English Language & Literature Teaching, Vol. 21, No. 1 Spring 2015

A Study of Experiences of Novice English Teachers in a Mentoring Program

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Chang, Kyungsuk (2015). A study of experiences of novice English teachers in a mentoring program. *English Language & Literature Teaching*, *21*(1), 29-48.

Newly qualified teachers are known to have difficulties in the transition from students at teacher training institutes to teachers at schools. Mentoring has gained ground in language teacher education as a way of supporting novice teachers in the transition. This study examines the impact that a mentoring program had on primary novice English teachers. 8 beginning teachers and 4 experienced teachers participated in a 3-month formal mentoring program organized by a local office of education and an educational research institute. The mentoring program included orientation, online class observation and feedback at regular meetings, and evaluation. The mentee teachers were engaged in the self-appraisal of their own teaching through mentoring. The analysis of the interviews with the participants shows that the mentees experienced professional and personal support from the mentoring. It also reveals that the mentors experienced professional development through mentoring the novice teachers. The research findings suggest that the mentors need training for successful mentoring. It is also suggested that a school-based mentoring program provide beginning teachers with aid on hand. The study concludes by offering some implications for implementing effective mentoring at schools, and suggestions for further research on mentoring.

[novice teachers/mentoring/induction/professional development/mentor/mentee]

I. INTRODUCTION

Bailey, Curtis and Nunan (2001) defines mentoring as an interpersonal, ongoing, situated, supportive, and informative professional relationship between two (or more) individuals, one of whom (the mentor) has more experience in the profession, craft, or skill in question. The term mentor goes back to Homer's the *Odyssey* (Eisenman & Thornton, 1999, pp. 80-81). In the epic poem, a wise old captain named Mentor gives Odysseus's son,

Telemachus, guidance in coping with his father's long absence (ibid). In modern times, especially in the management and human resources literature, the term mentor has become a verb as well and now refers to a relationship in which a more experienced person aids a less experienced person, referred to as a mentee or protégé (Nickols, 2002).

In education mentoring has often been used to support novice teachers[1] facing difficulties in the transition from a student teacher at the teacher training institution to a school. Mentoring novice teachers has been documented in general education research (Brooks & Sikes, 1997; Mullan & Lick, 1999; Tomlinson, 1995). Mentoring in education is the one-to-one support of a novice teacher (mentee) by a more experienced teacher (mentor) as designed to assist the development of the mentee's expertise and to facilitate their induction into the culture of teaching and into the specific local context (Hobson, Ashby, Malderez & Tomlinson, 2009, p. 207). Mentoring new teachers has come to play a prominent role in supporting initial teacher training, induction and professional development of beginning teachers in many areas of education. In the education field considerable time, energy and funding have been expended on the development of mentoring programs and on the process of mentoring beginning teachers (ibid, 2009). There have been discussions on potential benefits of mentoring novice teachers and conditions for effective mentoring.

Little has been explored about how novice teachers manage to survive at the first year (s). Not many detailed studies outlining the experiences of language teachers in their first year of teaching have been conducted in the second language education literature. It is relatively new that attention is paid to beginning teachers and their early professional development in English language teacher education. Studies have been done to document the experiences of language teachers in their first year of teaching in English language education literature. Studies on the socialization of novice English teachers reveal that there is a lack of support for them at the first years (Farrell, 2006; Hayes, 2008, 2009; Richards & Pennington, 1998; Shin, 2012). It is proposed that mentoring can be bridges at the transition from the student teacher at the pre-service teacher training institutions to a qualified teacher at the school classroom (Farrell, 2012; Hayes, Kim & Chang, 2013; Malderez, 2009).

This study aims to investigate what impacts mentoring have on novice English teachers' development by examining their experiences in a formal mentoring program. It also examines the effect of mentoring on experienced teachers' (the mentors) professional development. Implications are drawn from the findings for mentor preparation, support for novice teachers, and successful mentoring at schools.

