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Exploring Mentoring Practice for In-service Teachers' Professional Development

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Abstract

This study explores how untrained and trained mentors practise mentoring with their mentees and how trained mentors make mentoring practice effective. This study also exhibits the value of teachers' professional development (TPD) to update teachers' knowledge and skills. Mentoring is one of the key components of TPD that helps teachers continuously update and upgrade their performance. However, in the Nepalese context, mentoring is taken as an evaluation or judgement. A review of the literature examines mentoring practice by a trained mentor useful for teachers in their professional development. It enables mentee teachers to reflect on their practice. The mentee teacher receives support and feedback from their mentor that helps them to develop meaningful learning experiences. I used a qualitative case study design to study the impact of mentoring practice by trained mentors on the professional development of English language teachers in Nepal. The data drawn from teachers' reflective journals, semi-structured interviews and mentoring sessions' notes were collected data and triangulated to produce fair results. The results indicated that for effective mentoring practice, mentors should be trained before practising mentoring for teachers' professional development.

***Keywords**:* Teacher education, mentoring, training, reflection, feedback

Introduction

Teachers are required to continuously upgrade their knowledge, skills and attitudes to address 21st-century learners' needs. Professional development is an integral component for upgrading and updating their knowledge, skills and attitudes.

It is considered an essential element because it enhances teaching and upgrades students' learning experiences and outcomes (Al Asmari, 2016). It can occur in formal or informal settings (Postholm, 2012). Continuous professional development can take various forms: reflective practice, peer coaching, cooperative development and mentoring. This article discusses mentoring practice as an important strategy for teachers' continuous professional development. Mentoring practice is applicable and beneficial to all teachers at any stage of their teaching careers who are determined and committed to their professional development.

Mentoring is a "well-established concept" and a "common practice in education systems across the world" (Smith, 2021, p.3). However, it is still a new concept for ELT practitioners in Nepal (Baral, 2015; Yadav, 2017). They comprehend mentoring as a process in which an experienced teacher guides a less experienced teacher. It has not yet been practised formally. Therefore, some experienced teachers and principals become mentors in some schools and support novice teachers (Yadav, 2017; Bhattrai, 2012) without attending mentoring training. They are not well-trained mentors even though they observe teachers' classes and provide feedback (Yadav, 2017). Mentors are "mainly secondary school teachers" with some teacher training experience in Nepal (Smith, 2021, p.4). It is difficult to find qualified and experienced mentors who can successfully guide teachers (Yadav, 2017). So, they seem unskillful and face many challenges while mentoring teachers.

Despite many advantages of mentoring practice for the professional development of the mentor and mentees (Smith & Lewis, 2017), mentors are thrown into mentoring practice with little or no preparation (Ducharme & Ducharme, 1996; Murray & Male, 2005, as cited in Gakonga & Mann, 2022). So in many contexts, mentoring practices became a failure because untrained mentors cannot establish good and trustworthy relationships with mentees. That arises many issues such as judgementoring (Hobson & Malderez, 2013) and mentoring practices lead to frustration for both mentors and mentees (Gakonga & Mann, 2022). The purpose of this study is to explore how untrained and trained mentors practise mentoring with their mentee teachers. The research questions of this study were as follows:

1. How does a trained mentor make mentoring practice effective for teachers' professional development (TPD)?
2. What differences did the mentor experience before and after being a trained mentor for effective mentoring practice?

Literature Review

Teaching is a challenging job for teachers in their early careers. They face many challenges during this time. They need to cope with the new environment of the schools and also deal with new students and their parents (Yadav, 2017). They need an experienced teacher as a mentor who can guide them to adjust to that new environment and duties. The mentor is the more experienced or knowledgeable professional in the field who can provide the support needed to cope with the environment (Panday, 2014; Gakonga, 2019).

