who has worked for a period ranging between 0-24 months. To understand the concept of NQT mentoring and the needs of NQTs, a review of the significant professional and popular literature was warranted. This section of the paper does just that by reviewing literature relevant to gaining a deeper understanding of mentoring of newly qualified teachers. This review of the literature helped the researcher to critically engage with how the different authors conceptualise mentoring with the intention of arriving at a definition. This paper evaluates the global perspective to the need

for mentoring of NQTs through a review of research-based literature in line with the following themes: the concept of mentoring through which diverse definitions of the concept of mentoring from a global usage are discussed, challenges that NQTs face in their new work environments and the purpose and goals of mentoring. It also looks at the benefits of mentoring, its weaknesses as well as gaps in the literature on mentoring of newly qualified teachers.

Introduction

While there is a substantial body of research on the subject of mentoring of NQTs globally, most of the scholarly discourse on mentoring stems from studies conducted in the West and in Asia, and Oceanic countries; but considerable attention on mentoring in these areas has not been matched by similar emphasis in Africa which means understanding about this practice in Africa in general and Zambia in particular is minimal. Thus, whereas research has provided evidence pertaining to the crucial role of mentoring, most African education systems, including that of Zambia, continue to neglect this aspect of the professional development of teachers. This is so inspite of widespread findings which suggest, as Greiman (2002) records, that without mentoring, new teachers learn through time consuming and stressful trial and error and yet are given a wide range of responsibilities which they are expected to execute in the same manner as veteran teachers.

From the literature on NQTs in Zambia, it is evident that very little is done to provide formal mentoring for NQTs in Zambian secondary schools (Malasha, 2009). Lack of discussion and research on the perceptions of NQTs and other stakeholders perpetuates misconceptions of the concept of mentoring; hence the importance of this paper. It is hoped that this paper will contribute to an understanding of mentoring of NQTs among stakeholders. In so doing, this paper might contribute towards stimulating greater interest, creating awareness and developing understanding of mentoring of NQTs and its link to professional development of NQTs among key stakeholders like teachers, head teachers, teacher educators and policymakers.

Understanding the concept of mentoring

The first step is to begin with a critical description and discussion of a wide variety of the meanings attached to mentoring by different scholars, researchers and authors in the field of mentorship in order to have a wide ranging understanding of mentoring. From the literature, it has been observed that there appears to be no universally accepted definition of mentoring; it can be seen that there seems to be no single definition that encompasses all concepts regarding mentoring. As Dougherty and Dreher (2007: 77) argue, 'it is likely that one agreed-upon, uniform definition of mentoring would be difficult, since mentoring falls along a range of quality'. This has created numerous problems in terms of what authorities should focus on as they seek to provide a response to the many challenges facing newly qualified teachers.

However, this paper uses the definition of mentoring advanced by Mazerolle, Bowman and Klossner (2015) who state that mentoring is a relationship in which experienced and highly knowledgeable individuals bring this experience and knowledge to the benefit of a novice

for the betterment of the novice in the areas of work such as curriculum interpretation and implementation, instruction and classroom management. Mentoring therefore goes beyond orientation which is mere introduction to the physical geography of a new workplace as well as introduction to the general guidelines of how that particular school operates. In attempting to understand mentoring, this section discusses the two kinds of mentoring available to newly qualified teachers. These are formal or career mentoring and informal mentoring which is also known as natural or traditional mentoring. However, mere observation shows that typically, informal mentoring does not establish collaboration as the norm, but merely transmits the current culture or status quo of the school. Formal mentoring is the natural tool to create collaborative relationships between veterans and novices and promote continual professional learning. Formal mentoring is also referred to as planned mentoring. Planning entails that the mentoring relationship is not only formal and structured, but is based on a mutually agreed upon objective or goal. If this is not taken care of, the efficacy of the mentoring programme is negatively affected. It should be mentioned that while mentoring goes on in most schools, in far too many cases, the quality of help rendered to NQTs leaves much to be desired. In Zambia very little mentoring is taking place (Malasha, 2009). As McCollum (2014: 9) further states 'far too many beginning teachers participate in a mentoring programme that provide little or no support during this critical stage of their teaching career'. Planned mentoring is most successful when linked to clear, well-defined and achievable goals. In formal mentorship there is a well-known and easily identifiable relationship between mentee and mentor which cannot be said to be the same in an informal relationship between mentee and mentor.

