

## MENTORING PRACTICES OF ENGLISH COOPERATING TEACHERS IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine the competencies, attitudes, and interests of cooperating teachers as observed by the cooperating teachers, student teachers and school administrators. The extent of mentoring practices of English cooperating teachers in accommodation, orientation, observation, coaching and evaluation phases were also the concerns of the study. The descriptive method of research was used in the study with the questionnaire distributed to 360 respondents. The statistical tools were percentage, weighted mean, independent t-test and one-way analysis of variance. The revealed that the competencies and attitudes of a competent cooperating teacher were greatly manifested by the English cooperating teachers while interests were moderately manifested. Age which goes with length of service were found out to affect the attributes of competent cooperating teachers. Further, cooperating teachers, student teachers and school administrators had the same responses regarding the mentoring practices of the English cooperating teachers in the secondary schools in the province of Batangas, Philippines. The mentoring plan was the output of the study which addresses the needs of cooperating teachers as regard improving or enhancing the mentoring process. As expected results, cooperating teachers are enlightened and empowered, student teachers will be more confident and productive, and students will learn effectively.

**Keywords:** Mentoring practices, cooperating teacher, English, public secondary school, competence.

### INTRODUCTION

Seasoned educators have undergone skills-training, have sought professional growth and have mastered both methodology and discipline with years of teaching experience. They are instrumental in honing a successful practice teacher to be equipped with necessary tools and mastered teaching tasks in the actual teaching field. Thus, pre-service education itself is a crucial transition phase whereby a seasoned cooperating teacher must manifest spot-on mentoring principles and precision in directing positive holistic student teacher development.

At present, 21<sup>st</sup> century education for millennia learners is at its most demanding phase with the implementation of the K to 12 Basic Education Curriculum. Nonetheless it is a prerogative for the teaching-learning process to be constantly integrated with ICT and modern media technology. Although innovation on individualized independent learning styles, guided instructional technologies, and teaching breakthroughs will always co-exists

with every single curriculum or educational program; teaching methodology, styles, efficiency, achievement and holistic instructional success will solely be at the disposal of the educator. Since millennia learners are independent thinkers, facilitating the learning process inside the classroom cannot be outdated. Attention span, line of interests, and mobility inside the classroom are priorities to consider for our modern day learners. Therefore, a 21<sup>st</sup> century educator needs to be armed with the technical know-how, principles, and academic competency in preparing lesson plans, technological teaching aids, and classroom management scheme.

Student teacher internship as a course requirement for Bachelor of Elementary Education and Bachelor of Secondary Education exposes education students to the real world of teaching. After 60 hours of required class observation, a student teacher must take every courageous step to take center stage in administering actual student/pupil instruction, classroom management, and integrating himself to the academe community which is a complex society of experienced educators (acting as mentors) and students who are in their raw and unpretentious behavior towards studying.

With the immersion of senior Bachelor of Secondary Education students in the actual educational institutions, practice teaching gears toward the final demonstration as the ultimate objective that should be executed by a practice teacher but the end is not justified by the means. Consequently, cooperating teachers in a short span of time have to assess, modify or enrich the practice teachers' background on teaching principles and strategies as well as the latter's content-based knowledge of the subject matter or learning area.

With the 2,000 TEIs (Teacher Education Institutions) at present, three million students are enrolled in the Teacher Education program, the Commission of Higher Education (CHED) projects only half a million of graduates to complete the said program. Advertently, there is a reported mismatch on the required teaching skill and ability resulted from ineffective teaching formulas as cited by ASEAN. This is where the role of cooperating teacher sets in. The classroom setting acts as a springboard for the clientele (student teacher) to apply untested principles and strategies.

Assuming cooperating teacher assignments for diverse student teachers from various Colleges in the First Congressional District of Batangas, Philippines and being a student teacher twelve years ago in one of the leading universities in the province of Batangas, Philippines the researcher has observed the verities of the statement presented above on the world of student teaching. It is for these reasons that the researcher is very motivated to explore the mentoring practices of public secondary English cooperating teachers in the province of Batangas, Philippines with the hope to come up with a viable teacher's mentoring plan that would cater to the needs, demands, and goals of English cooperating teachers.

The researchers feel the necessity of a sustainable teacher's guide for cooperating teachers because for whatever cost, student teachers who are more precious than gold, to be purified by the taming fire of in-service training can only take form through the hands and craftsmanship of a systematic and skillful cooperating mentor.