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[1] In this study the term novice teachers refers to teachers within the first three years of professional practice in schools. It is interchangeably used with 'qualified teachers', 'new teachers', and 'beginning teachers' throughout the paper.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Novice Teachers' Tensions and Anxieties

It has been recognized by language teacher educators that the first year of language teaching has an important influence on future careers of novice teachers (Farrell, 2003, 2006; Hayes, Kim & Chang, 2013; Richards & Pennington, 1998). As Veenman (1984) notes, the first year of teaching is characterized as 'reality shock' for many beginning teachers. In a similar vein, Huberman (1989) refers to the phase of teaching career entry as 'survival'. According to his categorization of the life cycle of teachers (ibid, p. 33), the survival phase has to do with reality shock in confronting the complexity and simultaneity of instructional management, including the preoccupation with self, the gulf between professional ideals and the daily grind of classroom life, the fragmentation of tasks, the apparent inadequacy of instructional materials given the diversity of pupil characteristics etc. Investigation has been done to comprehend beginning teachers' experiences in the first year (s) of teaching. Hayes (2008) uncovered novice teachers' tensions and anxieties are not confined to the realities and immediate demands of coping with students in classrooms, issues of maintaining discipline, enacting methods, using materials, and engaging with students to attempt to influence learning, but also extend to establishing the teacher's place within the institutional context of the school.

In a study of novice teachers' perception on their work environment and burnout, Gavish and Friedman (2010) found novice teachers experience high levels of burnout as early as the beginning of their first year of teaching. They identified three variables contribute to predicting burnout, i.e., lack of appreciation and professional recognition from students, lack of appreciation and professional recognition from the public, and lack of collaborative and supportive atmosphere. Lortie (1975) described pressure to function as organizational persons with the contention that novice teachers, from the first days of teaching, are expected to have a thorough knowledge of the organizational, its bureaucracy, and the role holders in the school. Farrell (2003) in this vein points out that every school has a culture of norms, values and ideals to which teachers are expected to subscribe and every school is a complex web of interpersonal relationships which may engender a series of different teacher cultures within the school. Hayes (2008) in his study on the socialization of beginning English teachers, argues that novice teachers' burnout encompasses such factors as relating to colleagues, learning the norms of behavior expected in the school, and often managing one's identity as a teacher within the local community served by the school, going beyond classroom realities. Studies of novice teachers' experiences in the first year (s) of teaching (Chubbuck, Clift, Allard & Quinlan, 2001; Farrell, 2003; Hayes, 2009; Shin, 2012) suggest that many novice teachers be provided with support including person, school

context and personal relationships, which will lead to the creation of environment where beginning teacher develop their professional lives.

2. Supporting Novice Teachers through Mentoring

As mentioned earlier, mentoring has been considered to assist the development of beginning teachers and to facilitate their induction into the culture of teaching and into the specific local context. The review of the relevant literature shows that studies have been conducted on the potential benefits and costs of mentoring, and those factors which tend to maximize the former and minimize the latter (Hobson et al., 2009). Studies have also been carried out on the development of mentoring programs and on the process of mentoring beginning teachers working in different contexts (Chang & Han, 2007; HMIE, 2008; Lindgren, 2005; Sim & Kim, 2013; Scott, 1999). Although individual studies were conducted in a range of contexts employing a variety of methodologies and had limitations, it is acknowledged that they have enhanced the understanding of mentoring in a number of ways. They have also provided a number of common and recurring research findings on benefits and conditions effective mentoring.

1) Potential Benefits of Mentoring

Potential benefits of mentoring can be categorized into three areas: mentees, mentors, and schools and educational systems. Firstly it is suggested in some studies that mentoring is an important and effective form of supporting the professional development of novice teachers, i.e. mentees (Chang & Han, 2007; Danielson, 1999; Lindgren, 2005; Scott, 1999). The most commonly feature among research findings is related to the provision emotional and psychological support. Mentoring has been shown to be helpful in enhancing the confidence of beginner teachers, increasing their morale and job satisfaction. In Danielson's (1999) study, mentoring helped novice teachers face their new challenges, and improve their teaching practices through reflective activities and professional conversations as they assume full responsibility for a class. Chang and Han (2007) report a wide range of benefits of mentoring a mentee experienced, including reduced feelings of isolation, increased confidence, professional growth, and improved self-reflection and problem solving capacities. Research also points to the impact of mentoring on the socialization of beginning teachers, helping them to adapt to the standards and expectations associated with teaching (Bullough & Draper, 2004; Wang & Odell, 2002).