In formal mentoring, the mentoring programme is institutionalised with training forming the pinnacle of such mentoring programmes. This is in line with the philosophical and theoretical basis of Kram's Mentor Role Theory, and its assumption that mentoring is a learned behaviour that can be taught and be learned as postulated by the behavioural psychologist John Skinner. Aspects of Kram's theory will be referred to as the discussion unfolds. In this paper however, it must be admitted that there has been little consideration of theoretical discussion. It suffices therefore to state that among the many mentoring theories and models, other than the behaviourist theory, are the human development theory by Erick Erickson, Learning Theories, Social Interaction Theory (Powell, 1997), the knowledge transmission model which reflects a constructivist learning theory Shuell (1988),among others.

Basis of mentoring

Having laid the foundation in terms of understanding the concept of mentoring, this part of the paper now proceeds to look at the basis of mentoring. The basis for a discussion of mentoring of NQTs is found in the observation by Lankau and Scandura (2007: 95) that:

> Learning from training programmes and books will not be sufficient to keep pace with required competencies for success in today's fast-paced work environments.

Novice employees such as NQTs need support to weather the storms occasioned by the work experiences. One way of supporting new teachers towards success is through mentoring. The role of mentors is crucial in this regard. Eby and McManus (2002) have

argued, NQTs cannot simply be polished off and be expected to be fit for their demanding role. The intrinsic limitation of training programmes then gives birth to the need for mentoring to plug in the gap. To this end, Lankau and Scandura (2007: 95) emphasise the place of school-based mentoring as follows:

> Individuals often must look to others to learn new skills and keep up with the demands of their jobs and professions. Mentoring relationships can serve as a forum for such personal learning in organisations.

From the arguments above it is clear that attaining competence in one's job as a NQT extends beyond initial teacher training to encompass his/her personal and professional needs. It is the needs of NQTs and the numerous challenges they face in discharging their duties and their failure to perform to expectations plus the need to rectify these shortcomings that give birth to the need for mentoring. While orientation helps the NQT to acclimatise to their work place, mentoring helps to firmly place NQTs on their path to professional competence. It is important though to mention here, that mentoring is not always the panacea for inadequate teacher preparation. This, as well as the ever-changing knowledge landscape creates the need for Continuous Professional Development or in-service training.

Challenges of newly qualified teachers

Newly qualified teachers face a horde of challenges. The plight of NQTs has not only been felt by scholars and researchers, but also by school head teachers and other education officials. Thomas, Thomas and Lefebvre (2014) has argued that just like elsewhere around the world, NQTs in Zambia faced a myriad of challenges that included transitioning to new geographical locations, navigating school and organisational cultures, assessing the ability levels of their learners and improving their pedagogical practices.

Newly qualified teachers tend to lack additional knowledge and support in the areas of classroom management, lesson planning, curriculum interpretation, and communication within and outside the school. It is not surprising therefore that because they lacked systematic mentorship, NQTs continue to struggle to do basic things like writing schemes of work and lesson plans (Banja, 2017). From the literature, it is clear that NQTs faced serious instructional challenges in their first few years in discharging their instructional duties.

Response to challenges of Newly Qualified Teachers

As Powers (2012: 24) has stated 'new teachers generally do not have the content knowledge, instructional and management strategies, or ability to perform at the same level as experienced teachers'. Whatever mentoring programme is to be developed therefore must respond to the needs of the newly qualified teacher. These include the personal knowledge which is the pre-existing understanding and mental model that the novice teacher brings with him/her to the classroom and to the school organisation (Berliner, 1993). Personal knowledge, values and significance of the profession is important for the novice to develop his/her self-awareness and identity as a teacher, and commitment to the profession. With the support of the mentor, successful experiences at this initial stage

enhance new teachers' commitment, enthusiasm, confidence and positive feeling about the profession.

