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An Investigation into the Implementation of a Mentoring Program for EFL Novice Teachers at an English Center in the Mekong Delta

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Abstract: Professional development (PD) plays a crucial role in promoting teachers' linguistic competence and teaching quality, contributing to enhancing and maintaining sources of effective teachers, especially novice teachers with little teaching experience. Mentoring has emerged as a PD activity in which a novice teacher is mentored and directly supported in various aspects by an experienced professional. It has been popularly adopted in several countries in the world, including Vietnam. This study was conducted to investigate the extent of various types of support that the mentoring program provided. Additionally, it aimed at exploring the level of satisfaction of EFL novice teachers regarding the types of support in the program. The study was designed as a mixed-method study, using a questionnaire and interviews as data collection instruments. The study involved the participation of twenty-two EFL novice teachers who have less than three-year experience in teaching and took part in a mentoring program held by a private English center in the Mekong Delta. The finding showed that all types of support in the program, including instructional support, emotional support, physical support, and institutional support were provided to a high extent. The participants hold a high level of satisfaction with these types of support. Based on the findings, some recommendations were suggested to promote the quality of the program and meet participants' needs and expectations.

Keywords: Mentoring programs, EFL novice teachers, Support novice teachers

Introduction

Mentoring has emerged as a popular professional development strategy for both novice and experienced teachers worldwide. It has become the key feature of induction and continuous improvement in a wide range of settings, including teaching. Nowadays, mentoring has played a prominent role in assisting teachers' initial preparation, induction, and early professional development (Crisp & Cruz, 2009) and has been proven to boost novice teachers' confidence, skills, and motivation (Zembytska, 2015). In the context of Vietnam, the English language has become the first foreign language in schools and universities. The National Foreign Language 2020 Project of the Ministry of Education and Training has been a lever to encourage almost every language

institution to organize a variety of professional development programs to help EFL teachers to improve their teaching practices. Nevertheless, retaining effective teachers poses a problem for every educational institution. Inexperienced educators are encountering a range of challenges, such as career motivation, deficient competencies, and psychological distress, particularly when their academic training is overly theoretical. It is imperative for educators to bridge the divide between academic knowledge and practical application in the field of teaching. Insufficient support has been identified as a primary factor contributing to the high rate of attrition among novice teachers within their first year of teaching. Its efficacy has been substantiated by various studies. (Crisp & Cruz, 2009; Ehrich et al., 2004). It is believed to help novice teachers facilitate their professional growth (Peeler & Jane, 2005; Wang et al., 2008). The impact of mentoring on novice teachers has been popularly supported in Western contexts (Peeler & Jane, 2005; Wang et al., 2008); however, there is little research concerning the roles of mentoring in enhancing novice teachers' professional development in the Vietnamese context in general and in particular, the Mekong delta. For the reasons above, this study was conducted to gain insights into these interests to operate PD programs for novice teachers so that their effectiveness can be maximized.

Teacher Professional Development

The concept of teacher professional development involves a systematic approach whereby educators engage in individual or collaborative efforts to enhance their teaching performance, expand their knowledge base, and improve their psychological interactions. These efforts are deemed essential to the advancement of their teaching careers (Day, 1999). Additionally, Craft (2002) added that professional development refers to teacher professional improvement as a result of reflecting and learning through both personal experiences such as workshops, short-term or long-term training programs, and informal learning through professional publications, and documentaries about education. The development is also likely to influence perspectives and methods and thus may contribute to the enhancement of the way people learn and teach (Day & Sachs, 2004). The goals of professional development initiatives are twofold: to empower and assist educators, irrespective of their teaching location or professional background, and to provide optimal instructional assistance to enhance their competencies, confidence, and dedication, while also fostering a sense of gratification in their teaching practice (Day & Sachs, 2004).

