

A plea for a mentoring framework that promotes dialogic professional learning in the ELT teacher education context

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Abstract

The paper emerged out of my own and my colleagues' growing discontent with the traditional, ill-organized and unproductive way of evaluating the one-month-teaching practice of student teachers of English Language Teaching (ELT) at Haramaya University. It advances the argument that student teacher evaluation systems should be restructured to represent the voices and experiences of the student teachers. Towards this end, I proposed a mentoring framework that potentially encourages student teachers to become critical practitioners. The model I propose emphasizes the professional agency of the student teacher. The paper holds the position that to transform their views of teaching and learning, student teachers as well as their trainers should be empowered to seek justice and emancipation from the traditional model of evaluation. Finally, it attempts to leave readers with the impression that if we prefer our zone of comfort at the expense of our student teachers' growth, we must know that we are jeopardizing the fate of teacher education.

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Introduction

Student teachers' learning in the field experience is an important component of the initial teacher education. If properly carried the experience enables student teachers to "acquire and develop critically the knowledge, skills and emotional intelligence essential to good professional thinking, planning and practice with young children, young people and colleagues through each phase of their teaching lives" (Day, 1999, p. 4). However, student teachers' opportunity to construct adequate content, procedural, curricular, pedagogical and context knowledge is usually hampered by ineffective teacher education practice. An ineffective teacher education practice is one which denies student teachers as well as their advisers the opportunity to engage in reflective and developmental practices systematically.

My own experience as a student teacher in Addis Ababa University 13 years ago is worth mentioning here. The supervisors were using checklist to assess my performance in the class. Although I was usually asked to show my lesson plans prior to using them, the supervisors did not give me the chance to discuss with them theories that underlie my lesson plans and the problems that I may face when I try to implement the lesson plans. The way the supervisors postured themselves in the classrooms and their manner of recording classroom events were threatening. Since I thought that the main aim of their observation is to dig out the weakness of my teaching, I did not accept their presence as a positive experience. This psychological disturbance which their presence caused to me eroded my confidence in the subject matter I was teaching and in the pedagogical activities I was carrying out. I was unable to execute what I planned in the way I planned. While I was attempting to adjust myself to the situation, one of my supervisors called me only to tell me that things went wrong. His comment exacerbated my

feelings of insecurity and nervousness. I did not have even the chance to air my sense of defeat and frustration.

At the end of my lesson, the supervisors gave me a list of correction I would be required to make in an authoritative way. They did not encourage me to become reflective practitioner through expressing the theories and assumptions that underlie my pedagogical practice. They also failed to provide me with critical comments on what should be done to cope up with classroom dynamics. They were not willing also to point out to me what aspect of my practice they liked and disliked and why. I was not pretty sure why this was the case. I know very well, however, that I was denied a productive student teaching experience. Now I understand that productive student teaching experience occurs when mentoring derives and then nurtures the student teacher's construction and reconstruction of professional identity in an ongoing way. Today, in my teacher education faculty, I see that the same unproductive student teaching which I experienced a decade ago is still in place.

The Contextual Analysis Of Teacher Education In Ethiopia

In Ethiopia, modern education (that is education based on Western curricular systems) was introduced when Menelik II's School was opened in Addis Ababa in 1908. It was in 1944 that the Haile Selassie government launched the primary teacher training program in the premise of Menelik II School. University-based teacher education program began in 1950s when the Faculty of Arts of Addis Ababa University was opened. The first Faculty of Education in the country was opened in 1962 at Addis Ababa University. The main reason for opening the Faculty of Education at the Addis Ababa University was to train secondary school teachers. Before this, the Arts Faculty of Addis Ababa University was producing teachers for primary schools. Addis Ababa University was the only source of secondary school teachers before other teacher training

institutions were opened in the country (Zewdie et al. 2000). In 1972, the Haile Sellassie government opened Bahir Dar Teachers College to train teacher trainers, supervisors, educational leaders, adult education organizers and educational development agents. The Kotebe College of Teacher Education (KCTE) was founded in 1962. For a considerable number of years, the country's teacher education institutions were limited to the major cities of the country. But now, teacher education institutions are found through out the country.

My faculty of education was established in 1996, as one of the new faculties of Haramaya University. It has 9 different teacher education departments. It runs teacher education programs both through pre-service and in-service programs. Here, teacher education is carried out under precarious situations. Poor resources, teacher trainers' unpreparedness to engage their student teachers in productive professional learning, poor coordination between the faculty and the partner schools during the practicum programs and overall inconsistency in the curriculum of teacher training are among the major problems. The distance of the university from the partner schools also exerts serious impact. There is also lack of awareness among teacher educators and cooperating teachers in the partner schools on how to engage student teachers in productive teaching and reflective process. The other serious impact is the introduction of Plasma education through digital video broadcasting (DVB), mainly known as plasma display panels (PDPs), in secondary schools. This minimized and in some situations completely replaced the traditional role of teachers. Our teacher trainees take teacher education courses primarily designed to prepare them for the conventional classrooms. However, they go to schools only to be dictated by the plasma teacher. As the plasma broadcast takes the largest share of the available time of the lesson, the student teachers have only insignificant opportunity to gain hands-on experience (Hussein, 2006b).

