# MENTORING PROCESS OF PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS DURING TEACHING PRACTICE

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## ABSTRACT

This present study was aimed at investigating the mentoring process underwent by pre-service teachers during teaching practice, and the difficulties faced by them. The qualitative method was adopted, and interview and focus group discussion were used as the techniques of collecting data. Three pre-service teachers were selected as the participants of this study. The findings revealed that the pre-service teachers encountered different process of mentoring. Three of pre-service teachers experienced different frequency of mentoring, time, content, support and feedback of mentoring. The frequency of mentoring was done differently. The first pre-service teacher did the mentoring at any time if needed, the second one after the class finished, and the third one only three times during teaching practice. Regarding the time of mentoring, it was mostly done after the class finished, but sometimes only when the pre-service felt that the material was so difficult for their students. In the light of difficulties during the mentoring process, they faced five aspects; conflicting role expectation, compelled to emulate mentor, mentee exploitations, lack of constructive feedback, mentor distrust. The findings of this study contribute to the English Education Study Program particularly on the preparation for the students concerning teaching practice. They should be informed that mentoring is pivotal component that has to be faced during teaching practice.

**Keywords:** *mentoring process, pre-service teachers, teaching practice*

## INTRODUCTION

Learning to teach is pivotal for pre-service teachers during their study in teacher education program. This learning to teach phase is realized in the teaching practice which is usually taken place at the end of their four-year study. In teacher education program, teaching practice has been acknowledged as the most significant component and lying at the heart of teacher developmental process (Mutlu, 2014). Meanwhile, Richards & Farrell (2011) also state that, "Practice teaching is a part of most teacher education programs in language teaching and is intended to provide a link between the academic courses you studied in your university and the "real" world of teachers and students in a language-learning classroom" (Brenes-Carvajal 2009; Farrell 2007).

During teaching practice, pre-service teachers often encounter problems such as in the area of classroom discipline (Mutlu, 2014), assessing students' work (Veenman, 1984), and dealing with individual differences and managing relationships with parents (Vaughn, Boss & Schumm, 1997). These problems should be solved, and the person who can help the pre-service teachers coping with the problems during teaching practice at schools is mentor teachers. The mentor teachers are responsible for helping pre-service teachers to prepare themselves for teaching, and providing them the opportunity to observe other lessons, and

the process of helping the pre-service teachers is called mentoring.

The studies on mentoring have been an interest for the researchers. Reis (2012) reveals that several challenges could negatively influence the mentoring relationship such as conflicting role expectations, compelled to emulate mentor, mentee exploitations, lack of constructive feedback and mentor distrust. Meanwhile, the study conducted by Herald (2014) identifies the mentoring need of pre-service teachers in that the mentors assist pre-service teachers in meeting their needs and overcoming some of the challenges that they may face on entering the teaching profession. On the basis of those studies, this research focuses on exploring the mentoring process between the pre-service teachers and their mentors, and the difficulties faced by pre-service teachers during the process. Therefore, the research questions to be addressed are:

1. How are the mentoring processes experienced by the pre-service teachers during the teaching practice in Profession Practice Program?
2. What are the difficulties faced by the pre-service teachers in mentoring process during teaching practice?

## THEORETICAL BACKGROUND
### Teaching Practice in English Teacher Education Program
Teaching practice is one of the important elements in English teacher education program and an important component in the teacher-training curriculum (National Education Philosophy and Teachers Education Philosophy, The Teacher Education Department, 2005) Furthermore, Noel (2007, p.15) asserts that "Teaching practice is as the most important element in teacher education because it prepares teacher trainees to meet the demands in the world of teaching. It also gives the teacher trainees

a chance to understand their learners and enables the efficient application of teaching method into real classroom."

Teaching practice forms a critical part of the teacher training of the beginning teacher's first experience in a real school setting. It is a time where pre-service teachers are able to test out new or different strategies and apply what they have learned in their lectures to classrooms situations. It could also be a time to experience and learn to cope with occupational stress while they are having practicum. In other words, teaching practice program gives the pre-service teachers the opportunity to develop their skills in teaching and learning process in a real classroom. They get good experience although they should pass the difficulties during their practice. In order for the teachers to be able to cope with their difficulties, the mentor teachers provide help and guidance in the mentoring process.