However, teaching is challenging for in-service teachers too (Smith & Lewis, 2017). They become dissatisfied after working for some years. They think they are overloaded so they hardly prepare a lesson plan and design any materials. They simply go to the classroom, deliver content, give assignments and check them. They do not reflect on what they did well and what they did not. In this situation, a mentor plays the role of an observer and makes them reflect on their behaviour (Yadav, 2017). Then, the mentees can reflect on their classroom issues to the mentor without hesitation. Although, mentoring is a reciprocal process, it was traditionally conducted as a top-down approach (Orland-Barak, 2012, as cited in Gakonga, 2019). Therefore, mentoring can be a better option for the professional development of teachers in Nepal if the mentors are trained before practising mentoring.

Defining Mentoring and Mentor's Roles and Traits

Mentoring is "a one-to-one relationship" between a less experienced and an experienced teacher aiming to support the less experienced one in their professional growth and development (Hobson, 2016, p.4). In this relationship, the more skilled and experienced teacher demonstrates, acts as a sponsor, inspires, and gives pieces of advice to the less skilled and less experienced teacher. The overall purpose of this relationship is to focus on a developmental activity in which mentors may adopt different supportive roles to empower mentees and support their professional learning and well-being (Hobson & Malderez, 2013).

A mentor plays an active and effective role in the development of a mentee. For the growth and development of the mentee, the mentor plays the role of a model, acculturator, sponsor, supporter, and educator (Malderez & Bodoczky, 1999), advisor, coach, and supervisor (Smith & Lewis, 2017), an agent or a force for change (Gakonga & Mann, 2022). The mentor inspires and demonstrates his/her pedagogical knowledge and skill to the mentees. The mentor also provides a clear understanding of the education system by introducing the mentee to the right people. He/She uses his/her power and expertise to open the doors for the mentee's professional practice. The mentor also creates appropriate opportunities for the mentee to achieve

professional learning objectives providing a safe environment to release their mentees' emotions.

A mentor should be equipped with some positive personality traits to perform the above-mentioned roles. Long (1997) suggests that the mentor needs to develop certain personality traits and skills like communication, reflection, observation, feedback, conflict resolution, team leadership, and evaluation. Other researchers list some personal qualities of the mentor such as the mentor should be friendly, enthusiastic, trustworthy, open, patient, understanding, approachable, encouraging, and supportive (e.g. Hobson & Malderez, 2013).

Mentoring Issues in Nepal

The first challenge is the newness of the concept of mentoring in Nepal (Yadav, 2017). Mentoring has not received appropriate attention from stakeholders even though they have acknowledged its importance in teacher education and development (Pahadi, 2016). It is still a fuzzy concept to ELT practitioners and consequently, mentors are unaware of their identity and roles.

The second challenge is the over-dependence of mentee teachers on mentors for solutions to all their classroom teaching problems (Panday, 2014). They believe mentors are there to solve their issues both within and outside the classroom (Baral, 2015). They expect mentors to provide them with teaching tips to make their lesson plan effective and successful (Gakonga, 2019). They expect prompt answers from mentors rather than reflecting on their practices during the mentoring process and coming up with effective solutions.

The third challenge to mentoring is mentors received no preparation for their role (Okan & Yıldırım, 2004). There is no formal mentoring programme or course to prepare mentors for their roles (Baral, 2015; Pahadi, 2016; Panday, 2014). Informally experienced teachers or principals themselves become mentors for novice teachers. Therefore, they assume this responsibility without mastering the qualities and attitudes that go with effective mentoring. While observing mentees' classes, they as Hobson and Malderez point out "reveal too readily and/ or too often their planning and/or teaching" (2013, p.95). They sometimes lack empathy and become more evaluative which is termed judgementoring (ibid.).

The fourth challenge to mentoring is mentors play a supervisory role which creates a hierarchy and a power relationship between mentees and mentors in Nepal (Bhattrai, 2012). In that case, mentors try to act informally to create a comfortable environment. They seem more powerful because of their greater experience and administrative role (Gakonga, 2019). This is also because of the lack of a clear concept of mentoring (Pahadi, 2016).

