

# MENTORING PRACTICES IN PNU PARTNER SCHOOLS : TOWARDS POLICY CREATION IN CAPACITY BUILDING OF COOPERATING TEACHERS FOR EFFECTIVE MENTORING

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## ABSTRACT

*The practice of mentoring student teachers seeks the much needed intervention and reform in the preparation of future teacher professionals who will eventually implement the K-12 Curriculum in the Philippines. The present study investigated on the perception of student teachers on the way they were mentored during their practice teaching in the selected partner schools. Additionally, this paper presents the beliefs and practices of cooperating teachers which student teachers perceive to be effective in the mentoring process. Data gathered from surveys and interviews with student teachers and cooperating teachers for this study pointed the strengths of the mentoring program as well as pitfalls that need to be addressed. The cooperating teachers in the different partner schools identified elements which are believed to be areas of concern that make them feel the need to undergo capability building. The findings presented here are intended to inform the development of policies in building cooperating teachers' capability for effective mentoring.*

**Keywords:** *effective mentoring, practice teaching, cooperating teachers, pre-service teachers*

One very important feature of a teacher education program is the practice teaching component. Practice teaching is the total immersion of the prospective teachers in the rudiments of teaching set in the real teaching and learning environment. During the practice teaching, student teachers, referred to as pre-service teachers in this study, are assigned to university partner schools, which maybe public or private schools where they experience the whole process of teaching and learning with cooperating teachers, who are also called mentors. It is expected of these pre-service teachers who have reached this stage to put into practice the pedagogical content knowledge they acquired in related courses prior to practice teaching. It is through this practice teaching component that student teachers should be given all the opportunities to develop their full potential as they are mentored by their cooperating teachers. To achieve this goal, collaboration between the teacher education institution and the cooperating schools is vital.

Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) may have different modalities in the delivery of Practice Teaching like in-campus and off-campus arrangements, or all in-campus, or straight on-campus, as it is being done in the Philippine Normal University. Given these delivery options, it should be assured that competencies achieved through this course should match those of the National Competency Based Teacher Standards and the provisions in the CHED Memorandum Order no. 30, s. 2004. Specifically, CMO 30,s 2004 emphasizes the crucial role of teacher education institutions in ensuring quality pre-service education and clearly stipulates that:

*...the pre-service preparation of teachers for the primary and secondary level educational sectors is a very important function and responsibility that has been assigned to higher education institutions. All efforts to improve the quality of education in the Philippines are dependent on the service of teachers. As such, it is of utmost importance that the highest standards are set in defining the objectives, components, and the processes of the pre-service education curriculum.*

It is in this light that this study on mentoring is deemed to be significant in improving the quality of preparation of future teacher professionals. Needless to say, the cooperating teacher's role in mentoring pre-service teachers cannot be underestimated.

Being true to the mandate of the Philippine Normal University as the National Center for Teacher Education, the study, *Mentoring Practices in PNU Partner Schools: Towards Policy Creation in Capacity Building of Cooperating Teachers for Effective Mentoring* elucidates the PNU's commitments to: (1) quality education and excellence, (2) knowledge creation and application, (3) a culture of sharing and service, and (4) growth, efficiency and accountability.

The value of the study is appreciated in terms of how it contributes to the body of knowledge on mentoring and how the lessons learned can be applied to improve the quality of teacher preparation. The method of collecting data has promoted the culture of sharing and service as researchers and respondents

interacted fostering a much stronger university-school partnership. Consequently, student teachers and cooperating teachers alike believe the importance of mentoring as it puts forth growth, efficiency and accountability.

Mentoring in the context of teacher education has been acknowledged as a valuable process and a cost-effective strategy in achieving educational reform. Optimizing mentoring with the help of a cooperating teacher enables a pre-service teacher to link academic learning to school-work experiences. However, recent studies show that many cooperating teachers are not well-prepared for mentoring, particularly when difficulties arise with the per-service teacher (Valeni & Vogrinc 2007). This situation can be gleaned from the absence of preparation for mentoring or many teacher education institutions have not given effective mentoring program the attention it deserves. With this view in mind, the study sought to identify the mentoring practices implemented in selected partner schools providing the system enabling pre-service teachers and in-service teachers (cooperating teachers) engage in authentic, teaching-related, typical teacher tasks that will ignite 'growth for both the mentor and the mentee' (Hudson 2013).

Having emphasized the importance of the role cooperating teachers play in the development of future teacher professionals, there are still persisting problems as to how effective mentoring can be optimized. This study sought to gather information and insights to improve the system of pre-service teaching program by identifying the emerging beliefs and practices applied by cooperating teachers on mentoring; to identify the qualifications of the cooperating teacher for effective mentoring; and to determine the responsibilities of the mentor and the mentee while they are in the student teaching program. It also purports to determine the components and strategies that might be useful in developing mentoring skills among cooperating teachers which can be utilized to enhance and strengthen their mentoring capabilities. Consequently, the data gathered from interviews and surveys shaped the drafting of policies on how the mentoring program can be effectively implemented and become basis for the selection and capacity building of cooperating teachers to mentor pre-service teachers.

The research questions underpinning this study are:

- 1) What are pre-service teachers' perceptions on the mentoring practices of their cooperating teachers during their practice teaching?
- 2) What are the beliefs and practices of cooperating teachers that have been useful in mentoring pre-service teachers?
- 3) What constructs and components of these beliefs and practices on effective mentoring should comprise a policy to develop mentoring skills of cooperating teachers in PNU partner schools?

### Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework below shows the basic assumptions used in the study. It is seen that both the student teacher and the cooperating teacher have their own perceptions and shared experiences about mentoring. Both identified the best mentoring practices as they have perceived to have worked on them while they are in the pre-service teaching program. The identified mentoring practices will be utilized to draft policy guidelines for cooperating teachers on how to conduct an effective mentoring program. The guidelines will benefit the cooperating teachers through capacity building that will impact mentoring the pre-service teachers.

