Teacher Mentoring: Definitions, Expectations and Experiences from International EFL Teachers

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	This study aims to investigate pre- and in-service EFL teachers' definitions, expectations, and experiences concerning teacher mentoring. The study sample included EFL teachers from 41 countries: 49 pre-service and 187 in-service EFL teachers teaching at various levels from kindergarten to university. A qualitative research design was employed throughout the study. Data were collected via a questionnaire-based survey and semi-structured interviews. For the analysis of this qualitative data, an in-depth thematic analysis was conducted. Overall, the findings suggest that most of the participants found their mentoring experiences positive. In addition, the participants defined teacher mentoring as a master-apprentice relationship, problem-solving, assisting teachers, and collaboration among them. The study also points out that teachers have different expectations about the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes from teacher mentoring. The study's findings have important implications for teacher mentors in EFL teacher training. Implications include, among others, that designing teacher mentoring based on context and needs instead of a master apprenticeship would promote their professional development. Apart from that, the active participation of the stakeholders, such as school directors, would better facilitate the teacher-mentoring process.

1. Introduction

Although mentoring practices date back to Ancient Greeks, it has gained scholarly popularity over the last four decades (Bird & Hudson, 2015; Brown, 2001; Eby et al., 2010; Hobson et al., 2009; Kram, 1983; Moor et al., 2005; Nguyen, 2017; Noe, 1988; Othman & Senom, 2020; Tawalbeh, 2020). This literary interest was first sparked on business and management

mentoring. As one of the pioneers of this developmental relationship underlining the core concepts of mentoring (Allen & Eby, 2010), Kram (1983) attributes the requirement of mentoring to young adults in their pursuit of a dream in their work-life and experienced adults who are seeking for reassessment and reappraisal in their mid-career. Othman and Senom (2020) have linked this necessity of developing novice adults in their early careers to the shift in teacher education approach that progressed from a transmission-oriented approach to a constructivist perspective. Although the first refers to the mere transmission of knowledge on content and methodology for effective classroom teaching practices, the latter views teachers as active agents of their teaching and learning, which ends up with a more reflective and inquiry-based approach collaboratively in teacher education. Regarding theoretical backgrounds for learning, Nguyen (2017) asserted that social constructivism and collaborative reflection are vital principles that facilitate understanding of the basis for how peer mentoring/mentoring works.

2. Literature Review

Attempts to define mentoring have paved the way for different dimensions of mentoring (Eby et al., 2010; Kram, 1983; Nguyen, 2017; Noe, 1988; Othman & Senom, 2020). Mentoring is defined as one-to-one support of a novice or less experienced practitioner (mentee) by a more experienced practitioner (mentor), designed primarily to assist the development of the mentee's expertise and to facilitate their induction into the culture of the profession (in this case, teaching) and into the specific local context (here, the school or college) (Hobson et al., 2009). However, teacher mentoring is not a simple profession or context. Brooks and Sikes (1997) stated that being a good teacher is not just enough to be a good mentor. That is why, everyone cannot or should not be a teacher mentor since teacher mentoring involves a wide range of abilities, skills, attitudes, and perspectives. In a broader definition, Adams (2012) stated that mentoring is a nurturing process in which a more skilled person, serving as a role model, teaches, sponsors, encourages, counsels, and befriends a less qualified or less experienced person to promote the latter's professional development. Eby et al. (2010) defined mentoring in terms of its dimensions of emotional, psychological, relational, supportive, and dynamic scopes. Kram (1983) also stated that the mentor provides various functions that support, guide, and counsel the young adult. A mentor is described as a guide, teacher, counselor, and developer of skills who "facilitates the realization of the Dream" (Levinson et al., 1978, p. 98), the vision that one has about the sort of life one wants as an adult (Eby et al., 2010). Hudson (2016) revealed in his study that positive relationships require the achievement of trust and respect by sharing information, resources, and expectations and by being professional, enthusiastic, and supportive with collaborative problem-solving. Hudson (2016) and Margolis (2007) revealed that a positive relationship between mentor and mentee would lead to better teaching practices, so it conveys a very crucial standpoint. Noe (1988) also investigated the scope of the functions mentoring provides in terms of the relationship. It was found that mentoring is based on career and psychosocial functions.

However, Noe (1988) came up with a different result that mentees perceive mentoring behaviors as more instrumental for psychosocial functions rather than career advancement in addition to what Kram (1983) suggested. Hudson and Nguyen (2008) added that mentors have essential roles in motivating teachers, sharing ideas, counseling, and supporting them. Mentoring shortly serves as a bridge between teacher preparation and in-service teaching, and it assists novice teachers in adjusting to the challenges of teaching and developing into

professional practitioners (Othman & Senom, 2020). In short, the literature highlighted that the acknowledged model of teacher mentoring is between a more experienced mentor and a less experienced mentee in a nurturing way of teaching skills of the latter (Adams, 2012; Bird & Hudson, 2015; Hobson et al., 2009; Nguyen, 2017; Noe, 1988; Othman & Senom, 2020; Tawalbeh, 2020). Scholars (Nguyen, 2017; Noe, 1988) referred to mentees with a French-English word as protégé, which is used to identify guidance offered by a more experienced or influential person to a less experienced colleague. This also indicates that mentoring is mainly considered a service between a more experienced and less experienced one. On the other hand, Moor et al. (2005) also highlighted in their research report conducted for a pilot program with novice teachers in England that not only novice teachers who were mentees in this context but also mentors who were more experienced began to demand mentoring sessions which facilitated more collaboration and fostered teacher development for both less experienced and more experienced ones.

