EFL Faculty Mentorship Programs at HEIs in Vietnam

by

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Abstract

This qualitative study investigated the extant English as a foreign language (EFL) faculty mentorship programs at four higher education institutions (HEIs) in the Mekong River Delta (MRD) of Vietnam. The findings were interpreted through a social constructivist research paradigm drawing on three theoretical lenses: Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural Theory of Development, Knowles' (1970, 1998) Adult Learning Theory, and Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory of Human Development.

Purposeful sampling was utilized to choose four novel faculty members (mentees), four senior faculty members (mentors), and two experienced faculty administrators among these HEIs. Each of these actors participated in two individual semi-structured interviews in the Vietnamese language conducted by the researcher. Interviews were recorded, summarized, transcribed verbatim, and translated into the English language by the researcher. They were then verified by an EFL Vietnamese instructor and doctoral graduate from the University of Alberta. One week prior to the first interview, participants completed pre-interview activities (PIAs) provided.

Data analysis revealed that the mentorship program mandated by Vietnam's Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) has been implemented differently at each participating HEI and that there was no an officially endorsed mentorship document that guided the mentorship programs at these HEIs. Other themes include successes and challenges experienced by mentees, mentors, and administrators. The successes were reported in the mentees' and the mentors' personal and professional development; their dyadic relationships; their unexpected benefits; and the administrators' increased ease in making the mentee-mentor pairings, satisfaction with being good listeners, and expression of self-efficacy. The challenges were found in the mentees' and the mentors' personal pressures, their dyadic relationships, their additional issues, and the

administrators' challenge of different gender pairings and their insufficient scrutiny of the mentoring work.

Practically, the current study has offered the actors in the mentorship triad a description of benefits and some best practices of tertiary EFL mentorship. Participants conveyed thoughts about an improved mentorship program and suggested that a national mentorship guide for EFL instructors at HEIs would be "a lifebuoy" for administrators, mentors, and mentees in helping the mentees socialize into the first stage of the teaching profession. Theoretically, this study has contributed its findings to the world's growing knowledge of post-secondary mentorship by enriching the modest literature on Vietnamese tertiary EFL mentorship. Results may be of interest to other Asian contexts.

Preface

  This thesis is an original work by Hung Quoc Tran. The research project, of which this thesis is a part, received research ethics approval from the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board, Project Name "EFL FACULTY MENTORSHIP PROGRAMS IN VIETNAM", No. Pro00078854, March 03, 2018.

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At the researched higher education institutions in the Mekong River Delta of Vietnam, I am deeply indebted to the associate deans, chairs, senior and novel faculty members for their

enthusiastic and empirical contributions of experience and expertise to my study. I also had great pleasure of working with each of them. Without these colleagues, I could not have produced this study account to publicize their true stories.

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Predominantly, I, as a token of my heart, would like to dedicate this work to my late beloved parents, Father passing away while I was teaching away from home and Mother passing away while I was studying in Canada, for their ever-sensed and ever-present blessings over me during my academic journey.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter One:

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the present study as regards the mentorship and apprenticeship of new faculty at the tertiary level in the Mekong River Delta (MRD) of Vietnam. The chapter begins with locating myself in this qualitative study through a critical incident experienced by me, the researcher. It continues with the statement of the problem detected from a comprehensive review of literature and the living and working experience of the researcher as a university faculty member who has lived through being both a mentee and a mentor. Subsequently provided are a description of practical purposes of the study and its relevance in our country's present-day teacher professional development. The chapter then proceeds with the section of potential significance of the study in which both practical and theoretical meanings are described in detail. To end the chapter, the section of definitions of terms is included in order to clarify terminology that is used in this study.

1.1. Locating Myself

Locating myself in qualitative research is of great importance since it is like defining where we are on a map, giving the reader directions to reach to our shared destination. It is what Esterberg (2001) termed 'You are here' on the map. Once I locate where I am in the field of the study I am conducting, I will be able to pursue my study with pre-determined goals or research questions and choices of methodology regarding the researched issue.

Creswell (2014) asserted that qualitative researchers cannot avoid biases, values, and personal background which influence their interpretations of data during the study. In line with Creswell (2014), Denzin and Lincoln (1998) contended that the qualitative researcher's viewpoint "is always filtered through the lenses of language, gender, social class, race and

ethnicity" (p. 25). As a result, in conducting a qualitative study, the inclusion of the researcher's subjectivity and positionality as a tool in the research process does not only enhance the research ethics but reinforces the analysis and interpretation of collected data as well (Mosselson, 2010).

The following section is an anecdote about where and how I have become involved in the present study.

"Muốn sang thì bắc cầu kiều

Muốn con hay chữ phải yêu lấy thầy."

[If you want to cross a river, you must build a bridge across it.

If you want your children to be well educated, you must make them love their teachers.]

The meaning of this lifelong poetic Vietnamese proverb has been deeply engraved into my mind since I was a senior at a primary school located on the outskirts of a peaceful Southeast-Asian town. I was constantly reminded of it by my late father who had inspired me to become the teacher that I am today. His in-depth explanations of the valuable meanings and practical implications of the proverb and other similar educational sayings had drawn my attention to a career in teaching which has, in our country, been viewed as a noble calling. The teacher is figuratively considered a "soul" engineer who tirelessly endeavours to educate students to become the best citizens for their country.

Throughout my early school life, my father was the one that passed on his great love for teaching to me. This could be explained by the fact that he used to work as a senior trainer for newly recruited soldiers who served in the national defense military force of the contemporary government. He was an instructor who provided young male and female students with the most fundamental knowledge of military strategies as well as practical skills in order for them to fulfill their current and subsequent responsibilities successfully. I did not know much about his job

then. Nevertheless, I had been told by my mother and his former students who periodically paid a visit to our house years later that my father was a strict but devoted trainer in performing his life career. Later, in my adulthood, I had witnessed that every time my father's students visited him, they still addressed him with the same military title they had used long before, even though this title was no longer considered "suitable" in the new government. My father had perhaps left them with much respect and admiration even though they had finished their military training and left the military service a long time before. Possibly speaking, my father's strictness and devotion to a teaching career had made him stand out among other trainers of his age and time.

Since my father was an instructor, he paid close attention to his children's studies. Despite his busy full-time profession, he spent time reviewing my schoolwork every evening. He never did homework for me irrespective of my constant insistence on his support. Rather, he raised some questions to any problem in mathematics or other subjects I had been faced with to help me brainstorm and find solutions on my own even though this process was time-consuming. Helping me learn this way, my father played the role of a *mentor* rather than a teacher. He offered me some type of support whenever I encountered a challenge in my studies. Actually, not only is he my beloved father but he was also a mentor throughout my educational process.

During my primary schooling (grades one to five as mandated by our educational system), I was impressed by my grade-five teacher who had immigrated to the United States to reunite with family and passed away many years later. In class, she was our considerate, supportive, and affectionate teacher who always showed her loving care for every single student's learning. Out of class, she was like a mother who patiently instructed us how to behave with parents and those people around us. She also spent extra time at home teaching those of us who showed to be weaker than others in in-class learning without requesting any extra pay. In

such extra teaching classes, she called for help from some stronger students. I was often called to come to her house because my house was a short distance from hers, and I particularly loved to help my friends learn. I loved to appear in front of the class to explain or talk about something just as what my teacher had done. Perhaps, I was much influenced by my father and other teachers in the choice of my career direction. In addition, I was eager to share the new knowledge I had acquired with those friends who were really struggling to learn. Not only the weaker students but also the stronger ones loved to gather at her house just because we wanted to learn more valuable lessons about life from our beloved and respected teacher, also our *mentor* outside the classroom. Although I can no longer meet my most beloved primary school teacher and mentor in this lifetime, her good-natured personality is what we have been reminded of whenever we, her innocent and naughty students, meet again in occasional class reunions.

My love for learning and being mentored followed me to junior high school (grades six to nine). At this educational level, I had been instructed by numerous teachers who differed in personality traits, behaviours, and teaching methods. Since my dream was becoming a teacher when I grew up, I tried to think about and look into positive aspects of my junior high school teachers rather than criticize them. When I was a grade eight student, our class welcomed two student teachers from a teacher education college in our province. They came to practice teaching in partial fulfillment of their degree program required by the teacher education college. The female teacher practised teaching literature and the male – mathematics. As curious teenagers, we were all excited about this new experience since never before had we been taught by such student teachers. They would spend four weeks practising teaching in our class. In addition to teaching, they learned to be our form teachers and took responsibilities for organizing and managing the extra-curricular activities usually handled by our current form teacher.

Therefore, we could meet our student teachers more frequently during their practicum. Each student teacher or *mentee* was mentored by an experienced schoolteacher who was assigned by our school's principal and taught the same subject as the mentee. In addition, both student teachers were mentored by the same form teacher, who was our current form teacher, during their practicum. As a result of these assignments, each student teacher (mentee) was mentored by two experienced teachers (mentors) in our class during the practicum. See Figure 1.
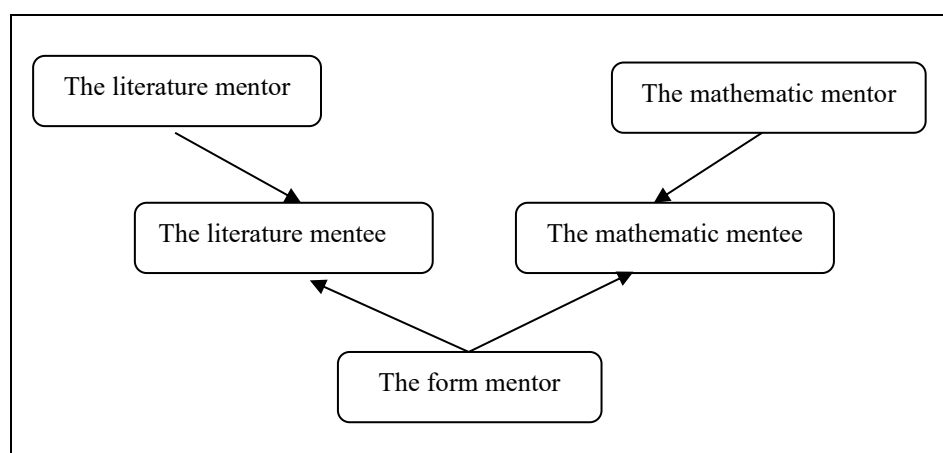
Figure 1. The mentee-mentor assignment in student teacher's practicum.

I could not understand much about the roles and jobs of the mentors and mentees in our class at that time. The only thing I could clearly perceive was that the student teachers were very enthusiastic and passionate in their teaching, and they participated in all extra-curricular activities. They hardly ever refused any of our suggestions regarding learning and after-school activities that took much of their time, energy, and money; and sometimes went beyond their capacities. They seemingly wanted to please all of us by readily giving less strict and more encouraging evaluations on our performance of tasks or assignments, and by being tirelessly involved in any relaxing activity with us. Their easy-goingness in academic activities and enthusiasm in after-school activities might have been aimed at creating some positive initial

impressions and helping them confirm teaching as their chosen career. I could not perceive these things until I took my teaching practicum in the final year of a teacher education program at a university. To some extent, I was like them in my interaction with students. Nevertheless, I did not ascertain if such perceptions of the mentees were accurate and could be encouraged. Therefore, an investigation into the mentoring phenomenon including this aspect of teaching was worth being conducted.

What Mentoring Is

Among the two practising student teachers, I maintained more frequent contact with the mathematics mentee than the literature one. Probably, it was not only because he was an inspiring teacher in every lesson he taught, but also because he made an on-going love for teaching in my heart burst into flame. Once in a friendly talk after class, he said to me, *"Hung, you have potential for teaching. By observing how you interact with your friends in class, I assume that you should choose teaching as your future career."* I was very surprised at his saying, but I was excited because he could seemingly read my mind. I would always feel glad and motivated whenever he appeared to teach in our class and in friendly talks after that. I was happy because I knew that my teaching dream was unexpectedly recognized. What the mathematics mentee had told me encouraged and motivated me day after day. Occasionally, during his teaching a lesson, I day - dreamed that I could be in his position to teach that lesson. I really wanted to grasp the teaching feeling at that time to satisfy my thirst for teaching, even though I knew that performing the act of teaching was not as easy as talking about it. It must be practised and performed as frequently as possible. It must be supported or guided by more experienced or senior teachers. At that time, I aspired to become mentored in such a teaching practicum so that I could experience what would actually occur in the act of teaching students. I

wanted to see, feel, and experience what these student teachers had been seeing, feeling, and experiencing. I also wanted to receive the benefits of the mentors' support and their advice on overcoming arisen challenges.

Upon completion of junior high school, I moved on to high school (grades ten to twelve). Again, I had been instructed by several teachers with diverse personality traits and teaching styles. Time in this final phase of general education seemed to go by rapidly. In the second semester of grade twelve, also the last semester of general education, a newly graduated teacher was assigned to teach the literature subject to our class. She had just graduated from the university where I would later study. Although she was the oldest sister of my classmate, I had never had a chance to meet her before. Since she was appointed a position at our high school as an apprentice teacher or a mentee, she was mentored by an experienced literature teacher who had taught us the previous semester. The apprentice teaching of this literature teacher was different from that of the two student teachers in my junior high school in that the former would become an official tenured teacher after a two-year probation of teaching, while the latter would be conferred a Bachelor of Arts degree upon completion of all requirements of the teacher education program and then have to look for a teaching position. The literature mentee might become familiar with being mentored by a more experienced subject teacher thanks to the mentoring experience she had gained in her compulsory fourth-year practicum at a high school. Like the mathematics mentee in the junior high school, the literature mentee engaged us by her soothing style of teaching. She possessed profound knowledge of local, national, and international literature. She hardly disappointed students whenever they asked her questions regarding a literary concept or idea. Studying in her class, I could not imagine that I was instructed by a novice teacher. In my observation, she showed herself to be experienced and self-

confident in every lesson she taught. This was surely a reflection of her careful and detailed lesson planning. Sitting long hours in her class, I did not feel tired. In contrast, I was engaged and motivated by her pedagogical aptitude. I then wished I could become a teacher like her in the same way as I did with my junior high school student teacher.

In addition to her engaging teaching methods, her feedback on student writing actually impressed me. Despite making many mistakes in writing, I would never feel overwhelmed with her comments on them. Reading her comments, I was more motivated to write and write without any disagreements because I believed that I would later become better at writing. Since the apprentice literature teacher demonstrated such positive teaching, was a mentorship program for her actually needed? Were there any hidden challenges in such a good sample of apprentice teaching? I have sought answers to these questions in the present study.

Mentorship as Support

Since I had been constantly encouraged by my father and strongly inspired by some recognized teachers from the time of primary school through junior and senior high school as aforementioned, I had decided to take an examination to enter the teacher education program of a multi-disciplinary higher education institution in our country upon graduation from high school. With my strong determination and heedful preparation, I had passed the exam and started at the institution a few months later. I had the mixed feelings of excitement and anxiety during the first few weeks at the university. I was excited because I had passed a competitive examination to become a university student, so I could continue to travel along the path toward my dream. Nonetheless, I was anxious because the familiar teaching approach utilized in general education was now replaced with a rather new teaching approach. In general education, we depended heavily on the teacher for internalizing new knowledge, while we, in higher education, generated

new knowledge in collaboration with the teacher. In other words, we had to switch from a teacher-centred teaching approach to a more student-centred one in our way of constructing knowledge.

During academic years, I had taken many different courses taught by experienced senior instructors. They each had their own teaching style, but almost all of them performed their teaching role as a facilitator rather than a provider of knowledge. In addition to taking in more knowledge of English as a foreign language (EFL), my field of study at the institution, I acquired more pedagogical content knowledge throughout the study program. I started accumulating this type of knowledge and spent much time and effort applying these lessons and insights whenever and wherever I could since I thought that they would be of great help for me in my prospective teaching career. Within four academic years, I had taken two practicums as one requirement of the teacher education program at our institution. The first practicum was a four-week field trip to a high school located near the institution. The key purposes of this field trip were to familiarize student teachers with the school and class setting, to learn how to be a form teacher of one assigned class, and to observe the subject teacher's teaching. Student teaching was not required in the first practicum. I was also assigned a mentor, a form teacher of a grade-ten class, so I became his mentee during that time. My mentor was a senior literature teacher who was enthusiastic and supportive. I was really lucky to have him as my mentor because I could consult him about any question as regards becoming a good form teacher. I had observed what he had been doing during the final class period of a learning week. This forty-five-minute class period, which was mandated in the general education program by the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) of Vietnam, was organized concurrently for all classes in public schools across the country. In this observed period, the form teacher led the class' summative discussion about

the activities which had happened during the learning week and included both positive and negative feedback as well as evaluations from other subject teachers. Suggestions for class activities in the subsequent learning week would also be given during this class period. After observing the mentor's performances in this class period in my first week of practicum, I started performing my role as a form teacher from the second week onward. I had accumulated much valuable knowledge of how to plan and organize activities within and after class, how to lead a discussion review, how to help students solve existing problems, and how to make the class progress during the semester. I could not have acquired such useful pedagogical content knowledge if I had not been guided by such a devoted mentor in my first practicum. I strongly appreciated his *mentorship*, and I always showed my respect through gestures and admiration toward him. The maiden practicum ended up with my deep gratitude for my mentor and a teaching-themed poem composed by him as a present to me, a would-be teacher. I have kept and revisited his poem as an invaluable keepsake throughout my teaching career.

In addition to practising to be a form teacher, I had observed some subject teachers' real-life classes. Because my major was teaching EFL, I was scheduled to observe the EFL teachers' lessons. By observing them, I had opportunities to see how the teaching theory was integrated into a real lesson, so I could review what I had learned in the institution. Follow-up discussions with these teachers had provided more tips and strategies for organizing and managing learning activities to me. They had also helped enrich my understanding of teaching a successful lesson. In my mind, the EFL teachers I had observed were, to some extent, my *informal mentors* during the first practicum.

The Mentee-Mentor Relationship

I took my second practicum in the last semester of the teacher education program. This practicum focused on teaching eight real lessons and reinforcing the form teacher's role. It was a five-week field experience in a high school located sixty kilometers south of the city where I was studying. I stayed with thirty-nine other student teachers at a designated guesthouse a short distance from the high school. The first week of the practicum was spent helping student teachers become acquainted with the school and their assigned class settings. I was assigned to be the form teacher of a grade-ten class under the mentorship of a chemistry teacher. Additionally, I was assigned to teach EFL to this class and another grade-ten class under the mentorship of an EFL teacher. As a result, I had two mentors during my second practicum. The former mentor was rather liberal in that he almost let me take over his role during the practicum. He did not ask me to follow exactly what he had been doing with his class. Instead, he offered me an opportunity to plan, manage, and run all extra-curricular activities for the class on my own while keeping him informed of my activities. In my mind, this opportunity might also have been a double-edged sword. On the one hand, I was able to decide all things to do with the class without being interrupted or hindered. I could be flexible and creative in planning things for students' learning and relaxation. Clearly, I must have been careful in my entire planning if I wanted my students and myself to succeed. On the other hand, if my planning was not successful due to my subjectivity, I would have been completely responsible for its negative results which could discourage me and lower students' trust in me. This made me wonder if it was too risky for mentees to maintain an *indirect mentoring* relationship with their mentors.

Amount and Nature of Mentorship Feedback

The key purpose of the second practicum was teaching real lessons. As required, I taught two lessons per week during four successive weeks. The EFL mentor teacher had graduated three

years before my practicum from the same institution where I was studying, so we could comfortably initiate a friendly mentoring relationship when we first met. Because of only a slight difference in our age, the EFL mentor did not consider himself as much more experienced. Thus he viewed our relationship as a friendship rather than a mentorship. During the practicum, he almost always accepted my proposed lesson plans and teaching methods, so he required no further discussions on them with me. Many times I insisted on his giving me more feedback or comments on my lesson planning and teaching performances, but he did not give me any other comments than just correcting some mechanical errors in lessons. Although he kept asking me to maintain a friendly relationship rather than a mentorship, I always showed him my respect, treated him as a senior teacher, and maintained my hierarchical communication with him. I consistently thought that I was still a student teacher and a mentee who was learning how to teach and practising teaching the first lessons in my life. Therefore, I took the second practicum as a good learning opportunity for me to train myself to successfully complete my academic tasks and subsequently become an inspiring teacher. I asked myself whether I had really received the things I needed in such a mentoring approach of my mentor. I also wondered whether the difference of age and absence of feedback on practice teaching could actually yield a productive and fruitful mentorship. Although I received a successful evaluation during the five- week practicum, I left the high school with the aforementioned dilemmas in my mind.

A few months after graduating from the institution, I was offered a teaching job at the same institution. I was extremely happy with this offering because I could finally make my dream come true. Being an instructor at a higher education institution was a rewarding but challenging experience for me. On the one hand, I had been given an opportunity to teach students at an advanced level, so my expertise in the field of EFL teaching could be enhanced.

On the other hand, I encountered difficulties in teaching at the tertiary level I had not been trained to teach before. I was only trained how to teach at the secondary level during my academic program. The students I was going to teach at the HEI were prospective EFL high school teachers upon completion of their undergraduate studies. They were taking courses on both EFL specialization and EFL teaching methodology in their academic program. I had to realize the foreseen challenges of teaching these students and update more pedagogical knowledge required of a teacher educator so that I could perform my teaching job well.

As mandated by MOET, I was assigned a mentor when I started teaching at the institution. Just a few months earlier, I had been a student teacher. Now, I was an apprentice teacher or a mentee at the institution. The apprenticeship here was very important to me since it would decide whether or not I would become an official tenured instructor of teacher education at the institution after a two-year probation. My mentor was the department's support staff member, not a faculty one. I did not know why I was not assigned an academic mentor. I also did not dare to ask for a substitute because I did not clearly know the mentoring policy or strategies at the institution, faculty, and department at that time. I later learned that five other novice instructors in four consecutive cohorts were assigned the same mentor. Since our mentor was not a faculty member, and her expertise was in another subject area, we did not receive any support regarding teaching EFL from her. This mismatching by the department's authorities intimidated me and negatively influenced my apprentice teaching experience. I had the feeling that I was like 'a square stick put into a round hole'; this instability could make the stick fall down any time. To stand still, I had to struggle myself tirelessly. To survive the apprenticeship, I sometimes sought help from some experienced EFL faculty members who were my former instructors in the EFL teacher education department. In other words, I had to initiate the so-called *informal mentorship*.

I depended on this type of mentorship during my apprenticeship and gradually blended into the mainstream of the department. Due to this mismatched mentoring, it was difficult for the mentor and me to find a common ground in order to share experience or solve unexpected problems in teaching. Her support was focused only on completing everyday chores such as providing me a classroom observation agenda, arranging my teaching classes, showing me how to use the department's teaching facilities, and reminding me of the department's meetings. In addition, since she was assigned to mentor many mentees and had to do her office tasks at the same time, she was not able to finish her required work satisfactorily. Consequently, she prolonged our attainment of a tenure status two years later than required. This delay resulted in other unexpected problems, one of which was the delayed assessment for our annual wage increase. I could assert that the mentorship during my apprentice teaching at the institution was perceived as being more challenging and less helpful than any other types of mentorship I had ever received earlier in my life. It has left me with an overarching question with respect to the impact of *mismatching* in educational mentorship on both mentees and mentors.

Interweaving all of the aforementioned anecdotes, I became aware of my desire to conduct the present study related to the EFL faculty mentoring phenomenon.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

The Foreign Language Teaching-Learning Project in the National Education System from 2008 - 2020 (hereafter the 2020 Project) is promulgated to enhance foreign language (FL) competence for Vietnamese college/university graduates by the year 2020. The overall goal of the 2020 Project is clearly stated:

A large-scale innovation in teaching and learning foreign languages in the national public educational system and implementation of teaching and learning foreign languages in all

levels of education with a view to gaining a significant step forward to foreign language levels and proficiency of human resources, especially in some priority areas of work up to the year 2015. By the year 2020, the majority of Vietnamese young adults with associate's and bachelor's degrees will have been capable of using foreign languages independently, becoming more self-confident in communication, study and work in an integrating, multilingual, and multicultural environment; transforming foreign languages use into Vietnamese people's strengths to serve industrialization and modernization of the country. (The Prime Minister, 2008, p. 1)

Since this overall goal of the 2020 Project has not been obtained, the Prime Minister signed another decision dated December 22, 2017 in support of the 2020 Project. The new promulgated document is entitled: Adjusting and Supplementing the Foreign Language Teaching-Learning Project in the National Education System from 2017 – 2025 (hereafter the 2025 Project). Both the 2020 and 2025 Projects have given a central role to FL teachers at all levels in upgrading students' FL competence. Directly influenced by the project, the last twelve years have witnessed an explosion in FL education stronger than ever before with English as the most widely selected language. The choice of English is rooted in a number of reasons, the key of which is getting credits in English is compulsory in secondary, undergraduate, and graduate programs in both public and non-public education systems throughout the country (Hoang, 2010). The explosion of English has entailed an increasing demand of EFL teachers to meet the growing number of learners' different needs. Consequently, many EFL teacher education programs at colleges/universities have improved their existing EFL teacher education programs to educate and graduate novice EFL teachers who are strong in both general pedagogical knowledge and content knowledge of EFL and expectedly qualified enough to teach at different

levels to attain the foreign language projects' goal. Among these new teachers, some earning

degrees with distinction or higher may be offered jobs at universities, and they will start working

as apprentice EFL instructors who will be assigned a mentoring instructor or mentor in the first

few years of teaching (see *Figure 2*). A mentor in the present study is a faculty member who is

experienced in professional knowledge and expected to effectively support an assigned mentee

(also a new, novel, or novice faculty member) in the first stage of teaching profession (Hunt &

Michael, 1983; Kram, 1985; Ragins & Cotton, 1999). The mentor and mentee relationship

during this stage is defined as the mentorship or mentoring. Detailed definitions of the key terms

related to mentorship will follow this background section.
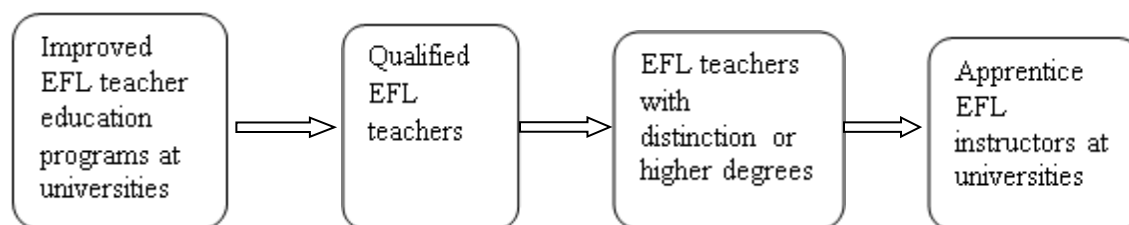
Figure 2. How apprentice EFL instructors are identified in the university context.

The apprenticeship is very important for novice instructors because it determines whether

these novices will become tenured faculty members or have to leave the institution upon

completion of this stage. Nguyen (2008) found that the initial teaching experiences in Vietnam

resulted in substantial impacts on the novices' behaviours, thoughts, and performances in the

latter stages of their career and emphasized that the novices constantly were faced with

"struggles for survival in their early career" (p. 112). Consequently, they had to successfully

perform all required tasks such as planning and teaching lessons, supporting students with

special needs, attending university meetings, professional development sessions, and

extracurricular activities (Fisher, 2011; Kastelan-Sikora, 2013). The novices could hardly

accomplish all tasks unless they received support from their mentors. If the novices did not

receive their mentors' support timely and properly, they had to be resolute and determined in their apprentice time to receive a number of accomplishments (Colbert & Wolff, 1992; Kastelan-Sikora, 2013). Eventually, the mentor plays a crucial role in the early stage of the EFL novice instructor's profession.

Nevertheless, supported by devoted mentors who were trained and have done this mentoring work for years, the EFL mentees can greatly benefit from both professional and personal development, particularly in the early stage of teaching. Howey and Collison (1995) found that if the mentees received sufficient scaffolding in the initial stage of their careers, they could soon grow professionally and develop accordingly. Specifically, they could enhance self-reflection and problem-solving skills (McIntyre & Hagger, 1996) in addition to reinforcing the development of such fundamental skills as managing time, workloads, classroom, and students (Lindgren, 2005; Malderez, Hobson, Tracey, & Kerr, 2007; Moor et al., 2005). Similarly, the good mentoring could help the mentees control their feelings of being isolated in the first stage of apprenticeship as well as increase their self-confidence and self-esteem during the course of teaching (McIntyre & Hagger, 1996).

Not only does mentoring offer many advantages to mentees, but it also provides benefits to mentors. Successful mentors were involved in apprentice teacher mentoring tutorials or sessions (Hagger & McIntyre, 2006; Hobson, Ashby, Malderez, & Tomlinson, 2009; Lopez-Real & Kwan, 2005) through which they enhanced their expertise and the skills to do their mentoring work well. The mentors' different advanced skills included interpersonal communication, self-reflection on work, and analysis of the mentees' personal and professional needs (Davies, Brady, Rodger, & Wall, 1999; Lopez-Real & Kwan, 2005; Moor et al., 2005). The mentors, however, encounter inevitable drawbacks in their mentoring practices. They were found to have suffered

from great loads of dual work of teaching and mentoring concurrently in daily life, which resulted in mental tension due to being incapable of satisfying all needs of the mentees (Maynard, 2000). Some of the mentors also endured other stressors such as anxiety and insecurity. when their teaching was monitored and observed by the mentees as part of required mentoring tasks (Bullough, 2005; Hart & Murphy, 1990; Hobson et al., 2009; Orland, 2001).

Literature on mentorship also depicted factors influencing the mentor-mentee relationship in four aspects: context, pairing, strategy, and preparation (Hobson et al., 2009). Positively, this dyad was found to be effective: (1) when the mentor and mentee were given sufficient contact time at school (Bullough, 2005); (2) where the two parties were compatible in personality and expertise (Abell, Dillon, Hopkins, McInerney, & O'Brien, 1995); (3) when the mentee was encouraged to develop her/his creative teaching style (Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Harrison, Dymoke, & Pell, 2006); and (4) when the mentee was advised to attend some seminars together with others organized by the mentor to find solutions to the mentee's personal and professional problems (Bullough, 2005). On the contrary, research studies such as those of Abell et al. (1995) and Lindgren (2005) concluded that the mentoring relationship could hardly be successful unless both the mentor and the mentee willingly participated in it. In addition, the successful mentoring relationship could not be formed merely on a mutual belief; rather, it had to originate from the mentor being both a supporter and an assessor who impacted the mentee's learning of how to teach (Abell et al., 1995; Williams & Prestage, 2002).

In addition to the aforementioned evidence of mentorship, mentoring the novices, in my conscientious observation as a senior faculty member and as a guest instructor to other HEIs in the MRD, seems to be under identified in the EFL teacher education (EFLTE) departments. That the mentorship has not been importantly emphasized resulted in challenges encountered by the

EFL novices in developing students linguistically and academically (ChewLin, 2010; Kindler, 2002). It also led to the disciplinarily incompatible mentoring assignment of the school's principal, yielding unexpected collegial disagreements (Nguyen, 2015). The mentoring assignment which is "disciplinarily-incompatible, unmindful, spontaneous, and unmonitored" could not help the novices improve academically and might cause a waste of money for the country (Nguyen, 2015, para. 17).

In addition to my observations of the current mentoring practices in the MRD, my own experience as a mentee as earlier described in the critical incident was problematic. That mentorship left me disillusioned with the quality of the first teaching experience which was seen as a very important factor influencing teacher retention (Hemminger, 2001; Odell & Ferraro, 1992). In the same vein, later in my career, I, as a mentor for new faculty, could not offer my mentees much support except my constructive feedback on what and how to teach. This reality may heavily rely on my inexperience in the mentoring work I was not trained to do. My situation resonated with Holloway's (2001) finding that stated if the mentors were not trained how to support the mentees, then their mentoring work would become ineffective despite their regular availability. In addition, there has not been any detailed support guidance for mentorship provided by our institution except a very brief statement of it printed in the educational laws mandated by our MOET (2016). Without being exposed to well-written guidelines which incorporated "the knowledge and skills associated with effective mentoring" (Ganser, 1999, p. 11), the mentors might become unproductive. Furthermore, in many informal talks with colleagues in the HEIs located in the MRD, I realized that the EFL mentoring practice was implemented as a formality, so it did not receive sufficient attention of its stakeholders. To this point, I thought it is timely to re-examine the mentoring practices at EFL teacher education

departments of the HEIs in the MRD in order to figure out its position in the greater context of EFL mentorship.

In my literature search related to EFL, English as a Second Language (ESL), and Second Language (SL) mentorship, I found several studies conducted around the world. Some selected examples include investigations into the mentor-protégé pairings for novice SL teachers (Hemminger, 2001), the meaning of mentoring relationship (Compton, 2002), beginning teachers' perceptions of mentoring quality and perceived self-efficacy (ChewLin, 2010), the way schools can support beginning teachers (Hudson, 2012), the importance of mentoring new teachers (Hobson, Harris, Buckner-Manley, & Smith, 2012), and the mentors' and mentees' perceptions of challenges and expectations of support (Kastelan-Sikora, 2013), to name a few. Nevertheless, I found a limited amount of studies in the Vietnamese context, particularly as related to pre-service EFL teachers in primary and secondary education. The only source of study on EFL mentorship at the university level which has been so far found is Nguyen's (2008) study on the mentorship for beginning EFL instructors at a national university in Vietnam. It was a quantitative investigation into the extent of mentorship, its benefits and drawbacks, and beginning teachers' evaluation of mentors. Nguyen's study found that formal mentorship was not practised, while the informal mentorship was identified in the participants' responses to a questionnaire regarding their mentoring experiences, types of mentoring activities, and evaluation of mentors at a tertiary level in Vietnam.

In addition to the scant publications on mentoring SL teachers in general and on EFL faculty in particular in Vietnam, the Regulations for University/College Operation enacted by MOET (2017) did not specify in detail what the mentee faculty in each discipline must possess and perform during their time of apprentice teaching. The same problem was also found in the

mentoring for EFL novel faculty members. Depending on their conditions and capacities, different EFL teacher education departments in the MRD developed their own policies of mentorship for their mentoring-involved faculty members. This lack of a common mentoring policy or guidance has resulted in variations in the quality of EFL faculty mentorship programs around the MRD. For example, some HEIs offered ease to get into a tenure-track position, while others did not. Nevertheless, since no research findings on the quality of EFL teacher education or apprenticeship or mentorship programs in Vietnam have been found in either the Vietnamese or English literature, this gap merits attention.

Weaving the aforementioned research findings into my personal observations of our mentoring performances, I decided to conduct a qualitative interpretive study on EFL mentorship in higher education to find answers to the primary question, "*What are the successes and challenges of the EFL faculty mentorship programs at higher education institutions in the Mekong River Delta of Vietnam?*"

1.3. Rationale for the Study

The study was conducted for two main purposes. The first one was to explore challenges and successes encountered by the three EFL actors – mentees, mentors and administrators - at four participating HEIs during the first three years of mentees' teaching known as their mentorship or apprenticeship. Challenges and successes in professional and personal development were identified. Embedded in these two areas of development are career advancement and psychosocial support, two outcomes of mentorship well identified in the literature (Ehrich, Hasford, & Tennent, 2014; Johnson, 2007, Kram, 1985). According to Kram (1985), career advancement was related to the mentors' sponsorship, exposure, and preparation

for the mentees, and psychosocial support included the mentors' encouragement, friendship, and advice/feedback on performance to the mentees.

The second purpose of the study was to collect data that could contribute to the establishment of a working faculty mentorship program. The design of such a program, including best practices, could be recommended for practice at the EFL teacher education departments of the participating HEIs in the MRD. An evaluation of the existing mentoring practices at these HEIs was conducted and the resultant findings served as a baseline for the proposed faculty mentorship program which "has value as a tool for reflecting on mentoring practice in teacher education" and "suggests a need to extend consideration beyond technical aspects of mentors' teaching to include attributes such as emotional availability or capacity to invest appropriately in novice teachers' growth and critical thinking" (Young, Bullough, Jr., Draper, Smith, & Erickson, 2005, p. 186). The trial recommendation for the other HEIs in the MRD rested on the fact that these HEIs share geographical, historical, social, economic, cultural, and political characteristics as well as lifelong mutual collaborations with one another.

In addition to these two purposes, the present study is highly relevant to one of the key objectives of Vietnam's two National Foreign Language projects regarding foreign language teacher professional development. As the EFL teachers' professional knowledge and capacity are strengthened, the foreign language (especially EFL) competence of Vietnamese youth can also be enhanced. The application of mentoring for novice EFL faculty at HEIs is important since they are becoming the teacher educators who help to train potential EFL high school teachers, who, in turn, directly influence the next generations of Vietnamese youth with an expected command of EFL to make the national foreign language projects' overall goals achieved.

1.4. Significance of the Study

With the purposes determined and the detailed investigating plan designed, the present study on EFL mentorship envisioned its practical and theoretical significances for the participating HEIs in the MRD of Vietnam, and hopefully beyond as well.

Practically, the study has offered its immediate beneficiaries - mentees, mentors, and administrators - a description of benefits and best practices of EFL faculty mentorship at the participating HEIs. By referring to the existing challenges identified in the present study, the HEIs' administrators could re-examine their management of the current mentorship program including policies, strategies, and assignments in order to maximize its effectiveness and bring about the best results for stakeholders in the mentoring circle. In addition, the study has provided the HEIs with a proposed faculty mentorship program inclusive of an EFL faculty mentoring guide figuratively depicted as "a lifebuoy" for its present and potential mentors and administrators to help their mentees survive in the initial stage of EFL teaching profession. Another significance could be that the present study has resulted in a better faculty mentorship program which will in turn enhance the HEIs' competition for prestige and enrolment. Further, such a faculty mentorship program may be introduced to other interested HEIs in the MRD to try as well.

Theoretically, the present study has added a section to the existing literature regarding the EFL mentorship at the participating HEIs in particular and in Southeast Asia in general. In addition, it has partially contributed to a common knowledge space of EFL mentorship which provides administrators and senior educators within the participating HEIs with a more critical stance on the extant mentoring issues to avoid potential problems. The present study outcomes may be shared with other HEIs in the MRD so as to call for their contributions of expertise and

experience to developing a comprehensive EFL faculty mentorship program which can be used to explain and justify problems encountered by stakeholders during the EFL mentorship. Not only is this program considered as the hallmark of the MRD's EFL teacher education programs as compared to those of other regions across the country, but it is the MRD's contribution to the accomplishment of the two National Foreign Language projects as well. The present study has, furthermore, contributed its findings to the world's growing knowledge of post-secondary mentorship programs by enriching the modest literature on Asian tertiary EFL mentorship.

1.5. Definition of Terms

Mentoring, mentee, mentor, administrator, the formal mentorship program, and the informal mentorship program were the widely used terms found in literature from business, nursing, and education. In education, different authors (Anderson & Shannon, 1988; Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Hobson, Ashby, Malderez, & Tomlinson, 2009; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Johnson, 2007; Lopez-Real & Kwan, 2005) defined these terms differently, depending on the focus of their investigation. In the scope of the present study, I approached them as defined below, and their alternative terms applied throughout the research proposal.

Mentoring (or mentorship, mentor-mentee relationship: "A nurturing process in which a more skilled or more experienced person, serving as a role model teaches, sponsors, encourages, counsels, and befriends a less skilled or less experienced person for the purpose of promoting the latter's professional and/or personal development" (Anderson & Shannon, 1988, p. 40). This term was occasionally replaced with *teaching apprenticeship, learning-to-teach program, teaching-to-teach program* to characterize the mentee and mentor in the EFL faculty mentorship program at the HEI.

*Mentee (or novice, protégé, beginning teacher): "*The person who is being mentored" (Murray & Owen, 1991, p. 13). This term referred to an inexperienced instructor supported by an assigned experienced instructor in the EFL faculty mentorship program at the HEI.

Mentor (or mentoring teacher): "The identified person in each school responsible for working collaboratively with trainee teachers and giving them advice and support" (Turner, 1993, p. 36). In the present study, this term denoted an experienced instructor assigned to support an apprentice instructor in the EFL faculty mentorship program at the HEI.

Administrator (or leader, manager): The person who was assigned by the HEI's rectoral board. The administrator was responsible for pairing mentors and mentees and monitoring their mentoring performances during the EFL faculty mentorship program at the HEI.

The formal mentorship program: This program was mandated by the MOET of Vietnam for new instructors in K – tertiary education throughout the country. Mentees were officially assigned a mentor who was responsible for providing them timely and qualified support to complete their teaching apprenticeship satisfactorily.

The informal mentorship program: This program was established on the premise of mentees' search for additional assistance from senior or experienced instructors who were not officially assigned to be their formal mentors. This type of mentorship program occurred naturally and voluntarily.

In summary, this chapter has located the researcher in his study (through the disclosure of personal experiences, aspirations and reasons for conducting this study). It has also presented the practical and theoretical significance of the study for the three actors participating in the mentorship programs, their HEIs, and other interested educators in the MRD of Vietnam. The definitions of some key words related to the mentoring topic and positioned at the end of this

chapter will prepare its readers for a smooth journey through the dissertation. In the next chapter

an extensive review of the literature on mentorship programs worldwide will be presented.

Chapter Two:

Review of the Literature

The purpose of the current study is to explore the successes and challenges of mentoring as experienced by new faculty members of EFL teacher education at the tertiary level during the first three years of their career. This chapter begins with an overview of mentoring through a description and analysis of the mentoring relationship and its immediate beneficiaries, namely three of the principle actors involved in a mentorship program. In this study this included mentees, mentors, and administrators; rectorate decision makers, ministry personal and students were not the focus of this investigation. The chapter proceeds with a review of successes and drawbacks that a mentorship program offered the three actors and their organizations, subsequently followed by a review of the mentee's and the mentor's characteristics and roles. The chapter will end with a discussion of mentorship in higher education in general and in second language education in particular.

