MENTORS OF NEOPHYTE TEACHERS IN A MICRO-ASIAN CONTEXT SPEAK

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Abstract

The experiences of neophyte teachers are characterized by difficulties due to lack of expertise on the job, numerous studies here and abroad reveal. However, their findings remain inconclusive. They clamor to undergo a formal mentoring program. The key players in the mentoring program are the mentors. This case study with a phenomenological slant used focus group discussion and semi-structured interviews in soliciting the mentor’s perspectives in managing a mentoring program. The same to be viable it should be formal and institutionalized. It is important that systems on program duration, mentee’s preferred schedule, subject time allotment and mentors’ remuneration should be in place. From the constant problems met by the mentees, mentors gathered cues on how to implement a mentoring program to include areas on classroom management, student assessment and evaluation, teaching strategies and research and orientation to local school policies. The above mentoring program cues can be applied in teaching universities in the Philippines and in the Asian context.

Keywords: Neophyte Teachers, Mentors, Mentees, Mentoring Program

Introduction

Teacher mentoring program is commonplace in universities and colleges in the Philippines and abroad. Mentoring program exists as either formally or informally in a school or university system. The principal actor in a teacher mentoring program is the mentor who is commonly called a buddy, coach and master teacher. Usually, a mentor is a veteran teacher who assists and supports the new teacher as the latter develops from student teacher to a teacher of students. Mentors support neophyte teachers in different ways. They familiarize new teachers with the new teaching context, conducts physical tour of the university facilities, introduce beginning teachers to the faculty and staff, spearhead orientation activities on policies and procedures; teach grading philosophies and they offer arrangements and suggestions for lessons and classroom management techniques to the teacher neophytes.

Still other mentors conduct discussion sessions on varied pedagogical issues and their effects on student learning. On many occasions they pave the way for situations that allow
new teachers to reflect on their performances and decisions so as to impact good student outcomes. By doing so, the mentors become change agent who consciously or unconsciously seek to effect change and establish a new culture of collaboration and commitment for the continued growth and professional development of new teachers.

In delivering their many important tasks as mentors, the latter encounter numerous problem challenges, tough situations that may serve as cues of what should constitute, compose and form part of the viable teacher mentoring program for beginning teachers. Hence this study focusing on the problems and issues met by the mentors in mentoring the neophyte teachers served as bases in formulating and proposing cues for a viable teacher mentoring program from the perspectives of the mentors in a teaching university.

Review of Literature
Mentors’ Role and Responsibilities
A mentor performs multi-faceted roles and responsibilities. The mentor plays a vital role on the implementing of teacher induction program. Acquainting neophyte teachers to the new teaching environment, providing physical tours in the school premises, getting new teachers to know the existing faculty and staff, explaining and discussing policies and procedures of the university or school, orienting grading systems, demonstrating proper classroom management procedure and techniques are some of the varied role and responsibilities assumed and performed by the mentors in new teachers.

An educational companion is a label applied to the mentors. Instructional concerns and its effect on student performance are discussed and threshed out by mentors with the new teachers. The mentors likewise provide opportunities for the new teachers to reflect on their teaching performance and the decisions that they make relative to student outcomes.

Issues, Problems and Proposed Solutions in Mentoring Neophyte Teachers
Exploring on the emotional aspects of mentoring Bullough Jr. and Draper (2007) discovered that mentors downplay the magnitude and complexity of their work as mentors. Hence they argued that to generate the benefits of mentoring neophyte teachers’ mentees should be exposed and made to recognize the hardships associated with mentoring in order to arrive at rich conversations about teaching and learning processes.

In the study of Yordem and Akyol (2014) on the problems of Mentoring System from the perspectives of faculty tutors problematic aspects of mentoring surfaced to include mentors not receiving formal instructions as to what to do during the mentoring, the mentoring system focused more on administrative concerns rather than mentoring processes,
mentors lack mentor – training seminars and finally mentoring class size were large and therefore the number of mentees assigned to one mentor needed to be reduced. It was further illustrated in the above mentioned study that problems in mentoring neophyte teachers arise from the lack of information regarding mentoring and the lack of dissemination of the mentoring system. The study argued that mentoring processes should be formal, its various aspects and details properly explained, discussed, debated or rejected by those involved.