There is a wealth of evidence that mentoring beginning teachers may have a positive impact on the professional and personal development of mentors (Chang & Han, 2007; Chang, Kim & Jung, 2011; Danielson, 1999; HMIE, 2008; Moon, 1994; Scott, 1999). In

a study of the value of teacher mentorship schemes in Bhutan, Moon (1994) reports that mentorship schemes can provide an important opportunity for teachers (mentors) to develop professionally through guiding and supporting mentees while they are on school experience of teaching practice. The mentoring experience has been shown to impact on the learning of mentors themselves. This is related to mentors' learning through self-reflection or critical reflection on their own practice. Mentors have also been found to have learned from their beginning teacher mentees, from participation in mentoring and from opportunities to talk to their mentees about teaching and learning or about the mentees' or their own teaching. In an analysis of the effects of the beginning teachers' induction program in Canada, Scott (1999) found that the experienced teachers (mentors) felt that they benefitted from the program. In this study the mentors were particularly enthusiastic because they believed that mentoring allowed them to help others, improve themselves, receive respect, develop collegiality, and profit from the novice teachers' fresh ideas and energy. Several studies report increased confidence in mentor's own teaching and improved relationships with pupils and colleagues, including being more collegial and more tolerant with pupils (e.g. Bodoczky & Malderez, 1997).

Regarding benefits of mentoring for schools and educational systems, it can be expected that the benefits on mentees and mentors would produce knock-on gains for pupils and schools, notably in terms of enhanced learning (HMIE, 2008; Moor, Halsey, Jones, Martin, Stott, Brown & Harland, 2005). As Hobson et al. (2009) note, the evidence on this particular outcome is limited partly because of the complexity of researching it. In the evaluation of the pilot professional development program for beginning teachers in England, Moor et al. (2005) suggested a number of additional benefits to schools of mentoring program. Among the benefits are staff's increased collaboration and enjoyment through the raised profile of beginning teachers and early professional development activities within the school. They added that the mentoring program had fostered a more developed culture of professional development and support within participating schools. As Hobson et al. (2009) point out, it is sometimes argued that mentoring is a cost-effective method of training and developing staff, though there is little empirical evidence to support this claim in the context of mentoring for beginner teachers.

2) Conditions for Successful Mentoring

As Hobson et al. (2009) suggest, maximizing its benefits and minimizing costs associated with mentoring lies in the realization of conditions for successful mentoring. In their extensive review of the literature, Hobson et al. (2009) point out that while certain conditions may be more likely to facilitate the achievement of some mentoring aims than others, a number of common findings emerge from the research regarding the factors which impact on the success. They draw four conditions for successful mentoring:

contextual support for mentoring, mentor selection and pairing, mentoring strategies, and mentor preparation.

The first condition, contextual support for mentoring relates to the assumption that the success of mentoring programs is influenced by a range of contextual factors. This emerges from the most consistent finding that mentoring is more likely to be effective where teacher mentors are provided with additional release or time to help them prepare for and undertake the mentoring role (Chang, Kim & Jung, 2011; Lee & Feng, 2007). Hobson et al. (2009) add that beginner teacher mentoring is more likely to be successful where it takes place within schools which are characterized by collegial and learning cultures as shown in Lee and Feng's (2007) study.

The condition of mentor selection and pairing is closely related to who is qualified for mentoring. It is suggested that the success of novice mentoring depends on the ways mentors are selected and paired with mentees. Abell, Dillon, Hopkins, McInerney, O'Brien (1995) suggest that mentors should be effective practitioners who are able to model good professional practice. They go on to propose that mentees have professional respect for their mentors. This entails that in the mentees' eyes at least their mentors possess sufficient knowledge and experience of teaching and their subject specialties.