Additionally, Adams (2012) listed three models of mentoring as follows: (1) co-learning, where both colleagues have the role of reflective practitioners; (2) professional partnership, where two experienced teachers share and have in-depth discussions; (3) lead teacher model in which group of teachers guide each other and collaborate. Ragins (2011) also identified relational mentoring that facilitates interdependence and generative developmental relationship where there is mutual growth and learning in a business context. Another model of mentoring is reverse mentoring, which is a unique form of mentoring and derives from the Information Technology-related industries in the United States, in which a less experienced person serves as a mentor (junior mentor) for a more experienced person (senior mentee) to share the latest skills and knowledge in technology (Kato, 2019). Reverse mentoring also promises to build the leadership pipeline, foster better intergenerational relationships, enhance diversity initiatives, and drive innovation (Murphy, 2012).

In addition to the attempts to define and outline the essential considerations regarding teacher mentoring, mentees' or mentors' expectations of teacher mentoring, as well as real mentoring experiences, have been examined in the literature to see and evaluate its practicum in the field (Bird & Hudson, 2015; Brown, 2001; Hobson et al., 2009; Hudson & Nguyen, 2008; Moor et al., 2005; Nguyen, 2017; Tawalbeh, 2020). Several studies displayed that teacher mentoring is effective in helping teachers develop their teaching skills (Hobson et al., 2009; Löfström & Eisenschmidt, 2009; Nguyen, 2017; Rajuan et al., 2008; Tawalbeh, 2020). Rajuan et al. (2008) investigated if learning was facilitated for EFL student teachers for 20 seconds after voluntary mentoring sessions were held. Finally, academic, technical, practical, personal, and critical orientations were all found to be accomplished in the study.

Arnold (2006) assessed mentoring quality which came up with proposing several requisite attitudes. In another study, Tawalbeh (2020) conducted a study with 33 newly recruited Saudi Arabian EFL teachers who displayed positive mentoring experiences. The other study (Löfström & Eisenschmidt, 2009) with 16 novice Estonian teachers in their induction year revealed that the novice teachers experienced support for personal development and professional knowledge development, feedback, collegiality, reciprocity of the relationship, mentor availability, and mutual trust as components of the mentor-mentee relationship. Beginning teachers are learning to become teachers through their experience of the mentoring relationship (Nguyen, 2017). Brooks and Sikes (1997) listed the necessary attitudes expected both from mentors and mentees in a mentoring context as *honesty, respect,*

enthusiasm, openness, sensitivity, self-awareness, and *reflectiveness*. This relationship was acknowledged to be shaped based on respect, trust, and open and mutual communication for some scholars (Brooks & Sikes, 1997; Löfström & Eisenschmidt, 2009; Rhodes et al., 2004; Russell & Russell, 2011; Tawalbeh, 2020). For instance, Rhodes et al. (2004) even linked these attitudes to enhanced individual, team, and organizational performance. For Nguyen (2017), other benefits of mentoring were reported to positively contribute to the mentee's confidence, job satisfaction, and problem-solving strategies. Similarly, Hobson et al. (2009) illustrated the benefits of mentoring for mentees, such as increasing self-confidence, self-esteem, job satisfaction, and time and classroom management.

However, limited literature shows the positive impact of mentoring on teaching skills. Hudson et al. (2005) outlined five factors for effective mentoring: personal attributes, system requirements, pedagogical knowledge, modeling, and feedback. Orsdemir & Yıldırım (2020) revealed in their study that the mentoring practices that the student teachers experienced focused on Modelling, Personal Attributes, Pedagogical Knowledge, System Requirements, and Feedback, respectively. Feedback was the most frequently cited growth area for the mentor. This explains why mentoring practices related to feedback were scarcely reported (Orsdemir & Yıldırım, 2020). In another study, Bird and Hudson (2015) investigated five factors of effective mentoring with student teachers. They concluded that teacher mentoring is effective in developing student teachers' teaching skills, particularly in modeling teaching practice, but its effect was found to be lower in lesson planning. On the other hand, Moor et al. (2005) asserted that the teachers in their case study felt that there were specific characteristics of an effective mentor. As well as being approachable, empathetic, and flexible, mentors should be suitably experienced and able to prioritize the mentoring relationship. Another study by Hudson and Nguyen (2008) illustrated a list of personal attributes expected from a mentor: "enthusiastic, helpful, friendly, and knowledgeable about communicative competence, sympathetic, devoted, flexible, creative, caring and good listeners". There were also several less commonly desired qualities, including "serious, humorous, easy-going, strict, and devoted".