Out of all these problems, the paper focuses only on one problem: lack of strongly organized and transformative mentorship during practicum. The aim of the paper is twofold. First it points out the major weaknesses of the traditional checklist-based evaluation format used to assess the performance of student teachers. Then it proposes a mentoring framework that encourages a progressive system of evaluation capable of building collaborative learning and nurturing dialogic professional learning between the mentor and the mentee. In other words, the framework attempts to inculcate the importance of stimulating student teachers as well as their professional supporters to reflect on dilemmas, doubts and uncertainties that are characteristics of novice teachers' practice.

The Drawbacks Of The Traditional Student Teacher Evaluation Form

The Faculty of Education at Haramaya University does not have the mechanism to ensure the proper assessment of student teachers. The traditional checklist-based student teacher evaluation format being used in the faculty (See Appendix A) is restrictive, authoritative, pre-determined and decontextualized. As one can see, it contains the names of the competencies, explanations of the examples of actions that demonstrate proficiency in different competency areas and the five-point scale for rating the level of the student teachers' proficiency. Irrespective of the different perspectives of their student teachers or the training courses they offer, all of the departments in the faculty are required to use the same format. The format encourages supervisors to approach their student teachers with evaluative rather than educative mindsets. As I observed, the pedagogical, curricular and procedural issues included in the checklist are not only too general, but also are behavioristic as they propagate technical rationality rather than critical professional learning. The format has its roots in the competency-based teacher education that tends to treat the competencies of teaching in generic terms. In addition, the format tends to

see teachers' performance in the classroom as the most essential evidence of the acquisition of the teaching competence and thus reduces educational activities into technical accounts of discrete behaviors. The most chronic weakness of the format viewed from the progressive teacher education point of view is that it ignores the dynamics of instructional engagements and the divergent ways teachers make instructional decision as they deal with their educational dilemmas. For example, it does not have the room for student teachers to learn how to cope with school climate and culture, to gain interpersonal and professional support from their supervisors and to reflect on their perspectives. In other words, the format denies both supervisors and their student teachers the opportunity to engage in critical reflection about the macro social and political factors that impact on the instructional practices. Last but not list, the format minimizes supervisors' role to the checking of student teachers' instructional behaviors against pre-determined checklist points and obliges student teachers to conform to decontextualised techniques and procedures (Hussein, 2006b). The question a critical teacher educator can ask is: What is the worth of a bunch of comments if it does not guide the student teachers “through a process of learning, reflection, and exploration to become more aware of their beliefs and behaviors” (Chamberlin, 2000, p. 654)? The behaviorist and reductionist view that the Haramaya University student teacher evaluation format is based on reinforces the agenda that human thought processes are accounted for through simple associations between stimuli and responses (Covey, 1992). However, such a view has now been rendered inadequate to explain the complex decision-making processes that are characteristic of instructional activities. The existing evaluation format denies the freedom of choice between the stimulus and the response, particularly the fact that the freedom of choice is constituted from individual differences in self-awareness, imagination, conscience and degree of independence.

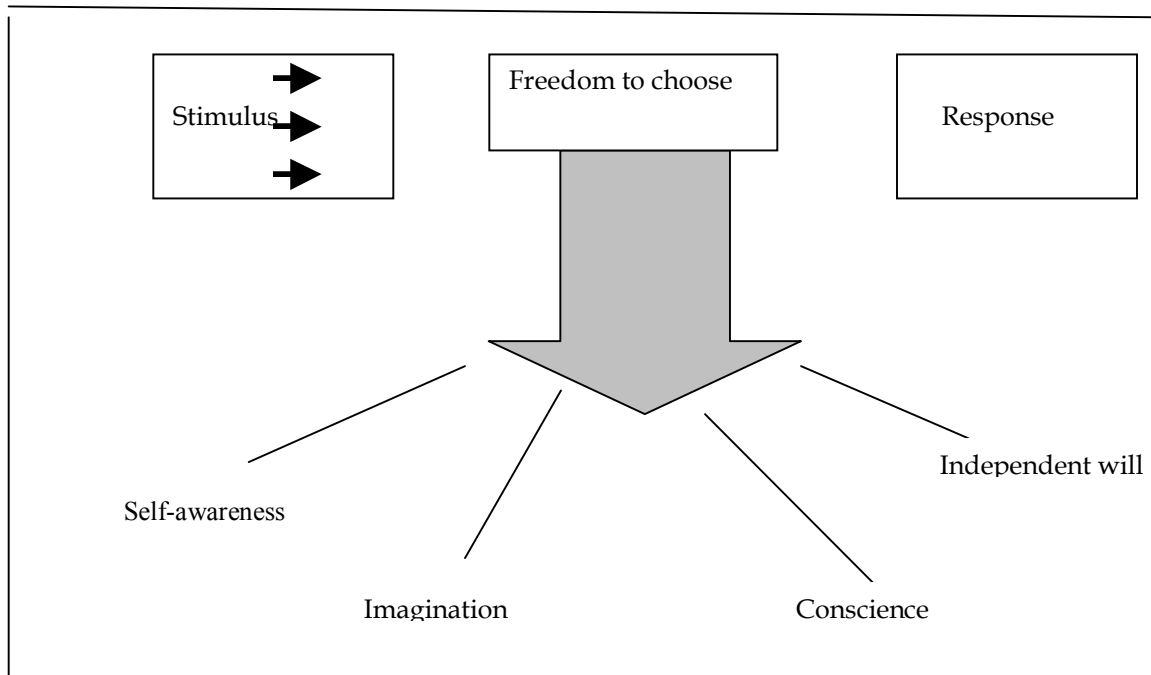


Fig 1. Proactive model taken from Covey (1992: 71)