2.1. Overview of Mentoring

2.1.1. Origin of mentoring

The term 'mentoring' had a historical meaning because it was generated from the term 'Mentor', a character in an ancient Greek myth, *The Odyssey* written by Homer (Everson & Smithey, 2000; Siskin & Davis, 2001, Wellington-Johnson, 1997). Odyssey, the King of Ithaca, requested Mentor, his loyal and experienced friend, to care and teach his son, Telemachus, while he was away fighting in the Trojan Wars. Entrusted by Odyssey, Mentor was expected to guide and advise the King's son. It was this "father-like relationship between young Telemachus and the wise, loving Mentor [that] set a standard for characterizing future mentoring relationship" (Merriam, 1983, p. 162). In interpreting this story, mentoring was traditionally considered as an

important field of education (Johnson, Geroy, & Griego, 1991). This caring and teaching process could also be viewed as the first mentor-mentee relationship or mentoring (Vanderbilt, 2010).

2.1.2. Definition of mentoring

Since its appearance and existence in literature, mentoring has been perceived differently by different people as a powerful and rewarding way to help develop others' learning (McKimm, Jolie, & Hatter, 2007). As evident in a variety of published works, no single, widely accepted operational definition of mentoring has been identified (Ambrosetti & Dekkers, 2010; Galbraith & James, 2004; Gold, 1996; Merriam, 1983; Mullen, 2012) because no consensus of what mentoring really means has so far been established (Smith, 2005). Mentoring as noted by Willie, Grady, and Hope (1991) encompassed so many definitions that it was probably difficult to find mentors since their functions could hardly be determined. In their critical review of the literature on mentoring from 1990 to 2007, Crisp and Cruz (2009) identified over fifty different definitions of mentoring. According to Jacobi (1991), the diversity of definitions of mentoring was still prevalent in the literature despite the fact that researchers have made much endeavour to induce the most persuasive definition of this educational concept.

One possible explanation for the definitional difficulty regarding mentoring lies in the context where it is applied. While mentoring held one meaning in academia, it rendered a second meaning in business, and a third one in psychology (Galbraith & Cohen, 1995; Merriam, 1983). Another description stemmed from the function or accountability of one person over another, emphasizing mentoring as a nurturing process in which a skilled or more experienced person played the role of a model, a teacher, a sponsor, a facilitator, or a counsellor to support the professional, personal, and psychological development of a less skilled or less experienced person (Anderson & Shannon, 1988; Blackwell, 1989). In assonance with these authors'

definition, Savage, Kapp, and Logue (2010) described mentoring as a process in which a person with a higher rank and recognized accomplishments was responsible for developing an early career person's professional and personal knowledge. This concept of mentoring is attuned to what a large body of researchers (Aladejana, Aladejjana, & Ehindero, 2006; Billett, 2003; Fowler & O'Gorman, 2005; Hayes, 2001; Price & Chen, 2003; McCormack & West, 2006;) agreed: mentoring reflected "a hierarchical relationship in which the mentor is more experienced than the mentee, or that the mentor has or can provide knowledge and skills that the mentee wants or needs" (Ambrosetti & Dekkers, 2010, p. 43). As regards mutual trust and belief, mentoring was depicted as a powerful emotional interaction between a mentor and mentee wherein the mentor was trusted and loved in the process of guiding and supporting the mentee (Merriam, 1983) so that the mentee could successfully master the adult world (Kram, 1985a).

As a combination of the aforementioned definitions of mentoring, Ambrosetti and Dekkers (2010) came up with a definition embracing the three components of relationship, process, and context (see Figure 3*)* in their critical literature review as follows:

> Mentoring is a non-hierarchical, reciprocal relationship between mentors and mentees who work towards specific professional and personal outcomes for the mentee. The relationship usually follows a developmental pattern within a specified timeframe and roles are defined, expectations are outlined, and a purpose is (ideally) clearly delineated. (p. 52)
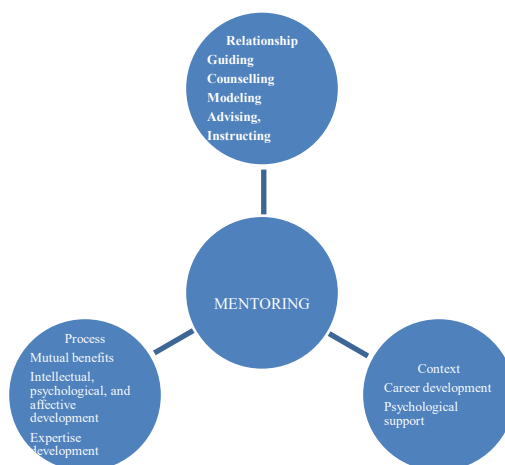
Figure 3. Adapted from Ambrosetti and Dekkers' (2010) three components of mentoring.

Making the situation more complicated, Healy and Welchert (1990) defined mentoring as "a dynamic, reciprocal relationship in a work environment between an advanced career incumbent (mentor) and a beginner (protégé) aimed at promoting the career development of both" (p. 17). Within this dyadic relationship, the protégé would transform from an understudied status into a self-directing figure, while the mentor would gain a positive middle-aged personality by showing cares and concerns for younger generations (Healy & Welchert, 1990). In line with this meaning, Beyene, Align, Sanchez, and Ballot (2002) contended that mentoring was a process through which the mentor and the mentee both mutually benefited from the interconnected relationship.

Galbraith and Maslin-Ostrowski (2000) examined mentoring in terms of its multi-faceted development when stating that

> mentoring is a process of intellectual, psychological, and affective development based on meetings of relative frequency scheduled over a reasonably extended time frame (…) Mentors accept personal responsibility as competent and trustworthy non-parental figures for the significant growth of other individuals. (pp. 136-137).

By the same token, Zachary (2002) argued that mentoring passed on knowledge of subjects, facilitated personal development, encouraged wise choices, and helped the protégé to make transitions.

Incorporating definitions from the literature in various fields such as education (teacher, adult, and higher education), management, psychology, library science, nursing, sociology, and counselling, Golian and Galbraith (1996) induced a comprehensive definition that stated:

> Mentoring is a process within which a contextual setting involves a relationship of a more knowledgeable individual with a less experienced individual; provides professional networking, counselling, guiding, instructing, modeling, and sponsoring; is a developmental mechanism (personal, professional, and psychological); is a socialization and reciprocal relationship; and provides an identity transformation for both mentor and mentee. (p. 100)

Irrespective of how mentoring was defined, it was widely accepted that mentoring in education was a bilateral relationship between an inexperienced teacher (mentee) and an experienced one (mentor) with a view to supporting the former's learning and development as a teacher, and their blending into and acceptance by the cultures of the school and the profession (Hobson & Malderez, 2013). In addition to this significance, mentoring reinforced the perception of individual and institutional empowerment by underpinning the individual's personal, professional, and emotional growth whether it was formally or informally practiced (Luna & Cullen, 1995).

For the purpose of the present study, the following definition by Hobson, Ashby, Malderez, & Tomlinson (2009) will be used to guide the process of the literature review, data collection and analysis, and discussion of the findings.

[M]entoring is defined as the one-on-one support of a novice or less experienced

practitioner (mentee) by a more experienced practitioner (mentor), designed primarily to

assist the development of the mentee's expertise and to facilitate their induction into the

culture of the profession (in the case, teaching) and into the specific local context (here,

the school or college). (p. 207). See Figure 4.
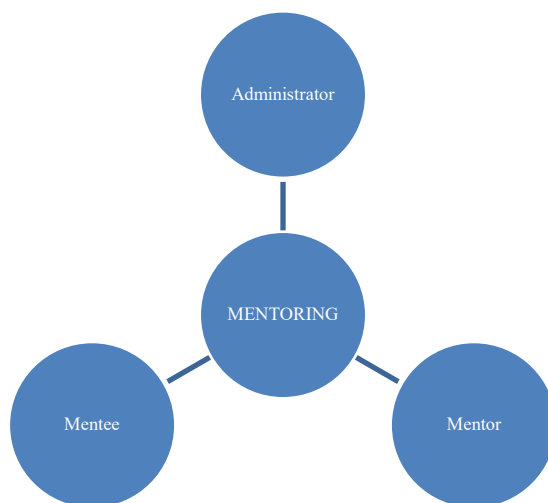
Figure 4. Adapted from Hobson, Ashby, Malderez, and Tomlinson's (2009) three actors of mentoring.

2.2. Mentoring in Education

The term of 'mentoring' was first introduced in the educational field in 1978 through

Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levinson, and McLee's longitudinal research that found the

importance of mentoring relationships in young men's adulthood (Luna & Cullen, 1995).

According to these researchers, in the mentoring practice, a mentor could represent various roles

or functions towards her/his mentee. The mentor could be a teacher by enriching a mentee's

skills and intellectual development or a sponsor by facilitating a mentee's entry and progression.

She or he could perform as a host and guide by inducting a mentee into a new working and

socializing community and familiarizing the mentee with its values, customs, resources, and role

players. Even, she or he could be an exemplar by setting a role model for the mentee (Luna & Cullen, 1995).

Since the 1980s, countries worldwide have steadily increased the number of formal school-based mentoring for early career teachers because they believed it could help beginning teachers overcome 'reality shock' in their early stage of teaching (Hobson, Ashby, Malderez, & Tomlinson, 2009; Veenman, 1984). In this educational mentoring, learning experiences played a crucial role in the relationship between mentors and mentees (Merriam, 1986) because it was asserted with evidence as a human resource development tool in educational organizations (Ghosh, 2012).

Mentoring in education defined by Koki (1997) was a complicated and multi-dimensional process wherein a mentor teacher was responsible for leading, guiding, teaching, influencing, and advising a less experienced teacher in a working environment featured by "mutual trust and belief" (p. 2). Specifically, the mentor assisted the mentee to blend into the mainstream of school by explaining school policies, regulations, and procedures; solving problems related to teaching and learning; providing personal and professional support; and facilitating the mentee's growth through collaboration, reflection, and research (Feiman-Nemser & Parker, 1992).

Since mentoring entered the educational arena in the early 1980s, with a view to improving education, educational leaders and policymakers have placed their resolute reliance on mentoring as a "vehicle for reforming teaching and teacher education" (Feiman-Nemser, 1996, p. 2). They believed that mentoring brought many advantages to not only its immediate beneficiaries known as mentees and mentors but also their administrators and/or organizations. These advantages will be synthesized and analyzed based on the two important outcomes of mentoring: *career development* and *psychosocial support* (Kram, 1985).

Career development was the process wherein mentors taught protégés or mentees how to learn the career basics and improve themselves in their organization (Kram, 1985, 1985a, 1985b). In other words, career advancement was often thought to help protégés acquire skills and experiences needed to perform current and future jobs, give advice, to positively influence others, and protect others' dignities from influences of unhealthy environments (Baugh & Scandura,1999; Hunt & Michael, 1983; Kram,1985; Kram & Bragar, 1991; Ragins & Cotton, 1999). Kram's (1985) five specific career development functions (see Figure 5) provided to protégés by mentors include *sponsorship, exposure and visibility, coaching, protection*, and *challenging assignments*. Sponsorship denoted the mentor's nomination and provision of opportunities for advancement to the protégé through formal committee meetings or informal peer discussions. Exposure and visibility were presented in the mentor's support in making the protégé seen as well as approaching key stakeholders in the organization so that the protégé could get accomplished during the mentoring. Coaching was shown through the mentor's giving advice and sharing ideas on a regular basis with a view to supporting the protégé to expose herself or himself freely. Protection was given to the protégé by the mentor in the case that the protégé encountered problems with leaders in the organization, or the protégé was not well-prepared enough to gain satisfactory achievements during work performances. Challenging assignments were provided to the protégés during the process of doing projects at work with some technical support. The mentor frequently observed the protégé and gave constructive feedback on work which helped the protégé sharpen skills, reinforce specific competences, and experience a sense of accomplishment.

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Figure 5. Adapted from Kram's (1985) career development functions of mentoring.

Psychosocial development was a process of establishing and improving the interpersonal relationship between mentors and protégés since the start of the mentorship program (Kram, 1985, 1985a, 1985b). Put differently, psychosocial support was often seen as helping protégés in building confidence, overcoming pressures, assisting their personal lives, making their voices heard and valued, sharing dreams, providing feedback, creating awareness of contribution to relationship, and teaching with examples (Kram, 1985; Kram & Bragar, 1991; Lyon et al., 2004; Ritchie & Genoni, 1999; Russell & Adams, 1997). Kram's (1985) four psychosocial support functions (see Figure 6*)* involved *role modeling*, *acceptance and confirmation*, *counselling*, and *friendship.* Role modeling fostered the protégé's learning about appropriate attitudes, values, and behaviours which were expected within the organization. Acceptance and confirmation enabled the protégé to sense unconditional positive concerns of the mentor. Counselling provided the protégé a positive sense of self at work and a chance to make use of the mentor in the process of exploring her or his potentials. Friendship was offered to the protégé by the mentor to establish social interactions that facilitated reciprocal understanding and preference between the two individuals in the mentoring dyad.
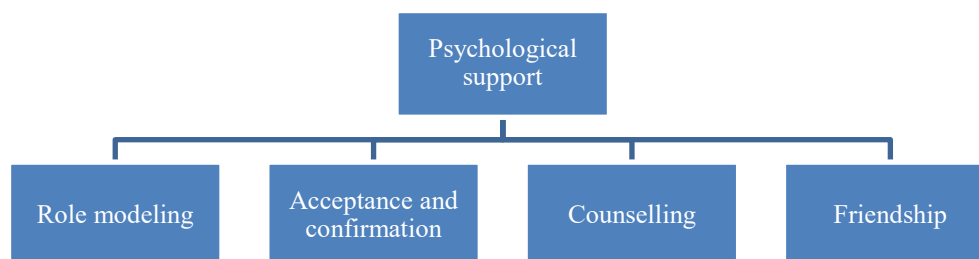
Figure 6. Adapted from Kram's (1985) psychological support functions of mentoring.

2.2.1. Benefits of mentoring for mentees

Since the early 1980s, mentoring in education has witnessed a dramatic increase in its programs, which was seen as a mobility to support and retain beginning teachers (Huling, 2001). It offers mentees a number of befinits. Ehrich, Harsford, and Tennent, (2004) reported a series of positive outcomes including (1) receiving support, empathy, encouragement, counselling, and friendship from the mentor; (2) being assisted with classroom teaching strategies, subject knowledge, and resources; (3) being offered opportunities for discussions, sharing ideas, information, and problems to get hands-on advice from mentors and mentee fellows; (4) and receiving the mentor's constructive feedback and critique and encouragement to work better during the mentoring. Illustrations of these positive outcomes could be found in various studies in which participants stated the importance of mentoring by confirming a source of comfort received when having a mentor (Ballantyne, Hasford, & Packer, 1995; Bush & Coleman, 1995). In addition, Hardy's (1999) researched participants reported that their knowledge of their subject areas greatly improved after a period of time being mentored, and that their improved knowledge was gained through frequent contacts to discuss and share ideas, information, or problems with their mentors or peers and receive timely advice on how to solve unexpected problems. As a result of this sharing experience, the mentees learned that they were not alone to encounter the extant problems (Hardy, 1999; Showunmi, 1996). Receiving constructive feedback on everyday

practice teaching as reported by the mentees in Tin's (1995) study additionally enhanced the benefits of mentoring for mentees.

Another widely cited strength of mentoring for mentees originated from lesson observations (Wang, Odell, & Schwille, 2008). Specifically, mentees benefited from both observing mentors' and fellow mentees' teaching and being observed by these colleagues in return. Supporting this finding was a series of studies on lesson observations. For instance, Luft and Cox's (2001) study on lesson-based discussions between the mentor and mentee before and after the mentee's teaching reported that the more frequently lessons were observed, the higher the mentorship programs were evaluated. In the same vein, in their serial studies on exploring learning how to teach, Hall, Johnson, and Bowman (1995) found that teaching observations definitely helped mentees reflect on their own teaching and outcomes of their students' learning. Unfortunately, both of these studies failed to analyze the components of lessons observed in lesson-based discussions as well as the mentee's thoughts about teaching and their practices in a real lesson, so it was difficult for readers to evaluate whether or not the outcomes of mentoring for the mentee were completely gained (Wang, Odell, & Schwille, 2008).

Researchers of positive impacts on mentoring for mentees also revealed that mentoring could help decrease mentees' feelings of isolation and increase their confidence and self-esteem (Bullough, 2005; Johnson, Berg, & Donaldson, 2005; Lindgren, 2005; Marable & Raimondi, 2007; McIntyre & Hagger, 1996). In other words, mentoring provided mentees with emotional and psychological assistance through the mentors' frequent interactions with their mentees to solve any problem detected so that mentees could accelerate their confidence to solve the extant problem and felt satisfied with their current teaching practice. At the same time as having emotional and psychological gains, mentees also developed their behaviours and skills of

managing classroom, time, and workloads thanks to being mentored during their early career stage (Lindgren, 2005; Malderez, Hobson, Tracey, & Kerr, 2007; Moor, Halsey, Jones, Martin, Stott, Brown, & Harland, 2005). Frequently performing these educational practices, mentees became more experienced in teaching lesson by lesson, and they quite blended into the mainstream of the school culture after coming across all policies, regulations, and standards required by the school (Bullough & Draper, 2004; Edward, 1998; Feiman-Nemser & Parker, 1992; Wang & Odell, 2002).

2.2.2. Benefits of mentoring for mentors

Not only does mentoring bring recognized advantages to mentees, but it also provides numerous benefits to mentors during the mentoring practice. Research showed that mentoring in education offered mentors multiple benefits. First and foremost, mentoring helped mentors develop personally and professionally (Ehrich, Harsford, & Tennet, 2004; Hagger & McIntyre, 2006; Yeomans & Sampson, 1994). In terms of personal development, mentors reported that their psychological aspects were greatly influenced. Specifically, mentors derived satisfaction from helping mentees (Scott, 1999), enhanced self-esteem of teaching career (Ehrich, Harsford, & Tennet, 2004; Wollman-Bonilla, 1997), and deepened teaching sensitivity (Tomlinson, 1995). Mentors also reported that they took pride in being mentors, especially when witnessing their mentees' professional and emotional growth as a consequence of their timely and productive support (Beck & Kosnick, 2000; Hagger & McIntyre, 2006). Research also found that participating in mentoring consolidated mentors' teacher identity and career status, thus increasing their personal values in the organization (Bodoczky & Malderez, 1997; Wright & Bottery, 1997).

As regards professional development, research showed that mentors improved teaching quality (Yosha, 1991) and cognitive coaching/mentoring skills (Clinard & Arive, 1998). Mentors additionally enlarged their knowledge of mentoring through critical self-reflection on their mentoring practices (Ganser, 1997; Lopez-Real & Kwan, 2005; Simpson, Hastings, & Hill, 2007), and from exchanging ideas with colleagues about their mentees' or their own teaching (Boreen, Johnson, Niday, & Potts, 2000; Hagger & McIntyre, 2006; Lopez-Real & Kwan, 2005). Resonant with these researchers' findings, in their critical review of 300 research-based articles on formal mentorship programs in education, business, and medicine, Ehrich, Harsford, and Tennent (2004) found four benefits of mentoring for mentors: (1) developing mentors' collegiality and establishing networking to share and exchange ideas with mentees and other mentors; (2) enriching their reflection on beliefs, practices, ideas, and values towards mentoring; (3) strengthening their professional development outcomes; (4) showing their personal satisfaction, reward, and growth. Another illustration of professional development through mentoring could be seen in Scott's (1999) six-year study on new teacher induction in New Brunswick, Canada. Scott's mentors (N=300) reported that they felt being personally motivated and satisfied with their own professional growth. They also felt proud of supporting their mentees to improve professionally and emotionally.

Apart from personal and professional development, mentoring was found to develop mentors' leadership capacity (Ehrich, Harsford, & Tennent, 2004). In this sense, if mentors received accomplishments in their mentoring practice, then they would be nominated and selected to attend some training courses for leadership skills. They might be appointed to a leading position subsequently. It was also reported that mentoring could arouse the desire of

doing research on mentoring in particular and education in general (Ehrich, Harsford, & Tennent, 2004).

Research also revealed that participation in the mentoring practice facilitated mentors' career planning and advancement by enabling them to identify their strengths and priorities (Tauer, 1998) so that they were able to maintain and extend assistance to mentees as well as other colleagues in the process of promoting their professional development (Moor et al., 2005). One other benefit of mentoring for mentors, which was supported by a number of researchers, (Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Foster, 1999; Harrison, Dymoke, & Pell, 2006) was that mentors became successful since they offered their mentees sufficient autonomy to make decisions and to develop their own teaching styles.

2.2.3. Benefits of mentoring for administrators

Literature reported administrators, like their mentors and mentees, acquired a number of benefits when they participated in managing the mentorship program at their HEI. First of all, administrators perceived a significant personal satisfaction the mentoring management brought to them (Daresh & Playko, 1993). When they observed mentors' and mentees' working with each other in harmony and productivity, they felt happy because they thought that they had done the right thing in matching and monitoring these two actors. In addition, by believing that a mentorship program could be led by an administrator to yield positive outcomes, administrators in the study by Scandura, Manuel, William, & Lankau (1996) stated that the management of such a program offered them "a pathway towards more effective and more egalitarian organizations" (p. 50). Echoing these scholars, the Canada-wide survey on 1,157 newly hired and mid-to-late career faculty members at higher education institutions, and 43 semi-structured interviews at the University of Alberta carried out by the University of Alberta in 2012 revealed that

administrators of the mentorship program had opportunities to strengthen their leadership capacities as well as potential which were also found in Luna and Cullen's (1995) study. Besides, by contributing their substantial thoughts and endeavours to managing the mentorship program, administrators perceived a true value of their work by saying, "Mentoring meant a lot to me, so I put a lot of work into it" (University of Alberta, 2012, p. 94).

2.2.4. Benefits of mentoring for the organization

Besides benefiting mentors and mentees, the practice of mentoring has brought their organization or administration numerous advantages. One piece of evidence which was supported by a growing body of research was the increased retention and stability of beginning teachers at the school as a result of participation in mentoring (Hobson, Ashby, Malderez, & Tomlinson, 2009; Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004; Johnson & Donaldson, 2005; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). The researchers found that those teachers who were assigned mentors did not want to change their job or move to other schools during their career. Participants in Moor et al.'s (2005) study reported that the culture of professional development for mentors and mentees within the school where mentoring was going on was initiated and reinforced, so mentees started seeking individual advice on other issues related to life from their mentors and other mentee peers. Cost-effectiveness was another benefit which mentoring offered the administration at the school although it was not substantially supported by much empirical research (Hobson, Ashby, Malderez, & Tomlinson, 2009). It was also reported that mentors would not receive any extra payment since they could be performing the mentoring practice while they were still doing their assigned class teaching (Murray & Owen, 1991). This could help the school save much money that might have been used to pay for outside contract mentors. Other benefits included the increased productivity and organizational stability to survive in an increasingly competitive

environment (Kanuka, 2005; Murray, 2001), the enhanced socialization and communication (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2004; Murray, 2001), the improved leadership capacity and succession planning (Jossi, 2007; Murray, 2001).

Like two sides of a coin, the discussion on mentoring will be incomplete if only its benefits are mentioned. Therefore, in the following section, drawbacks of mentoring which were termed as the dark side of mentoring (Duck, 1994; Ehrich & Hansford 1999; Long, 1997) will be discussed.

2.2.5. Drawbacks of mentoring for mentees.

In the dyadic relationship, mentees have experienced some undeniable disadvantages. One of the most widely cited disadvantages was seen in the insufficient mentoring time, meaning that mentees were not given enough conferencing time with their mentors (Hansford, Tennent, & Ehrich, 2003). This finding corresponded with that of the mentors who also recognized this lack of time as one of their problems in the mentoring work. In the mentor-mentee working circle, if neither stakeholder has enough time to meet, two questions arise: *(1) Why not?* and *(2) How did the actors manage to receive favourable mentoring outcomes without this support? Were there perhaps other forms of support?* Another problem regarding time reported by mentees in some studies was that they could not seek convenient meeting times for both mentors and mentees so that they could observe their mentors' teaching or have their teaching observed (Quinn, 1994, Scott, 1997).

Studies found that more drawbacks of mentoring for mentees were derived from mentors' characteristics. In fact, mentees reported that one common problem which was posed to them stemmed from the mentor's 'lower-than-expected' professional expertise or the mentor's and mentee's personality mismatch (Ackley & Gall, 1992; Bush & Coleman, 1995; Ganser, 1995;

Long, 1997; Turner, 1993). These incompatible pairings could be elucidated by either disparity in personality traits and/or ideologies between mentees and their mentors, preventing them from reaching consensus (Hansford, Tennent, & Ehrich, 2003, 2004). Another problem related to this aspect was identified in mentors' severe criticism, outdated thinking, defensiveness, conservativeness, and skepticism about mentees' capacities (Hansford, Tennent, & Ehrich, 2003, 2004; Hanson, 1996; Tin, 1995; Yau, 1995). Besides, mentees were noted to receive insufficient support from mentors when they encountered emotional and psychological turbulence (Hardy, 1999; Oberski, Ford, Higgins, & Fisher, 1999; Smith & Maclay, 2007); to be exposed to insufficient challenges for improving autonomous learning through practice teaching (Collison & Edwards, 1994; Dunne & Bennett, 1997); and not to be allowed free creativity in their teaching (Beck & Kosnick, 2000).

2.2.6. Drawbacks of mentoring for mentors

Mentoring has brought mentors apparent disadvantages. The first disadvantage of mentoring for mentors reported by a number of researchers (Ganser, 1992; Lee & Feng, 2007; Robinson & Robinson, 1999; Simpson, Hastings, & Hill, 2007) was the uncontrollably increasing workloads for mentors since they had to be responsible for teaching classes and supervising mentees concurrently. This dual task did not allow them to equally take good care of all individual mentees (Maynard, 2000), greatly influenced mentors' work-life balance, and even left mentors with constantly stressful feelings (Hobson, Ashby, Malderez, & Tomlinson, 2009). Additionally, mentors were found to have felt insecure, nervous, threatened, and even depressed when their teaching was observed by mentees or when their mentees raised questions on challenging new issues which they could not respond to right away (Bullough, 2005; Hart & Murphy, 1990; Orland, 2001). This challenge might put more pressure on mentors and make

them lose face because they were firmly assumed to be more experienced and more knowledgeable than their mentees. Another reported drawback lay in mentors' feelings of isolation when they mentored their mentees (Bullough, 2005; Graham, 1997). This negative feeling became more severe when mentors were faced with an absence of time for mentoring, an absence of understanding about the mentoring process, professional expertise or personality mismatch, and poor planning of the mentoring process (Ackley & Gall, 1992; Bush & Coleman, 1995; Ganser, 1995; Long, 1997; Nguyen, 2008; Turner, 1993).

Not only did disadvantages of mentoring for mentors result from their own performances, but they were also related to mentees themselves. Research revealed that mentors were challenged by their mentees' negative attitudes, poor performances, and lack of commitment to or trust in their mentors, even the mentees' unrealistic expectations of their mentors and mentorship programs during the mentoring practices (Bower & Yarger, 1989; Hansford, Tennent, & Ehrich, 2003; Herndon & Fauske, 1996). In fact, these drawbacks hindered the healthy relationship between mentors and mentees in the early stage of professional development.

2.2.7. Drawbacks for mentoring for administrators

The literature on managing the mentorship program exposed a number of noticeable challenges encountered by administrators. The first challenge reported was that administrators did not have a thorough comprehension of the process of enticing and enlisting prospective capable faculty members, inducting newly recruited faculty members into a new academic environment, and prolonging their stay at the institution (Finkelstein & LaCelle Peterson, 1992; Sorcinelli, 1994). In addition to that, after having recruited the new faculty members, administrators suffered a bewildering feeling of having been unable to figure out how to

adequately match them with prospective mentors, which resulted in a dilemma in their managing performance (University of Alberta, 2012). Therefore, administrators were very concerned that their mismatch regarding personality traits and skills between a mentee and a mentor would cause unexpected, negative impacts on the mentee, the mentor and the department.

2.2.8. Drawbacks of mentoring for the organization.

The organization has encountered different disadvantages when it institutes the mentoring practice at their site. The most frequently cited disadvantage in several studies was an absence of funding for the operation of the organization (Hansford, Tennent, & Ehrich, 2003, 2004). Researchers such as Robinson (1993) and Hanson (1996) reported that receiving insufficient funding resulted in ineffective mentorship programs, causing a financial pressure on the organization. Research also found that there was an absence of partnership and communication with or commitment from organizations participating in mentoring (Davies & Harrison, 1995; Evans, Abbott, Goodyear, & Pritchard, 1996; Freiberg, Zbikowski, & Ganser, 1994). Two supplementary problems reported in Murray and Owen's (1991) study were the danger of allowing a mentorship program to proceed while no complete organizational commitment to it was made, and the risk of suggesting a mentorship program for implementation to the organization without any reported evidence that justified the effectiveness of such a program. Other problems arising from mentoring included the lack of indicators to measure effectiveness of mentorship programs (Wagner, 1996), the possibility of parental concerns about the quality of mentees' teaching (Robinson, 1993), and the increased workload for the organization (Mills, Robinson, & Tasker, 1995).

2.3. The Mentoring Relationship

2.3.1. Types of the mentoring relationship

The mentoring relationship was a special interaction where at least two individuals established a real connection with each other through a mutual trust, respect, openness, and honesty (Mc Kimm, Ollie, & Hatter, 2003, 2007). Two principal types of mentor-mentee relationships existed in the literature (Buell, 2004). One was a formal or classic mentoring that was carefully planned and might last for a long time, while the other was an informal one happening spontaneously and lasting for a short period of time (Crisp & Cruz, 2009; Luna & Cullen, 1995). In other words, the informal mentoring relationship developed on its own when one inexperienced person (mentee) sought support, advice, and supervision from an experienced person (mentor) in order to survive and grow in her or his initial stage of profession. In contrast, the formal mentoring relationship referred to intercommunication between these two individuals as assigned by a third party, very often their administrators, were charged with guiding the mentorship program and promoting the mentee's development (Buell, 2004, Chao, Walz, & Gardner, 1992, Hobson, Ashby, Malderez, & Tomlinson, 2009). Other researchers (Kram, 1985; Lankau & Scandura, 2002; Murray & Owen, 1991; Ragins, 1989) distinguished informal and formal mentoring through the level of formality, length of relationship, and the specifics of purposes.

McKenzie (1995) developed a continuum of a mentoring relationship to demonstrate the benefits and drawbacks of each mentoring type. See Table 1.

Table 1. *Types of the mentoring relationships.*

Mentoring relationship	
Informal	**Formal**
Unplanned	Planned
No or little organizational involvement	Organizational involvement
May not be measured	Measured and monitored
Natural relationship requiring little or no training	Training for all participants usually provided
No standards set for selection of mentors and mentees	Assessment and selection for mentors and mentees

Note. Adapted from McKenzie's (1995) types of mentoring relationships.

2.3.1.1. Informal mentoring relationship

The majority of mentoring relationships were found to be informal by Phillips-Jones (1982, 1983). The informal mentoring relationship occurred between two individuals "where one gains insight, knowledge, wisdom, friendship, and support from the other" (Inzer & Crawford, 2005, p. 35). Gralbraith (2001) stated that occurring in an unplanned or unexpected relationship, the informal mentoring pulled two individuals to each other with a view to developing themselves personally, professionally, and psychologically. Frequently in the informal mentoring relationship, discussions between mentors and mentees "go beyond career-related issues to more in-depth personal sharing of interests, needs, and values" (Noe, 1988, p. 458). This type of relationship was naturally initiated on the basis of mutual interests, admiration, respect, trust, caring, and shared job skills between mentors and mentees (Noe, 1988; Underhill, 2006; Wright & Werther, 1991). The informal mentoring relationship was likely to last over a period of three or six years, and in some cases a lifetime (Blake-Beard, 2001; Kram, 1985a).

Research reported the informal mentoring resulted in more and stronger outcomes than the formally assigned one (Chao, 2009; Chao, Walz, & Gardner, 1992; Egan & Song, 2008; Ragins & Cotton, 1999; Ragins, Cotton, & Miller, 2000; Russell & Adams, 1997). The first outcome was that this naturally initiated relationship showed to be more voluntary, more egalitarian, longer lasting, and more frequently happening than the formal mentoring (Ragins & Cotton, 1999). In addition, owing to the flexible nature of informal mentoring, which did not cause any constraints of work structures between the two parties (Lumpkin, 2011), mentees gained greater ownership and maintained a stronger and broader connection with their mentors (Sands, Parson, & Duane, 1991). Ragins and Cotton's (1999) study also found that mentors provided mentees with more communication opportunities and greater coaching skills because

they participated in this informal mentoring relationship with their voluntary commitments; as a result, mentors received higher satisfaction and greater benefits in most mentoring roles as compared to those with formal mentors. Inzer and Crawford (2005) noted that mentors in the informal mentoring relationship were involved in more positive psychosocial activities such as counselling, facilitating social interactions, role modeling, and providing friendship. Mentors also provided their mentees with more types of career development functions, including coaching, providing challenging assignments, and increasing the mentees' exposure and visibility, resulting in the mentees' greater satisfaction with their mentors in the process of practising the informal mentoring. Research further found that because of participating in the informal mentoring with their self-selected partners, both mentors and mentees stayed with it as long as they preferred (Nemanick, 2000). Noted as a strong and valuable tool for mentees' personal and professional development by a number of researchers (Inzer & Crawford, 2005; Lumpkin, 2011; Underhill, 2006), the informal mentoring assisted mentees in establishing friendship first, subsequently followed by promoting learning, and finally by boosting their careers (Inzer & Crawdford, 2005).

The informal mentoring was, on the other hand, reported to face some inevitable challenges. Research found that a body of mentees were excluded from social interactions while they really wanted to be mentored, though informally (Clutterbuck, 2004). This social exclusion also applied to those mentees who were not selected by mentors due to different genders and minority groups (Kanter, 1977). In line with Clutterbuck (2004) and Kanter (1977), Bova (2000) identified a difficulty for female and minority mentees who were historically under-represented in academia in seeking informal mentors since mentors were likely to couple with younger versions of themselves, resulting in injustice and insufficiency of mentors for each mentee in the

informal mentoring. The selection of mentees by mentors was more likely based on the mentee's abilities and potentials rather than on the mentee's need for help (Allen, Poteet, & Russell, 2000) and more likely based on the mentee's competences and better performances (Kram, 1988). In addition, researchers noted that many organizations did not have strong mentoring cultures such as workshops, presentations, and activities that could lead to the initiation of natural or informal mentoring (Reimers, 2014).

2.3.1.2. Formal mentoring relationship

Formal or classic mentoring was formed by pairing an experienced or senior individual (mentor) and an inexperienced or junior individual (mentee), usually from the same work environment, for a specified period of time (Philip & Hendry, 2000; Reimers, 2014). In this type of mentoring relationship, mentors were assumed to be responsible for helping mentees grow and develop (Lumpkin, 2011). In other words, mentors were paired with mentees in the belief that the formal mentoring could help accelerate mentees' personal, psychological, and professional development. A formal mentorship program as described by Chao, Walz, and Gardner (1992) was a designed mentorship program administered by the organization that normally employed a systematic selection and a selected matching process. Goals of a formal mentorship program were multi-faceted ranging from improving mentees' skills, abilities, and knowledge of the field to helping retain mentees longer in their career (Eddy, Tannenbaum, Alliger, D'Abate, & Givens, 2001). The formal mentoring was also asserted to offer some orientation and training activities to help mentors and mentees comprehend their role obligations and become comfortable with the mentoring process (Allen, Eby, & Lentz, 2006; Eddy et al., 2001). The formal mentoring was found not to be a substitute for informal mentoring (Chesler & Chesler, 2002; Ragins & Cotton, 1999), but it was viewed as a means of professional development by which mentees were not

only supported but also further connected to other networks which were established by their mentors (Zellers, Howard, & Barcic, 2008). The length of the formal mentoring relationship between mentors and mentees varied; however, the typical minimum time expected for a formal mentorship program to bring about notable outcomes was between six and twelve months (Blake-Beard, 2001; Cotton, Miller, & Ragins, 2000).

Research reported a great number of benefits offered by the formal mentorship program to mentors, mentees, and their workplaces (Abell, Dillon, Hopskins, McInery, & O'Brien, 1995; Burke & McKeen, 1989; Geiger-Dumond & Boyler, 1995); Zey, 1985). As an overall benefit, the mentor and mentee were reported to develop themselves personally and professionally, while their organization could increase mentees' retention, commitment, and motivation (Fagenson-Eland, Mark, & Amendola, 1997). Specifically, it was assured that every mentee was formally assigned a mentor during the early stage of their career (Reimers, 2014). With the mentor's support, the mentee was reported to develop learning and coaching skills, increase work performance and self-confidence, extend networking, plan their career, and stay longer in their career (Eby & Lockwood, 2005; Lumpkin, 2011). In addition, Kram and Bragar's (1992) study presented a series of benefits for the formal mentees ranging from acquiring new skills and developing professional direction to identifying new opportunities for advancement and making greater commitment to their career and organization. Regarding mentors, research reported numerous advantages of participating in the formal mentorship program such as developing personal relationships and gratifications with mentees; building leadership, supervisory, and training skills; improving networking opportunity and performance; and reinforcing self-reflection on strengths and weaknesses in mentoring work (Eby & Lockwood, 2005; Hegstad, 1999; Messmer, 2003; Ragins & Scandura, 1994; Scandura & Schriesheim, 1994). Mentors also

noted that by participating in formal mentorship programs, not only did they develop some close

relationships with loyal followers, but they were respected and admired by their peers as well

(Ragins & Scandura, 1994). The formal mentorship program was found to have attracted more

and more participating individuals because of its commitment to a type of professional

development for its potential employees in the early career stage (Allen, Eby, Poteet, Lentz, &

Lima, 2004; Allen & O'Brien, 2006; Catalyst, 1993).

Despite evidence-supported benefits for the participants and organization, research

revealed some negative or dysfunctional aspects of the formal mentoring relationship (Eby &

Allen, 2002). Mentor-mentee mismatching was the most widely reported problem in the formal

mentoring relationship, causing uncomfortable interactions and a sense of interpersonal

discomfort between the mentor and mentee (Eby & Lockwood, 2005; Klauss, 1981; Kram, 1985;

Reimers, 2014). This mismatching stemmed from a variety of differences in individual life

aspects such as background, age, personality, interest, or experience which have been publicly

viewed as a common problem of formal mentoring (Eby & Allen, 2002; Eby, Butts, Lockwood,

& Simon, 2004; Eby, Lockwood, & Butts, 2004; Eby & McManus, 2004). Additionally, it was

noted by researchers (Kram, 1985; Levinson, Darrow, Levinson, Klein, & McKee, 1978; Ragins

& Scandura, 1997) that mentees had to suffer mentors' verbal abuse, excessive criticism,

conservativeness, and jealousy which prevented them from getting success during the course of

formal mentoring. Some researchers (Brown,1990; Burkee & McKeen, 1989; Geiger-Dumond &

Boyle, 1985; Kizilos, 1990) showed that the assigned or coerced relationship led to the feeling of

dissatisfaction, vexation, resentment, and suspicion of mentees towards their mentors due to the

assumption that this coercion violated the true spirit of mentoring. The resultant outcome was

that formal mentees were provided with fewer career development and psychosocial functions by

their mentors compared to informal mentees (Ragins & Cotton, 1999). Other reported

dysfunctional issues regarding the formal mentoring included: (1) mentees' expectations were

unmet; (2) mentors neglected or did not pay close attention to mentees; (3) the two parties could

not establish a well-planned work schedule; and (4) they both faced the problem of geographical

distance (Eby & Lockwood, 2005; Eby et al., 2004; Eby, Lockwood, & Butts, 2004; Young &

Perrewe, 2000).

2.3.2. Factors that affect a formally assigned mentoring relationship

Research on the mentoring relationship has been widely conducted and reported in the

literature on different fields. Irrespective of what aspect research focuses on; for example, its

nature (formal or informal) or its functions (career development or psychosocial development)

(Erdem & Aytemur, 2008) - success or failure of a formally assigned mentoring relationship in

the educational field is decided by several defined factors, as identified below.

2.3.2.1. A successful mentoring relationship

A successful mentoring relationship was dependent on four key factors: (1) contextual

support for mentoring, (2) mentor selection and pairing, (3) mentoring strategies, and (4) mentor

preparation (Hobson et al., 2009).

Contextual support*.* A successful mentoring relationship was rooted in a variety of

contexts. The most widely cited context was the reduction of daily teaching role required of

teacher mentors so that they could focus on preparing for their mentoring role (Abell et al., 1995;

Lee & Feng, 2007; Robinson & Robinson, 1999). To facilitate the success of the mentoring

relationship, it was reported by researchers (Abell et al., 1995; Evans & Abbott, 1997; Simpson

et al., 2007) that mentors should be financially awarded and publicly recognized for their

accomplishments in teaching and mentoring work. Another context that exerted a positive impact

on the mentoring relationship was found in a school setting characterized by a collegial and learning culture where the mentor and mentee received additional supports from other teacher mentors or peer mentees within their schools or in other places (Edwards, 1998; Lee & Feng, 2007; Whistnant, Elliot, & Pynchon, 2005).

Mentor selection and pairing. Foster (1999) and Roehrig, Bohn, Turner, and Pressley (2008) contended that mentors should be effective teachers in order to play exemplary roles for mentees. In return, mentees showed admiration and respect for their mentors whose expertise and experience of teaching in general and their subject areas in particular were strong enough to guide mentees in the early career stage (Abell et al., 1995). Additionally, selecting mentors for successful mentorship was reported to stem from their positive personality traits such as supportive, approachable, non-judgemental, trustworthy, good listening skills, and abilities to understand and enter mentees' lives (Abell et al., 1995; Rippon & Martin, 2006; Yeomans & Sampson, 1994). More importantly, mentors were able to show their strong desire to participate in the mentoring work (Abell et al. 1995; Lindgren, 2005; Wildman, Magliaro, Niles, & Niles, 1992). In the same vein, successful mentor-mentee pairings as found by Abell et al. (1995) were decided by the consideration of mentees' strengths and weaknesses as well as the professional and personal compatibility between mentors and mentees. Research also asserted that these pairings would yield the best outcomes if both mentors and mentees taught the same subject areas within the school (Hobson et al., 2007; Johnson, 2004; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004).