In contrast, some studies also indicated opposing or challenging sides of mentoring (Brown, 2001; Hobson et al., 2009; Rhodes et al., 2004; Tawalbeh, 2020). Brown (2001) investigated negative opinions of teachers towards mentoring and found that there is complete unreliability of disarray of thoughts as some displayed positive reactions towards mentoring., However, they did not show in different aspects. Tawalbeh (2020) revealed some barriers to mentoring in the study, such as not having awareness towards mentoring, lack of mentoring skills, limited time, poor planning, and lack of access to mentors, resources, and administrative support. Hobson et al. (2009) additionally examined the literature regarding the opposing sides of mentoring. They found three main results: lack of time and too much workload because of mentoring, feeling insecure or uncomfortable, and isolation. Rhodes et al. (2004) posited that mentoring, coaching and peer networking difficulties might be teacher collaboration, information and training, selection of individuals, engaging staff commitment, needs analysis, and time constraints. Löfström and Eisenschmidt (2009) also identified undeveloped potential in mentoring related to three main areas: 1) facilitation of reflection, 2) mentor training, and 3) integration of mentoring into the school community.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The current study addresses the following research questions:

(1) How do pre-and in-service English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers define teacher mentoring?
(2) What are pre-and in-service EFL teachers' expectations from teacher mentoring?
(3) What are pre-and in-service EFL teachers' experiences in teacher mentoring?

To answer these research questions, the present study used a questionnaire-based survey in English. It is presented in Appendix A.

3.2 Participants

A total of 236 pre-and in-service EFL teachers volunteered to participate in the questionnaire. This study used a hybrid purposive-snowball sampling (Babbie, 2001). First, primary participants were identified through purposive sampling. Then, snowball sampling was adopted by asking the participants to nominate potential participants. This snowball technique provided an invaluable contribution to reaching out to enough participants from different countries. The demographic information of the participants is given below:

- 162 were female, and 74 were male.
- Participants' age ranged between 19 and 67.
- 187 were in-service EFL teachers, and 49 were pre-service EFL teachers.
- In-service teachers had between 1 to 39 years of teaching experience. They taught English at every level, from kindergarten to university.
- The participants were from different countries (Afghanistan n=1, Albania n=2, the United States n=12, Argentina n=1, Australia n=3, Bangladesh n=6, Belgium n=1, Bosnia n=2, Brasilia n=4, Britain n=16, Canada n=3, China n=1, Colombia n=1, Egypt n=1, Philippines n= 2; German n=1; Ghana n=1, Greek n=1; Guyana n=1, India n=11, Indonesia n=3, Iran n=13, Iraq n=5, Italian n=3, Kenya n=1, Libya n=1, Lithuania n=1, Mexico n=1, Morocco n=2, Nicaragua n=1, Nigeria n=2, Pakistan n=7, Peru n=1, Saudi Arabia n=1, Serbia n=3, South Africa n=2, Spain n=1, Tatarstan n=1, Turkish n= 111, Tunisia n=2, Ukraine n=3).

3.3 Instruments

Survey. This study employed a questionnaire-based survey. Accordingly, a self-developed short questionnaire was developed through the Google Form template, and the link was sent to the participants. Informed written consent from each participant was obtained. The survey consisted of two sections: (1) demographic information and (2) opinions about and experiences in mentoring. The authors developed the survey in English as the participants are from different countries, and English is widely used as a lingua franca. Items in the survey were open-ended. In the development of the survey, feedback from five experts (three assistant professors and two associate professors of English language teaching) was received to avoid redundancy in the items. The items were piloted with 15 participants, and no changes were required in the wording.

Semi-structured interviews. This study also used semi-structured interviews to provide an in-depth understanding of the participants' understanding and experiences concerning

mentoring. Piloting of the semi-structured interviews was performed with five participants, and no necessary changes in wording were made (See Appendix B). Three of them were pre-service teachers, and two were in-service teachers. Three of them did not have the role of a mentor but a mentee. However, two of them had both roles throughout their career. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with eight participants in English, each lasting 30-40 minutes. Throughout this study, pseudonyms were used to ensure confidentiality.

3.4 Data Analysis Procedures

Survey and interview data were investigated to determine pre- and in-service EFL teachers' definitions, expectations, and experiences concerning teacher mentoring. A qualitative content analysis was taken to investigate the survey and interview data. In so doing, the authors employed inductive analysis that is based on grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This analysis followed the guidelines provided by Charmaz (2014): First, the researchers compiled responses provided by the participants in the survey and transcribed the interviews. Then, they read the compiled responses and transcripts several times to familiarise themselves with the data content. They made analytic sense of the data by defining what the data suggested. Following this, they did initial coding line-by-line and generated provisional codes. After making a constant comparison among the group of provisional codes to see how they showed similarities and differences in content, the researchers organized the codes into themes. Next, the researchers gathered and compared the codes and themes each generated. Based on the model by Miles and Huberman (1994), inter-rater reliability was calculated as 90%, which indicated a substantial agreement among raters. The discrepancies were discussed till a consensus was reached.