Mentors help apply and connect pedagogical theories to actual teaching practice (Kizildag, 2011). In his study on the assessment of Mentorship Model in Teacher Education, a mentor described how she helped teachers connect theory to teaching practice among mentees would be during mentoring meetings on matters like classroom behavioral differences among girls and boys where practical understanding is shared by the mentors on solving and managing classroom discipline.

One of the many factors that can affect senior teachers to become a mentor are expected costs and rewards: troublesome costs of mentoring was that mentoring was more trouble than it was worth. Mentoring costs include mentor-mentee dysfunctional relationships, nepotism, poor protégé’s reflecting badly on the mentor and energy drain could reflect on the latter too (Allen, 2007).

Eby and Mcmanus (2004) reported several problems linked to mentoring relationships. The themes identified include exploitation and egocentricity, malevolent deceptions, sabotage, harassment, interpersonal difficulty, spoiling, benign deception, submissiveness, performance below expectations and unwillingness to learn.

A study on mentoring relationships as reported by the mentors themselves revealed that the willingness to become a mentor is significantly associated with a selection of a particular mentee by the mentor (Allen, 2007). In interviews with experienced mentors, results gathered that what attracted the mentors to their mentees was that the latter reminded the mentors of themselves and that they had a lot in common.

Mullen’s (1998) study yielded no relationship between time spent together and mentor reports of mentoring provided.

**Research Questions**

1. What are the experiences and problems met by the mentors in mentoring the neophyte teachers?

2. What are the cues proposed by the mentors in order to implement a viable neophyte teachers’ mentoring program?
Theoretical Framework

Faculty mentoring or mentorship programs in universities have been created to address common as well as diverse needs among teacher neophytes. Several of these needs fall along development in the profession, emotional support, intellectual pursuits, role models, safe and severe space, accountability, sponsorship, opportunity access and feedback needs. Indeed, career benefits had been reaped from the implementation of faculty mentorship programs to include salary increase, work promotions, job satisfaction learning, organizational commitment, productivity at work and job retention.

Positive career outcomes resulting from job mentoring has not escaped the notice of the academia. Higher education institutions, universities and colleges have implemented varied faculty mentoring models in which conceived to accommodate diverse academic context and development needs.

It is on this regard that a teaching university in the Philippines which is seemingly devoid of a formal and official faculty mentoring program ventured to explore on the problematic situations experienced by faculty mentors in a teaching university taken from the mentors’ perspectives with the end goal of arriving at cues towards the development of a viable teacher mentoring program for teacher neophytes in a teaching university.

Our underlying assumption of this study is there is no one and only single mentoring model that best fit a university but that is always a mixed of a combination of faculty mentoring models because of the diverse and uniquely differing aspects of an academic life in a particular university.

Hence this study anchored on seven (7) Mentorship Models for faculty development sponsored and adopted by the School of Medicine at Wake Forestry University, Rochester Institute of Technology and the School of Medicine at Indiana University (Hanover Research, 2014), described thus:
# Seven Faculty Mentorship Models