The fifth challenge to mentoring is since it is still not formally practised in Nepal, ELT practitioners misapprehend supervisors or observers as mentors. Usually, in post-observation feedback, people who act as mentors bring a long list of negative feedback and the feedback session is dominated or led by them (Yadav, 2017). They observe classes for evaluation or grade so they do not give enough time for mentees' reflection.

The sixth challenge to mentoring is mentees sometimes have a negative attitude towards mentors and mentoring process (Smith & Lewis, 2017) so they become reluctant to change and learn. Some of the reasons behind mentees' negative attitudes toward mentoring are that mentee teachers feel like they acquired enough knowledge and skills needed for teaching while pursuing their degrees. They are busy and have heavy workloads so they do not want any disruption of their work by anyone. They seem highly confident in their abilities even though they are lacking skills in their performance. In the same way, they also feel mentoring is an unnecessary extra burden to them (Smith & Lewis, 2017) which demotivates them to be mentored.

Theoretical Framework

Mentoring practices are grounded in Vygotskian sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978) which argues that human learning is embedded in social interaction. According to the Vygotskian approach, learning is a socially constructed and socially mediated process that develops through interaction (2012). Like the Vygotskian perspective, in mentoring practice, mentors and mentees interact and learn from each-others. They develop their understanding and skills through interaction in mentoring sessions. In these interactive sessions, Langdon and Ward (2014) advocate that "mentors and mentees should have a reciprocal relationship and both should get benefited from the exchange of ideas" (p.39).

Methods and Procedures

This research study is envisaged within a qualitative research method to allow researchers to understand the effectiveness of mentoring practice for TPD from the perceptions of the participants (Lankshear & Knobel, 2004). After reviewing the related literature and considering the purpose of this study, I found a qualitative case study design appropriate as it enables a researcher to explore or describe a phenomenon in context using a variety of data sources. A case study is an in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a project in a real-life context and it is an evidence-led research method (Simons, 2014).

As a trained and experienced mentor, I intended to explore more about the effectiveness of mentoring practice by a trained mentor. I selected three teachers as research participants who were interested to take part in this small-scale study. They gave their consent to participate in three months long programme and got ready to engage. The teachers were from the same school so they could visit each other's classes and spend time in reflection and mentoring sessions. I, as a researcher, worked online with them so sometimes they recorded their mentoring sessions and sent me to watch and sometimes I attended them virtually.

Through this study, I planned to explore participants' thoughts, perceptions and feeling about mentoring practice for TPD before and after attending mentoring training. This study focused on conversation and participants' reflections on mentoring practice so the study was qualitative as qualitative methods are selected to deeply understand what participant considers about the topic. Richards (2003) states that a qualitative study narrows down the circumstances and concludes with clarification. I focused on the detailed exploration of the experiences and perspectives of the participant mentor on the effectiveness of mentoring practice for professional development before and after being trained mentor so this study is a qualitative case study.

I planned to collect data from two different perspectives. According to the plan at first, a teacher (a mentor) was selected to mentor a teacher (a mentee) without any preparation and training. The mentor teacher mentored the mentee teacher three times and the researcher collected their perception and experience of mentoring practice through their mentoring session, reflective journal and semi-structured interview. After a few week intervals, the same mentor teacher was trained to be a mentor. He was trained for five days informally. The topic discussed in the training sessions were:

Session 1: Teacher education, mentoring concept, discussion on reflection and giving feedback

Session 2: Mentoring skill development activities (e.g. I am the person who…., Mirrors….)

Session 3: Dealing with challenge activities (e.g. Butterflies…., We listen to…...)

Session 4: Developing empathy activity (e.g. I statement..., Paraphrasing……)

Session 5: Assessing teaching not being a judge or evaluator, negotiating evaluation

(Adapted from Malderez & Bodoczky, 1999)

After attending five days of mentoring training, the mentor mentored another mentee teacher three times. After that again I collected data from their mentoring sessions, reflective journal and semi-structured interview.