## Statement of the Problem

The study aimed to ascertain the mentoring practices of the English cooperating teachers in the public secondary schools in the province of Batangas. Specifically, it sought answers to the following questions:

1. What is the profile of cooperating teachers in terms of age, sex, civil status, educational attainment, teaching experience, membership in professional organizations, and seminars and trainings attended?
2. How do cooperating teachers, student teachers and school administrators assess English cooperating teachers relative to their competencies, attitudes, and interests?
3. Are there significant differences in the assessments when cooperating teachers are grouped according to profile variables?
4. Is there any significant difference in the assessments of the three groups of respondents?
5. To what extent do cooperating teachers manifest mentoring practices in the following phases: accommodation; orientation; observation; coaching; and evaluation?
6. What mentoring plan for English cooperating teachers may be proposed?

## Significance of the Study

The results of this study were significantly useful for the following units and individuals:

The CHED and DepEd Officials, the result will serve as basis for formulating action programs and policies to improve the planning process and decision making of the two agencies on teacher-training needs. Teacher Education Institutions, the result will be used as the baseline information data so proper intervention and capability building among mentors can be made.

School administrators can give proper technical support to cooperating teachers and student teachers. Cooperating teachers will be in a position to try out mentoring plan to improve their mentoring practices and the student teachers' teaching preparedness.

Student teachers will be benefited in improving their teaching skills. It will also enable them to learn more and be able to achieve the goals and objectives of the student teaching program.

Local Government Units (LGU's), results of the study will give the Local Government Unit a chance to allocate school board fund to augment trainings and seminars for cooperating teachers. Future researchers, the study could be used as basis for future studies related to cooperating teachers.

## RESEARCH METHOD

### Research Design

Descriptive method of research was used in this study to assess the mentoring practices of English cooperating teachers in public secondary schools in the province of Batangas, Philippines. This method was employed as it is believed to best describe the concerns of the study and used as basis for preparing mentoring plan for English Cooperating Teachers. Sevilla (2007) explained that the descriptive method of research is designed to gather information about the present existing conditions.

A questionnaire was designed according to specific questions stated in the study and analyzed statistically with appropriate tools. The qualitative method was used through the triangulation process; questionnaire, interview and focus group discussion with the school administrators, cooperating teachers and student teachers.

### **Subjects of the Study**

There were three groups of respondents in the study. The first group were 120 public secondary school administrators, the second group were 120 English cooperating teachers and the last group were 120 English student teachers in the Province of Batangas. Purposive sampling was done to identify respondents in each division. Slovin's formula at five percent margin of error was used to determine the sample of population. Fish bowl and lottery techniques were used in choosing the respondents of the study.

### **Data Gathering Instruments**

**Questionnaire:** The researcher prepared the survey questionnaire to gather data about the profile, competencies, attitudes and interests of cooperating teachers. Further, it was used to ascertain the mentoring practices English cooperating teachers.

The questionnaire was divided into three parts. The first part was about the profile of the cooperating teachers. The second part of the questionnaire assessed the competencies, attitudes and interests of English cooperating teachers. The third part dealt with the survey of the respondents' assessment on the extent of the manifestation of mentoring practices of English cooperating teachers in accommodation, orientation, observation, coaching and evaluation phases.

**Interview:** Informal interviews among the school administrators, cooperating teachers and student teachers were conducted to solicit more information, add inputs and validate the responses of the respondents.

**Focus Group Discussion:** For inputs on mentoring plan, the researcher conducted focused group discussions with the English cooperating teachers. The agenda included: mentoring capabilities of cooperating teachers, issues and concerns confronting the mentoring process and mentoring plan.

### **Data Gathering Procedure**

Before the questionnaire was distributed to the sample schools in the entire province of Batangas which is composed of four divisions namely; Batangas Province, Batangas City, Lipa City and Tanauan City, permission to conduct study was sought from the superintendents of the Division Schools involved in the study. Distribution and retrieval of the questionnaires were done personally by the researcher to ensure high percentage of data collection. After the retrieval of the questionnaires, the data were tallied and tabulated for statistical treatment of data.

Qualitative technique was also utilized in this study. Student teachers and school administrators were also interviewed to enrich the data gathered. Focus group discussion was done by inviting cooperating teachers from different schools. They served as discussants on matter related to the problems of the study. The flow of discussion was facilitated and exchanged of ideas in different issues and concerns related to the study were documented.

The data gathered from the discussion were used as bases for the development of a mentoring plan for English cooperating teachers.

### **Statistical Treatment of Data**

Data gathered were classified, tabulated and interpreted using the following statistical tools.

**Frequency.** It was used to show the distribution of respondents as to profile variables.

**Percentage.** It was used in this study to describe the proportion of a particular number of occurrences of responses by the total number of respondents. The quotient was multiplied by 100.

