

Perceived roles of cooperating teachers in student teachers' formation: Input to policy making

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ARTICLE INFORMATION

Article History:

Received 18 December 2014

Received in revised form 20 February 2015

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ABSTRACT

Mainly this investigation sought to determine the perceived roles of the cooperating teachers in student teachers' formation. The study fused the quantitative – qualitative method of research utilizing student teachers, critic teachers, university Professional Education professors and university supervisors. The gathered data used the modified research instrument from which items were derived from the joint CHED and DepEd Order Guidelines in the Deployment of Pre-service

Teachers under Experiential Learning Courses. Mean and standard deviation helped interpret quantitative data while thematic analysis qualitative data. Findings revealed that coaching, mentoring, being a role model and evaluating the performance of student teachers as well as honing their skills in lesson planning are some of the important roles expected of cooperating teachers, as perceived by the participants. These roles have contributed much to the development of student teachers. Thus, cooperating teachers greatly contributed to the formation and development of the student teachers professional growth. It is recommended then that the university provide more training to student teachers on campus before they are sent for off campus.

Keywords

Perceived Roles, Cooperating Teachers, Student Teachers, Policy Making

Introduction

Teachers' Pre-service education is a key to achieving sustainable quality basic education. Since DepEd has the biggest stake in teacher pre-service program, it demands for a more rigorous classroom-based training of future teachers (Medium-Term Development Plan, 2004-2010). Thus, the Teacher Education Council (TEC) has drafted a resolution implementing Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan (MTPDP) 2004-2010. One of the tasks of the Department of Education mentioned in the MTPDP was to "get involved in the selection, qualification through training those who will enter the teaching profession and prescribed standards for Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) as well as institute a quality assurance mechanism for incoming teachers ". This gave the DepEd full responsibility in the new teachers formation. Thus, it is but important

to ascertain the role of their cooperating teachers in their formation.

Experiential Learning Courses introduced to the new teacher education curriculum play a great role in the development of education students. Their early immersions to Basic Education Schools (BES) give them authentic picture of the actual role played by the teacher inside and outside the classroom. The six (6) field study courses bridge theories and concepts learned in the different professional education courses to the actual practice teaching. Bustos *et al.* (1982) affirm that student teaching provides an anchor between theory and practice for it gives student teachers opportunity to synthesize all that they have learned to translate them into professional skills. This competence is further enhanced by

the teaching practices of cooperating teachers which observe student teachers and eventually carry over when they are hired as teachers.

This research project indicates the role cooperating teachers play when mentoring the incoming teachers in the field. Developing the professional skills and personal traits of student teachers are essentials. Cooperating teachers have to work doubly hard so as to assure quality pre-service teachers who will eventually join the pool of teachers in our educational system. Rivera and Sambrano (1992) underscore that the success of the pre-service teachers in their future career will depend to a great extent upon how well the cooperating teachers have trained them to teach effectively.

This study is anchored on some of the theories of learning such as Gestalt Theory (in Corpuz and Lucas (2007) which is focused on the experience of contact that occurs herein and now. It considers with interest the life space of teachers and students, as well as takes interest in the complexity of experience without neglecting anything, but accepting and amplifying all that emerge. Furthermore, it stimulates learning as experience and experience as learning. Another theory on formal discipline states that the faculties of the mind such as memory, reason, will, and imagination could be strengthened through practice (Villamin, 1989).

Objectives

This study aimed to identify the roles of cooperating teachers in the formation of student teachers as input to policy making. Specifically, this study shed light on the following questions:

1. What are the roles of cooperating teachers in the formation of student teachers, as viewed by the:
 - a. University Professional Education teachers

- b. University Supervisors
- c. Cooperating Teachers
- d. Student Teachers

2. To what extent do cooperating teachers actually perform their roles and functions in the formation of student teachers, as perceived by the:
 - a. Cooperating Teachers themselves
 - b. Student Teachers
3. What are the roles of cooperating teachers, as actually observed by the *university supervisors*.
4. What institutional policy can be formulated to define the responsibilities of cooperating teachers as partners in the formation of student teachers

Conceptual Framework

Mentoring is one of the major aspects of teacher education programs, often a collaborative effort between university supervisors, teacher educators, school administrators, supervising teachers, and pre-service teachers (Schwille, 2008) to fully equip teachers for the increasingly challenging classroom environment.