In this article, I wished to compare the effectiveness of mentoring practices with an untrained mentor and mentee and a trained mentor and mentee with the help of those teacher participants. That's why I used the content analysis method to analyse the mentoring sessions before and after mentoring training. The content analysis method, as Babbie (2001) highlights, helps to develop codes by looking at the data recorded in human communication and drawing conclusions looking at the codes. Ryan and Bernard (2000) claim that coding is the heart and soul of text analysis which forces the researchers to evaluate the coded block to develop themes. I used thematic analysis to analyze the meaning of codes. Boyatzis (1998) defines thematic analysis, as a way of seeing and making sense of the collected data. It helps the researcher to identify and analyze the meaning of the data. The goal of thematic analysis is to develop a story from the codes.

Results

The primary purpose of this research was to find out the effectiveness of mentoring practice with a trained mentor. This study also focused on how the trained mentor can make the mentoring practice more effective. This study also investigated the factors the trained mentor considers during mentoring sessions. The researcher collected the mentoring session notes, participants' reflective journals and interview notes as research data. The data collected from the mentor and mentees were analyzed and interpreted to explore the differences the mentor experienced before and after being a trained mentor for effective mentoring practice for in-service teachers' professional development. I grouped the data into the thematic ground and analysed and interpreted in detail to meet the purpose of the study close to my research questions.

Mentoring Experience of the Mentor before Training

As mentioned in the interview, the mentor's experience with mentoring practice was similar to that of other mentors in Nepal who teach secondary-level students and have some years of teaching and teacher training experience (Smith, 2021). After he was assigned as a mentor, he observed mentees' classes and provided some feedback after observation. However, he was not trained on how to provide oral or written feedback. There were no pre-mentoring discussions or pre-observation discussions between the mentor and mentees. He observed classes, pointed out mistakes, and told the mentee how to improve. He thought he should be critical and

straightforward by pointing out the mentee's mistakes because, in his opinion, that was the ideal way to improve. He had a judgmental attitude (Gakonga, 2019) looking for weaknesses in the mentee's performance so that he could make suggestions on how to improve them. He mainly focused on what the mentee did wrong than what the mentee did well. Here are some extracts from the mentoring sessions.

The mentor observed the mentee's class the second time when he found a similar mistake the mentee had performed he got rude to him. He thought he had commented on those things to improve in the previous mentoring session.

Extract 1

> Mentor: I found that you don't listen to me. You are doing the same mistakes. Still, I could find the same issues there. Didn't you notice that when you used the same sentence?

In this extract, when the mentor found the mentee had used long sentences in his presentation, the mentor pointed out that very straightforward and proposed to the mentee not to repeat it in the coming days. He sounded rude to the mentee while asking questions. When the mentor was justifying the reason the mentor intervened in the middle and started blaming the mentee "you didn't listen to my suggestions" which was face-threatening to the mentee (Hobson & Malderez, 2013). The mentor seemed ignorant about the negative impact on the mentee's well-being by his face-threatening comment. The conversation was led by the mentor and he was focused on providing direct suggestions for the mentee's improvement. The mentor was not considerate of his act which may lead the mentee to feel unsafe, distrustful, and reluctant to be open with him about the mentee's professional learning and development needs. The mentor was not aware of the fact that such utterance may damage the mentee's self-esteem which may cause anxiety and stress for him (Maguire, 2001, as cited in Hobson & Malderez, 2013).

Likewise, during the mentoring session, the mentor started lecturing the mentee on ideas to overcome the mentee's issues. The mentee has just opened up about the classroom issue he was facing, the mentor started sharing his experience and told the mentee to follow his ideas.