**Weighted Mean.** This was used to determine the typicality of responses of the three groups of respondents on items that would be rated based from a scale of options.

**t-test.** This was used to determine if there were significant differences in the assessments of the cooperating teachers on competencies, attitudes and interests when they were grouped according to variable sex, membership in professional organizations and seminars and trainings attended.

**F-test** - This was used to test the significant differences of the responses of the school administrators, cooperating teachers and student teachers.

## **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATION**

**Findings:** From the gathered data the following findings were revealed.

### **1. Competencies, Attitudes and Interests of Cooperating Teachers**

**1.1 Competencies.** Cooperating teachers under study greatly manifested the competencies expected of them supported by the composite mean of 3.61, 3.51, and 3.62 as rated by cooperating teachers themselves, student teachers and school administrators respectively.

Cooperating teachers exposed that encouraging student teacher to be creative and innovative in presenting lessons was their top most competency possessed with the weighted mean of 3.77. On the other hand, school administrators, heads of the English department and English coordinators also highly rated this competency as supported by the weighted mean of 3.83. However, the student teachers rating was not so far compared to the two groups of respondents, this item obtained a weighted mean of 3.67 as perceived by the student teachers.

The student teachers and school noted that other competencies were rated greatly manifested. The student teachers rated showing mastery of the subject matter at all times with the weighted mean of 3.72, the school administrators placed it seventh in the list.

**1.2 Attitudes.** The three group of respondents obviously observed that cooperating teachers treat student teachers as fellow authority in the presence of students. It gained weighted mean of 3.83, 3.75 and 3.72 as rated by the cooperating teachers, student teachers and school administrators respectively.

The cooperating teachers and the school administrators were one in the revelation that cooperating teachers greatly manifest characteristics of developing a professional and supportive argument when students criticize the student teacher supported by a weighted mean of 3.58 and 3.59 respectively. But student teachers contested the claim of the cooperating teachers and school administrators, for student teachers the same item is only moderately manifested by the cooperating teachers with the weighted mean of 3.43.

**1.3 Interests.** Cooperating teachers, student teachers and school administrators revealed that cooperating teachers moderately manifested the interests of competent English cooperating teachers supported by the composite means of 3.06, 3.22 and 3.16 respectively.

There was congruency on the responses of the three groups of respondents in the demonstrated interests of the cooperating teachers, for example the respondents noted that the cooperating teachers' top most rated item concerning interest was on using internet. This gained a weighted mean of 3.52, 3.47, and 3.44 as rated by the cooperating teachers, student teachers and school administrators respectively. Furthermore it was noted the cooperating teachers moderately manifested interests in English movies as rated by student teachers. It was given a weighted mean of 3.25. The same had been rated by the cooperating teachers with a weighted mean of 3.08 and 3.19 by the school administrators.

However, promoting innovative, sustainable ideas through the conduct of research studies was moderately manifested by the cooperating teachers according to the three groups of respondents. It was supported by the weighted means of 3.13, 3.31 and 3.27 respectively.

## **2. Comparison of the assessments on competencies, attitudes and interests cooperating teachers**

The observations of the cooperating teachers on their competencies, attitudes and interests were compared to their profile using one way analysis of variance and t-test. Significant difference was revealed when cooperating teachers were grouped according to age and length of teaching experience.

Age influenced competencies of cooperating teachers. The obtained f-value of age was 2.80 with its corresponding p-value of 0.03 which was lower than 0.05 level of significance.

This led to the rejection of the null hypothesis.

Furthermore, attitudes were affected by age and length of teaching experience. Since the f-values of age and length of teaching experience were 4.17 and 5.06 respectively with their corresponding p-values of .003 and .001 respectively which were lower than 0.05 level of significance.

## **3. Comparison of the Assessments on the Attributes of Competent English Cooperating Teachers**

Another comparison was done this time it was between the observations cooperating teachers, student teachers and school administrators on the competencies, attitudes and interests of cooperating teachers. Independent t-test was used to test the null hypothesis. It was revealed that all three groups of respondents rated each indicator for competencies, attitudes and interests closely. Thus, no significant differences were noted.

Competencies were rated similarly by the three groups of respondents. The computed f-value for competencies was 2.478 with its p-value of .085 which was greater than the level of significance of 0.05. While, cooperating teachers, student teachers and school administrators had the same assessments on the attitudes shown or exhibited by the cooperating teachers. It was reflected in the computed f-value of 2.246 with p-value of .11 at 0.05 level of significance.