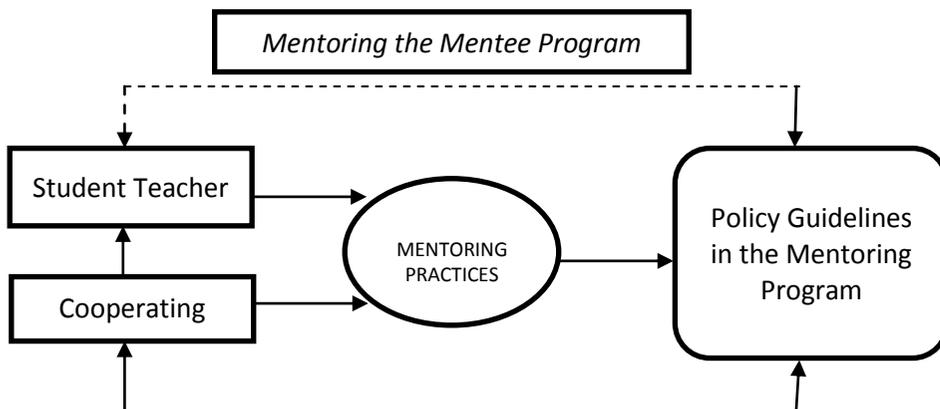


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study

Susan Engel in her article, "Teach Your Teachers Well" that appeared in the New York Times on November 1, 2009, resonated the need for mentoring future teacher professionals in the substance and practice of teaching. This article has prompted this study to review the mentoring practices if it has to be used as a strategy to develop critical mass of great teachers. Although mentoring the pre-service teachers in the Philippines has been a practice in universities and partner schools, there is a dearth of research in as far as effective mentoring in the context of pre-service teacher education is concerned. To add substance to this study and make it relevant, literature related to effective mentoring was reviewed. Pre-service teachers are assigned to partner schools where they are taken care of by cooperating teachers. For the duration of ten weeks or one quarter of the school year, learning opportunities are negotiated and cooperating teachers carry on the task of mentoring pre-service teachers in the practical aspects of learning to teach. Once cooperating teachers accept the responsibility to mentor pre-service teachers, Ambrosetti (2014) emphasized that they need to nurture, advice, guide, encourage and facilitate authentic learning experiences for developmental growth of their mentees. In the mentoring process, the cooperating teacher, the mentor and the pre-service teacher, the mentee establishes a relationship where objectivity, credibility, honesty, trustworthiness and confidentiality are crucial (Experiential Learning Course Handbook, 2009).

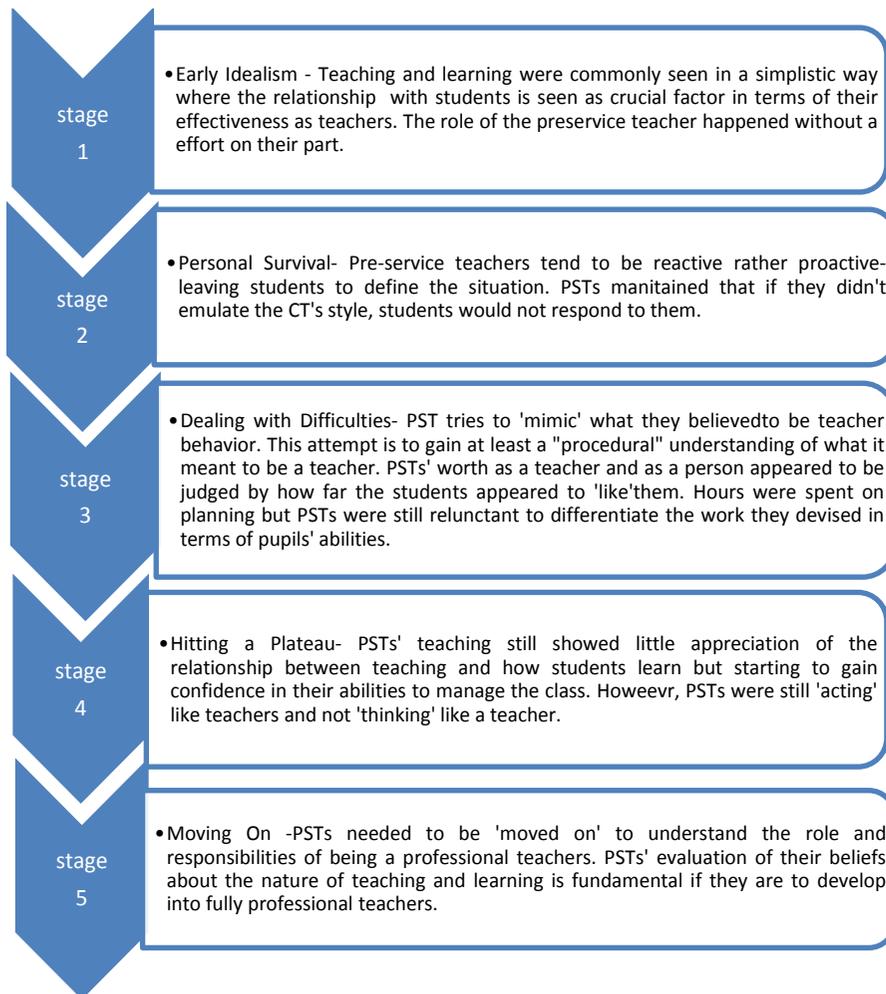
If the role of the cooperating teachers is crucial, who then, should be selected to mentor the pre-service teachers? Ideally, a cooperating teacher chosen to be a mentor does the roles described as someone who can be a guide, a supporter, a friend, an advocate and a role model. More importantly, cooperating teachers should have a deep understanding of the nature of mentoring within the teacher education context and must not equate mentoring to supervision or coaching alone. Building of relationship through interaction between the mentor and mentee is central to mentoring. Through this mentor-mentee relationship, Walkington (2005) emphasized that mentoring should provide mentees with the opportunity to develop their personal and professional selves through reflection. Looking at this stance, cooperating teachers should refrain themselves from creating replicas of themselves allowing the identities of their mentees to emerge. Since cooperating teachers are the ones who have continual dialogue with the pre-service teachers in terms of appraising and assessing the latter's performance and development, they are also mandated by teacher education institutions to evaluate and give the appropriate rating. Deducing from this practice, cooperating teachers need to draw on both mentoring and supervisory skills to perform their role (Cranborn, Hennissen, Brouwer, Korthagen & Bergen, 2010).