Conventional approaches to mentoring have emphasized situational adjustment, technical advice and emotional support (Little, 1990). In line with the ideas of Tickle (2000), educators often claim that educative mentoring also includes experiences that promote learning in the future, rather than merely solving the immediate problems in the present. Educative mentors interact with students to create opportunities for an inquiring stance that serves long-term goals of good teaching. They help students confront problems and learn from them rather than simply ease them into the system.

According to He (2010), the mentee or pre-service teacher needs significant guidance in both pedagogical and content knowledge throughout the mentoring process.

In fact, He says, such mentoring experience primarily determines the success of the first-year or beginning teacher's experience.

Admittedly, beginning teachers face numerous challenges during the first few years of teaching, including student motivation, planning and implementation of curriculum, instruction, and various other roles and responsibilities (Roehrig et al., 2002). This complexity, coupled with the increasing pressure to ensure that students are excelling, can place a significant amount of stress on the new teacher (Roehrig et al., 2007) and adversely impact his or her effectiveness in the classroom.

The internship field experience plays a significant role in shaping the beliefs and knowledge of the prospective teacher (Eisenhart et al., 1993, as cited in Borko & Mayfield, 1995). The field experience is often considered the culminating capstone event for a teacher education program, as well as a critical milestone toward becoming an effective teacher (McIntyre et al., 1996). According to Guyton and McIntyre (1990), surveys of practicing teachers indicate that they overwhelmingly rate their student teaching or internship experience as the most beneficial and critical component of their teacher education program.

To a certain extent the attainment and success of student teachers internship is dependent on his or her cooperating teacher: hence the mentee-mentor relationship needs to be reconsidered, if we want our student teachers to gain much knowledge and experiences to help them become better teachers in the future. Appropriate and timely study indeed is the goal of the perceived roles of cooperating teachers in the formation of student teachers, as perceived by the student teachers, cooperating teachers, professional education professors, and university supervisor.

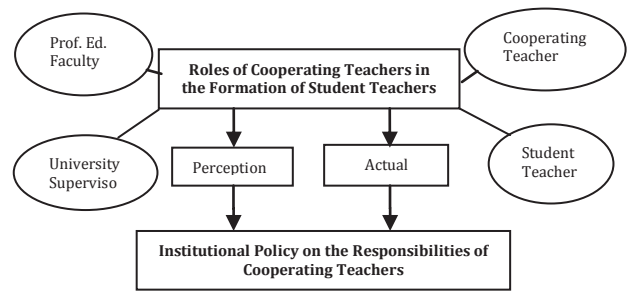


Fig. 1 Schematic Diagram of the Study

Literature Reviews

Research has shown that student teaching practice in the school serves as the most significant factor in the shaping of student teachers' experience of training to be a teacher (Tang, 2003). Student teachers' experiences of training to be a teacher in this regard are attributed to an environment of which the mentor or the critic teacher plays a vital role. There is a growing body of knowledge concerning "good mentoring" and the majority of literature in teacher education describe optimal mentoring relationships (Rowley, 1999). However, it cannot be denied that optimal mentoring relationships are sometimes far from reality. Considering positive mentoring, the benefits of this are more likely to be realized in advanced stages of the relationships. The initial stage of mentoring consists of complex social interactions that can be problematic when student teachers and cooperating teachers differ in their perceptions concerning the professional purposes of their work together.

Along this line, Beijaard and Verloop (2007) in their study on the role of the cooperating teacher looked into the similarities and differences in the perceptions of cooperating teachers and student teachers concerning the role of the cooperating teachers in the initial stage of the mentoring relationship in the context of an Israeli practicum program for pre-service students teachers. Focus group technique was used to bring to awareness and articulation the perceptions of the participants concerning the role of the cooperating teacher. The theoretical framework of Calderhead and Shorrock (1997) was used to analyze the

participants' perceptions into categories of different kinds of teaching knowledge and skills. Perceptions of a practical and technical nature were found to be prevalent among members of both groups, whereas student teacher group expressed perceptions of a more personal nature than the cooperating teacher group. Suggestions are given for bridging the gap in perceptions between cooperating teachers and student teachers in the initial stage of the practicum program.

Furthermore, the literature on mentoring identifies a number of key roles of mentors, such as serving as a guide, offering support (Ganser, 1996), and acting as adviser, trainer, or partner (Jones, 2001), as well as nurturer to the mentee. Mentoring is also defined as a nurturing relationship that is based on mutual trust that leads to the development and professional growth of both the mentor and mentee (Halai, 2006). Simply put, mentoring provides benefits to both the mentor and the mentee, and there is a sense of satisfaction as the mentor watches the mentee grow (Reed et al., 2002).