### Mentoring Process
Pre-service teachers rely on their mentors to upgrade the skills and knowledge necessary to be successful in the classroom. Mentoring is a popular model of teaching practice to enable pre-service teachers to implement the pedagogical theories using practical realities of the classroom (Ngoepe, 2014). Moreover, mentoring is the process of helping pre-service teachers to learn how to teach in a school based setting (Tomlinson, 1995; Hobson, 2001).

The aspects of the mentoring process that need to be discussed amongst pre-service teachers such as the understanding of system requirements (curriculum, school policies and assessment), writing of lesson plans, articulate pedagogical knowledge (such as teaching strategies, classroom management, motivating students and dealing with unexpected situations), and providing direct and detailed feedback about teaching performance (Hudson,

2002), particularly on their teaching methods and more opportunities to teach as well as time management (Blank and Sinderlar (1992); and Klausmeier (1994)). The mentoring process in this study covers frequency, time, content, support and feedback as proposed by Bonavidi (2013).

In short, pre-service teachers should undergo the mentoring in order that they can perform in the real classroom well. In contrast, during mentoring process, miss communication between the mentor and the pre-service teachers exists.

## The Difficulties Faced by Pre-Service Teachers in Mentoring Process

Most of the recent studies focus on investigating the sources of the difficulties encountered by pre-service teachers, for example, Murray-Harvey et al. (2000) who invited 607 Australian students, having completed their practicum studies, to respond to a questionnaire to elicit information about their concerns on teaching. The result revealed that the difficulties encountered by them were among other, being observed and evaluated by the supervisor, managing the class and enforcing discipline, managing time and coping with the overall teaching workload.

Meanwhile, several challenges have been revealed in national and international empirical studies that could negatively influence the mentoring relationship (Reis, 2012) such as the followings :

1. Conflicting Role Expectations
   Bradbury and Koballa (2008) explored the difficulties that arose in a mentoring relationship during a one year internship and claim that tension between the mentor and mentee is inevitable during an internship. School-based mentors and pre-service teachers had different expectations of the mentoring relationship and thus problems arose because they did not communicate their expectations at the beginning of the mentoring relationship.

2. Compelled to Emulate Mentor
   According to Zanting and Verloop (2001) pre-service teachers were compelled by their mentors to emulate their teaching style. For example, a pre-service teacher complained that her mentor wanted her to model his method of teaching and she refused as it did not suit her personality and her belief that there is not only one suitable method of teaching a particular subject. Hence pre-service teachers found it difficult to develop their own initiative for lesson preparation and other teaching duties (Zanting and Verloop, 2001).

3. Mentee Exploitations
   Mentee exploitation could be a result of mentor teachers not always being aware of their expected role as mentors (Hamel and Fischer, 2011). Pre-service teachers complained that mentors being unaware of what is expected of the pre-service teachers resulted in these mentees being given a workload that does not allow them to concentrate on other assignments required by the university (Hamel and Fischer, 2011).

4. Lack of Constructive Feedback
   Whilst it was found that school-based mentors do provide feedback, the problem pre-service teachers faced was the lack of constructive feedback provided by teachers (Nillas, 2010:83). According to Nillas (2010:71) the pre-service teachers indicated that the school-based mentor provided feedback that was "inconsistent and unspecific".

5. Mentor Distrust
   Kiggundu and Nayimuli, (2009:356) found that mentors would not allow

student teachers to take over their classes as they felt that the student teachers were wasting time, since the mentors had to complete the syllabus before the academic year ended. This was a clear indication that the mentors had trust issues with the pre-service teachers and viewed the pre-service teachers as incompetent to teach.

## METHOD

This study adopted qualitative research design to investigate the pre-service teachers' experience in mentoring process with mentor teachers, as well as the difficulties faced by them in mentoring process during teaching practice. The participants of this study were three pre service teachers of English Education Study Program at a university in Bogor who have taken Profession Practice Program in the year 2016/2017. The participants were chosen using purposive sampling. In other words, the researchers selected the sample on the basis of their experience and knowledge. The techniques for collecting the data were interview and focus group discussion.

The participants were interviewed to know their insights of the mentoring process with mentor teachers and the difficulties faced by them. The focus group discussion was done to explore the mentoring process and the difficulties.

The result of focus group discussion was analyzed to corroborate the data from the interview. All data were then triangulated qualitatively in order to reduce potential bias that may happen in this present study.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

As stated earlier, the problems that seek to answer were 1) pre-service teachers' mentoring process with mentor teachers, and 2) the difficulties faced by pre-service teachers in mentoring process during their teaching practice. The data to answer those problems were taken from interview and focus group discussion.