Mentoring strategies. Researchers (Foster, 1999; Lindgren, 2005; Valencic-Zuljan & Vogric, 2007) reported that mentors nicely treated adult mentees with distinct individual learning styles by carefully selecting strategies responsive to and appropriate to mentees' needs so that they could recognize their current stages of development. At the same time, mentors confirmed

agreements with mentees on the general objectives of the mentoring relationship and their personal learning goals and revisit them for revision or modification if required during the mentor-mentee pairing (Lindgren, 2005; Stanulis & Weaver, 1998). In case mentees encountered work- or life-related challenges, they had to discuss with mentors to find out feasible solutions to them so that they would receive the full range of benefits embedded in the mentoring relationship (Kram, 1985; Noe, 1988).

Mentor preparation and support. Research stated that mentors were able to be provided with some professional development programs which helped enrich mentors' expertise to do their work effectively apart from some traditional training workshops (Crasborn, Hennison, Brouwer, Korthagen, & Bergen, 2008; Ganser, 2002; Rowley, 2009; Tomlinson, 1995; Williams & Prestage, 2002; Valencic-Zuljan & Vogrinc, 2007). In other words, the content of such preparation programs concentrated on planned strategies and hands-on tactics to help mentors build up their identities as effective mentors by engaging them in seminars and conversations with professional mentors and/or university-based educators. Such programs would not only increase their knowledge of mentoring but also reduce feelings of isolation suffered from working as the only mentor within the school (Bullough, 2005; Carroll, 2005; Graham, 1997; Orland, 2001). Other studies stated the need of providing mentors more additional supports such as involving them in educational research on mentoring (Evans & Abbott, 1997), making them perceive the value and potential benefits of discussing pedagogical issues with mentees (Lindgren, 2005), and reinforcing their skills to motivate mentees' self-reflection on the mentee's actions (Crasborn et al., 2008; Dunne & Bennett, 1997).

2.3.2.2. A poor mentoring relationship

In some instances, the mentoring relationship failed to gain its expected objectives and outcomes due to a number of factors identified from empirical studies. Research by Kilburg and Hancock (2006) reported four broad factors that could affect the development of a strong mentoring relationship from both the mentors' and the mentees' perspectives: (1) shortage of time, (2) absence of emotional support, (3) poor interpersonal skills, and (4) institutional barriers.

Shortage of time. The most frequently cited problem that resulted in poor mentoring relationships was a shortage of time reported by both mentors and mentees (Eby et al., 2000; Eby & Allen, 2002; Ehrich & Hansford, 1999; Ehrich, Hansford, & Tennent, 2003, 2004; Ehrich, Hansford, & Ehrich, 2011; Kilburg & Hancock, 2003; Kilburg & Hancock, 2006; Kilburg, 2007). Both of them had to take additional time to complete their daily work (Kilburg, 2007). For mentees, they needed more time to make lesson plans, teach, and meet with student's parents (Kilburg, 2007), while mentors needed more time to help mentees prepare lesson plans and teaching activities, to observe mentees' teaching, and to organize follow-up conferences for teaching feedback (Ganser, 1993; Sudzina, Giebelhaus, & Coolocan, 1997). Research reported that the mentoring practice would merely have been a token gesture if its participants had been given sufficient time to implement their intended plans (Guyton & McIntyre, 1990; Ganser et al., 1998).

Absence of emotional support. Research reported that despite achieving some recognized outcomes in the initial stage of teaching, beginning teachers still fell into inevitable feelings of losing energy, being isolated, and lacking confidence and competence (Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2002). These negative feelings were rooted in a series of required tasks such as adapting themselves to a new environment, working with a busy schedule, dealing with a

demanding curriculum, and balancing schoolwork and family life (Kilburg, 2007).

Unfortunately, the support for such problems of mentees was not provided in time at the start of

the mentoring relationship, so they had to look for mentors' assistance in creating a nurturing

environment that could satisfy their personal and emotional needs in order to survive the

challenging and demanding mentoring relationship (Feiman-Nemser, Carver, Schwille, &

Yusko, 1999; Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2002; Tickle, 1994). Kilburg and Hancock (2006)'s

study also asserted that the mentees' belief in a strong scaffolding mechanism offered by mentors

reduced their emotional problems, encouraged, and empowered them when they were exposed to

challenging situations during the mentoring relationship.

Poor interpersonal skills. Research reported that poor communication skills between

mentors and mentees during the mentoring relationship (Kilburg & Hancock, 2006; Kilburg,

2007) hampered the mentorship process. Mentors tended to show authority by giving direct

orders to mentees, refusing to listen to them, and limiting co-operation with them (Boreen et al.,

2000; Brewster & Railsback, 2001; Kinlaw, 1999; Weeks. 1992). Similarly, mentees were found

to become more argumentative and reluctant to accept any constructive feedback or comments

from mentors, and even deny listening to any rationale (Corley, 1998; Cross, 1981; Kilburg,

2002). To improve this negative aspect and make the mentoring relationship more successful, it

was suggested that mentors had to place their trust in mentees, provide good guidance to them,

and allow them to make important decisions on their own (Ganser et al. 1998; Newton et al.,

1994; Villani, 2002). In the same vein, good communication skills could help mentors and

mentees reinforce their interactions and reflections, yielding an effective mentoring relationship

(Boreen et al., 2000; Kinlaw. 1999).

Institutional barriers. This negative factor mainly originated in educational organizations and reported to be a consensus among many researchers and scholars in the mentoring relationship (Kilburg, 2007). The findings regarding this factor were presented in different aspects. The first aspect was related to the influence of change on mentors' and mentees' personal and professional lives, which could make their reaction unpredictable (Kilburg, 2007; Loucks-Horsley & Stiegelbauer, 1991). To improve this negative reaction, it was stated with evidence that the institutional administrators had to offer the mentoring participants some training to raise their awareness of the unpleasant consequences of this change that were leading to their anxiety, frustration, and destabilization during the mentoring process (Kilburg, 2002, Newton et al., 1994; Veeman, 1984; Villani, 2002). The second aspect embedded in the institutional barriers was related to the professional and personality mismatch created by institution administrators (Ehrich, Hansford, & Tennet, 2003, 2004; Ehrich, Hanfors, & Ehrich, 2011). Reasons for this mismatch as noted by these scholars were rooted in disparities in personality traits, ideologies, or expertise between mentors and mentees, which led to the mentor's anxiety about being unable to get along well with the mentee (Ganser, 1995) and the mentee's insecure feeling of incompatible relationship with the mentor (Tuner, 1993). In line with this mismatching aspect, the institution administrator's use of prerequisite criteria in selecting mentors was problematic (Kilburg, 2007). Gordon and Maxey (2000) found a list of criteria that could negatively affect the mentoring relationship including approachability, integrity, ability to listen, sincerity, willingness to share time, enthusiasm, teaching competence, trust, receptivity, positive attitude, openness, commitment to the profession, experience in teaching, tactfulness, cooperativeness, and flexibility. Selecting criteria without careful consideration could negatively affect the mentoring process and the mentee's decision to leave

the institution or even the profession (Kilburg 2002, 2007; Newton et al., 1994). Additionally, research contended that the absence of financial commitment could set up an institutional barrier that prevented the mentoring relationship from gaining success (Kilburg, 2007). It was considered to be unfair for the institutional administrator to require considerable extra-time of mentors and mentees in order to participate in the mentoring relationship, without any form of compensation in return. Had compensation been given, then the two mentoring parties would have positively been engaged in the mentoring experience as stated by Kilburg (2007).

2.4. The Mentee

2.4.1. Characteristics of the mentee

The literature on the mentoring relationship claimed mentoring as the most effective way to transfer skills and knowledge promptly and inspire loyalty in novices to establish collaborations in the working environment (Robinson, 2001). Among many determined objectives of mentoring, the most noticeable one was to encourage and support mentees to develop personally, psychologically, and professionally in addition to providing them with resources to satisfy their career aspirations (Danziger, 2001). Although mentoring relationships were found to be different due to the mentees' personal needs, interests, and behaviours, mentees shared a number of characteristics and personality traits (Abiddin & Hassan, 2012). Researchers (Orland-Barak, 2001; Robinson, 2001) reported mentees' eagerness to learn and willingness to take on new challenges as a key factor to a successful mentoring. Mentees also needed to be open and receptive to constructive feedback from mentors and peer mentees, and they appreciated it as a valuable chance to learn and improve themselves academically and professionally (Furlong & Maynard, 1997; Hudson, 2013). At the same time, mentees needed to be ready to internalize new ideas and examine things from other perspectives while they still

remained self-confident in their beliefs (McIntyre, Hagger, & Wilkin, 1993). Another characteristic which was found to positively affect success of mentoring lay in mentees' punctuality or being on time in scheduled and regular meetings with mentors, administrators, peer mentees, and students (Mountford, 1993). Such meetings might formally happen on a three- to four-week basis or informally twice every week in order to guarantee the establishment of a continued relationship between mentors and mentees. Other expected characteristics or attributes of mentees which were stated in Hudson's (2013) study included mentees' enthusiasm for teaching, their ability to work with people, and passion for their chosen career; capability of building relationships with others; ability to reflect on their personal practices and mentors' feedback; ability to take responsibility for their learning; and ability to rebound from adversity.

2.4.2. Roles of the mentee

Since the nature of educational mentoring is a reciprocal relationship between mentors and mentees, the role of mentees is no less important than that of the mentors (Ambrosetti & Dekkers, 2010; Freeman, 2008; Kamvounias, McGrath-Champ, & Yip, 2007; Paris, 2010). Both parties need to perceive their important roles in order to establish and prolong the mentoring relationship (Hockey, 1997; Wilkin, 1992). The most frequently cited role of mentees is performing a variety of required tasks including preparing lesson plans, teaching lessons, reflecting on teaching, and evaluating students' learning (Hudson, 2013; Kamvounias, McGrath-Champ, & Yip, 2007; Lai, 2005; Walkington, 2005a). Mentees would not be able to accomplish these compulsory tasks without discussing them with mentors and receiving their support. In other words, mentees were required to work with their mentors in developing skills and knowledge about the day to day work of a teacher during the mentorship (Freeman, 2008). In addition, mentees were found to engage in professional conversations with not only their mentors

but also other mentors and peer mentees in order to extend their circle of academic relationships and enrich their work expertise (Freeman, 2008; Kamvounias, McGrath-Champ, & Yip, 2007). Through participating in such conversations, mentees could listen to and accept advice from professionals, share ideas and learn new ideas from other academics, and initiate opportunities to work with others during and after the mentoring (Ambrosetti & Dekkers, 2010; Fairbanks, 2000; Laker, Laker, & Lea, 2008; Phillips-Jones, 1982). As part of these conversations, mentees need to honestly inform mentors of what they really hope to gain upon completion of the mentorship program so that mentors are able to make a feasible mentoring plan to help them reach the set goals (Richo, 1991). Hudson (2013) noted that mentees are expected to demonstrate a good mastery of pedagogical content knowledge as well as mandated policies of the working environment so that they are able to perform their assigned tasks successfully.

2.5. The Mentor

2.5.1. Characteristics of the mentor

Research on the characteristics and qualities of mentors revealed that effective mentors showed both specific personality characteristics and interpersonal traits (Blackburn, Cameron, & Chapman, 1981; Clark, Harden, & Johnson, 2000; Cronan-Hillix, Davidson, Cronan-Hillix, & Gensheimer, 1986; Gilbert, 1985; Johnson, 2002; Sanders & Wong, 1985). Regarding personality, Johnson (2002) found that successful mentors were clever and caring and had a sense of humor. They also possessed such positive personality traits as confidence, security, flexibility, altruism, enthusiasm, and patience, and they always showed great care for and placed trust in their mentees (Alleman, 1982; Johnson, 2000). In terms of interpersonal communication, research by these scholars reported that desirable mentors were supportive, encouraging, and respectful to their mentees. Further findings were reported that successful mentors were people-

oriented, tolerated ambiguity, preferred abstract concepts, and valued their mentees (Clawson, 1979). They were also psychologically well-adjusted (Cronan-Hillix et al., 1986), and played intentional role models (Gilbert, 1985). In other words, accomplished mentors were noted as being kind, healthy and competent (Johnson, 2002). It was these characteristics of competence that enabled mentors to be "more knowledgeable on teaching practices and through explicit mentoring processes [to] develop pedagogical self-efficacy in the mentee towards autonomous teaching practices" (Hudson, 2004. pp. 216-217). In line with the aforementioned personality traits, Shea (1994) found three overall characteristics that contributed to the success of mentors, including going beyond job responsibilities in assisting others, being other-oriented or paying attention to other mentees, and finding the act of sharing and giving enjoyable.

2.5.2. Roles of the mentor

Mentors performed a variety of roles depending on the contexts they were involved in (Ambrosetti & Dekkers, 2010). First of all, mentors were reported to play the role of supporters who assisted mentees in their personal and professional development (Kwan & Lopez-Real, 2005), and provided advice and honest, critical feedback during the mentees' task performances (Hall, Draper, Smith, & Bullough Jr., 2008; Maynard, 2000). They also looked after and/or protected mentees from uncomfortable and disappointing circumstances (Hall et al., 2008). In addition, mentors played the role of models for mentees to follow by carrying out tasks explicitly for the mentees to observe (Espinoza-Herold & Gonzalez, 2007; Jaipal, 2009; Kwan & Lopez-Real, 2005). At the same time, mentors provided mentees guidance in task performance (Bullough, Young, Birrell, Clark, Egan, Erickson, Frankovich, Brunetti, & Welling, 2003), demonstrated positive behaviours of the profession (Maynard, 2000), and allowed the mentees to try different techniques and strategies (Hall et al., 2008; Maynard, 2000). Additionally, mentors

were reported to be assessors or evaluators who gave criteria-based grades and constructive

criticism on mentee performance (Kwan & Lopez-Real, 2005). They also gave appraisals to

mentees whenever the mentees made progress in task performance (Le Maistre, Boudreau, &

Pare, 2006). In the foreign language context where mentors and mentees might be from different

cultures, mentors were found to establish empathetic relationships between their multicultural

experiences and their mentees' diverse backgrounds which opened many professional

opportunities to the mentees (Espinoza-Herold & Gonzalez, 2007).

2.6. A Chronicle of Research on Educational Mentoring

To offer an overview of how research on educational mentoring has been discussed over

the past four decades, a brief summary of key topics and developments in educational mentoring

research is presented in Table 2 below. The information in the table was drawn from different

critical reviews conducted from 1980 to the present time and is divided into six categories:

definitions, functions/roles in mentoring, types of mentoring relationships, mentor and mentee

characteristics, challenges and supports in mentorship, and effects and influences of mentorship

programs on all involved. The choice of the year 1980 as a starting point was based on Irby and

Boswell's (2016) claim in their most recent editorial publication about the print origin of the

term 'mentoring': "The year, 1980, appeared to be the turning point in the proliferation of

mentoring research and commentary in professional journals" (p. 2). In line with this

observation, Ingersoll (2011) stated, "Interest in teacher induction and mentoring appeared to

gain momentum in the mid-1980s" (p. 9) in his critical review of the research on mentoring

beginning teachers. The reviews included Agholor, Lleo, and Serrano (2015), Allen, Eby,

O'Brien, and & Lentz (2008), Cochran-Smith (1991), Feiman-Nemser (1996), Ghosh (2012),

Ingersoll (2011), Irby and Boswell (2016), Jacobi (1991), Kammeyer-Mueller and Judge (2007),

Kessels (2010), Little (1990), Wang and Odell (2002), Wang, Odell, and Schwille (2008), Wang

and Fulton (2012), and Zembytska (2016).

Table 2. *A chronicle of research on educational mentoring.*

	1980 – 1990	1991 – 2000	2001 – 2010	2011 - present
Definitions	Diversity of definitions of mentoring	Diversity of definitions of mentoring	Addition of definitions of mentoring	Further definitions of mentoring
Functions/Roles in mentoring	Mentoring as a practice to retain beginning teachers rather than a way of learning how to teach professionally		Mentoring functions and roles	Role of mentoring in mentees' lifelong learning and professional development Diversity of functions, and approaches in mentoring
Types of mentoring relationship		Mentoring types: formal and informal Pervasiveness of natural or informal mentoring in higher education	Exploration of different kinds of mentoring (e.g., responsive, interactive, and directive)	New types of mentoring: peer mentoring, group mentoring, tele-mentoring and electronic mentoring Importance of mentoring for mentors in formal mentorship programs in higher education
Mentor/mentee characteristics	Mentees' characteristics and the mentor- mentee relationships Mentors' characteristics, their dispositions, and skills required for mentoring work, interpersonal skills	Role of gender in mentoring		
Challenge and support	Dramatic and traumatic experiences faced by mentees in transition	Expectations of mentors and mentees from their counterparts and the outcomes of	Attention to institutional supports	Attention to institutional supports

	from a student to a teacher Conceptualization of ways in which mentors provide challenges and supports to mentees	their mentoring relationship		
Effects and influences		Effects of various models of mentor preparation on mentors' knowledge, skills, and dispositions in relation to teaching Effects of mentoring on mentees' teaching instead of their feelings of adjusting to a new context, their thinking about teaching, and their students' learning	Effects of mentoring on mentees' teaching outcomes Impacts of mentoring on mentees' well-being (e.g., feelings of isolation, attitude for work, and career concern) Influence of mentors' beliefs in learning to teach, mentees' learning to teach, and different mentoring contexts (e.g., school culture, and national policies) on mentors' work performances and mentees' learning-to-teach experiences Influence of patterns and characteristics of mentor-mentee interactions on mentees' possibility to extend or limit their learning to teach	Longitudinal effects of mentoring on mentees, mentors and institutions Influence of collaborative mentoring as a community of learners on mentors' and mentees' career development

2.7. Mentorship in Higher Education

The mentoring relationship in academic organizations has a longer duration and a more traditional viewpoint than in other settings (Erdem & Aytemur, 2008). Historically, HEIs (or universities) developed orientation programs and optimal methods which could successfully induct new faculty members (or faculty mentees) into the university community (Savage, Karp, & Logue, 2010). In other words, mentoring could assist new faculty mentees to fully develop their professional careers, support professional identity, and build competence (Toal-Sullivan, 2002) as well as facilitate their professional learning, socialization, and adaptation into a profession (Kalbfleisch & Bach, 1998). Recognizing the importance of mentoring, many HEIs established formal mentorship programs using a dyadic model in which an experienced faculty mentor was paired with an inexperienced or novice faculty mentee (Boyle & Boice, 1998; Darwin & Palmer, 2009; Gardiner, 2005).

2.7.1. Benefits of faculty mentoring

A wealthy body of research has proven benefits of mentoring relationships for mentors, mentees, and their educational organizations at different levels. In the higher education context, mentoring was claimed to support new faculty mentees to acquire necessary expertise and competency so that they could develop themselves personally, psychologically, and professionally during and after the mentoring and establish working relationships with related people to build up their careers (Bean, Lucas, & Hyers, 2014; Fountain & Newcomer, 2016; Lund, 2007; Tareef, 2013; Thorndyke, Gusic, & Millner, 2008). Other benefits to mentees in academe included a fast assimilation into the institutional cultures (Luna & Cullen, 1995; Murray, 2001), higher career satisfaction (Luna & Cullen,1995; Luecke, 2004; Murray, 2001), increased probability of success (Luna & Cullen, 1995; Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 2004;

Murray, 2001), accelerated leadership development (Murray, 2001), increased motivation to mentor others (Luna & Cullen, 1995; Luecke, 2004; Murray, 2001), and enhanced teaching effectiveness (Luna & Cullen, 1995).

With respect to faculty mentors, research argued that participating in mentoring brought them numerous advantages among which were their sense of contribution and accomplishment (Fogg, 2003; Murray, 2001); and attainment of personal satisfaction of working with faculty mentees (Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 2004). Research also stated that mentoring re-aroused not only the faculty mentors' interest in mentoring practices (Jossi, 1997; Murray, 2001) but also their willingness to contribute new ideas and perspectives to developing mentees personally and professionally (Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 2004; Murray, 2001).

Regarding benefits for academe, researchers (Lumpkin, 2011; Smith, Smith, & Markham, 2000; Thorndyke et al., 2008; Thurston, Navarrete, & Miller, 2009) found that mentoring resulted in faculty retention and other advantages within educational institutions. It also helped increase the educational institution's productivity and organizational stability (Murray, 2001), support cultural diversity (Gunn, 1995; Jossi, 1997; Murray, 2001), and improve the administrator's leadership capacity and succession planning (Jossi, 1997; Luecke, 2004; Murray, 2001). The educational institution was also reported to receive its best benefit once its mentoring was practised in conjunction with other human resource development programs such as professional development training and performance appraisal (Tilman, 2001; Zellers, Howard, & Barcic, 2008).

2.7.2. Challenges of faculty mentoring

Much research reported a chain of challenges encountered by faculty mentees when they first entered the higher education environment. These challenges were specified as lack of time

for teaching, research, and service; unconstructive feedback; unrealistic expectations about assigned tasks to be timely completed; lack of collegiality; and unmanageable work-life balance (Austin, 2003; Boice, 2000; Eddy & Gaston-Geyles, 2008; Menges, 1999; Rice, Sorcinelli, & Austin, 2000; Sorcinelli, 2002). Coupled with these challenges was the pressure of demands for a tenure-track position which faculty mentees had to satisfy to prolong their career at the HEIs (Eddy & Gaston-Geyles, 2008). Faculty mentees were also reported to face the unavailability of mentoring due to the fact that a limited number of mentors were assigned for a few mentees selected for fast track promotion, leading to inequity in higher education mentoring practices (Knippelmeyer & Torraco, 2007). Another challenge identified by Wright and Wright (1987) was that the faculty mentee could be paired with a weak faculty mentor who would limit the mentee to only one person's perspective, rendering the mentee's apprenticeship less effective.

Likewise, faculty mentors were confronted with a number of difficulties. One of them arising among some faculty mentors was they held insecure feelings that their position and status would be taken over by their up-and-coming faculty mentees when they developed to the highest potential (Knippelmeyer & Torraco, 2007). Furthermore, faculty mentors were found to suffer much pressure originating from concurrently performing many required tasks including teaching courses, publishing research projects, supervising students, serving on academic committees, and partaking in other campus responsibilities, all of which would prevent them from having finished the roles of mentors satisfactorily (Knippelmeyer & Torraco, 2007). In addition, faculty mentors might misidentify potential in faculty mentees, resulting in unexpected challenges for faculty mentors in such a way that they could not manage the mentoring practice as planned, and so their faculty mentees might be unwilling to accept their constructive criticism or their insufficient listening skills (Wright & Wright, 1987).

2.8. Mentorship in Second Language Education

2.8.1. Factors affecting successful mentorship in second language education

Sharing many commonalities regarding benefits and challenges experienced by mentors, mentees, and administrators in general education mentoring, SL mentoring takes its distinct features into consideration.

Primarily, SL mentoring emphasized the contextual support for mentoring (Tomlinson, Hobson, & Malderez, 2010). The authors stated that the ideal context for building a successful mentoring relationship occurred when mentors were given some release time off work to prepare for mentoring activities and engage with mentees during the working day (Glazerman et al., 2010; Tomlinson et al., 2010). Furthermore, the ideal context also saw mentors financially rewarded or capably recognized and allowed to participate in the design as well as evaluations of the broader programs which mentoring was part of (Tomlinson et al., 2010). Successful SL mentoring was asserted to happen in the milieu which allowed mentors and mentees to interact with each other in the context of a collegial and learning culture, to highly value 'learning instructors' (Edwards, 1998), and to freely instigate alternative pairings (Tomlinson et al., 2010).

Secondly, an effective SL mentoring was reported to depend on the mentor-mentee selection and matching (Bell & Treleaven, 2011; Hudson, 2016; Tomlinson et al., 2010). According to Tomlinson et al. (2010), "not all good or experienced teachers make good mentors, and not all good mentors make good mentors of *all* beginning teachers" (p. 8); therefore, it was important that mentors loved the mentoring work and set a good model of professional practice for their mentees who could, in return, show professional respect toward their mentors. In the same vein, the mentor-mentee pairing proved to work well when mentors demonstrated such positive personality traits as being supportive, non-judgmental, trustworthy, and sympathetic in

addition to being good listeners who were honestly concerned about their mentees' work and lives (Tomlinson et al., 2010). Other conditions of the mentor-mentee matching which were found to result in effective SL mentoring included the careful consideration of mentees' strengths and weaknesses, the personal and professional compatibility between mentors and mentees, and the same subjects of teaching (Johnson et al., 2005; Tomlinson et al., 2010).

Another research focus of SL mentoring was placed on mentoring strategies which fit mentees' individual learning-to-teach styles at their respective stages of professional development (Tomlinson et al., 2010). These authors found at least four strategies which mentors could employ to interact with mentees with a view to gaining a successful mentoring as follows: (1) providing mentees with emotional and psychological support that made mentees feel included; (2) spending sufficient time working with mentees on a regular basis; (3) facilitating mentees' autonomous learning and respecting their effectively creative teaching styles; and (4) practicing all types of mentee teaching observations including pre-teaching, while-teaching, and post-teaching accompanied with mentors' constructive feedback or comments which would help mentees perfect their professional work day after day. Research, in addition, reported that SL mentors needed to help mentees determine and distinguish their individual learning goals from the objectives of the mentoring relationship and revisit and revise them in order to conform to mentees' developmental stages (Tomlinson et al., 2010).

2.8.2. Novice second language teacher socialization

The beginning years of teaching were viewed as an intense and formative stage in teaching and learning to teach (Feiman-Nemser, Schwille, Carver, & Yusko, 1999). This stage was also considered a transition from the teacher education institution to a real-life classroom characterized as "a type of 'reality shock' (Veenman, 1984) in which beginning teachers realize

that the ideals they formed while training may not be appropriate for the realism they are faced with during their first year of teaching" (Farrell, 2006, p. 211). Bliss and Reck (1991) called this stage of 'teacher socialization' "the process by which an individual becomes a participating member of the society of teachers'' and the ''learning process which requires developmental growth on the part of the novice teacher'' (p. 6).

Much research on teacher socialization in general education mentoring was conducted; however, second language teacher (SLT) socialization was scantly explored (Farrell, 2006). Different researchers came up with different findings on the developmental stages of SLT socialization. Fuller and Brown (1975) reported two developmental stages novice SLTs had to experience in socializing into the teaching career: (1) survival and mastery and (2) either resistance to or acceptance of change. These two authors further elaborated that novice SLTs' early ideal concerns were substituted by those related to class management and instructional content, while they switched their concerns into their negative teaching performances which directly affected students' learning. Fuller and Brown's (1975) research findings were supported by Kagan's (1992) critical review of studies on how beginning teachers learned to teach (Farrell, 2003).

Two to four decades after the research findings of Fuller and Brown (1975), Maynard and Furlong (1995) reported a five-stage model of the SLT socialization into their career. Firstly, novice teachers established their best identities with students in *idealism*, refusing any image of older cynical teachers. Secondly, with the overwhelming feeling of complicated classroom realities, novice teachers had to struggle in the *survival* stage in order to find out some stable teaching methods or strategies. Thirdly, novice teachers started *recognizing difficulties* of teaching and perceived how difficult it was to achieve what was expected. This was also

considered a self-doubt stage since novice teachers wondered if they could fit into this teaching job. Passing this challenging stage, novice teachers could *reach a plateau*, feeling familiar with some teaching routines. They did not want to try new teaching methods or approaches since they did not want to mess up their newly established routines. They also focused more on successful classroom management than on student learning in this fourth stage. They *moved on* to the final stage where they would pay much attention to student learning, and they really needed lots of support from mentors in order to avoid unexpected burnout during the process of socialization (Farrell, 2003).

Farrell (2003) protested that the stages of the SLT socialization process did not develop in linearity. Other researchers such as Bullough and Baughman (1993) asserted that the process of learning how to teach proceeded and was challenged in clusters, not rows, so it was inevitable to break down these stages. Nevertheless, several researchers on novice teacher socialization admitted that novice teachers needed support in a variety of forms such as personal and emotional sharing, teaching methods and skills, and collegial relationships (Johnson, 1996; Jordell, 1987; Odell & Ferraro,1992; Veenman, 1984; Williams, Prestage, & Bedward, 2001). One illustration of the importance of support for novice SLT socialization could be found in Karatas and Karaman's (2013) study on challenges experienced by beginning language teachers. Both researchers claimed that beginning language teachers could survive and develop in the initial years of teaching thanks to different types of support: (1) from mentors who provided instructional ideas, resources and feedback to them; (2) from colleagues who could share ideas about teaching, classroom management, resources and school policies; (3) from family members who could help them prepare teaching aids and take care of children; and (4) from their

perceived self-efficacy beliefs which could help novice teachers make commitment to work to reach their teaching goals.

2.8.3. Second language teacher mentoring procedures

Research on SLT mentoring reported some common procedures that could be employed by mentors to yield the positive mentoring practice (Kissau & King, 2014). The first step mentors should do was developing a preparation program which involved challenging but practical assignments for novice teachers to perform and reflect on (Farrell, 2012). Such assignments would help novice teachers or mentees sharpen their skills and get used to teaching practices, so they could attain lesson objectives day after day and teaching goals over the long run.

Researchers (Pitton, 2006; Hyland & Lo, 2006) emphasized the importance of the sharing of classroom observations and reflections on mentees' teaching before, during, and after teaching a lesson in which mentors invited mentees to participate in the process of giving feedback on teaching. In this step, mentors could offer mentees opportunities to raise questions or concerns, share ideas, and make decisions for subsequent teaching tasks.

Research also noted that novice SLTs could be encouraged to expose and share the difficulties they encountered in their initial years of teaching and ways to overcome them (Farrell, 2012). The stories of these novice teachers' experience could help their peer mentees reflect on their own teaching performances and empower them in the career chosen (Farrell, 2012; Shin, 2012)

With the unceasing growth of technology, novice SLT mentoring was not confined to face-to-face interactions, but it was supported, reinforced, and sustained by the great value of technology, especially the Internet (Farrell, 2012). Research studies by Delaney (2012) and

Wesley (2013) contended that novice teachers maintained their relationships with mentors and learning-to-teach practices through participation in online communities.

To gain an effective novice SLT mentoring, it was found that mentors could also be formally trained and become skilled in various educational fields, some of which included how to organize teaching observations and give feedback on teaching (Farrell, 2012). Giving feedback with straightforward comments could be done with mentors' mitigating strategies in order to encourage mentees to strive more (Bodoczky & Malderez, 1997; Wright, 2010). One illustration of the mitigating strategies suggested by these authors was the use of modal verbs; for example, "You *might* try standing next to students who are off task", or to change a criticism into a question to moderate commands; for example, "How do you feel about your classroom management?" (Farrell, 2012, p. 147)

In conclusion, this chapter has offered a review of a large number of globally published studies in a variety of areas including the definition of mentoring; mentoring in education; its benefits and drawbacks for mentees, mentors, administrators, and their organizations; types of mentorships; characteristics and roles of mentees and mentors; the history of educational mentoring; mentorship in higher education; and second language mentorship. The next chapter will present an overview of mentorship in EFL education in Vietnam.

Chapter Three:

Mentorship in English as Foreign Language Education in Vietnam

This chapter begins with a summary of EFL education and the history of education in Vietnam over four time periods. It proceeds with a description of teaching and learning EFL in an EFL teacher education program and as a subject in other discipline programs in Vietnamese higher education. Then an overview of EFL teacher mentorship at different levels of education will be described and subsequently followed by a number of studies on Vietnamese EFL mentorship in various settings. The chapter ends with the key research question and serial sub-questions.

3.1. Historical timeline of English as a Foreign Language Education in Vietnam

EFL education in Vietnam has undergone considerable changes in accordance with its historical, political, economic, and diplomatic development. Over time it was viewed as inferior or superior, and marginalized or included, depending on the language policy that drove it. It is not easy to trace back the precise date when English found its way into Vietnam, and how it was then taught in the national educational system, but it is widely agreed that the teaching and learning of EFL started during the French-governed time (Do, 2006; Hoang, 2007). In this brief chronological account, EFL education is depicted in four distinct milestones which represent four important stages of Vietnam's history: the French Invasion [1945-1954], the U.S.A. Resistance War or Vietnam War [1955-1975], the Pre-Doi Moi [1976-1985], and the Doi Moi [1986-present] (Chu, 2014; Hoang, 2007).

3.1.1. The French invasion [1945-1954]

The 1945-1954 period marked the return of the French invaders and the Vietnamese war against them, entailing the re-occupied utilization of the French language (Do, 2006; Hoang 2007). French also replaced Chinese, a compulsorily used language during the ascendancy of emperors from China, to become an official language in the society even though Vietnamese

people then possessed Quoc Ngu, a Latin-based Vietnamese orthography invented and developed by European missionaries, particularly Alexander de Rhodes from France. During the French-controlled time, French became the national official language, and it was utilized as a priority in many fields of life including higher education, business, newspapers, and especially the colonial government (Nguyen, 2012). Despite being used to teach lower levels of education in remote rural areas, Vietnamese or Quoc Ngu was not given any significant status in the society (Do, 2006; Nguyen 2012), while many movements such as speaking French, thinking in the French way, and living in a French lifestyle were strongly implemented and reinforced as a token of the French colonization plans set for Vietnamese people (Nguyen, 2006).

In Hoang's (2007) descriptive article, EFL education in the French-invaded stage was not clearly ascertained. Neither the written documents on EFL teaching in the context of Vietnam nor the English textbooks written by Vietnamese authors were found existing. In fact, the English textbooks used in this time period were written by French writers and used alongside bilingual English-Vietnamese dictionaries compiled by some Vietnamese scholars. From the contents of these English textbooks, it could be clearly seen that the grammar-translation teaching method had dominated EFL education in Vietnam prior to 1954 although pronunciation drills and reading skills were periodically noticed (Hoang, 2007).

3.1.2. The U.S. resistance war or Vietnam war [1955-1975]

In 1954, the struggle against the French colonists ended with the signature of the Geneva Agreement, ending the domination of the use of French as the official national language. This historical Agreement resulted in a division of the country into two regions, with the North pursuing the communist party in alliance with the former Soviet Union, while the South establishing the Vietnam republic government in support of the U.S.A. (Do, 2006, Hoang 2007).

The two contrastive political perspectives entailed a foreign language policy dichotomy. The North claimed Vietnamese as the national language officially taught in the educational system (Do, 2006; Gayle, 1994; Hoang, 2007; Pham, 1991), and Russian as the most selected foreign language of the four suggested foreign languages: Russian, Chinese, French, and English in contrast to the South where English was dominantly used as a foreign language along with French (Do, 2006; Hoang 2007). Despite the two different foreign language policies, foreign languages were taught and used to promote direct communication and interactions with their respective allied partners during this historical stage.

Due to the foreign language dichotomy, English was considered inferior and only taught as a pilot subject in designated high schools in big cities in the North (Hoang, 2007; Nguyen, 1993). In higher education, English was taught as a discipline at two foreign language education institutions which trained EFL teachers for lower and upper secondary schools and as a subject at some non-foreign language universities. The EFL education in this stage mainly focused on getting to know more about the U.S.A. and finding ways to confront it diplomatically (Hoang, 2007).

In the South, *The Age,* an Australian newspaper, reported that Kenneth Filshie was named the first official EFL teacher sent to teach in Sai Gon (currently, Ho Chi Minh City) by the Australian government in 1955 (Nguyen, 2012). Following that year, as noted by Do (2006), EFL education started growing with the involvement of the U.S.A. The EFL teaching and learning were supported by many different organizations such as USAID, United States Information Services, International Voluntary Services, and the Vietnam-America Association; and by people such as American university professors and graduate students, linguists, civilian

and military officers, and missionaries. These organizations and people all volunteered to teach EFL in various communities throughout the region.

Since 1970, EFL education in the South witnessed a stronger development than ever before, with thousands of people taking EFL classes in multi-forms for different purposes including working for either Vietnamese- or foreign- owned companies. In secondary and higher education, English became the most widely selected official foreign language in cities (Do, 2006). EFL education both in and out of the educational settings was supported by free English textbooks, mass media such as English newspapers and magazines, television and radio channels, and voluntary teachers from the U.S.A., Australia, and New Zealand (Do, 2006).

3.1.3. The pre - Doi Moi [1976-1985]

April 30, 1975 marked the liberation of South Vietnam, entailing the unification of the North and the South to establish the Socialist Republic of Vietnam as currently known. The pre-Doi Moi or Economic Reform stage from 1976 to 1985 was recalled as the heyday of the Russian language and the deterioration of English and French languages in national foreign language education. Dramatically, the Chinese language was completely excluded from all levels of education throughout the country due to the border war between China and Vietnam in early 1979 (Do, 2006; Hoang, 2007).

During this stage, Russian was the key foreign language thriving in the North and rapidly spreading downwards to the South, enabling the establishment of serial Russian teaching facilities, including Russian language teacher education departments at universities. A large wave of Russian language teachers also moved down to the South working in these newly established Russian programs. In secondary education, Russian was the most selected foreign language, while English and French tended to wane day by day. An illustration of the imbalance

of foreign language education at that time was clearly seen in the enrolment of 60%, 25%, and 15% for Russian, English, and French, respectively (Denham, 1992). One explanation for the outnumbered Russian enrolment lay in the political influence of the former Soviet Union on Vietnam (Nguyen, 2016). Several faculty and students in Russian language teacher education programs were sent to the former Soviet Union to earn higher degrees or participate in professional development activities every year (Do, 2006).

EFL education at the HEIs or universities where English was taught as either a discipline or a subject in the pre- Economic Reform period developed as much as that in secondary education (Do, 2006; Hoang, 2007). However, during this stage, professional development for EFL teacher educators of HEIs was paid attention to by MOET. Selected faculty in the North were sent to Britain, Australia, New Zealand, or India to pursue a fully funded graduate program in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL), or Applied Linguistics (Do, 1994, 2006; Gayle, 1994; Nguyen, 1992). Upon completion of the program, these faculty members returned to Vietnam and continued their profession at the same HEIs as core faculty to strengthen their EFL teacher education programs. Not until the Doi Moi took place in 1986 were EFL teacher educators from the Southern universities offered opportunities to study abroad for higher degrees (Do, 2006).

3.1.4. The Doi Moi [1986-present]

In December 1986 the Vietnam Sixth National Congress promulgated a significant policy to open its door to the world, particularly Western countries. This Open-Door policy known as Doi Moi, a term used first with regard to the economy and then in other aspects of society, enabled Vietnam to approach closer to many countries with similar and different political points of view through the establishment of economic relationships and the adoption of a market-

oriented economy (Do, 2006). As a common tendency of language adaptation, Vietnam had to mobilize itself in the promotion of English, the growing world language (Brutt-Giffere, 2002), in order to integrate with the world and not to be left behind. Therefore, since the start of this stage, English has played a key role in the country's economic development and so received great concerns of the whole society. English has replaced Russian which had once flourished and dominated as an official foreign language all over the country and then faded away as a consequence of the collapse of the former Soviet Union and its allies in Eastern Europe in the late 1980s and early 1990s (Do, 2006, Hoang, 2007, Nguyen, 2012).

Since opening the door to the world, Vietnam has attracted foreign investments on various businesses from different counties. However, most of them are on the capitalist side such as Taiwan, Singapore, Hong Kong, Australia, Malaysia, European Economic Community, and North America who require English as a core means of business communication (Do, 2006). In response to this reality, English has re-emerged as the official foreign language utilized in almost all types of foreign-related co-operations and relations nationwide (Shapiro, 1995; Wilson, 1993a, b). In fact, a huge number of people have selected English as a top priority foreign language to take among other foreign languages such as French, Russian, German, Chinese, Korean, and Japanese which have been designated in the national education curriculum. Thus, English has become the most preferred foreign language to learn in the current society (Denham, 1992; Do, 2006; Wright, 2002).

EFL education has rapidly developed in breadth and depth as a consequence of the Doi Moi policy. In general education, since 1996 English has been taught as an elective subject from grades 3 to 5 with the total of 210 periods (45 minutes/period) and as a compulsory subject from grades 6 to 9 with 385 periods and from grades 10 to 12 with 315 periods (MOET, 2007).

English has also been one of the six exams required in the national high school graduation examination to confer Bằng Tốt Nghiệp Trung Học Phổ Thông [Certificate of Upper Secondary School Graduation] upon completion of the general education in Vietnam. In higher education, English is a compulsory subject for both undergraduate and graduate students with a total of 14 credits (15 periods/credit and 50 minutes/period) and 5 credits, respectively (Hoang, 2007) being required for graduation. English is also a compulsory entrance examination for all graduate school programs irrespective of what non-English disciplines are pursued.

In informal education where English language is an interest of learners from different backgrounds and careers, EFL education has developed faster than ever before. Hundreds of EFL centres - public, private, or joint-venture - have been established to satisfy the diverse needs of learners, including those working for foreign-owned companies, businesses, and organizations which require their employees to have some command of English to communicate with foreign bosses or colleagues (Do, 2006; Hoang, 2007). Operating in parallel with these EFL centres, many internationally recognized testing and assessment services such as TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language), TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication), and IELTS (International English Language Testing System) have attracted test takers who sit for their preferred English test to complete requirements of English competence for studying abroad or working for foreign companies (Do, 2006; Nguyen, 2007).

EFL teaching and learning during the Doi Moi stage has not been confined to formal and informal education but has blossomed in governmental sectors as well (Nguyen, 2012). The country's Prime Minister signed the Order No. 422/TTg dated August 15, 1994 to require governmental officials and leaders in districts, cities, and provinces to acquire a desired target level of foreign language competence, depending on their currently held political positions with a

view to reinforcing their command of foreign languages to perform their foreign-related affairs in the market-oriented economy successfully. The Order contemporarily released the target people's work time so that they were able to fully attend a foreign language program to meet the requirements (Hoang, 2007; Nguyen, 2012). The most widely selected foreign language in this program has been English.