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Features and Characteristics</th>
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| **One-to-One Mentoring** | 1. One mentor meets with one mentee at a time.  
2. This is the traditionally accepted model.  
3. The mentor pays individualized attention to the mentee for greater rapport building.  
4. Mentor-mentee relationship lasts for a number of years and even become a lifelong partnership.  
5. The mentoring program is highly structured.  
6. It has multiple outcomes for both the mentor and mentee. |
| **Group Mentoring** | 1. One mentor meets with multiple mentees at a time.  
2. Mentees typically have a common or similar goal.  
3. This method is especially effective in situations where time and mentoring resources are at a premium.  
4. Once a level of trust and openness has been achieved, this model is also effective for tapping into collective knowledge, where shared knowledge and ideas can trigger larger possibilities. |
| **Team Mentoring** | 1. Multiple mentors work with single mentee.  
2. The relationship lasts for a limited time, until the goal is achieved or the project is completed.  
3. The focus of the mentoring relationship is the function of the group, rather than any psychosocial bonding.  
4. The mentors are assembled to act as guides and resources, providing feedback on the work, but it is the responsibility of the mentee to bear the burden of learning and to move the project forward. |
| **Peer Mentoring** | 1. Another junior faculty member or members provide guidance and/or feedback to a junior faculty member.  
2. These relationships can be one-to-one or as a group, and are an informally structured relationship.  
3. This type of mentoring can be effective for sharing job related knowledge or to share insight on some of the challenges and experiences the others may encounter. |
| **E-Mentoring** | 1. One mentor works with a single mentee at a time via the Internet.  
2. Some programs factor in an initial meeting or periodic face-to-face meetings, if distance is not too much of a barrier, but most do not because the participants are in vastly separate locales.  
3. This type of mentoring is extremely helpful for schools or organizations that have multiple branches around the world.  
4. It is also a great way for participants in different locations but common fields to establish mentoring relationships.  
5. However, it is important that both parties be self-motivated to maintain regular communications and complete agreed upon tasks without the traditional "face time" to serve as an impetus. |
| **Informal Mentoring** | 1. The mentee self-selects their mentor, usually initiated as part of a conversation or because the mentor is someone the mentee has identified as a role model.  
2. These relationships develop naturally, may not include any formal agreement, and may not have any formalized structure to them.  
3. Most of the relationship progresses at the behest of the mentee and... |
even though there are goals, measures of success are seldom kept track of.

| Reverse Mentoring | 1. The junior faculty member has more experience or knowledge in a particular area than the senior faculty member.  
2. This kind of mentoring can be used when the senior person needs to know about a particular kind of new technology or can be used to encourage diversity and cross generational understanding.  
3. For this kind of mentoring to be successful, it is important to remove barriers of status and position and to create a safe, open environment. |

Source: Wake Forest University

With the above faculty mentorship models thoroughly described, its characteristics elucidated, it is with great expectations and ample possibilities that the cues which could be generated for a viable teacher mentoring program as a result of this study could be closely linked and that the cues could be pre-dominantly identified with several models from which a future faculty mentoring program of this particular teaching university or other universities with similar characteristics would be hinged, adopted and finally institutionalized.

Methodology

This phenomenological study has explored the experiences of senior teachers who have acted and were considered as mentors of the neophyte teachers in a teaching university. The qualitative research was an appropriate methodology for this study to solicit the lived experiences of the senior teachers on their actual encounter with the neophyte teachers and took the role as mentors in an informal manner. As the mentors of the neophyte teachers speak, what they have shared in this phenomenological inquiry would serve as take-off point in crafting a more formal, comprehensive and beneficial mentoring arrangement to both parties. This part of the paper describes the research design and its setting, the process of identifying and selecting the participants, research instruments and the manner of collecting the data.

Research Design

This phenomenological study has employed the case study approach in describing the experiences of the teacher-mentors of the neophyte teachers. According to Lester (1999), the purpose of phenomenological approach is to illuminate the specific phenomena through how they are perceived by the actors in a situation and normally translates into gathering deep information and perceptions through inductive, qualitative methods such as interviews, discussions and participant observation, and representing it from the perspective of the research participant. This approach was deemed appropriate at surfacing the concerns and views of mentors and making their opinions heard.
Research Setting
This study was held in a government operated university located in Tacloban City, Philippines. The school has three colleges, the biggest in terms of enrollees is the College of Education, the College of Arts and Sciences and the College of Management and Entrepreneurship and it caters to an annual average number of students of 6,500 to 7,000 per year who are enrolled in the 35 curricular programs in the undergraduate and graduate levels. The most recent record of manpower of the university, it has 132 teaching staff and this translates to an average ratio of more or less 50 students for every teacher. The university’s vision and mission dictates to produce top performing professionals equipped to engage on knowledge and technology production, which are necessary factors to develop a sustainable society. Consistent to its vision, the school has been producing topnotchers both in the Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET) and in the Licensure Examination for Social Workers and high caliber professionals in the fields of hospitality management, arts, sciences and humanities.

Research Participants
The main goal of this study is to account and document the lived experiences of senior teachers who have been informally tapped as mentors and suppliers of experience-based know-how and ideas that are deemed helpful for the beginning teachers in the university. As such, six participants were identified and participated in the focus group discussion and the interviews and these are teachers who are considered as seniors with 5 to 25 years of teaching experience inside and outside the university. Five of the participants have designations as unit heads of the different departments and units in the university where the neophyte teachers are assigned during the time of the conduct of this study, while the other one is a senior teacher. Therefore, it cannot be denied that the participants have been into performing the tasks of a mentor formally and informally, consciously and unconsciously as part of their defined responsibility as supervisors of the new teachers.