### Pre-Service Teachers' Mentoring Process

The mentoring process in this study covered frequency, time, content, support and feedback as proposed by Bonavidi (2013). The data from interview showed that the pre-service teachers had to undergo the mentoring with mentor teachers before teaching in the real classrooms. The detail explanation of the data is presented below.

### Frequency

Frequency is how often the pre-service teachers do the mentoring process during their teaching practice. Below is the description of the pre-service teachers' frequency of mentoring.

### Table 4.1 Frequency of Mentoring

| PST 1 | PST 2 | PST 3 |
|---|---|---|
| *I did the mentoring at any time as long as I did the teaching practice* | *I did the mentoring regularly as long as I did the teaching practice* | *I did the mentoring only three times as long as I did the Profession Practice Program* |

From the table above, it could be concluded that the pre-service teachers had a different frequency of mentoring process. The first pre-service teachers told that she did the mentoring at any time. Meanwhile, the second pre-service teacher explained that he did the mentoring regularly after he finished the teaching learning process. However, the third pre-service teacher did the

mentoring only three times as long as she did the Profession Practice Program. Therefore, the second pre-service teacher was the most often doing the mentoring. Meanwhile, the first pre-service teacher was more often than the third pre-service teacher.

This is also supported by the comments from pre-service teacher in focus group discussion related to frequency of mentoring.

*"When I did the teaching practice, I met my mentor at any time if needed."*

*"It did not happen on me. I always did the mentoring regularly."*

*"Unfortunately, I did the mentoring only three times as long as I did the teaching practice."*

### Time

Time is something that describes when the mentoring is done. The time of mentoring happened differently. The detail data of pre-service teachers' time of mentoring can be seen in the table below.

**Table 4.2 Time of Mentoring**

| PST 1 | PST 2 | PST 3 |
|---|---|---|
| *Sometimes, I did the mentoring with mentor teacher when I felt the material was so difficult for students* | *I did the mentoring every after the class finished* | *The first was when I met with the mentor for the first time. The second was in the middle of the Profession Practice Program. The last was before I did the examination of teaching practice in Profession Practice Program* |

From the table above, it could be concluded that the first pre-service teacher did the mentoring when she thought that the materials were so difficult for the students. Meanwhile, the second pre-service teacher did the mentoring after the class finished. It means that the second pre-service teacher did the mentoring after he did the teaching learning process. The third pre-service teacher did the mentoring only three times. The first was when she met with the mentor for the first time. The second was in the middle of the Profession Practice Program. The last was before she did the examination of teaching practice in Profession Practice Program.

This is also supported by comments from pre-service teacher in focus group discussion related to time of mentoring.

*"I did the mentoring with mentor teacher when I felt that the material was so difficult for student. So I think that I should consult it with mentor"*

*"I did the mentoring every after the class finished."*

*"The first was when I met with mentor for the first time. The second was in the middle of the Profession Practice Program. The last was before I did the examination of teaching practice".*

### Content

Content is something discussed during the mentoring process. There are several contents discussed in mentoring related to pre-service teachers' needs. The detail data of pre-service teachers' content of mentoring is discussed below.

**Table 4.3 Content of Mentoring**

| PST 1 | PST 2 | PST 3 |
|---|---|---|
| *I always consulted about my lesson plan and asked about the students* | *I discussed about the next material for the next meeting* | *I discussed about the schedule of teaching, the materials for teaching which was appropriate with the curriculum, the school's habit and the assessment of the students* |

From the table above, it could be concluded that there were several materials discussed in the mentoring process. The first pre-service teacher consulted about the lesson plan and discussed about the students. The second pre-service teacher discussed about the next materials. The third pre-service teacher discussed about the schedule of teaching, the materials for teaching which was appropriate with the curriculum, the school's habit and the assessment of the students.

This is also supported by comments from pre-service teachers related to content of mentoring. Below are the comments from focus group discussion.

*"In mentoring, my mentor and I discussed about the lesson plan and I asked about the students' characteristic."*
*"Mentor and I only talked about the next material for the next meeting."*
*"I discussed about the schedule of teaching, the materials for teaching which was appropriate with the curriculum, the school's habit and the assessment given for the students".*

**Support**
Support is one of the important things in mentoring process. It is needed by pre-service teachers in order the teaching practice goes well. Here is the detail explanation of support of mentoring.