Mentoring strategies relate to how mentoring activities should be carried out to be effective on novice teachers' professional development. Hobson et al. (2009) point out that a number of studies have found that, like all forms of teaching, mentoring is most effective where it is fit for purpose and addresses, and is responsive to the needs of the mentee. In a school-based mentoring program in Sweden, Lindgren (2005) suggests that the mentor of beginning teachers should respect their mentees as adult learners and consider their individual learning styles, making sure that the mentoring strategies are responsive to their concerns and appropriate to their current stage of development.

Regarding the condition of mentor preparation and support, studies suggest that mentors are more likely to be able to employ effective mentoring strategies where they have undertaken an appropriate program of mentor preparation (Hobson et al., 2009). In his study of being and becoming a mentor, Bullough (2005) concludes that mentor preparation program needs to go beyond training, and should include planned strategies to assist individuals in developing their identities as mentors. As Bullough (2005, p. 53) suggests, this can be achieved through participation in seminars, 'organized around the practice of mentoring', together with other teacher-mentors. He also emphasizes the importance of helping them to understand the value and potential benefits of discussing pedagogical issues with beginning teacher mentees (Lindgren, 2005). In other studies the mentor preparation activities are suggested for the development of their interpersonal skills or their ability to stimulate mentees to reflect on their actions (Hobson et al., 2009).

The above discussion on the conditions for successful mentoring supports the assumption that success in mentoring of novice teachers would be gained if such

prerequisites are met in the context where mentoring is carried out. It also suggests there are areas on which further research needs to be done due to their inconclusive evidence or lack of research on the areas.

III. RESEARCH METHODS

1. Participants

J Local Office of Education organized a formal mentoring program with focus on teaching practice, designed to assist the development of the beginning teachers' expertise and to facilitate their induction into teaching and into the school where the mentee started his/ her career. An official letter was sent to all the primary schools in the district, where novice teachers were working. Any English subject teachers with less than 3 years' teaching experience were entitled to join the mentoring program. Eight novice teachers volunteered for the formal mentoring program. Four mentors were needed as two mentees were assigned to one mentor teacher according to the plan of the program. The mentors were selected from the experienced teachers with the recommendation of the educational official in J Local Office of Education. The candidates were required to have at least five years' teaching experience and consulting or coaching experience, however short it is. Table 1 shows the brief personal profile of eight mentees and four mentors who participated in the beginning teacher mentoring program. All the names are replaced by alphabet letters A-L to secure anonymity.

TABLE 1
Participants

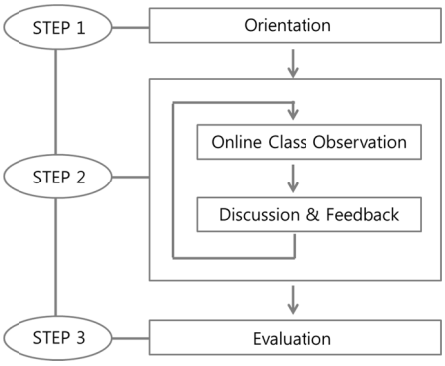
Roles	ID	Sex	English Teaching Experience (Consulting/Coaching Experience)
Mentees	A	F	2 years
	B	F	6 months
	C	F	1 year 6 months
	D	F	2 years 6months
	E	F	2 years
	F	F	1 year
	G	F	6 months
	H	M	6 months
Mentors	I	M	8 years 6 months (2 years)
	J	M	6 years (1 month)
	K	F	5 years (2 months)
	L	F	11 years (7 months)

As shown in Table 1, the mentees' teaching experience ranges from 6 months to 2 years and 6 months. Female novice teachers outnumbered male teachers. Only one male novice teacher participated in the program. The mentors' teaching experience ranges from 5 to 11 years. All of the mentors had consulting or coaching experience from 1 month to 2 years. There were individual differences in the experience of collaborative teacher development. All the teachers worked at different schools. No one of the participants had mentoring experience before.

2. Data Collection and Analysis

The formal mentoring program was designed with the consultancy from the researcher, who had experience on mentoring at an educational research institute. It was a 3-month program that aims to provide one-to-one support to novice teachers by more experienced teachers. It took place from April to June during the first semester. Figure 1 illustrates the structure of the program.

