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## AN ANALYSIS OF THE MENTORING PRACTICE OF STUDENT TEACHER'S TEACHING PRACTICUM PROGRAM: A CASE STUDY

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### *Abstract*

*Mentoring has an essential role for the success of the student teachers' teaching internship program, a fundamental period for every student taking an educational program. During the program the student teachers experience face real world of teaching (McDonald, 2009; Bonilla & Rivera, 2008; Wang & Odell, 2002) where they develop knowledge on the standard teaching, deep flexible understanding about the subject matters, and pedagogical knowledge on the real students' context (Wang & Odell, 2002). Mentoring plays a significant role in bridging and smoothing the student teachers to face the real but complex world of being a professional teacher. Realizing the context of the crucial period of the program, this study intends to analyze the practice of mentoring for the student teachers taking the practice teaching program. Management of learning, effectiveness of planning, knowledge and structuring of subject matter, coherence lesson, effectiveness of teaching strategies, students' learning, personal qualities, quality of interaction, self-evaluation, extent of innovative teaching, and sense of professionalism (Kelly & Tannehill, 2012) become the focus of the study. Interviews with student teachers as well classroom teachers become the main source of the qualitative data. Results of the study will give a broader insight of the mentoring world that will provide mentors with practical skills for mentoring to lead the student teachers entering the real educational context.*

**Keywords:** *Mentoring, Teaching Strategies, Professionalism, Student Teachers, Bridging*

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### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Practice teaching or teaching practicum is an essential stage for every student teacher, since it gives her/him an experience to face real teaching situations. This is the period when student teachers try to bridge theory they acquire in their class and the real classroom teaching situations (Bonilla & Rivera, 2008; Feiman-Nemser, 2012; Hudson; Usak; Savran-Gencer, 2009). This is the program where student teachers learn and develop the knowledge, skills and competence of being professional teachers, and is often viewed as a challenging and complex experience of their education program (Kelly & Tannehill, 2012). Practice teaching program, as a course of a teacher education program, provides the student teachers with opportunities to explore experiences, self-reflection, and critical analysis of their teaching performance. Furthermore, students teachers often look at the program as a means to improvement their language and teaching competence, especially the language of classroom instruction and language teaching methodology as well as the class management, and attitude or personal feeling toward language teaching (Fernandes, 2012; Ogeyik, 2009).

Realizing that student teachers have not got or only had very minimal teaching experience, the role of their mentor is very crucial (Kelly & Tanehill, 2012). The mentor helps and guides the student teachers entering the real world of language teaching. Besides, he also improves the student teachers' teaching skills through the feedbacks he gives toward their teaching performance. Without the mentor, the student teachers may not have useful information about the real situations language classes and that may cause them lose their confidence entering the class. With the help of the mentor the student teachers are able to make their teaching activities effective, attractive, and coherent (Hudson; Usak; Savran-Gencer, 2009). The mentor also helps them prepare the proper materials and construct a form of evaluation. In addition, with the mentor's help, the student teachers will also be able to predict

problems they may face during the teaching and learning processes as well as reflective feedbacks of their performance. Finally, the mentor guides the student teachers so that they will be able to write a lesson plan according to the present educational system which is completed with the objectives of the lesson, teaching steps, exercises, and assessments.

Understanding the important role of the mentor or mentoring in smoothing the path to the real world of language teaching, this paper aims to analyze the practice of mentoring the student teachers who are taking the teaching practicum program or teaching internship. The scope of this study is limited to the teaching practicum of students of the Department of English Language Education, Faculty of Education and Language, Atma Jaya Catholic University of Indonesia. The schools they student teachers are doing the teaching practicum are private high schools in various regions of Jakarta. Hopefully, this study will give mentors broader insight of mentoring their student teachers.

## 2. REVIEW OF RELATED THEORIES

Mentoring is a program where a skilled and experienced teacher is helping a new or inexperienced teacher so the new one will feel good with the new position. The mentor guides the mentee through the transfer or share of practice knowledge of teaching. Usually, the guidance involves classroom management, resources, and how things are done around the setting (Langdon & Ward, 2015). To be successful, the experienced teacher needs both the teaching experience and the mentoring skill, since the relationship between both parties is not simple. The mentee is not always a new full-time teacher in the school but also a student doing the teaching practicum or teaching practice. In the present study, the one the experienced teacher guides would be later one, namely, a student teacher doing the practice teaching as a subject he/she has to take as the completion of his/her educational program.