4. Findings

4.1. Pre- and In-Service EFL Teachers' Definitions of Teacher Mentoring

The survey and interview data analysis focused on how pre-and-in-service EFL teachers defined teacher mentoring. The responses given by the teachers in the survey were grouped under three themes: (1) Mentoring as assisting EFL teachers, (2) Mentoring as problem-solving, and (3) Mentoring as a collaboration among EFL teachers as can be seen in the table below.

Table 1: Pre- and in-service EFL teachers' definitions of mentoring

Themes	Categories
Mentoring as assisting EFL teachers	planning
	language teaching strategies/techniques
	guidance
	identifying learners' language needs and proficiency levels
Mentoring as problem-solving	language teaching strategies/techniques
	classroom management
Mentoring as a collaboration among EFL teachers	trustworthy relationship
	no judgment
	encouraging teamwork

(1) Mentoring as assisting EFL teachers: Most of the participants in the survey mentioned that mentoring is equivalent to assisting EFL teachers. They thought that mentors should help teachers in several areas. Among them, the most referenced aspects were planning, language

teaching strategies, and techniques. Accordingly, the participants thought that mentors should become guides for the mentees in planning the English lessons by considering the learners' needs. They thought that a novice teacher might need help identifying learners' language needs and proficiency levels; thus, they may need support in planning. Along with this issue, the participants also said that the new beginning EFL teachers might need to learn what and how to use the correct language teaching strategies and techniques. In response to this issue, the participants thought mentors should support mentees.

However, in their definitions of mentoring within the concept of assisting the mentees, most participants specifically mentioned that mentoring should happen in the format of a master-apprentice relationship. They reported that knowledge and expertise should be passed from experienced teachers to novice teachers. Accordingly, the new beginning teachers could learn how to implement teaching methods, techniques, and strategies through the guidance of their mentor. This understanding was also voiced in the semi-structured interviews. For instance, one of the in-service EFL teachers commented:

> *"I absolutely think that a mentor is a person who has some experience. We cannot solve our own problems without the ability to cope with them, and this skill is something that can only be gained through experience."* (Hatice, female, 38, 16 years experience, in-service EFL teacher).

Echoing her, an in-service EFL teacher also claimed:

> "*New teachers can turn to their mentors for support when times are tough and seek their advice. For the mentee, it is a great opportunity to benefit from the broad knowledge and practices of an experienced teacher.*" (Ezgi, female, 35, 6 years experience, in-service EFL teacher).

Similarly, another in-service EFL teacher also thought that mentors have experience in the field and can guide novice teachers to develop themselves. She also added:

> "*I don't think that novice teachers can serve as a mentor to an experienced English teacher as experience and personal growth in the field matter.*" (Ada, female, 45, 22 years experience, in-service EFL teacher).

On the other hand, the interview data revealed some opposite viewpoints toward the understanding of mentoring by experienced teachers. Some participants mentioned that novice EFL teachers could also mentor experienced teachers. For instance, one of the pre-service EFL teachers agreed that novice teachers would make good mentors to experienced teachers because she thought: *"Less experienced teachers tend to be more enthusiastic and idealistic as well as more eager to share what they have."* (Emine, female, 22, 3 years experience, pre-service EFL teacher). In the same line of thinking, another pre-service EFL teacher also said: "*Less experienced teacher can be a mentor for an experienced teacher, and it allows them to find and discover new paths for their learning journey.*" (Hacer, female, 21, 1-year' experience, pre-service). In addition to these comments, an in-service EFL teacher also emphasized: "*As the novice teachers have fresh ideas and might have more knowledge about newer technology, they can mentor experienced teachers.*" (Mary, female, 51, 25 years experience, in-service EFL teacher)

Most survey data revealed that the mentor and mentee relationship should be a master-apprentice relationship. The participants believed that a mentor could guide novice EFL

teachers to develop themselves professionally through his/her experience that s/he gained over time. However, the interview data showed two differing viewpoints: One group of participants indicated that an experienced EFL teacher should do mentoring. At the same time, others mentioned novice teachers could also mentor an experienced teacher as they believed everyone could learn from each other regardless of their experience.

(2) Mentoring as problem-solving: Some of the participants defined mentoring as a problem-solving phenomenon. Accordingly, experienced EFL teachers should help novice teachers solve their problems in their profession. They thought the mentors should introduce suggestions concerning the problem area, such as language teaching methods/techniques and classroom management strategies for an effective language learning environment. Interview data also revealed that most participants thought mentoring was closely linked to identifying and solving problems the mentees may have faced. Kate (female, 30, 13 years experience, in-service EFL teacher) admitted that mentors helped suggest solutions and explained the reasoning as: "*They [mentors] see the things from the outside and that always helps*". Another participant shared how important for a mentor to have previous teaching experience as an EFL teacher in problem-solving and noted: "*I had an opportunity to work with only one mentor, and he was good at identifying my problems and solving them because he was trained and we were also sharing the same educational background. He was an English teacher, as well. So, he was familiar with the kind of obstacles I had during my teaching process.*" (Nurten, female, 22, 1,5 years experience, pre-service EFL teacher). Echoing Nurten, Hatice (female, 38, 16 years experience, in-service EFL teacher) also commented: "*They [mentors] are aware of the problems English teachers have as they had the same experiences previously, they should help.*" Apart from that, although these two participants agreed that mentoring is problem-solving, others shared their concerns about mentors' ability to identify the solutions, as the following excerpts reveal:

> "*I think that not all mentors are good at identifying and solving problems. The mentors who think that their way is the only way to handle things get stuck in the old-fashioned methods, and they merely don't perceive learning and teaching as a life-long process, which is why these mentors tend to fail to become the actual problem-identifiers and problem-solvers*" (Ada, female, 45, 22 years experience, in-service EFL teacher).

> "*I think they're most of the time quite right about the solutions, but I disagree that mentors are good at successfully identifying problems. I believe this stems from the age difference between the teachers and the students. The older teachers get, the less likely they are to find the actual starting point of a problem. To find the root of the problem, one must think like a child from that generation, and this ability is taken from us as we grow older and become less agitated by others' opinions on us*". (Emine, female, 22, 3 years experience, pre-service EFL teacher).

Therefore, they reported that the mentors should consider the current teaching approaches and learners' profiles, particularly learners' age. Thus, they could effectively identify and solve the problems that the EFL teachers experience.

(3) Mentoring as a collaboration among EFL teachers: Several participants reported that mentoring should be collaborative and encourage teamwork. They thus indicated that there should be a trustworthy relationship between the mentor and mentee. They admitted that a mentor should never judge the mentee for any professional need or knowledge gap that

s/has. For a transparent expression of the mentee's thoughts and feelings, they noted that the mentors should not see themselves as superior to the mentees but should recognize that both parties are a team. This understanding was also reflected in the interview data, as illustrated in the following excerpts:

> *"Collaborative mentoring benefits both parties in the relationship. The mentee receives help and direction, but the mentor also benefits from this relationship"* (Ezgi, female, 35, 6 years experience, in-service EFL teacher)

> *"Both can learn from each other. If a person has been teaching for a long time, they might be stuck in their old ways, and a newer teacher can help them to look at teaching with fresh eyes"*. (Ada, female, 45, 22 years experience, in-service EFL teacher).

> *"Mentoring is genuinely a form of collaboration between mentors and mentees because they can work together, learn from each other and be more productive and innovative together."* (Hatice, female, 38, 16 years experience, in-service EFL teacher).

> *"I have always thought of it as a collaboration, and as I mentioned before, whether the mentee is a less experienced teacher is irrelevant when it comes to learning. We as teachers learn to be open to learning, and I cannot think of a better way to learn from each other through the context of mentor and mentee."* (Emine, female, 22, 3 years experience, pre-service EFL teacher).

Overall, the survey and interview data showed that the participants emphasized the collaborative aspect of mentoring by stating that mentors and mentees can learn from each other. This suggests that a positive atmosphere where mentors and mentees can share their opinions, feelings, and experiences comfortably could be created.

4.2. Pre- and In-service EFL Teachers' Expectations from Teacher Mentoring

The survey and interview data illustrated what pre-and-in-service EFL teachers expected from teacher mentoring. The responses given by the participants in the survey were grouped under three themes: (1) knowledge, (2) skills, and (3) attitudes. For the current study, knowledge was defined as a theocratical understanding of the pedagogical content area, such as knowledge of language teaching approaches. Skills were explained as the practical implementations of theoretical understanding. For instance, participants highlighted communication skills in this study. Concerning attitudes, they were defined as behaviors and values towards mentees during mentoring. A particular example voiced by the participants considered attitudes were respected. All these are stated in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Pre- and in-service EFL teachers' expectations from teacher mentoring

Themes	Categories
Knowledge	language teaching approaches
	language teaching methods/techniques
	lesson planning
	language assessment
	classroom management
	online teaching
Skills	practical implementation of theoretical understanding
	attentive listening
	taking responsibility
	observation and feedback

Attitudes	respect
	rapport
	empathy
	open-mindedness
	patience

Central to these themes, the most referenced aspect concerned what mentors should know. In particular, the participants expected from the mentors that they should know the latest language teaching methods/techniques, lesson planning, language assessment, classroom management, and online teaching. The second most referenced theme was about the skills that the mentors should be expected to have. Accordingly, the participants reported that the mentors should be able to establish good interaction by particularly emphasizing attentive listening. That is, the participants agreed that the mentors should listen to them so that they can understand and reflect on what the mentees need.

Furthermore, they noted that the mentors should collaborate with the mentees by taking responsibility for the mentoring process and respecting the mentees' ideas. Observation skills were also mentioned for the mentors; the participants stated that the mentors should be careful in gathering information about the mentees' in-class performance and giving feedback through a robust rubric. They thought that observation and feedback are interwoven, thus, not separable. For this reason, they indicated that mentors should give comprehensive feedback to the mentees by mentioning their performance's strong and weak points.