In order to support and improve EFL education to conform to the political, social, and economic changes within the country, a number of mandated documents have been promulgated by the national government during the Doi Moi. In 2000, the Decree of the general education curriculum and English language policy reforms were sanctioned by the Vietnam National Assembly to renovate and implement the general education curriculum across the country in order to satisfy the requirements of its modern development (Nguyen, 2016). As one of the products of this important policy, new English textbooks for grades 6 to 10 were published in 2002 and brought into official use for students from all educational and socio-economic backgrounds throughout the country in 2006 (Le, 2011; Nguyen, 2016). Although the implementation of the new English textbooks and curriculum faced some challenges due to administrators', educators', and teachers' resistance to change (Le, 2011), this policy was claimed to have made "a profound impact on the teaching and learning of English in the country" (Nguyen, 2016, p. 3).

In 2008, MOET sanctioned a huge foreign language project, the 2020 Project aforementioned in Chapter One of the present study, in terms of budget investment and large-scale involvement of participants. Again, the overall goal of the project is stated here:

> By the year 2020, the majority of Vietnamese young adults with associate's and
>
> bachelor's degrees will have been capable of using foreign languages independently,

becoming more self-confident in communication, study and work in an integrating, multilingual, and multicultural environment; transforming foreign languages use into Vietnamese people's strengths to serve industrialization and modernization of the country. (The Prime Minister, 2008, p. 1)

In other words, the project aims to make an all-sided change in the teaching and learning of foreign languages with a special focus on English all over the country. The ten key tasks of the 2020 Project (Nguyen, 2013) include:

- establishing a foreign language proficiency framework of six levels ranked from Level 1 as the lowest to Level 6 the highest which are compatible with A1, A2, B1, B2, C2, and C2 of CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference) (Cambridge University, 2013);

- students at primary schools acquiring Level 1; at lower secondary school - Level 2; and upper secondary school, college, university – Level 3;

- teachers at primary and lower secondary schools acquiring Level 4; at upper secondary school, college, university - Level 5;

- starting to teach English from grade 3;

- developing language teacher qualifications framework;

- renovating pre-service teacher training curricula at all teacher training colleges, universities;

- establishing a national language testing centre;

- creating new intensive English programs for students at colleges and universities;

- teaching university courses in English: ICT (Information and Communications Technology), Engineering, Tourism, Business; and

- harnessing ICT for better and more efficient English language programs.

Stemming from the project, a series of sub-projects have been initiated and implemented during recent years. Some of them include (1) the pilot program to teaching EFL in designated primary schools from grades 3 to 5 since 2010 (MOET 2010); (2) the project on implementation of advanced level undergraduate programs in some Vietnamese universities in the period of 2008-2015 (MOET, 2008); (3) the decision on implementation of the pilot EFL program for lower secondary school students (MOET, 2012); (4) the decision on implementation of the pilot EFL program for upper secondary school students (MOET, 2012); (5) the circular on implementation of professional development programs for EFL secondary school teachers (MOET, 2013); (6) the circular on promulgation of the framework of six-level foreign language proficiency which is used to measure the foreign language competence of Vietnamese learners (MOET, 2014); and (7) the decision on promulgation of the training program for assessors of spoken and written EFL tests using the framework of six-level foreign language competence (MOET, 2016).

The 2020 Project emphasizes the importance of foreign languages, particularly English, as one of the key decisive factors to boost up the development of the society, economy, and politics for the whole country (Nguyen, 2016). The project seemed ambitious in its overall goal because it is like a 'one size fits all' statement, while the country has sustained many disparities in economic matters, geographical regions, socio-cultural status, and educational conditions among the regions. In fact, there have existed many problems in the course of implementation of the project three of which were affirmed by Phung Xuan Nha, the Minister of Education and Training of Vietnam, at the National Assembly Question and Answer session on November 16, 2016 - *time*, *expense*, and *teaching staff* (Vietnamnet, 2016). To supplement his answer to the

question regarding the project's general goal, the Minister asserted, "Let me get it straight: the project has failed to meet its target" (Luong, 2016, para. 3). He furthered that the project's goal to enhance foreign language competence for ALL learners has been unfeasible (Vietnamnet, 2016). This realization is in resonance with what Jim Cobber, a Fulbright scholar who has conducted substantial studies on the Vietnamese education system, alerted: "The obvious problem is that sometimes if the target is too unrealistic and aspirational, it may become discouraged and do worse than might have been done with a realistic target" (Luong, 2016, para. 30). According to the Minister, MOET carefully re-examined the extant problems and made a plan to revise the project's ambitious and unrealistic goal. Most recently, the Prime Minister of Vietnam signed a decision entitled: "Decision on Adjusting and Supplementing the Foreign Language Education in the National Education System in 2017 – 2025" (The Prime Minister, 2017) in support of the 2020 Project with a view to making the foreign language and teaching in Vietnam successful by the year of 2025.

3.2. EFL in Vietnamese Higher Education

As a positive consequence of the Economic Reform policy and in order to train a high-skilled workforce meeting the requirements of regional and international integration, knowledge-based economy, and sustainable development (Nguyen, 2013), Vietnam has changed itself in a variety of life aspects, particularly its HEIs. Among different fields of higher education, a special focus has been placed on EFL education since it has directly affected international communication between Vietnam and the world. EFL education at the HEIs in Vietnam is divided into two major strands: (1) EFL as a discipline in EFL teacher education programs and (2) EFL as a subject in other discipline programs at the HEIs.

3.2.1. EFL teacher education programs

Within the EFL teacher education programs, EFL is taught to those students who choose to pursue teaching EFL as a profession upon completion of a degree program. EFL degree programs include Teaching EFL, English Linguistics, English Literature, and Culture, and English Interpretation and Translation offered at the undergraduate level. At the graduate level, students can choose to pursue a master's degree program in Teaching EFL, TESOL, or Applied Linguistics. The bachelor's degree may be earned from numerous teacher education or multi-disciplinary colleges/universities all over the country. However, the master's degree is conferred by a few nationally recognized HEIs located in big cities.

To be accepted into the EFL teacher education undergraduate program, students must demonstrate the following qualifications mandated by MOET (2015):

- Certificate of Upper Secondary Education Graduation;

- passing scores of the national entrance exam with English is one of the three required exam papers; and

- an official letter of acceptance from a selected university.

To be offered a teaching position in one of these degree programs, a faculty member must satisfy some qualifications required by MOET (2014) and MOIC (Ministry of Information and Communication) (2004) as follows:

- for undergraduate teaching: at least Bachelor's Degree in Teaching EFL, TESOL, Applied Linguistics, or equivalent; Certificate of Undergraduate Teaching; Certificate of Level 2 (compatible with A2 CEFR) Foreign Language Proficiency (this foreign language is other than English); and Certificate of Basic Computer Skills;

- for graduate teaching: at least a master's degree in Teaching EFL, TESOL, Applied Linguistics, or equivalent; Certificate of Graduate Teaching; Certificate of Professional

Development for Junior/Senior Faculty; Certificate of Level 3 (compatible with B1

CEFR) Foreign Language Proficiency (this foreign language is other than English); and

Certificate of Basic Computer Skills.

Unlike primary and secondary education which requires the use of MOET-published

textbooks and curricula for EFL teaching and learning, HEIs are flexible in selecting or

developing their curricula and teaching-learning resources based on the MOET's guidelines.

According to MOET (2007, 2012), the full-time training curriculum for a bachelor's

degree in EFL teacher education is structured in 120 credits with 15 periods per credit. The

training curriculum is composed of three core areas of content knowledge that lead to a

bachelor's degree. The first area is the general knowledge acquired in such courses as

Philosophy of Marxism, Ideology of Ho Chi Minh, Educational Psychology, Introduction to

Vietnamese Culture, and a Foreign Language. The second area is the subject matter knowledge

embedded in such courses as English Linguistics including Phonology, Lexicology, Morphology,

Semantics, Discourse Analysis, and the four language skills of Listening, Speaking, Reading,

and Writing in addition to Grammar, Vocabulary, and Pronunciation. The third area, the

professional knowledge, is acquired in courses on EFL Teaching Methodology and two teaching

practicums at designated secondary schools.

The EFL Teaching or TESOL graduate program is also structured around the common

framework issued by MOET (2014). This full-time graduate program consists of 60 credits in

total required to earn the degree in the duration between two and three academic years. The HEIs

which offer this program are flexible in designing their own training curricula based on their

unique features. Nevertheless, most HEIs have built their curricula on the content knowledge

spreading in three core areas which include general knowledge, foundational and professional

knowledge, and the final research project. In the first area of knowledge, graduate students take compulsory courses such as Philosophy of Marxism for graduate studies and a foreign language. In the area of foundational and professional knowledge, students take some compulsory courses such as research methodology in foreign/second language education, theories of foreign/second language teaching and learning, and EFL advanced academic writing; and some elective courses. These elective courses are diverse and based on each HEI's professional scholarship. Some examples of such courses include Sociolinguistics, Psycholinguistics, Applied linguistics, Second Language Acquisition, Foreign/Second Language Testing and Assessment, Technology in Foreign/Second Language Education, and Cross-Cultural Communication. The third area of knowledge is acquired in the process of conducting a final research project on each student's interest or on some extant problem in her or his teaching context. Since a bachelor's degree in EFL Teaching or TESOL is the initial requirement at the entry of this graduate study, a practicum is not normally required by most HEIs. However, it is offered as an elective in a few programs.

3.2.2. EFL as a subject in other discipline programs

EFL as a subject has attracted the largest number of students at HEIs in Vietnam. This trend stems from students' priority choice of a foreign language to take for both undergraduate and graduate studies and from the practical and large-scale applicability of EFL to different fields of employment throughout the country. As many as 93% of students at HEIs took English as a required foreign language compared with 3 %, 2 %, and 1.5 % taking French, Russian, and Chinese, respectively in 2008 as reported by MOET; and this number is still growing annually. In Vietnam's undergraduate education, irrespective of what disciplines students have pursued, they have to take one foreign language subject which accounts for 12 credits out of 120 credits

required in a four-year undergraduate program. For example, if students choose English language, they will have to take ten credits of general English. They may also take another two-credit course on English for Special Purposes (ESP). In total, students can take up to 14 credits of EFL in their undergraduate program. In addition, students have to submit their passing EFL proficiency scores as one requirement of the degree qualifications. Students may take this EFL proficiency test at a MOET- designated test centre or an international testing centre such as TOEFL-ITP, TOEFL-iBT, IELTS, or Cambridge Tests to obtain the scores. Different HEIs set their cut-off scores for EFL proficiency which can be compared to those of other EFL tests. Students will be officially informed of this requirement at the start of their first term at the university. An example of the compatible test scores required of non-English disciplines at Thai Nguyen University (2014) located in Northwest Vietnam is presented in Table 3 with the cut-off scores highlighted.

Table 3. *A comparison of cut-off EFL test scores for non-English disciplines at Thai Nguyen University.*

Vietnam's Framework	CEFR	TOEIC	TOEFL-ITP	TOEFL-iBT	IELTS	Cambridge Tests
Level 6	C2	945+	630+	111+	7.5 +	45 - 59 CPE 80 - 100 CAE
Level 5	C1	850	550	90	6.5 - 7.0	69 - 79 CAE 80 - 100 FCE
Level 4	B2	600	500	60	5.0 - 6.0	60 - 79 FCE 80 - 1000 PET
Level 3	B1	450	450	35	4.0 - 4.5	45 - 59 FCE 65 - 79 PET 90 - 100 KET
Level 2	A2	400	337	31	3.0 - 3.5	45 - 64 PET 70 - 89 KET
Level 1	A1	< 400	< 337	< 31	< 3.0	45 - 69 KET
Pass	Pass	Top score: 900	Top score: 677	Top score: 120	Top score: 9.0	Pass

Regarding non-English graduate studies, students have to take an EFL test to enter their chosen fields of study at a HEI. This test is organized together with two other specialized tests at the entrance examination organized by the HEI. During their studies at this HEI, graduate students may take some EFL courses as electives, but they have to submit the required English proficiency scores to complete their programs. Like non-English undergraduate students, graduate students can submit either the MOET or international English test scores as an alternative foreign language requirement.

3.3. EFL Teacher Mentorship in Vietnam

3.3.1. An overview

To obtain contents for this section, I conducted an extensive search for relevant materials including written official documents promulgated by both the governmental organizations and electronic databases. Consequently, I found very little research evident in the literature on mentoring EFL teachers written in either Vietnamese or any foreign language. Even more noticeably, there have been very few publications about the mentoring of novice EFL teachers at different educational levels throughout the country.

In the Circulars promulgated by MOET (2016, 2018, 2019) regarding apprenticeship of beginning teachers at all levels of the Vietnamese public educational system (K-tertiary), the apprentice time applicable to each level is specified as six months for kindergarten and primary school teachers, nine months for lower secondary teachers, and twelve months for upper secondary and tertiary instructors.

In the Decree issued by the Vietnam Government in 2012, newly recruited public officials, including teachers, must strictly follow all contents prescribed in the Decree during their apprenticeship. These include:

- mastering all regulations of Public Officials Law (The National Assembly, 2010) including their rights, responsibilities, and must-not-do things; and the structures, functions, responsibilities, and rights of their work organizations;

- enhancing professional knowledge and practicing professional skills required by the work organizations; and

- performing work-related tasks including solving problems in tasks assigned. (The Government, 2012).

In the same vein, the Government's Decree includes the practice of mentoring which states that the newly recruited public official will be assigned a mentor to support her/his apprenticeship seven days after the recruitment is done. The mentor must be the one who holds a similar or higher work title and is experienced and capable of transferring knowledge to the apprentice (or the mentee). It is not accepted that one mentor is assigned two mentees concurrently. Both the mentor and mentee are offered some benefits while forced to strictly comply to regulations specified in the Decree in terms of salary, working conditions, and the unique nature of the work. The mentee will be appointed an official work position upon successful completion of the apprenticeship or forced to end the work contract due to failure to satisfy all required apprentice tasks.

In higher education, Vietnam's Prime Minister promulgated the Decision on Regulations for University Operation in 2014. This multi-chapter document includes a section describing mentee faculty as follows:

1. Newly recruited faculty must sign a contract of a twelve-month apprenticeship.

2. Those faculty members who had experience in teaching at previous universities will be exempted from taking an apprenticeship at their present university. Those who hold a doctoral degree and had experience in teaching while pursuing their doctoral study will require a shorter apprenticeship.

3. The apprentice time must be detailed in the working contract.

4. The apprentice contents include:

   - mastering all regulations on the faculty's rights, responsibilities, and must-not-do things; and the structures, functions, responsibilities, and rights of their institutions;

   - consolidating and supplementing professional knowledge and skills of teaching courses assigned; preparing lesson plans including teaching methods and evaluation of students; and managing classrooms;

   - implementing classroom observations; participating in professional development seminars; practicing teaching; and doing other related tasks; and

   - earning a required Certificate of Undergraduate Teaching.

5. Mentee faculty will be assigned mentor faculty within at least seven days after their recruitment by the department chair. The mentor must be the faculty who is experienced in and capable of transferring professional knowledge to the mentee.

Upon completion of all apprentice tasks, the mentee faculty must submit the required documents for final evaluation before being appointed to a tenure-track teaching position at the university. The documents include the mentee's curriculum vitae, the mentee's final report on apprentice teaching, the mentor's evaluation, the minutes of the mentee's teaching lesson

observed by the evaluation committee, and all required certificates such as foreign language proficiency, computer skills, undergraduate teaching, and Philosophy of Marxism.

3.3.2. Evidence of mentoring EFL education in Vietnam

Since mentoring EFL faculty in HEIs has been scantily studied in Vietnam, the section below briefly summarizes the findings of different studies most of which were conducted by Dr. Hoa Nguyen, a Vietnamese educator and researcher at the University of New South Wales, Australia and her associates. These studies have presented the current practices of EFL teacher apprenticeship and mentorship at different levels in the Vietnamese educational system.

Hudson and Nguyen (2008) conducted a study on pre-service EFL teachers' expectations from their mentors at the beginning of their six-week practicum at designated upper secondary schools in North Vietnam. Ninety-one pre-service teachers completing a four-year undergraduate degree program in EFL teaching responded to a written semi-structured questionnaire. The study found that most of the mentees expected their mentors to possess a variety of personal attributes such as being enthusiastic, friendly, cooperative, cheerful, and knowledgeable. In addition, they desired their mentors to perform a series of mentoring practices such as sharing experiences, checking lesson plans before teaching, giving clear advice and explanations, providing constructive feedback on teaching methods, modeling teaching, and demonstrating an understanding of school policies.

In their 2010 study, Nguyen and Hudson conducted a case study on EFL pre-service teachers' attitudes, needs, and experiences in learning to teach and teaching EFL writing before their six-week practicum in upper-secondary schools located in Hanoi, Vietnam. Data were collected from responses to a questionnaire by 97 pre-service teachers who were completing a four-year undergraduate degree program in EFL teaching. Findings of the study were reported in

four content areas. Pre-service teachers were motivated to learn how to teach EFL writing due to the fact that they enjoyed EFL writing and considered it as a supportive skill for their job as well as a means for developing communication and critical thinking. The pre-service teachers also identified that their students' motivation to learn, writing products and writing progress, and their school-based mentors' comments on teaching practice all contributed to their success or failure in teaching a writing lesson during the practicum. Although an ideal mentor was not reported clearly in the data, most of the pre-service teachers highly evaluated the mentors' modeling a lesson as a sharing-experience activity and their enthusiasm and constructivism in giving feedback on their mentees' teaching practice. Additionally, pre-service teachers were found to be in need of knowledge of different EFL writing genres, classroom management techniques, and ways of providing feedback on their students' writing. They also faced challenges in motivating students to write, dealing with mixed levels of students, and adapting to new teaching contexts with school-based mentors.

In supplement to the previous study, Hudson, Nguyen, and Hudson (2009) conducted an investigation into mentoring EFL pre-service teachers in EFL writing. This qualitative study employed an empirically based survey instrument with 106 pre-service EFL teachers in their final practicum on their perceptions of being mentored for teaching EFL writing across the five factors of personal attributes, system requirements, pedagogical knowledge, modeling, and feedback. Findings reported that most of the pre-service teachers were not provided any formal mentoring or modeling teaching for their learning how to teach EFL writing during the practicum. In terms of system requirements, more than half of the mentees asserted that there was an absence of discussion with mentors about the aims of teaching EFL writing, the school's writing policies, and writing curriculum documents. Pre-service teachers also reported that

neither pedagogical knowledge nor content knowledge including problem-solving strategies was formally provided to support the teaching of EFL writing. No modeled lesson of EFL writing accompanied by classroom management practices was offered to pre-service teachers either. Most mentors did not provide written feedback as part of their mentoring practices to mentees teaching EFL writing, and less than 50% of mentors reviewed their mentees' lesson plans. The findings called for a re-visitation of mentoring practices for teaching EFL writing in particular and for EFL teacher education programs at Vietnamese universities in general.

Another study by Nguyen and Hudson (2012) explored a critical peer collaboration for EFL pre-service teachers in a six-week TESOL practicum in Vietnam. This qualitative research approach collected data from six one-hour focus group interviews with four-to-six participants in each group to understand their experiences in their peer group mentoring. Twenty-eight pre-service teachers were divided into groups and attended an orientation meeting to learn about the program's goals, philosophy, requirements, and expectations during their practicum. The participants were required to observe their peers' teaching, using the agreed observation criteria. In weekly feedback meetings, the participants discussed what they had learnt from one another via teaching performances, and what each of them thought could be improved. The findings reported changes in pre-service teachers' teaching methods and sources of emotional supports thanks to peer mentoring during the practicum. The study also raised pre-service teachers' awareness of the vitality of well-designed interactions among peers and thus could raise the standard of mentoring within peer groups. As a result, stakeholders in mentoring practices could use the peer collaboration model as a supplementary source of learning and support for pre-service teachers during the TESOL practicum.

Following her 2012 study on peer collaboration in the TESOL practicum, Nguyen (2013) further investigated peer mentoring as a forward way to support pre-service EFL teachers psychologically during their practicum. This mixed-methods study more deeply explored the impact of a peer mentoring model on the mentee teachers' perceptions of their psychological support from their peers during their six-week practicum at two secondary schools in North Vietnam. A questionnaire was delivered at the end of the practicum to collect quantitative data from 65 pre-service teachers 32 of whom were placed in the treatment group and 33 in the control group. The treatment group was formally peer-mentored, while the control group was not. Six 60-minute focus group semi-structured interviews were carried out by the researcher for all participants in both groups one week upon completion of the practicum in order to learn about their perceptions towards their peers' psychosocial support during the practicum. The findings reported that the mentee teachers in the treatment group perceived more psychological support from their peers than those in the control one. They were supported in emotions, sharing teaching experiences, making mutual communication, and making more new friends during the practicum. The study suggested that a formal peer mentorship program could act "as a catalyst for restructuring the TESOL practicum to provide pre-service EFL teachers with more support" (p. 41) to make their practicum a success.

Apart from the studies in the contexts of pre-service mentoring aforementioned, Nguyen's (2008) study focused on mentoring beginning EFL teachers at the tertiary level in Vietnam. So far this has probably been the only study on EFL faculty mentorship at the higher education level in Vietnam. This quantitative study used a 45-question survey to explore 31 new EFL faculty's feelings and attitudes toward their mentoring experiences at four colleges within Vietnam National University in Hanoi. The participants had to satisfy three requirements: (1) full

time teaching status; (2) less than three years of teaching experience; and (3) voluntary participation. The study reported that there was an absence of a formal mentoring practice for new faculty at the surveyed colleges even though they valued the crucial role of mentoring in their early career professional development. Instead of an expected formal mentorship program, new EFL faculty only received informal mentoring as identified in their opinions about their mentoring experiences, types of mentoring activities, and their evaluation of mentors. The lack of a formal mentorship program at the researched colleges resulted in a series of problems for mentoring stakeholders including mentors' insufficient awareness of mentoring roles, mentoring process, mentoring time, mentors' poor mentoring skills, and problematic mentor-mentee pairings despite the administrator's informal mentoring support. The study has been an alarm for further studies on the same issue to find out more feasible improvements for EFL teacher education in general and EFL teacher mentorship in particular at all levels in the Vietnamese educational system.

Almost all studies by Nguyen and her associates focused on mentoring EFL pre-service teachers for secondary schools in North Vietnam. So far only one study on mentoring EFL new faculty at a Northern Vietnamese university has been reported in the literature, suggesting that there is a need for more research in this area. Resting on the literature in the field which has just been reviewed, the current situations of EFL teacher education mentorship coupled with the researcher's work experience, the present study which focused on the mentee's, mentor's, and administrator's perceptions and articulations of their mentoring experiences in the MRD of Vietnam attempted to answer the question: *"What are the successes and challenges of the EFL faculty mentorship programs at higher education institutions in the Mekong River Delta of Vietnam?"*

To look for answers to this overall question, the following sub-questions were explored:

1. What have mentees/mentors/administrators expected from one another during the apprenticeship or mentorship?

2. What types of support do they receive from one another/the faculty/the university?

3. What are some unexpected problems that have arisen during the mentorship or apprenticeship? And how have they been overcome?

4. How has the mentorship or apprenticeship impacted them? And why?

5. What kinds of resources or support are available to guide mentorship work? (e.g., pairing, what to do in the event of a troubled pairing)

6. If they could design a mentorship program, what would it be like?

To conclude, this chapter has presented a summarized history of EFL education in Vietnam. It also described both how EFL learning and teaching have been practiced in HEIs and what the MOET-mandated mentorship program expects. Then, the chapter reviewed a number of studies on EFL mentorship programs throughout the country and concluded by stating one key research question and six sub-questions. The following chapter will present the methodology employed in the study.

Chapter Four:

Methodology

This chapter presents a detailed account of the methodology employed in the present study. The chapter begins by summarizing three educational theories which serve as both theoretical foundations and interpretive lenses for the study. As such, it presents the alignment of the principles and tenets of these theories with the components of the study. The chapter then proceeds with a description of the research paradigm and its applications for the study. Also included in the chapter is a detailed depiction of the research methodology, including the research design, research setting, research participants, role of the researcher, data collection, data triangulation, and data analysis. An analysis of attributes used to assure the trustworthiness of qualitative research data such as credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the present study will bring this chapter to an end.

4.1. Theoretical Lenses for the Study

Like a plan carefully designed by a traveller to collect knowledge for a successful trip to a new place, a relevant theoretical framework underpinning the knowledge base of the researched phenomenon needed to be determined at the outset of a study (Sinclair, 2007). A theoretical framework which is figuratively viewed as the foundation of a house by LoBiondo-Wood & Haber (1998) is "a frame of reference that is a basis for observations, definitions of concepts, research designs, interpretations, and generalizations" (p. 141). Since the theoretical framework informs the organization of the study and drives the entire research process, it is usually presented in different research stages.

Choosing to include a relevant theoretical framework for a study was not easy work, particularly for doctoral or beginning researchers because little literature on it was written

(Green, 2014). Even among research guidebooks reviewed by Phillip and Pugh (2005), some did not include any theories as a philosophical knowledge base for the study. Resonant with the hurdle generated by the absence of literature to support the study, Crotty (1998) pointed out the inconsistently or even contradictorily used terms regarding theories and methodologies embedded in research proposals or reports. Irrespective of differently used terms in educational research, the utilization of theoretical framework(s) could be determined and clearly depicted. Given that this study involved adults in the process of learning through interactions in the context of mentorship, and also explored mentorship initiatives already taken in institutional and national levels, I drew upon Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural Theory of Development, Knowles's (1970, 1998) Adult Learning Theory, and Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory of Human Development as the theoretical framework for my investigation into the positive and negative aspects of the EFL faculty mentorship programs at the HEIs in the MRD of Vietnam. Before giving a rationale for aligning these three theories with the study, I reviewed their key tenets and characteristics which could fit the phenomenon examined.

4.1.1. Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural Theory of Development

The present study explored the successes and challenges of EFL faculty mentorship programs in which the developments of all three actors and particularly the mentee could be described by some of the principles of Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural Theory of Development (SCT). Vygostky's theory was founded on "the concept that human activities take place in cultural contexts, are mediated by language and other symbol systems and can be best understood when investigated in their historical development" (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996, p. 191). In other words, SCT reinforced the society - individual interaction that was actively happening during the process of learning (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996; Peer & McClendon,

2002; Vygotsky, 1978). Among many concepts and themes that were developed and analyzed in SCT, Wertsch (1991) discussed three key themes illuminating the essence of such an interaction (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996).

The first theme described in Vygotsky's (1978) generic law of development was the *social source* from which the human's cognitive development including higher mental functioning originated. In this sense, Vygotsky believed that individuals' thinking was constructed by their interactions with other people rather than on their own in a cultural community (McLeod, 2014, 2018). Vygotsky (1997) emphasized, "Any function of the child's cultural development appears on the stage twice, or on two planes, first the social, then the psychological, first between people as an inter-mental category, then within the child as an intra-mental category" (pp. 105-106). This perspective implied that the more collaborative activities learners were involved in and the more effects of this collaboration they internalized, the more novel knowledge of the world they acquired (Scott & Palincsar, 2009).

The second theme identified by Welsch (1991) in Vygotsky's SCT was the *semiotic mediation* in human's action in both social and individual development. The semiotic means listed by Vygotsky (1981) comprised "language; various system of counting; mnemonic techniques; algebraic symbol systems; works of art; writing; schemes, diagrams, maps and mechanical drawings; all sorts of conventional signs and so on" (p. 137). Additionally, such semiotics as computers, calculators, and paint brushes were tools to accelerate the co-construction of knowledge and to be internalized or appropriated (Leontiev, 1981) in support of learners' subsequent independent problem-solving activities (Scott & Palincsar, 2009).

The third theme in Vygotsky's SCT detected by Welsch (1991) was the *generic* or *developmental analysis* which was conducted to examine the first two themes. The generic or

developmental analysis as described by Mahn and John (2012) was "the study of phenomena in their origin and their development" (p. 15). This analysis was employed by Vygotsky to develop the theoretical framework underpinning his research (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996). Vygotsky (1978) stated:

> To study something historically means to study it in the process of change; that is the dialectical method's basic demand. To encompass in research the process of a given thing's development in all its phases and changes—from birth to death—fundamentally means to discover its nature, its essence, for it is only in movement that a body shows what it is. Thus the historical study of behaviour is not an auxiliary aspect of theoretical study, but rather forms its very base. (pp. 64–65)

From this perspective, Vygotsky (1978) emphasized the interconnectedness of learning and development which occurred in the environment shaped by culture and society (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996). Put another way, the genetic analysis believed that the mental process could be precisely perceived on the basis of how and where it took place in its developmental path. Vygotsky (1978) also asserted focusing not on the product of development, but on the process by which higher forms were shaped. Because historical conditions were always changing, contexts and learning opportunities had to do so, too (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996).

In order to understand Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory of Development, it is crucial to review some of his important principles and concepts as discerned below:

More Knowledgeable Other

Vygotsky (1978) utilized the phrase More Knowledgeable Other (MKO) to describe those who had a better understanding or a higher level of ability than learners in doing specific tasks (Roth & Lee, 2007). The MKO was normally thought of as a teacher, a coach, or an older

adult, but the MKO could also be a peer, a young person, or even an electronic tutor (McLeod, 2014). The MKO could share her or his knowledge with learners to help them advance in their knowledge and cognitive ability (McLeod, 2014). Vygotsky (1978) also argued that the MKO helped learners move from being incapable of doing something to being capable of doing it with some guidance and further to being capable of doing it on their own within the *Zone of Proximal Development*. When learners could develop required skills by themselves, the MKO would become less involved in their process of learning development.

The Zone of Proximal Development.

Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) was established to support the assumption that children's levels of development were closely tied to their learning. Vygotsky (1978) argued that it was necessary to figure out two distinctive levels of development in order to comprehend how the children's learning correlated with their cognitive development (Scott & Palincsar, 2009). The first level of development, known as the actual, referred to those tasks a child could successfully perform independently, while the second one, the potential, implied those tasks successfully done by the child with some support of a parent, a teacher, or a more experienced adult (see Figure 8). "The distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 85) was suggested as the ZPD. The ZPD also confirmed Vygotsky's (1978) claim that social influences, particularly instruction played a crucial role in children's cognitive development.
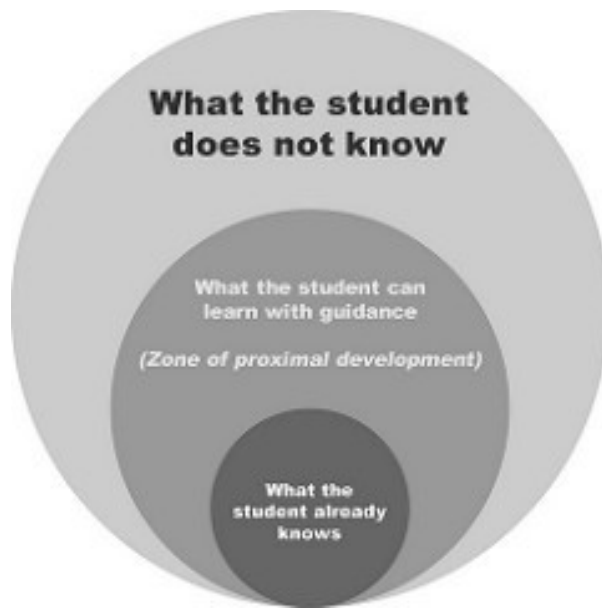
Figure 7. Vygostky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Ferster, 2013) from
https://www.flickr.com/photos/bferster/15156617496.

Not only was the ZPD formed in the context of mutual collaboration between learners

and more experienced humans to develop cognition and co-construct knowledge, but it was

created in other contexts as well (Vygotsky, 1978). Three typical contexts discussed by Oerter

(1992) included intentional instruction as given by a teacher or a parent, stimulating

environments created by books or materials for making artworks, and playing. Vygotsky (1966)

observed how children at play could create their own ZPD and found that children at play

reached a higher level of their actual ability. Similarly, Brown, Ash, Rutherford, Nakagawa,

Gordon, & Campione (1993) suggested other artifacts such as videos, wall displays, scientific

equipment, and computer environment as active guidance within the ZPD.

Scaffolding

The term scaffolding was not used in Vygotsky's writings (Stone, 1998), but it was an

important concept closely related to his ZPD. Scaffolding stressed the important role of social

interaction over cognitive development in a way that learning first took place at the social or

inter-individual level. Therefore, when children learned with an adult or a more experienced peer, the learning would happen within their ZPD (Puntambekar, 2009). Wood, Bruner, and Ross (1976) initiated the use of scaffolding and defined it as:

> the process that enables a child or novice to solve a problem, carry out a task or reach a goal which would be beyond his unassisted efforts. This scaffolding consists essentially of the adult "controlling" those elements of the task that are initially beyond the learner's capacity, thus permitting him to concentrate upon and complete only those elements that are within his range of competence. The task thus proceeds to a successful conclusion. (p. 90)

From this perspective, scaffolding facilitated learning and development and created "supported situations in which students extend their current skills and knowledge… [and]… make connections between old and new information in a social, active environment" (Peer & McClendon, 2002, p. 137) in order to construct knowledge. In addition, scaffolding explored the nature of assistance which more capable adults offered learners to perform tasks they could not do by themselves. If scaffolding was practiced deliberately and efficiently, then it could motivate learners to participate in more tasks in order to develop their learning and reach their learning goals (Hausfather, 1996). Scaffolding would no longer be needed once learners were qualified enough to perform tasks independently.

4.1.2. Knowles's (1970, 1998)) Adult Learning Theory

Granted that the present study investigated the successes and challenges of EFL faculty mentorship programs in which their immediate actors are adult mentees whose characteristics could be shared with those of adult learners in Knowles's (1970, 1998) Adult Learning Theory. Knowles's theory was developed on the basis of adopting and expanding 'andragogy', a term

coined by Alexander Kapp, a teacher from Germany, in 1883 (Loeng, 2017; Reischmann, 2004).

Andragogy as defined by Knowles (1970) was "the art and science of helping adults learn"

(Knowles, Holton III, & Swanson, 2005, p. 61), so it was alternatively used as adult education.

Knowles, Holton III, and Swanson (1998) framed this theory in the Andragogy in Practice Model

*(*see Figure 9*)* of adult learning which was formed by the three concentric rings with the

andragogy: core adult learning principles positioned in the innermost ring surrounded and

influenced by the middle ring of individual and situational differences and further expanded and

influenced by the outer ring of goals and purposes for learning. For Knowles et al. (1998) "the

three rings of the model interact, allowing the model to offer a three-dimensional process for

understanding adult learning situations" (p. 148). This andragogical model was also contended

by Knowles (1984) as "a system of elements that can be adopted or adapted in whole or in part"

(p. 418) in adult education.

The innermost layer outlined theoretical and practical methods based on six

characteristics of adult learners. Understanding these characteristics would help educators inspire

learners to improve their knowledge and skills. Knowles (1970, 1998) specified adult learners'

characteristics as follows:

1. **The Need to Know.** Adults ask the question why they need to learn something prior
   undertaking it.

2. **The Learners' Self-Concept.** Adults take responsibility for their lives, so they need to
   be recognized as capable and self-directed.

3. **The Role of the Learners' Experience.** Adults bring their individual differences in
   background, learning style, motivation, needs, interests, and goals into learning, creating
   a greater need for individualization of teaching and learning strategies.

4. **Readiness to Learn.** Adults readily learn things needed in effective response to real-life situations.
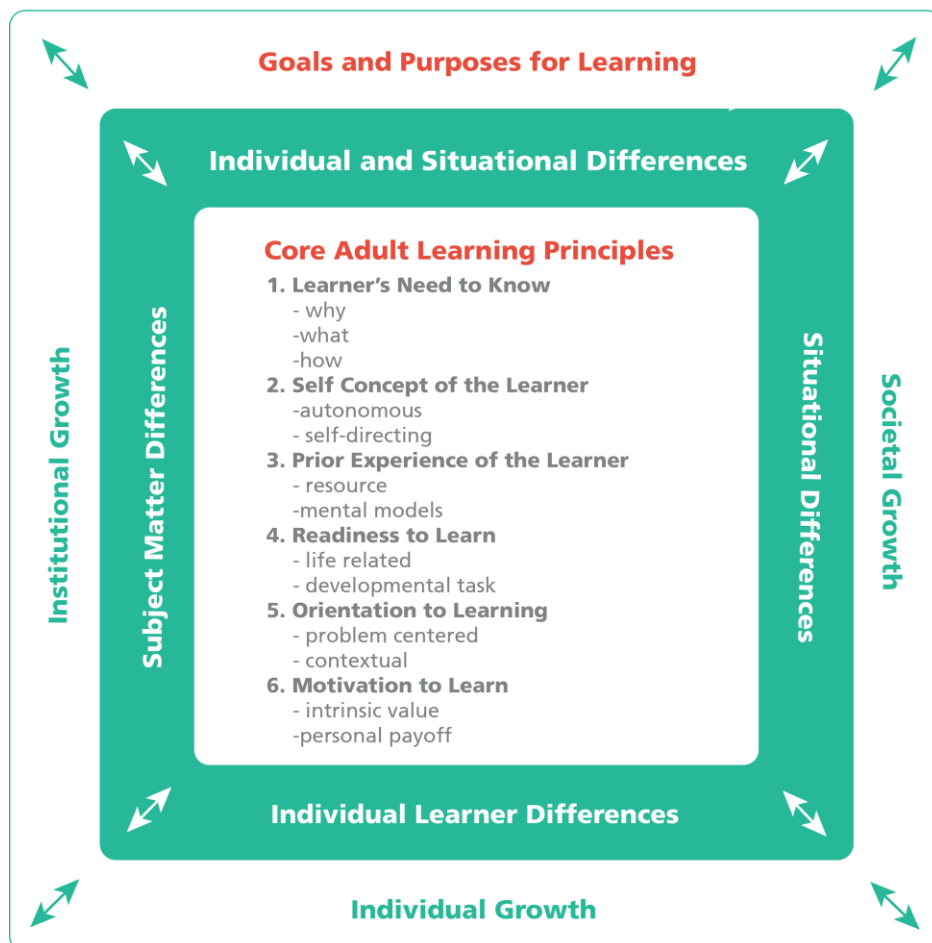
Figure 8. Andragogy in Practice from http://webiset.ca/toolkit1/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Andragogy-Model-2.png

5. **Orientation to Learning.** Adults search for solutions to problems occurring in everyday life and dealing with application to real life because they are life-centred in their orientation to learning.

6. **Motivation.** Adults perceive the internal value of motivators that offers them individual achievements in learning.

To reach the determined goals of andragogy, policy makers, educators, trainers, and adult learners needed to work in a closely tied environment on the basis of facilitation and encouragement rather than oppression and disposition (Holton III, Swanson, & Naquin, 2001). A comprehensive understanding of these characteristics was crucial to developing successful educational programs which would yield engagement of participants and facilitation of adult learning (Sogunro, 2015).

The middle ring illustrated and analyzed the impacts of disparities in subject matters, situations, and adult learners on adult learning. Subject matter differences would result in different learning strategies, which could reveal the adult's application of self-directedness to acquiring knowledge ranging from simple general knowledge to a more complex technical one (Holton III et al., 2001). In terms of situational differences, the milieu where adults learned would influence their learning outcomes mediated by different learning or teaching strategies used. Self-directed learning would be more fruitfully adopted by adult learners in remote areas, while more collectiveness-oriented learning would yield positive outcomes for adult learners in group studies (Holton III et al., 2001). Regarding the impact of individual differences on adult learning, Holton III et al. (2001) explained that there was a link between psychology and adult learning. Since individuals were different in cognition, personality, and prior knowledge (Jonassen & Grabowski, 1993), they were sure to differ from one another in the learning strategies that would decide their learning outcomes (Holton III et al., 2001).

Knowles et al. (1998) contended that the outer ring of the andragogical model represented the developmental outcomes of goals and purposes for learning. This ring encompassed the academic, professional, and personal growth of individual adult learners as they were situated in an institution and society. The workplace was a significant setting since "control of the goals and

purposes is shared between the organization and the individual" (Holton III et al., 2001, p. 131), and in turn, adult development transformed society. For example, after taking professional development workshops on equity and anti-racist strategies, adults were expected to transform the inequitable and racially discriminating society in which they lived.

Knowles et al.'s (1998) perspective of this andragogical problem was attuned to Friere's (1970) Pedagogy of the Oppressed. In their arguments, andragogy should not only train adult learners to become educated or knowledgeable but also raise their consciousness of the inequalities in the society they were involved in. From this point of view, the goal and purpose of andragogy was to enable adult learners to apply their learned knowledge to reality in order to attain a transformed society (Holton III et al., 2001). In summary, andragogy aimed to develop individual adult learners, the institution they studied in, and the society they lived in.

4.1.3. Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory of Human Development

Given that the present study investigated the successes and challenges of mentorship programs experienced by EFL faculty mentees, mentors, and administrators at HEIs in the MRD of Vietnam, a mentorship program involved many layers that were compatible with those of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory of Human Development. Bronfenbrenner's theory was founded with four concentric systems (see Figure 7): *microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem,* and *macrosystem* each of which differently affected the development of human beings (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Onwuegbuzie, Collins, & Frels, 2013). In later studies, Bronfenbrenner supplemented *chronosystem,* which had a time impact on an individual's development (Harkonen, 2007) and was referred to as a process-person-context-time model called *The Bioecological Model as a System* (Bronfenbrenner, 1995). Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory incorporated "an evolving body of theory and research concerned with

the process and conditions that govern the course of human development" (Bronfenbrenner, 2000, p. 129). A brief summary of his developmental systems is presented below:

The microsystem was defined by Bronfenbrenner (1979) as "a pattern of activities, roles, and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person in a given setting with particular physical and material characteristics" (p. 22). The setting here meaning the classroom, playground, home, neighborhood, or religious unit was the immediate environment in which a child or the developing person interacted. Here, the developing person would establish direct interactions with parents, teachers, and classmates who maintained reciprocal influences on her/his development.