FIGURE 1
Structure of the Mentoring Program



The program consists of three steps: orientation, mentoring activities and evaluation. At the first step, the cohort of the participants attended the orientation where the teachers shared the aim, structure and activities of the mentoring program, followed by the mentor-mentee pairing. The pairing was done by the local office of education. Considering distances between schools, 2 mentees were assigned to 1 mentor. Teachers I, J and K were the mentors of novice teachers A and B, C and D, and E and F respectively. Each pair of the mentor-mentee had a discussion on their needs, the class observation schedule, and other strategies for successful mentoring.

The second step of the program was the main part of the mentoring program. It consisted of class observation and feedback. As the participants worked at the different schools, class observation was done online. Lessons plans and teaching materials were uploaded by the mentee teachers. For the online observation, the English classes of the mentees were videotaped by a technician employed for the program. The video footages of the classes were uploaded on the mentoring website. All the participants were given the ID and password to log in the site for the online observation. Both the mentees and the mentors observed their own or mentees' classes and filled the observation scheme (see Appendix) designed by the local office of education and the educational research institute. The cohort of the mentees and the mentors were required to attend the three regular meetings for discussion and feedback. Between the meetings, each pair of mentee and mentor communicated with each other using the way they preferred, including emails or mobile telecommunication. There were not any regulations about individual meetings. The participants could have meetings whenever they needed and wanted.

At the evaluation step, the cohort of the participants met to review the whole process of mentoring. The group discussed what they achieved from the mentoring and what should be improved to be a successful mentoring. The discussion was followed by the interviews with two groups, mentees and mentors. The interview schedule included the following:

- Motivation to participate and goals to be achieved
- Extent of the satisfaction and assistance from the mentoring
- Improvement areas of the mentoring program
- Requirements for a more effective mentoring
- Support for novice teachers' continuing professional development

The data for the research question was gathered primarily from the discussions, class observation and semi-structured interviews. The gathered data was translated into English for the presentation. The gathered and translated data were categorized using the thematic analysis, and then sub-categorized according to its salience and relevance to the research question, and frequency.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of the data gathered from the different sources shows that three areas are identified to appear frequently with salience and relevance to the research question: support to mentees, benefits for mentors, and improvements for future novice teacher mentoring programs.

1. Support to Mentees

1) Professional Support

All the mentees mentioned that they got teaching-related support from the mentoring, which was the main motivation to participate in the mentoring and one of the goals they expected to achieve through mentoring. At the interview Mentee B said she was content with support she had gained from her mentor:

> The reason I joined the mentoring program is that I can get help from so called professionals. I have been very much interested in improving my English teaching and asked the senior teachers and colleagues in my school for help. The feedback I received from them was superficial, mainly about the spelling or the format of lesson plans. I wanted more than this. I needed advice on teaching, not such superficial things. … The mentor's feedback was focused on my teaching. She gave me what I had expected my seniors and colleagues at the school. … Now I'm very much satisfied with the support I received from the mentoring. (Mentee B)

It was found that observation and feedback was helpful in engaging the mentees in the reflection on their own teaching. The mentees pointed out that they could make an objective observation of their own classroom, identifying the areas to be improved. It was also found that the interactive talk with the mentor at the meetings helped them see what they missed at the self-observation. Mentee H said that the feedback from his mentor helped him identify which areas of teaching needed more attention. Mentee A shared her observation and reflection experience with the other participants at the meeting:

> …the mentoring based on class observation was a new experience for me. I have never had an opportunity to analyze my teaching from the third person view. … I could see what I need to improve and what problems I have in teaching through the observation and feedback from the mentor. Not often but sometimes I could see my strengths. My mentor encouraged me to develop more what I can do well. This was very encouraging me. (Mentee A)

Mentees C and D shared their learning experience with their mentor in adapting teaching materials to customize individual students' needs. Both of them said there were many roles teachers needed to play for effective teaching, and their mentor showed how important the teacher's role as material writers was to meet students' needs.