Looked at from this proactive model, the old evaluation format we are using denies (1) dynamics of instructional engagements like individual teachers' diverse ways of carrying out their educational activities and (2) constant changes in way teachers make instructional decisions. Of course, the evaluation format has also political bearings as it exerts a centralized control over what teachers do, homogenizes the curricula into easily testable bits and legitimizes technical knowledge as the best possible form of knowledge (Fuller, 1991). It is difficult for student teachers to become reflective practitioners if they are not allowed to "think about what they want to accomplish, how they are going to accomplish it, why they want students to learn it and how they will know students have learned it" (Walkington *et al.*, 2001: 343). They can not redefine their thoughts and lay foundation for their future development as teachers if they are not offered constructive feedback on their pedagogical content knowledge, and if they do not reflect on their experiences through analyzing what worked well and what did not work well in particular instructional conditions (Ling, 2003).

I have been teaching English and training English teachers over the last 7 years in this university. What I learned from my experience is that our student teachers are unhappy about the way we observe their classrooms and comment on their practices. They have the feelings that the existing supervisory approach is not helping them:

- improve their professional learning;
- cope with school climate and culture;
- gain interpersonal and professional support that will encourage them to reflect on their school experience;
- increase their confidence and instructional effectiveness;
- learn from the knowledge and experience of their mentors, and
- reflect on and share their views about theories that inform their practice.

These problems evoked in me the desire to think of a quality mentoring framework that assumes student teachers as engaged learners and constructors of knowledge.

Principles That Underlie Progressive And Productive Mentoring Of Student Teacher

One principle that informs the current framework is the view that mentoring should promote student teachers' professional goals and autonomy, enrich their personal engagement in learning, and stimulate an ongoing commitment to teaching and learning. This is characteristic of mentoring that integrates the social, affective and cognitive learning goals of the student teacher. Learning how to teach is a developmental and reflective process and requires student teachers to take into account and reflect on dilemmas of learning how to teach. Thus, only a supportive environment helps student teachers make safe and productive transition (Housego & Grimmett, 1983; Williams, 1989). Without a system and procedure that offer student teachers "personal and professional self-development opportunities in a positive relationship" (Boudreau, 1999, p. 456), it is unlikely for a meaningful professional experience to occur.

Mentoring should also be reciprocal. Unlike its hierarchal counterpart, the reciprocal mentoring emphasizes the mutual and interdependent professional growth of the mentor and the mentee. In the reciprocal mentoring, the mentor is not someone positioned at the throne just to

direct; he/she is rather a co-constructor of meaning and an open-minded figure ready to be influenced, changed and tested in the mentoring process (Ballantyne & Green, 1999; Beattie, 2000; Rodrigues, 1995). Hanky gives us clear explanations about how the mentor and the mentee should work within the demanding process of mentoring

...the mentor is the critical friend and co-enquirer whose relationship with the trainee teacher will benefit both parties in enabling them to engage in debate, to formulate and articulate critical comparisons of personal ideologies in relation to teaching and learning, leading to mutually beneficial growth and new understandings. This is a process of engagement in 'professional discourse' referred to by Freeman, a process that involves making the tacit explicit, a process...which is not a linear one of revealing what is known, but rather 'a dialectical one in which familiar and tacit knowledge interacts with and is reshaped by newly explicit understandings' (2004: 391).

Not only the process, but also the institutional goals of mentoring should be principled. For example, mentoring programs should place at their centre student teachers' strong commitment to professional learning. Similarly, mentors should take up the mentoring role from a sense of commitment to their profession rather than to any other benefits (Cooper, 1995; Holloway, 2001); they should not, as is the case in my institution, supervise because they are forced to do so. The professional goal of mentoring should also extend beyond the induction of the novice teachers into the procedures and mores of the school system (Stevens, 1995; Tellez, 1996; Tomlinson, 1995) to planting the seed for a life-long professional growth. Mentoring is not a haphazard and poorly conceptualized process. As Anderson & Shannon (1988) made clear, any productive mentoring

...must be grounded on a clear and strong conceptual foundation. Such a foundation includes a carefully articulated approach to mentoring which could include delineation of the mentoring relationship, the essential functions of the mentor role, the activities through which selected mentoring functions will be expressed, and the dispositions that mentors must exhibit if they are to carry out requisite mentoring functions and activities. p.38

If it is based on clear purpose and plan, mentoring benefits all parties: the mentor, the mentee, and the institution. The dialogues and questions raised during the mentoring sessions provide the parties in mentorship the opportunity to reevaluate their professional thoughts and practices (Ganser, 1996; Ghaye & Ghaye, 1998). Greene (1986, p. 440) pointed out: "To engage with our students is to affirm our own incompleteness, our consciousness of spaces still to be explored, desires still to be tapped, possibilities still to be opened and pursued." A quality mentoring is one that "allows both those supervising, and those being supervised to understand their own personal and collective histories, and to work collaboratively at a deeper understanding of the complexities of their work practices" (Yarrow & Millwater, 1997, p. 350).