Mentoring

Emerging in the early 1980s, the concept of mentoring was initially implemented as a strategy to address the prevalent issue of high turnover rates among inexperienced educators in various nations (Feiman & Nemser, 1998). Anderson & Shannon (1998) defined mentoring as a nurturing process in which a more experienced teacher teaches, sponsors, encourages, and counsels a less experienced one for boosting later professional and personal development. (Giannakaki et al., 2011) described it as the support offered by a more experienced person for the growth and improvement of another, and for their integration into and acceptance by the

community.

Why needs mentoring

The shift from the role of a student teacher to that of an autonomous teacher can be perceived as a jarring encounter. Blakley (2006) described this process as a "reality shock" as novice teachers' expectation confronts reality. The researcher discovered that inadequate support has been the primary factor affecting the professional growth of inexperienced educators. It was pointed out that successful induction programs play crucial roles in assisting new teachers to overcome challenges, boosting their coping ability, and helping them reduce their doubts about their decision to teaching careers (Blakley, 2006). Throughout decades, mentoring has been accepted as an effective strategy for supporting student teachers to step into their teaching profession (Sundli, 2007). Lai (2006) supported this viewpoint by stating that mentoring can prepare new teachers with opportunities to learn within the context of teaching. Successful implementation of mentoring programs has been believed to provide novice teachers with various types of effective support during the induction stage.

The types of support for EFL novice teachers

When studying the roles of mentoring for beginning teachers, Lipton & Wellman (2001) pointed out four types of support that new teachers primarily need to be provided during the early stages of their careers. These four types of support were subsequently consolidated and strengthened by Tina H. Boogren (2012) when she studied strategies to support new teachers.

Physical Support

According to Boogren (2012), new teachers, when confronted with a new teaching environment, often face resources, materials, and logistical issues. The assistance in relation to these aspects is considered to be physical support. It involves helping new teachers with school procedures such as getting familiar with the paperwork system, arranging furniture, managing teaching materials provided, and the like. Novice teachers only need this type of support for a certain period when they have just started to get familiar with a new environment. Physical support is likely to assist new teachers with daily concerns and familiarize them with the operation and function of the new educational environment. Boogren (2012) also recommended some strategies to support new teachers. It is advisable that mentors can give a tour of the new school to familiarize new teachers with the environment, introduce them to the physical layout of the school and explain to them how to perform their duties and tasks. Another activity is to help describe a typical day in a classroom including school time, regulations, common size and capacity of the classrooms as well as how to arrange facilities and resources in the class. In addition, the author suggested that mentees should receive guidance on the utilization of technological equipment provided by the educational institution, including but not limited to projectors, televisions, and CD players.

Emotional Support

Emotional support has been researched in many studies, most of which revealed it strongly benefits novice teachers from strengthening their psychology during the period of socialization in teaching to enhancing teachers' level of confidence in teaching performance (Bradbury & Koballa, 2008; Salleh & Tan, 2013). The feeling of fatigue, isolation, and self-doubt lead to pressure and stress during a few first years of a career. New teachers often find it difficult to balance work and personal life. The individual experiences self-doubt regarding their capacity to manage their workload, leading to uncertainty regarding the continuation or termination of their teaching career. According to Nora & Crisp (2007), emotional support mainly involves psychological issues including the sense of listening, offering moral support as well as a kind of relationship in which common understanding, the connection between mentors and mentees, and problem recognition can be easily found. Emotional support is mainly provided through collaborative interactions and reflective activities on pedagogical issues in mentoring activities.

Instructional Support

After the beginning stage in which novice teachers need to be provided with physical and emotional support, they begin to settle into their crucial role which is teaching. At this phase, high-quality instructional support becomes their vital need. Boogren (2012) viewed this stage as an appropriate time to ensure that beginning teachers are using effective instructional strategies in the classroom, facilitate their current skills of these strategies and guide them towards the improvement of expertise level. Boogren (2012) pointed out that mentees should be provided with timely instructional support to boost their professional skills and enhance their level of expertise with an eye toward future performance. This puts an expectation on mentor teachers to well master pedagogical knowledge and skills (Alhija & Fresko, 2014; Aspfors & Fransson, 2015).