Secondly, the programme must meet the instructional knowledge needs of the newly qualified teacher. Pre-service teacher education programmes often include theories of curriculum, teaching and learning. Through effective mentoring, mentors can work with NQTs in their classrooms, supporting them on the challenges they face, providing in the process options for solving their pedagogical challenges related to lesson plans, teaching strategies, and assessment. By giving NQTs pedagogical/instructional support from the start, NQTs focus less on day-to-day survival and more on instruction. They become more confident, reflective and more skilled (Moir, 2010). The collaboration between the mentor and mentee facilitates the twin betterment of teaching and student learning.

The other need relates to operational knowledge. As discussed earlier and as observed by many experts, the first year can be overwhelming for a newly qualified teacher. A mentor can help the NQT tune in quickly with all the operational aspects, such as school policies, procedures, documents, plans, classroom management, system for keeping students' progress, communications with parents, and so on.

In addition, the mentoring programme should answer the professional knowledge needs of the newly qualified teacher. According to Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (1995), teaching for understanding relies on teachers' abilities to see complex subject matter from the perspectives of diverse students, the know-how necessary to make this vision of practice a reality. The vision of practice that underlies the reform agenda requires teachers to rethink their own practice, to construct new classroom roles and expectations about learner outcomes.

In a study by Banja (2017) it appears that heads of department (HoDs) were preoccupied with sharpening the skills of NQTs to help them improve their teaching performance relative to the following key professional areas of a teacher's work: improving teaching skills, developing understanding of subject area, and preparing lesson plans and schemes of work. All these aspects should help a teacher to teach effectively and thereby demonstrate an acceptable level of understanding of the subject content that one is teaching. Kram and Ragins (2007) have compiled numerous studies that show the benefit of mentoring on NQTs in different parts of the world.

Considering the many needs that NQTs have, there is need to address their specific needs and help them settle in their new work places because the success of NQTs depends on how well they are received and integrated into the school. Long serving teachers should position themselves to assist NQTs adapt to their new schools. This in turn helps him/her to begin exploring new and more effective and efficient ways of teaching. It is therefore imperative for schools to help NQTs feel accepted and appreciated by welcoming them to their new work stations and providing the necessary guidance and assistance in the first few years of their teaching career.

Veteran teachers need to understand that, whether NQTs are willing to learn from experienced teachers or not, they (NQTs) need help because they cannot make it on their own. The mentor has the duty to help the NQTs in pedagogical and moral/social aspects of

their (NQTs) work. There is need to bring to an end this sink or swim treatment of NQTs because it has adverse effects on the system.

Purpose and goals of mentoring

In response to the above and many other challenges that NQTs face in the execution of their duties, mentoring programmes have been instituted. In ensuring maximum efficiency and effectiveness, most effective mentoring programmes have specific goals, and formally structured and systematically organised. In general terms, the intention of all mentoring programmes is to transform a trainee teacher into a competent career teacher. Competence here refers to the state of having enough knowledge and skills to perform a task to expected standards.

Part of the purpose of mentoring is to help a new teacher to adapt easily to the school environment. In line with this view, some scholars have advanced that mentoring seeks to provide services that assist new teachers to develop and sustain skills for successful classroom instruction (Eby and McManus, 2002). It must be realised that 'the principal goal of mentoring is to create a self-directed learner, that the primary tool for learning is discovering, and that the most effective context for reaching that goal is a learning partnership' (Egeler, 2003). This viewpoint is supported by Bell and Goldsmith (2013:7) who state that mentoring 'is not a one-way, master-to-novice transaction.

The next section specifically discusses some of the well-known benefits of mentoring of NQTs, not only to NQTs but also to other relevant stakeholders.