Much of the research on mentoring has focused primarily on the perspectives and role of the mentor (Harris, 2003). More specifically, research has examined the type of support mentors provide, which can be characterized as emotional or psychological (Oplatka, 2009). Research by Jacobi (1991) examined mentoring in the educational setting and defined three major categories of the mentor's roles, which include personal support, role modeling, and professional development. Moreover, this relationship is often characterized by the mentor as providing guidance, support, and advice (Harris, 2003). The word mentor, according to the Merriam-Webster online dictionary, is defined as "a trusted counselor or guide"; mentee is defined as "one who is being mentored" or "protégé." Reed et al., (2002) define mentoring as "a process of coaching a person both personally and professionally". Although, there are multiple definitions for mentoring, there are commonalities when contemplating the necessary qualities for effective mentors and the types of activities that facilitate effective mentoring.

Knox and McGovern (1988) assert that there are six critical characteristics of mentors: (a) willingness to share knowledge; (b) competency; (c) willingness to facilitate growth; (d) honesty; (e) willingness to give critical, positive, and constructive feedback; and (f) ability to deal directly with the protégé. Some of the primary aspects of effective mentoring models include making observations, providing feedback, and having time for the mentor and mentee to discuss feedback and engage in reflection (Giebelhaus et al., 2002).

Researchers and scholars in the field of mentoring agree that the primary role of the mentor is to provide guidance and emotional support to the novice teacher who is in need of significant support (Halai, 2006).

Method

Research Design

To answer questions posed in this research, the researcher made use of quantitative-qualitative mixed method of research. The quantitative method helped determine and identify the perceived roles of cooperating teachers in the formation of student teachers which was quantified by assigning score to the different categories as perceived by the student teachers themselves, cooperating teachers, professional education professors, and university supervisors. On the other hand, the qualitative focused on group discussion (FGD) to determine the role of cooperating teachers in the formation of student teachers, as actually observed by the university supervisors.

Research Participants

The respondents of the study were 233 student teachers, 106 cooperating teachers, seven (7) university supervisors, and six (6) professional education professors determined using total enumeration.

Instruments

Three sets of questionnaires were utilized in this study. The first instrument surveyed the roles of cooperating teachers in the formation of student teacher, as answered by the student teachers, cooperating teachers, professional education professors and university supervisors. The second instrument was developed by the researcher upon gathering and grouping the common roles of cooperating teachers identified by the four respondents. These roles were checked against those identified in the joint CHED and DepEd Order on the Guidelines in the Deployment of the Pre-Service Teachers under Experiential Learning Course: Field Study and Practice Teaching, then quantified to determine the extent cooperating teachers actually perform their roles and functions and answered by the first two groups of respondents: the student teachers and the cooperating teachers. Lastly, an interview guide drew out responses from the university supervisors on their actual observation of how cooperating teachers perform their role and functions. In particular, questions elicited the development of possible policies to be formulated to define the responsibilities of cooperating teachers as partners in the formation of student teachers.

The research instruments used in this study were subjected to expert validation. Reliability, on the other hand, was established using Cronbach Alpha.

Conduct of the Study

In seeking permission from the concerned authorities, the letter stressed that the university-funded research would serve at the basis for policy formulation on student teaching.

Much later schedules for the conduct of the survey questionnaire, researcher-made instrument and the focus group discussion to the university supervisors were setup. Then the four groups of respondents readily complied with the request.

Cooperating teachers were made to answer this survey instrument after permission was granted. Student teachers, professional education professors, and university supervisors, likewise, answer the same instrument. This was done before the student teachers had been deployed for Off Campus Training.

What facilitated the conduct of the second instrument was the researcher, being one of the university supervisors, asked the student teachers to answer the instrument after their Off Campus stint. While the cooperating teachers did so during the researcher's field visit to the different cooperating schools, the questionnaire was filled out during the respondents' free time.

Finally, in the focus group discussion, the researcher convened the university supervisors in identifying the roles and functions the cooperating teachers actually perform in the development of student teachers. They were also asked to indicate behavioral change on the part of student teachers after off campus and qualify if these changes were brought about by it. They even suggested possible policies which could be formulated on their roles. The data were tallied, interpreted and analyzed to answer problems posed in this study.

Data Analysis

The survey instrument elicited responses from the different respondents on the roles of the cooperating teachers in the formation of student teachers. These roles were listed down, then grouped with those provided in the CHED and the Department of Education, their frequencies determined.

In the analysis of the quantitative data, mean and standard deviation were used to identify the extent cooperating teachers perform their roles, as perceived by the student teachers and cooperating teachers. For focus group discussion, narrative presentation was resorted to.