Institutional Support

As new teachers complete their certain time dealing with psychological issues, gaining confidence in teaching, and improving their instructional strategies, they may consider their opportunities for growth and development on a greater scale. They begin to seek expansion in the connection and relationship with their coworkers, school, district, and educational systems (Boogren, 2012). At this phase, mentors should assist them with institutional support. This kind of support helps new teachers find their place in their teaching profession. According to Schaefer et all (2012), teachers in their early years rely upon the connection with others. They need to be offered support that goes beyond mentoring and induction which can encourage and improve these connections. Birkeland & Johnson (2002) concurred that having their roles in the faculty, positive relationship with colleagues and the presence of supportive structures bring a sense of success to beginning teachers during the first stage of their career. The social environment provides a strong underpinning for beginners to develop their personal identities and allow the empowerment of teachers' development (Uusimaki, 2013). To facilitate the relationship to work effectively, mentoring training should consist of contextual dimensions and an

understanding of the institution's culture and context (Aspfors& Fransson, 2015). In this way, mentors could understand and master a high level of sensitivity to contextual and cultural differences in the school (Aspfors, & Fransson, 2015).

Participants

A sample of 22 participants, who are EFL novice teachers, were selected to participate in a mentoring program at a language center for the purpose of gathering quantitative data. The sample population comprises of 15 individuals who identify as female, representing 68.2% of the total, and 7 individuals who identify as male, accounting for 31.8% of the total population. All individuals fall within the age range of 22 to 29 years. The majority of participants are recent graduates who possess a Bachelor's degree in English teacher education and English language studies.

With respect to teaching experience, the individuals involved possess limited teaching experience, spanning from under one year to three years of teaching. Two participants indicated a lack of prior teaching experience, while thirteen out of twenty-two participants reported having less than one year of experience as tutor. Additionally, seven novice teachers reported having one to three years of teaching experience as part-time instructors at private centers.

Research instruments

The investigation employed a combination of quantitative and qualitative methodologies, thereby facilitating a comprehensive comprehension of the research concerns. A questionnaire was developed utilizing a Likert scale consisting of five points to gather numerical data. The survey comprises 35 items that were developed in accordance with Boogren's theories (2012) on supporting novice teachers. The interview data were interpreted based on the framework of the rating scale adapted from Oxford (1990). There are four ranges of levels that are shown in the table below.

Table 1. Rating scale adapted from Oxford (1990)

Levels	The extent of support	Satisfaction
4.5 to 5.0	Very high	Very satisfied
3.6 to 4.4	High	Satisfied
2.5 to 3.5	Medium	Medium
1.0 to 2.4	Low	Unsatisfied

Before distribution to the participants, the questionnaire underwent translation into the Vietnamese language, as not all respondents were proficient in English, particularly those who were not majoring in the language. Then the questionnaire was checked by using SPSS to calculate its Cronbach's coefficient alpha. The pilot questionnaire has a Cronbach's coefficient alpha value of 0.855. Following the piloting phase, the questionnaire

was formally utilized to collect quantitative data, as evidenced by a Cronbach's coefficient alpha exceeding 0.9, indicating the questionnaire's reliability.

Table 2. Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.906	22

Qualitative data was gathered through the implementation of semi-structured interviews, which were subsequently transcribed to unveil the findings. Eleven open-ended questions were formulated in accordance with the questionnaire's content. In order to acquire qualitative data, semi-structured interviews were administered to a sample of 6 participants who were selected at random and had previously completed the questionnaires. The interviews were recorded in audio format, transcribed, and subsequently translated into the English language. The participants were duly apprised that their personal data would be utilized solely for research objectives and maintained in a confidential manner.

Results from the questionnaires

Table 3 provides statistics for each category of teacher support. The degree of four types of support was high. Physical and instructional support received the highest scores (M=4.27, SD= .45; M=4.27, SD=.42) while the lowest score can be seen in instructional support (M=3.90, SD=.58). The mean score for emotional support was above 4.0, specifically at 4.19 (SD=.59).