This study has complied with the ethical considerations in conducting research. One of which is maintaining the anonymity of the participants that were referred in this study as the senior teachers or mentors. The researchers understand that what have been shared during the focus group discussion and interviews were actual and true to life experiences of the participants and so therefore the information were treated and kept with utmost confidentiality and used for its intended purpose.
Research Instruments and Data Collection

The conduct of the focus group discussion (FGD) with the research participants was aided by a carefully crafted pre-prepared guide questionnaire that were intended to extract and elicit the lived experiences of the mentor teachers. The participants were formally invited to a comfortable place where the interview and discussion took place. The researchers made sure that the participants were fully informed about the purpose of the invitation and their participation in the focus group discussion. The discussion was facilitated in a way that every participant was given the chance and equal opportunity and were made to talk and express freely their views and experiences. This was deemed important considering that they belong to the different departments with varied experiences in mentoring their subordinates particularly the neophyte teachers in their respective units. Only one focus group discussion was conducted for the actual data gathering for this study. The discussion during the FGD was completely recorded from start to finish that lasted for one and a half hours.

After the conduct of the focus group discussion (FGD), the audio recordings were transcribed personally by the researchers in order to attain the high accuracy of the data.

Data Analysis

The qualitative data in this study have been analyzed using the Colaizzi method. This method is fit for a phenomenological type of study that involved the analysis of actual lived experiences of people. The following steps represent Colaizzi process for phenomenological data analysis (Sanders, 2003; Speziale& Carpenter, 2007), (1) The method requires an accurate transcription of the data gathered and to have a very clear sense of the content. (2) After having a thorough understanding of the transcript, it requires the formulation of significant statements that relates to the phenomenon under study. (3) Analyze the statements and formulate meanings. (4) Sort the formulated meanings of the statements into themes, (5) Formulate an exhaustive and comprehensive description of the phenomenon. (6) Formulate a structure of the phenomenon, and (7) validate the findings from the research participants.

Results and Discussion

Using the Colaizzi method, six themes were formulated from the sharing of experiences of the teacher-mentors that served as the respondents of this phenomenological study. The themes are (a) problem on non-committed neophyte teachers; (b) problem on non-prepared and immature neophyte teachers; (c) the need for mentoring on classroom management and teaching strategies and pedagogies; (d) the need for mentoring on the
academic and administrative policies and procedures; and (e) The mentoring arrangement, duration and remuneration.

1. Lived Experiences and Problems Met by the Mentors in Mentoring the Neophyte Teachers.

**Theme 1. Mentors’ Problem on Non-Committed Neophyte Teachers.**

The teacher-mentors have shared their actual experiences particularly the issue on the working attitude of the neophyte teachers in their units. They said that the new teachers have not adapted so far the working style in the university like being flexible and extending the work hours if the need arises. The neophyte teachers should appreciate the idea of multi-tasking, working fast and have more focus on the tasks that are assigned to them. The teacher-mentors have shared their actual experiences regarding this concern.

**Significant Statement 1.** “For me, what I need really is somebody who is fast, one who works, can think fast, otherwise they will be left behind.”

**Significant Statement 2.** “There are times that you have to work beyond your official time, the system has not been appreciated by her.”

**Significant Statement 3.** “We can extend, but she’s not into it, if she is done with her work at 5:00, then she will go, she cannot still adapt the system.”

**Significant Statement 4.** “Ma’am, I think we need to be informed that the personnel and faculty should be ready to do multi-tasking.”

The first year teaching experience is considered critical for a teacher in gauging their effectiveness and commitment to the job they have chosen. Teacher’s commitment can be described through their psychological attachment to their profession (Chapman, 1982) and they tend to stay long in their work if they are intrinsically motivated and satisfied with their career choice (Raju and Srivastava, 1994). If the decision of a teacher to teach was made out of motives to serve others and influenced by personal experiences and their family, they tend to stay long and have higher efficacy in their chosen career.