In the Department of English Language Education, Faculty of Education and Language, Atma Jaya Catholic University of Indonesia, all students are required to take the internship program where they have to go to schools to have real experiences of how to be real teachers. They will be exposed to the daily activities the school teachers do in managing and executing their tasks, and also they will have to have the experience of teaching real classes for eight (8) sessions. With the program, it is hoped that they will be more prepared to enter the real world of language teaching after they finish their education. In this program, the students are accompanied by the lecturer and the school teacher as the mentors. Usually, one lecturer is responsible for mentoring five (5) to ten (10) students, and each school teacher supervises one (1) to three (3) student teachers. During the internship program the school teacher assigns the student teachers to be involved in the daily activities the teacher does in schools to experience the school culture. Besides, she also arranges the teaching practicum for the student teachers, including the teaching materials and scheduling. During the teaching practicum, the teacher helps the student teachers with the lesson plans, sits in the class and observes the teaching practicum, and gives feedbacks about the student teachers' teaching performance. Scoring the student teachers' teaching performance using a certain scoring rubric is also one of the school teacher's responsibilities. The lecturer helps the student teachers with their lesson plans, conducts video conferences for the teaching improvements, and evaluates each student teacher's teaching performance using a certain scoring form. The lecturer usually sits in the class two or three teaching sessions.

The mentoring practice takes place during the execution of the daily school routines, the writing of the lesson plans, the teaching sessions, the video conferences, and the teaching evaluation. The final score of the student teacher in the program will be based on those processes.

## 3. RESEARCH METHODS

Ten student teachers taking the internship program in 2016 were involved and became main respondents of this study. Most of them are already in the seventh semester (two were in the ninth) of their educational program in the university. In addition, four school English teachers (mentors) from four different high schools and responsible for the internship program also took part in this study.

A questionnaire based on the items of the daily log suggested by (Kelly and Tannehill, 2012) was distributed to the student teachers. The questionnaire dealt with eleven (11) main categories taking place during the mentoring activities: management of learning, effectiveness of planning,

knowledge and structuring of subject matter, coherence lesson, effectiveness of teaching strategies, students' learning, personal qualities, quality of interaction, self-evaluation, extent of innovative teaching, and sense of professionalism. The students were asked to score the mentoring processes. Informal interviews with student teachers and school teachers were also conducted to strengthen the data collected through the questionnaire and to get comments on each category.

#### 4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Students' Scores to the Mentoring Processes

Categories	Scores			
	Very good	Good	Poor	Very Poor
Management of learning Environment	7	3	0	0
Effectiveness of planning	10	0	0	0
Knowledge and structuring subject matter	9	1	0	0
Coherence of lesson	8	2	0	0
Pupil learning	0	10	0	0
Effectiveness of Teaching Strategies	10	0	0	0
Personal Qualities	3	7	0	0
Quality of Interaction	7	3	0	0
Self-Evaluation	8	2	0	0
Extent of Innovative Teaching	6	4	0	0
Sense of Professionalism	9	1	0	0

From Table 1 above it can be seen that the student teachers give high score to the process of mentoring in all categories. All of the students give very good or good scores in the eleven categories of their mentoring sessions. The following discussion describes the discussion of the

### **Effectiveness of planning and Effectiveness of Teaching Strategies**

All students give perfect responses for both categories. Effectiveness of planning is something new for most the student teachers, since most of them have not got experiences in teaching real classes. During the mentoring they learn how to plan various things and how effective their plans are. During the interviews, it is also found out that the student teachers need guidance from the mentor in writing effective lesson before teaching. In the lesson plans they have to mention suitable lesson objectives, both the curricular objectives and the instructional ones, for each teaching session and activities to reach the objectives. The mentor provides help to the students teachers with the information about the real classroom situations, and pupils' characteristics and language competence, so that the teaching practicum will be successful. The student teachers learn from the mentor how effective their lesson plans are.