The Experiential Learning Courses Handbook (2009) summed up the personal qualities a mentor must possess. A mentor must be: a role model, wise and kind, willing to help, objective and credible, honest and positive, firm yet flexible. Furthermore, a mentor must also possess professional qualities. The ELC Handbook mentioned the following:

- 1) desire to help people gain insights into how they think;
- 2) a proven track record of working with others and the ability to recognize mentee's needs and problems;
- 3) ability to work with others of different social and ethnic background and command of the confidence of all sectors;
- 4) ability to listen and identify potential barriers and jointly engage in strategies to overcome these barriers;
- 5) ability to assess and plan appropriate responses by tapping other resources;
- 6) ability to work effectively by networking with private and public sectors; and
- 7) ability to see mentoring not just a quick fix, but as a long-term activity designed to achieve set goals.

Having identified the personal and professional qualifications of a cooperating teacher taking the role of the mentor and the importance of the role they play in nurturing future teacher professionals, studies reveal that much is still to be done in support of these mentors. Tang & Choi (2007) in their research gathered that few teachers receive training or preparation for mentoring. Ambrosetti (2014) justified this view that in many instances, it is assumed that if a teacher is considered to be an effective practitioner, they can pass their knowledge and skills to another as a mentor. Thinking along this line cooperating teachers may just adopt the notion that mentoring is just requiring the pre-service teachers to replicate what the former are doing. For practice teaching to be meaningful and fulfilling, Fletcher (2000) suggested a proactive approach to mentoring where the mentoring relationship has to go through the five stages.

Furlong and Maynard (1995) cited in Fletcher (2000) created a model identifying the stages in the development of the pre-service teacher in the mentoring process. The model provides the mentees structure and value where they are in relation to a particular skill and stage in their development. The diagram illustrates the stages of development in the mentoring process.



**Figure 2.** Stages in the development of the pre-service teacher in the mentoring process (Furlong &Maynard. 1995)

The aforementioned literature on mentoring offers numerous interpretations thus, the differences in definition. Mentoring being equated with coaching and supervision has been understood and used interchangeably by many teachers. This is because mentoring is a complex process that the role of the cooperating teacher overlaps with that of other stakeholders. Koki (2014) mentioned Head, Reiman and Thies-Springhall (1992) who enumerated major aspects that contribute to the complexity of mentoring include the multiple needs of pre-service teachers, as well as their mentors, their developmental issues and concerns, their repertoire of teaching skills, the school culture that may impact positively or negatively on the mentoring process and other numerous variables. Given these aspects, cooperating teachers as mentors must be cognizant of the fact that mentoring goes beyond giving encouragement, professional guidance and support to induct a pre-service teacher to the school system - mentoring is characterized by mutual trust, belief and respect. Shadiow (1996) in her book, *Remembering a Mentor* had these reverent words for mentoring:

*“The heart of mentorship comes from a commitment to education, a hope for its future, and a respect for those who enter into its community”*

## METHOD

The research questions led the researchers to use the mixed methods design which yielded both qualitative and quantitative data. The access to both kinds of data aimed at providing richer answers to the questions underpinning this study. Descriptive statistics was used in an attempt to get a more generalized understanding of the data obtained which trends or explanation need to be made (Creswell, J. 2005). On the other hand, qualitative data have been gathered and explored to obtain a deep understanding of the problem (Creswell, J. 2005) Subsequently, this combined design was useful in providing both trend or explanation, exploration, and deep understanding.

### Data Collection Process

Permission to carry out the research in the various PNU partner schools was secured from the Department of Education Division of City Schools of Manila, Quezon City, Las Piñas, Parañaque, Caloocan, Makati, Pasay and Cavite. After securing approval from the Division of City Schools Superintendents, the researchers went to the principals of the partner schools to set an appointment with the cooperating teachers for the conduct of interviews. Parallel to this activity is the gathering of data from the pre-service teachers who have had their practice teaching. They were in PNU for their review in the Licensure Examination for Teachers and the researchers used their free time for the interviews. The researcher went to the different classes and asked them to accomplish the questionnaire. After the questionnaires were retrieved, data were tabulated and analysed.

For the data collected from the cooperating teachers, the responses for each question were listed and then coded. During cool analysis remarkable referents were highlighted to identify themes within the text. For the warm analysis, the marked words and phrases were analyzed to formulate categories and themes. Validity, truthfulness and trustworthiness of patterns were established through member-checking procedure and critical friend technique involving the experts.

### Ethical Considerations

A provision in the memorandum of agreement between the university and the partner schools stipulates that a research activity of this kind can be conducted bearing in mind the best interest of the participants. Although such agreement exists, the researchers observed protocols by securing the needed permits to allow them to conduct the interviews. The researchers explained to the participants the nature and purpose of the research and the plans for using the findings. The pre-service teachers and the cooperating teachers signed a consent form ensuring that they fully understand the protocols.

### The Instrument

The instrument used to determine the perceptions of pre-service teachers on the best mentoring practices that they have experienced during their off-campus training was developed by the researcher. Part II of the instrument adapted Hudson's Mentoring Model which contains these elements: personal attributes, system requirements, pedagogical knowledge, feedback and modelling. The questionnaire for the cooperating teachers which contain eleven (11) open questions was also developed by the researchers.

The instrument is comprised of three (3) parts. Part I deals with the respondents profile and demographics, Part II is for the quantitative evaluation of the pre-service teachers' experience on practice teaching, and Part III is for the qualitative part. The instrument has been subjected to content validation by different experts in the field of teaching. The validators are composed of school principals, master teachers, and a head teacher. The validators evaluated the instrument using the following scale:

Rating	Criteria
3	Acceptable without any revisions
2	Acceptable with revisions
1	Unacceptable

The analysis of the said validation showed that all the parts gained a mean score of 3 ( $M=3.00$ ), which means that all areas of the instrument are acceptable. However, several suggestions were given to improve the instrument like inclusion of the address of the respondent in part I and clarity of items and sentence construction in part II. No suggested revisions for Part III was indicated.

For the reliability of the instrument, the Cronbach Alpha coefficient for each category in part II of the instrument was obtained. The overall reliability of the test obtained a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of 0.970, which means that the instrument is highly reliable. Further reliability test for each category was obtained and is reported below.

Category	Cronbach Alpha Coefficient
Personal Attributes	0.906
Teaching Attributes	0.895
Pedagogical, Content, Knowledge (PCK)	0.947
Systems Requirement	0.869
Giving Feedback	0.900

The reliability tests for the sub-parts of the questionnaire revealed that the instrument has a consistent reliability (Cronbach Alpha>0.8).