**Theme 2. Mentors’ Problem on Non-Prepared and Immature Neophyte Teachers.**

Immaturity of neophyte teachers is a huge test for teacher-mentors in their mentoring endeavor. Beginning teachers operate on what has been described as the survival stage, a developmental period where there driving concern is acceptance and their focus is on self-related issues, (Rowley, 2006). The significance of emotions in the work and motivation of teachers has long been recognized. The concept of emotional intelligence, drawn from the work on multiple intelligences by Gardner (1983), has been
made popular by Goleman (1995), who has been instrumental in alerting educationists to the central role played by the emotions in decisions and actions.

**Significant Statement 1.** “Mr. C is intelligent but still immature, what he likes more is to play computer, that is the kind of person he is.”

**Significant Statement 2.** “He is a potential teacher and we should not disregard him, but he still cannot accept that these things are happening to his life.”

One of the most common reasons for low commitment on the part of beginning teachers is a strong sense that seeking help, advice, or support from another is a sign of incompetence. As has been well documented, for some beginning teachers, this focus on self takes the form of a strong need to preserve an image of confidence.

**Significant Statement 3.** “What I was thinking, maybe his assignment was heavy for him, so he needs to be helped.”

**Theme 3. Mentors’ Problem on the Mentees’ Lack of Knowledge on Classroom Management, Teaching Strategies and Pedagogies**

Another common and popular agenda for mentoring deals with classroom management and teaching strategies of which the mentee is considered to be naturally deficient being a beginner in the profession. This is one thing that a teacher-mentor is expected to share to the mentee highlighting the best practices extracted from real-life experiences as a teacher. Early-career teachers, including preservice teachers, claim that classroom management can cause significant apprehension (Lewis, Romi, Qui, & Katz, 2005; Putman, 2009). Managing student behavior is high on the list of priorities for teachers (Australian Education Union, 2006); particularly as unsuccessful student management can produce teacher stress and early burn out (Martin, Linfoot, & Stephenson, 1999).

**Significant Statement 1.** “I only saw one thing that time, in the case of Mr. R there was no issue on classroom management, but in my case there’s a problem about it.”

**Significant Statement 2.** “On classroom management, those students in the class who cannot behave, they will come to us to ask on what they are supposed to do.”

**Significant Statement 3.** “if it is a little problem on classroom management, it could be one-on-one with the peers.”

The mentor should provide demonstrations of good teaching practices and be willing to invite their mentees to observe as they teach or suggest other faculty to provide
the mentee with the opportunity of observing a variety of teaching styles (University of Wisconsin – Teaching Academy, 2017).

**Significant Statement 5.** “Yes there was no initiative, you are not supposed to focus only on what is in the syllabus, maybe there is something better.”

**Significant Statement 7.** “In terms of different strategies, compared to your strategies during your time and now, more or less she has learned something because she’s already exposed in her studies.”

**Significant Statement 8.** “It was not really pure lecture-discussion and not everything is dish-out, there’s even question and answer.”

**Significant Statement 9.** “If it is about strategies, maybe one session will do with teaching demonstration, and syllabus preparation also.”

**Theme 4. Mentors’ Problem of the Mentees’ Lack of Awareness on the Academic and Administrative Policies and Procedures.**

In this study, the teacher-mentor had exemplified to the mentee the responsibilities of the latter attached to him when using laboratory equipment of the university. It was made clear to the neophyte teacher the accountability of the student who actually borrowed the materials and his accountability being the teacher in-charge according to the existing policies of the school. As simple as it seems, the novice may not think about things that are a matter of course for the experienced, e.g. how to deal with late or missing assignments, attendance policies, class withdrawal procedures, and mentors can also offer suggestions about textbooks, how to get examination copies, how to work with the library, etc. (University of Wisconsin – Teaching Academy, 2017).

**Significant Statement 1.** “On the use of the equipment in our laboratory, if you are going to use equipment, you return it and not just leave it and you need to orient them about it, the borrower is a student but you have to sign it, meaning it is not only the student who is responsible but including you as the teacher.”