The other expectation area was the attitudes that the mentors should develop. The participants acknowledged that the mentors should have positive attitudes towards mentees, such as respect, rapport, empathy, open-mindedness, and patience. This suggests that there was an expectation that mentors should be able to create a positive atmosphere with mentees. Participants noted that this supportive relationship is essential for effective learning during the mentoring process.

This understanding concerning the expectations was also confirmed during the interviews. For instance, Ezgi (female, 35, 6 years experience, in-service EFL teacher) emphasized one aspect of communication skills that the mentors should own and said: "*Active listening is the most important characteristic of a mentor. Thus, s/he can create an inspiring environment where mentees are encouraged.*" Similarly, another participant emphasized the importance of being open to communication and commented: *"Discussing, exchanging ideas and making decisions together are important skills for a mentor."* (Hacer, female, 21, 1-year' experience, pre-service). This was reiterated by another participant who emphasized the attitudes that the mentor should have: "*The mentor should not criticize the mentees in a demoralizing manner but act as a supportive guide."* (Ada, female, 45, 22 years experience, in-service EFL teacher).

4.3 Pre- and In-service EFL Teachers' Experiences in Mentoring

The responses to the survey about the participants' overall mentoring experiences were investigated. The themes were categorized into (1) positive experiences and (2) negative experiences, as illustrated in the table (see Table 1) below.

Table 3: Pre- and in-service EFL teachers' experiences in mentoring

Themes	Sample Excerpts	No F (Number of Frequency)
Positive	*"It helped me improve my teaching."* *"It was insightful, eye-opening…"* *"Exchange of ideas…"* *"Enriching…because learning other techniques for teaching".*	46
Negative	*"Challenging"* *"Requiring lots of responsibility."* *"Wasting time".*	10

The table above illustrates that the first core theme includes participants' positive experiences concerning mentoring. Accordingly, the majority indicated mentoring was helpful for them as it enhanced their professional knowledge and skills. The participants often said they were observed and given feedback during the mentoring, which they believed contributed immensely to their professional development. Furthermore, many participants commented that mentors listened to the problems they faced in the classroom and tried to solve them by drawing on their previous experiences. Thus, the participants mentioned that mentoring was a fruitful exchange of ideas.

In parallel, all the participants reflected on their positive experiences during interviews. One of the participants, for example, emphasized the importance of sharing throughout mentoring: "*I found classroom management techniques being shared the most…*" (Emine, female, 22, 3 years experience, pre-service EFL teacher). Echoing her, another participant also said: "*The most useful experience I had was the feeling that I had while I was helping the mentees with any problem they came face to face from lesson planning to classroom management issues.*" (Hatice, female, 38, 16 years experience, in-service EFL teacher). Also, the other participant emphasized the contribution of feedback to her professional development and said: "*I received feedback, which provided a chance for me to question my performance during the mentoring. It was the most precious part of the way of learning.*" (Hacer, female, 21, 1-year experience, pre-service).

Despite these positive experiences, a couple of participants expressed their negative experiences in the survey. Some of them described mentoring as a 'waste of time'. They thought their mentors did not believe in the importance of the profession they conducted, and they were not aware of their responsibilities, but they only did mentoring as part of a procedure. Another reason for describing mentoring as a waste of time was that the participants reported that several mentors were not provided training about EFL/ESL and that they were only native speakers of English with no knowledge about EFL/ESL teaching methods. As a result, they thought that they needed to be provided more support and guidance throughout mentoring. In addition, some participants who had worked as a mentor also expressed their negative experiences. They thought that mentoring was challenging and demanded lots of responsibilities. The former mentors expressed that they strived to be objective, which was hard to achieve when they provided mentorship to their colleagues they knew well.

To conclude, most of the participants discussed the positive experiences they had during mentoring. They believed that mentoring was a fruitful period for professional development.

Only a minor group of participants expressed the negative aspects of mentoring they experienced and highlighted the importance of mentors' receiving field-specific mentoring education.

5. Discussion

5.1 Pre- and In-Service EFL Teachers' Definitions of Teacher Mentoring

This study investigated pre-and in-service EFL teachers' definitions of teacher mentoring. The data analysis revealed that participants in this study defined mentoring as assisting EFL teachers in problem-solving and collaboration among teachers. Several studies (e.g., Hobson, 2009; Hudson, 2016; Hudson & Nguyen, 2008; Löfström & Eisenschmidt, 2009; Nguyen, 2017;) indicate that mentoring practices are designed to assist teachers, particularly in terms of language teaching strategies, techniques, and methods that are in line with the findings of this study highlighting that EFL teachers define mentoring as assisting teachers. It can be concluded that the nature of mentoring to assist others is a widespread notion in the literature supported by the results displayed here.