**Table 4.4 Support of Mentoring**

| PST 1 | PST 2 | PST 3 |
|---|---|---|
| *The mentor really supported me. She trusted me in teaching practice.* | *The mentor supported me in teaching learning process.* | *The mentor supported me in teaching practice.* |

From the table above, it could be concluded that the three of pre-service teachers gave the support from their mentors. The mentor trusted them to teach their class. However, the mentor still gave them guidance in order they can teach the students well.

Comments coming from pre-service teachers in focus group discussion related to the support of mentoring are presented below.

*"The mentor was really support me to teach the classroom. Mentor trusted on me."*
*"I was supported by the mentor well".*

**Feedback**
Feedback is something given to pre-service teacher in developing their skill in teaching. The detail explanation is presented in table below.

**Table 4.5 Feedback of Mentor in Mentoring**

| PST 1 | PST 2 | PST 3 |
|---|---|---|
| *My mentor gave me the strategies in teaching and how to manage class well* | *My mentor commented about my performance if there were some mistakes. The mentor also gave me some motivations* | *I had never been controlled as long as I taught in the class. But, the mentor just checked me to the class for a while without any comments. Even, when I came to the school for the opening of Profession Practice Program, my mentor asked me to teach in the class directly without any preparations. The mentor only told me what should do in the class first.* |

From the table above, two of pre-service teachers got a good feedback on their teaching in mentoring process. However, the third pre-service teacher did not get a good enough feedback. During the teaching practice, the pre-service teacher was only checked once without any comments. In addition, the third pre-service teacher was asked to teach the class directly without the preparations. The mentor only told what they should do in the class first.

This is also supported by comments from pre-service teachers related to the feedback of mentoring.

*"My mentor commented of my performance in teaching. Mentor talked that if there were some mistakes. But, the mentor also gave the motivation to me".*

*"I had never been controlled as long as I taught in the class. But, the mentor just checked me to the class for a while without any comments. Even, when I came to the school for the opening of Profession Practice Program, my mentor asked me to teach in the class directly without any preparations. The mentor*
*only told me what should do in the class first".*

Based on the obtained data from the three pre-service teachers above, they got different experiences in mentoring process as proposed by Hobson (2002) and Bonavidi (2013) who states that three important things in mentoring process include frequency, time, content, support and feedback. Three of pre-service teacher got the different frequency of mentoring, time of mentoring, content of mentoring, support and feedback of mentoring.

**The Difficulties Faced by Pre-Service Teachers in Mentoring Process**

The data shows that there were several difficulties faced by pre-service teachers in mentoring process during their teaching practice. In this research, five difficulties were found: conflicting role expectation, compelled to emulate mentor, mentee exploitations, lack of constructive feedback and mentor distrust (Reis, 2012). The detail explanations are discussed below.

**Table 4.6 The Difficulties Faced by Pre-Service Teachers
in Mentoring Process**

| PST | Mentoring Process' Difficulties | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Conflicting role expectation | Compelled to emulate mentor | Mentee exploitations | Lack of constructive feedback | Mentor distrust |
| 1 | - | - | - | - | - |
| 2 | - | √ | √ | - | - |
| 3 | - | √ | - | √ | - |

The table indicates that the pre-service teachers faced several difficulties in mentoring process. The difficulties faced by them were conflicting role expectations, compelled to emulate mentor, mentee exploitations, lack of constructive feedback and mentor distrust. However, not all difficulties were faced by pre-service teachers.

**Conflicting role expectations**
Three of pre-service teachers told that they did not face this in mentoring process during their teaching practice. Comments coming from pre-service teachers related to conflict role expectation are presented below:

*"When I did the first mentoring, the mentor and I shared about the things that I would do during the teaching practice. I also told the mentor the purpose I did the teaching practice. So, the mentor knew my expectation in teaching practice and also the mentor told what I should do during the teaching practice".*

*"I did not face it. Everything was well until I finished the teaching practice".*

**Compelled to emulate mentor**
Two of the pre-service teachers reported that the mentor expected them taught using the same method and the same style of the mentor. As it is indicated in their comments:

*"When I did the mentoring, the mentor always told that I should be like the mentor. The mentor demanded to emulate the pre-service teacher with him".*