The mesosystem was thought as "the interrelations among two or more settings in which the developing person actively participates (such as, for a child, the relations among home, school, and neighborhood peer group; for an adult, among family, work, and social life)" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 25). In other words, the mesosystem was considered by the theory founder as the system of microsystems in which relationships between home and school, between friends and family, and between family and community were formed to foster the person's development.
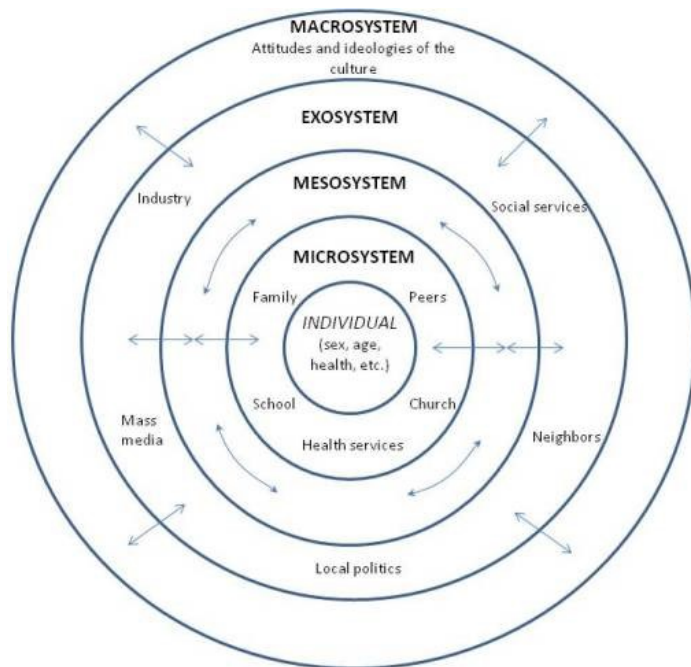
Figure 9. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory from
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecological_systems_theory#/media/File:Bronfenbrenner'sEcological_Theory_of_Dev
elopment_(English).jpg

The exosystem was described by Bronfenbrenner (1979) as "one or more settings that do

not involve the developing person as an active participant, but in which events that occurred

affected or were affected by what happened in the setting containing the developing person" (p.

25). This system involved people and places with which the developing person did not directly

interact. However, they might impact her/him. Because this system yielded some

misinterpretations (Haarkonen, 2007), an example is worth mentioning here. A developing

woman's experience at home might be influenced by her husband's experience at work. Their

newly born baby shortened the husband's sleep for many nights. This experience was likely to

influence his work productivity in the company. His reduced work quality entailed some

negative comments from his boss, ending up with unexpected arguments between him and his

wife at home (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2013). In this case the wife or the developing woman was said

to be indirectly affected in the environment in which she was not a member.

The macrosystem refers to:

> consistencies in the form and content of lower-order systems (micro-, meso-, and
> exo-) that exist, or could exist, at the level of the subculture or the culture as a
> whole, along with any belief systems or ideology underlying such inconsistencies.
> (Bronfenbrenner,1979, p. 26)

From this perspective, the developing person was indirectly influenced by the larger cultural

contexts including societal belief systems, cultural norms, ideologies, policies, or laws. The

macrosystem viewed as the setting of people and places bigger and larger than the other systems

still influenced the developing person remarkably. The macrosystem was also believed to change

with time, so it was temporally constructed (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2013).

The chronosystem, according to Bronfenbrenner (1993):

> encompasses change or consistency over time not only in the characteristics of the
> person but also of the environment in which that person lives (e.g., changes over the
> life course in family structure, socioeconomic status, employment, place of
> residence, or the degree of hecticness and ability in everyday life). (p. 40)

Seen as the time-related change along the other four ecological systems, the chronosystem

included the influence of environmental events and transitions over a human's lifespan,

involving socio-historical conditions. This change also greatly influenced a developing person

when she/he was moved to another place to live. As the developing person aged, s/he might react

differently to environmental changes and became more capable of giving explanations for

subsequent influences of those changes on her/his development.

4.2. Research Paradigm

The present study was an investigation into the EFL faculty mentoring practices at the HEIs in the MRD of Vietnam. It aimed to gain an understanding of how the mentorship programs at these institutions fostered and/or hindered the development of the mentees', mentors', and administrators' expectations and experiences in their triadic interconnectedness. Based on this aim, the present study was grounded in the social constructivist paradigm. Before delving into its alignment with the present study, an overview of the social constructivist paradigm is given.

4.2.1. Research paradigm

As defined by Guba and Lincoln (1994), a paradigm was "the basic belief system or worldview that guides the investigator, not only in choices of method but in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways" (p. 105). In this respect, to identify a paradigm used in a research study, it is important for the researcher to clearly perceive how assumptions regarding ontology, epistemology, and methodology were made. These assumptions were considered to be interconnected components and should be discussed in this sequential order since the discussion of one component taken in any order would affect discussions of the remaining components (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

Ontology was defined by Crotty (1998) as the study of being, so ontological assumptions in research were related to what constituted reality. Guba and Lincoln (1994), instead of giving a direct definition of ontology, raised a compound question, *"What is the form and nature of reality and, therefore, what is there that can be known about it?"* (p. 108). By raising this question, they argued that once the world was recognized as 'real', then we would know how everything existed and worked, so we would only accept the real existence and action as legal in

scientific research (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Eventually, ontology required the researcher to take a position in her/his perceptions of the real existence and real action of things when doing qualitative research (Scotland, 2012). For me mentorship existed as a reality in the context of HEIs as an initial professional development activity to help novice faculty integrate into a new teaching environment. The mentorship was of importance for them to decide whether they would stay with the profession or leave it upon completion of the mentorship. This decision was not solely confined to them, but it was also affected by their mentors and administrators who were directly or indirectly involved in the process of their apprentice teaching. Therefore, the present study on the faculty mentorship could not exclude the existence of one of these three actors.

Crotty (1998) defined epistemology as the understanding of "how we know what we know" (p. 8). In line with Crotty (1998), Guba and Lincoln (1998) posed a big question regarding epistemology, *"What is the nature of the relationship between the knower or would-be knower and what can be known"* (p. 108). They explained that the answer to this question was partly pre-determined by the answer to the ontological question. Therefore, when we assumed that once there was a real existence, our perception had to be objective so as to explore the nature and operation of reality or existence (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). In line with Guba and Lincoln (1994, 1998), Willig (2008) contended that epistemology had a relation to knowledge, including an understanding of the nature and scope of knowledge and the credibility and trustworthiness of knowledge claims.

Guba and Lincoln (1994) put forward the question, *"How can the inquirer (would-be knower) go about finding out whatever he or she believes can be known?"* (p. 108). The response to this question was influenced by the responses of the two previous questions. From Guba and Lincoln's (1994) perspective, the choice of methodology was not random; rather, it depended

upon the assumptions regarding ontology and epistemology that had a blurred borderline and were occasionally thought to be embedded in each other (Guba, 1990a). Therefore, the choice of method(s) for a research study must be driven by its methodology (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

4.2.2. Social constructivist paradigm

How are the three aforementioned philosophical components identified in a social constructivist paradigm in an investigation into a social or educational phenomenon? Derived from Socrates' talks to his students in which his direct questions made students realize their own weaknesses of thinking (Singh & Yaduvanshi, 2015), constructivism became an emerging philosophy of the twenty-first century with its influential scholars such as Piaget, Ausubel, Brunner, Vygostky, and Dewey. Constructivism, a new paradigm compared with the other existing ones, theorized learners' construction of knowledge on their experiences and assumed the subjectivity and contextuality of knowledge as opposed to its objectivity (Singh & Yaduvanshi, 2015). Piaget (1971) described the way learners, as individuals, adapted and refined knowledge, while Vygotsky (1978) argued that learning in view of social constructivism was social in nature, happening while learners were interacting with other people such as teachers, friends, and others in order to construct, share, compare, examine, and redefine knowledge together; thus, they were active participants. Lincoln and Guba (1994) contended that the purpose of inquiry under the wing of social constructivism was "understanding and reconstruction of the constructions that people (including the inquirer) initially hold, aiming toward consensus but still open to new interpretations as information and sophistication improve" (p. 113). Thus, both scholars argued that with time people could increase their understanding of the meaning and content of different constructions after they constructed knowledge more sophisticatedly and informedly. Crotty (1998) argued that the birth of social

constructivism was viewed as a link between the objectivist and subjectivist perspectives because social constructivism posited that humans constructed the meanings of the world in which they were involved. Joining the discussion of social constructivism, Chamaz (2006) added that in social constructivism, individuals constructed the meanings of events or experiences, resulting in the construction of realities which they were involved in. Accordingly, the social constructivist researcher intended to interpret the meanings about the world which were held by other individuals (Creswell, 2014).

Social constructivist ontology

Social constructivism holds the view of relativist ontology. The relativist ontology referred to a theory of existence and examined the nature of reality and humans (Lee, 2012). In other words, all truth was constructed by humans and positioned within a historical stage and a social context. Multiple meanings existed within the same data. Guba and Lincoln (1994) further described that realities could be perceived in the form of a myriad of invisible mental constructions and were based on society and experience. In addition, these realities were specific and local in nature and dependent on individuals or groups to construct their forms and contents. These constructions were not absolutely true but simply complex, and they were also as changeable as their corresponding realities. Adding to the discussion on social constructivist ontology, Krauss (2005) contended, "Qualitative research is based on a relativistic, constructivist ontology that posits that there is no objective reality. Rather, there are multiple realities constructed by human beings who experience a phenomenon of interest" (p. 760). Thus, for me when conducting the study on mentorship at HEIs in the MRD of Vietnam, I treated the mentees, mentors, and administrators as three both separable and inseparable entities with their own expectations and experiences which were reflected in the strengths and weaknesses of the

mentorship. Although the three actors might differ in these aspects, they all contributed to building a mentorship program that was aimed at helping the novice faculty members thrive at their institutions in the initial and subsequent stages of teaching profession.

Social constructivist epistemology

Epistemology nested in a social constructivist paradigm was transactional and subjectivist (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). What the two scholars meant here was that the researcher and the researched were believed to have interconnectedness and produce findings during the process of the study. Social constructivist epistemology holds a view that realities were socially constructed rather than objectively determined and that truth and understanding emerged when people engaged with their realities in transactional relationships (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; Crotty, 2003; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). It was due to this transactional and interactive nature claimed by Guba (1990a) that social constructivism was considered as "the underlining mechanism that creates both reality and knowledge" (Lee, 2012, p. 407). Advocates of the transactional view claimed that "the meaningful behaviour of people forms the context in which reality exists, so instead of emphasizing separate subjectivity, it emphasizes transactional subjectivity" (Refai, Klapper, & Thompson, 2015, p. 320).

Social constructivist methodology

Social constructivist methodology was hermeneutical and dialectical in nature (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). From this perspective, Guba and Lincoln (1994) claimed that unless based on interactions between and among the researcher and the researched, individuals could not construct meaning or knowledge out of the research. "These varying constructions are interpreted using conventional hermeneutical techniques and are compared and contrasted through a dialectical interchange" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 111). In other words, the researcher

needed to pay attention to the interpretation of the meanings of interactive actions (Little, 2008), and her/his interpretation could be verified with others' interpretations to yield persuasive findings.

4.3. Methodology for the Present Study

The methodology section of the present study discusses the research design, the research setting and participants, the role of the researcher, the procedure of data collection, triangulation, and analysis, and issues of trustworthiness and ethics required for an educational qualitative study.

4.3.1. Research design

The research design or a strategy of action formed the researcher's "choice and use of particular methods and links them to the desired outcomes" (Crotty, 1998, p. 7). Grounded in the social constructivist paradigm in connection with Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural Theory of Development, Knowles's (1970, 1998) Adult Learning Theory, and Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Theory of Human Development, this study employed an interpretive qualitative research approach to investigate the mentorship programs in higher education institutions. The choice of a qualitative approach for this investigation into humans' interactions was resonant with a holistic worldview based on the beliefs that "There is not a single reality. Reality based upon perceptions that are different from each person and change over time. What we know has meaning only within a given situation or context" (Joubish, Khurram, Ahmed, Fatima, & Haider, 2011, p. 2082). Aligning this belief with the present study, the researcher perceived that in the mentor – mentee relationship, each actor created a reality which differed from the other and evolved during the course of mentorship. The knowledge gained by one mentee was not quite applicable to the other. However, by taking all realities together for a critical consideration, the

researcher was able to produce a meaning with the acceptance of different meanings induced by different individuals (Joubish et al., 2011).

Denzin and Lincoln (2011) stated, "Qualitative research is difficult to define clearly. It has no theory or paradigm that is distinctively its own … Nor does qualitative research have a distinct set of methods or practices that are entirely its own" (p. 6). Their statement implied that qualitative research was a very broad field of inquiry including a wide range of approaches and methods which were identified in different research disciplines (Ormston, Spencer, Barnard, & Snape, 2014). To be more specific, Creswell (1994, 2014) defined qualitative research as a research process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry which explored a social or human problem. In qualitative research, the researcher built a complex, holistic picture, analyzed words, reported views of information in detail, and conducted the study in a natural setting.

To distinguish a qualitative study from a quantitative one, Bogdan and Biklen (2003) and Creswell (2014) identified several characteristics of qualitative research, including the following:

- It is naturalistic: qualitative research collects immediate data in the natural context with the researcher as the key research instrument;

- It provides descriptive data: the data collected are in forms of words or pictures rather than numbers, and the research findings are reported inclusive of quotations extracted from the participants' interviews;

- It is concerned with process: the researcher focuses more on the research process than on its products;

- It is inductive: the researcher analyzes the data collected inductively rather than trying to search for evidence to prove some hypotheses;

- It seeks meaning: qualitative research stresses the importance of meaning because the researcher takes more interest in how the participants make sense of their lives;

- It uses an emergent design: qualitative research cannot be fixedly planned in advance because the research stages may be modified to conform with incidental happenings after the data are collected;

- It draws on reflexivity: the qualitative researcher reflects on the influences of her/his personal background, culture, and experiences on her/ his interpretations of data; and

- It requires a holistic account: the qualitative researcher attempts to draw an intricate picture of the investigated phenomenon, including presenting multiple perspectives and detecting many associated factors in order to make a larger picture reveal.

Choosing a research approach should be supported by its rationale. Creswell (1994, 2014) postulated eight reasons for conducting qualitative research. The first reason stemmed from the nature of the research question which often commenced with *What* or *How*, meaning that the research was depicting what was going on. Second, the research topic needed to be explored because the researched individual's or group's behaviour was not supported by existing theories. The third reason was a needed larger ecological view of the topic. Studying individuals or groups in their natural setting made up the fourth reason. The fifth reason was the researcher's interest in a writing style of storytelling. Having sufficient time and resources to work on extensive data collection and analysis, being accepted by research readers, and emphasizing the researcher's role as an active learner contributed to forming the sixth, seventh, and eighth reason for doing qualitative research, respectively.

4.3.2. Research setting

The present study was conducted within the departments of EFL teacher education (EFLTE) at four HEIs in the MRD of Vietnam. The HEIs were coded HEI 1, HEI 2, HEI 3, and HEI 4. The HEIs were selected for the present study based on three criteria. First, they are located in the region with which I as the researcher am familiar, so I could easily travel to and from them to conduct interviews during the study process. Second, they were implementing the mentorship programs for their novice faculty members as mandated by MOET. This mentorship program was considered a professional development activity in the initial stage of the mentee's teaching profession. The participants included mentees, mentors, and administrators at these four HEIs. Third, they were offering bachelor's degree programs to train prospective EFL instructors for secondary schools, colleges, or universities in the MRD upon completion of their academic studies.

4.3.3. Research participants

The participants were selected for the present study by the use of a purposeful sampling strategy (MacNealy, 1999; Patton, 1990, 2002). Purposeful sampling which was synonymous with qualitative research (Palays, 2008) was employed when the researcher chose specific people among the population for a particular study. The purposeful sampling in an in-depth qualitative study aimed to identify *information-rich cases* [italics in original] which enabled the researcher to learn more about important issues related to the purpose of the study (Patton, 1990). Conducting the study on such information-rich cases would bring the researcher "insights and in-depth understanding rather than empirical generalizations" (Patton, 2002, p. 230).

Before the study started, I had sent emails to chairs of the EFLTE departments at 16 HEIs located in the MRD to request information of in-progress mentoring practices. I received seven responses regarding the requested information. Based on this baseline data, 16 new faculty

members (or mentees) taking their teaching apprenticeship at the four HEIs described in the

research setting section aforementioned were identified. After having received the University of

Alberta's Research Ethics Review approval, I emailed a letter clearly explaining the purposes of

the study to these mentees and invited the interested mentees to participate in the study. At the

same time, I sent a letter describing my project to department's chairs and asked them to act as

intermediaries to inform mentors of this study endeavour. Upon receiving responses from the

interested mentees, mentors, and administrators, I selected participants to ensure that there were

at least four mentees, four mentors, and two administrators from the four HEIs coded HEI 1, HEI

2, HEI 3, and HEI 4. I then contacted them individually via emails to discuss follow-up research

activities. Pseudonyms were strictly used to protect the participants' identities and prevent any

possible link to a particular participant in the present study (Merriam, 2009). The participants

complied with the following criteria:

- The mentees were the new faculty members of the participating EFLTE departments. They were in the apprentice stage within the first three years of their teaching profession. They were identified in different genders. They each were formally assigned one mentor by administrators during their apprenticeship;

- The mentors were the experienced or senior faculty members of the participating EFLTE departments. They had participated in at least one prior mentoring practice in their career life. They were teaching at the moment and assigned to mentor one new faculty member; and

- The administrators were both teaching courses and managing the participating EFLTE departments. Within their entitlement, they paired mentors and mentees on the basis of

staff availability. Their job was also monitoring the pairings and making modifications as required. They might or might not have prior experiences of mentorship.

4.3.4. Role of the researcher

Conforming to reflexivity, one feature of qualitative research, the qualitative researcher could not avoid biases, values, and personal background which influenced her/his interpretations of data during the study (Creswell, 2014). This fact stemmed from the researcher's long and intensive interactions with participants during the process of data collection. From this perspective, Denzin and Lincoln (1998) argued that the researcher's stance "is always filtered through the lenses of language, gender, social class, race and ethnicity" (p. 25). Therefore, in order to produce a sound and rigorous qualitative study, it is important for the researcher to make explicit all of these influential factors from the proposed phase of her/his study.

As a mentee in the first stage of my profession and later a mentor for new faculty members at the EFLTE department of a university situated in the MRD, I have experienced different factors directly and indirectly affecting the mentor – mentee relationship. Those factors offered both benefits and challenges during the apprenticeship and mentorship. Therefore, they were used, along with the literature review, as the background for my questions which delved deeply into the personal and subtle experiences of the mentees, mentors, and administrators involved in the triadic relationship. Nevertheless, when I utilized such questions to interview the participants in the present study, I tried to put aside the assumed answers from my past mentoring experiences. By doing this, I could elicit the trustworthy data sources from the participants' truest thinking and feelings.

Nevertheless, to avoid the obstacle rooted in the culturally bound assumption that the mentees would not dare to provide me with their unfavourable comments on their mentors or

administrators during the teaching apprenticeship due to their concern about the confidentiality

of the data they provided, I tried to earn their trust by initiating informal talks with each

participant prior to the interview. In these talks, I asked the participants about their daily

activities, and I then linked them to my own ones in order to identify some commonalities or

disparities among us. Since I was a senior faculty member and maintained close academic

relationships with the participating HEIs in the MRD of Vietnam, I believed that I was able to

engage the participants in our interviews. I also assured them that their identities and responses

would not be publicized or shared with anyone. Upon agreeing with me, we both read and signed

the information letter and consent form on the interview day. This ethical protocol will be

described later in this chapter.

4.3.5. Data collection

4.3.5.1. Pre-interview activities (PIAs)

In the paradigm of qualitative research, interviewing was used to explore research

participants' thoughts and experiences (Ellis, 2006). However, how to evoke participants to

verbally reveal their thinking and stories related to the topic investigated was a challenge. To

overcome such a challenge required the researcher to create conditions in which the participants'

recollection of significant experiences would be aroused, analyzed, and reflected (Ellis, 2006).

To obtain rich data from the participants, the qualitative researcher benefited from performing

one required step prior to the commencement of an official interview. This step was called Pre-

Interview Activities (PIAs) (Ellis, 2006; Ellis, Amajd, & Deng, 2011; Ellis, Hetherington,

Lovell, McConghy, & Viczko, 2013; Macris, 2012). PIAs could also be viewed as a warm-up

exercise for the participants to "retrieve their memories" of the meaningful stories happening to

them "over a long period of time" (Ellis, Amajd, & Deng, 2011, p. 72). Additionally, PIAs could

assist the researcher in more deeply understanding the participants' "idiosyncratic and unique" perceptions of the research topic (Macris, 2012, p. 720). PIAs were given to the participants in different modes the most common of which included drawings, diagrams, and special lists of events (Ellis, 2006; Ellis, Amajd, & Deng, 2011).

In her article, Ellis (2006) suggested several PIAs, as in Table 1 (see Appendix D) which were grouped into the following headings:

- Getting-to-know-you activities;

- Activities to learn about context;

- Creating a meaningful starting point for conversation about the topic of interest;

- Facilitating recall, analysis, and reflection;

- Expressing one's understanding or personal experience of the topic of interest; and

- Visual metaphors or symbolic representations of experience. (p. 119)

Resting on Ellis's (2006) Table 1, I designed a list of the following topics as PIAs for the participants in the present study. One week before the interview, I had emailed this list to the participants. I asked them to choose two topics as their reference and prepare their answers before coming to the interview. On the interview day, they showed and described their pictures, drawings, diagrams, or lists to me, and I started the interview with them individually from there. Although the present study explored the mentorship programs, the study on PIAs suggested that it was better to use a related term. Therefore, I used the term *'professional development program in the initial stage of career'* in this PIAs list.

1. Draw two pictures to show you before and after participating in a professional development program in the initial stage of career.

2. Make a list of happy and unhappy (or unexpected) things about one professional development meeting you had once been involved in together with your peer teachers and department administrators.

3. Draw a diagram to show activities of a typical day in your professional development program.

4. Make a list of support sources you needed to survive your initial stage of career.

5. Make a list of things to do and qualities to possess that contribute to making a good teacher in the initial stage of career.

6. Draw pictures about things that challenge teachers in the initial stage of career.

7. Make a list of things you had done when you were responsible for pairing a novice teacher and an experienced teacher in a professional development program you were involved in.

8. Draw pictures showing difficulties you had encountered and ways you had overcome them in creating and managing the new teacher and experienced teaching relationship.

4.3.5.2. The interview

The present study was an exploration of the EFL faculty mentoring practices experienced by four mentees, four mentors, and two administrators at four HEIs located in the MRD of Vietnam. To collect the participants' expectations and experiences of their triadic interactions, interviews were used after the ethical issues had been approved by the Research Ethics Review Board of the University of Alberta.

One of the most frequently used data collection methods for qualitative research was interviews (Chamaz, 2006; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Mason, 2002). According to Fontana and Frey (2000), an "interview is one of the most common powerful ways in which we try to

understand our fellow human beings" (p. 645). An interview was usually a two-way conversation where the interviewer purposefully looked for responses from the interviewee in order to examine an identified social or educational phenomenon (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Fontana & Frey, 2000; Gillham, 2000).

The interview mode utilized in this study was the face-to-face individual semi-structured one. A semi-structured interview was depicted as a set of guiding questions and issues to be explored without utilization of exact wording and orderly-pre-determined questions (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993). Each participant was interviewed twice by me, the researcher, using the semi-structured interview protocol (Creswell, 2014; Hancock & Algozzine, 2011). The first interview was conducted at the beginning stage of data collection, using some beforehand prepared questions for each group of actors - mentees, mentors, and administrators (see Appendix E, F, and G, respectively) - subsequently followed by spontaneous questions generated from the participant's responses. Its key purpose was acquiring an overall understanding of the participants' different perspectives on the mentoring relationships and performances. The second interview, which was scheduled four weeks later, focused on the particular topics emerging from the first interview (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). Although all of the participants and I are EFL educators, the interviewing was conducted in our native language, Vietnamese. Koulourioris (2011) elucidated that non-native English speakers' speaking competence in a qualitative research interview in the English language could prevent them from exposing their personal experiences thoroughly; therefore, their native language could be utilized to make their perceptions of their own life and the world revealed (Shimpuku & Norr, 2011). The use of native language additionally freed the participants from struggling with language 1 – language 2 transfer, so they could completely concentrate on generating ideas to respond to the questions

posed, yielding rich data for analysis. Both interviews were organized at the office of each

participant with an assigned pseudonym for privacy and confidentiality of personal identity.

Each interview approximately lasted for an hour and was audio-recorded upon the participant's

consent for later data analysis. The interviews were summarized, transcribed verbatim from tape

to paper, translated from Vietnamese into English by me, and then verified by an EFL

Vietnamese instructor and doctoral graduate from the University of Alberta. The translated

version of the first interview or the research data was sent to my research supervisor, and we then

discussed my interview skills before I proceeded to the second interview. Thereafter, all English

transcripts were sent to my research supervisor for review, and all Vietnamese transcripts were

sent to each participant for review, additions or deletions to ensure accuracy of the data collected

as member checking. The computerized data was password-protected and only accessed by my

research supervisor and me. Other written forms of data were protected in a locked cabinet.

4.3.5.3. Field notes

Writing field notes or note-taking during and after interviews for a qualitative study was

considered as "a strategic selection of information that can be used to remember the scenario

existing at the time in question" (Muswazi & Nhamo, 2013, p. 13). Field notes were of

importance since they embraced the critical acts of sense-making and interpretation which had

direct impacts on the research findings (Eriksson, Henttonen, & Merilainen, 2012). In addition,

field notes of an interview helped the researcher establish a link between her/him and the

participant in the stage of writing the qualitative report upon completion of the data collection

and data analysis (Wolfinger, 2002). Field notes could also record descriptions of the

participants' oral speeches, a reconstruction of the talk between the interviewer (researcher) and

the interviewee (participant), the physical research setting, and the researcher's observations during the interview (Muswazi & Nhamo, 2013).

In the present study, while I was conducting individual interviews with mentors, mentees, and administrators on their mentorship experiences, I was taking notes with a pen and a notebook in addition to tape-recording their responses to my questions. My notes were comprised of the key points in the interviewees' responses, the questions for clarifying their confusing or incomplete responses, and the key quotes which differentiated one interviewee from the other interviewees. In addition, I took notes of the interviewees' body language including facial expressions, hand movements, nodding, and other physical reactions to my questions. Besides, I wrote brief descriptions of the setting including time and place of the interview. I also jotted down my personal feelings, thinking, reflection, and concerns regarding each participant after each interview. The field notes collected during and after each interview were employed as a tool to remind me of the interviewees and thus allow me to cross check the recordings with my notes.

4.3.5.4. Data triangulation

Emanated from research on mathematics in the 1970s, triangulation was developed and employed in investigations into social and educational issues (Hales, 2010). Triangulation was defined as "a process of combining data from different sources to study a particular social phenomenon" (Hales, 2010, p. 13). In other words, triangulation required multiple data sources to reinforce accuracy and trustworthiness of findings in a qualitative research project (Oliver-Hoyo & Allen, 2006). Since triangulation was used to compare qualitative data collected from different sources to determine concurrences, it was viewed as a process of qualitative cross-validation (Wiersma, 2000; Wiersma & Jurs, 2009). Denzin (1978, 1989, 2009) described four types of triangulation used as a strategy in qualitative research projects. They included:

1. Data triangulation: referring to the use of multiple data sources including time, space, and persons in a single study;

2. Methods triangulation: referring to the use of multiple methods to conduct a study;

3. Investigators triangulation: referring to the involvement of more than one investigator during the course of the study; and

4. Theories triangulation: referring to the use of multiple theories in conducting a study on an identified phenomenon.

The choice of a suitable triangulation type depended on the purpose of a study (Meijer, Verloop, & Beijaard, 2002). In the present study, I employed the data triangulation to support information collected from the interviews with the research participants. This choice of data triangulation also aimed to compensate for weaknesses detected in one data source by strengths identified in the other data sources, which would help to increase the credibility and trustworthiness of the research findings (Hales, 2010). Each member of the three groups of participants - mentees, mentors, and administrators - was interviewed individually. The within-group responses to the interview questions were compared with one another, subsequently followed by a comparison of cross-group responses in order to identify common themes related to the successes and challenges in the mentorship program they experienced in the initial stage of teaching profession at their HEIs in the MRD of Vietnam. In addition to triangulating the data collected from the mentees, mentors, and administrators, the data from the three actors' individual interviews and the findings from the literature review were compared with one another in order to enhance their trustworthiness of the data. Hence, the present study employed multiple levels of triangulation.

4.3.6. Data analysis

Marwill and Rossman (2016) asserted, "The process of bringing order, and interpretation to a mass of collected data is messy, ambiguous, time-consuming, creative, and fascinating" (p. 214). In a qualitative study, data analysis was the process of systematically searching and arranging the interview transcripts, field-notes, and other materials which allowed the researcher to gather to devise findings (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). In other words, it depicted the researcher's work on the data collected including "organising them, breaking them into manageable units, coding them, synthesising them, and searching for patterns" (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003, p. 147). Therefore, the main aim of qualitative data analysis was discovering patterns, concepts, themes, and meanings, and data analysis could be viewed as a continuous process rather than a one-time event.

The data of the present study was analyzed by utilizing the thematic approach, a hybrid approach of inductive and deductive thematic analyses (Crabtree & Miller, 1999; Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006; Boyatzis, 1998). The thematic analysis searched for and extracted "general patterns found in the data through multiple readings of the data" (Yukhymenko, Brown, Lawless, Brodowinska, & Mullin, 2014, p. 96). The deductive approach of thematic analysis employed "a structure or predetermined framework to analyze data", while "analyzing data with little or no pre-determined theory, structure or framework" (Burnard, Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008, p. 429) was the work of its inductive approach. The latter tended to employ "the actual itself to derive the structure of analysis" (Burnard, Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008, p. 429). The choice of the thematic approach to analyze the data lay in its flexibility, its applicability across a range of theoretical and epistemological approaches, and its compatibility with constructivist paradigms (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

According to Punch and Oancea (2009), qualitative data analysis could be understood as interpreting, transforming, and making sense of qualitative data. In line with these authors' description of data analysis, the data collected in the present study was analysed against the assumptions regarding relativist ontology that accepted multiple realities of social constructivist paradigm (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). From this perspective, the participants' expectations and experiences of the mentoring relationship were explored and interpreted. In addition, the data was analyzed on the premise of the tenets and principles of Vygotsky's, Knowles's, and Bronfenbrenner's theories which were discussed in the theoretical lenses section of this study report. The social constructivist paradigm and these three theories drove the data analysis and interpretation. The data collected from the first interview for the first participant was being analyzed while subsequent interviews were going on (Creswell, 2014). The second set of interviews for the participants did not begin until the first set of interviews for them had been completed.

Qualitative research scholars created a variety of methods to analyze data, as shown in Table 4 below. In comparing the three to six phase processes espoused by five different sets of researchers, we see that in all cases qualitative data is categorized into meaningful categories through a process of extracting ideas, coding them, collating codes into themes, and labelling them (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In addition, the phases are carried out in a sequence and can then be re-visited to make refinements, modifications, or replacements of codes, sub-codes, themes, or sub-themes. This recursive process is also aimed at yielding a set of themes sufficiently supported by quotes extracted from interviews (Labra, Castro, Wright, & Chamblas, 2019).

Table 4. *A summary of qualitative data analysis methods.*

Marshall & Rossman (1999)'s six stages of thematic analysis	Braun & Clarke (2006)'s six phases of thematic analysis	Fereday & Muir-Cochrane (2006)'s six steps in a hybrid approach of deductive and inductive analysis	Strauss & Corbin's (1998) three stages coding techniques	Vaismoradi, Jones, Turunen, & Snelgrove's (2016) four phases of theme development
1. Organise the data 2. Generate categories or themes 3. Code the data 4. Test emergent understandings of the data 5. Search for alternative explanations of the data 6. Write-up the data analysis	1. Become familiar with the data 2. Generate initial codes 3. Search for themes 4. Review themes 5. Define themes 6. Write-up	1+ 2. Occur sequentially, focusing on developing a codebook to employ in deductive analysis and testing its applicability and reliability 3 + 4. Involve performing inductive and deductive analyses of the data 5. Connect codes and themes that emerge during inductive and deductive analyses. At this step, some similarities and differences are identified across the data 6. Corroborate and legitimating coded themes	1. Open coding • Refers to the process of generating initial concepts from data. • Concepts are identified and their properties and dimensions discovered 2. Axial coding Through axial coding, categories and their related subcategories and concepts were refined to form more precise explanations 3. Selective coding Selective coding is used to integrate and refine categories to form a larger theoretical scheme.	1. Initiation: • Reading transcriptions and highlighting meaning units • Coding and looking for abstractions in participants' accounts • Writing reflective notes 2. Construction • Classifying • Comparing • Labelling • Translating and transliterating • Defining and describing 3. Rectification • Immersion and distancing • Relating themes to established knowledge • Stabilizing 4. Finalization • Developing the story line

Note. Adapted from Marshall & Rossman (1999), Braun & Clarke (2006), Fereday &Muir-Cochrane (2006), Strauss & Corbin's (1998), Vaismoradi, Jones, Turunen, & Snelgrove's (2016).

The data of the present study was analyzed by following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six

phases of thematic analysis. As the researcher of this project, I performed a series of sequent

steps into the text data (interview transcripts) collected from nineteen individual face-to-to face

interviews with ten participants. Each participant was interviewed twice except one administrator

who missed the second interview due to a personal issue. The interviews focussed on *successes*

and *challenges* each of the participants experienced since they participated in the mentorship program at their HEIs. The six phases of thematic analysis were conducted as follows:

In the first phase of data analysis, I made myself familiar with the data by reading through nineteen verified interview transcripts in order to grasp an overall understanding of the participants' responses and shape some patterns of them (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Actually, it was the third time I made contact with the transcripts. The first contact happened when I listened to the participants' interview responses in the Vietnamese language. Then I summarized and transcribed verbatim them. The second contact was when I translated the Vietnamese transcripts into English and had the translations verified. Therefore, I was confident that I immersed myself in the data. I subsequently re-read each transcript, highlighted every word, phrase or sentence extracted that focussed on *"successes"* in the orange color and every other one extracted on *"challenges"* in the pink color. These extracts would be matched with themes or patterns in the latter phases of data analysis. I followed the same process for each transcript of four mentors, four mentees, and two administrators.

In the second phase, I started generating initial codes for highlighted data segments and used a pencil to write them on the parallel lines in the margins of the text data. The codes were either words, phrases, or sentences. Using the pencil allowed me to modify codes easily after I read all of them over and over again and decided some modifications. Then, I transferred all of these codes and their extracts to large sheets of paper, using different color markers and post-it notes. I made a table for each group of participants namely mentors, mentees, and administrators. The table encompassed all codes and extracts which were positioned under the headings of *Successes* and *Challenges*. This phase was implemented by using the deductive approach since the extracted information was related to the two overall concepts - *successes* and *challenges* - of

the mentorship program that were stated in the overarching research question: '*What are the success and challenges of the mentorship programs at higher education institutions in the Mekong River Delta of Vietnam?*" Nevertheless, *successes* and *challenges* in whichever aspects of the mentorship program were not been pre-determined. In total, the data analysis yielded 78 codes specified in Table 5 below:

Table 5. *Codes generated from interview text data.*

	Mentees	Mentors	Administrators
Successes (codes)	16	13	10
Challenges (codes)	15	12	12

These codes were data-driven, meaning that they were detected from the data itself (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I treated each data item in the entire data set with a care and equity in order not to leave out any important information (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Since this phase involved the search for information that was not pre-determined, the data was analyzed inductively.

The third phase involved collating the generated codes into themes in conjunction with themes from the literature review. Again, I made a table on a large sheet of paper for each group of participants, including the codes generated from the interview transcripts and the themes identified from the literature review. I carefully read them over and over again to look for their similarities and differences. I finally ended up with 19 themes, 44 sub-themes, and 20 sub-sub-themes divided for each group of participants in Table 6 below:

Table 6. *Generated themes, sub-themes, and sub-sub-themes.*

	Mentees	**Mentors**	**Administrators**
Successes	4 themes 11 sub-themes 5 sub-sub-themes	3 themes 10 sub-themes 4 sub-sub-themes	3 themes 4 sub-themes
Challenges	3 themes 10 sub-themes 7 sub-sub-themes	3 themes 9 sub-themes 4 sub-sub-themes	3 themes

In the fourth phase of Braun and Clarke (2006), I examined the dual criteria of all themes, sub-themes, and sub-sub-themes which Patton's (1990) devised as *internal homogeneity* and *external heterogeneity*. The *internal homogeneity* looked at the conformity of coded data extracts with each theme to see if they could establish "a coherent pattern" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 20). If there was any disconformity between them, then new themes were created to accommodate extracts, or the mismatched extracts were removed from the established themes. Subsequently, the *external heterogeneity* reviewed "the validity of individual themes in relation to the data set" to see if they precisely devised "the data set as a whole" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 21). To assure this phase, I re-examined each of individual themes, sub-themes, and sub-sub-themes to see if they met these two criteria. I made a number of modifications and discards in each group of participants to make the theme set more coherent and meaningful. The modifications were made due to some reasons such as themes, sub-themes, or sub-sub-themes supported by limited or weak extracts from the text data, inappropriate word choice for themes, and overlapped themes. As a result of this modifying process, a set of themes, sub-themes, and sub-sub-themes were established and ready for the subsequent phase of data analysis.

The fifth phase of the thematic analysis required the definition and refinement of themes that were going to be presented in different accounts in the last phase (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I re-examined all of the themes and devised a definition for each of them in Table 7 below:

Table 7. *Final themes.*

Themes	Definitions	Codes
MENTEES		
Successes Personal development	Mentees improved their personal life in many fields including psychological aspects when they participated in the mentorship program	Improved behaviours and thoughts Enhanced self-reflection and problem-solving skills Satisfaction about students' engagement in learning

Professional development	Mentees enriched their teaching knowledge when they participated in the mentorship program	Enriched subject knowledge and teaching methods Received constructive feedback Annual working plan
Relationship between mentees and mentors	Mentees gained benefits when they established a mentoring relationship with mentors	No conflict in work No conflict in age disparity No conflict in gender difference
Additional sources of support	Different types of assistance mentees received during the mentorship program	Support from formal mentors Support from informal mentors Support from peer mentees across disciplines
Challenges Personal pressures	Problems mentees themselves encountered during the mentorship program	Doing time-consuming dual work: teaching and office work Facing shortcomings due to rudimentary experience in teaching Feeling anxious about teaching observed Having pressure on a tenure-track position
Mentor-related issues	Problems mentees encountered were resulted from mentors	Mentors' insufficient support Mentors' changing working and mentoring styles
Additional issues	Problems that were not directly stemmed from mentees	Disappointment in teaching due to outdated facilities Students with mixed learning abilities Absence of officially endorsed mentoring guide
MENTORS		
Successes Personal development	Mentors improved their personal life in many fields including psychological aspects when they participated in the mentorship program	Satisfaction about contribution to mentees' accomplishments Increased perception of more responsibilities Enhanced inter-personal communication skills
Professional development	Mentors enriched their mentoring knowledge when they participated in the mentorship program	Increased teaching skills Enhanced mentoring knowledge
Relationship between mentors and mentees	Mentors gained benefits when they established a mentoring relationship with mentees	No conflict in age difference No conflict in gender disparity Positive relationship with informal mentees
Challenges Personal pressures	Problems mentors themselves encountered during the mentorship program	Perception of insufficient foundational knowledge of mentoring Perception of insufficient knowledge of mentees' background
Mentee-related issues	Problems mentors encountered resulted from mentees	Mentees' unsatisfactory personality traits Different teaching approach and feedback
Additional issues	Problems did not directly stem from mentors	Absence of officially endorsed mentoring guide Unsatisfactory compensation for mentoring

		Complicated procedure for informal mentoring
ADMINISTRATORS		
Successes Mentee-mentor matching	Benefits administrators gained in paring mentors-mentees	Increased ease of the mentee-mentor pairing Benefits of pairing mentors and mentees with a five-year difference of age
Administrators as good listeners	Advantages administrators received when being a good listener in the mentorship program	Benefits of being a good listener
Expression of self-efficacy	Administrators were self-aware of their achievements in managing the mentorship program	
Challenges Different gender pairing	Administrators encountered problems when matching male mentors and female mentees, and vice versus	
Insufficient scrutiny of the mentoring work	Administrators did not have the well-planed observation and assessment for the mentoring activities	
Absence of a mandated mentoring guide	Administrators were not supported by any official mentoring document	

The final phase Braun and Clarke (2006) called "the write-up of a thematic analysis" (p. 23) involved a series of anecdotes told by mentees, mentors, and administrators. Their anecdotes revealed *successes* and *challenges* in various aspects of the mentorship program they participated in at their HEIs. This phase is elaborated in the remaining chapters of this study report.

In summary, in interpreting the data collected from the mentees, mentors, and administrators during their mentoring practices at the participating HEIs in the present study, I examined how these stakeholders interacted with one another and what knowledge each of them generated and constructed. I would then pull out similarities and disparities between them with a view to building on a common knowledge space which addressed varying issues regarding different aspects of mentorship, particularly those mentioned the interview questions.

4.3.7. Trustworthiness of qualitative research data

To produce a rigorous study, qualitative researchers needed to establish trustworthiness within their research studies (Merriam, 2009). Lincoln and Guba (1985) raised an overarching question as regards trustworthiness of the study, *"How can an inquirer persuade his or her audiences that the researcher's findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to?"* (p. 290). To respond to this question, Lincoln and Guba (1985), Krefting (1991), and Creswell (1998, 2014) postulated an alternative set of four criteria to assess the trustworthiness of a qualitative study which corresponded to four criteria dominantly used to evaluate a quantitative study: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility (versus *Internal Validity* in a quantitative study). Credibility refers to the believability of the data and data analysis in a qualitative study. It also deals with the issue of congruence between the research findings and reality (Meriam, 1998). Credibility could be enhanced by using one or more of the following strategies: prolonged engagement with participants, persistent observation in the field, data triangulation, peer debriefing, negative case analysis, researcher reflexivity, and/or member (participant) checking (Creswell, 2014; Denzin, 1994; Morrow, 2005). To establish the credibility of the findings in the present study, I utilized member checking and data triangulation techniques. The transcripts of interviews were sent to all participants for review, revisions, deletions and/or additions. The data triangulation was verified at multiple levels: by triangulating the interviews with four mentees, four mentors, and two administrators; and by triangulating these interviews with the findings from the literature review.