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Four Types of Novice Teacher Support

Types of support	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Physical support	22	3.33	4.83	4.27	.45
Emotional support	22	3.20	5.00	4.19	.59
Instructional support	22	3.38	5.00	4.27	.42
Institutional support	22	2.60	5.00	3.90	.58

The following table displays the degree of physical assistance provided to inexperienced teachers in the mentorship program.

Table 4. The Extent of Physical Support

No.	Physical support	Disagree %	Neutral %	Agree %
1	I was introduced to important locations including classrooms, libraries, teacher rooms, administrative offices, and so on.	4.5	0.0	95.5
2	I was provided with essential teaching materials for	0.0	9.0	91.0

		Disagree %	Neutral %	Agree %
	every lesson.			
3	I was offered to use technological devices such as TVs, CD players, projectors…	0.0	9.1	90.9
4	I was instructed to arrange a typical classroom.	0.0	22.7	77.3
5	I was told about a typical lesson including classroom size, time rules, classroom regulations…	4.5	18.2	77.3
6	I was assisted in printing teaching materials before the lessons.	4.5	4.5	91

Table 4 reveals that a majority of the mentees received significant support in the physical aspects of the mentoring program. Four out of six items (Item 1,2,3,6) hold a very high proportion of agreement levels (from 90.9% to 95.5%) which means that the extent of physical support in relation to institutional familiarization, teaching materials, technological devices, and printing service is very high. The percentage of participants' disagreement and neutrality of these items is minor (less than 9.1%). Regarding physical support in arranging typical classrooms and providing typical lesson information (Item 4,5), results indicated that the intensity of support is quite remarkable (77.3%).

The table below illustrates how novice teachers received emotional support through the mentoring program.

Table 5. The Extent of Emotional Support

No.	Emotional support	Disagree %	Neutral %	Agree %
7	My mentor listened to my difficulties actively and supportively.	4.5	4.5	91
8	My mentor and I usually contacted each other via email, message, or phone call.	0.0	18.2	81.8
9	My mentor usually asked how I felt after my lesson.	0.0	4.5	95.5
10	I often got encouraging messages from my mentor.	0.0	13.6	86.4
11	We celebrated success when I had improvement in teaching.	4.5	18.2	77.3

Table 5 displays data indicating that the degree of emotional support is statistically significant, with participant agreement percentages ranging from 77.3% to 95.5%. The table above highlights that item 6 "My mentor usually asked how I felt after my lesson" received the highest agreement rate of 95.5% among participants. Only 4.5% of participants remained neutral, and no one expressed disagreement with it. The active and supportive listening skills of mentors during the program (Item 7) were highly appreciated by 91% of the respondents. Two forms of emotional support, namely frequent contact (Item 8) and receipt of positive messages from mentors (Item 10), have garnered a significant level of agreement among participants, accounting for 81.8% and 86.4% respectively. 77.3% of the mentees agreed with Item 11 which states that "We celebrated success when I had improvement in teaching." whilst the percentage of neutrality and disagreement is 22.7%.

The extent of instructional support which novice teachers received in the mentoring program is presented in the following table.

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Table 6. The Extent of Instructional Support

No.	Instructional support	Disagree %	Neutral %	Agree %
12	My mentor helped me set appropriate growth goals.	0.0	18.2	81.8
13	My mentor used a scale to measure my growth in teaching	4.5	22.7	72.8
14	I was given constructive feedback after every lesson.	0.0	0.0	100.0
15	My mentor helped me identify my strengths and weaknesses.	0.0	4.5	95.5
16	My mentor encouraged me to have a reflection on improving my teaching performance.	0.0	13.6	86.4
17	My mentor and I usually discussed effective teaching ideas.	0.0	9.1	90.9
18	My mentor helped me establish a common language of instruction.	0.0	4.5	95.5
19	My mentor instructed me on how to deal with unexpected situations in the classroom.	0.0	18.2	81.8