Seeing mentoring as a transformative practice is the other important principle. By transformative mentoring I mean mentoring in which mentors and their protégées collaborate in on-going critical self-reflection about teaching practice and student learning with the intent to uncover personal assumptions, examine beliefs, and improve practice (Martin, 2004). Transformative mentoring arises from "a commitment to education, a hope for its future, and a respect for those who enter into its community" (Shadio, 1996, cited in Kokoi, 1997, p. 2). The following guidelines (adapted from Schapiro, 2003, p. 154) are meant to display a clearer representation of the principles emphasized above.

Table 1
 Principles Underlying The Proposed Mentoring Framework

No	PRINCIPLES	EXPLANATIONS
1.	Mentee-centered than mentor-centered	Mentoring begins with mentees needs, purposes, and goals, not with mentors' agenda, ideas or methods.
2.	Problem-focused than subject-focused	Mentoring builds the learning process around situations and problems that mentees confront in their own lives, not around learning particular subject matter out of context and for its own sake.
3.	Inquiry-directed than answer-directed	Mentoring uses mentees' questions to derive the learning process rather than mentees' acquisition of other's pre-determined answers.
4.	Wholistic than purely cognitive and rational	Mentoring recognizes the emotional, kinesthetic, and spiritual dimensions of learning.
5.	Experiential than purely didactic	Mentoring helps mentees learn not only from books and lectures but also from experience and reflection on and in experience.
6.	Collaborative than competitive	Mentoring enables the mentor and the mentee to use one another as colleagues, resources and co-learners, not as the ruler and the subordinate.
7.	Integrated than discipline-based	Mentoring encourages mentors and mentees to approach problems and topics from a multi-disciplinary perspective.
8.	Constructivist than transmission-based	Mentoring enables the mentee to construct their own meaning and knowledge rather than consuming other's ideas of the truth.
9.	Person-centered than role-centered	Mentoring enables the mentee and mentors to engage one another as authentic persons who are colleagues in the learning process, each with their own wisdom and expertise, not solely as expert and protégé, fount of knowledge and vessel to be filled.

Table 1 suggests that mentoring is carried out within the context of evolving and caring relationship between the mentor and the mentee and that a successful mentoring takes into account hooks' (1994) notion of 'engaged pedagogy'. Collaborative relationship between the mentor and the mentee is essential to establish a meaningful mentoring. Research confirms that student teachers' receptivity to supervision increases if the supervisory relationships are

transactional and reciprocal (Hussein, 2006a, 2007). For example, before they disclose their personal metaphors and beliefs about teaching, mentees must have trust in their mentors. The mentor can intervene using catalytic questions like: “When you put students in groups to work out the meanings of the words ‘*formidable*’ and ‘*fantastic*’ from the reading passage, I noticed that some students were engaged in off-task activities, like developing personal notes from friend’s exercise book. What useful actions/measures could you have taken to avoid such behaviors?” The purpose of such a question is to encourage student teachers to self-discover and then to open the room for discussion and critical thinking.

The complexity of mentoring can also be shown from the dimensional perspective of the roles mentors assume. Table 2. below shows the three main dimensions of the roles and responsibilities of mentors adapted from Samson & Yeomans (2002).

Table 2

Dimensions Of Mentors' Role In The Proposed Mentoring Framework

The Structural dimension	The supportive dimension	The professional Dimension
<i>Planner:</i> The mentor, together with the student teacher, plans the process of the teaching practice.	<i>Friend:</i> The mentor becomes source of positive comments.	<i>Trainer:</i> The mentor provides professional support on content as well as pedagogy.
<i>Organizer:</i> The mentor, together with the student teacher, sets conditions that make possible professional practice.	<i>Host:</i> The mentor welcomes the mentee into the teaching profession. By doing this, he/she would build up the confidence and sense of the mentee.	<i>Educator:</i> The mentor helps the mentee become autonomous, self-referential teacher capable of objectively analyzing his/her own and others' professional practice. In this context, the mentor is expected to take the role of a dialogical partner to help the mentee become concerned about their own long-term professional development rather than merely with the here and now issues
<i>Negotiator:</i> The mentor negotiates with the mentee about time, classroom practice and other essential variables.	<i>Counselor:</i> The mentor helps the mentee cope up with the difficult task of making educational judgments	<i>Assessor:</i> The mentor communicates to the mentee about his/her performance.
<i>Inductor:</i> The mentor offers the mentee insights about how one as a teacher should behave in and outside the classroom		

Adapted from: J. Samson & R. Yeomans (2002). Analyzing the role of mentors. In A. Pollard (ed) *Readings for Reflective Teaching*. London: Continuum.

Readers should know, however, that the role of a mentor is more divergent and complex than what is presented in the table. The overlapping key roles of mentors are *a counselor, teacher, challenger, coach, observer, facilitator, trainer, master, tour, guide, advocate, role model, reporter, and equal* (Provident, 2005).