Another interesting finding derived from this study is that mentoring is defined as a problem-solving strategy for EFL teachers. It can be concluded that pre-and in-service EFL teachers demand quick tips or solutions from their mentors when they have problems concerning methodology, classroom management, or lesson planning. This refers to a rather transmission-oriented approach stated by Othman and Senom (2020). Accordingly, teachers are trained in a lecturing way, and knowledge is transmitted from a more knowledgeable to a less knowledgeable person. However, as expressed by Othman and Senom (2020), a practical teacher training approach is a transformation-oriented approach that is more constructivist as it is based on reflective practices. Nevertheless, we can still come across quite a high number of mentees or mentors who demand exposure to a more traditional way of transmitting knowledge instead of co-constructing the knowledge together. As Löfström and Eisenschmidt (2009) identified, facilitation of reflection and mentor training are two weaknesses that mentoring must improve to reach its potential.

Some teachers in this study supported the idea of collaborative learning in mentoring sessions. They stated that mentoring is collaborating among EFL teachers through encouraging teamwork, creating a trustworthy relationship, and creating a non-judgmental atmosphere where each side learns from the other. Some studies also echo these findings (Nguyen, 2017; Othman & Senom, 2020;). Hudson (2016) proceeded with this idea stating collaborative problem-solving is significant for mentoring contexts. Adams (2012) also referred to the lead teacher model in mentoring in her guidebook, where a group of teachers guides and collaborate, which is also in line with the definition of mentoring in this study in terms of encouraging teamwork. Then, it can be expressed that mentoring practices can lead to better teamwork within schools if they are designed by considering this function, which can result in more successful schools or institutions, as Rhodes et al. (2004) highlighted in their study. As one of the requirements for this collaboration to work better in mentoring practices, the trustworthy relationship should be based on respect, trust, and open and mutual communication for some scholars (Löfström & Eisenschmidt, 2009; Rhodes et al., 2004; Russell & Russell, 2011; Tawalbeh, 2020). This is also echoed in this current study; therefore, it can be understood that this collegial relationship between the mentor and mentee is crucial in enhancing productivity and effectiveness. This type of positive

collaborative relationship refers to reverse mentoring (Kato, 2019; Murphy, 2012), where the more experienced learn from the less experienced. It is understandable from the findings of this study is that a minor group of teachers favor reverse mentoring in terms of co-constructing the knowledge, although most of the literature (Adams, 2012; Bird & Hudson, 2015; Hobson et al., 2009; Nguyen, 2017; Noe, 1988; Othman & Senom, 2020; Tawalbeh, 2020) supports the idea of an experienced teacher mentoring a novice teacher. Most participants defined mentoring as a concept between a master and a novice. However, as Kato (2019) suggested, more experienced teachers might need the latest knowledge about teaching methods or language technology. Moor et al. (2005) revealed in their study that mentees and mentors might demand mentoring sessions to develop their teaching and foster collaboration. In line with this finding, participants in this study also asserted quite a high number of comments about the efficiency of reverse mentoring. This can be interpreted with the fact that most of the pre-service teachers in this study belong to the Z generation.

5.2 Pre- and In-service EFL Teachers' Expectations from Teacher Mentoring

Another aim of this study is to investigate pre-and in-service EFL teachers' expectations of teacher mentoring. Accordingly, they expected the mentors to have specific knowledge of theoretical understanding of pedagogical content. Additionally, skills attributing to the practical implications of theories were expected from the mentors. Another expectation was on attitudes to create a positive atmosphere in the mentoring relationship (Hudson, 2016; Margolis, 2007). In terms of experiences, participants expressed their positive experiences because of the sessions' enriching, developing, eye-opening, and interactive sides despite a few negative experiences referring to its challenging atmosphere, high level of responsibility required, and not easy to be objective. These highly adorable expectations concerning knowledge, skills, and attitudes were in line with what was referred in the literature (Brooks & Sikes, 1997).

The findings of this study illustrate that mentees expect mentors to know language teaching methods, lesson planning, language assessment, and classroom management. While most mentees expressed that they expected the mentors to be knowledgeable about language teaching methods and classroom management techniques, language assessment and lesson planning were also reported by some participants. However, to our best knowledge, no literature reports on mentees' expectations of lesson planning and language assessment. Bird and Hudson (2015) investigated five factors of effective mentoring. They concluded that lesson planning is the least expected dimension of mentoring, which is contrary to the expectations stated in this study. Lesson planning and language assessment can be the topics that can be mentioned in a mentoring session but not in a lecturing style but rather by co-constructing the knowledge together.

For skills expected from a mentoring session, this study revealed that communication, attentive listening, taking responsibility, observation and feedback skills are expected from the mentors. Communication skills, attentive listening, and feedback have also been addressed in the related literature (Hudson & Nguyen, 2008; Löfström & Eisenschmidt, 2009; Moor et al., 2005; Orsdemir & Yıldırım, 2020). Orsdemir & Yıldırım (2020) found that feedback is the growth area of a mentoring session. This shows that mentors should be trained in how to critically observe and give positive and constructive feedback to their mentees as it is expected from them. Löfström & Eisenschmidt (2009) and Moor et al. (2005) also clarified the

roles of effective mentoring in which a mentor is considered to have feedback skills, as well as communication skills for a better mentoring sessions as this study also revealed that mentors are required to be good at feedback and communication skills.