Results

1. On the Perceived Common Roles of Cooperating Teachers

Table 1
List of Perceived Common Roles

Respondents Groups	Perceived Roles of the Cooperating Teachers
Student Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maintain harmonious relationship between and among student teachers - Assist the student teachers in preparing lesson plans and class demonstration - Observe, coach/mentor and evaluate the performance of the student teacher; - Serve as role model for effective teaching and classroom management techniques - Always keep a record of student teachers' performance in the classroom and during demonstrations. - Hone student teachers skills in lesson planning, questioning technique, preparation of instructional materials, and classroom management. - Allow student teachers to participate in co-curricular and other school related activities.
Cooperating Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Observe and maintain cooperating teachers' and student teachers' relationship - Assist the student teachers in honing their skills in lesson planning, preparing instructional materials, and managing the classroom - Observe, coach/mentor and evaluate the performance of the student teacher - Provide evaluation reports for each student teacher's performance in classroom management and demonstration - Recommend a PASS or FAIL standing for the student teacher for the practicum.
Professional Education Professors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Serve as critic and adviser - Induct student teacher into the teaching profession - Involve student teacher in school and community affairs - Serve as role model for effective teaching and classroom management techniques
University Supervisors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Share best educational practices and experiences - Serve as facilitator, guide, help student teachers, help, support, assist, share expertise - Draw out the best from the student teacher through varied responsibilities and activities, as well as engage them to work with colleagues

2. On the Extent Cooperating Teachers Perform their Role in the Formation of Student Teachers

2A. As Perceived by the Bachelor of Elementary and Secondary Education Student Teachers

Table 2A.
Extent Cooperating Teachers Perform their Roles in the Formation of the Student Teachers, as Perceived by the Bachelor of Elementary and Secondary Education Student Teachers

Roles / Function	BEED			BSED		Interpretation
	Mean	SD	Interpretation	Mean	SD	
The cooperating teachers						
1. observe mentor-mentee relationship	1.70	0.91	A	1.74	0.88	A
2. assist the student teachers in honing their skills through:						
a. regular class observation and post conference	2.12	0.99	AA	2.30	0.89	AA
b. lesson planning	1.86	0.98	AA	2.14	1.09	AA
c. using varied strategies/approaches/techniques	1.94	0.99	AA	2.05	0.88	AA
d. classroom management	1.79	0.96	A	1.88	0.95	AA
e. assessment of learning outcomes	1.89	0.93	AA	1.83	0.81	AA
f. questioning techniques	1.93	0.94	AA	1.89	0.90	AA
g. preparation of instructional materials	2.01	0.96	AA	2.38	0.92	AA

h. preparation of examinations/various assessment modes	1.94	0.94	AA	2.09	0.82	AA
i. accomplishments of different forms and related works	2.09	0.97	AA	2.11	0.91	AA
3. observe, coach/mentor and evaluate the performance of the student teacher;	1.93	1.01	AA	1.92	0.98	AA
4. keep a record of observations and post conferences made with the student teacher; model effective teaching and management techniques.	2.23	1.03	AA	2.29	0.89	AA
5. provide the student teacher the opportunity to teach independently and collaboratively;	1.63	0.92	A	1.53	0.73	A
6. allow student teacher to participate in co-curricular and school/community activities;	1.62	0.88	A	1.92	0.95	AA
7. complete a set of summative evaluation reports for each student teacher; and	2.13	1.02	AA	2.39	0.87	AA
8. recommend a PASS or FAIL standing for the student teacher for the practicum	1.95	1.09	AA	2.11	1.07	AA

Legend: A – Always AA – Almost Always

2B. As Perceived by the Cooperating Teachers Themselves

Table 2B.

Extent Cooperating Teachers Perform their Roles in the Formation of the Student Teachers, as Perceived by the Cooperating Teachers Themselves