Besides, the student teachers get guidance, feedbacks, and suggestions from the experienced teacher about the teaching strategies they will apply in class. They learn the applicability of the teaching methods and techniques they have got in their educational program. Indeed in the mentoring session they learn that some teaching strategies will be applicable and successful or not. Surprisingly, the results of interviews do not fully support the responses of the questionnaire. Three of the student teachers do not agree that they really get full information about the effectiveness of teaching strategies from the mentors. Furthermore, during the interviews, the mentor or school teacher, mentions that she is usually open to any teaching strategies or techniques the student teachers, and she never mentions that certain strategies or techniques are the most appropriate or better than the one the student teachers

### **Pupils learning and Personal qualities**

Contrary to the previous categories, pupils learning and personal qualities get the least scores from the student teachers and which means that the mentoring processes they have experienced together with the mentors do not give significant influence in those aspects. The mentors give little feedbacks concerning the pupils learning. Results of the interviews clearly show that the interactions during the mentoring rarely touch the areas of both aspects. Student teachers who have little teaching experience do not have enough time and attention to the aspects of mentoring. They state that finishing the teaching processes and exercises become their focus of attention. What is in the student teachers' mind is what the proper teaching technique to deliver certain materials is and the results of the exercises they have in class. Processes of the pupils acquiring the materials seldom appear in the mentoring sessions. Therefore, their mentoring session are filled with the discussion of teaching techniques and material delivery. Similarly, the aspect of personal qualities get a minimal portion in the mentoring processes. Usually, the mentor spends most of the mentoring time for the problems of the lesson plans, and the result of the class observation. Small amount of time and attention are dedicated to the student teachers' personal qualities. The student teachers are not interested in discussing personal matters with the mentor even though it is necessary. Apparently, the mentors try to limit the guidance in the teaching and learning matters and the student teachers do expect the discussions of personal qualities during the guiding period. Results of the interviews also highlight the idea that closer relationship and better understanding of both parties are needed to open the mentoring of the aspects.

### **Knowledge and structuring subject matters and Sense of professionalism**

Nine of the ten participants gave the highest scores to these aspects discussed during the mentoring. Teaching real classes is something new for the student teachers. Responses from the class are things that they never experienced in their educational program. Often the discussion taking place in the classrooms or comments given by the students are unexpected and this makes the student teachers have better understanding or knowledge of the subject matter they teach (English). During the writing of the lesson plans student teachers usually focus their attention to the proper teaching steps so that the pupils can digest the materials well. Besides, the mentors often help the student teachers with all possibilities of interactions that may occur in the classes. Transfers of experience

from the mentors to the mentees often occupy most part of the mentoring sessions. Besides, mentors also share things appropriate or inappropriate to be done by teachers in the classes and that enriches their professionalism as teachers. Results of the interviews support the fact. Both the student teachers and school teachers admit that their mentoring often deals with these aspects of mentoring. The guidance and share the school teachers gave to the student teachers are related to the widening the knowledge and structuring the subject matters as well as their sense of professionalism.

Things that mentors often discuss in the mentoring sessions with the students teachers are school cultures and pupil characteristics. Those aspects are also important in the success of the internship program of the student teachers (Sandra & Odell 2002). The better understanding of the school culture and the characteristics of the pupils will make the process of internship smoother and chances of success of the program become bigger. Interviews with school teachers highlight these facts. The mentors mention that the student teachers with more open minds to the new culture of the school tend to have bigger success and better performance in the aspects. They interact and behave better in the school environments.

Another aspect that people should pay attention to in the process of mentoring is the mentoring skills. Not all experienced teachers can become good mentors. Since mentoring does not just transfer experiences

## 5. CONCLUSION

Mentoring is a crucial process in the success of the internship program of an educational teacher training program. Without the successful program, the graduate of the institutions will have serious problems when they enter the teaching world. The findings suggest that mentoring covers aspects of management of learning, effectiveness of planning, knowledge and structuring of subject matter, coherence lesson, effectiveness of teaching strategies, students' learning, personal qualities, quality of interaction, self-evaluation, extent of innovative teaching, and sense of professionalism. Results of the study show that all of the aspects mentioned above get very high or high scores. Responses from both questionnaire and interviews support the idea.

The result of the interviews also suggest that mentors should have sufficient mentoring skills and student teachers should be willing to be open to new cultures of the school. Those two things will certainly increase the success possibility of any internship program

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