### Participants/Respondents

Two sets of respondents were purposely chosen for this study: pre-service teachers and cooperating teachers in the different partner schools. A total of 226 pre-service teachers who were in their senior year in the academic year 2014-2015 at Philippine Normal University responded to the questionnaire. The said pre-service teacher had their practice teaching experiences in varied public elementary and secondary schools in Metro Manila. The demographics of the pre-service teacher respondents are shown in Table 1 below.

**Table 1.** Demographics of Respondents

Age of pre-service teachers

Area of	Criteria	Frequency	Percent
Age	19	36	15.9
	20	145	64.2
	21	31	13.7
	22	3	1.3
	23 & above	11	4.9
	Total	226	100

Specialization/ Majorship

Majorship	Physics	12	5.3
	Biology	9	4
	Chemistry	11	4.9
	Gen. Sci.	27	11.9
	BECED	9	4
	BEED	66	29.2
	Math	9	4
	Filipino	1	0.4
	English	4	1.8
	Psychology	21	9.3
	Social Science	4	1.8
	Music	11	4.9
	History	8	3.5
IT	1	0.4	

NDT	10	4.4
ITE	13	5.8
PE	7	3.1
Literature	3	1.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>100</b>

#### Period of Practice Teaching

Period of Practice Teaching	1 <sup>st</sup> Qtr.	50	22.1
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Qtr.	68	30.1
	3 <sup>rd</sup> Qtr.	65	28.8
	4 <sup>th</sup> Qtr.	43	19
Total		226	100

#### Venue of Practice Teaching

Valid	Manila	90	39.8
	Caloocan	31	13.7
	Quezon	39	17.3
	Paranaque	9	4
	Las Piñas	17	7.5
	Makati	7	3.1
	Pasay	12	5.3
	Cavite	2	0.9
	Others	19	8.4
	Total		226

#### Grade level handled by pre-service teachers

Valid	G3	32	14.2
	G4-6	44	19.5
	G7	47	21.2
	G8	42	18.6
	G9	35	15.5
	G10	25	11.1
	Total		226

A total of nineteen (19) cooperating teachers participated in this study. They were asked to answer a questionnaire consisting of 11 questions. They preferred to write their answers on the questionnaire, however they were also asked to elaborate their answers if needed. The survey was paper-based, anonymous and did not ask respondents to provide any identifying data about themselves since the demographic profile of these cooperating teachers was not needed in the study. Significant in this study is giving them the voice to express their insights about mentoring which will be analyzed to form part in crafting a policy on mentoring.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### *Perceptions of Pre-service Teachers*

This section presents the results of the survey through a questionnaire given to the pre-service teachers on their experiences in their practice teaching. In particular there are four areas being investigated namely personal attributes, teaching attributes, pedagogical content knowledge, and systems requirement. To analyze the results, a mixed methods of quantitative and qualitative research was utilized.

#### *On Personal Attributes*

The personal attributes of a mentor are the qualities that he/she possesses to establish mentor-mentee relationship while guiding their mentees. In this research, pre-service teachers were asked how they found their mentors in terms of the said qualities. Table 2 below reports the answers of the pre-service teachers.

**Table 2.** *Personal Attributes of a Mentor (N=226)*

Criteria	Mean	SD
was supportive of me for teaching.	4.5841	.76856
made me feel more confident as a teacher.	4.4867	.86013
was comfortable talking with me about teaching.	4.5442	.80570
listened to me attentively on teaching matters/concerns	4.5044	.81784
demonstrated how to develop good rapport with students while teaching	4.3274	.99726

The data in table 2 show that the pre-service teachers generally observed that their mentors possessed the qualities being asked in the questionnaire ( $M > 4$ ,  $SD > 0.7$ ). The item that gained the highest mean score in personal attributes of a teacher is the statement that deals with the support they get from their critic teachers ( $M = 4.5841$ ,  $SD = 76856$ ). Pre-service teachers identified several characteristics of their mentors that made them perceived that they are supportive of them. The said characteristics are listed below. Clearly, the mentor's personal qualities encourage pre-service teachers to learn from the practice teaching experiences.

Supportive characteristics of mentors	Frequency
Approachable	13
Supportive	11
Motherly	7
Kind	4
Encouraging	3
Helpful	3
Understanding	3
Accommodating	2
Friendly	2

*"She is very understanding when it comes to my concerns in the lesson. She teaches me some other techniques on how to deliver the lesson. She is also caring and generous."* – Respondent 18

The pre-service teachers observed that their mentors was comfortable talking to them about the teaching profession (M=4.5442, SD=0.80570) and listened to their concerns on matters about teaching (M=4.5044, SD=0.81784). As a result, it made them feel more confident as a teacher (M=4.4867, SD=0.86013). The above-mentioned observations of the pre-service teachers coincide with their answers on the open-ended questions.

Pre-service teachers observed that their mentors are dedicated towards their work (f=9), has an optimistic point of view (f=2), and has a sense of responsibility (f=6). Pre-service teachers also observed that their mentors has practical mentality towards classroom matters, well disciplined disposition, and are organized in their classroom procedures (f=3).

In terms of confidence, pre-service teachers observed that their mentors are confident in the way they handled their classes (f=3) and are presentable and well-groomed in appearance as a teacher (f=7). Such observations is believed to have influenced pre-service teachers to have self-confidence for themselves.

On the other hand, the item with the lowest mean score is on demonstrating good rapport with students (M=4.3274, SD=.99726). This may have been due to the observations of pre-service teachers that their mentors have a strong personality (f=4), authoritative and strict (f=6), and inconsiderate of students (f=3).

Other notable responses for the personal traits of a mentor is the habitual tardiness of mentors (f=3). Two respondents did not answer the open ended questions on personal attributes.

### *On Modelling Teacher Attributes*

The present research seeks to determine if pre-service teachers were able to perceive that their mentors modelled effective teacher attributes. Such characteristics encompass the planning of instruction, execution of the lesson, assessment of learning, and even affective qualities such as positive attitude towards teaching. To determine such perception of pre-service teachers, they were asked to rate their mentors modelling teacher attributes capability from not effective (1) to highly effective (3). Table 3 below reports the said investigation.