Roles	BEED			BSED		
	Mean	SD	Interpretation	Mean	SD	Interpretation
The cooperating teachers						
1. observe mentor-mentee relationship professionally	1.28	0.58	A	1.00	0.00	A
2. assist the student teachers in honing their skills through:						
a. regular class observation and post conference	1.43	0.67	A	1.00	0.00	A
b. lesson planning	1.42	0.70	A	1.00	0.00	A
c. using varied strategies/ approaches/techniques	1.39	0.62	A	1.00	0.00	A
d. classroom management	1.28	0.58	A	1.00	0.00	A
e. assessment of learning outcomes	1.32	0.50	A	1.00	0.00	A
f. questioning techniques	1.44	0.73	A	1.04	0.20	A
g. preparation of instructional materials	1.43	0.67	A	1.02	0.14	A
h. preparation of examinations/various assessment modes	1.65	0.66	A	1.10	0.31	A

i. accomplishments of different forms and related works	1.52	0.69	A	1.08	0.28	A
3. observe, coach/mentor and evaluate the performance of the student teacher;	1.32	0.65	A	1.02	0.14	A
4. keep a record of observations and post conferences made with the student teacher; model effective teaching and management techniques;	1.53	0.63	A	1.00	0.00	A
5. provide the student teacher the opportunity to teach independently and collaboratively;	1.35	0.73	A	1.02	0.14	A
6. allow student teacher to participate in co-curricular and school/community activities;	1.22	0.52	A	1.13	0.33	A
7. complete a set of summative evaluation reports for each student teacher; and	1.47	0.63	A	1.67	0.48	A
8. recommend a PASS or FAIL standing for the student teacher for the practicum.	1.57	0.84	A	1.29	0.46	A

Legend: A – Always AA – Almost Always

Table 3.
Roles of Cooperating Teachers, as Actually Observed by the University Supervisors

University Supervisors	What are your actual observations on the cooperating teachers' contribution to student teachers' professional development?	Are there any observed improvement in the student teachers after off campus?	Do you think these changes were caused by the mentoring process of the cooperating teachers?
A	Some cooperating teachers mentor students through hands-on supervised teaching. Some would allow student interns to handle classes and seldom did they supervise as stated by these interns. However, there were those who were really caring that they tended to treat student interns very well with snacks, frequent supervised teaching and give out their moral support. Lastly, some were very much focused with their timetable for lessons that they preferred not to let student interns hold classes for supervised teaching.	Yes, student interns began to feel like professional; their self-esteem improved and with much greater self-confidence. They began to be more responsible and happier in being teachers-to-be.	Not all, I think one major factor that greatly caused the positive changes in the interns' professional and personal growth is the realization of "what" and "how" it is being a teacher in the class. In addition, their reaction and interaction of the students/pupils and the whole school system
B	Based on observation, their cooperating teachers have helped them in enhancing their skill in dealing with and disciplining students. They are very diligent in assisting student teachers in preparing for their demonstration. They also trust interns in terms of handling the class that sometimes they allow them to take over some classes.	They improved their confidence and feeling of being a teacher. In terms of time management, they arrived early because they used to attend flag ceremony. Some of them had improved their leadership skills.	Yes, because they experience the actual teaching and can handle students by themselves, thus, changes in some aspect are honed by mentoring process of cooperating teachers.

C	Most cooperating teachers shared their own experiences and teaching practices to the student teachers. However, some critic teachers who had not fully mentored their student teachers as mentioned by the student teachers.	Most student teachers acted and implemented the same strategies that their cooperating teachers had employed	Some have changed a lot in terms of their attitude//behavior specifically in dealing with students. They were able to understand students behavior and deal with them with compassion..
D	Cooperating teachers play a crucial role in the development of student teachers in aspects of their becoming real teachers. Their classrooms serve as a training ground for student teachers to learn the repertoire of teaching strategies and how to be flexible in their own teaching. They also display the good qualities and competencies that student teachers must learn, and follow, like independence, innovativeness, interpersonal skills and other personal qualities.	After the off campus experience, the student teachers had certain improvements in terms of carrying themselves, speaking, and showing sense of responsibility. They become more mature and dependable.	Yes, because mentoring is important in the internship program. Through the closer guidance of the cooperating teachers, students become more aware of their strengths and weaknesses. It is a constructive way of helping the intern grow and improve competencies as would be teacher.
E	Most cooperating teachers provided student teachers the chance to understand their role as future teachers. They trained student teachers to become effective facilitator of learning. They let student teachers realize that teachers should be an expert on the subject they teach. They likewise would give student teachers an opportunity to observe and practice how to manage the class.	Student teachers become more passionate and more organized. They were able to develop a more pleasing personality, sense of humor, and patience	I believed that these changes were the result of mentoring process.
F	Most cooperating teachers helped student-teachers improve their teaching performance on the subjects taught.	Having acquired knowledge on how to manage oneself as a "teacher", handling classes, and managing the classroom.	Develop confidence as a future teacher.
G	Cooperating teachers try their best to transform the student teachers from a student to a professional teacher by honing their skills in the different teaching strategies, methodologies, and approaches, as further enhanced by the experience shared by their cooperating teachers.	Student teachers gained more self-confidence and developed their own style in classroom management. They developed their own initiative on how to solve problems they encountered in processing teaching and learning in the classroom.	Partly yes, but not all because student teachers mature and develop sense of responsibility, initiative and self-confidence. They become aware of what is expected of a teacher other than those which were clearly identified and emphasized in their professional education courses. Their changes are the products of the concepts they learned as pre-service teacher, their off campus experience and the contributions made by their cooperating teachers.