Benefits of mentoring

The discussion of the key benefits of mentoring within the educational system has been well captured in the literature. Indeed, an important aspect to note in the discussion on the subject of mentoring is the justification of its use by pointing to several career and psychological related benefits to different stakeholders. Top on the list are benefits of mentoring to newly qualified teachers. Mentoring researchers have empirical evidence that support the role of mentoring for career advancement; literature on mentoring chronicles the benefits of both career and psychological mentoring, for the mentee (Baugh and Fagenson-Eland, 2007) including as an effective tool for ensuring quality teachers. The mentor as a more experienced teacher is expected to provide professional guidance and support to the NQT for a given duration. It is clear from the literature that the role of a mentor is critical in the career progression of a newly qualified teacher. Numerous scholars have argued that the roles of mentors have essential aspects for newly qualified teachers. Wildman, Niles, Magliaro and McLaughlin cited in Little (1990) have alluded to how critical this support is during the first year of teaching when while learning how to teach, NQTs have to be in the classroom teaching. It is critical therefore, that a mentor enters into a new relationship with a novice teacher with a positive attitude and a sense of perceived success for the teacher.

Benefits of mentorship for the NQT relate primarily to career assistance. Career assistance has direct and measurable consequences for the mentee. As Kram (1985) has argued, career assistance serves, primarily, to aid advancement up the hierarchy of an organisation. Scholars such as Dougherty and Dreher (2007) have advanced that career assistance refers

to specific mentor behaviours which are likely to enhance an individual's career advancement in an organisation. It serves career-related ends of the junior person by helping him or her learn the ropes of organisational life, gain exposure, and obtain promotions. Based on the views of Kram and various other scholars as discussed above, it is abundantly clear that the primary goal of career assistance activities is to help a new employee work their way up the hierarchy of an organisation.

Apart from career related benefits, there are benefits related to psychosocial assistance (which is also referred to as interpersonal assistance) that accrue to the NQT in a mentoring relationship. Kram (1985) says psychosocial assistance refers to those aspects of a relationship that enhance an individual's' sense of competence, identity, and effectiveness in a professional role and helps individuals build self-worth inside and outside the organisation. Psychosocial assistance affects each individual on a personal level by building self-worth inside and outside the organisation. It helps provide emotional support, needed information and access to various networks. In line with these findings, teacher induction literature reviewed by Clutterbuck (2007), revealed that NQTs who were mentored were teachers who were more effective in their early years since they learned from guided practice other than from trial and error. The Eric Digest as cited in Chatora (2008) reported that beginning teachers who were mentored were more effective in their early years since they learned from guided practice other than from trial and error. It enabled teachers to be acquainted with the system, and avoid frustrations which forced good teachers to give up teaching. Egeler (2003) also reported that emotional stability in teachers was greatly related to student achievement, job satisfaction and teacher effectiveness.

The professional growth and personal well-being of the NQTs are both important for the production of a well-rounded competent teacher. When provided, career and psychological assistance enable individuals to address the challenges associated with the different career stages. Whether it is formally planned or the informal response of helpful professionals, a major result of mentoring is the passing on of organisational values and beliefs from the veterans to the novices.

While a NQT has prior knowledge from his/her initial training, this knowledge blossoms faster and more effectively through career and psychosocial assistance which is supplemented via the knowledge and wider experience, influence and achievement of the veteran teacher. This assistance of an old hand is invaluable.

When the mentor's responsibilities discussed above are fully and meaningfully carried out, the NQT is expected to have developed competencies in the areas in which they need help. After all, the necessity for mentorship of NQTs lies in its contribution towards developing effective and competent teachers.

Literature on mentoring further chronicles its benefits; just as is the case with the mentee, there are several benefits of mentoring, both career and psychological, for the mentor (Kram, 1985; Little, 1990; Allen, 2007; Baugh and Fagenson-Eland, 2007; Godshalk and Sosik, 2007) among others. These include, for example, role modeling through which the

senior person rediscovers valued parts of self in observing the extent to which his or her junior colleague incorporates these parts.