Data from Table 6 indicated that the majority of participants surveyed concurred with the high support in terms of instructional aspects. Specifically, the outstanding point from the above table is seen in Item 14 which investigated the extent of support regarding giving constructive feedback in the program. Interestingly, 100% of participants highly appreciated the feedback that their mentors provided after every lesson. A very high percentage of participants (95.5%) agreed that their strengths and weaknesses were identified by their mentors (Item 15). Similarly, the same proportion is seen in Item 18 which stated that "My mentor helped me establish a common language of instruction." Additionally, a significant number of participants showed their agreement with their mentors' crucial roles in setting appropriate growth goals, encouraging teaching reflection, and familiarizing with unexpected situations (Items 12,16,19), accounting for 81.8%, 86.4%, and 81.8% respectively. Controversial ideas were seen in Item 13 with 4.5% of respondents expressing disagreement and 22.7% expressing neutrality.

The following table reports how physical support was provided to novice teachers in the mentoring program.

Table 7. The Extent of Institutional Support

No.	Institutional support	Disagree %	Neutral %	Agree %
20	I was encouraged to have collaborative time with peer teachers.	4.5	31.8	63.7
21	I was given opportunities to establish relationships with other teachers.	4.5	13.6	81.9
22	I was encouraged to take part in extracurricular activities.	9.1	40.9	50.0

| 23 | I was invited to workshops, conferences, and small talks to share teaching experiences. | 13.6 | 9.1 | 77.3 |
| 24 | I knew the people whom I should contact to have appropriate support. | 0.0 | 9.1 | 90.9 |

Data from Table 7 reveals that a majority of the participants received some level of institutional support, although the degree of support was not particularly significant. Only Item 24 which stated that "I knew the people whom I should contact to have appropriate support." has the highest percentage of participants' agreement (90.9%) and 0% of participants' disagreement. More than 80% of participants agreed that they were given opportunities to establish a relationship with other teachers (Item 21). Conversely, mentees reported that they did not receive significant institutional support in relation to having collaborative time with peer teachers, taking part in extracurricular activities, and being invited to workshops, conferences, and small talks to share teaching experiences (Item 20,22,23). The percentage of agreement regarding these items was not high, ranging from 50% to 77.3%.

Regarding the level of teachers' satisfaction with the types of assistance that they received in the program, Table 8 indicates that EFL novice teachers expressed a high level of satisfaction with all four types of support. The participants expressed the highest level of satisfaction towards instructional support, with a mean score of 4.45, and standard deviations of .956. Similarly, participants reported high levels of satisfaction, with both categories having the same mean score of 4.32, and standard deviation of .646 and .716, respectively. Institutional support had the lowest level of satisfaction compared with the other three types, yet its mean score was still above the scale 3.0 (M=3.82, SD=.907).

Table 8 Descriptive Statistics of Teachers' Satisfaction

Types of support	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Novice teachers' satisfaction with physical support	22	3.00	5.00	4.32	.646
Teachers' satisfaction with emotional support	22	3.00	5.00	4.32	.716
Novice teachers' satisfaction with instructional support	22	3.00	5.00	4.45	.596
Novice teachers' satisfaction with institutional support	22	2.00	5.00	3.82	.907

Results from the interviews

The qualitative data from the interviews provides additional information about the degree of support and teachers' satisfaction levels with the support they received in the program.