Extract 2

> Mentor: By listening to you I came to know that you will try to encourage the students to speak about the topic you assigned, but they do not keep on talking or speaking. Yeah. So, by looking at the situation I would like to give you my example of whatever I used to do or whatever I do in that situation like in the classroom forty-five or fifty students will be there in my class. So,

every day in every class, I separate five to ten minutes for speaking. Okay, they speak for five to 10 minutes, whether it is for discussion or conversation or while the topic of the discussion may be textbook or based on out-of-text topics any way every day, okay, it's not for one day, two days within classes every day. As there I try to integrate all the skills in the same classroom like listening, speaking, reading, writing and grammar sometimes so while integrating all this five to 10 minutes for speaking. Okay. So in this way, I do and then I roam around the class and try to see everyone every individual student whether they are talking or not. Why don't you try this idea? Can't it be done in your class?

Mentee: Yeah, it can be done.

In extract 2, the mentor led the conversation by giving direct suggestions. When I analyzed their conversation (Copland, 2012), I realised that instead of listening to the ideas of the mentee, the mentor was occupying most of the space of the conversation for giving advice for improvement. The mentor presented himself in that way because of our culture and belief system. He mentioned in his reflective journal that he believed giving direct suggestions to the mentee was not bad. In this extract, the mentee was asking the mentor 'what can I do when my students do not participate in speaking activity actively' then instead of scaffolding answers from the mentee, the mentor started giving directions on things to do (Van de Pol et al., 2010). He dominated the conversation and did not listen to the ideas of the mentee carefully (Gakonga & Mann, 2022).

In addition, the mentoring session mostly seemed rushed. The mentor directly started giving feedback instead of making the mentee feel relaxed and reflective before the mentoring session.

Extract 3

Mentor: Last time in our discussion we were talking about putting pictures on each slide to attract the attention of participants and you agreed about that but today still I could see no pictures, and then you were breathlessly you were speaking right. For the participants, it was very hard to understand what you were saying and what you were focusing on I found that right. So what is your plan that from next time? What do you do? You will have the same problem?

In extract 3, the mentor seemed unnecessarily directive to provide feedback to the mentee (Hobson & Malderez, 2013). It might be because the mentor had a lack of time and resources as he had to teach four or five classes a day and he couldn't spend

much time with the mentee. He seemed unaware of the fact that providing effective and genuine emotional support is time-consuming and mentoring cannot be done in a short period (Malderez & Bodoczky, 1999). He was not giving sufficient time and autonomy for the mentee to think and rethink his action.

The mentor mentioned in his reflective journal that due to the heavy workload, he got fewer opportunities to practise mentoring. He became directive in mentoring sessions because he thought if he talked all the time during the mentoring session, then he would finish the session in a short time. Although he was interested in mentoring, he perceived it as an additional duty as there was no extra remuneration for mentoring teachers (Walkington, 2005).

Mentoring Experience of the Mentor after Attending Training

The training session was one to one informal session between the researcher and the mentor. During the training sessions, the mentor was trained about some important topics related to mentoring practice. The mentor in his reflective journal mentioned that the training session positively impacted his belief and understanding of mentoring. He learned mentoring should be non-judgmental, non-directive, developmental and growth-oriented. As Hobson (2016) highlights, mentoring should be offline, non-hierarchical, non-evaluative, supportive, individualized, developmental and empowering. Here are some extracts from the mentor's current mentoring experience.

The mentor reported in his journal that as a mentor he discovered himself transformed in his roles and attributes. He started mentoring sessions focusing on his mentees' development and growth. He seemed a good listener, enthusiastic, patient, encouraging, and supportive (e.g. Hobson & Malderez, 2013) during mentoring sessions. For example, in the mentoring session below, the mentor was highlighting the positive things about the mentee's presentation which made the mentee enthusiastic and empowered.

Extract 4

> Mentor: So I observed your class yesterday. It was so wonderful. I found that it was very nice, you could manage your time. The first and foremost thing I'd like to highlight here is you could manage time within that 15 minutes you could be able to share so many things in an effective way and then I felt so proud by looking at you and it's a kind of sense of achievement for me.