**Table 3. Modelling Teacher Attributes. (N=226)**

<b>Effective teacher attributes</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
modeled effective teaching strategy	2.2212	.65638
displayed enthusiasm when delivering a lesson	2.3584	.72409
modeled effective classroom management when teaching	2.4779	.62677
instilled in me positive attitudes for teaching	2.5133	.68786
demonstrated well-designed activities for students	2.2876	.75515
showed me how to assess the students' learning	2.3805	.74019

\*Note: Scale: 0.1 to 1.0=not effective, 1.1 to 2.0 = effective, 2.1 to 3.0 = highly effective

Based on the data presented in Table 3, it can be deduced that pre-service teachers generally perceived that their mentors were able to model the different teaching attributes asked in the questionnaire (M>2.1, SD>0.6). The pre-service gave the highest highly effective rating to the item that describes the positive attitude of their mentors towards teaching and that through modelling it has been instilled in them (M=2.5133, SD=.68786). The pre-service teachers were able to identify several characteristics that enabled them to say that their mentors have a positive attitude towards teaching. The Pre-service teachers said that their mentors are dedicated teachers (f=6) and that they are efficient (f=5) in their job. Also, they have perceived that their mentors are punctual in their classes (f=6), have a good rapport with students and co-teachers (f=2), and guided them well throughout their practice teaching period (f=2). With these experiences, pre-service teachers found their cooperating teachers as mentors who were able to model good behavior (f=15) thus the mentors have been good role models (f=4) to their practice teachers and that they were able to learn from them (f=5).

In terms of the professional modelling of mentors, pre-service teachers mostly agreed that their mentors modelled highly effective classroom management (M = 2.4779, SD=0.62677). In the open ended

questions, there were nine (f=9) respondents that identified their mentors as good classroom managers. Aside from classroom management, pre-service teachers said that their mentors were highly effective in showing them how to assess student learning (M = 2.3805, SD=.74019) and facilitate instruction with enthusiasm (M=2.3584, SD=.62677).

Though still in the highly effective range, two areas were recorded to have the lowest mean score which are modelling effective teaching strategy (M=2.2212, SD=0.65638) and demonstrating well-designed activities for students (M=2.2876, SD=0.75515).

*“Not really. She’s doing corporal punishment” –Respondent #155*

*“ To be honest, he has favouritism in terms of handling the higher section than the lower section ” – Respondent #156*

*“ I find her lacking these attributes ” – Respondent 160*

*“ My CT seemed to always want to do something other than teaching ” –Respondent #200*

**On Demonstrating Pedagogical Content Knowledge in Teaching (PCK)**

Mentors who are experts of the education process are expected to have a high degree of mastery of the content of the lesson being taught as well as how to deliver the lesson using an appropriate and effective pedagogy. This research seeks to find out if such mastery of the PCK has been manifested by the mentors to their mentee. The pre-service teachers rated their mentors from zero which means not felt or observed to three as very effective. The results of the said rating are shown in table 4 below.

**Table 4. Mentors Pedagogical Content Knowledge in Teaching (PCK) (N=226)**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
guided me with lesson preparation	2.3938	.67314
assisted me with classroom management strategies for teaching	2.4425	.64550
assisted me with implementing teaching strategies	2.3805	.67749
helped me in developing my strategies for teaching	2.4292	.72224
discussed with me questioning skills for effective teaching	2.3894	.68552
used hands on materials for effective teaching	2.3274	.73566
assisted me to reflect on improving teaching practices	2.4513	.65308
gave me clear guidance for planning to teach	2.4204	.70888
demonstrate strategies in solving problems	2.2965	.75170
gave/shared with me new viewpoints on teaching	2.4425	.72954
discussed with me the content knowledge I needed for teaching	2.3982	.71851

\*Note: Scale: 0= not felt/observed, 0.1 to 1.0= ineffective, 1.1 to 2.0 = effective, 2.1 to 3.0 = highly effective

The pre-service teachers found their mentors to be highly effective in demonstrating pedagogical content knowledge in teaching (M>2.0, SD>6.0). Among the different criteria in the PCK questions, the top areas that gained higher mean score involve planning of classroom activities. A sample response on how pre-service teachers see the PCK capability of their teacher is shown below.

*“My cooperating teacher demonstrated here good facilities in the area by as much ensuring that the content can be understood by her students pragmatically in their everyday living” – Respondent 17*

In terms of the mentors’ pedagogical content knowledge, the highest mean score recorded is assisting pre-service teachers to reflect on improving their teaching practices (M=2.4513, SD=0.65308). Pre-service teachers observed that their mentors are competent in terms of concepts and are capable of delivering the lesson in an effective manner (f=13) because of their mastery the content (f=11). These capabilities of

mentors have been shared to the pre-service teachers by discussing with them the knowledge they needed to know for teaching a certain concept (M=2.3982, SD=.71851) and giving them new viewpoints on teaching (M=2.4425, SD=0.72954). Respondent 10 said that her mentor follows an organized and manageable pedagogy that suits the need of her students because her mentor is well versed in the subject matter.

In terms of pedagogy, the pre-service teachers reported that their mentors were highly effective in helping them develop teaching strategies (M=2.4292, SD=0.72224), providing clear guidance for planning to teach (M=2.4204, SD=0.70888), and implementing the plan successfully (M=2.3805, SD= .67749). Respondent 10 sees her mentor to be well organized and employs pedagogies that suit the needs of her students. Teaching skills like the art of questioning (M=2.3894, SD=.68552), classroom management (M=2.4425, SD=.64550), using materials for effective teaching (M=2.3274, SD=0.73566) were also found to be highly effective of the mentors by pre-service teachers.

There were twenty (f=20) respondents that reported to find their mentors utilize appropriate teaching and learning strategies. Respondent 79 narrated that her mentor relates the subject matter or content to practical situations and that her mentor to have other references that will provide more information than the book.

However, not all pre-service teachers had the same positive experience on their mentors. Respondent 9 find her mentor to be “not at all” demonstrating PCK. There were six (f=6) respondents who described that their mentors utilized inappropriate pedagogies in executing the lesson and did not manifest their own pedagogy on teaching but rather stick entirely on what’s written in the modules. Thus, there were respondents that described their mentors to be “bookish”, traditional, and boring (f=4).