Transferability (versus *External Validity*). Transferability refers to the applicability of the research findings to other contexts. Transferability could be reinforced by the thick description of the data perceived by the research readers who would decide whether the research findings could be transferred to their personal contexts (Geertz, 1983). The thick description of

the data also "involves an emic perspective, which demands description that includes the actors' interpretations and other social and/or cultural information" (Davis, 1995, p. 434). In addition, transferability could be achieved "when the researcher provides sufficient information about the self (the researcher as instrument) and the research context, processes, participants, and researcher– participant relationships to enable the reader to decide how the findings may transfer" (Morrow, 2005, p. 252). Implied in this study, transferability was reflected in my detailed descriptions and interpretations of ten participants' responses to the interview questions. Their expectations and experiences of the mentoring relationship were visibly exposed to readers so that they would be able to perceive how and why the mentoring practices shaped the knowledge, thinking, and behaviour of the participants when they interacted with one another during the mentorship program.

Dependability (versus _Reliability_). Dependability refers to the extent to which the study could be repeated by other researchers and that the research findings would be consistent. It also refers to the researcher's description of any changes in the context within which the study occurred and in the study design which is needed to understand the research context more clearly. In other words, the researcher is responsible for describing the changes which occurred in the setting, and how they influenced the way she/he approached the study. Dependability could be obtained through the researcher's

> carefully tracking the emerging research design and through keeping an audit trail, that is, a detailed chronology of research activities and processes; influences on the data collection and analysis; emerging themes, categories, or models; and analytic memos. The audit trail may then be examined by peer researchers, a student's advisor, or colleagues in the field. (Morrow, 2005, p. 252)

In the present study, I assessed the dependability criterion by thoroughly examining the entire research process from the data collection stage to data coding, data analysis, and writing up interpretations in order to see if there was any emerging issue or problem that needed attention. In addition, I reported to my research supervisor all activities during the research process and received her feedback and comments as well as her advice on any unexpected incidents to ensure the rigor of the study.

Confirmability (versus *Objectivity*). Confirmability refers to the support from other researchers regarding the research findings. Confirmability is based on the acknowledged subjectivity or bias of qualitative research and on the stance that "the integrity of findings lies in the data and that the researcher must adequately tie together the data, analytic processes, and findings in such a way that the reader is able to confirm the adequacy of the findings" (Morrow, 2005, p. 252). To enhance the confirmability of the research findings, Morrow (2005) claimed that the researcher could employ the same procedures as identified in supporting the dependability criterion with an emphasis on compatible use of an audit trail and controlled subjectivity. Linking confirmability to the present study, I strictly followed the guiding steps of working on the data collected. At every step, I compared and contrasted the data from the participants' interviews and the literature review to generate themes in response to the research questions. Further, I had my research supervisor read through the research findings and made revisions of finding descriptions upon her requests to make my writing more clarified.

4.3.8. Ethics

In conducting qualitative research projects related to human subjects, researchers were required to comply to a code of ethics mandated by the organization or institution which they worked for (Banister, 2007; Flick, 2009; Hammersley & Traianou, 2012). The code of ethics was

a set of "moral principles, rules, or standards governing a person or a profession", which enabled

researchers "to do good and avoid evil" (harm) during the course of doing research (Flick, 2009,

p. 54). In order to produce sound research projects, researchers were expected to protect the

rights as well as safety of their participants (Halai, 2006). Researchers were expected to prolong

the ethical consideration throughout successive stages of the study such as (1) prior to

conducting the study; (2) at the beginning of the study; (3) while collecting data; (4) while

analyzing data; and (5) when reporting, sharing, and storing data (Creswell, 2014). Different

organizations and institutions such as the American Educational Research Association (AERA),

British Education Research Association (BERA), and Canadian Educational Researchers'

Association (CERA) enacted the research ethics guidelines with their different titles for their

own uses. However, embedded within these documents were the four key common principles

identified by Banister (2007), Flick (2007), Halai (2006), and Hammersley and Traianou (2012)

which included:

1. *Informed consent*. Researchers are expected to obtain the written consent of all research

   participants which provides them with simplified information about the background,

   purpose, procedures, benefits, and risks of the study. Each participant will voluntarily

   sign this consent form and can withdraw from the study at any specified time during the

   course of the study;

2. *Confidentiality*. Researchers are expected to inform all participants about the protection

   and security of the information they have provided. If their information is intentionally

   publicized, their names must be strictly pseudo;

3. *No harm*. Researchers are expected to protect all participants from disadvantages or difficulties that may influence them in a variety of aspects of their lives. The participants should be informed about any possible risks and benefits at the start of the study; and

4. *Reciprocity*. Researchers are expected to carefully consider some type of benefits for the time and effort the participants have spent during the course of the study.

Aligning the aforementioned ethical issues with the present study, I treated the research participants with respect from the beginning and throughout to the ending stage of the study. I strictly followed all the principles of the ethics guidelines mandated by the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board. The interviews with the three participating actors in the mentorship program were not conducted until the application for research ethics was approved by the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board. To protect the participants' rights in the present study, I carried out three important things: (1) I had each of the participants - mentees, mentors, and administrators - read and sign *Information Letter* and *Consent Form* (see Appendices A, B, and C, respectively) prior to the first interview. The written information letter and consent form specified the background, purpose, procedures, benefits, and risks of the study they were participating in; (2) the participants were assigned pseudonyms which were utilized during the stages of analyzing collected data and writing the research report, and their participants' identities are completely anonymous if the research findings are planned for publication in the future; and (3) the participants were given access to verbatim transcriptions of their responses to the interview questions as a member check (opportunity to add, delete or change the transcript) to assure the accuracy of the collected data and avoid any harm the data might bring to them.

In summary, this chapter began by describing the theoretical foundations of the study (Vygotsky, 1978; Knowles, 1970, 1998; and Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Grounded on the

philosophical assumptions of social constructivism, the study set out to explore the outcomes of the social interactions of three actors within the MOET-mandated mentorship program at four HEIs in the MRD of Vietnam by interviewing four mentees, four mentors and two administrators. After elaborating on social constructivism, it presented the research design, setting, and participants; described the researcher's role; and outlined the data collection methods including PIAs, interviews, and field notes as well as a description of data triangulation. The data collected were analyzed by using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six phases of thematic analysis. The chapter closed with a description of standards to ensure the trustworthiness of the research data and the ethical commitments to protect the participants during and after the study at their HEIs.

Chapter Five:

Mentees

This chapter presents the text data from the researcher's interviews with four novice

faculty members or mentees among the higher education institutions (HEIs) participating in the

present study. The first part of the chapter provides an overview of each mentee's personal

background including their pseudonyms, academic degree earned, teaching venue, teaching

experience, and tasks assigned during the mentorship program. The second part describes themes

generated from the text data and substantiated by mentees' quotations. Concurrently, these

themes will be converged with those presented in the literature review for the study, thus

identifying concurrences and new contributions to the research about mentorship in HEIs.

5.1. Mentees' Background

5.1.1. Trang

Trang is a female apprentice instructor of English as a foreign language (EFL) at a public

institution (HEI 2) located in the Mekong River Delta (MRD) of Vietnam. Trang obtained a

graduate degree in Teaching EFL conferred by a Vietnamese HEI. She was assigned to teach

courses on general English to non-English majors and English reading skills to second-degree

English majors during her mandated mentorship program. Besides teaching, Trang was also

assigned to work as one of the department's clerks. She occasionally works as a teaching

assistant, a classroom observer, and a substitute instructor.

By being mentored, Trang expected that with her mentors' mentoring experience, she

"could figure out what [she] lacks and what [she] needs to strengthen". She anticipated that her

mentor would be able to provide her with needed information to supplement her existing

knowledge and identify irrelevant information so that she might minimize her shortcomings

during the mentoring process. Trang also hoped to be supported in teaching methods, teaching material development, and problem-solving skills.

From Trang's perspective, to become successful in the mentorship program, she should possess the following qualities: be hard-working and progressive-minded, not feel inferior from negative feedback, be conscious of her own strengths and weaknesses, be flexible in teaching and office work, be willing to learn from other mentors and peer mentees, and be mindful of autonomous learning in order not to be left behind.

5.1.2. Nghi

Nghi is a female apprentice instructor of EFL at a public institution (HEI 2) in the MRD. She is in the final stage of the mentorship program. Nghi obtained her graduate degree in Teaching EFL from a Vietnamese HEI and has been teaching there ever since. She has taught courses on general English to non-English majors and English communication skills to English majors at different levels. Besides practice teaching, Nghi was also assigned other tasks such as writing department meeting minutes as a clerk, supervising students' internships, writing up internship reports, organizing an English-speaking club, and supporting organizers of workshops or conferences within the department.

As a mentee, Nghi set some expectations for her mentor. She expected that her mentor would give her a timely cautious notice whenever she did something wrong in the mentoring process. She also hoped to be instructed on how to solve problems related to student management and lesson planning. In addition, Nghi expected her mentor to give her some free time to learn more about professional knowledge during the learning-to-teach process in order to make some further progress in teaching and doing mentoring-focused activities.

Nghi believes a successful mentee should possess qualities such as the following: passion for teaching; devotion to the institution, not only to her own life; ability to adapt to a new environment; ability to establish good relationships with colleagues; being active in work and pursuing opportunities; and having an understanding of students.

5.1.3. Han

Han is a female apprentice instructor of EFL at a public institution (HEI 4) in the MRD. Han has taught there since she obtained her graduate degree in Teaching EFL from a Vietnamese HEI. Han has taught courses on general English and English for specific purposes (ESP) to non-English majors from freshmen to seniors. In addition to teaching, Han was assigned to organize and manage some extra-curricular activities for students, including an English-speaking club in her department.

Participating in the apprenticeship program, Han expected a few things from her mentor. She wanted to make her mentor satisfied with a good performance on the tasks he had assigned. She believed that this would show him her strong professional knowledge, classroom management skills, relationships with colleagues, collaborative spirit, ability to assist others, all without any aggression, inferiority, or arrogance. She believed these positive characteristics helped her. Han also expected that her mentor would point out what strengths she possessed as well as what weaknesses she should avoid in order to improve herself during the mentorship program.

As regards an accomplished mentee, Han believes that she should satisfy the following conditions: loving the teaching job because it will help her solve difficulties in work and life, being friendly with colleagues and students, mastering the teaching knowledge and learning more about it at a higher level, being capable of applying technology to teaching and upgrading

it for improved teaching, logically planning a daily agenda on a priority basis in order to finish it successfully at the end of the mentorship program. Han wishes to build up an image of a successful instructor as her mentor. She also anticipates the mentorship program to be extended into a so-called indirect mentorship program so that she could receive more support from her mentor whenever she encounters unresolvable problems in her future teaching. This reflects her consciousness of lifelong learning in her profession.

5.1.4. Nam

Nam is a male apprentice instructor of EFL at a public institution (HEI 3) in the MRD. Nam holds a graduate degree in Teaching EFL conferred by an overseas HEI. He was assigned to teach such courses as EFL skills, linguistics, and literature to English majors from freshmen to seniors. Besides teaching, Nam participated in some extra-curricular activities with his colleagues and students.

During the mentorship program, Nam expected a few things from his mentor: the mentor should teach in the same knowledge areas as he; she should be experienced in the course he is assigned to teach so that he can exchange more ideas with her; and the mentor should actually listen to mentees or be a good listener because this open-minded quality of the mentor will make him feel respected as a new member of the department. Nam also expected to have opportunities to attend professional development programs such as some departmental meetings where all mentees gathered to learn how to teach at the university level subsequently followed by private conferencing between the mentor and mentee to develop syllabi and make lesson plans.

To become successful in the mentorship program, Nam thinks that a mentee should have the following characteristics: be patient with teaching-related problems; be a learning lover because in his viewpoint teaching is not easy; be modest and behave moderately, meaning that

mentees should know they are newcomers and still have many things to learn; and be courteous in communication to maintain good relationships with colleagues.

Tables 8 and 9 present a summary of the mentees' expectations of being a successful mentee and their expectations of their mentors in the mentorship program respectively. As we can see in Table 8, the mentees varied somewhat in their expectations of being a successful mentee: being hard-working and patient with teaching-related challenges (3), being progressive minded to master professional knowledge (3), being conscious of their own strengths and weaknesses and behaving modestly (2), being flexible in accepting and completing mentorship tasks (2), being mindful of autonomous learning (2), having a passion (love) for teaching and learning (3), being devoted to the development of the institution (1), establishing good relationships with colleagues (3), understanding and being friendly with students (2), being able to integrate information technology into teaching (1), and making a working agenda with prioritized tasks (1). Table 9 reveals the expectations these same mentees had of their mentors: pointing out mentees' strengths and areas that need improvement (2); providing mentees with knowledge about teaching methods and teaching resource development (1); providing mentees with knowledge about problem-solving skills and student management skills (2); giving mentees feedback on lesson planning and teaching apprentice performances (4); offering mentees free time to acquire more professional knowledge/attend professional development programs (2); instructing mentees how to communicate and maintain good relationships with others (peer mentees, informal mentors, and department's instructors (1); teaching the same courses as mentees (1); and being good listeners (1).

Table 8. *Mentees' expectations of being a successful mentee.*

A successful mentee should………	Trang	Nghi	Han	Nam
be hard-working and patient with teaching-related challenges	✓	✓		✓
be progressive minded to master professional knowledge	✓	✓	✓	
be conscious of their own strengths and weaknesses and behave modestly	✓			✓
be flexible in accepting and completing mentorship tasks	✓	✓		
be mindful of autonomous learning	✓		✓	
have a passion (love) for teaching and learning		✓	✓	✓
be devoted to the development of the institution		✓		
establish good relationships with colleagues		✓	✓	✓
understand and be friendly with students		✓	✓	
be able to integrate information technology into teaching			✓	
make a working agenda with prioritized tasks			✓	

Table 9. *Mentees' expectations of their mentors.*

Mentors are expected to ………	Trang	Nghi	Han	Nam
point out mentees' strengths and areas that need improvement	✓		✓	
provide mentees with knowledge about teaching methods and teaching resource development	✓			
provide mentees with knowledge about problem-solving skills and student management skills	✓	✓		
give mentees feedback on lesson planning and teaching apprentice performances	✓	✓	✓	✓
offer mentees free time to acquire more professional knowledge/attend professional development programs		✓		✓
instruct mentees how to communicate and maintain good relationships with others (peer mentees, informal mentors, and department's instructors)				✓
teach the same courses as mentees				✓
be good listeners				✓

5.2. Key Themes

The following themes are generated from the data collected after two interviews with each participating mentee. The data text reflects the mentees' experiences, practices, thoughts, and expectations that are specified in the gains and challenges they experienced during the mentorship program.

5.2.1. Mentees' gains in the mentorship program

Participating in the MOET- mandated mentorship program at the participating HEIs, the mentees reported four prominent gains: personal development, professional development, relationship between mentors and mentees, and additional supports.

5.2.1.1. Personal development

Since the mentees participated in the mentorship program at their institutions, they reported a number of improvements in their personal life. First of all, the mentees stated that they developed their behaviours and thoughts during the course of mentorship, particularly arousing their love and passion for teaching. Although Trang was not trained how to teach at the tertiary level, she, to some extent, became successful in teaching by adjusting her teaching strategies to meet students' varied needs and expectations and by seeking assistance from not only their formal mentors but also their informal ones. Trang reported that the more she taught in the department, the more closely she wanted to be attached to it, though she had never thought about a career in teaching before. This is what Knowles (1970, 1998) called motivation, one of the principles of adult learning theory. Trang shared:

> I obtained a bachelor's degree in English Language Studies. I subsequently took a few
>
> courses on English language teaching because I intended to take a part-time teaching job
>
> besides my full time working at a company. However, since I started my teaching

apprenticeship at this HEI, I have actually fallen in love with this teaching job, and I am

planning to stay with it for a long time (…) To tell the truth, I have never thought of

teaching at the tertiary level before. In my apprentice teaching, I had to adjust my

teaching methods to respond to student's different learning abilities thanks to my

mentor's and other instructors' advice (...) One of the major advantages I received is I

could engage most of students in my class activities. (Trang, HEI 2)

This finding aligns with a number of studies (Bullough, 2005; Johnson, Berg, & Donaldson,

2005; Lindgren, 2005; Marable & Raimondi, 2007; McIntyre & Hagger, 1996) which reported

that mentoring provided mentees with emotional and psychological gains through the mentors'

interactions with them. These studies revealed that mentorship was able to accelerate the

mentees' confidence in solving their extant challenges and help them feel satisfied with their

current teaching apprenticeship. These findings are also assonant with those of Eby and

Locwood (2005) and Lumpkin (2011) who stated that the mentees increased their learning and

coaching skills, self-confidence, and social relationships, which helped them develop their

working plans and thus remain longer in the teaching profession. In all instances the More

Knowledgeable Others (MKO) (Vygotsky, 1978), or the formal and informal mentors, played a

significant role in acculturating the mentees into their teaching practices and responsibilities in

their HEI.

In the same vein, teaching as an apprentice faculty member at the same institution as

Trang, Nghi was assigned multiple tasks to complete during the teaching apprenticeship. Nghi

described:

I was assigned two clear tasks in the mentorship program: practice teaching and office

working. In terms of practice teaching, I was initially assigned to teach some general

English courses because of my inexperienced teaching. I had to observe other instructors'

teaching, listen to post-teaching feedback, and read more teaching-related materials.

Then, I was assigned to teach more advanced courses (…) As regards office working, I

had to do several duties such as writing department's meeting minutes, supervising

students' internships, and organizing academic groups. (Nghi, HEI 2)

Nonetheless, Nghi tried to overcome difficulties to perform what her mentor expected her to do

thanks to several meetings with her mentor to discuss lesson plans and find solutions to her

challenges in teaching. Knowles' (1970, 1998) adult learning theory can be used to describe

Nghi's effort. Because the mentee was self-aware of her role as a teaching apprentice and

motivated by the mentor's support, she felt that she was able to finish her assigned tasks

satisfactorily and gradually developed a love for teaching. Then Nghi happily revealed, "I have

gradually realized that I am quite able to teach after being supported and encouraged by the

mentor and other instructors" (Nghi, HEI 2). In other words, the mentorship program resulted in

a positive change in the mentee's perception of her job and her ability to teach.

Not only did the mentorship program help the mentees' thinking grow, but it also trained

them to build a positive image of teaching, like that of their mentor. By observing how well the

mentors taught and communicated with students or colleagues in daily life, the mentees reported

that they drew some useful lessons for themselves. They applied these positive personal

characteristics and effective teaching approaches to their own classes until they became

successful. By doing this, they built their own image or style that would go along their teaching

profession over the long term. The mentees' expectation of becoming a good teacher like their

mentor revealed the motivation of an adult learner (Knowles, 1970, 1998). Building a teaching

identity strongly motivated the mentees to constantly try to learn during the mentorship program. Reflecting on this positive point, Han stated:

> My mentor is enthusiastic and ready to share his accumulated experience during his teaching time with me. He also shows me how to communicate with other instructors or colleagues, how to deal with students' problems. He does these things wholeheartedly (…) I have a deep admiration for my mentor's professional knowledge and radical personality trait. (Han, HEI 4)

Han looked at her mentor as providing a structure for building an image of a successful mentee at the moment and an accomplished instructor in the future. The idea that the mentor was a model of a strong teacher is grounded in Confucianism, and as such has not been reported in Western research literature. However, this idea also situates the mentor as an MKO (Vygotsky, 1978).

In addition to growing behaviours and thoughts, the mentees reported that they enhanced their self-reflection and problem-solving skills to perform a variety of activities in teaching and managing students with diverse characteristics. Just as Ehrich, Harsford, and Tennent (2004) found that in the mentoring process, mentees received their mentors' hearty assistance in classroom teaching strategies, teaching resources, empathy, encouragement, counselling, and friendship, so they enriched their academic teaching skills. These positive skills can be understood by the 'orientation to learning' principle of adult learners in Knowles' theory (1970, 1998). The mentees were confronted with challenges in the teaching apprenticeship, so they kept seeking ways to overcome them with their mentors' support. By doing this, the mentees were oriented to learning more new things and find more solutions to arising problems during the mentorship program. The mentors' classroom observations and follow-up feedback on the taught

lesson were significant in helping the mentees in this study improve their teaching. This was also evidence of the ZPD (Vygotsky, 1978) in action. Han felt thankful for her mentor's feedback on every lesson she taught. She elaborated, "When I received my mentor's feedback on some shortcomings in my teaching, I realized I still have some teaching shortcomings. Then I looked back on them and found ways to overcome them in the next lesson" (Han, HEI 4). In addition, the mentees affirmed that they acquired new skills in teaching as well as managing classes where they worked with students with different learning abilities and personality traits during the mentorship program. Han revealed:

> I have become more experienced in interacting with students who have different personality traits such as studious, rambunctious, and unmotivated. I have to think and use various strategies to deal with each of them. Then I have to become better in solving such and other problems in my teaching. (Han, HEI 4)

Another benefit regarding personal and psychological development reported by the mentees in the mentorship program is shown through their satisfaction with students' engagement in learning. The mentees asserted that they were excited to see that their students learned the target content from their plans. The mentees were able to see how they were MKOs for their students (Vygotsky, 1978). The mentees were also happy whenever their students felt amused and were willing to participate in every class activity the mentees organized. Feeling proud of this achievement, Trang shared:

> Except for a couple of good students who reluctantly participated in class activities, almost all of the other students were enthusiastic to join all class activities organized by me. That is what I like most about my teaching. In the future, if I have chances and time, I will definitely strengthen this teaching approach. (Trang, HEI 2)

The mentees' expression of contentment with their students' engagement was also not reported in the literature review for the present study and may reflect the strong other-orientedness of Vietnamese or south east Asian culture.

Most of the mentees' personal successes were closely related to their interactions with their mentors. They developed their knowledge of teaching apprenticeship including lesson planning, teaching, teaching observation and feedback, student management, and student evaluation thanks to their mentors' thorough supports. The mentees expressed their appreciation of this bi-directional influence on their navigation through the learning-to-teach process, noting both accumulated successes and some challenges. Their appreciation was also reported at a higher level by the mentees in other published studies (Orland-Barak, 2001; Robinson, 2001).

In brief, participating in the mentorship program at their HEIs, the mentees experienced the expansion of their personal life. This development was displayed in a number of ways including improved behaviour and thinking, commitment to the teaching profession, establishment of a positive teacher identity, enriched problem-solving skills, and contentment in students' excitement of learning. These accomplishments were also found in a number of the mentoring – focused studies published globally and can be interpreted by the sociocultural theorists (Knowles, 1970, 1998; Vygotsky, 1978).

5.2.1.2. Professional development

The mentees from all participating HEIs reported that they perceived much progress in their teaching during the mentorship program. All admitted that their subject expertise and teaching methods improved gradually. Specifically, mentees reported that they acquired more knowledge of teaching the English language in different areas ranging from general English, ESP to more specialized English such as linguistics, literature, cross culture perspectives, translation,

and interpretation. Particularly, when their mentor assigned them to teach a course or a lesson they had never done before, they realized how much this lesson taught them. Such acts of the mentors and outcomes of the mentees revealed Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) in action. As Vygotsky (1978) stated, learners can, by themselves, perform an assigned task, which is beyond their actual knowledge, when an MKO scaffolds the learning of the task within the ZPD. From this perspective, Nam illustrated;

> I was assigned to teach a lesson in the course on English business. I was hesitant because it was totally new to me. I did not know if I could finish teaching the lesson well with my immature experience (…) That lesson left me with a strong impression. It went by very smoothly. It was like every student in class understood one another and collaborated with me to finish the lesson successfully. (…) That was one of the most significant moments in my mentorship program. (Nam, HEI 3)

This finding is also supported by Hardy (1999) who stated that the mentees enriched their knowledge of the subject area via the persistent conferencing with their mentors to exchange ideas on teaching and seek solutions to teaching-related problems. Further, this finding echoes Knowles's (1970) two characteristics of an adult learner – 'readiness to learn' and 'orientation to learning' – in the way that the mentees were conscious of the importance of becoming a capable instructor and seeking solutions to challenges during their teaching apprenticeship. The mentees tried their best to follow their mentors' supervisory direction and appreciated receiving additional supports from the informal mentors and peer mentees. Their inter-personal relationships in these mentoring-related activities helped them to construct their knowledge of mentoring.

The mentees, in addition, affirmed that they sharpened their teaching skills after adjusting and trying various methods or approaches thanks to the mentor's feedback and suggestions after observing their lessons. These new methods increased student engagement in the lessons. One of the mentees elaborated:

> With my mentor's encouragement, I have applied new teaching styles such as integrating technology into the lesson, group-work, and project-work in order to create a lively learning atmosphere in class in order to help my students improve their communication skills in language learning. (Han, HIE 4).

The value of being observed and receiving constructive feedback is a finding shared in a number of studies such as those by Hall, Johnson, and Bowman (1995) and Ehrich, Harsford, and Tennent (2004). These researchers reported that teaching observations and post-teaching feedback benefited the mentees because they provided the mentees an opportunity to reflect on how they performed and what their students achieved after their teaching.

Further, with their mentor's support, the mentees utilized their own techniques and strategies in teaching every lesson. In this way, the mentees became confident to try new teaching ideas to see whether or not these ideas worked. Trang clarified, "Actually, every mentor guides her or his mentee but does not force the mentee to strictly follow any fixed pattern of teaching. Therefore, I could create my own teaching style" (Trang, HEI 2). The importance of the mentors encouraging the mentees to develop their own creative teaching style as a characteristic of a successful mentee-mentor relationship was also found in studies by Feiman-Nemser (2001) and Harrison, Dymoke, and Pell (2006).

During the mentorship program, the mentees also reported that they received the mentors' constructive feedback and comments on different aspects of teaching. Most of the

feedback was offered during the post-teaching phase of the mentorship process. Other feedback

was given throughout the mentoring process. The mentees were especially happy to receive

positive feedback and considered it to be a strong motivator, one of Knowles' (1970, 1998)

principles of adult learners, for them to teach subsequent lessons. Further, the mentees were

challenged not to become upset or humiliated by disadvantageous feedback; they reflected on

this as an overall constructive experience. According to Nghi, the constructive feedback she

received after teaching every lesson offered her new factors to consider in subsequent lessons.

She described:

> When I prepared the lesson at home, I thought it was not problematic. However, after the
>
> observers pointed out the frailties, then I could also identify them. Therefore, when
>
> preparing and teaching the next lesson, I tried to remember and avoid repeating them.
>
> (Nghi, HEI 2)

Supporting this finding, Wang, Odell, and Schwille (2008) stated that the mentees

benefited from both observing their mentors' and fellow mentees' teaching and being observed

by these colleagues in return. In assonance with these scholars, Luft and Cox (2001), in their

study on lesson-based discussions between the mentor and mentee before and after the mentee's

teaching, reported that the more frequently lessons were observed, the higher the mentorship

programs were evaluated. Similarly, Hall, Johnson, and Bowman (1995), in their studies on

learning how to teach, reported that teaching observations assisted the mentees in reflecting on

their own teaching and their students' learning outcomes. These same findings were also

reported in a number of studies on Vietnamese mentorship (Nguyen, 2008; Nguyen & Hudson,

2010). The mentors' post-teaching feedback was considered to be a motivation, one attribute

described in Knowles's (1970, 1998) adult learning theory. Feedback increased the mentees'

capability to teach and their passion for the profession.

As a type of support to develop their professionalism, an 'Annual Working Plan', a

compilation of well-planned stages of the mentorship year prepared by the mentor, was provided

to the mentees. The mentees reported that this document was a useful resource for them to

navigate through the mandated mentorship program as they did not have any official mentoring

guide from the MOET, though this had been mandated. This annual working plan also included

the knowledge that the mentees 'needed to know', an attribute described in Knowles' (1970,

1998) adult learning theory, in order to perform their teaching apprenticeship successfully.

Reflecting on this useful artifact, Nam stated:

> My mentor gave us a year-round working plan. It does not specify every single task we
>
> have to complete. Rather, it is composed of a set of stages we have to undergo during the
>
> mentoring process. Additionally, she introduces us to some other things that are not
>
> mentioned in this plan. They are about some places where we can get more information
>
> about regulations or policies applicable to new instructors. I find this plan crucial because
>
> I think my mentor understands us so much that she has given us the suitable mentoring
>
> approach. That means she does not force us to do this or that. Instead, she shows us a
>
> source, a starter, and then we have the right to do things according to our aspiration and
>
> capability. (Nam, HEI 3)

Creating or providing such a working plan was not discussed in the literature review for this

study and may be a valuable consideration in future research and in plans for other mentorship

programs.

In summary, the mentees enriched their professionalism, improved their subject area expertise, sharpened their teaching skills, enhanced their creativity and confidence in teaching, and learned the value of a provided annual working plan. A number of studies in the literature review also mentioned these findings. They were, further, supported by sociocultural theorists (Knowles, 1970, 1998; Vygotsky, 1978).

5.2.1.3. Relationship between mentees and mentors

Throughout the mentorship program, the mentees reported that there were no significant conflicts, though a few minor disagreements took place between the mentees and mentors. The mentees participated in this initial professional development process with a strong spirit of learning to teach as apprentice instructors. Although the mentorship administrator performed the mentee-mentor pairing, both the mentees and mentors worked in harmony with each other to participate in a variety of activities. The mentees rarely opposed their mentors because they perceived their mentors as older, more knowledgeable, and more experienced than they. They thought that the mentors would be able to train them to become capable apprentice instructors during the mentorship program. Thus, the mentees saw their mentors as More Knowledgeable Others (Vygotsky, 1978). Regarding the absence of conflicts with her mentor, Trang said:

> Currently, I do not have any conflicts with my mentor. However, I had some questions, for example, about teaching materials for the course. I was wondering if I could select some parts of a lesson to teach or had to do what the mentor and other instructors had done before, or if I could add to or create something new for the lesson. The mentor asked me to keep the content of the lesson unchanged, and then I could supplement some other content to be suitable to the different learning abilities of students. Generally

speaking, I had to comply with the pre-planned lesson, and then could add or create

something new for my own class teaching. (Trang, HEI 2)

Trang did not hold any strong conflicts with her mentor, and she was able to maintain a good

relationship with him because she responded as a listener rather than a questioner during the

mentorship program. This might stem from a large number of Vietnamese learners' traditional

belief in teachers that goes, "Tôn sư, trọng đạo" [Honour teachers, respect their teachings]. This

tradition, in other words, implies that the learners should believe in what their teachers teach

them and so hold no disagreement with them. Nguyen (2002) stated:

One is expected to show respect to people senior in age, status or position, whether

within or beyond the family (…) Most Vietnamese tend to hide their feelings, avoid

conflicts and reject confrontation, in order to avoid hurting or embarrassing anyone. (p. 2)

Like Trang, Han did not experience any disharmony with her mentor during this learning-

to-teach stage. Nor did she confront any contradictions with other instructors and peer mentees.

Han said:

Generally speaking, I am pleased with my mentor. So far, I have not had any conflict

with him. My mentor is sociable, so every staff member in the faculty agrees that he is a

great man. I think I am lucky to be mentored by him. (Han, HEI 4)

In addition to the absence of conflicts or contradictions in work in the mentor-mentee

relationship, the mentees did not report any difficulties in age disparity with their mentors.

Although the mentors were much older than the mentees in the present study, neither had any

obstacles communicating with each other. Most mentees reported that the mentors should be

older than they because with their accumulated expertise in teaching and mentoring, the mentors

could be more trusted. These senior mentors possessed much career experience which the

mentees wanted to learn from. According to Nghi, the age disparity did not cause any trouble for her. She detailed:

> My mentor is also my former instructor. She is now over 30 years old, while I am in my early twenties. I think a difference of 10 years of age does not make her difficult to understand me. In addition, she clearly understands my occasionally naive thinking and behaviours, so she does not put pressure on me. She gives me more advice; for instance, 'For this issue, think this way. Do not put yourself in it and only think about it by yourself. Examine it in all contexts.' That means she advised me to think as she did. There were some issues I think she was right to give me her advice on. But there are other things I had to think about in my own way to suit my age. (Nghi, HEI 2)

Nam also realized an advantage when being mentored by a senior faculty member. He reasoned:

> If possible, a mentor can be young but must be a few years older than I. The important thing is work experience. This is my first criterion. I think a mentor should be older than a mentee because I think it is very hard for the younger instructor to mentor the older mentee no matter how experienced and highly educated the mentee is. For me, if being guided by a younger mentor, I will feel very embarrassed in working with my mentor. Therefore, a mentor must be older than a mentee, and how many years older does not matter. (Nam, HEI 3)

For Nam, a ten-year difference of age between the mentor and him did not matter, but the mentor's teaching experience and communication skills did. This finding resonates with those in studies by Kilburg and Hancock (2006) and Kilburg (2007) which stated that the poor communication skills between the mentors and mentees resulted in a broken mentoring relationship. When the mentors treated the mentees with their direct orders, refused to listen to

them, and limited collaboration with them, the mentees felt disadvantaged (Boreen et al., 2000; Brewster & Railsback, 2001; Kinlaw, 1999; Weeks. 1992). In the same vein, although the age difference between Han and her mentor was over 10 years, Han did not feel unfriendly or uncomfortable at all because "the mentor's perspective is radical, open-minded, and friendly" (Han, HEI 4). She added:

> Generally, my mentor is very experienced. He frequently travels back-and-forth. He has trained many generations of students. I thoroughly admire and respect him. His professional knowledge is superb. I have learned a lot from him. At the beginning of the mentorship program, I felt a little nervous because I was a timid new instructor. I had spent just a few months of teaching practicum when I studied at the university. Entering a new environment here, I felt worried. However, since I contacted the mentor, exchanged ideas, and received his encouragement, I have become more and more self-confident. Up to now, I have made some progress in my practice teaching. (Han, HEI 4)

In this study, the mentees did not report encountering any conflicts in age disparity, nor confronting serious contradictions in gender difference during the apprenticeship program. Most mentees were paired with mentors of different genders. Trang and Han were mentored by two senior male faculty members, while Nam's mentor is female. Only Nghi was mentored by a senior faculty member of the same female gender. Whether having a female or male mentor, the mentees did not find any difficulties working together. They greatly valued their mentors' professional knowledge and personality traits over their gender identity. From the Vietnamese perspective, the mentees considered themselves to be learners, so they did not oppose to any mentors assigned for them by the administrators irrespective of the mentors' gender and age differences. Their unquestioning acceptance displayed a Vietnamese cultural belief - "Trên nói,

dưới nghe" [When the older speak, the younger should listen]. The mentees would become successful if they performed what their mentors advised them to do. Having a female mentor, Nghi said:

> I think my mentor is very careful, so I have learned the quality of carefulness from her. She always makes a detailed working plan. Particularly she is very careful when she works on some required documents. I think a female mentor will help me to become more careful and meticulous in work. (Nghi, HEI 2)

About having an opposite gender mentor, Nam identified some merits:

> Actually, my mentor is my former instructor at the university. We have maintained an instructor-student relationship for a long time, so I am not reluctant to exchange my ideas with her. However, from my own perspective, I prefer working with a same gender mentor because I think we will feel more comfortable to work with each other. (Nam, HEI 3)

To sum up, the mentees perceived a positive relationship with their mentors by experiencing the absence of contradictions regarding working, age difference, and gender difference with their mentors. These findings were reinforced by those in the globally published studies and further supported by Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory of human development and Knowles' (1970, 1998) adult learning theory. They can also be influenced by using Vietnamese culture.

5.2.1.4. Additional sources of support

The mentorship program offered the mentees a variety of other support sources that reached them in different stages of the learning-to-teach process. The most important support the mentees reported originated from their formal mentors. They were experienced faculty members

or MKOs (Vygotsky, 1978) who were assigned by the administrators to directly guide the new faculty members to perform all required tasks and duties during the learning-to-teach program. According to the mentees in this study, their mentors supported them in a variety of ways ranging from lesson planning, teaching and assessment, classroom management, and classroom observation to participation in department meetings, seminars, and workshops. Similarly, Eddy, Tannenbaum, Alliger, D'Abate, and Givens (2001) found that the mentors provided their mentees with a number of supports such as improving their skills, capabilities, and subject knowledge; and helping retain the mentees longer in their profession.

In addition, the mentees reported that their mentors did not hesitate to provide scaffolding (Vygotsky, 1978) to overcome the unexpected problems in daily teaching and to give them advice on orientations towards their future life, when requested. To this point, the mentees were considered to be the mentors' younger siblings at home rather than their learners of teaching at the HEIs. In fact, Trang received her mentor's advice on several aspects of teaching such as how to do office work, teach, and observe classes successfully; how to improve shortcomings in the future teaching plan thanks to post-teaching feedback; and how to solve problems in teaching. Similarly, Nghi revealed:

> I am new and inexperienced in teaching, so I always have someone [the mentor] beside me to refer to. When I do not know something, I will ask, and my mentor is ready to answer all of my questions. Although other instructors can answer my questions when I ask them for help, my mentor will give me more detailed answers due to her mentoring responsibilities. Other instructors still help me, but they do not have to be responsible for me. Therefore, when I really need their help, I have to ask for (…) Besides supporting me in teaching methods, my mentor introduced me to many teaching resources and provided

me some guidance to orientate my life in two or three years to come; for example, finding

an opportunity to pursue a graduate study. (Nghi, HEI 2)

This familial type of relationship may be a reflection of Vietnamese society, as it was not

mentioned in other reviewed studies.

Like her two colleagues, Han identified an invaluable support from her mentor. She

specified:

My mentor is very enthusiastic and ready to share his accumulated experience with me,

the way to collaborate with colleagues, and the way to deal with students' problems. He

heartily shares them with me. He also introduces me to some scholarship sources and

reference materials to help me enhance my professional knowledge. (Han, HEI 4)

Besides being immediately supported by their formal mentors, the mentees showed

evidence that they received much help from other instructors in the department whom they

considered to be their informal mentors or MKOs (Vygotsky, 1978). The informal mentors were

the senior instructors who were not assigned to supervise these mentees but were willing to offer

additional supports to them. Because of the voluntary nature of the informal mentorship, which

did not result in any constraints of work structures between the two parties (McKenzie, 1995),

the mentees' connections with their informal mentors became deepened and broadened

(Lumpkin, 2011). In fact, the mentees did not find any considerable difficulties seeking their

mentors' advice because the informal mentors were ready and happy to share their experience

and expertise with the new instructors. Trang, in the mentoring process, looked for supports from

the informal mentors in the department because "other instructors are normally a great source of

help besides my mentor" (Trang, HEI 2). Trang reported that she learned many good lessons

from the teaching experience of other experienced instructors. Additionally, Trang occasionally

worked as a teaching assistant for these instructors. What she learned from this work is the different techniques used to teach the same lesson effectively.

In the same situation as Trang, Han received much good advice and ideas from her informal mentors. She said:

> When I made lesson plans and faced some content that was hard to understand, I phoned these instructors [informal mentors], and they were ready to explain it to me carefully until I got through it. That made me feel more self-confident to teach in front of my class. (Han, HEI 4)

Further, just as Freeman (2008) and Kamvounias, McGrath-Champ, and Yip (2007) found in their investigations, the scaffolding (Vygotsky, 1978) from the peer mentees from other disciplines was of significance for the mentees in the Vietnamese mentorship program. The mentees appreciated opportunities to expand and enrich their relationships with peers and enhance their expertise through engaging in professional conversations with their peer mentees and other informal mentors at their HEIs. The mentees were aware of their role as an apprentice instructor (Knowles, 1970, 1998) and thus tried to take this apprenticeship as an opportunity to learn and develop themselves personally and professionally. The mentees also received useful advice from professionals, exchanged ideas with other academics, and sought opportunities to cooperate with others during and after the mentorship program (Ambrosetti & Dekkers, 2010; Fairbanks, 2000; Laker, Laker, & Lea, 2008; Phillips-Jones, 1982). Since these mentees were accommodated in the same learning-to-teach situation as the novel instructors, they had many things in common to share and learn from one another (Nguyen, 2012; Nguyen & Hudson, 2012). This complementary learning did not only assist them in enriching their disciplinary

knowledge, but it also strengthened their friendship. Nam found the support from the interdisciplinary mentees greatly significant, so he said:

> We often exchange ideas with peers not only within the department but also with those from the other ones. We mainly want to know which problems we have faced, so we can give mutual support to one another. For example, I am a mentee in this department. When I wanted to solve my problem, I asked mentees from the other departments for help. They were open to this process, perceived my problem, and suggested me a solution.
>
> Therefore, I think that this type of mutual support is one advantage I have been offered in this mentorship program. (Nam, HEI 3)

Briefly, in the mentorship program, the mentees received a number of supports from the informal mentors and peer mentees in additional to their formal mentors. These additional supports focused on a variety of aspects such as lesson planning, teaching and assessment, classroom management, and other related activities. They were also similar to the findings in a number of published studies in the literature review for this dissertation. Clearly, the adult learners [mentees] were willing, oriented, self-aware, and motivated to learn more new things (Knowles, 1970, 1998) in order to supplement the mentoring knowledge acquired from the scaffolding of their formal and informal mentors as MKOs (Vygotsky, 1978) in their teaching apprenticeship.

5.2.2. Mentees' challenges in the mentorship program

The challenges the mentees encountered during the MOET-mandated mentorship program at the participating HEIs slightly outnumbered their successes. The mentees reported these challenges in various aspects of the mentorship program such as personal pressures, mentor-related issues, and additional issues, as described in more detail at the end of this section.

5.2.2.1. Personal pressures

Personal pressures are the challenges the mentees faced during their mentorship program. They originated from both their personality traits and the systemic factors of their surroundings.