Thirdly, literature on mentoring discusses the benefits of mentoring to an organisation. In addition to the benefits to NQTs and mentors there are benefits that accrue to the schools that employ these NQTs. According to Baugh and Fagenson-Eland (2007) organisations can benefit from mentoring through enhanced communication and commitment and reduced staff turnover.

In addition, and probably most importantly, apart from the benefits to the NQTs, mentors and schools, this paper examines the expected beneficial connection between NQT mentorship and learner outcomes in schools. The paramount interest in the discourse on mentorship of NQTs is the potential impact it has on student achievement. The capacity to develop professional competence in NQTs early in their practice has profound implications for learner achievement. Mentoring of novice staff is not an end unto itself. Therefore, mentoring programmes have to focus beyond the benefits of mentoring to novice staff, the mentors and the organisation itself, to the ultimate beneficiaries of the social process of mentoring, that is, the clients of the organisation. While the positive influence of mentoring on the NQT remains largely undisputed, of greater interest to administrators and policy makers is the potential impact that mentoring has on learner achievement. Seen from this view, the goal of mentoring focuses on addressing the needs of NQTs so that they gain more knowledge and insight into what is necessary for increasing student achievement in the classroom setting. The ultimate in teacher induction, that is, the ultimate goal of meeting the needs of NQTs is improved learner outcomes because of a better-equipped teacher.

The real benefit of mentorship of NQTs lies in the link between the benefits to NQTs and the resultant benefits to learners; for mentoring is not for its own sake, but that the teachers improve their performance so that they improve the performance of the learners. The adjustment, the competencies attained and so on, all make sense only if the learners benefit at the end of it all. It is one thing to mentor NQTs, but it is another thing to ensure that they (NQTs) pass on the benefits of their been mentored, to learners in their classes. So while it is true as Rudasingwa (2013; 96) writes that 'very little is done to provide young teachers with school-based support so that they confidently enter the teaching career, stay and enjoy teaching', it must be emphasised that the reason for mentoring goes far beyond this; it is ultimately about the learners.

All the benefits of mentoring such as the enhanced competence of novice staff, the rejuvenation of a mentor's career and the benefits to the organisation only derive meaning when the benefits of this mentoring trickle down to the clients of the organisation. They are the real reason why organisations want their novice staff to be mentored and to be competent and more productive. In this regard, the clients are the learners in the school setup. An effective, efficient and highly competent NQT of his/her own accord is meaningless to the school until these attributes begin to filter down to the learners and begin to affect their learning outcomes positively.

Balthazar (2010) attests to the well-known fact that in education ongoing mentoring has a positive impact on both teachers and students. She adds that when teachers are mentored, the ultimate goal is to impact student learning.

From the literature discussed this far, it is evident that the positive returns on mentorship far outweigh the shortcomings. The implication of this is that mentoring NQTs is a cornerstone to improving educational delivery. While acknowledging the limitations of mentoring as discussed later in this paper, I posit that many mentoring scholars share the view that mentoring is necessary for newly qualified teachers. The implication of the benefits of mentoring for NQTs discussed above is that mentoring is not just important but essential to the career development of the NQT and should be prioritised in schools' support systems. In view of the many beneficial outcomes of mentoring, many countries, particularly in the West, have adopted mentoring as a tool for career advancement.

Factors associated with successful mentoring

The necessity of mentoring of NQTs and the contribution it makes towards having effective teachers is hardly a matter of dispute. Nonetheless, it must be appreciated that mentoring of NQTs takes place in an ideal environment. Several factors might affect the success levels of any mentoring undertaking. Literature on the subject of mentoring therefore takes cognisance of the fact that mentoring relationships do not exist in a vacuum and are dependent upon and are affected by a myriad of factors. Therefore, mentoring must be contextualised to reflect prevailing circumstances. Therefore, as Powell (1997:5) states:

> Information about how mentoring works and the conditions under which mentoring is found to be most effective will be useful in schools in planning and implementing academic mentoring programmes.