On the other hand, this study shows that patience was an expected attitude from a mentor. However, the literature does not reveal much about this, although rapport, empathy, trust, and respect are common ideas that a mentoring session should have to foster positive mentoring relationships (Arnold, 2006; Brooks & Sikes, 1997, Hudson, 2016, Margolis, 2007).

5.3 Pre- and In-Service EFL Teachers' Experiences in Mentoring

This study explored pre-and in-service EFL teachers' experiences in mentoring. The findings revealed that most participants had positive mentoring experiences, although a few had negative experiences. The participants with more positive experiences are also in line with the literature (Hobson et al., 2009; Löfström & Eisenschmidt, 2009; Margolis, 2007; Nguyen, 2017; Rajuan et al., 2008; Tawalbeh, 2020). The participants in this study commented on why they had negative experiences and stated that mentoring was challenging, a waste of time, and required lots of responsibility. To our best knowledge, these experiences were not precisely highlighted in the extant literature. However, there are some studies where different aspects of mentoring were found challenging. For example, Tawalbeh (2020) referred to the barriers as not having awareness towards mentoring, lack of mentoring skills, limited time, poor planning, and lack of access to mentors, resources, and administrative support. In addition, Rhodes et al. (2004) claimed that teacher collaboration, information, and training, selection of individuals, engaging staff commitment, needs analysis, and time constraints might be challenging mentoring methods. Hobson et al. (2009) also examined the literature. They concluded that mentoring had difficulties because of lack of time and too much workload, leading to an insecure, uncomfortable, and isolated work life.

6. Conclusion

Teacher mentoring is widely found fruitful. That is why it can be understood that it is effective to educate teachers and create a more educative environment at schools. First, in terms of relationship, a teacher mentoring session is generally in a master-apprentice relationship. However, various teacher mentoring models can be designed at schools depending on the context and needs. That is why needs analysis and evaluation of the dynamics of teacher mentoring in that school can be applied first. For instance, this master-apprentice relationship might prevail at one school as there are more newly graduated EFL teachers. At the same time, the other school might require a more reverse or collaborative mentoring style if most of the teachers in this school have taught there for more than 20 years. Teachers can require more assistance to refresh, encourage and keep themselves up to date, which can be possible if an opposite role is attributed to teacher mentoring. Shortly, the relationship can be determined based on the context and needs.

On the other hand, it can be highlighted that several skills, knowledge, and certain attitudes are needed to conduct better teacher mentoring sessions. School management can thus hold some training for teacher mentors to equip them with these mentoring essentials and mentees who will have reverse roles from time to time after a deep analysis is conducted about the context. Remarkably, giving more constructive and effective feedback in mentoring sessions will be significant to be educated. In addition, specific characteristics can be expected from teacher mentors to lead more effective sessions with their colleagues

earlier the sessions. Last, schools can also provide a relaxing atmosphere where novice teachers can ask for quick tips or solutions for their classrooms on lesson planning, pedagogical content, or methodology from a more experienced teacher. However, this can be assumed to be a rather spoon-feeding. It can be more effective if it is conducted more constructively rather than giving direct tips or solutions. This can also be possible in schools where a collaborative atmosphere is achieved among teachers and management.

This study was conducted to overview teacher mentoring in terms of practices or perceptions. As a result, it was understood that teacher mentors should assist their mentees in solving their problems in a collaborative atmosphere where mutual trust, respect, empathy, and patience exist. To achieve this, we must design an excellent mentoring model in our schools where each colleague interacts and collaborates. A good model of training mentors in terms of how to increase rapport, give positive and constructive feedback and provide constructive knowledge rather than transmission of direct knowledge on language teaching strategies, methodologies, techniques, classroom management techniques, lesson planning, and language assessment should be designed.

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Appendices
Appendix A: Survey

Part 1. Demographic Information
1. Indicate your age, please:
2. Indicate your nationality, please:
3. Indicate your gender please:
4. Do you work as a pre-service teacher or an in-service teacher?:
5. Indicate years of teaching experience (if any):
6. Which grades do/did you teach? (if you have any experience):

Part 2. Opinions about and Experiences in Mentoring
1. What do you think teacher mentoring is? Please explain in as much detail as possible.
2. What would you expect from a teacher mentoring session as an English teacher if you had one? Please explain in as much detail as possible.
3. If you had any experience mentoring as a mentor or mentee, what kind of experience was this? Please explain as detailed as possible by indicating the positive and negative aspects of your experience.

Appendix B: Semi-structured interview protocol
1. What aspects did you find most and least helpful in your experience as a mentor and a mentee?
2. Do you think the mentor is an experienced English teacher that helps novice English teachers? Why? Why not?
3. Do you think that a less experienced language teacher can serve as a mentor to an experienced English teacher? Why? Why/ Why not?
4. Do you think mentoring is a form of collaboration between mentors and mentees? How?
5. Based on your previous experiences, do you think that mentors are good at identifying and solving the problems you had as an English teacher? Why? Why not?