Discussions

1. On the Perceived Common Role of Cooperating Teachers

As shown in table I, the common roles of cooperating teachers as perceived by the student teachers are (a) maintain harmonious relationship between and among student teachers; (b) assist student teachers in preparing lesson plans and class demonstration; (c) observe, coach/mentor and evaluate the performance of the student teacher; (d) role model for effective teaching and classroom management techniques; (e) always keep a record of student teachers performance in the classroom and demonstrations; (f) hone student teachers skills in lesson planning, questioning technique, preparation of instructional materials, and classroom management; and (g) allow student teacher to participate in co-curricular and other school related activities.

By contrast, as perceived by the cooperating teachers, their roles are to: (a) observe and maintain cooperating teachers and student teachers relationship; (b) assist the student teachers in honing their skills in lesson planning, preparing instructional materials, and managing the classroom; (c) observe, coach/mentor and evaluate the performance of the student teacher; (d) provide evaluation reports for each student teacher performance in classroom management and demonstration; (e) recommend a PASS or FAIL standing for the student teacher for the practicum.

As perceived by the professional education professors, the roles of the cooperating teachers: (a) serve as critic and adviser; (b) induct student teacher into the teaching profession; (b) involve student teacher in school and community affairs; and (c) role model for effective teaching and classroom management techniques.

Furthermore, as perceived by university supervisor, the roles of cooperating teachers are (a) share best practices, and experiences; (b) serve as facilitator, guide, support and share expertise; and (c) draw out

the best of student teacher through varied responsibilities and activities, as well as engage students to work with colleagues.

Responses of the respondent groups reflect that one of the most important roles cooperating teachers should take into account is that they should always assist student teachers in preparing lesson plans, instructional materials and in classroom management. Notably, cooperating teachers have big roles in honing student teachers' skills in lesson planning, questioning technique, preparation of instructional materials, and classroom management.

Furthermore, responses also indicate that cooperating teachers serve as role model, guidance counselor, adviser, consultant, guide, and coach. According to Halai (2006) there is a lack of consensus on one single or standard definition of mentoring. However, the literature on mentoring identifies a number of key roles of mentors, such as serving as a guide, offering support (Ganser, 1996), and acting as adviser, trainer, or partner (Jones, 2001), as well as nurturer to the mentee.

Much of the research on mentoring has focused primarily on the perspectives and role of the mentor (Harris, 2003). More specifically, research has examined the type of support mentors provide, which can be characterized as emotional or psychological (Oplatka, 2009). Research by Jacobi (1991) examined mentoring in the educational setting and defined three major categories of the mentor's role, which include personal support, role modeling, and professional development. Moreover, this relationship is often characterized by the mentor as providing guidance, support, and advice (Harris, 2003).

2. On the Extent Cooperating Teachers Perform their Role in the Formation of Student Teachers

2A. As Perceived by the BEED and BSE Student Teachers

Table 2A shows the extent cooperating teachers perform their roles in

the formation of student teachers, as perceived by the student teachers. As reflected in this table, cooperating teachers always observe mentor-mentee relationship, as perceived by the BEED (M = 1.70, SD = 0.91) and BSED (M = 1.74, SD = 0.88) students. Also, they perceived that cooperating teachers always provide them with the opportunity to teach independently and collaboratively, as indicated by the obtained mean scores of 1.63 and 1.53 at standard deviations of 0.92 and 0.73, respectively. Furthermore, the data revealed that cooperating teachers almost always assist student teachers in honing their skills through regular class observation and post conference, lesson planning, using varied strategies/approach/techniques, classroom management, assessment of learning outcomes, questioning techniques, preparation of instructional materials, preparation of examinations/various assessment modes, and in the accomplishment of different forms and related works. It can be gleaned also from the data that cooperating teachers evaluate the performance of the student teachers; keep a record of observations and post conferences made with the student teachers; model effective teaching and management techniques; complete a set of summative evaluation reports for each student teacher; and recommend a PASS or FAIL standing for the student teachers for the practicum. Meanwhile, cooperating teachers always allow student teachers to participate in co-curricular and school/community activities, but almost always only as perceived by the BSED students.