In this regard, Allen (2007) reports about studies that have found that rigid organisational structures, unclear expectations, job pressures, and a competitive environment impede the mentor's ability to mentor others.

For mentoring of NQTs to succeed, it must start with strong personal relationships. In recent years, Hirsch (2010: 12) has stated that, "for mentoring to have maximum impact, it must take place in schools with supportive leaders who develop a culture of trust, empower educators, and find time for them to work together". As already discussed, the role of the mentor is to pass on knowledge, experience and judgment, and to provide guidance and support (Lund, 1992). It is clear from the above sentiments that NQTs must be comprehensively supported if the potential in them is to be fully tapped and developed.

In addition, the mentoring relationship is also affected by organisational factors.

Work commitments already in place affect one's willingness and capacity to undertake and build developmental relationships. The more committed a senior person is, the less willing they will be to take up new mentoring responsibilities. Such senior people may provide no more than occasional coaching, exposure, or sponsorship to another junior colleague (Banja, Ndhlovu and Mulendema, 2015). In contrast, the less committed one is, the more likely they are to be available to offer mentorship particularly if their own needs for growth are important and are being answered in the mentoring relationship.

The organisational context determines the range of assistance, the levels of participation as well as the magnitude of the mentoring activities. Much career assistance is not possible without a particular role relationship and formal position in the organisational hierarchy. Senior personnel are more likely to provide mentorship assistance that they perceive to be part of their job particularly if a system of rewards offered to senior people involved in providing mentoring is well tabulated. Organisational norms and practices such as job rotation, promotion, performance management, and communication procedures can individually or collectively positively or negatively influence which assistance is provided in a relationship (Kram, 1985).

Weaknesses of mentoring programmes and relationships

Even though the literature has demonstrated beyond doubt that mentoring relationships are beneficial for the participants and their organisations as discussed in the preceding sections, studies on mentoring have simultaneously identified many that cannot merely be glossed over. While mentoring for NQTs is desirable, and while different mentoring strategies may be available including one on one mentoring, one mentor handling a group of teachers, in-school mentoring and in-profession mentoring, mentoring programmes have their own problems.

 It has to be noted that no matter what the mode of mentoring programme is adopted, there is increased demand on the time, budgetary and spatial resources of a school. In most of the developing world, these demands on a school represent huge challenges that currently appear insurmountable. Mentoring activities increase the workload for both the mentor and the mentee, and yet mentoring might require freeing some people, both mentors and mentees of teaching time. Such a luxury is hardly available in Zambia where work overload among Zambian teachers is a common occurrence (Banja, 2013). Furthermore, Egeler (2003) has argued that in order to achieve success mentors needed more than their present superficial level of training. They suggest that mentors needed training in demonstrating teaching, observing teaching and coaching teachers, and studying teacher development, needs of new teachers, effective teaching, supervision skills and professional development. Responding to all these needs requires resources.

 In order to attract people to take up mentoring of NQTs, financial rewards may have to be considered. In the absence of incentives, monetary or otherwise, for those expected to mentor NQTs, there is little motivation among long serving teachers to provide mentoring to newly qualified teachers. A commitment of time on the part of both mentor and mentee is critical. This becomes even more significant when considered against the fact that mentoring is voluntary and reciprocal and cannot therefore be imposed on NQTs or senior experienced teachers. What this means is that there is need to set agenda for areas in which mentoring is important for implementation. This is all the more reason why mentoring should be backed by policy as opposed to mere dependence on the good will of those able to provide such mentoring. It is imperative therefore, for the MoGE to take it upon itself the challenge to introduce a policy on mentorship of NQTs so that veteran teachers accordingly guide NQTs as they set out to begin a career in teaching. However, considering that Zambia's educational system is already struggling under a limited budget, additional demands on the scarce financial resources seem unattainable and may not be seen as priority by educational planners.