#### 4. Extent of Mentoring Practices

**4.1 Accommodation:** The composite means of 3.50, 3.37 and 3.46 of the items rated by the three groups of respondents indicated that cooperating teachers as a whole had executed all the mentoring practices expected to be done under accommodation phase to a great extent. Furthermore, the data revealed congruency in the responses of the three groups of respondents in relation accommodation practices of the English cooperating teacher. The cooperating teachers and the school administrators, for instance noted that acquaintance of student teachers with the students in class was given emphasis by the cooperating teachers. It obtained the highest rate, which was verbally interpreted as great extent with the weighted mean of 3.77 and 3.71 respectively. The same had been rated by the student teachers as second to the highest rated item with the weighted mean of 3.54.

**4.2 Orientation.** Cooperating teachers, student teachers and school administrators disclosed that cooperating teachers oriented student teachers to the real world of teaching to a very great extent as supported by the weighted means of 3.60, 3.43, and 3.55 respectively. More so, the English cooperating teachers' top most rated item concerns on lesson planning format. This gained a weighted mean of 3.77. Meanwhile, the student teachers and school administrators rated the same item and gained a weighted mean of 3.44 and 3.65 respectively. Obviously this item was not their highest rated item.

**4.3 Observation.** Indicators of the mentoring practices on observation phase were found to be carried out to a moderate extent by English cooperating teachers as perceived by the three groups of respondents with the composite means of 3.48, 3.43 and 3.49. Furthermore, the cooperating teachers, student teachers and school administrators perceived that the cooperating teachers showing positive reinforcement through smiles and other encouraging facial expressions during observation period had been practiced to a very great extent as supported by the composite means ranging from 3.60 to 3.78. It was the item rated highest by the respondents.

**4.4 Coaching.** Cooperating teachers mentored student teachers to a very great extent on coaching phase as supported by the composite means of 3.67, 3.55 and 3.71 rated by cooperating teachers, student teachers and school administrators respectively. Moreover, all groups of respondents emphasized that genuine respect from class is achieved through factors such as enthusiasm, respect for people and interesting class sessions was the highest rated practice of the English cooperating teachers on coaching phase as rated by the three groups of respondents which was substantiated by the weighed means ranging from 3.64 to 3.81.

**4.5 Evaluation.** Cooperating teachers, student teachers and school administrators claimed that cooperating teachers evaluated the performance, growth and progress of student teachers to a very great extent as supported by the composite means of 3.61, 3.40 and 3.60 respectively. However, reviewing and critiquing the demonstration plan and checking on appropriateness of the instructional materials and strategies to be used and participating in the evaluation of student teacher's performance during entire internship were the top most mentoring practices on evaluation phase as rated by the cooperating teachers themselves with the weighted mean of 3.73.

**5. Proposed mentoring plan for English cooperating teachers.** The proposed mentoring plan for English cooperating teachers was designed to assist the cooperating teachers in performing their roles towards the goal of improving student teachers' performance. Specifically, the output will transform weak areas into strengths of mentoring practices as

revealed in the findings of the study. It highlighted the following areas of concern on mentoring weaknesses such as: welcoming student teachers cordially; establishing strong partnership with student teachers; boosting communication skills; cultivating a love for reading; practicing proper observation etiquette; evaluating student teacher's progress.

## CONCLUSIONS

Based from the findings of the study, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. Majority of the respondents are 26 to 35 years old, female and married. Majority in the groupings has MA units and rendered more than six years in service. Seven of the respondents are members of professional organizations and only 12 had attended seminars and trainings for the last three years.
2. Competencies and attitudes of a competent cooperating teacher were greatly manifested by the English cooperating teachers while interests were moderately manifested.
3. There were significant differences in the assessments of competencies, attitudes and interests of cooperating teachers when the English cooperating teachers were grouped according to age and teaching experience.
4. There is no pairwise significant differences in the assessments of competencies, attitudes and interests of the cooperating teachers when the English cooperating teachers were grouped according to age and teaching experience.
5. Both assessments of cooperating teachers and school administrators showed mentoring practices to a great extent while the student teachers' assessment showed moderate extent only.
6. A proposed mentoring plan underscores areas of concern related to accommodation, observation, coaching and evaluation phases.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

From the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are set forth:

1. Mentoring plan may be presented to concerned authorities for validation and evaluation.
2. Department of Education through the schools division superintendents should advise English cooperating teachers to join professional organizations to widen professional network for continuous development.
3. English Cooperating teachers should be encouraged to attend seminars, workshops and trainings related to mentoring student teachers to strengthen their mentoring practices.
4. Mentoring materials for English cooperating teachers should be devised to facilitate the handling of pre-service teachers.
5. Follow-up studies may be conducted on aspects related to variables of this study.

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