Regarding physical support, the participants' responses were quite parallel to the surveyed results from the questionnaires. When the researcher investigated the degree of support regarding physical assistance, six out of six interviewees reported that they were well supported in terms of resources, materials, teaching tools, and logistic issues. One teacher expressed:

> *"During the program, I was well supported in terms of written materials which are available in the center as well as teaching software from other teachers. Also, the classrooms are well equipped with technological devices such as projectors, TVs, and CD players."*

Another teacher added:

> *"My mentor introduced me to the textbooks and materials that I should use. Additionally, there is a library in the center where I can read and borrow the books, teaching tools, and technological devices that I need to use for my teaching.."*

In terms of teachers' satisfaction with physical support, the results were very consistent with quantitative data from the questionnaire. 50% of questioned teachers were completely satisfied. 50% were satisfied and suggested improvements. One mentee said:

> *"I feel really content with physical assistance. I was supported very well in terms of logistical issues. I was carefully instructed to borrow teaching tools and supplementary books regarding the places, means, and the people who were responsible for this aspect."*

Nevertheless, when being asked about the facility of the classrooms, two out of six teachers shared opinions about the size of the room. A teacher said:

> *"Because the number of students exceeds the capacity of the classrooms, students find it difficult to move around, making group work impossible."*

Regarding emotional assistance, most of the mentees shared that they were greatly supported to overcome their emotional challenges. Four out of six participants reported receiving substantial emotional support from their mentors and coordinator.

> *"I struggled with plenty of psychological issues in the classrooms. The pressure mainly came from my failure in teaching performance, my fear of the mentor's expectations, and the quality of the lesson plans. My mentor and I have daily meetings to share lesson plans, teaching ideas, and how to link activities in the plan. I really appreciate this."*

The majority of participants showed very high satisfaction with emotional assistance. Particularly, five out of six teachers reported that they felt completely satisfied and one teacher said that the support in terms of psychology was quite satisfactory. One teacher, who was strongly content with emotional assistance, noted:

> *"Everyone in the program is very considerate. I always felt that I am welcomed in the center as well as in this program."*

According to a mentee, her mentor did not provide significant support for emotional challenges. Nevertheless, she was able to overcome these obstacles with the help of her coordinator's motivation. She responded:

> *"I expected to be supported more to overcome my psychological issues. However, my mentor did not provide me with much support in this aspect. My mentor and I usually contacted to mainly discuss teaching ideas, but he did not give me many encouraging messages."*

In terms of instructional assistance, the results showed that 100% of participants agreed that they received a high

level of support. The primary source of aid was provided by the mentors. Additionally, most of the interviewees acknowledged that, in terms of instructional strategies, they struggled with plenty of challenges when they started to teach in real classrooms. One teacher remarked:

> *"There was a huge difference between teaching theories and reality when I started to teach which was very shocking."*

The majority of educators noted significant enhancements in their ability to create lesson plans, facilitate instructional activities, and execute teaching techniques. Their capacity to anticipate and resolve unforeseen situations in the classroom was also improved. A teacher notified:

> *"My mentor supported me gradually in how to apply theories to reality. I was instructed to move from a beginner with no teaching experience to a teacher that can design an effective lesson plan. My mentor gave me lots of feedback which was useful and practical."*

The participants feel highly satisfied with the instructional assistance. A mentee noted:

> *"I feel very content about the support in relation to teaching strategies, academic knowledge and teaching skills. I learn a lot from several theoretical lessons and the informal talk for sharing teaching knowledge held from the mentoring program. In addition, I also appreciated the help of my mentor. I improved significantly thanks to my mentor's instruction and feedback."*

Regarding institutional assistance that was investigated in the interviews, 100% of the participants agreed that they were supported quite considerably in terms of establishing relationships and improving interaction and connection among mentees, their mentors, and the program coordinator. To be more precise, four out of six teachers appreciated the weekly meetings among mentees that were regularly organized by the program coordinator. They had opportunities to share knowledge about the teaching techniques that they learned and the psychological problems they faced with. Two mentees emphasized their high appreciation for the regular workshops which were held by experienced teachers in order to give them effective teaching ideas and strategies. A mentee noted:

> *"After each theoretical session taught by the center's skilled teachers, other mentees and I would normally have a casual conversation with them to share our understanding of teaching techniques."*

A teacher appreciated the friendly and close-knit environment in the program. She said:

> *"All of us were always invited to conferences, workshops, professional development programs, and even special events such as the center's founding ceremony and year-end party. We felt that we were treated as members of a family."*

Regarding teachers' satisfaction with institutional support, the results from the interview show that they were quite satisfied with it. Four out of six participants reported that they were quite content about institutional support while the other two participants showed strong satisfaction with this type of support. A mentee, who expressed high satisfaction with institutional support, notified:

> *"I felt satisfied with this support. For example, on my first day participating in the program, there was a program coordinator who took me around the center and introduced me to every member of the departments. I had the feeling of being welcomed."*

Discussion

The current research examined the execution of a mentorship initiative for EFL inexperienced instructors at a language center. The study specifically examined the nature of support provided to novice teachers within the program, as well as their level of satisfaction with the support they were given. The findings of this study indicate that there exist both similarities and differences when compared to the previous related studies and the conceptual framework of beginning teacher support as proposed by Boogren (2012).

The study's results indicate that the mentoring program offered all four categories of support, namely physical, emotional, instructional, and institutional support. The level of support provided in relation to these aspects was extensive and greatly valued by the majority of novice teachers. This discovery aligns with the results reported in previous studies conducted by Lipton and Wellman (2001), Boogren (2012). The researchers placed particular emphasis on the provision of specialized assistance pertaining to pedagogical concerns. This perspective aligns with the current research results, which indicate that instructional support was the most frequently provided type of support. The present investigation corroborates the perspective put forth by Paula & Grīnfelde (2018) that emphasizes the significance of instructional strategies, including classroom management and effective implementation of teaching activities within the classroom setting.

Additionally, the results of the current investigation indicate that emotional support was provided in a robust and explicit manner by mentors and the program coordinator, and was deemed to be of great importance for ongoing maintenance beyond the program's duration. This discovery aligns with the research conducted by Abu Bakar (2016), which revealed a significant correlation between mentoring programs and emotional and psychological support. Nora and Crisp (2007) further substantiated this perspective. The provision of emotional support was also valued by the individuals. The researchers conducted an investigation into the effects of mentoring programs on mentees' emotional well-being. They found that mentors who actively listened provided encouragement, and offered ongoing support after the program had a positive impact on the mentees' emotions.

In comparison to prior research on the implementation of mentoring programs, the present study diverges in its emphasis. A notable trend among previous studies is their concentration on instructional support, including but not limited to lesson planning, feedback provision, and mentorship responsibilities. The study did not prioritize other facets such as psychological assistance, physical assistance, and institutional support. There is a paucity of research that has examined all forms of support concurrently. Nevertheless, it is my firm conviction that novice educators require comprehensive support beyond matters pertaining to instruction. According to Boogren's (2012) findings, there is evidence to suggest that despite possessing effective instructional strategies and teaching abilities, a number of teachers tend to exit the profession. Insufficient support in other aspects can be a contributing factor to this issue. The present research is centered on examining four fundamental categories of assistance provided to novice educators, with the aim of determining which one requires augmentation or enhancement to fulfill the requirements and anticipations of mentors. This has the potential to mitigate attrition

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and preserve the source of proficient educators.

Conclusion

The study was conducted to seek answers to two questions (1) To what extent have EFL novice teachers been supported during the mentoring program? and (2) To what extent are novice teachers satisfied with the support they received during the mentoring program?

The study was carried out with the involvement of 22 EFL novice teachers who have worked as new teachers of English in a foreign language center in the Mekong Delta and volunteered to participate in a mentoring program for new teachers. To address the research inquiries, this study utilized two data collection instruments, including questionnaires and interviews. Data analysis and interpretation were conducted with the aid of SPSS 20.0 software and interview protocols. The study's primary outcomes are succinctly outlined as follows.