Results presented in this table can be taken to mean that identified roles in student teaching are performed always and almost always by the cooperating teachers, as perceived by both the BEED and BSED students. Student teachers response in this regard disclosed that they are in safe and in good hands when they go out of the university because cooperating teachers are performing their tasks well.

Thinking along this line, Knox and McGovern (1988) assert that there are six

critical characteristics of mentors: (a) willingness to share knowledge, (b) competency, (c) willingness to facilitate growth, (d) honesty, (e) willingness to give critical, positive, and constructive feedback, and (f) ability to deal directly with the protégé. Some of the primary aspects of effective mentoring models include making observations, providing feedback, and having time for the mentor and mentee to discuss feedback and engage in reflection (Giebelhaus, et al., 2002). To Giebelhaus (1999), effective mentoring models should include a method for selection and preparation of mentors and their mentees that promote collaboration as well as opportunities for direct observation of their teaching. Moreover, factors such as personality, ability to communicate tenets of effective teaching, and similarities between grade level and content area facilitate effective mentoring (Giebelhaus, et al., 2002).

2B. As Perceived by the Cooperating Teachers Themselves

Table 2B reflects the extent cooperating teachers perform their roles in the formation of the student teachers as perceived by the cooperating teachers themselves. Cooperating teachers of the BEED and BSED always perform their roles as cooperating teachers, as reflected by their responses in this table. They always observe mentor-mentee relationship as indicated by the obtained mean scores of 1.28 and 1.00 at standard deviations of 0.58 and 0.00, respectively. Also they always assist student teachers in honing their skills in lesson planning, using varied strategies/approaches/techniques, classroom management, assessment of learning outcomes, questioning techniques, preparation of instructional materials, preparation of examinations/various assessment modes, and accomplishing different forms and related work, as indicated by the obtained mean scores ranging from 1.00 to 1.65 at standard deviations from 0.00 to 0.73.

Furthermore, results reveal that they observe coach-mentor relationship and

evaluate the performance of their student teacher; keep a record of observations and post conferences made with the student teacher; model effective teaching and management techniques; provide the student teacher the opportunity to teach independently and collaboratively; allow student teachers to participate in co-curricular and school/community activities; complete a set of summative evaluation reports for each student teacher; and recommend a PASS or FAIL standing for the student teacher for the practicum. This is projected by the obtained mean scores ranging from 0.00 to 1.67 at standard deviations ranging from 0.00 to 0.048.

Results presented in this regard reflect teachers are delighted with the presence of their student teachers in the classroom. Their responses reveal that they are always willing to mentor student teachers, even though it requires extra effort and time on their part. However, some feel discomfort when they have student teachers in their classroom in that they cannot work with their routine since they need to attend to the their student teachers' needs. Current literature in teacher education focuses on the changes that cooperating teachers undergo in relation with other people, contexts and situations (Awaya, et al., 2003) and how such relations are negotiated on the journey to professional development. The mentoring context introduces teachers to a new role in the workplace while interacting with student teachers and teacher trainers.

Also, responses of the cooperating teachers are reflections of what they had experienced when they were once student teachers. Their pleasant experiences reflected how they mentor student teachers nowadays, their perceptions of what teaching is, mirrors how they value their profession which can be shared to the next generation. This idea is reinforced by Beijard et al., (2000) when they contend that cooperating teachers' perceptions of teaching are closely tied to their professional self-image and perspective of what it means to them to be a teacher. These perceptions of the cooperating teachers

have implications for the way they view teacher education.

Further analysis of the data from the obtained mean scores also shows that cooperating teachers in the BSED perceived their roles better than those of the BEED. This means that these identified roles were practiced by them regularly much better than those of the BEED. Observed differences in the obtained mean score can be attributed to the fact that assumed roles of BEED cooperating teachers are quite different from those of the BSED cooperating teachers.

3. On the Roles of Cooperating Teachers as actually observed by the University Supervisors

Table 3 reflects the role of cooperating teachers, as perceived by the university supervisors. As reflected in the table, university supervisors' actual observations on cooperating teachers' contribution to student teachers' professional development show that cooperating teachers perform hands-on supervised teaching. In the same vein, they enhance student teachers' skills in disciplining students as well as train student teachers to be an effective facilitator. Furthermore, their observation reveals that cooperating teachers extend moral support and assist student teachers in preparing for their demonstration.