The most commonly reported challenge in this study, and that in studies by Hudson (2013), Kamvounias, McGrath-Champ, and Yip (2007), Lai (2005), and Walkington (2005a), was that the mentees had to perform dual work which was very time-consuming during the mentorship program. The mentees learned that making lesson plans, teaching lessons, observing lessons, and evaluating students' learning were the time - consuming tasks. Like American mentees (Austin, 2003; Eddy and Gaston-Geyles, 2008; and Sorcinelli, 2002), they had limited time for teaching, research, and service during the mentorship program. As an apprentice instructor at the HEI, Nghi described:

> I do not only have to perform a required number of teaching hours, but I have to complete weekly assigned office work as well. I consider teaching to be my primary concern, with office work being secondary to me. Teaching activities also involve attending monthly department meetings, seminars, and workshops; and office work consist of being on duty to manage daily paperwork, incoming and outcoming documents, and receiving visitors to the department. (Nghi, HEI, 2)

Regarding teaching, the mentees reported that they had to satisfy a number of teaching hours by the end of the mentorship program. However, the mentees in this study did not provide the same information of the required teaching hours despite the fact that two mentees were from the same HEI. To be more specific, the annual required teaching hours for Nam, Han, Trang, and Nghi were 135, 120, 115, and 110, respectively.

As required, I have to teach 115 hours per year, do office work, observe the other

instructors' teaching, and teach as an assistant. These jobs are assigned by the department

chair, faculty office manager, and dean. Sometimes, I do substitute teaching for other

instructors who are busy after I have finished my assigned tasks. I consider this

substitution as accumulating more teaching experience. (Trang, HEI 2)

Similarly, the mentees affirmed that the office work time among the mentees was rather variable.

The office work even took the mentees more time than teaching did, though teaching was

considered to be a bare-bones responsibility of the mentees in the mentorship program. Trang

encountered a major challenge related to time allocation. She elaborated:

Oftentimes, the office work takes me much time. Dependent on the nature of work, I am

sometimes free. But at other times, a lot of office work comes to me concurrently. This

imbalanced time allocation puts pressure on me. It makes me nervous. I need more time

to solve office work problems. Particularly, when I make a mistake on an assigned office

task, I need more time to correct it. I still need to learn how to solve such problems.

(Trang, HEI 2)

The mentees even became busier with other assigned extra-curricular activities for

students at their HEIs. They reported that sometimes they had to use flexitime in the evening to

take part in these activities. Han justified:

Besides teaching, my peer mentee and I have to organize a scheduled English-speaking

club in the evening at my institution. This club is aimed to support instructors and

students to have more chances to practice language skills. Sometimes, we invite foreign

instructors if available to participate in the club to train students in English listening and

speaking skills. Both activities are time-consuming. (Han, HEI 4)

Sharing this drawback, the mentees in other studies (Hansford, Tennent, & Ehrich, 2003; Quinn, 1994; Scott, 1997) reported that they were not allotted sufficient time to conference with their mentors and were not allocated convenient meeting times to observe their mentors' teaching or have their teaching observed.

Most of the mentees' challenges such as doing the time-consuming dual work, meeting the required working time, and participating in extra-curricular activities actually were the things the mentees needed to know, one of the adult learners' principles in Knowles' (1790, 1998) adult learning theory. The mentees could understand why they had to fulfill these assigned responsibilities and then were motivated to find ways to overcome their challenges in order to become the successful mentees by the end of the mentorship program.

Another personal frustration the mentees reported were the shortcomings they experienced in teaching due to their rudimentary experience. It was well established that teaching techniques and classroom management skills took time for novice instructors to acquire. One shortcoming described by Han was "my weakness is that I always use all pre-designed tasks in the textbook to teach students. My mentor advised me to use other sources to fit different learning abilities of students" (Han, HEI 4). Another type of shortcoming reported by the mentees was learning how to pace a lesson, in this case not understanding how many activities could be completed in the time allotted to the lesson. Trang prepared more activities to use in the class than the teaching time allowed. As a result, she could not complete all of the objectives of the lesson, though she had tried to move from one activity to another in a swift and smooth manner. The mentees were self- motivated of these shortcomings - they were things they needed to know. With such guidance they could seek solutions to their shortcomings. Thus, for the mentees such shortcomings became a motivation, an orientation to learning, and a way to

advance their learning-to-teach abilities. All of these points adhere to Knowles' (1970, 1998) principles of adult learners.

Additionally, the mentees felt anxious when their teaching was observed by their mentor and other instructors in the department. Particularly they reported feeling more overwhelmed when their teaching was being officially evaluated for credits. Although the mentees stated that they had prepared the lesson plan carefully, they could not control this negative feeling because they feared that they would not be able to finish their teaching well. Trang elaborated:

> Some people say that instructors will feel self-confident standing in front of class when they have prepared lesson plans well at home. In my situation, I planned that I would do this and do that in the class on the observed teaching day. However, when I heard about my teaching being observed, I felt pressured no matter how carefully I had prepared the lesson in advance. Every step of the lesson I carried out, every word I uttered out, every act I performed, and every manner I showed all were carefully observed. Likewise, I did not know whether my students would collaborate with me in the lesson or not. All of these things would greatly affect the evaluation of my teaching. Therefore, I felt pressured and worried. (Trang, HEI 2)

Having experienced a similar situation, Nghi found that teaching while being observed and not being observed was quite different. She elaborated:

> When I taught an unobserved lesson, I felt very comfortable. Everything happened as smoothly as I had expected. It was not rigid. However, when teaching while being observed, I had to follow the lesson plan step by step in conforming to pre-established criteria, so I felt uncomfortable. An observed lesson did not make much sense compared with an unobserved one. Being observed, I had to teach in conformity to pre-established

criteria. I felt uncomfortable. It did not entertain both the instructor and students. (Nghi,

HEI 2)

This uncomfortable feeling is common among novice instructors. Learning to control this

emotion is a characteristic of Asian culture. Explaining the anxiety resulting from the teaching

being observed, Pham (2004) reported that a large number of Vietnamese instructors did not feel

comfortable when their teaching was observed. They even felt that "learning and teaching under

observation can be more stressful than usual [because the observation] may make the whole

learning situation unnatural and therefore distort what the observer gathers" (Pham, 2004, p. 26).

The pressure and frustration associated with such a feeling was not mentioned in the literature

review for this study, perhaps because the context of other studies did not situate the mentees in

such a context.

The final personal frustration reported by the mentees is that they experienced an anxiety

over obtaining a tenure-track position upon completion of the mentorship program. This finding

resonates with that of Eddy and Gaston-Geyles (2008) who reported that the mentees suffered a

pressure of demands for a tenure-track position which a faculty member had to meet in order to

prolong her or his academic career. A tenure-track position was important for the mentees not

only because it acted as evidence of their accomplishment of the mandated mentorship program,

but also because it assured them a long-term professional position in a public HEI in Vietnam

(Nghi, HEI 2). In order to be entitled to this position, the mentees had to work tirelessly since

they entered the learning-to-teach program. One illustration of this issue was found in Nghi's

experiencing difficulties during the mentorship program. Nghi divulged:

I am afraid that I will not teach well, and that I am not experienced enough in teaching, so

I am worried. Although in a friendly manner the mentor says the teaching evaluation is

just a way to help me draw out some experience, I am afraid that the teaching evaluation will cause some negative impacts on my teaching. I am just a mentee. I have not yet been a tenure-track instructor. For example, if I make a mistake, then the Rectorate Board will still examine my case recorded on the teaching feedback evaluation sheet. Then it will negatively affect my future work. (Nghi, HEI 2)

In conclusion, the mentees in this study encountered a number of mentoring-related challenges originating from their performance of the concurrent teaching and office tasks, the shortcomings due to their inexperienced teaching, and the anxiety of being observed and the fear of the influence of their mentor's evaluation on obtaining a tenure-track position. These findings were mentioned in a number of studies in the literature review for this study. Some of them can also be elucidated by Knowles' (1970, 1998) adult learning theory and the influence of Vietnamese culture.

5.2.2.2. Mentor-related issues

The mentees were accommodated in the mentorship program at their HEIs under the direct supervision of their mentors. This relationship resulted in a number of challenges for the mentees.

First and foremost, the mentees reported that the mentors occasionally offered them insufficient support, especially in areas that they really needed. As in Hansford, Tennent, and Ehrich's synthesis (2003) of 82 research-based papers in America, when the mentees wanted to have more conferencing time with their mentor, or seek additional advice on solving problems, they reported dissatisfaction. The mentees in this study and those in Nguyen's (2008) study felt that their mentor's insufficient mentoring skills and support prevented them from gaining essential knowledge of teaching and doing related work. Nor did it motivate them.

Failing to look for specific ways to solve the unexpected problems of class procedure and students due to the absence of conferencing time with her mentor, Trang revealed:

I actually needed help to solve these arisen problems. However, my mentor was also assigned to teach a number of courses, so he did not have much free time for me. Anyway, he also supported me by letting me find solutions to the problems by myself. (Trang, HEI 2)

Moreover, the mentees reported that their mentors might think that the mentees were mature adults who could do things well by themselves without requesting their mentors' constant support. As a result, the mentors could only meet them within the time scheduled. Trang did not receive her mentor's support in classroom management, so she reasoned:

This is because my mentor might think that I was capable of doing it, so he seldom mentioned it [classroom management]. He only mentioned academic activities and teaching methods, not yet classroom management (…) In managing my class, like other instructors, I fell into a real situation where a class consisted of good, average, and unmotivated students. Such a class has left me challenged as to how to engage them all. (Trang, HEI 2)

In addition, some mentees stated that they did not receive clear and sufficient instructions from their mentors during the mentorship program (Nguyen, 2008). This led to some frustration for the mentees to perform the assigned tasks. For example, Nam reported that he experienced a challenge from his mentor. He expected her to give him more detailed instructions in order to do some difficult tasks, but she did not do that at all. Instead, she showed him how to approach the tasks in other ways. Nam did not agree with his mentor's indirect mentoring style, so he complained:

The mentor should offer me her hand to support me in a timely manner so that I could complete my tasks better after I had tried my best to do them by myself (…) So the mentor needed to be involved more. Sometimes, the mentor did not directly support me but asked me to look for solutions elsewhere. This mentoring approach was not effective for me at times. (Nam, HEI 3)

Nam's challenge was similar to that of other mentees who reported that their mentors did not meet their expectations, did not pay attention to them, and could not establish a working schedule with them (Eby & Lockwood, 2005; Eby, Lockwood, & Butts, 2004; Young & Perrewe, 2000).

The second mentor-related challenge that the mentees reported was the mentors' working and mentoring style. This finding was also reported by Nguyen (2008) in her study on mentorship in Vietnam. Because the mentees were the novice instructors who were learning how to teach in a new environment, they expected a clear and consistent mentoring approach from their mentors. Meeting their expectations would feed their motivation to perform the tasks of the teaching apprenticeship (Knowles, 1970, 1998). They believed that it would be the mentors' consistent working styles that would yield the successful mentees during the mentorship program. As such, the mentees did not agree with their mentors' abrupt modification of the mentoring agenda. More than anyone else, Trang was challenged by her mentor in the way that he changed his planned schedule for her teaching. This was because the mentor might have introduced some last-minute task, or just wanted to test the mentee's flexibility in teaching. This change sometimes put some pressure on her because she was afraid that she could not do exactly what she had planned for the class. She lost confidence when doing something that was suddenly

modified. Such a modification kept her constantly alert to be available to teach her class or to substitute her mentor to teach his class that day. As evidence, Trang described:

My mentor informed me that he would observe my teaching the following week. He wanted to observe my lesson at a designated time slot. However, he suddenly changed his idea to observe it at another time slot to see how I managed such a change. In addition, he wanted to see how I managed my students' class activities. I was upset when I knew that my every teaching step was being observed. Eventually, my observed teaching did not happen as smoothly as my unobserved one. (Trang, HEI 2)

In addition, the mentees reported that they did not always feel satisfied with their mentors' conservativeness in discussing some academic activities with them. Just as Hasford, Tennet, and Ehrich (2003, 2004) found that the mentees had to work with the mentors who were severely critical, defensive, conservative, and skeptical about their abilities. Such personality traits demotivated the mentees' learning, thus working against the motivation principle in Knowles's (1970, 1998) adult learning theory. One illustration of this issue was shown by Nghi when working with her mentor on a test design. Nghi elaborated:

My mentor and I taught the same course to two groups of students. This means that one class was divided into two groups. Normally, an English class consists of 30 students. However, with 60 students, our class was divided into two. Two of us were required to design only one mid-term test for both groups. We sat down to discuss the test format and contents. I am rather strict in the test design. I was greedy to include all of the lesson contents I had taught on the mid-term test. However, my mentor did not agree with me because for her students could not finish the test in 60 minutes. She requested me to focus

only on some important contents and delete the rest, but I did not agree. We argued with each other for a while. Finally, I had to accept her request unpersuasively. (Nghi, HEI 2)

The challenges aforementioned could break the inter-personal relationship between the two actors. A positive relationship between the mentees and mentors was needed to make a positive impact on the mentees' personal and professional growth. Unplanned events were unpleasant for the mentees.

Briefly, the mentees suffered from a number of mentor-generated challenges in their learning-to-teach program ranging from the mentors' insufficient conferencing time, incomplete instructions, abruptly changed mentoring styles, and conservativeness. These findings correlated with those reported in a variety of worldwide published studies. They were also discussed through the educational theories of Knowles (1970, 1998) and Vygotsky (1978).

5.2.2.3. Additional issues

During the mentorship program, the mentees stated that they coped with a number of challenges which did not directly originate within themselves.

First of all, the mentees reported that they had to teach in outdated facilities which they felt contributed to unsuccessful lessons. Having experienced teaching in such an out-of-date environment, Han said:

Once I used a projector in teaching. I had carefully planned the lesson at home. I used pictures and videos. After entering the classroom, I snooped around looking for the projector for 15 – 30 minutes, but it did not show up. In addition, the sound was noisy, affecting my mood. Finally, the follow-up activities of the lesson did not flow smoothly either. Later, I asked for some help from the facility management unit of the institution, but the situation did not get better. (Han, HEI 4)

In addition, the mentees were challenged when teaching a class of students with mixed learning abilities and diverse personality traits. Although the mentees in the present study had taken a couple of courses on adult learners' psychology in their previous academic studies, they were not able to manage all of the unexpected problems occurring in their classroom. Trang who experienced teaching students with different learning abilities in the same class elaborated:

> In managing a class, like other instructors, I fell into a situation where I taught a class of students with different learning abilities such as good, average, and unmotivated. I faced a difficulty that I had not known ways to engage all of them together in my class activities and how to manage students with such diverse personal characteristics and learning abilities. (Trang, HEI 2)

The last and most important "other" issue reported by the mentees is that they were not supported by an officially endorsed mentoring guide. All of the mentees felt that they encountered the challenges and obstacles aforementioned in part due to the absence of an official mentoring guide from either their institutions or the MOET of Vietnam. With such a document, the mentees believed their participation in the mentorship program could have become easier and more productive. It would provide the mentees with what they needed to know prior to practicing the mentorship program at their HEIs, and an explanation as to why. Their need to know is another characteristic of adult learners reflected in Knowles' (1970, 1998).

> I think there should be an official document to guide the mentorship program. As you know, I am not the one that runs around to ask for some help. For instance, if there were such a document, I would refer to it in advance. When I cannot understand anything in it, I will look for some help. Likewise, if I see something that I can do, I will take action on

it, and I will consult people's ideas on it. I don't like to ask for some help in everything I

do by questioning or calling them. (Nam, HEI 3)

I find a mentoring guide document very useful for me because I could then clearly know

the mentoring procedure and detailed mentoring contents in advance. I would follow its

instructions to reach my mentoring goals. (Han, HEI 4)

Trang had not heard about an official mentoring document. However, she found support by

referring to a general mentoring guide posted on her HEI's website. She elaborated:

Those are the university's general regulations based on the MOET's decrees, circulars,

and decisions that are used for mentees in all disciplines. But there are some typical tasks

assigned by the chair and the dean based on the needs of each faculty (….) A mentoring

guide written for mentoring foreign language instructors would be helpful. (Trang, HEI

2)

 In assonance with Trang, Nghi said, "An officially endorsed mentoring guide is really necessary

because it could tell me what I need to do" (Nghi, HEI 2).

The mentees encountered a number of challenges in the mentorship program, other than

their personal pressures and mentor-related issues. These challenges included not being able to

teach contemporary lessons due to poor teaching facilities, not feeling prepared to teach students

with different learning abilities, and not having direction from an officially endorsed mentoring

guide. Similar drawbacks were reported in the literature review for this study and can be

elucidated by Knowles' (1970, 1998) adult learning theory.

In summary, this chapter presented details of the successes and challenges the mentees

experienced in the mandated mentorship program at their HEIs. The findings reported a variety

of themes related to the successes and challenges the mentees expressed in the interviews about

their mentorship experience. These were often found to align with the findings of other researchers, as described in Chapter Two: Review of the Literature. A number of these findings can be understood through principles and concepts of sociocultural theorists (Knowles, 1970, 1998; Vygotsky, 1978). However, a variety of new findings will also contribute to the literature about mentorship in Vietnam, namely, (1) mentees' positive teaching identity being influenced by their mentors' personality traits and teaching practices; (2) the value of mentees establishing a good working relationship with mentors, (3) mentees experiencing no conflicts of age and gender with their mentors, perhaps a reflection of Vietnamese culture, (4) mentees' encounter with shortcomings of teaching techniques and classroom management due to their rudimentary experience in teaching, (5) mentees' anxiety about their teaching being observed by their mentors and others, and (6) mentees not being given an official mentoring guide. In the next chapter, the findings regarding the mentors will be presented and compared with those purported in the literature review.

Chapter Six:

Mentors

This chapter presents the text data from the researcher's interviews with four experienced faculty members or mentors among the higher education institutions (HEI) participating in the present study. The first part of the chapter provides an overview of each mentor's personal background including their pseudonyms, academic degree earned, teaching venue, teaching experience, and tasks assigned during the mentorship program. The second part describes themes generated from the text data substantiated by mentors' quotations. Concurrently, these themes will be converged with those presented in the literature review for the study, thus identifying concurrences and new contributions to the research about mentorship in HEIs.

6.1. Mentors' Background

6.1.1. Tri

Tri, an experienced male faculty member or mentor, has worked as an instructor of EFL Education at a public institution (HEI 1) in the MRD of Vietnam. He obtained a graduate degree in Teaching EFL conferred by a Vietnamese HEI. Tri is teaching courses on general English and ESP to non-English majors and EFL skills and linguistics to English majors ranging from freshmen to seniors. Tri has so far mentored two new faculty members since the establishment of this institution.

In mentoring new faculty members, Tri's expectation was witnessing how his mentees would apply what they have learned from him to their teaching, how they would respect students' ideas, and how confidently they would teach their students. In addition, Tri also expected to see how much students would be engaged in the mentee's classroom activities. He

intended to evaluate mentees' performance on planning lessons, delivering them, and assessing students' learning by observing the degree of engagement among their students.

From Tri's viewpoint, a successful mentor must be trained by an expert on how to supervise mentees. Mentees should be given clear guidelines to do their mentoring work effectively. He also expects to have a chance to attend a mentoring training course. His expectation originates from having not yet seen any improvement in the current mentorship program in Vietnam.

6.1.2. Yen

Yen, an experienced female faculty member or mentor, teaches at a public institution (HEI 1) in the MRD. She obtained a graduate degree in Teaching EFL from a higher education institution in Vietnam. She has taught courses on general English and ESP to non-English majors, and various courses on EFL skills, semantics, and translation-interpretation to English majors of different levels. Yen has worked as a mentor for four new faculty members thus far.

As a mentor, Yen always expected that her mentees were able to stand on their own feet to teach effectively both during and by the end of the mentorship program. Since new instructors often encounter several difficulties in classroom management and in developing relationships with their students, Yen expected they would keep in mind her advice about these issues. In addition, since the age difference between mentees and their students is not very large, Yen advised her mentees to keep an interpersonal distance in communicating with them. This means that mentees should not be either too friendly or informal with their students; instead, they should maintain a hierarchical relationship in communication with them so that they can teach their students more easily.

From Yen's perspective, a successful mentor at the HEI should possess the following personality traits: being capable of teaching and mentoring, being experienced in the field of knowledge they are teaching, being respectful of mentees and colleagues, and being skilled in inter-personal communication.

6.1.3. Minh

Minh, an experienced male faculty member and mentor, has taught at a public institution (HEI 4) in the MRD for several years. He obtained a graduate degree in Teaching EFL conferred by a Vietnamese HEI in Vietnam. Minh has taught ESP to students of different majors ranging from freshmen to seniors. Until now he has mentored two new faculty members.

As a mentor, Minh expected that by the end of his mentoring work, his mentees would become more self-confident in teaching, acquire better knowledge about their chosen teaching methods, and accelerate their abilities to teach effectively after the mentorship program. Regarding lecture notes, Minh expected that his mentees would be able to make more productive and comprehensive lesson plans because from his observations in their teaching apprenticeship, he firmly believed that they were not yet able to produce such lesson plans. By the conclusion of the mentorship program, Minh hoped that his mentees would design their own lecture notes that were more effective and suitable to their students' learning abilities.

From Minh's standpoint, a successful mentor at the HEI should satisfy the following requirements: mastering the knowledge of teaching methodology; giving constructive feedback, for instance, praising mentees' strengths and avoiding too much criticism on their weaknesses that can discourage them; and showing a relaxing face while observing mentees' teaching. The reason for this requirement is that mentees will feel embarrassed and will not teach well if they see a mentor's dissatisfied face.

6.1.4. Lan

Lan, an experienced female faculty member and mentor, has taught at a public institution (HEI 2) for several years. She obtained a master's degree in Teaching EFL from a Vietnamese HEI. Lan has taught courses on British/American literature, literary criticism/discussion to English-majors and English for law students ranging from freshmen to seniors. Lan has so far mentored nine new faculty members at her institution.

As a mentor, Lan holds a number of expectations of her mentees. Mentees should employ appropriate teaching methods for different cohorts of students. In Lan's observation, new instructors often cling to more theoretical teaching than practical teaching. They should try different teaching methods, do more research on them, refer to more experienced instructors, and exchange more ideas about teaching with them. In terms of managing students in class, Lan expected her mentees to understand their students' psychology, aspirations, expectations, and difficulties so that mentees would be able to offer them timely supports. In addition, mentees could be flexible to combine different teaching resources beyond the available textbook to design more exercises for a to-be-taught lesson. Doing these supplementary exercises often would enable students to understand the lesson more deeply. In shaping mentees' image, Lan expected her mentees to do as she was doing. That means her mentees should have a good heart for teaching if they decided to choose the teaching profession. Mentees could not teach their students unless they had a passionate love for teaching.

To become successful in the mentorship program at the HEI, Lan believes a mentor needs to satisfy a number of crucial criteria such as having a clear teaching philosophy; having a passion for teaching and an ability to transfer it to mentees; having broad and deep professional

knowledge/expertise including teaching methods, classroom management, and problem-solving skills; and possessing a good morality and ability to communication.

Tables 10 and 11 include a summary of the mentors' expectations of being a successful mentor and their expectations of their mentors in the mentorship program respectively. As we can see in Table 10, the mentors varied somewhat in their expectations of being a successful mentor: having prior exposure to mentorship training (3), mastering the training program (3), having teaching and mentoring experience (3), being respectful (3), having good inter-personal communication and problem-solving skills (2), and being able to give constructive feedback on mentees' performances (2). Table 11 reveals the expectations these same mentors had of their mentees: being able to apply their acquired knowledge about teaching and stand on their own feet to teach effectively (4); noticing potential difficulties in classroom management (1); being cautious about developing intimate relationships with students and keeping an appropriate relational distance in communicating with them (1); being able to make more productive lesson plans, effective lecture notes, and comprehensive teaching resources (2); learning about students' psychology, aspirations, expectations, and challenges in order to provide timely supports to them (2); and having a good heart (love) for teaching (1).

Table 10. *Mentors' expectations of being a successful mentor.*

A successful mentor should……	Tri	Yen	Minh	Lan
have prior exposure to mentorship training	✓		✓	✓
master the mentorship program	✓	✓		✓
have teaching and mentoring experience		✓	✓	✓
be respect to others (formal mentees, informal mentees, and colleagues)		✓	✓	✓
have good inter-personal communication and problem-solving skills		✓		✓
give constructive feedback on mentees' performances	✓		✓	

Table 11. *Mentors' expectations of their mentees.*

Mentees are expected to …………..	Tri	Yen	Minh	Lan
be able to apply their acquired knowledge about teaching and stand on their own feet to teach effectively	✓	✓	✓	✓
notice potential difficulties in classroom management		✓		
be cautious with developing intimate relationships with students and keeping an appropriate relational distance in communicating with them		✓		
be able to make more productive lesson plans, effective lecture notes, and comprehensive teaching resources			✓	✓
learn about students' psychology, aspirations, expectations, and challenges in order to provide timely supports to them	✓			✓
have a good heart (love) for teaching				✓

6.2. Key Themes

The following themes were generated from the data collected after two interviews for each participating mentor. The text data reflect mentors' experiences, practices, thoughts, and expectations which are specified in the successes and challenges they experienced during the mentorship program.

6.2.1. Mentors' successes in the mentorship program

As evidence from the interviews, participating in the MOET- mandated mentorship program offered the mentors at the participating HEIs four prominent successes: personal development, professional development, relationship between the mentors and mentees, and additional supports, as described in more detail at the end of this section.

6.2.1.1. Personal development

The mentors, like their mentees, experienced successes in improving their personal life in a variety of ways.

First of all, the mentors in the study reported that they felt satisfied with their contributions to their mentees' accomplishments in every phase of the mentorship program, as did the mentors in studies of Ehrich, Harsford, and Tennent (2004), Fogg (2003), Johnson-Bailey and Cervero (2004), Murray (2001), and Scott (1999). Mentees' accomplishments in various aspects reflected how much effort the mentors, as MKOs (Vygotsky, 1978), made to support them.

Looking back at the path the mentees underwent with their own successes, the mentors in this study and those in studies of Beck and Kosnick (2000) and Hagger and McIntyre (2006) reported that they felt proud of the talent, energy, and time that they invested in order to provide timely, relevant, and productive support to their mentees. Recalling this positive feeling, Minh revealed his happiness as he received what he expected from his mentees. He shared:

> My two mentees perform teaching very well. They receive lots of love and trust from their students. Actually, they later made more achievements compared to what I have supervised them. That is they have acquired higher degrees in education. One of them is preparing to pursue her doctoral study. I take pride in my mentees' endeavours. (Minh, HEI 4)

Although Lan did not completely accept her decisive role in her mentees' success during the mentorship program, she admitted that she shared her accumulated experience and knowledge with her mentees to help them succeed in teaching. She elaborated:

> I do not know whether or not I am subjective, but I have seen that my mentees' students succeeded in their studies every time my mentees changed their teaching methods to teach them. By giving some post-teaching tests to these students, I found that they made

improvement in their studies. Therefore, I think my mentees' change of teaching methods has brought them successes. (Lan, HEI 2)

In addition to satisfaction, the mentors reported that they were successful in gaining more responsibilities towards teaching and mentoring practices. They realized the importance of the mentorship program not only for the mentees, but for themselves as well. This discovery aligns with the principles that Knowles (1970, 1998) identified in adult learning theory. This opportunity for reciprocal growth was stated by the mentors. They, as the co- learners, were aware that their own experience and concepts/understandings of teaching played important roles in developing not only their personal life but that of their mentees as well. With their experience and responsibilities in teaching and mentoring, the mentors provided their mentees with much useful advice on performing assigned tasks. They also had opportunities to update their teaching skills through reviewing their acquired knowledge of teaching and observing their mentees' lessons. Reflecting on this perception, Minh described:

> Actually, by being assigned mentees, mentors receive a number of benefits. During the teaching and mentorship program, I have accumulated more experience in teaching. This is a very good point. The mentorship program does not cause any negative impact on me in terms of time. This is because once I accept to mentor new instructors, I have to arrange my own working time in order to support them. This also increases my responsibilities. (Minh, HEI 4)

Feeling the increased value from having increased responsibilities was also reported by the mentors in studies by Bodoczky and Malderez (1997) and Wright and Bottery (1997). Further, these studies revealed that the mentors increased their teacher identity, professional status, and

personal values in the educational context thanks to the opportunities to mentor their mentees. In line with this finding, Yen revealed:

> Participating in this mentorship program, I feel that I am more respected. When other people know that the mentees were mentored by me, they expressed their positive attitudes towards them. They thought that I was an experienced mentor, so anyone that was mentored by me was lucky. In addition, I have maintained good relationships with my mentees after the closure of the mentorship program. Because I had provided my hearty and timely supports to them during the mentorship program, they have, more or less, felt "indebted" to me. They found ways to assist me, in return. (Yen, HEI, 1)

In addition, the mentors affirmed that they enhanced their inter-personal communication skills a great deal thanks to face-to-face or telephone conferences with their mentees in the mentoring relationship. Through the scheduled conferencing with the mentees, the mentors had opportunities to discuss several issues regarding lesson planning, teaching, giving feedback, and observing classes with their mentees. Such discussions enhanced the mentors' communication skills since they had to utilize a variety of verbal functions to make the mentor-mentee conferencing achieve its goals. As the mentors acquired these inter-personal communication skills through sharing their knowledge and understanding with their mentees during the mentorship program, we see what Vygotsky (1978) called intersubjectivity. This *semiotic mediation* helped the mentors and mentees develop personally and professionally in the mentorship community. This semiotic mediation was described by Eun (2008) as "the mechanism that underlies the transformation of those external forms of social interaction to internalized forms of mental functions" (p. 137). Lan's experience in giving feedback on her mentees' teaching is an illustration of this enhancement. When her mentees revealed minor or

major shortcomings in teaching, Lan did not criticize them although she occasionally felt uncomfortable. Sometimes, the inexperienced mentees did not agree with her comments and suggestions. However, they were finally convinced because of Lan's mitigating comments. Lan reasoned:

> Normally, I give feedback in a gentle voice using mitigating words. I do not criticize mentees by saying that they will never teach well if they keep repeating their teaching shortcomings. Generally speaking, I respect mentees. I speak to them in a gentle voice and share with them similar stories of my former apprentice teaching. I expect them to think about their shortcomings carefully. (Lan, HEI 2)

In alignment with Lan, Minh improved his communication skill which was shown in his evaluation of the mentees' teaching. He elaborated:

> To evaluate mentees' teaching, I tend to focus on more good points. That means I clearly tell them their strengths which need to be maximized. For some weaknesses, I often tell my mentees to minimize them in a constructive voice rather than stating criticism that will discourage them. (Minh, HEI 4)

By employing this communication strategy to assist the mentees in improving their teaching shortcomings, both Lan and Minh convinced their mentees of its value. As a result, their mentees performed their teachings more productively. This finding was not openly discussed in other studies in the literature review for this study, though it might be implied; for example, the mentors' improved psychological aspects (Scott, 1999), enhanced self-esteem within their career (Ehrich, Harsford, & Tennet, 2004; Wollman-Bonilla, 1997), and strengthened teacher identity (Bodoczky & Malderez, 1997; Wright & Bottery, 1997), all of which were generated from the mentors' interactions with their mentees.

By participating in the mentorship program, the mentors gained a number of benefits including feeling satisfied with their mentees' personal and professional development, increasing their responsibilities towards teaching and mentoring practices, and enriching their inter-personal communication skills. These accomplishments were also found in a number of published studies and elucidated by sociocultural theorists (Knowles, 1970, 1998; Vygotsky, 1978).

6.2.1.2. Professional development

Engaging in the mentorship program, the mentors also enriched their expertise of teaching and mentoring which were required skills of a successful mentor.

In terms of enriching teaching skills, the mentors reported that they received invaluable opportunities to review their acquired knowledge of teaching methodology and classroom management. This is also considered to be a strong motivator (Knowles, 1970, 1998) for them to revisit the knowledge they had learned and to use it in order to enhance their teaching and mentoring. Therefore, the more mentoring practices they engaged in, the more motivated they became. In their tertiary study program, the mentors had taken courses on different teaching methods/approaches/techniques, and classroom management skills. Nevertheless, they might not have remembered using all of them in their daily teaching. In fact, they might have only employed a few teaching methods suitable for various groups of students. Therefore, part of their teaching expertise faded away. Reflecting on this reality, Tri admitted:

> The current mentorship program has brought me some benefits. First, I have an
> opportunity to review my learned knowledge. This review is very important. When I
> mentored new instructors, I realized that I had to review and update my knowledge. This
> is like what people call the faded-away knowledge. The teaching methods that have not
> been used for a long time will fade away. In addition, there were some problems in

teaching that required me to solve. Although I am considered as an experienced

instructor, my solutions to those problems were not as effective as the younger's ones.

(Tri, HEI 1)

Like Tri, Yen did not only have an opportunity to review her knowledge of teaching methods

acquired from the previous academic courses, but she also recalled the knowledge accumulated

from several workshops she had attended. The reviewed knowledge was helpful for her to keep

pace with her mentees' contemporary knowledge. Yen revealed:

When I was first assigned to be a mentor at this institution, there was no any other mentor

here at that time. Therefore, I had no one to refer to. I did my mentoring job based on my

own experience. I mentored my mentees in the way that I had been mentored before

without asking for any other colleagues' additional support. I also revisited some

available books of teaching methodology. In addition, I had opportunities to attend some

workshops on teaching methodology. I compiled some teaching method materials from

there and re-read them to support my mentoring work. (Yen, HEI 1)

The opportunity for the mentors to review the knowledge of teaching methodology and

classroom management acquired from their previous academic courses and their attendance in

professional training courses was not mentioned in the literature review for this study, perhaps

because other studies were not aimed at exploring such an opportunity. A quick reference of such

content would be helpful for the mentors.

Apart from a need to review previously acquired knowledge, the mentors reported that

they learned how to integrate technology into teaching from their mentees. This new experience

revealed something the mentors needed to know and their readiness to learn how to use it

(Knowles, 1970, 1998). In the technological era, the use of information technology in teaching is

essential, so the mentors eagerly accepted how to integrate it into their teaching. They expected

to use their newly acquired knowledge to create more effective lessons and to engage more

students in their teaching. The bi-directional teaching and learning between the mentors and their

mentees seemed to provide strengths to the mentorship program. On the one hand, the mentors

taught their mentees how to teach students a specific subject. On the other hand, the mentees

taught their mentors how to approach modern technology in teaching. Yen called this "a trade-

off". She described:

> My mentees are active and good at information technology or IT. They often show their
>
> IT strengths in their teaching practice (…) For those mentees who are good at IT, they
>
> teach me many useful things as a trade-off for how I supported them. (Yen, HEI 1).

> Although other researchers learned that through mentoring, a professional development

activity, the mentors developed leadership capacity and desire for conducting research on

mentoring (Ehrich, Harsford, & Tennent, 2004), professional planning and advancement (Tauer,

1998), and success in supporting mentees' autonomous teaching (Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Foster,

1999; Harrison, Dymoke, & Pell, 2006); none reported on how the mentors developed skills in

information technology.

Another benefit regarding professional development reported by the mentors in the

mentorship program is that they sharpened their mentoring skills. The mentors in this study and

those in other studies (Clinard & Arive, 1998; Ganser, 1997; Lopez-Real & Kwan, 2005;

Simpson, Hastings, & Hill, 2007) reported that they improved their cognitive coaching/

mentoring through a critical self-reflection on their mentoring work. This is akin to the principle

of building self-concept in adult learning (Knowles, 1970, 1998), a way to encourage the

mentors to strengthen their mentoring skills. Minh and Tri utilized their existing experience of

teaching to make their mentoring work easier and more productive. The techniques and approaches the mentors chose to teach students in daily classes were transferred as they are applicable to mentoring their mentees because, to a great extent, both of these educational practices held similarities. Tri identified:

> Participating in the mentorship program, I had to prepare things for myself. I first read materials and regulations related to mentoring, including things mentors and mentees would do. However, these written documents did not work in the real situation. I also revisited my teaching knowledge and teaching methods I used. In addition, I predicted prospective problems related to students in order to help my mentees feel less shocked or disappointed with their unexpected shortcomings in future teaching. (Tri, HEI 1)

Tri reported that he was able to apply his teaching skills and experience to his mentoring activities. In line with Tri, Minh stated that taking part in the mentorship program offered him one notable advantage - he could easily apply the knowledge of teaching to his mentoring work. As an experienced instructor, Minh realized that a strong foundation of teaching made him feel more experienced, responsible, and self-confident to mentor new instructors. He also found this program invaluable for professional development not only for him and but for other instructors as well. That the mentors were reportedly able to apply their knowledge of teaching to their acts of mentoring revealed a positive learning orientation, which is one of Knowles' (1970, 1998) principles of an adult learner. The mentors also developed their mentoring skills through *semiotic mediation* (Vygotsky, 1978) with the mentees. By doing so over a long period of time, the mentors would become skilled in mentoring new faculty members at their HEIs.

In addition to the application of what they knew about teaching to mentoring, the mentors reported that they increased their mentoring expertise from observing their mentees' teaching. As

mandated, the mentees' teaching was observed by their mentors and/or other instructors in the department. By observing their mentees' teaching, the mentors in this study and those in other studies by Ganser (1997), Lopez-Real and Kwan (2005), Simpson, Hastings, and Hill (2007), and Yosha (1991) reported that they did not only collect ideas for giving feedback on mentees' post-teaching, but they also had an opportunity to reflect on their own teaching and make adjustments for improved teaching and mentoring in the future.

The more collaborative activities learners (mentors and mentees) were involved in and the more the effects of this collaboration they internalized, the more new knowledge of the world they acquired (Vygotsky, 1978; Scott & Palincsar, 2009). By frequently observing their mentees' teaching and giving their post-teaching feedback, the mentors drew some useful observations that could help their mentees improve teaching and assist them in planning more effective mentoring strategies. Through the social source (Vygotsky, 1978) or the regular interactions with the mentees, including classroom observations, the mentors were also able to supplement their teaching knowledge and skills. As such, the mentors benefited from interacting with self, one another, peer mentors and with their mentees in the mentorship program. This also revealed that the mentors improved personally and professionally through their involvement in more cooperative lesson observations with their mentees. Perceiving this significant benefit, Yen revealed:

> Although I am middle-aged and considered to be an experienced instructor, I always want to continue to learn. At the moment, I would like to have mentor, but finding a mentor for me is not easy. Fortunately, I have learned much from observing other instructors' teaching. Observing the older and more experienced instructors, I have learned useful

things. Observing the younger instructors or mentees has even brought me good things.

(Yen, HEI 1)

Lessons drawn from such observations provided Yen with different techniques and strategies to mentor her mentees.

In summary, the mentors' professional knowledge was improved in a variety of areas including having opportunities to review their acquired knowledge of teaching, learning about integrating information technology, and sharpening their mentoring skills through self-reflection on their mentoring work and observing their mentees' lessons. These findings were also reported in various studies published worldwide and elucidated by sociocultural theories of Knowles (1970, 1998) and Vygotsky (1978).

6.2.1.3. Relationship between mentors and mentees

The mentorship program benefited the mentor – mentee relationship. In other words, the mentors gained benefits when they established the mentoring relationship with their mentees in a number of ways. Firstly, most mentors reported that they did not encounter any major conflicts with their mentees regarding age difference. In this study, the age difference between the mentors and mentees was fairly large ranging from 10 to 20 years. Nevertheless, this age difference did not hinder their mentoring relationship. In contrast, it offered the mentors considerable advantages, including respect and admiration from their mentees. Yen described:

My mentees are much younger than I. Some of them were my former students. Some others were my former students' siblings. Therefore, they agreed with whatever I told them to do. Possibly speaking, they admired me. They might not agree with what a 'younger-than-I' mentor told them to do. However, they thought that I was more experienced, so they listened to my reasonable instructions. However, when they realized

that I said something rather unreasonable, they found ways to tell me in a humble

manner. Therefore, being an older mentor is very advantageous for me. (Yen, HEI 1)

In agreement with Yen, Lan reported that an older mentor was beneficial to her. She reasoned, "I

have seen an easy thing, that is, my mentees perhaps think I am much older and more

experienced than they, so they accepted all of my comments or feedback on their teaching and

tried to improve it" (Lan, HEI 2). Like the two colleagues, Minh reported that he perceived no

conflicts with his mentees in terms of age difference. Minh explained:

> Actually, I myself do not find age difference difficult when I work with my mentees. As
>
> for mentees, they might be timid when they want to ask for my help because of this big
>
> age difference. As for me, I do not feel it at all. I consider them as my younger siblings,
>
> so I heartily support their work and give them useful advice (…) I want to encourage
>
> them to overcome their timidity in conferencing with me. (Minh, HEI 4)

Secondly, the mentors reported that they did not experience any considerable challenges

as regards gender disparity when they supervised their mentees. Because of this opposite gender

pairing, the mentoring discussions did not go beyond educational activities. Perceiving no

problems related to the gender difference during the mentoring process, Tri, a male mentor,

reported:

> From my point of view, it does not matter for me if I am assigned a female or male
>
> mentee. The thing that matters me is how we work with each other. My mentee is a
>
> female. We work with each other well throughout the mentorship program. There have
>
> been no serious difficulties so far (….) Sometimes, there was a minor disagreement with
>
> whether some planned activity was suitable to students' level or not. Such an issue

resulted in some discussions between us. Except that, the other mentoring activities have

gone by smoothly. (Tri, HEI 1)

In assonance with Tri, Lan, a female mentor, affirmed that she did not have any challenges to

mentor either a female or male new instructor. She revealed:

Normally, if my mentee is a male, I will still work with him in the same way as I do with

a female. In general, I exchange ideas about contents, goals, or objectives of the

mentorship program with the male mentee as clearly as I do with the female one. In

giving feedback on their work, I do not have any difficulty. When they have any

question, they will ask me, and I am willing to respond to them. (Lan, HEI 2)

Interestingly, that the mentors did not encounter challenges of age and gender differences with

their mentees was not mentioned in the literature review for this study, perhaps because they are

factors more openly discussed in Vietnamese culture.