In extract 4, after watching the mentee's class presentation the mentor provided feedback with some praiseworthy notes. The mentor appeared in such a way that he wanted the mentee to be motivated towards further improvement in his performance.

The mentor expressed his happiness in the interview stating "how happy I was when I saw my mentee improving in a short time". The mentee teacher in his reflective journal mentioned that "whenever I listen to my mentor and his supportive and caring words I feel very motivated and encouraged." It showed the mentor could be able to create safe, trustworthy relationships with the mentee.

During the mentoring session, the mentor seemed to make the mentee feel happy and relaxed by providing emotional support (Gakonga, 2019). He started giving enough time to the mentee to share and reflect on anything the mentee wished.

Extract 5

> Mentee: …… (laughing)
>
> Mentor: So, what do you think about that, how you planned and then it went well, from your perspective?
>
> Mentee: Oh, yeah. First of all, thanks for your kind appreciation of my presentation. And the credit goes to you honestly speaking, uh because you have supported me in many ways either in mentoring. We discussed looking for the free template in google and I did it and found those effective templates which made my presentation slides interesting. Now, I am very happy as I was not thinking my presentation would be that effective as when I asked the students about the presentation they told me that it was really good and they were happy reading the slides and learning the information.

In extract 5, the mentor tried to provide enough space for the mentee to share his reflection about his classroom experience so he shared everything in detail. By listening to the mentee actively, the mentor presented himself as supportive to him which seemed to encourage the mentee's autonomy and motivation, as Gakonga (2019) mentions, mentors provide emotional support, technical support, and support with reflection to the mentees. The mentor presented himself as a co-thinker (Feiman-Nemser, 2001, as cited in Gakonga, 2019), a friend and provides space for reflective practice. The mentor mentioned in his reflective journal that he realized using a dialogic approach (Gakonga & Mann, 2022) to provide feedback can encourage and deepen the mentee's reflective practice.

The mentor seemed to focus on dialogic mentoring sessions as he stated in the interview that dialogic mentoring session support mentees' reflective practice (Mann & Walsh, 2015) that will encourage them to find their areas for improvement.

Extract 6

> Mentee: Oh! Yeah (laughing)

Mentor: And the most important thing, which, which is most impressive I have found is the examples.

Mentee: Yeah!

Mentor: The thing which you have done, you have presented, so it was really nice.

Mentee: Yeah, they were relevant. Yeah. And I think they were much supportive to prove that, yes, I had some other examples too.

The mentor perceived classroom observation as a way of supporting the mentees' continuous professional development by appreciating and highlighting their achievements. For that, he mentioned that he developed the skill of encouraging the mentee to reflect more during mentoring sessions. As he has reported in his reflective journal, he improved his developmental and growth-oriented attitude (Hobson, 2016). Therefore, during a mentoring session, he seemed to encourage the mentee to reflect and come up with ideas to address the things he needed to improve.

The mentor mentioned in the interview that he learned negative feedback demotivates the mentees and suppresses their creativity and ideas (Gakonga, 2019). The mentee also stated in the interview that "if I am suppressed or dominated by my mentor, I would not digest that. I think I will quit I will not think of doing that again." It demonstrates that the mentor should be careful during mentoring practice. To enable the mentee to reflect constructively, the mentor should start providing feedback positively using encouraging words.

Discussion

From the finding, I discovered that the teaching job is equally stressful for in-service teachers. Therefore, a trained mentor should be provided to the teachers for their emotional support, technical support and support with reflection (Gakonga, 2019). I also found the participants agreed with Gakonga (2019) and stated mentors should be trained and skilful to conduct effective mentoring sessions. It seemed that mentors should have positive personality traits like friendliness, enthusiasm, trustworthiness, openness, patience, encouragement and support (Hobson & Malderez, 2013; Long 1997). The participants asserted that these qualities can be developed by mentoring training. According to them, trained mentors can make mentoring practice more effective because the training helps the mentors to develop their mentoring roles, skills and attitudes. As has been mentioned in the analysis part, training enhances the mentor's qualities and skills which improve the mentee teachers' attitudes, values and skills. Such improved attitudes, values and skills help

the mentees to feel refreshed and motivated and planned for better performance (Tinoco-Giraldo et al., 2020).