Regarding the extent of support provided to novice teachers, the questionnaire data indicates that a majority of them received highly significant support in terms of physical, emotional, and instructional aspects whilst the extent of institutional support that they were provided was not as much as teachers' expectation. In terms of physical support, novice teachers agreed that they were quite fully supported with logistical issues including teaching materials, teaching tools, technological devices and detailed instructions for using them. A majority of teachers reported that they were significantly provided with emotional support. The mentees regularly engaged in close communication with their mentors, who demonstrated exceptional listening skills and provided constructive feedback to enhance their pedagogical practices. The data also revealed that instructional support was given to mentees to the highest extent. Mentees highly appreciated the support in terms of instructional areas such as giving constructive feedback, discussing teaching ideas, and lesson plans, practicing reflective teaching, dealing with unexpected situations in the classrooms, and the like. Regarding institutional support, The participants reached a consensus that the level of assistance provided was considered substantial. They appreciated institutional assistance in terms of expanding relationships with colleagues, having assistance from other teachers, and taking part in PD activities such as conferences, workshops, and short-term training programs.

Regarding novice teachers' satisfaction with the types of support they were offered in the program, the data from the questionnaire indicated that the majority of novice teachers were highly satisfied with four types of support during the mentoring program. More precisely, instructional support was deemed the most satisfactory, while institutional support was identified as the least satisfactory form of support. The data indicated that EFL novice teachers expressed high levels of satisfaction with four specific types of support provided to them through the mentoring program. The study participants put forth recommendations for enhancing the level of support in the program, with a view to improving overall satisfaction. The adequacy of classroom infrastructure, including the dimensions of the learning spaces and the availability of technological equipment, warrants careful

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consideration. The majority of the participants expressed a greater degree of concentration toward the subject matter of the lesson plan.

Recommendations for the future mentoring activities

In light of the major findings from this present study, several implications can be suggested as follows with the purpose of improving the quality of mentoring activities and meeting the participants' expectations towards mentoring programs for novice teachers.

The research findings suggest that mentoring program coordinators should prioritize providing institutional support to a greater degree. The significance of instructional and emotional support in facilitating the entry of novice teachers into the teaching profession is widely acknowledged. Nevertheless, institutional support assumes a pivotal role in enabling them to contemplate their prospects for advancement and progress on a larger scale, thereby contributing to the reduction of teacher attrition rates. Mentees can find their place in a new environment and develop personal identity. Program designers may facilitate weekly meetings to encourage sharing and learning among mentees. This can provide opportunities for mentees to expand their professional network and gain insights from their peers, which can enhance their emotional and instructional support. It is strongly advised that novice educators be afforded occasions to engage in collaborative endeavors with peers who instruct comparable grade levels and share analogous pedagogical interests. Collaborative activities such as joint work sessions, lesson plan development, pedagogical discourse, and the exchange of scholarly findings can be undertaken by educators.

The research findings indicate that there is a strong expectation for instructional support to be provided to the greatest degree possible. It is recommended that future mentoring activities prioritize instructional issues, such as the utilization of effective instructional strategies in the classroom. The mentoring process should aim to facilitate the mentee's current skills in these strategies and guide them toward achieving a higher level of expertise. During this phase, mentors play a crucial role in directly enhancing the practice of their mentees. The process of mentor selection should be conducted with great care to ensure alignment with the specific needs of the mentees. An effective mentor has the ability to provide both efficacious instructional guidance and emotional encouragement.

During the mentoring process, it is imperative for a program coordinator to possess a comprehensive understanding of the pivotal role that co-teaching and feedback provision play in augmenting the performance of mentees. It is recommended that the duration of the program be extended in order to facilitate the effective participation of mentees in co-teaching activities. The phase of theoretical revision ought to be suitably structured to ensure that protégés are afforded sufficient time to implement their acquired knowledge in practical settings, enabling them to navigate unforeseen circumstances and adapt their pedagogical approach accordingly. Additionally, mentors take vital roles during the co-teaching stage as they directly instruct and contribute to forming teaching styles for their mentees. Therefore, it is advisable that program leaders should be cautious

when pairing mentors and mentees. They are recommended to have similar teaching interests and fields.

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