**Significant Statement 2.** “So in terms of grading system of the school he asked, and I find it okay because he’s not used of deciding things on his own and the way he thinks about the grading system.”
**Significant Statement 3.** “On policies, they cannot really follow the policies because they are not well oriented, so there is a need to strengthen our policies with the neophyte teachers so that they would be able to embrace the culture of the university.”

**Significant Statement 4.** “Especially on grading system, I said 40% if you will follow the transmutation, but actually we have adapted it in Math, so because it is Science the passing is only 30%.”

**Significant Statement 5.** “He is only how many months here and not year, but in terms of relationship, grading system that we are adapting, she asks, ‘sir what is it and why like this?’”

**Significant Statement 6.** “If he was not able to do it, then if I can do it, I will do it, and because they are just new here in our system, and what is our norm here at Leyte Normal, they’re not really used to it.”

**Theme 5. Mentors’ Problem on the Mentoring Arrangements, Duration and Remuneration**

The mentoring arrangements and schedules should be carefully thought in a mentoring program because it is considered as a key for its success. Since this matters are concerns of the parties, therefore it’s the mentor and the mentee who should decide on a schedule that they think is convenient and facilitative in achieving the purpose.

**Significant Statement 1.** “For example, official mentors have been designated, but because we are busy people and we do everything, we are into multi-tasking like we teach, we do research and many other things.”

**Significant Statement 2.** “We should be given a service credit.”

**Significant Statement 3.** “Aside from giving service credit, we need to ask the mentor if he/she is really interested because if we will issue a Special Order and he will be forced to do mentoring and then he/is hesitant to do it.”
**Significant Statement 5.** “Ma’am, it would be better if in the mentoring program, the mentor should also be oriented first and be clear about the activity and its purpose otherwise they will be surprise on what to do.”

**Significant Statement 8.** “If it is about strategies, we can focus first on assessment, then after that will be on the grading system, because if we will combine these topics in one day nothing will be followed even one.”

**Significant Statement 9.** “there should be a schedule within the semester, and it should be consistent.”

**Significant Statement 2.** “I guess, a semester is already enough, they can already adjust.”

*Time commitment.* The goals will determine the frequency and length of meetings. Decide how often face-to-face meetings will occur, being sure that the amount of time is sufficient in order to succeed. The Academic Staff Mentoring Program recommends making a minimum time commitment of two hours per month. (University of Wisconsin – Teaching Academy, 2017).

2. **Cues for a Viable Mentoring Program: Mentors’ Perspective**

**Cue 1. Establishment of a Formal Mentoring Program**

The existing mentoring practices of the university is very informal, meaning to say there are no policies and established guidelines to follow on how such activity should be implemented. The objectives and goals are not clear and agreed by those who are involved while its expected results are not known and this has no direct benefits for the organization. To maximize the benefits of mentoring to the organization in general and the individual, it entails formalizing the system. Establish clear mentorship goals and purpose by expressing reciprocity, specifying time commitment and planning activities spread over time (Nick, J., et al., 2012).

A formal mentoring should be directly linked to the objective of the organization with measurable outcomes and defined organizational benefits that required strategic pairing of mentors and mentees and well-defined training and support (Management Mentors, 2015). There should be meeting of minds between the mentor and the mentee,
therefore in entails planning that should involve the latter. According to Yordem and Akyol (2014), information regarding mentoring and the mentoring system must be widely disseminated and the various aspects and details of mentoring should be explained, discussed, described, debated, accepted or rejected by those involved.

**Cue 2. Careful Selection of Mentors and Matching of Mentors and Mentees**

Successful mentoring program entails careful matching and strategic pairing of mentor and the mentee. This is not true in the existing mentoring practice of the university. Since mentors’ role is very critical in the mentoring exercise, the qualifications first and foremost should be of utmost consideration.

The mentor should display a very strong commitment to the role and the profession, open minded, flexible, with good humor and willing to share ideas to the learner. The mentor should be equipped with excellent communication skills, able to articulate the art of listening and questioning and gives comments and remarks with enthusiasm and high desire for teaching.

A mentor is expected to be rich with relevant experiences and high level of competence and knowledge of the subject matter. Also, the confidence to deliver and to teach should be evident at all times and circumstance. Building rapport between the mentor and the mentee is likewise a pre-requisite for a successful mentoring. The challenge here of the mentor is to create a trusting relationship that would support the emotional and professional needs of the mentee.