When it comes to mentoring on PCK, some pre-service teachers were not satisfied at all with what they have experienced from their mentors. Though some mentors are good in teaching still they were not able to teach PCK to their mentees as described by Respondent 60. Respondent 31 described that “*My mentor wasn’t able to fully demonstrate pedagogical content knowledge. I did my lesson plans on my own with the help of other teachers and the department head*”. Some mentors were also vague with their instruction to their mentees and are not clear and consistent with the suggestion on teaching based on Respondent 48.

#### *On Understanding Systems Requirement*

Systems requirement is one of the aspects of the mentoring process. It requires a teacher to strictly implement such as accomplishing the curriculum content in time, preparing school forms, using the language of instruction. Such aspect is also an important experience for pre-service teachers for it will help them to understand the context of the school and to better prepare for the job. The pre-service teachers rated their mentors from zero which means not felt or observed to three as very effective and the summary of the result is shown in table 5 below.

**Table 5.** *Understanding System Requirements (N=226)*

<b>System Requirements</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
used the language from the current syllabus/curriculum	2.3628	.69999
discussed with me the school policies	2.1637	.80261
assisted me to schedule my lessons to meet the curriculum requirement	2.4381	.69804
outlined curriculum/syllabus documents	2.2566	.75164
discussed with me the aims of teaching	2.2434	.7877

\*Note: Scale: 0= not felt/observed, 0.1 to 1.0= ineffective, 1.1 to 2.0 = effective, 2.1 to 3.0 = highly effective

Based on the data gathered, it can be deduced that pre-service teachers had a highly effective perception on their mentor’s understanding of systems requirement (M>2.1, SD>2.6). Most of the pre-service teachers found their mentors to assist them in scheduling the lesson that they will teach for the duration of their practice teaching (M=2.4381, SD=0.69804). Eighteen (f=18) respondents reported that their mentors have informed them of the requirements that have to be accomplished for a certain time. The summary of other observations of pre-service teachers on system requirements is shown in the table.

System requirements	Frequency (f)
Complies to requirements like school forms etc.	10
Explains school policies/ takes time to orient ST	7
Follows class schedules	2
Follows school rules and regulations	6
Follows the K-12 Curriculum	7
Good	2
Shows flexibility in terms of implementing the curriculum	5
Shows good planning skills	3
Shows lack of understanding for the K-12 curriculum	4
Systematic/ Well-organized	9
Willing to adjust	1
NO RESPONSE	25

Most responses recorded in systems requirement were on the capability of the mentors to implement the curriculum. Respondent 15 described her mentor to be very knowledgeable on the K12 curriculum, its implementation, lesson plan preparation, and system of evaluation. However, there are four (4) pre-service teachers who had a contradictory observation on implementing the K12 curriculum.

Though most responses on systems requirements are positive, three pre-service teachers (f=3) had opposite observation. Respondent 87 said that the understanding of her mentor of the systems requirement is not enough and their class is not planned very well. Respondent 48 described that her mentor didn't really care whether she finished the lesson or not for the quarter. A notable response on systems requirement by Respondent 31 is stated below:

*"My mentor has an easy-going personality. She's not into rule so she did not orient me with the school policies. I have to get the orientation from the department head."*- Respondent #31

#### On Giving Feedback

Feedback from mentors are very important for pre-service teachers for it is their basis for improvement. The respondents of this study rated their mentor's ability to give feedback using the scale zero which means not felt or observed until three as very effective.

**Table 6.** Mentor's Ability to Give Feedback (N=226)

Mentors' ability to give feedback	Mean	Std.
discussed evaluation of my teaching	2.4292	.68432
provided oral feedback on my teaching regularly	2.3274	.76527
provided written suggestions on how to improve my teaching	2.2743	.85112
clearly articulated what I needed to improve in my teaching.	2.4469	.72376
observed me teach before providing feedback.	2.5177	.70688

\*Note: Scale: 0= not felt/observed, 0.1 to 1.0= ineffective, 1.1 to 2.0 = effective, 2.1 to 3.0 = highly effective

The data show that the mentors in general were highly effective in providing feedback to the performance of the pre-service teachers (M>2.1, SD>0.6). Pre-service teachers find it the most highly effective

that they were observed by their mentors teach before giving feedback (M=2.5177, SD=0.70688) and that it is frequently done. There were twenty nine (f=29) pre-service teachers who reported that they experienced frequent feedback sessions with their mentors either written (f=4) or orally (f=3). The manner of feedback whether in oral (M=2.3274, SD =.76527) or written (M=2.2743, SD=.85112) were also highly effective. The said feedback system for some pre-service teachers (f=12) is done in a professional manner, objective (f=15), and is sincere (f=2).

*"I really like my mentor giving me feedback after my teaching. She points out the things that I need to improve on and commends the things that are good in my teaching"*  
– Respondent 86

During the post conference, pre-service teachers also find it highly effective that their evaluation was discussed to them (M=2.4292, SD=0.68432) and that the things that they need to improve were clearly articulated to them. A number of pre-service teachers (f=10) realized that their mentor's feedback is detailed and is focused on areas for improvement and that it is done to improve their teaching in particular (f=16).

*"My mentor is straightforward in telling me where I should improve but makes sure that I don't take it in a negative way or make a wrong interpretation. Her comments are constructive criticisms"*  
– Respondent 55

While other pre-service teachers have positive experiences on feedback from mentors, others have the opposite. There were six (f=6) pre-service teachers who reported that they only get feedback when time permits and five (f=9) pre-service teachers said that they rarely have one or none at all. One pre-service teacher reported that the feedback provided were concentrated on pitfalls and mistakes. Respondent 109 reported that though she had many classroom demonstrations she only experienced 3 feedback sessions from her mentor. Respondent 98 also reported that her mentor does not give feedback even if she asks for it. Respondent 4 said that "As far as I can remember, my mentor never provided me with feedback unless I insisted". Lastly, a notable response on the way the feedback was given by mentors that should be corrected is written below.

*"While I was having my demonstration teaching, my mentor was giving her feedback as the class was on-going"*  
– Respondent 6

The respondents were asked, "If you were to redo your practice experience, what other experiences would you like to gain?". Emerging categories of answers were identified.