Developing teacher competency is contingent on a number of factors other than mentoring. Further, it would be naïve and erroneous to assume that one can only succeed as NQTs if they are mentored by someone. As Doughterly and Dreher (2007) state, mentors do not provide all mentoring functions. The challenge in formal mentoring is certainty about how the positive behavior that the mentor promotes is associated with a desired outcome. Literature on the subject of mentoring recognises that producing a competent teacher involves an interplay among various variables whose individual impact may not be easy to delineate. Delineating the role of each of these factors is an impossible task, and not every competent teacher is a product of formal mentoring. There is danger therefore in overemphasising the role of mentoring to the exclusion of other equally important aspects of ensuring competence in NQTs such as CPD and monitoring and evaluation/supervision. Furthermore, where impact is largely qualitative, proving the positive impact of mentoring might be a challenge. Balthazar (2010; 9) recognises this challenge as follows:

> Clearly, it is difficult to assess a one-to-one correspondence among mentoring, teacher efficacy and student learning. Measuring the impact of mentoring is like measuring the impact of respect. It is complex, non-linear and an inter-connection of many mentoring actions.

The factors discussed above make evaluating the effectiveness of mentoring, in isolation from other services, extremely difficult. And yet, without affecting learner outcomes in the positive, any addition to current practice would be merely academic and a meaningless venture. Therefore, NQTs, their potential mentors and the school want to know how they and their learners will benefit from a mentoring programme (Turner and Bash, 1999).

Gaps in the literature on mentoring of newly qualified teachers
Based on the literature reviewed in this article, one shortcoming in the literature on the mentoring of NQTs as a support system relates to how these NQTs cope with the many challenges that they encounter in the absence of support through mentoring as is the case in Zambia. Most of the studies reviewed focused on the benefits of mentoring and neglected to discuss the coping strategies that NQTs resorted to in the absence of mentoring.

Summary
The literature reviewed in this paper has demonstrated global and local mentoring trends, predominantly the recognition of the importance, growing and eminent role of mentoring in the career progression of newly qualified teachers. Furthermore, the literature makes clear the significance of the various mentor roles and functions needed for the development of mentees. Further, the literature identifies multiple factors that are necessary for the creation and maintenance of an enabling environment that assists NQTs to discover their place in the school community and cultivate and acquire the necessary competencies, talents and skills needed to perform their functions effectively as teachers. In order for individuals to benefit from mentoring relationships they need to first identify what their needs are, and which career and psychosocial assistance would respond to those needs. Later, they must identify others in the organisation with the capabilities, desire and time to provide the desired mentoring functions.

There is also evidence in the literature that a developmental relationship has a potential reciprocity to it as it benefits both mentor and mentee. Mentored teachers tend to perform better than their unmentored colleagues. In addition, the literature has also established that outcomes of mentoring benefit the school as an organisation and the learners too. Clearly literature from around the globe shows that mentoring is an invaluable process in the career path of a newly qualified teacher. However, literature also recognises that in Africa in general and Zambia in particular, there is still apparent indifference to mentoring as a support system for NQTs in Zambia inspite of the overwhelming evidence in the literature regarding its significance in promoting teacher competence. Most schools neglect to provide adequately for this very important function.

Conclusion and recommendations

The purpose of this paper was to examine the relative importance of the mentoring of NQTs as part of their professional path towards attaining competence in their teaching profession. A global review of literature on mentoring of NQTs points to the immeasurable value of mentoring in facilitating preparation for and smooth transition into the teaching profession. Therefore, the paper calls for closer attention to be paid to mentoring of NQTs as a strategy for the support of newly qualified teachers. Given the evidence adduced in the literature, there are good reasons for advocating for the introduction of mentorship for NQTs in Zambian secondary schools.

Since the mentor's role in imparting knowledge, skills, values and attitudes in the NQT predominantly relies on the competencies that the teacher has acquired during initial teacher training, and since, as Lankau and Scandura (2007) have advocated, that the competence, effectiveness and efficiency of a NQT are likely to be affected by poor initial teacher training, the role of education training programmes in the effective mentoring of NQTs comes into play. Mentoring can help to bridge the gap between outdated theories taught at universities and current practice in schools brought about by constant curriculum changes.

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