On the other hand, considering observed improvement in student teachers after off campus, results reveal that almost all of the university supervisors observed improvement in student teachers after undergoing off campus training. Observed improvements are attributed to enhanced self-confidence, self-esteem, sense of responsibility, and leadership skills more pointedly, they become more mature and dependable as well as more passionate and organized. Improvement was also observed in the way they manage the classroom and develop initiative on how to solve problems encountered along the way.

Furthermore, results reflected in this table indicate that some of the improvements in student teachers after their off campus training were due to the mentoring process of their cooperating teachers. The fact that they experienced actual teaching and could handle and interact with the pupils/students in the classroom are evidences of the guidance of their cooperating teachers. Then, the epiphany on the positive changes taking place in the intern's professional and personal growth may be traced to the mentor-mentee mentoring process. The skills, knowledge, and professionalism developed by the student teachers as improvement, after they have gone through with practice teaching are accounted to cooperating teachers' efforts and dedication. Although, there are instances where cooperating teachers are not doing their tasks well, but generally they have been an instrument to the professional development of student teachers.

Cooperating teachers play a vital role in the professional development of student interns. Although they serve as mentors, most cooperating teachers do not receive comprehensive or coordinated preparation for their role as effective mentors (<http://www.readperiodicals.com/201104/2477422431.html#b>).

According to He (2010), the mentee or pre-service teacher needs significant guidance in both pedagogical and content knowledge throughout the mentoring process. In fact, He says, that the mentoring experience is one of the primary factors that determine the success of the first-year or beginning teacher's experience.

Similarly, internship field experience plays a significant role in shaping the beliefs and knowledge of the prospective teacher (Eisenhart et al., 1993, as cited in Borko & Mayfield, 1995). The field experience is often considered the culminating capstone event for a teacher education program, as well as a critical milestone toward becoming an effective teacher (McIntyre et al., 1996). To Guyton and McIntyre (1990), surveys of practicing teachers indicate that they overwhelmingly rate their student teaching or

internship experience as the most beneficial and critical component of their teacher education program.

The internship provides opportunities for interns (novice teachers) to collaborate and be actively mentored by cooperating teachers (veteran teachers). Typically, university teacher education programs select experienced teachers to serve as cooperating teachers and mentors based on factors that may include prior collaboration, credentials, and teacher availability or willingness to work with an intern. Generally, the cooperating teachers are eager and willing to facilitate in this supervisory role, but oftentimes they are ill-prepared to serve as effective mentors (He, 2010). The ideal setting for the mentee is one that is welcoming, accepting, and supportive (Cain, 2009). Furthermore, mentors are often expected to function in multiple roles and meet an unrealistic standard envisioned by the beginning teacher (He, 2010). When the mentor is unable to meet this standard, the mentor-mentee relationship is often stressed (Bullough & Draper, 2004). Because the beginning teacher tends to be impressionable and the internship experience pivotal to his or her development, it is critical to investigate methods or strategies that better prepare the cooperating teacher to be an effective mentor. Moreover, research has shown that the more formal preparation the mentor receives, the more effective they become (Iancu-Haddad et al., 2009). Subsequently, promoting successful mentoring relationships is a very important step toward developing student interns into effective practitioners.

Conclusions

In sum, cooperating teachers greatly contributed to the formation and development of the student teachers' professional growth.

However, cooperating teachers do not often give student teachers the opportunity to observe much of their techniques/practices in carrying the teaching-learning process. Student teachers were

immediately required to hold classes or take over classes of absentee teachers.

Recommendations

There must be further study as to the extent cooperating teachers' classroom practices influence student teachers' classroom practices in carrying out their actual tasks as in-service teachers.

Equally, the University should provide more training to student teachers on campus before they are sent for off campus stint.

It is also recommended that a comparative study be done, as to the extent of learning student teachers acquired from on campus and off campus training.

Recommended Guidelines for Student Teaching Program

A. For the University to formulate policies regarding Student Teachers on the following: They should.

- Have a GPA (grade point average) of 88 for all courses in Prof. Ed., FS and specialization.
- Possess the character and personality of a true and dedicated teacher as recommended by the FS professors.
- Observe FS keenly, practice diligence carrying out assigned task
- Deal with children professionally
- Apply knowledge of the growth and behavior of children in managing and organizing the classroom environment.

B. For the DepEd to provide TEIs Student Teachers with;

- Experienced, effective and dedicated cooperating teachers whom student teachers can emulate.
- Authentic teaching learning environment for the student teachers.

- Continuous feedback on the progress and development of the student teacher's teaching craft.
- Willing partner of the Teacher Education Institutions in the development of future molders of the youth.

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