One of the most frequent answers is the need to have varied teaching experiences (f=16). Respondent #62 said that she wants to experience handling pupils in lower grade level, while Respondent #71 said he wants to experience the higher level. With this, it can be inferred that pre-service teachers would like to experience teaching students in the different levels to be more prepared in teaching when they become full-fledged teachers. Respondent #12 said that he wants to gain experience in teaching students in K12 curriculum since he handled fourth year students under BEC curriculum. Such experience will prepare him for the challenges of the new curriculum. The need to be exposed to students with special needs has been described by Respondents #161 and #64.

Understanding systems requirements is also a concern of pre-service teachers (f=11). They want to experience doing school forms like the Form 137. Pre-service teachers are also concerned with preparation and conducting periodical assessments. Respondent #30 said, "I want to be more familiar with assessment and evaluation because it was the aspect of teaching that was not focused on."

The period of practice teaching was also pointed out by pre-service teachers (f=10). Respondent 1 said that the time they have spent with practice teaching is not enough. Spending one quarter will not suffice to provide them with significant training.

Several issues were raised by pre-service teachers as part of their practice teaching experiences. The pre-service teachers pointed out that cooperating teachers should have a strong sense of responsibility (f=7). Respondent # 25 said, "I did not learn from my CT. But what compensated for the lack of it is the concern from my CT's co-teachers, co-practice teachers and even from the department head." Respondent #31 said that her mentor was not with her all the time and that she received feedback from other teachers. Respondent #34 said she felt neglected because her mentor was not responsible.

Another problem that pre-service teachers pointed out is professionalism (f=4). An interesting response on this issue is stated below.

*"Having a minor conflict with a teacher or guidance coordinator due to a personnel that is making stories about me and my CT. I just ignored her misbehavior inside the office and act as if nothing is wrong with us, because I believe that I should practice professionalism at all times."* – Respondent 27

Other professionalism issues include the observed gossiping of critic teachers with other teachers and actions that are unbecoming of a teacher.

### ***Cooperating Teachers Perceptions on Mentoring Pre-Service Teachers***

To incorporate effective mentoring practices in the context of developing the next generation of teachers, it is primordial to identify enabling proactive approaches to support mentors by finding out how they understand their roles as mentors. The study investigated on their mentoring practices that they have been implementing and from their responses ideas are drawn to improve practice and inform policy debates.

#### ***Best mentoring practices***

Best mentoring practices employed by cooperating teachers were culled from their responses as they elaborated on their answers. Given the complexity of the mentoring process, the cooperating teacher performs multifarious roles as a model, critique, guide, evaluator, trainer and coach. In this study, the practices which they thought to have worked with them and their mentees are categorized based on the model created by Furlong and Maynard (1995) cited by Fletcher (2000). Understanding the different stages will guide cooperating teachers to approximate and manage their expectations thus, frustrations can be avoided. The table below shows the summary on this aspect.

Stages	Mentoring Practices
1.Early Idealism - Mentees think that teaching and learning can be easy and may not need a great deal of effort. Teaching effectiveness is seen as mainly having a good relationship with students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt;Exploring the school environment.</li> <li>&gt;Orienting PSTs to the school policies.</li> <li>&gt;CTs discuss the curriculum and planning lessons.</li> <li>&gt;CTs get PST's profile</li> <li>&gt; PSTs write a narrative of their impressions.</li> <li>&gt;Leveling off expectations</li> </ul>
2.Personal Survival- Mentees tend to be more reactive than proactive in dealing with students, leaving the mentee adjust to how students define the situation. Mentees want to show their own style or personality but stick to using the mentor's style if they want to survive this stage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt;Pre-service teachers observe their CTs in handling the class.</li> <li>&gt;CTs introduce the PSTs to the class.</li> <li>&gt;PSTs observe students behavior; makes a seat plan.</li> <li>&gt; CTs model teacher appropriate teacher behaviors in dealing with students.</li> <li>.PSTs assist CT in preparing instructional materials.</li> <li>&gt;CTs conduct post conferences</li> <li>&gt;Scheduling demonstration lessons</li> </ul>
3.Dealing with Difficulties- Mentees feeling of worth as a 'teacher' is dependent on whether the students 'like' them or not. They begin to gain understanding of what it is like to be a teacher at least with how they follow procedures and implement routines.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt;CTs assign and guide PSTs in handling the class in some parts of the lesson.</li> <li>&gt;CTs continue to hold pre and post conferences</li> <li>&gt;PSTs continue writing on their journals</li> <li>&gt;CTs implement their lesson plans</li> <li>&gt;CTs use observation notes to appraise and assess PSTs performance.</li> <li>&gt;CTs checks LPs guiding PSTs to use other strategies</li> </ul>
4.Hitting the Plateau- Mentees start to gain confidence in their abilities to manage the class but their ability to show understanding of the connection between teaching and how students learn is still wanting. Mentees are 'acting' like teachers and not 'thinking' like a teacher.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt;PSTs observe other classes in school, at times they are brought to satellite schools for observation</li> <li>&gt;CTs require PSTs to attend parent conferences</li> <li>&gt;PSTs join school activities like camps, science fairs etc.</li> <li>&gt;CTs continue in giving feedback</li> </ul>
5.Moving On - Mentees take on greater responsibilities to make them face and reflect on their own value positions and how they view this in relation to their practice and student learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt;PSTs are trusted to gain more control of the class</li> <li>&gt;They're allowed to write columnar lesson plans</li> <li>&gt;PSTs are allowed to be discussant leaders.</li> <li>&gt;CTs discuss matters on future career development of PSTs.</li> </ul>

Establishing open communication, providing feedback, modelling appropriate teacher behaviours and involvement of pre-service teachers in school activities are the mentoring practices perceived by both cooperating teachers and pre-service teachers to be effective.

#### ***Perception of cooperating teachers of their own qualities***

Asked how they describe themselves as mentors, two broad categories emerged: personal qualities and professional qualities. However, personal qualities outweigh professional qualities. It can be gleaned from the responses collected that cooperating teachers can easily build rapport with their mentees. This observation is parallel to the pre-service teachers' description of their mentors. Personal qualities which cooperating teachers believe they possess are: being supportive, helpful, responsible, approachable, open-minded, committed, motivated, trusting and strict but caring. Professional qualities mentioned by the cooperating teachers are: effective in guiding mentees to plan lessons, transactional, effective in supervising pre-service teachers in the day-to-day tasks and being a guidance counsellor. As to being a transactional mentor, Respondent #16 elaborated that "at the beginning, I state my expectations...high expectations but I also give high support".