Description of The Structural Flow Of The Proposed Mentoring Framework

The mentoring framework I am proposing promotes the reciprocal rather than the hierarchical process of mentoring that maintains a hegemonic relationship in which the mentor (master) hands out flotation devices to his/her apprentices until the latter develop a more definite teaching style (George, 1995; Ghaye & Ghaye, 1998; Murray & Owen, 1991; Rodrigues, 1995; Fischer, 2004; Holloway, 2001). It was designed primarily to help the professional and personal growth of student teachers within a collaborative and interactive climate. This is its major difference from the hierarchical mentoring process in which mentors are assumed in hallowed tones as people that “have successfully trod the profession’s highways and who now wait the novice journeyer with beacons to guide the way to a guaranteed successful career path. Etymological considerations have tended to elevate further the status of mentor to the realms of the ancient god” (Martinez, 2004: 102).

The framework is founded on the constructivist paradigm that learning in general and teacher learning in particular are “advanced by: (a) exposure to new input from others, creating an awareness of what is unknown and therefore leading to the expansion of cognitive structure; (b) exposure to new ideas that may contradict one’s own beliefs and cause a reexamination and reconstruction of beliefs; and (c) communication of one’s own beliefs to others which forces articulation and sharpens conceptualizations” (Montgomery, 2000, p. 2). Towards this end, it underscores a four-step process of teacher observation: *pre-observation conference*, *classroom observation*, *post-observation conference* and *follow-up analysis*. Together, the mentor and the mentee plan for learning, implement the planned learning activities and assess the outcome of their plans. In the framework, the mentee is represented as a person in the process of ‘becoming’

and as active agents in the construction of their own personal and professional growth. The mentoring framework expects mentors to allow their mentees:

to experience a shift from seeing knowledge as something that exists outside of themselves and that faculty will impart to them to seeing it as something that they, too, have the authority to construct for themselves; from thinking about their learning experience only in terms of meeting faculty expectations to thinking about it more in terms of what they want to know and learn; from thinking of themselves as passive recipients of others' learning to thinking of themselves as active agents in their learning, and in working for personal, organizational, and social change (Schapiro, 2003: 162).

The Pre-observation Conference: Before he/she visits the classroom, the mentor communicates with the mentee to know in advance the latter's instructional plans and goals, among other things. The mentor may need to receive copies of the lesson plan and other important materials and strategies that constitute the student teacher's lesson. The pre-observation conference provides the mentor and the mentee the opportunity to clarify goals, address concerns, discuss on the lesson plans, instructional activities and the expected outcomes. During the pre-observation conference, the mentor and the student teacher would also agree on what aspects of the instructional practice and the students' learning processes should be focused on during the formal observation.

Table 3 below contains sample questions which the mentor may pose to the mentee to get clearer information about the objectives, structure, presentation and assessment of the instructional practice:

Table 3.

Sample questions for pre-observation discussion

1). Let me know the general situation of your class and your students?	5). What assessment methods/tools will you use to check if your learning objectives were met? How do you go about this? (Please, attach tests or performance indicators together with marking/scoring systems. How do you provide feedback? Have you established the criteria for performance assessment? How do you plan to use the results of your assessment in the subsequent classes?
2). What are your major goals in the lesson? What do you want your students to know or be able to do as a result of this lesson? To what extent is your lesson suitable to the group of students in your class?	6). What materials and teaching strategies, if any, will you use to accomplish your lesson goals/objectives? Is there anything that you want me to focus on during my observation?
3). What did you do in the previous class(s)? How does your lesson relate to what students learned in the previous lessons? What have you planned to connect your students to their previous learning?	7). Is there anything else I should be aware of before I start observation?
4). How are you going to deal with differences among students in your class? What are the concerns, if any, about the activities you planned in your lesson?	

One should note that discussion during the pre-observation conference should not be reduced to just giving and receiving information. The mentor is not a passive recipient of information about student teacher's plans and intentions. He/she is expected to get clarifications and elaborations from the student teacher about theories that inform the latter's plans and intentions. For the mentor's question: *"Is there anything else I should be aware of before I start observation?"* the mentee may say: *"I want you to be aware of how the class size affects my attempt to assess learners' performance."*

Classroom Observation: During the observation, the mentor focuses basically on things that were agreed up on during the pre-observation conference. It is this perspective which distinguishes mentoring from the traditional system of evaluation. Of course, the mentor may also take note of other events in the classroom and consider them whenever he/she thinks they are important to discuss with the mentee. The following table contains areas a mentor can focus on and the corresponding questions he/she can ask while observing.

Table 4
 Areas to Focus on and Potential Questions during Observations

AREAS	Sample questions at the time of observation
1. <i>Presentation and development</i>	What has the student teacher done to make the aims and objectives of the lesson clear to the students? Is the lesson well placed?
	What strategies has he/she used to make the instructions brief and clear? What activities has he/she carried out to monitor and correct students' errors effectively? What has he/she done to make his/her instructional strategies appropriate to the lesson objectives?
2. <i>Interpersonal dynamics</i>	Which activities of the student teacher indicate his/her enthusiasm for the subject or his/her awareness of individual students' learning needs and strategies? What has the student teacher been doing engage all or the majority of the students in the learning process? In what ways did the teacher use the body language?
3. <i>Class management</i>	What has the student teacher done to get the attention of the students? What has he/she done to stop off-task behaviors? What strategies has he/she used to maintain a classroom atmosphere that is conducive to learning? How did the teacher manage group activities?
4. <i>Clarity of the overall lesson</i>	What has the student teacher done to clarify abstract ideas or concepts? How has he/she link the current lesson to the previous one?

