

The Journey of a Mentees on Their Mentorship Program

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Abstract: *This study focused on the journey of English major pre-service teachers of Rizal Technological University in their mentorship program that involved mentee-mentor relationships during the academic year 2023-2024. This study aimed to foster a deeper understanding of the mentorship program and determine the significance of the mentee-mentor relationship to the mentee's experience and improvement. With the random sampling method, twenty-two out of sixty (60) pre-service teachers participated in a survey questionnaire, and eight pre-service teachers participated in an interview. A quantitative approach was used in the data analysis. The findings indicated that the relationship between mentees and mentors influenced the PSTs' preparation, instruction, and student-teacher development. The results showed that the participants were continuously improving in the field, and the major contributor to that was their positive interactions with their mentors. The significance of this study is that it provides information about the dynamics of the mentorship program and exhibits what happens in a real classroom setup where mentoring takes place, supported by the feedback of the first account handler, the pre-service teachers. Future researchers may use this as a basis for future studies with the use of structured observation as an additional research tool.*

Keywords: Mentorship Program, Mentee, Mentor, Teaching Internship Program

1. Introduction

Teaching internships are essential in the education program, especially in the Philippines. The Internship program immerses the students in a real-world environment that helps them in developing skills, experiences and theories they have gained in taking the four-year program. Practice teaching programs for PTs are pivotal in the Philippine Teacher Education Institutions (TEI) because they supplement the education quality in the country (Ulla, 2016). PSTs or PTs went through practice teaching to go beyond mastery of skills and knowledge such as communication, critical thinking, technology literacy, and collaboration in preparation for their in-classroom practice under the guidance of a cooperating teacher who observed and assessed PTs (Mugot & Sumbalan, 2019). As part of the teaching internship program, PTs learned to coordinate with teachers to mentor them as they immersed themselves in the workplace. This rigorous training from the program sharpened their teaching abilities because of the provided insights and guidance from the students' mentor. In the Philippine TEIs, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) is the one governing student internships. CHED Memorandum Order (CMO) No. 104, series of 2017; Article 2, Section 6 enumerated the following specific objectives of a teaching internship in the country, which are: (6.2.1) Enrich the degree programs

in HEIs to respond to the needs of the industry; (6.2.2.) Promote mutually supportive industry academe collaboration/linkages; and (6.2.3.) Strengthen career guidance.

At [RTU] Rizal Technological University, the practice teachers are placed in various public high schools and paired with the coordinating teachers who guide them in their internship. Like other teacher education institutions [TEIs], The College of Education at Rizal Technological University assigns the senior CED students to various public schools, including the laboratory high school for a hand-to-hand teaching experience for the students. To perform well, the PSTs should master the skills, theories and concepts to apply in practice. Still, despite the rigorous training, the issue of the poor teaching quality persists. According to Bautista [2023] from the inquirer, the passing rate for LET or Licensure examination for teachers is lower in contrast to the other courses leading to a drastic debate about the efficacy of the teacher education as well as their four-year curriculum of theories and concepts. However, in the study of Diaz (2015) about the teaching performance of novice teachers, her findings showed that academic performance and teacher testing were not significant contributors to their good teaching performance. Thus, this manifested the research gap, stating that other constituents significantly contributed to the standard of their teaching performance. Correspondingly, Bowman (2014) stated that mentoring programs for teacher education students will provide consistency to new teachers, and schools often benefit from consistency. This posed the idea that mentoring is another contributor to good teaching performance. By looking into the standpoint of the practice teachers, this paper delved into the understanding of their experiences, which contributed to their development.

2. Methodology

This study used the quantitative research method. The quantitative method design is an approach in research that quantifies the accumulation and analysis of data.

Specifically, a semi-structured oral questionnaire and survey questionnaire were used as the primary sources of data collection for this study. Through these methods, the researchers will be able to ascertain the PSTs' narratives from the mentorship program toward the teaching internship.

This study used a random sampling method to gather data from the participants. According to Dr. Finch (2013), when speaking of random samples, one must consider its two words: "sampling," which means the data involved is taken from something, and "random," which means that the sample obtained is based on probability. The participants of the study were 60 fourth-year English major students from Rizal Technological University, Boni and Pasig campuses, and they were selected randomly.