**Cue 3. Integrating in the Mentoring Activity Learning Plan Professional Topics on Classroom Management, Teaching Strategies and the Conduct of Research**

One thing that has been observed by the mentors was the inability of some neophyte to correctly instill classroom discipline. This is one thing that has been raised by neophyte teachers to the mentors specifically on how to deal with misbehaving students for example.

Best practices in classroom management suggests for critical reflection on teacher practice in dealing with specific problems to help beginners expand their repertoire of strategies (Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2000). In addition, having “learning buddies” to develop students’ responsibility for their own learning and generate ideas is a helpful idea coupled with positive reinforcement strategies such as praise, stickers, and encouragement (Sempowicz & Hudson, 2011). Psychologically-acceptable strategies such
as positive reinforcement and developing in students a sense of self responsibility ensure effective classroom management (Woolfolk & Margetts, 2010).

On enhancing the neophyte teacher’s teaching strategies and approaches, one very good input is knowing what materials are appropriate for a particular student who always finishes the assigned tasks early or what can be done to help a student with special needs while keeping the rest of the class productive (Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2000).


Although most of the mentoring programs were focused on agenda of enhancing the capabilities of the mentees on classroom management, teaching strategies and pedagogies, other equally important topics were also identified for inclusion in the mentoring plan. Topics on the organizational policies and guidelines, the university rules and regulations, the institutional resources and administrative support system were suggested to be part of the mentoring sessions.

Cue 5. Specifying the Mentoring Arrangements and Time Duration

Mentors have argued with their varying suggestions of the mentoring schedules and for how long the informal mentoring should be conducted. Some mentoring relationships may last one semester or less, and others may last for years but the expected duration of the relationship will be influenced by the goals of the mentee and the individual personalities. (University of Wisconsin – Teaching Academy, 2017). Mentoring achieves less when it is relegated to after hours and weekends (The National Foundation for the Improvement of Education, 1999)

The effectiveness and impact of mentoring is linked to the duration and amount of time that a mentor and a mentee work together. That amount of time should give sufficient opportunities to observe one another, model good teaching, discuss instructional strategies and resources (The National Foundation for the Improvement of Education, 1999)

Cue 6. Provision of Mentors’ Remuneration and Incentives

Mentoring is a demanding activity in terms of time and efforts on the part of the mentor, therefore they put emphasis on its incentives. Incentives for mentors are usually non-monetary and intrinsic in nature like simple recognition of their contribution in helping the neophyte teachers that would become an asset of the organization. Mentors usually appreciate their important role in the mentoring program and the opportunity to
exercise and display their leadership skills and potentials. Mentoring by arrangement is usually an add-on workload on top of his/her regular work assignment, and so the mentor would always expect that a customized special schedule would be crafted for both parties involved.

Conclusion

Problematic episodes in conducting faculty mentorship programs for neophyte teachers are also common even in teacher-training universities. From the faculty mentors’ perspective in this teaching university, mentors struggle and face problematic realities foremost among others is the absence of an official and formal faculty mentorship program and model which in turn breeds numerous mentorship problems such as non-committed neophyte teacher mentees; non-prepared and immature attitude of mentees; mentees enormous lack of knowledge and expertise on classroom management and teaching pedagogies; non-awareness on the academic and administrative policies and procedures of the university among the neophyte teachers; absence of definite mentoring time schedule and duration and most importantly, there was no faculty mentoring incentives provided to the mentors. From that challenges the mentors have spoken and gone through in the course of their mentorship in this teaching university, cues and functional features for a neophyte faculty mentorship program should come forth to be formal and official; mentors and mentees fit is a major concern to reap mutual mentoring benefits for both; A Mentorship Activity and Learning Course design must for the most part include professional topics on classroom management, teaching strategies and the conduct of research. Orientation and Induction Seminar on the university academic and administrative policies needs to be a major event in the faculty mentorship course. Arrangement and time duration should be specifically indicated. And most importantly, mentors’ remuneration and mentorship incentives should be made an integral component of the neophyte faculty mentorship program. While the study was conducted in one teaching university in Central Philippines, its results remain generalizable in teaching universities exhibiting similar characteristics in the Philippines and in the Asian context.

References