As one can see, the way the mentor questions the activities and behaviours of the mentee is different from the traditional evaluation system based on fixing questions like: “Does the teacher involve students in the learning process?” , which merely implies that the evaluator has better knowledge and skills of teaching. Questions that begin with wh-questions, like *how*, *what*, *in what way* and *why* may stimulate the mentor to take the role of a vigilant and critical observer. For me the mentor who uses these questions assumes that teaching involves complex-decision making that cannot be reduced down to absolute routines.

Post-observation Conference: The post-observation conference is a time for both the mentor and the mentee to reflect on the collected data. During this time, before he/she presents the data he/she collected during observation, the mentor would allow the mentee the chance to express his/her overall impressions about the teaching moment. When he/she offers suggestions, the mentor would refer to specific teaching and learning strategies, class structure, the use of materials, teacher-student interactions, questioning and assessment behaviors, etc. Unlike the traditional supervisory system in which the mentor is placed at the summit of the hierarchy and the mentee at its bottom, this framework assumes the mentor as reflective practitioner who sees his/her professional lives in developmental terms (Atkinson, 1996; Yarrow & Millwater, 1997).

In a democratic teacher education, the mentor is expected to bring his/her mentee to the edge of reflective dialogic. In the educational context, dialogue involves naming of one’s own experience and reflecting on it. It is a kind of communication that awakens the consciousness of the mentor and the mentee. It is meant to enable transformational, democratic and respectful relationship between the parties. The mentor can engage the mentee in the dialogic communication in several ways. One way is making the mentee talk through the teaching he/she has done. The second way is making him/her relate the teaching practice to his/her own previous

theoretical dispositions or understandings. Thirdly, the mentor can bring forward his/her own experience and understandings. Through such processes, he/she can encourage the mentee to reflect in a thoughtful and personally transformative ways. The mentor should thus demonstrate an unremitting commitment to facilitate the voicing of differences in attitudes and dispositions. There is no magic way of doing this. The mentor can use questions such as shown in Table 5 below and other situationally evoked questions to encourage his/her mentee to articulate his/her voice of difference. The feedback should emphasize the mentee's strengths and the potential areas for improvement. This session should also provide the mentee the opportunity to reflect on the mentoring process. Student teachers' reflection on the mentoring processes may help the mentoring team to make modifications or alterations in the future programs. In general, the debriefing session should encourage: (1) finding out what the student teacher feels about the lesson; (2) encouraging the student teacher to talk about the weaknesses and strengths of his/her teaching and the variables caused the perceived shortcomings, if any (3) eliciting the mentor's perception of the lesson's strength and mentee's reflection on how things could have been made qualitatively different (Hagger, Burn & McIntyre, 1995: 61).

Table. 5.
 Sample Questions for the Post-observation Conference

1). In general, how do you feel about your lesson?	5). Is there any part of your lesson or pedagogical practice which you think was inadequate? Why?
2). Can you say something on your assessment? Remember what you did to check your learners' understanding.	6). How effective were your assessment methods? How will you use the assessment data to improve your future lessons?
3). Do you think the students have accomplished the learning objectives you had planned in this lesson?	7). If you are given another chance of teaching this lesson, what improvements do you want to make? Why?
4). What is it that you think	8). Do you have any suggestions?

worked well as a result of your lesson? What strategies did you find most effective in terms of student learning? What was least effective? Why?	
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Since the main goal of mentoring is to foster the professional growth of the mentee, the mentor should help the mentee to reflect as freely as possible to learn both from their failures and successes. For example, the following questions reveal the challenger role of the mentor: *“You offered students 5 minutes to find answers for inferential questions in a paragraph. I observed that some of them finished the task quite earlier and wanted your attention while others were struggling with the problem. What useful measures could you have taken to react to the situation?”* *“When you put students in groups to work out the meanings of the words ‘formidable’ and ‘fantastic’ from the available contexts in the reading passage, I noticed that some students were engaged in off-task activities, like developing personal notes from friend’s exercise book. What other useful measures you could have taken to avoid such behaviors?”* In this question, the mentor sees the mentee as a developing practitioner rather than as a fixed one. In a mentoring process based on constructivist view of learning, the mentee must be given ample opportunity to raise similar questions whenever he/she feels doing so is important.

FOLLOW-UP: There is no specific purpose for which this stage is set. One thing, however, is clear. That is, the follow-up stage develops out of the discussions made with the student teacher mainly in the post-observation conference. As implied in the feedback procedure shown under the post-observation conference, the mentor and the mentee identify areas that need further intervention.