3. Results and Discussion

The findings relate to the research questions that guide the study. The data were analyzed to identify different mentorship programs for the pre-service teachers, their impact on the PSTs' preparation, instruction, and student-teacher development, the challenges they faced, and how they overcame these challenges.

Table 1: A summary table with the most critical findings on the impact of mentorship.

Indicator	Composite Mean	Verbal Interpretation
I was able to understand the practical elements of managing a classroom.	3.36	Strongly Agree
I have been sufficiently supported to develop classroom management skills for my practice teaching internship.	3.40	Strongly Agree
The mentorship program is guiding me to understand the educational policies and practices.	3.53	Strongly Agree
The mentorship program is helping me improve my reflective practices and self-assessment.	3.5	Strongly Agree

Table 1, as shown, resulted in a high composite mean, which represents the participants' strong agreement to the above-mentioned impacts of mentoring on preparation, instruction, and student-teacher development. This result can be interpreted to the extent that the mentorship program in Rizal Technological University was and still is efficiently supplementing the needs of their student-teachers. Furthermore, the relationship between the mentor and the mentees was shown to be effective as per the result of the survey. All of which helped the mentee in improving and developing themselves in the field.

Table 2: A summary table with the most critical findings on the challenges of mentorship.

Indicator	Composite Mean	Verbal Interpretation
The opportunities for observation and hands-on experiences given to me were limited, making it difficult for me to develop practical teaching skills.	2.36	Agree
The mentorship program has overwhelmed me as it made it difficult for me to manage my time and tasks accordingly.	2.36	Agree
I find it difficult to communicate with my mentor.	1.5	Strongly Disagree
My mentor gives feedback which I perceive as inappropriate.	1.54	Strongly Disagree
The mentorship program is not helping me improve my teaching style.	1.40	Strongly Disagree

Table 2 resulted with a positive outcome, effectively supporting the findings in table 1. The critical challenges which the mentees encountered throughout their teaching internship (e.g. lack of communication with mentor, difficulty adjusting, etc.) were barely a challenge at all. With a good relationship with their mentors, the mentees of RTU did not find it difficult to traverse throughout the internship program.

Table 3: A summary table with the most critical findings on overcoming the challenges.

Indicator	Composite Mean	Verbal Interpretation
When difficulties arise, I talk to my mentor for advice.	3.74	Strongly Agree
I made sure that my mentor and I had talked and agreed on specified rules and boundaries during the first week/month after meeting him/her	3.54	Strongly agree
I am maximizing my exposure in the teaching field to work on the skills that I am yet to develop or improve.	3.54	Strongly Agree
I prioritize my tasks and manage my time to effectively overcome my difficulties in handling overloaded tasks.	3.68	Strongly Agree

I modify my teaching strategies to overcome the challenges I face when supplementing the students' educational needs.	3.77	Strongly Agree
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Table 3 shows how pre-service English teachers overcome the challenges in the mentorship program and obtain an overall mean of 3.66 verbally interpreted as strongly agreeing. The results have expressed strong agreement regarding the role of mentors in assisting them in navigating difficulties within the mentorship program. Pre-service teachers seek guidance from their mentors to mitigate these obstacles. This support is particularly crucial during their practice teaching sessions, where pre-service teachers collaborate closely with their mentors, aiding in their personal and professional growth within the realm of education.

4. Conclusion

The findings of this study provided a deep understanding of the pre-service teachers' experiences in the mentorship program and highlights the following:

- 1) Rizal Technological University's mentorship program aims to enhance teachers' skills and capabilities in effectively planning lessons, conducting observations, and managing classrooms. By honing these key areas, the mentorship program strives to improve overall teaching quality.
- 2) The mentorship program at Rizal Technological University is a success in terms of the PETs' preparation, instruction, and student-teacher development. The sufficient support and guidance during the preparation and instruction phase were enough to ensure the PETs' development as student teachers and as prospective in-service teachers.
- 3) The PETs responded that the identified issues they have encountered in the mentorship program are not relevant to them. Therefore, the mentorship program has been perceived positively by the mentees.
- 4) The collaboration between the mentees and the mentors is crucial in cultivating adaptable and efficient teachers. By emphasizing cooperation and continuous learning, the mentorship program proved to be the platform for the development of flexible and competent educators who can meet the evolving demands of the education sector

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