#### *Qualifications of a mentor*

Cooperating teachers mentioned specific qualifications such as the length of service and performance ratings. Respondents # 1,13,16, and 19 specified that a teacher to be qualified to mentor pre-service teachers must have been in the active service for five years. Respondents #1,4,5,6, and 7 described them as experts in their areas of specialization and must be accomplished teachers. Respondent 16 and 17 insisted that teachers holding the Master Teacher ranks must be given this assignment. Although, one of them said that the Master Teachers are overloaded with work as they are also assigned supervisory tasks.

Assignment of pre-service teachers to mentor is usually done by the grade level chairman. This is done to have proper matching of mentors and mentees. In some other schools, the principal assigns the pre-service to the cooperating teachers. However, the participants believe that there must be a standard to be implemented in the selection of teachers to mentor pre-service teachers especially now that this assignment can earn them points for promotion.

#### *Cooperating teachers' expectations of their mentees*

Aside from the positive characteristics that cooperating teachers expect their mentees to demonstrate, they believe that pre-service teachers have had taken courses that prepared them for Practice Teaching. They expect that mentees should have completed the courses so that they can focus on their practice teaching. One CT used the word 'battleground' as a metaphor for practice teaching. She expects that a mentee must be equipped with the knowledge, skills and right attitude to survive this phase in their teacher preparation.

#### *The need to mentor pre-service teachers*

All the respondents agreed that there is a need to mentor pre-service teachers. Their responses point to seeing themselves as being a part in the development of future teachers by accepting the role of a mentor.

*"... with the developments in education, there are a lot of things that a pre-service teacher needs to know and understand. Teachers in the field are the best people to model to them the strategies. They must be guided in the technical and practical aspects of real teaching"* –Respondent # 3.

*"...mentors are take part in realizing the vision and mission of PNU – to produce quality teachers"* Respondent # 12.

#### *The challenges of mentoring*

Pre-service teachers assigned to partner schools are expected to bring with them the knowledge and skills that they have learned from their undergraduate courses. They believe that the challenges that both the mentor and the mentee face is due to the absence of preparation before the practice teaching. They observed that some pre-service teachers are uncooperative, have limited knowledge of the K-12 Curriculum, subject matter, strategies, and have poor communication skills.

*"...I remember when I was a student teacher we had our "on-campus" practice teaching...that gave me the confidence to face the next phase of practice teaching which was the 'off-campus'. It seems that it ("in-campus) does not exist anymore."* –Respondent # 1.

*" I find it hard to handle student teachers who are not ready for practice teaching"* –Respondent #11.

The respondents agreed that time for practice teaching was short considering the complex nature of learning to teach. The limited time given to this important phase in pre-service training adds more mental and physical stress on the mentee.

The study identified the areas where cooperating teachers have found to be challenging and thus, the researchers saw these as areas of concern where cooperating teachers need to be assisted for them to develop their capabilities to mentor pre-service teachers. The areas considered as challenges are: observing the mentee, assisting the mentee in the "final" demonstration teaching, giving feedback, developing in the mentee classroom management skills, modelling the different strategies, conducting post-conference, asking questions, use of new technologies in teaching and mentoring the pre-service teachers in general.

The nineteen (19) respondents admitted that they have not undergone any training on mentoring the pre-service teachers but they have always been selected to be a cooperating teacher. Four (4) of them replied that they had training on mentoring the mentor program but they believed that they need to strengthen their

capabilities as mentors or pre-service teachers. The respondents believe that they need to go through a training on 'mentoring the pre-service teacher' to become effective in performing their role as mentors.

#### *Strengthening mentoring capabilities of cooperating teachers*

The last three questions gravitated on how mentoring can be improved and how cooperating teachers' mentoring capabilities be enhanced. They were unanimous in saying that they need training on mentoring. As to the design of the training program, cooperating teachers would want the training to more interactive. Thinking about their needs to become effective mentors, they suggested that topics to be included are: giving feedback, use of new education technology, updates on educational trends and assessing mentee's performance. Majority of the respondents pointed out that practice teaching should be longer so that the pre-service teachers will have the chance to learn from the many teaching and learning situations which they will experience in the partner schools. They also would want to have a training matrix which they can use as guide in mentoring the pre-service teachers. One teacher pointed out that they be oriented on outcomes based education so all the efforts in educating the future teacher will be guided by this principle. One respondent even mentioned the need for organizing a team of teachers solely for mentoring pre-service teachers in schools.

Asked about the improving the policies on selecting cooperating teacher to mentor pre-service teachers, the cooperating teachers would want the following items to be reviewed: 1) duration of practice and that schedule must be implemented and followed accordingly 2) number of pre-service teachers assigned to cooperating teachers 3) monitoring of university supervisors 4) better communication between the cooperating teachers and the university supervisors 5) honorarium for the cooperating teachers 6) protection of privacy and confidentiality 7) readiness and study load of the pre-service teachers 8) proper decorum that must be observed by the pre-service teachers, university supervisors and the cooperating teachers 8) pre-service teachers pre-practicum training or the on-campus practice teaching 9) auxiliary work, and community-based outreach program 10) collaborative partnership with the teacher education institution.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

Clearly, findings generated in this study highlighted the importance of mentoring in the pre-service education of future teachers. Participants voiced out their concern that no matter how efficient and effective a teacher may be, it does not always translate to effective mentoring. They need to be prepared and that there must be policies that focus on mentoring itself. Teacher education institutions are challenged to initiate programs and policies to equip cooperating teachers in partner schools with the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes to mentor future teachers effectively. The study successfully drew out mentoring practices demonstrated by cooperating teachers and experienced by pre-service teachers during their practice teaching. The findings in this study contribute to the growing body of research in teacher education specifically on mentoring pre-service teachers. The outcomes substantiate pre-service education by citing mentoring practices identified by pre-service teachers and cooperating teachers as well as affirming previous investigations. The findings in this study however, is limited to partner schools used as the site of the investigation and may not reflect the experiences of pre-service teachers and cooperating teachers in other areas, in other circumstances. Nevertheless, this study has drawn patterns and insights worthy of further investigation with the view of increasing awareness and improving mentoring practices.

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