The Contribution of The Mentoring Framework For Teacher Educations In Ethiopia

Other teacher education institutions in Ethiopia can use the model to make their student teachers take part in the construction and reconstruction of their own reality. The model can

facilitate a situation both for mentors and mentees to scrutinize the social, political and institutional factors that affect the teaching profession. It calls for critical dialogue between the mentors and their mentees. Dialogue is a key element in the construction of emancipatory knowledge. The framework advocates that if they are dialogically engaged, student teachers can develop a thorough understanding of the reality (social, political, religious, cultural, economic or a combination of all) that shapes their lives and makes or breaks their capacity to transform that reality (Freire, 1970).

As I emphasized through out the paper, mentoring is a complex process. It requires (a) selecting and training individuals to serve as mentors; (b) matching mentors with protégés; (c) setting goals and expectations; and (d) establishing the mentor program. The current framework assumes that selection of mentors would consider not only expertise, but also commitment/willingness to work as mentors. Open-mindedness, flexibility, empathy, interdependent learning and reconstruction of knowledge are among the crucial social skills a dialogically-oriented mentor is expected to have. To benefit from the framework, the mentor should familiarize himself/herself also with facets of the program and needs training in communication and active listening techniques, relationship skills, effective teaching, supervisory techniques and coaching, conflict management, and problem solving. There are no strict criteria to follow to match mentors with protégés. The mentoring programmers can use different criteria depending on the social and educational needs of the mentee. Setting goals is the most important component of the mentoring task. As I stated in Table 2, there is no specific goal a mentor is expected to play. However, mentors may seek the help o others to establish more informed goals and expectations regarding the process and the relationship. Mentoring must be specific to both the types of membership and the expected outcomes. Establishing

mentoring program takes into consideration the following steps. The first step is to build a support structure that includes making physical arrangements and handling logistics. A second step is to create monitoring and supervisory mechanisms to assure a process of continual assessment of the relationship. A third step is to evaluate the staff developers' skills and abilities (Janas, 1996).

Colleagues' Reactions To The Proposed Mentoring Model

The idea of developing an alternative framework for student teacher evaluation is basically informed and influenced by the principles of dialogic teacher learning for educational and social justice (Hoffman-Kipp, 2003). Therefore, in the framework I am pressing “for emancipatory education that frees both the student and the teacher from the oppressive grasp of positivist framework” (Gilstrap, 2007, 3). The mentoring framework attempts to promote libertarian education. According to Freire (1984: 124): “The important thing, from the point of view of libertarian education, is for the people to come to feel like masters of their thinking by discussing the thinking and views of the world explicitly or implicitly manifest in their own suggestions and those of their comrades.” Implied in the model is the view of liberation as praxis, as an action and reflection whose aim is to transform our world (Freire, 1984: 79). The critical dialogue between the mentor and the mentee suggests that teacher evaluation is not about fixing the performance quality of the teacher. It is rather a process of encouraging the teacher to develop curiosity towards what he/she is doing and the complex factors that limit the functioning of one's educational plans and strategies.

Despite its potential advantages over the conventional form of student teacher evaluation, the new mentoring framework can be affected by various situational variables. The main shortcoming of this model is that it consumes time and resources. It requires teacher trainers to

work over a long period of time closely with their student teachers. In teacher education institutions with few experienced and professionally committed teacher trainers, it is difficult to implement the model. The ever-increasing number of student enrollment in teacher education programs may also limit the usefulness of the model. Thus, after I developed the framework, I gave it to my colleagues at Haramaya University for comment and critical suggestions. The framework evaluators have good experience in critical analysis of teacher education policies and discourse in Ethiopia and have enriched knowledge of the institutional, social and personal factors that are detrimental to progressive teacher education reform. The evaluators appraised the relative value of the attempt I made to reverse the behaviorist and essentialist mode of evaluation in which the role and knowledge of the mentee is superimposed on that of the mentees. They also appreciated the theoretical grounding of the model, which is the humanistic, developmental and constructivist process of learning based on critical reflections and counter-reflections. They stressed that the new framework emphasizes social relationships founded on personal willingness, mutual trust and respect and negotiation of meaning.

However, they pointed out institutional and policy factors that limit the value of the framework. They have the view that the seed of change and development cannot grow if it is cast on a rocky ground. There should always be a climate that nurtures and sustains the seed of development (Hargreaves & Fullan, 1992). According to my colleagues, one problem lies with teacher educators themselves. They argued that since they are the products of the training system that promotes the conventional, behavioristic practices, some teacher trainers may become inconvenient with the new model of student teacher evaluation. They have the view that there is always a tendency to question and resist change after one has been used to the old ways of doing things. Of course, the teacher educators which I have proposed the current mentoring framework

for have long been using the centrally prepared evaluation format with predetermined agendas and perspectives of teaching and learning. My colleagues have generally the fear that teacher trainers who are unwilling to get involved in the demanding tasks of designing a developmentally oriented mentoring document may prefer to continue with the traditional evaluation system because although it is entirely counter-productive when measured on the scale of progressive and transformative teacher education, the readymade evaluation, paradoxically speaking, makes their evaluation process simpler.

The framework evaluators' other view is that the proposed mentoring framework becomes meaningful only if the curricula of the Ethiopian teacher education include aspects of managing the unique teaching and learning process which the plasma technology has brought about. I share my colleagues' fear. But one thing should be made clear here. In so far as student teachers' management of the plasma education is an inevitable challenge they are going to face when they go to school as full-time teachers, the supervisors should adjust their supervisory practices to suit the educational practice in the country. They do not have to go to the school to watch the artistic demonstration of the plasma teacher; they should not also wait for the government to announce for them what they have to do. The mentoring framework I have suggested can be adapted for the new styles of educational provision.