*"I also felt it. The mentor demanded the pre-service teacher to teach same as the mentor with the same method and style".*

**Mentee exploitations**
One of the pre-service teachers addressed that mentee exploitation was one of the difficulties. The following comment of the pre-service teacher is presented below:

*"I asked to do a lot of things except the teaching learning process. I had to collect the students' absent of all the class in the school, etc."*

**Lack of constructive feedback**
One of the pre-service teacher reported that she did the mentoring rarely. The mentor did not give her any comments after the teaching learning process. Comment from pre-service teacher related to the lack of constructive feedback is presented below:

*"I only did the mentoring three times from the beginning until the ending of the Profession Practice Program. I had never been controlled by the mentor during the teaching learning process. The mentor came to the class to check the pre-service teacher. It happened*

*once. However, the mentor did not give any advice or any comments".*

**Mentor distrust**
Three of pre-service teachers reported that they did not face it. The mentor trusted to the pre-service teacher. Below is the comment of the pre-service teacher.

*"My mentor allowed me to handle the class. But, the mentor gave me some instructions. Overall, the mentor trusted me to take over the class".*

Based on the obtained data from the three pre-service teachers above, they faced several difficulties in mentoring process as proposed by Reis (2012): conflicting role expectations, compelled to emulate mentor, mentee exploitations, lack of constructive feedback and mentor distrust.

**DISCUSSION**
This study explores the mentoring process and the difficulties faced by pre-service teachers in mentoring process during their teaching practice. The findings revealed that the pre-service teachers underwent different mentoring process. Five things appeared in mentoring process: frequency, time, content, support and feedback. Three pre-service teachers experienced different frequency of mentoring, time of mentoring, content of mentoring, support and feedback of mentoring (Bonavidi, (2013).

The frequency of mentoring was done differently. The first pre-service teacher did at any time if needed. The second pre-service teacher did regularly after the class finished. Meanwhile, the third pre-service teacher did only three times during teaching practice. In addition, the time of mentoring was done after the class finished, sometimes, when the pre-service felt that the material was so difficult for students.

The findings revealed that the pre-service teachers consulted the lesson plan with mentor teacher before they were teaching in the classroom. After the class finished, the mentor gave them advice, and commented them on the mistakes made during the teaching learning process. The mentor shared her experience in teaching, how to handle the students, how to manage classroom well and the strategies used in teaching process.

Those are in accordance with Hudson's (2008) theory stating that during mentoring process, the things to be discussed between pre-service teachers and mentor covers the understanding of system requirements (curriculum, school policies and assessment), writing of lesson plans, articulate pedagogical knowledge (such as teaching strategies, classroom management, motivating students) and dealing with unexpected situations and providing direct and detailed feedback about teaching performance. This study also found that pre-service teachers require constructive feedback on their teaching methods and more opportunities to teach as Hudson (2002) suggests that mentor provides constructive guidance such as sharing teaching experiences and giving clear advice.

Regarding the difficulties faced by the pre-service teachers, three of pre-service teachers did not face conflicting role expectations in mentoring process. Two of them reported that the mentor expected them to teach using the same method and style as those of the mentor's. Concerning the frequency, one of the pre-service teachers did the mentoring rarely because the mentor did not give her any comments after the teaching learning process done. This condition made the teacher reluctant to do the mentoring. Meanwhile, in terms of mentor distrust (Reis, 2012), all teachers did not encounter that problem since the mentor trusted them.

## CONCLUSION

This research has two purposes: 1) to investigate pre-service teachers in mentoring during teaching practice and 2) the difficulties faced by pre-service teachers during mentoring process. The findings revealed that the pre-service teachers encountered different process of mentoring. Three of pre-service teachers experienced different frequency of mentoring, time, content, support and feedback of mentoring. The other findings showed that the pre-service teachers consulted the lesson plan with mentor teacher before they were teaching in the classroom. The mentor shared her experience in teaching, how to handle the students, how to manage classroom well as well as teaching strategies.In the light of difficulties in mentoring process, the pre-service teachers faced five aspects 1) conflicting role expectation, 2) compelled to emulate mentor, 3) mentee exploitations, 4) lack of constructive feedback and 5) mentor distrust.

The findings of this study contribute to the preparation of the pre service teachers for teaching practice. They should be informed that mentoring is one pivotal component that has to be faced during teaching practice.

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