Effective use of classroom English, coping with individual differences, paying more attention to students' reaction, classroom management are pointed out to be specific teaching areas that the mentees got help from the mentoring. Novice Teacher G said she realized she had tried to finish what she had prepared:

> … it is shameful. My problem was I prepared more than what my students can take within one class. I realized that I tried very hard to pass all that I had prepared for one lesson to the students in my class. I didn't care what they thought. I did try to reward myself by completing the task of passing the prepared lesson. My mentor L pointed out that was one of the typical mistakes less experienced teachers make. She said she was just like me when she was a novice teacher…. She gave me tips how to bridge the gap between students and myself. It was very helpful for me to pay more attention to students' learning not my teaching goals. (Mentee G)

The professional support the mentors experienced backs up the findings of the previous studies on the effects of mentoring on novice teachers' development (Chang & Han, 2007; Danielson, 1999; Lindgren, 2005; Scott, 1999). Considering the important role of reflection in professional learning, it can be assumed that reflection novice teacher experienced at the mentoring process had influence on mentees' learning to teach. It was found that the mentees in this study got help from their mentors on the areas, which novice teachers in the previous studies reported as difficult areas for new teachers in the primary English teaching in the given context (Chang, Kim & Jung, 2011; Chang & Han, 2007).

2) Personal Support

One of the most commonly mentioned helpful features of mentoring was the provision of emotional or psychological support. The mentees that experienced personal support pointed out that they did not expect it as they understood the mentoring program was designed to help novice teachers improve their English teaching. Mentees E and F remembered the emotional support they received from Mentor L. Mentee E told about the mentor's empathy with her at the meeting:

> The mentor showed her empathy with me whenever I complained about the burden from the job. … She said I settled in the new environment much better than her. She spent some time telling me how awful she was when a novice teacher even 5 years ago. Listening to her experience, my anxieties or worries became less serious than the beginning of the meeting. … Now looking back, by doing so she helped me have confidence in myself as a teacher. (Mentee E)

Mentee F described an anecdote with her Mentor. After this happening, Mentee F came to respect her mentor. She stated:

> My mentor L is an amazing person. I can say I respect her. She said Mentee E and me could contact her whenever we needed to talk to her. One day I was really upset after being blamed by the head of my department for my fault in handling an official document from the local office of education. The department head treated me just like her student. I couldn't put up my face because I burned with shame in front of colleagues. I had to spend all evening calming down, but failed to. I started to think about how to revenge for shame. Then I remembered what she said, so I called her very late at night and explained to her what had happened at the school. … I repeated myself. She listened to me with only a few remarks. After the 30-minute talk on the phone, strange enough, I felt relieved. … I thanked her. (Mentee F)

Mentee G realized that she relied on the mentor when she had difficulties in the school life. She regularly telecommunicated with her mentor. She talked with Mentor L about problems with the headteacher, colleagues, or parents. She said this helped her release stress from work:

> … I think I am lucky to meet Mentor L at the program. It is true that I have learned a lot about teaching. More importantly I could rely on her when I had to cope with emotional problems from stress. She had 11 year teaching experience and she had a coach certificate. She seemed to know how handle stress and help people handle stress from work. I must say emotional support I gained from the mentoring is much more valuable for me than teaching skill-related advice. (Mentee G)

The mentees agreed with the existence of realities in the school life, about which the pre-service teacher training institute had not taught them. Such realities relate to Veenman's (1984) reality shock at the first year (s) of teaching. The psychological and emotional support some mentees received from the mentoring is in line with personal support mentees experienced in previous studies on the benefits for mentees (Bullough & Draper, 2004; Chang & Han, 2007; Danielson, 1999; Lindgren, 2005; Scott, 1999; Wang & Odell, 2002).

2. Benefits for mentors

The benefits of mentoring for mentors were frequently indicated by the experienced teacher mentors regardless of their teaching and other relevant training experience.