The other possible challenge, according to the evaluators, may come from student teachers themselves. Student teachers who think that their supervisors have better knowledge and experience than they do may tend to accept comments and suggestions uncritically and thus fail to interrogate the dissemination of established way of thinking and doing things (Egbo, 2005). This problem can, however, be minimized through negotiation of experiences, positions and expectations.

Concluding Remarks

Dialogue is at the centre of teacher education as human life in general and professional life in particular holds meaning through communication and dialogical relations (Keesing-Styles, 2003). From communication and dialogue emerge consciousness and *critical intervention* in reality (Freire, 1984). If we believe in dialogic principles, we may easily leave the familiar shores of practice and start to practice our mentoring in different ways. This requires practicing what Megan Boler (1999) termed as “pedagogy of discomfort.” It is a process of moving out of our comfort zones to productive places of discomfort, which offer opportunities to engage with our own practices of complicity and consumption, with our own “habits of inattention.” Pedagogy of discomfort also paves the way for us to learn how to see and hear differently (Waterstone, 2000). However, shifting the zone requires “serious commitment, persistence, courage, conscience and conviction” (Waters, 1998).

The framework I propose here calls for a pedagogy of discomfort. It claims that a meaningful and productive mentoring occurs when it is accepted with its complexity. Thus, the mentors are expected to take time and carry out a mentoring activity in agreement with their mentees with the hope to create student teachers who understand not only the broad principles of teaching and learning, but also the context-orientedness of teaching in general. This requires us to break with the hegemonic views and technical arrangements. The paper thus urges teacher educators to break with the idealist, antihistorical training based on inflexible formalism and relationships (Gadotti, 1996) by shifting to a quality mentoring that promotes self-consciousness and management can break with the suppressing tradition. In other words, it urges them to “redefine their role from servants of hegemonic power to public and “transformative intellectuals” that reject dominant forms of rationality or “regimes of truth,” and commit

themselves instead to furthering equality and democratic life” (Gair, 1998, p. 3). Only if we hang to this critical pedagogy principle that we can help others learn and grow and maintain a reasonable preferential right of interpretation over our practice (Dahlström, 2003a, 2003b).

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APPENDIX A: HARAMAYA UNIVERSITY GUIDELINE FOR EVALUATING A STUDENT TEACHER IN PRACTICE TEACHING

Assessment 1 to 5 is given. The highest is 5 and the lowest is 1. Indicate your assessment by circling one of the points against the student teacher's competence given below. Also write down your additional comments in the columns provided.

The keys to the points are going to be given as follows.

5=very satisfactory; 4=satisfactory; 3=Average; 2=Less satisfactory; 1=Unsatisfactory

Name of the student teacher _____ date _____

Grade and Section _____ Subject _____

1	Instructional Planning	Points	Comments
1.1	Are objectives specified in behavioral terms or action words?	1 2 3 4 5	
1.2	Does the lesson plan provide a range of teaching strategies, which are consistent with the objectives?	1 2 3 4 5	
1.3	Are home works and other activities integral parts of the lesson plan?	1 2 3 4 5	
1.4	Are contents sequentially and logically arranged?	1 2 3 4 5	
2	Teaching-learning process		
2.1	Does the student teacher arouse the interests of students towards the subject matter?	1 2 3 4 5	
2.2	Are the factual information of the subject matter presented accurately?	1 2 3 4 5	
2.3	Are examples, illustrations and demonstrations used to explain and clarify the subject matter?	1 2 3 4 5	
2.4	Is the subject matter presented in learnable pieces, and timed?	1 2 3 4 5	
2.5	Are students encouraged to respond to and ask questions about the subject matter?	1 2 3 4 5	
2.6	Does the student teacher utilize a variety of questioning techniques?	1 2 3 4 5	
2.7	Is meaningful verbal praise used to keep students actively participating in learning?	1 2 3 4 5	
2.8	Does the student teacher monitor seat work and frequently check progress of student during	1 2 3 4 5	

	practices?		
2.9	Is feedback frequently provided in a non-evaluative atmosphere during practices?	1	2 3 4 5
2.10	Does the student teacher use different classroom management techniques?	1	2 3 4 5
2.11	Is the student teacher able to influence students' behaviors in his or her presentation of the subject matter?	1	2 3 4 5
2.12	Is the student teacher able to maintain student involvement in classroom tasks?	1	2 3 4 5
2.13	Does the student teacher use different teaching materials like real objects, specimen, modes, etc. while teaching?	1	2 3 4 5
3	Assessment of teaching learning		
3.1	Is learning monitored and evaluated in order to improve teaching and learning?	1	2 3 4 5
3.2	Does the student teacher interact with students to know about their learning behaviors?	1	2 3 4 5
3.3	Are appropriate assessment tasks (such as oral questions, class work, homework, observation) used to monitor progress in learning?	1	2 3 4 5
3.4	Total (out of 100 points)		

Evaluator's Name _____ Signature _____