The data contribute to a clear understanding that in the Nepalese context, mentoring is one of the best tools for teachers' professional and personal development (Bhattrai, 2012; Panday, 2014; Yadav, 2017). Mentoring develops educators together as they share what they notice, think, experience, and their expertise in related topics therefore mentoring is beneficial for all who involve in this relationship (Smith & Lewis, 2017). For mentees, it provides an opportunity to improve classroom performance and develop learners' experience because mentees can perceive a clear picture of their classroom activities and behaviour through mentoring. It supports finding out their strength and weakness in ELT areas. Mentoring supports professional learning and development for mentees which enhances mentees' capabilities to manage classroom, time, and workload. It also improves self-reflection and problem-solving capacities which leads them to be confident and have job satisfaction (Hobson & Malderez, 2013).

Likewise, for mentors mentoring helps to identify their strengths and weaknesses while analyzing and listening to mentees. It benefits their professional development as ELT professionals (Smith, 2021). The mentor will get a new identity through mentoring. It assists in developing decision-making, problem-solving, and leadership skills for the mentor (Pandey, 2009, as cited in Bhattrai, 2012). Moreover, mentoring helps to build strong relationships between teachers and their classroom goals. Mentoring supports teachers to deepen their pedagogical knowledge and extend their expertise in the ELT field. Mentoring provides depth insights into teaching staff and areas for their improvement (Smith, 2021). It assists to develop teachers' expertise which builds the reputation of the institution.

For the overall development of the ELT, mentors should be prepared. Before assigning any teachers or supervisors to be a mentor for novice teachers or in-service teachers' professional development, they should be prepared. Every experienced teacher may not perform the role of mentor as it demands (Gakonga, 2019). Mentors should be good at mentoring as mentors are often expected to master the mentoring process (Malderez & Bodoczky, 1999). Therefore, the preparation of competent mentors is an important aspect of running quality mentoring programs (Tang & Choi, 2005).

Based on my own experience and this research study, I would like to highlight some areas for mentor preparation. At first, mentor selection and training schemes should be proper and systematic (Hudson & Hudson, 2010). Secondly, mentors should be well-trained for giving oral or written feedback after classroom observation (Malderez & Bodoczky, 1999). Thirdly, mentors should develop sound

pedagogical knowledge and new trends of techniques, methods, and approaches to ELT. Overall, mentors' attitudes and personal attributes should be positive to build trust, enthusiasm, and confidence in mentees (Orsdemir, & Yildirim, 2020).

Conclusion

In Nepal mentoring is recognized by many ELT practitioners. However, it is not formally in practice in educational institutions. Educators highlight the value of mentoring practice stating mentoring is the best tool for teachers' personal and professional development. In some institutions, teachers become mentors without training so there occurs challenges in mentoring practice. As the data suggested if the mentors are trained to mentor teachers, the challenges can be reduced. Trained mentors highlight positive things in mentees' classroom practice that makes mentees motivated and encouraged. They build a trustworthy relationship with mentees by giving them enough time to reflect on their classroom practice. The trained mentors make the mentees reflect on their classroom practice which makes the mentees realize their strengths and weaknesses themselves. Mentoring practice helps teachers to transform into better professionals who can be eligible to solve their problems themselves. Therefore, mentoring should be introduced and practised formally in schools and institutions. In addition, it should be promoted widely by the ministry of education in Nepal. They should conduct seminars and workshops on mentoring and make it available for more ELT practitioners.

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