Professional development through class observation was the most frequently mentioned benefit for mentors. Mentor Teacher I said:

> I had to look at some of the references on ELT, seeking rationales for the feedback I gave two mentee teachers about their teaching. Sometimes I looked for some alternative ideas at the resources. As far as I understand about mentoring, the trust between mentees and mentors plays an important role in successful mentoring. I believe that my feedback and advice should be based on what is proved to be objective and trustworthy, not on my own personal views. Through this process, I have learned to teach English. Personally it is a valuable experience for me. It is worthy of time and commitment. (Mentor I)

Mentor K also spent time finding theoretical background to her feedback by looking at research papers and professional books. She emphasized the importance of the mentor's readiness for giving the mentees feedback based on critical reflection on practice:

> … When observing the mentees' classes online, I knew by intuition that there are some areas to be improved. I was tempted to give the feedback from my intuition and experience. Instead I took time and found out some relevant literature, seeking for some principles for my feedback. … This helped me improve my teaching as I reflected on my classes to see whether I did what was preaching. (Mentor K)

It was observed that mentoring gave the mentors an opportunity of seeing themselves through putting themselves in mentees' shoes. As her mentees pointed out, Mentor L said she tried to listen to them with understanding and empathy. This made her look back on her first years of teaching. At the meetings she repeated how mutually helpful mentoring can be:

> … Recalling my first year as a novice teacher, unfortunately there was no one I can get help from. I had to learn from trial and error. … I try to put myself in my mentee teachers' shoes, not mine. From my experience of coaching and consulting, I learn empathy is very important in helpful mentoring. Instead of giving my answers to their questions, I tried to help them find their own answer with my support. While communicating with them, I learned a person as well as a teacher. (Mentor L)

The professional and personal benefits that the mentors experienced have something in common with the findings from the studies conducted in different contexts (Bailey, Curtis

& Nunan, 2001; Chang & Han, 2007; Chang, Kim & Jung, 2011; Danielson, 1999; HMIE, 2008; Moon, 1994; Scott, 1999). Hobson et al. (2009) note, little has been known about how mentoring activities are correlated to the benefits for mentors. It would be possible to uncover how the benefits can be maximized, avoiding its pitfalls.

3. Improvements for Future Mentoring Programs

In spite of the benefits for mentees and mentors, the participants suggested improvements for successful mentoring in the future: mentor preparation, school-based mentoring and contextual support.

1) Mentors Need Training

All the mentors recognized and emphasized how important mentor training was for successful mentoring. They came to understood that there were many roles they should play according to the needs the mentees want to have support from them. Mentor K told about differences in her mentees:

> …Two mentees were different from each other. They had different background, experience, needs, motivation, and expectations. It seemed they had nothing in common except being a mentee. This was not what I had expected about mentoring. If the program included a training before the program started, I wouldn't be lost. (Mentor K).

Mentor J said he was not satisfied with his way of providing the feedback on his mentees' classes. He found himself employing a judgemental approach to class observation, saying 'This is right.' 'That was wrong.', 'You should do this.' or 'You shouldn't do that.' He expressed the challenge he faced in class observation and feedback:

> I knew that my mentees wanted to get help from me about their English teaching, not being judged by my subjective evaluation. Although I knew I shouldn't have done in a judgemental way, I found myself doing as the way I was observed in the past. … I started to have doubt about my role of being a mentor. (Mentor J)

In previous studies mentor training is suggested as one of the conditions for successful mentoring was mentor training (Hobson et al., 2009). Kyle, Moore and Sanders (1999) suggest that prospective mentors should participate in professional development to learn about the mentoring process and what is expected of them before assuming their duties. Their study shows that the novice teachers working with trained mentors possessed a

higher level of teaching skills than new teachers whose mentors were not trained, Evertson and Smithey (2000) stress that the mere presence of a mentor is not enough; the mentor's knowledge of how to support novice teachers and skills at providing guidance are also crucial.

2) School-based Mentoring

There was a need for more frequent mentor-mentee meetings. Five mentees said they wanted to see their mentors right away when they needed help from them. In the interview Mentee D said she wanted to see her mentor more often than once three weeks:

> … it is a bit depressing. I can't see my mentor when I need immediate help. When I see him, the problem will be solved or will be nothing serious. Or it slipped out of my mind or I couldn't remember what help I needed from the mentor. It would be handy and helpful if the mentor works at the same school as mine, so that I can see him or her easily whenever I need support or help. (Mentee D)

Mentee F said she had to get permission from the headteacher to attend the meetings with the mentor at the local office of education during the school day. She added it was not efficient to travel to get to the venue. She put this at the interview:

> I wish mentoring takes place in my school, so that I don't need to spend time to travel or to explain the headteacher why I need to attend the meeting with the mentor. Or if I had a mentor from the teachers in the same school, it would be efficient! (Mentee F)

What was pointed out by the mentees relates to contextual factors that might influence the success of mentoring programs. As suggested in Lee and Feng (2007), mentoring is more likely to be effective where teacher mentors are given additional release or time to help them prepare for and undertake the mentoring role. As Hobson et al. (2009) suggest, beginner teacher mentoring is more likely to be successful where it takes place within schools. Bullough (2005), in a similar vein, suggests that successful mentoring facilitated where mentors and mentees are allowed to meet together during the school day.

3) Support for Continuing Professional Development through Mentoring

All the participants expressed their desire to continue the program if they could get continuous support from the local offices of education. Mentee H expressed his strong interest in continuing to join the mentoring program:

> … this program has been very helpful for me, and I wish the local office of education allocate its budget to continue this program. I am very willing to continue to take part in and pursue professional development. Everything depends on the willingness on the part of the local office of education like other programs. We have to wait and see. (Mentee H)

Another mentee strongly suggests that the mentors should receive financial reward for their hard work. This is line with the suggestion that mentoring is more likely to lead to positive outcomes where mentors are given financial support and/or some other form of incentive or recognition for their work (Abell et al., 1995).

Mentor K stressed collegial and learning cultures within schools to successfully continue mentoring. Hobson et al. (2009) suggest that both mentors and mentees have access to support outside the mentoring relationship, like support from other teachers in the school.

V. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The aim of this study was to investigate what impacts mentoring have on novice English teachers' development by examining their experiences in a formal mentoring program that was supported by a local office of education. It was found that the mentoring provided the mentees with psychological support as well as professional assistance. It was also revealed that the mentors gained benefits from the mentoring program in terms of professional development. For improvements for future mentoring programs, the participants recommended mentor training, school-based mentoring, and support for continuing professional development.

Based on the findings, this study makes some suggestions for successful mentoring to support beginning teachers. Firstly the mentoring program to support novice teachers needs to be introduced to individual schools and implemented with support from local offices of educations. Such school-based mentoring programs are expected to serve the needs of beginning teachers more directly than the traditional short novice teacher training that usually takes place during vacations. Collegiality is emphasized for school-based mentoring to be conducive to cooperative development among teachers (Bailey, Curtis & Nunan, 2001; Chang, Kim & Jung, 2011).

It is suggested that training for mentors should be provided for successful mentoring. As Hobson et al. (2009) stress, it is important for mentors to recognize that mentoring, like teaching, in different contexts have a variety of purposes or goals, involve a variety of practices and strategies to achieve these purposes and goals, and take place at different

stages of a mentee's professional development and over different durations. It is misleading that all the experienced teachers can be a good mentor in any mentoring programs for novice teachers. Mentor training can improve the quality of a mentoring program.

The finding of the present study is expected to make a contribution to uncovering only a small part of the mentoring areas. More research needs to be conducted to enhance the understanding of issues surrounding novice teacher mentoring. Further research areas include the cost-effectiveness of mentoring compared with other methods of supporting and facilitating the early professional learning of novice teachers, and the impact of mentoring on the learning of pupils taught by mentors and mentees. Further research also needs to be done on the impact of mentors' participation in different kinds of training on the professional and personal development of mentees.

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APPENDIX

Classroom Observation Scheme

Step	Areas	What you observed	Comments	Discussion Issues
Before class	Objectives to be achieved			
	Learning contents			
	Strategies			
	Learning environment			

Class	Student motivation/ engagement			
	Interaction (S-T/S-S)			
	Teacher talk			
	Feedback			
	Learning activities			
	Management			
	Assessment			
After Class	Achieved objectives			
	Satisfying areas			
	Improvement areas			
	Others			

Examples in: English

Application Languages: English

Applicable Levels: Primary

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Received in January 15th, 2015
Reviewed in February 26th, 2015
Revised version received in March 5th, 2015