Most mentors shared a common benefit - they encountered no conflicts over age and

gender disparities with their mentees. Instead of noticing the gender difference issue, the mentors

centred on how to help their mentees make lesson plans, teach them, and then improve them after

receiving feedback from the mentors. By doing this, both the mentors and mentees built up the

expertise and experience that led them to move forward step by step in the mentorship program.

This co-constructed mentoring process reflects the social source of the mentors' professional

development (Vygotsky, 1978).

In addition to not experiencing age and gender conflicts, the mentors in this study, similar

to those in the research of Ragins and Cotton (1999), reported that they established a positive

relationship with the informal mentees during the mentorship program, and they provided their

informal mentees with communication opportunities and mentoring skills through their voluntary

commitments. The informal mentees are the new faculty members who looked for additional supports from the mentors who were not assigned to supervise them officially. Although these informal mentees were assigned their formal mentors, they wanted to receive more advice from the unassigned mentors who taught the same course sor had the same interests as they did. Since the unassigned mentors were directly working with their assigned mentees, they could use this experience to deliver their extra supports to the informal mentees without spending much extra time. The mentors also treated these informal mentees like their formal mentees, so they provided them as much assistance as possible. Besides mentoring her assigned mentees, Yen supported some informal mentees upon their requests. Yen reported that this additional work brought her significant advantages. She specified:

> First, I was enthusiastic to help them. They observed my teaching. Then, they realized that I am often a supporter, so they requested me to mentor them. One of the advantages here is that I have established a good relationship with colleagues. This relationship has led to some more benefits in my work relations. (Yen, HEI 1)

Yen's relationship with those informal mentees was very positive. They treated her with respect and admiration. They also helped her when she needed as a return to what she had given them.

In brief, the mentors experienced a number of advantages in relationships with their mentees. They experienced no challenges of age and gender differences; instead, they received respect and admiration from their mentees in the mentorship program. They also benefited from establishing positive relationships with their informal mentees. Some of these findings were similar to those reported in mentoring literature and supported by Knowles's (1970, 1998) and Vygotsky's (1978) theories.

6.2.2. Mentors' challenges in the mentorship program

Like one of the two sides of a coin, the mentors also encountered a number of challenges during the mentorship program at their HEIs. These challenges included a vast array of aspects such as personal pressures, mentee-related issues, and other issues, as described in more detail at the end of this section.

6.2.2.1. Personal pressures

The first challenge most the mentors reported is that they possessed insufficient foundational knowledge of mentoring. This insufficiency stemmed from their limited exposure to a mentoring training program or workshop. They would have liked to have been able to access this professional training program before they were assigned their mentees, but they were not offered an opportunity to attend such a program. The mentors reported that they accepted to be a mentor and tried their best to support their mentees in ways that they had mentored or been mentored before. This reality resulted in inevitable problems during the mentorship program. Having experienced this inaccessibility, Tri said:

> So far, I have not heard about such a program [a mentoring training program]. In general, mentors are the experienced instructors who are appointed to mentor inexperienced new instructors. In addition, I have not had any chance to attend a mentor training course (...) I need such a program that will equip me with some skills to train my mentees to become successful instructors. (Tri, HEI 1)

Like Tri, Minh reported that he did not attend any mentor training course or workshop. He only participated in some teacher trainer programs through which he was able to employ part of the knowledge to mentor his mentees. From Minh's perspective:

> A mentor training program should focus on teaching methodology. It trains mentors new teaching methods so that they will transfer them to their mentees. This is because

teaching methods have greatly changed these days compared with those in the past. There should also be some training workshops on how to integrate technology into teaching. Such workshops will be very essential. (Minh, HEI 4)

Like Tri and Minh, to make her mentoring work more productive, Lan reported that she expected to attend a more comprehensive training course on new/up-to-date teaching methods. She reasoned:

If possible, I want to attend some advanced training courses or conferences on most updated teaching methodology because currently my mentoring experience is just based on my own experience. I think there are more changes in teaching methodology I need to update for my future needs. At present, I supervise my mentees based on my own experience and expertise. Although I am specializing in teaching methodology, I think it has constantly changed. Therefore, if I am possibly given an opportunity to attend such a short training course, I will be greatly appreciative. (Lan, HEI 2)

The second personal pressure the mentors reported is that they wished that they had had more knowledge about their mentees' background. In other words, the mentors reported that they had not been provided with information about the mentees they were going to work with in advance. Eventually, the mentors in this study and those in Wright and Wright's (1987) study reported that they misidentified their mentees' potentials, making it challenging to manage the mentoring practices as planned. They eventually encountered their mentees' dismissive behaviours, including the mentees' inattention to their constructive feedback. This resulted in an information gap between the mentors and mentees at the beginning of the mentorship program. Lan recognized one difficulty when she was assigned the mentees she had never met before, so

she was passive in preparing things to do and ways to deal with her mentees in advance. She complained:

> One difficulty when I worked with mentees is that I had not known much about their teaching knowledge and behaviours. Sometimes, my mentees taught their students who were young adults. However, they thought these students were still children, so they used the teaching method that was just suitable for children. As a result, they failed to reach the lesson objectives. (Lan, HEI 2)

To sum up, taking part in the mentorship program, the mentors encountered the challenges of having limited basic knowledge about mentoring due to their insufficient exposure to mentoring training programs. They were also provided with little information about their mentees' background that caused a number of difficulties for their mentoring practice. Some of these findings were reported in the worldwide published studies.

6..2.2.2. Mentee – related issues

Participating in the mentorship program, the mentors affirmed that they had to be faced with some of the mentees' unfavourable personality traits. This was also reported by the mentors in studies by Bower and Yarger (1989), Hansford, Tennent, and Ehrich (2003), and Herndon and Fauske (1996). They stated that they encountered their mentees' negative attitudes, weak performances, distrust in mentors, and unrealistic expectations of mentors. In addition, the mentors in this study and those in other studies (Corley, 1998; Cross, 1981; Kilburg, 2002) reported that although their mentees were much younger than they, their mentees sometimes showed a cynical attitude toward them in discussions of the mentoring-focused issues. Despite their mentors' explanations or suggestions, the mentees did not change their attitude, and they even became more argumentative and reluctant to accept their mentors' constructive comments

or listen to their mentors' rationale. This made the mentors sometimes feel uncomfortable to work with their mentees during the mentorship program. Although Lan made efforts to mitigate this tension, she did not actually feel satisfied with the progress and performance of her mentee. She elaborated:

> Whenever I gave them [mentees] feedback on their teaching and provided them with some explanations of appropriate teaching approaches, they seemed to understand me. However, in their subsequent teaching, they repeated the same mistakes. When I asked them the reason why they kept doing so, they answered that they had already tried their best to teach. However, I did not know why the situation remained unchanged. Therefore, I was not satisfied with them at the end of the mentorship program. (Lan, HEI 2)

In addition, the mentors reported that they occasionally had to suffer mentees' naive thinking and behaviour while they were working with them during the mentorship program. The mentors could not anticipate why their mentors showed that naivety, though they were actually the young adults and working as the apprentice instructors at the HEIs. Being involved with this issue, Yen described:

> Some new mentees are not familiar with the way of contacting and communicating with their colleagues and students. Oftentimes, they talk to their students in a coddling manner, which is seen to be inappropriate. They should keep a communicative distance between them and students. Although my mentees are still young and not much older than their students, they should show to be more mature than their students. I always keep reminding my mentees of this behaviour. In terms of communication with colleagues, I notice that working with colleagues for long time willy-nilly results in some unexpected conflicts. In this case, I advise them that they should compromise with their colleagues

and be careful in choosing subtle, appropriate, and constructive words to use in addressing them. (Yen, HEI 1)

Supervising the mentees with such unfavourable personality traits, Yen did not criticize them strictly. Instead, she spent more time and effort to bend 'these young bamboos' not only in the art of teaching but also in their behaviours. Through her developmental analysis (Vygotsky, 1978), Yen did not support her mentees' immature teaching behaviour or let her mentee act in his/her own ways. Instead, she found ways to help her mentee grow in awareness and change of his/her own volition. By working alongside her mentee, she was able to observe the mentee making steady improvements during the learning-to-teach process. Interestingly, although the mentors in the literature review for this study were not satisfied with their mentees' various personal characteristics, they did not explain it as the mentees' immaturity. Perhaps, this reveals a changing generation, or a characteristic related to Vietnamese culture.

In addition to concerns about the mentees' personality traits, the mentors reported that they had conflicts with their mentees over teaching approaches and post-teaching feedback. These conflicts were actually the differences between the mentors' and mentees' viewpoints which were grounded on the professional knowledge acquired from two different training programs. The mentors had been trained years before their mentees were done, so their knowledge of teaching methods might have faded away compared with that of newer teaching methods of their mentees. Reflecting on this factor, Tri reported:

When I gave comments on teaching activities used in her class, my mentee did not agree with me. I told her that the same activity should not be used for all classes because of students' different learning abilities. I said to her, 'For students of your class, this activity is not suitable'. However, she did not agree with me and said, 'According to me, my

students cannot do it because they have just learned it. After teaching them for a while, I

believe they will be able to do this activity well.' (Tri, HEI 1)

Sharing Tri's challenge, Minh revealed:

Actually, there is a conflict over the use of different teaching methods. The teaching

method the mentee had learned in her university is different from the one I had learned.

Because the teaching method I had learned is actually older than the one learned by the

mentee, a conflict among us happened unavoidably. (Minh, HEI 4)

Interestingly, a conflict over different and 'current' approaches to second language instruction

was not mentioned in other studies.

In short, the mentors were confronted with a number of challenges resulting from their

mentees during the mentorship programs. These challenges included the mentees' unfavourable

personality traits such as being cynical, being skeptical, and being impractical; the mentees'

naive thinking and behaviour; and the mentors' and mentees' conflicts in teaching approaches.

Some of these findings were reported in the published studies on mentoring around the world

and can be understood by using Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory.

6.2.2.3. *Additional issues*

Besides the challenges related to the mentors themselves and their mentees, the mentors

reported that they encountered some other issues in the mentorship program. Mentoring without

being guided by a mandated document was the first challenge all of the mentors mentioned in the

mentorship program. They reported that this challenge eventually resulted in other difficulties

they had to endure in the teaching-how-to teach program. A mandated document, as they

described it, was the one that could be published for use in the field of EFL education by a

prestigious authority such as Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) of Vietnam. They felt

that it could be an officially endorsed mentoring guide that encompassed all mentoring-related contents and procedures from general to specific in order to support the immediate actors - mentees, mentors, and administrators - to navigate through the triadic mentoring process. At the moment, the mentors were only guided by their own HEI's documents based on the MOET's general regulations. This led to the disparate mentoring practices among the participating HEIs. The absence of such a document resulted the mentors in encountering various problems. This document was believed to provide the mentors with what they needed to know (Knowles, 1970, 1998) prior to practicing the mentorship program at their HEIs and why. Using her institution's written mentoring guide, Lan commented:

> I think the some of the contents of the current mentoring guide should be revised. First, it sounds more suitable to mentoring in secondary education. Second, it is used for all disciplines. There should be one mentoring guide specifically written for English language education to suit its nature. (Lan, HEI 2)

In line with Lan, Minh reported that he solely employed his institution's general mentoring guide that he also thought was insufficient. He elaborated:

> Actually, I just use my university's mentoring guide. I have not heard about a MOET-mandated mentoring document. According to me, such a document is very important because when mentoring new faculty members, I need to be carefully guided by this document so that my work will yield better results after a year of mentoring. Without an officially endorsed mentoring guide, my mentoring work will not bring better results if it is only based on my own experience. (Minh, HEI 4)

Tri also identified a number of problems with the general mentoring guide issued by the MOET. He reported:

The MOET's mentoring regulation is written in the Vietnamese language and includes

general contents. Therefore, when it is used to mentor English language education

mentees, I find it difficult. As for English language education mentoring, there should be

a distinctive guide for English language instructors. From my viewpoint, teaching

English is different from teaching other disciplines. (Tri, HEI 1)

Without an officially endorsed mentoring guide, the mentors reported that they perceived

confusion over the mentoring process. Tri disclosed:

At present, as I see that mentors like me are very confused because we do not know the

process and contents of mentoring new instructors. Further, we do not know what

contents should be included in the final evaluation of a mentee. I have the feeling that the

final evaluation depends rigidly on an observation sheet. We just put checks on given

score lines and add them up. It seems rather subjective. Having felt that the mentee taught

the lesson properly, we will only give him or her 'Pass' without any accompanied clear

explanations or comments. There should be a clearer guide for this. If possible, it will be

better to send experienced instructors to a mentor training course. (Tri, HEI 1)

Another challenge the mentors reported lies in the poor compensation for the mentors'

work during the mentorship program. This finding is akin to that of Kilburg (2007) who reported

that there was an unfair commitment when the mentors were required to spend extra-time for

mentoring but received inadequate financial compensation for their work. This could taint the

future of the mentoring practice. Depending on each researched institution's policy, the mentors

reported that they were given different trade-offs for their endeavours to mentor the new

instructors. Mentioning this issue, Minh elaborated:

I did not receive any financial compensation. Instead, my 40 teaching hours among the

required annual teaching time were reduced. Actually, this trade-off was just a slight

encouragement for me to mentor new instructors better. If I had not been given this

teaching time reduction, I would not have been ready to accept this mentoring work.

(Minh, HEI 4)

Receiving a similar compensation for his mentoring work, Tri reported that he had "10 percent of [his] required annual teaching time subtracted". In contrast to these two colleagues, Lan was paid an amount of money for her mentoring, but she could not remember precisely the amount. She said, "Regarding the financial support for my mentoring participation, I was paid some money. However, I could not remember its precise amount. This payment was given to me at the end of the mentorship program, but not anything else" (Lan, HEI 2). Although the policies for compensation varied and definitely suggest inequities, no mentor felt that s/he would not mentor in the future. In fact, Tri asserted, "The compensation for my mentoring work was not as my expectation, but I still mentor my mentee as much as I can" (Tri, HEI 1). As Vietnamese culture states, "Thà có còn hơn không" [It is better to receive little than nothing]. The benefits to the mentors outweighed the poor compensation.

The last challenge the mentors stated when they navigated through the mentoring process is directly connected to mentoring the informal mentees. The mentors accepted to supervise the informal mentees voluntarily because these mentees really wanted to receive additional support while they were waiting for their officially assigned mentors. With their enthusiasm and readiness, the voluntary mentors accepted the informal mentees without carefully examining the mentoring policy of the HEIs. Thus, their voluntary mentoring resulted in unexpected problems in the mentorship program. Yen reported that she experienced institutional barriers similar to

those reported by Kilburg (2007). The problem emerged when she agreed to assist some informal

mentees upon their request. She elaborated:

> One difficulty is when I wanted to correct the unassigned [informal] mentees' lesson
>
> plans, I HAD TO obtain the faculty leaders' permission because they did not assign me to
>
> mentor these new instructors. If I wanted to support these mentees, I had to obtain the
>
> leaders' approval. I asked them whether I could review and corrected these mentees'
>
> lesson plans or not if they really wanted me to help; or whether I could observe their
>
> teaching in one class as a rehearsal in order to give them some advice before they
>
> officially taught the same lesson while being observed and evaluated in a subsequent
>
> class. When the leaders approved my request, I would be able to support those mentees.
>
> That I supported the unassigned mentees came from my personal willingness. Not being
>
> assigned to mentor them but still willing to support them created a type of disadvantage
>
> to me. (Yen, HEI 1)

Interestingly, Western studies did not report such a concern among the mentors, though they

stated that the informal mentoring resulted in a number of challenges for the informal mentees.

Such studies reported: the mentees were not selected due to their different genders and minority

groups from the mentors (Kanter, 1977); the mentors and mentees were matched (Bova, 2000);

and when the mentees were selected, only their abilities and potential were considered, rather

than their needs (Allen, Poteet, & Russell, 2000).

In the mentorship program, the mentors encountered other challenges in addition to those

resulting from their interactions with their mentees. These challenges comprised the absence of

an officially endorsed mentoring guide, the poor compensation for mentoring practices, and

some troubles with the informal mentorship. A number of these findings were also reported in

several globally published studies, including those on systemic barriers, and linked to Knowles' (1970, 1998) adult learning theory. They can also be said to reflect aspects of Vietnamese culture.

In summary, this chapter presented details of the successes and challenges the mentors experienced in the mandated mentorship program at their HEIs. The findings reported a variety of themes related to the successes and challenges the mentors expressed in the interviews about their mentorship experience. These were often found to align with the findings of other researchers, as identified in Chapter Two: Review of the Literature. However, a variety of new findings will also contribute to the literature about mentorship in Vietnam, namely, (1) mentors benefitting from a mentorship program by having an opportunity to review their knowledge of teaching methodolgy, (2) mentors acquiring information technology skills, (3) mentors experiencing no challenges regarding age and gender differences; (4) mentors working with their mentees despite immature teaching behaviour, (5) mentors having a conflict over preferred teaching approaches of their mentees, and (6) mentors supporting the development of an official mentoring guide. Some of these may be related to Vietnamese culture and/or context, including Confucian values. In the next chapter, the findings regarding the administrators will be presented and compared with those purported in the literature review.

Chapter Seven:

Administrators

This chapter presents the text data from the researcher's interviews with two experienced administrators among the higher education institutions (HEIs) participating in the present study. The first part of the chapter provides an overview of each administrator's personal background including their pseudonyms, academic degree earned, teaching venue, administrative experience, and tasks during the mentorship program. The second part describes the themes generated from the text data substantiated by the administrators' quotations. Concurrently, these themes will be converged with those presented in the literature review for the study, thus identifying concurrences and new contributions to the research about mentorship in HEIs.

7.1. Administrators' Background

7.1.1. Thu

Thu, an experienced female instructor of EFL Teacher Education, currently holds the position of an administrator at a public institution (HEI 3) in the MRD. She obtained a graduate degree in education from an overseas HEI. In her leadership role, she works closely with both of mentors and mentees, particularly matching experienced instructors with new instructors in all professional activities in order to support them in carrying out their responsibilities through mutual interactions. In the past few years, Thu has directly administered the mentorship program for two new instructors in addition to teaching a variety of courses in the faculty.

Administering the mentorship program, Thu expected that both mentors and mentees should be enthusiastic, responsible, and cooperative in working with each other. They should report their work to the faculty/department leaders on their unresolvable problems so that these people could support them in a timely manner. For example, if a mentor felt overwhelmed by

having to do so many concurrent jobs and could not focus on the mentoring work, then the faculty would consider reducing the mentor's workload so that he or she could devote sufficient time to the mentorship tasks. Besides, Thu expected that each mentoring session would entail a sharing meeting, meaning that mentors and mentees will share with other instructors in the faculty what they learned and what they will do to make the future mentorship program more interesting and satisfy mentors' and mentee's aspirations better.

From Thu's perspective, to become successful in administering the mentorship program, an administrator needs to meet the following requirements: thoroughly understanding all hierarchically leveled documents and regulations related to the mentorship program and clearly mastering the faculty setting; being skilled in many fields such as organization, monitoring, and evaluation of the mentorship program at its pre-, during, and post-stages in order to make the future mentorship programs more effective; constantly updating the knowledge of mentorship by reference to worldwide published studies; having experienced a mentor's work; and being devoted and passionate in order to build and administer the mentorship program as well as possible to inspire the mentoring participants.

7.1.2. Hau

Hau, an experienced male instructor of EFL Teacher Education, has been an administrator at a public institution (HEI 4) in the MRD. He obtained his graduate degree in education from a Vietnamese HEI. Hau has administered the mentorship program at his faculty since he was appointed his current position. During this time, his faculty was accommodating two new instructors. In his administrative work, Hau matched mentors and mentees upon the request of the institution's Rectorate Board. He selected experienced and enthusiastic senior

instructors as mentors for new instructors. In addition, Hau has taught several courses in the faculty.

Participating in the mentorship program as an administrator, Hau expected that the current mentorship program in his faculty should be prolonged to increase mentees' knowledge of teaching and extra-curricular activities. He also believed that mentees should not only practice teaching, but they should also participate in other activities such as managing a singing club, a sports club, an English-speaking club, and a social supporting group. In addition, Hau expected that mentors and mentees should work in harmony with each other, find a common voice between them, and report their problems to the faculty leaders. Mentees should also be willing to learn, and mentors should be enthusiastic to support their mentees so that they will be able to have accumulated sufficient experience by the end of the mentorship program.

From Hau's standpoint, an accomplished administrator of the mentorship program should have mastered the mentoring process. She or he should do the mentor-mentee pairing scientifically based on their expertise and experience rather than on their randomly pairing approach. In addition, Hau believed an administrator's work would become more effective if she or he was guided by a well-written mentoring document.

Tables 12 and 13 present a summary of the administrators' expectations of being a successful administrator of a mentorship program and their expectations of their mentors and mentees in the mentorship program respectively. As we can see in Table 12, the administrators varied somewhat in their expectations of being a successful administrator: mastering all hierarchically leveled documents about the mentoring (2); mastering the mentoring context (2); having good skills in organization, scrutiny, and evaluation of the multi-staged mentorship program (2); updating the knowledge of mentorship published globally (1); having a love for the

mentoring administration (1); and having pre-established criteria for making the mentor-mentee

pairing (2). Table 13 reveals the expectations these same administrators had of their mentees

mentors: being enthusiastic, responsible, and cooperative in working with each other (2);

reporting their work to leaders on unresolvable problems in order to receive timely supports (2);

sharing their ideas with other instructors in meetings after their mentoring conferencing (1);

prolonging their mentorship in order to increase mentees' knowledge of teaching and extra-

curricular activities (1), and being willing to learn [for mentees] and enthusiastic to support

mentees [for mentors] (2).

Table 12. *Administrators' expectations of being a successful administrator.*

A successful administrator should…..	Thu	Hau
master all hierarchically leveled documents about the mentorship program	✓	✓
master the mentoring context	✓	✓
have good skills in organization, scrutiny, and evaluation of the multi-staged mentorship program	✓	✓
update the knowledge of mentorship published globally	✓	
have a love for the mentoring administration	✓	
have pre-established criteria for making the mentor-mentee pairing	✓	✓

Table 13. *Administrators' expectations of their mentees and mentors.*

Mentees and mentors are expected to………	Thu	Hau
be enthusiastic, responsible, and cooperative in working with each other	✓	✓
report their work to leaders on unresolvable problems in order to receive timely supports	✓	✓
share their ideas with other instructors in meetings after their mentoring conferencing	✓	
prolong their mentorship in order to increase mentees' knowledge of teaching and extra-curricular activities		✓
be willing to learn [for mentees], and enthusiastic to support mentees [for mentors]	✓	✓

7.2. Key Themes

7.2.1. Administrators' successes in the mentorship program

As one of the three actors in the triadic mentoring relationship, the administrators accomplished a number of benefits from managing the mentorship program at their HEIs. The benefits included increased ease in making the mentee-mentor pairing, being a good listener, and improved self-efficacy.

7.2.1.1. Increased ease of mentee-mentor matching

Managing the mentorship program at their HEIs, the administrators reported that they did not experience difficulties in matching the mentors and mentees because they employed the prerequisite criteria to match the experienced instructors with the novice ones in the mentorship program. The administrators in this study and those in other studies by Abell et al. (1995), Rippon and Martin (2006), Yeomans and Sampson (1994) reported that they paid more attention to the mentors' year-long expertise in teaching and mentoring and to their positive personality traits such as being supportive, being approachable, and being trustworthy than to the issue of gender in their matching. The administrators used their experience to make the mentor – mentee pairings with their pre-determined criteria so that they could yield effective dyadic mentoring interactions (Knowles, 1970, 1998). Further, the administrators noticed that the mentors and mentees of the same gender seemed to work with each other more easily and productively. In matching the mentors and mentees, Thu carefully examined the gender issue. She reasoned:

> Because some new instructors seem rather timid and less confident, they should be mentored by the same gender instructor. This way of matching makes mentees expose their personal feelings and experiences to their mentors more easily because they have mutual understandings. However, the most important factor that affects the effectiveness

of the mentoring relationship is mentors' enthusiasm in mentoring and orientating

mentees towards their optimal ability development. (Thu, HEI 3)

Slightly different from Thu's perspective, Hau was not concerned much about the gender issue.

However, he realized that the same gender relationship resulted in more benefits. He revealed:

The same gender issue is a psychological one. I had not thought much about it before.

This is because in my observation, new mentees strictly obeyed all mentoring regulations.

Therefore, I do not overvalue the gender issue. Since mentees were accepted into the

mentorship program, they have received the mentoring-related information via emails

and responded to them timely and effectively. For me, the different gender relationship

does not make any matter, but the mentor's mentoring expertise really does. (Hau, HEI 4)

In addition, the administrators explored that the age difference of five years or above

between the mentors and mentees was a benefit for them in the pairing performance. With such

an age distance, the administrators reported that the mentors had already acquired a firm

foundation of expertise in different academic activities required of a tenure-track faculty

member. As a result, they were able to perform their mentoring tasks successfully. Having

experienced this benefit, Thu elaborated:

At least, their [mentors and mentees] age difference should be five years. That is, the

mentors should have taught at least five years longer than the mentees. Within these five

years, mentors can thoroughly understand all regulations, training curricula, and working

conditions of the faculty and department, so they can mentor their mentees well. (Thu,

HEI 3).

Interestingly, the benefit resulting from the age difference of five years between the mentors and

mentees was not mentioned in other studies in the literature review, though they found a similar

comfort of the mentor-mentee matching reported in this study. This may be a factor relating to Vietnamese culture.

Briefly, managing the mentorship program at their HEI, the administrators perceived the increased ease of the mentor-mentee matching. They also realized that the mentors who were five years older than their mentees would benefit the mentees thanks to their mature professional knowledge and potential career status. The findings of this study are akin to those of a number of published studies and can be elucidated by Knowles' (1970, 1998) adult learning theory.

7.2.1.2. Administrators as good listeners

During the mentorship program, the administrators reported that they received advantages when they were good listeners in managing the mentorship program as well as leading the faculty. A good listener, from the administrators' perspective, was someone who was not conservative or stubborn, but willing to listen to others in order to facilitate the managing work effectively. Thu elaborated:

> Not only do the younger learn from the older, but the older administrators also need to learn from their younger colleagues. If the administrators believe in, listen to, and welcome new ideas from others, they can make their staff more self-confident. If the administrators create opportunities for their staff to practice or apply new initiatives to see what their results are, then I think it will create motivation for the staff to see that they are respected, and then they will continue to contribute their thoughts, ideas, and trials more. (Thu, HEI 3)

The radical characteristic was also manifested in the administrators' sharing ideas with their mentors and mentees. To participate in managing the mentorship program, Hau reported that he drew upon his personal experience, another principle of adult learning (Knowles, 1970,

1998), in exchanging his ideas with colleagues, rather than attending the mentoring training courses. Hau reasoned:

> I always expect that mentors and mentees work in harmony with each other and find a common ground between them. Mentees must be willing to learn, and mentors must be enthusiastic to support their mentees so that they will be able to accumulate more experience in their young age to enter a real teaching life upon completion of the mentorship program. I hope both of them will collaborate with each other firmly and productively. (Hau, HEI 4)

Also claiming this benefit, Thu described:

> I have recognized that the mentoring practice at our faculty has become more and more positive. I think after this time, I will organize several mentor-mentee conferences where instructors sit down together, not in a well-decorated room but in some seminars and sometimes in free time, or in a post-meeting chat. I also listen to opinions from both sides, particularly from younger new instructors. In assigning tasks, I pay much attention to individuals' strength and assign tasks for them based on it. I will praise them upon their good completion of tasks as a thank-you note. (Thu, HEI 3)

To strike improvements in the mentorship program, the administrators listened carefully to both their mentors and mentees. They are aware that "Một cây làm chẳng nên non. Ba cây chụm lại nên hòn núi cao" [One stick can not make the shape of a mountain. But three sticks can make it/Together we can change the world].

Closely connected to this benefit, the administrators reported that they received a resultant advantage when they worked with the mentees who were their former students. With this pre-established relationship, the administrators did not have to spend much initial time

establishing a relationship with their mentees because the mentees clearly knew their

administrators' working styles and personality traits as well as the institution which they had

recently graduated from. Thu revealed:

> I am also lucky that these new instructors were my former students, so there is a strong
>
> bond in work between us. Whenever a new idea arises, we share it together openly. I see
>
> that there is hardly a discrimination between the administrator and staff members, which
>
> is good for me. (Thu, HEI 3)

Since the administrators as radical listeners were not mentioned in the literature review, this

positive personality trait can also now become a part of the literature on mentorship.

In short, the administrators in the mentorship program received a benefit when they

worked with their mentors and mentees as radical listeners. They also felt more comfortable in

this role because of the formerly established familiarity between them and their mentees. The

findings in this section can be elucidated by Knowles' (1970, 1998) adult learning theory and

aspects of Vietnamese culture.

7.2.1.3. Expression of self-efficacy

Working as a leader of the mentorship program, the administrators reported that they had

an opportunity to develop and reveal their self-efficacy. Like the administrators in the study by

Daresh and Playko (1993), the Vietnamese administrators perceived a significant personal

satisfaction in seeing the success of a strong mentor-mentee matching. The administrators were

aware of their own abilities to make effective mentor – mentee pairings (Knowles, 1970, 1998).

This achievement motivated them to continue the pairings and engage in other related tasks

during the management of the mentorship program at their HEIs. The administrators asserted that

they took pride in seeing how compatibly their mentors and mentees worked with each other during the mentorship program. Hau shared his contentment:

> My happiness is that I have an opportunity to assign tasks for mentors and mentees. This shows one of my ways to support them. When they faced any difficulty, they asked for my advice. That I helped them solve their problems made me feel honored and happy.
>
> (Hau, HEI 4)

In alignment with Hau, participating in administering the mentorship program in her faculty, Thu revealed:

> My administering work becomes more meaningful. This is because monitoring and learning more professional knowledge are very essential and need to be done continuously in order to train the next generations of instructors who will be qualified not only to develop the faculty but also to improve each faculty member personally and professionally. (Thu, HEI 3)

In short, the administrators took pride in their effective mentor – mentee pairings during the mentorship program. This finding was also asserted in the published study on mentoring and can be interpreted by employing Knowles's (1970, 1998) adult learning theory and aspects of Vietnamese culture.

7.2.2. Administrators' challenges in the mentorship program

In contrast to benefits received in the mentorship program, the administrators reported that they were confronted with a number of challenges including the different gender pairing, the insufficient scrutiny of the mentoring work, and the absence of a mandated mentoring guide.

7.2.2.1. Different gender pairing

The administrators stated that gender became a challenge in their mentor-mentee pairing in the mentorship program. Assigning a male mentor to supervise a female mentee and vice versus could incur unexpected discomfort. Reflecting on this issue, Thu disclosed:

I had a challenge with matching mentors and mentees; for example, assigning who would work with or mentor whom. This is because I did not match their roles properly, then this mismatch yielded frustration in the mentor's and mentee's mutual learning. (Thu, HEI 3)

Hau, in addition, reported a similar challenge:

When mentors and mentees with opposite genders work with each other, they should respect each other. Besides the mentoring work, mentors should respect different gender mentees. I found it difficult to match instructors of different genders with each other. For example, a male mentor and a male mentee could go for coffee comfortably without any problems. However, it will be a subtle issue if a male mentor and a female mentee do the same thing. Mentoring should be done on the basis of supporting professional knowledge, not on the mentees' personal life outside the mentorship program. (Hau, HEI 4)

The administrators' challenge of pairing the mentors and mentees of different genders was not reported in the literature review for this study, perhaps because discussions about different genders in mentorship are inherent in Vietnamese culture. As Nguyen (2002) said, "It is important that physical contact between opposite sexes be avoided (…) Most Vietnamese strongly disapprove of public expressions of affection between males and females" (p. 3).

In brief, in participating in the mentorship program, the administrators found it difficult to match mentors and mentees of different genders because this cross-gender matching might result in unexpected intimate relationships between them, an issue which is not readily accepted

from the traditional perspective of educational mentorship in Vietnamese culture. Since this issue was not raised in the Western research literature reported in Chapter Two, this comment suggests that culture plays a role in mentorship. While principles of mentorship might be transferrable across cultures and institutions, the practices and values of local culture must also be accommodated.

7.2.2.2. Insufficient scrutiny of the mentoring work

The administrators also admitted that they encountered a problem of insufficient scrutiny of the mentoring work they managed. This problem accounted for their superficial examination of the mentors' and mentees' activities. This finding is similar to that of the University of Alberta's study in 2012. The study reported that the administrators were neither confident in making the mentee-mentor pairing nor making the newly recruited faculty members love teaching and stay longer in the teaching profession upon completion of the mentorship program. The administrators in the present study reported that they were so busy with concurrent multi-jobs including managing, teaching, meeting, and mentoring that they did not thoroughly monitor the mentor-mentee performances; nor did they request the mentors to submit their periodical mentee assessments, except a final mentee evaluation. The resultant problem of this inattention was that the mentors did not maintain frequent conferencing with their mentees. Recalling this issue, Thu said:

> I was told that the mentor and mentee did not meet with each other frequently. When the mentorship program was going to end, the mentor tried to collect forms and paperwork to complete the mentoring requirements. I think this mentoring work was a waste of time and effort. (Thu, HEI 3)

Generally, the administrators confronted a challenge of a loose examination of the mentors' and mentees' performances during the mentorship program due to their myriad tasks in the faculty. This finding was also reported in the mentoring literature.

7.2.2.3. Absence of a mandated mentoring guide

The administrators reported that they, like mentors and mentees, suffered from the absence of an official mentoring guide. Their management relied strictly upon their own experience, which yielded some unexpected challenges. Such a guide could help them learn what they needed to know prior to engaging in the mentorship program at their HEIs, and why.

Without being guided by any officially endorsed mentoring document, the administrators revealed that the managing approach at each institution was different. Hau reasoned:

Actually, our institution did not issue an official mentoring guide at all. They just

assigned mentoring-related tasks for senior staff to induct new faculty members into the

faculty. Administrators should learn about the faculty's mentoring requirements and

make sure that mentees are able to do their teaching practice well (…) The mentorship

program is mandated by the Vietnam MOET, but it is not guided by any official

document. It is done based on our personal experience. Mentors are just told to evaluate

the mentees' required teaching hours. At the end, the mentors must submit a final mentee

evaluation giving 'Credit' or 'No credit' to the mentees. (Hau, HEI 4)

Like Hau, Thu revealed:

At present, there is no official mentoring guide with detailed instructions at the

institutional level. In my understanding, our institution has used some related documents

issued by the government. For example, Decision # 9 or Circular # 5 is about the new

personnel recruitment and employment. And I think every faculty has applied it in their

own ways, and every mentor has practised it from their own perspectives in compliance

with their mentoring methods, time, and enthusiasm. (Thu, HEI 3)

The administrators were troubled by the absence of an officially endorsed mentoring guide in

their management of the mentorship program at their HEIs.

In summary, this chapter presented details of the successes and challenges the

administrators experienced in the mandated mentorship program at their HEIs. The findings

reported a variety of themes most of which were often found to align with the findings of other

researchers, as reported in Chapter Two: Review of the Literature. A number of these findings

can be elucidated by Knowles's (1970, 1998) adult learning theory. However, a variety of new

findings will also contribute to the literature about mentorship in Vietnam, namely, (1)

administrators observing that pairing mentors and mentees with the age difference of five years

seemed most advantageous; (2) being a good listener facilitated the work of the administrators ;

(3) matching different genders could be problematic in Vietnamese culture, and (4) imagining

the benefits of an official mentoring guide to increase quality outcomes and reduce stress of the

actors. In the next chapter, an interpretation of the study findings in light of three educational

theories (Vygotsky, 1978; Knowles, 1970, 1998; Bronfenbrenner, 1979) will be done.

Chapter Eight:

EFL Faculty Mentorship Program in Light of Educational Theories

This chapter presents a discussion of the findings in the study on successes and challenges of the EFL faculty mentorship program at the HEIs in the MRD of Vietnam in light of the three educational theories that were introduced earlier. It begins with an illumination of study findings through the interpretation of Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural Theory of Development and then proceeds to the same with Knowles' (1970, 1998) Adult Learning Theory and Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory of Human Development. The chapter ends with the utilization of social constructivist paradigm in connection to these three theories to interpret the findings of this study.

8.1. Vygotsky's (1978) Theory of Development

Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural Theory of Development was constructed on the belief that people developed personally, psychologically, and professionally by their interactions not only within themselves but also with other people in social and cultural contexts through their use of language and other symbol systems (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996). Particularly, their development was most clearly observed through their inter-personal communication during the process of learning (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996; Peer & McClendon, 2002; Vygotsky, 1978). From a Vygotskyan SCT perspective, the mentors' and mentees' interactions within their formally and informally paired mentoring environment took place in a variety of modes such as face-to-face conferencing, telephoning, class observations, and extra-curricular activities. On these occasions the mentors used both spoken and written language to communication with their mentees by sharing books, teaching resources, lesson plans, teaching realia, and other mentoring-related documents. By exchanging ideas through these means of communication, the mentors

and mentees learned to understand each other, and the mentees were able to perform their mentoring tasks and the latter steadily developed their knowledge and skills of teaching.
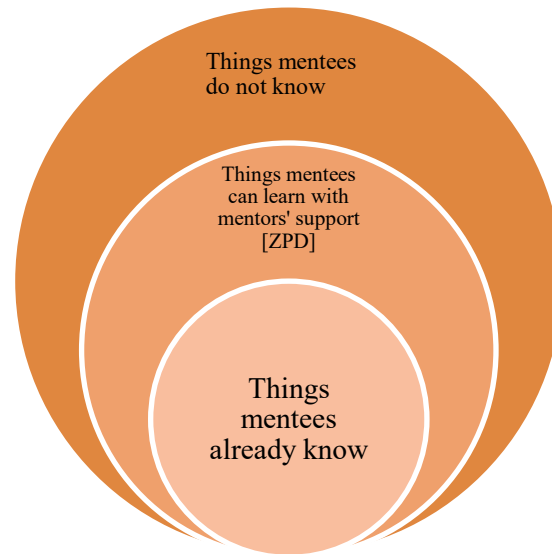
Figure 10. Zone of Proximal Development in the mentorship program at HEIs in the MRD of Vietnam. Adapted from Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural Theory of Development.

Whether done consciously and intentionally, or not, the mentors scaffolded and assigned the mentees tasks according to Vygotsky's ZPD. The mentors challenged their mentees by assigning them to teach a lesson they had never been taught before as reported by Nam (HEI 3) or by changing the mentees' scheduled teaching as reported by Trang (HEI 2). These challenges resulted in tension and anxiety for the mentees. However, with their determination and learned flexibility, the mentees were able to overcome these challenges satisfactorily, proving that they could do things beyond their abilities to acquire new knowledge and experience, and did so with the support of their formal mentors or MKOs (See Figure 10). In addition, the mentees spoke of receiving the benefits from the interactions with informal mentors (Han, HEI 4; Trang, HEI2) and mentoring peers (Nam, HEI 3) as well. They relayed solving a number of mentoring-related

challenges in the so-called scaffolding of experiences during their teaching apprenticeship. The mentees also showed themselves to be MKOs in presenting the new knowledge in every lesson to their students (See Figure 11). Although this study did not include students as its participants, they were mentioned here because they were the mentees' immediate catalysts in their teaching apprenticeship. From the sociocultural view, the mentor-mentee interaction is considered as a learning process of "apprenticeship, where apprentices collaborate in social practices with teacher educators as well as mentors, critical friends and peers to acquire and construct new forms of interaction and thinking" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 12).
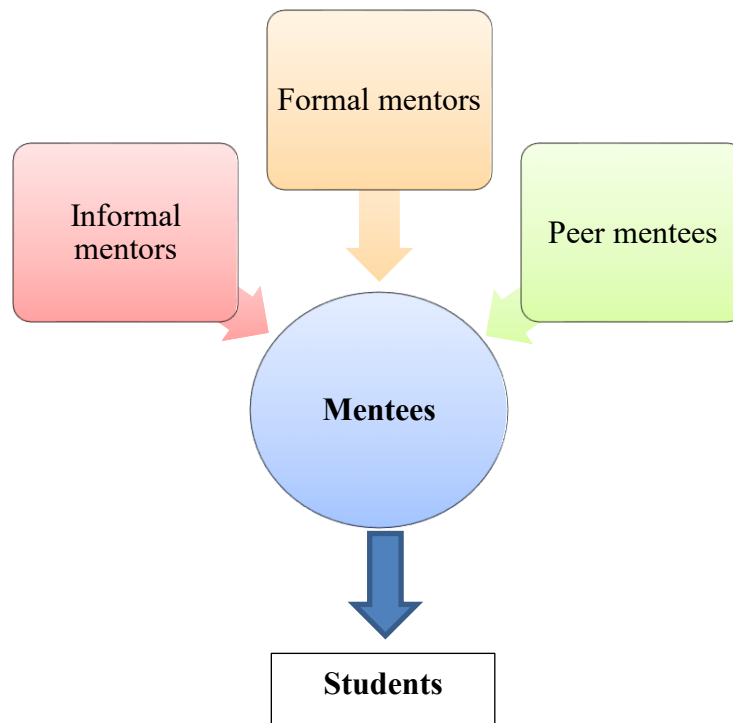
Figure 11. Sources of scaffolding for mentees in the mentorship program at HEIs in the MRD of Vietnam. Adapted from Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural Theory of Development.

In addition to the utilization of the ZPD and scaffolding to interpret the interactions between the mentors and the mentees, the positionality of teacher-learner's identity implied from

the sociocultural perspective was found relevant to the language instructor mentoring activities (Harvey, 2011; Kastelan-Sikora, 2013) in the present study. Through various interactions with the mentors, administrators, peers, and students during the learning-to-teach process at the institution, the EFL teaching mentees built their own identities. This identity of an EFL teaching role is "far more complex than simply a transmitter of information" due to the dual function of "language as both medium and content of instruction" (Harvey, 2011, p. 3). As an illustration of building her teaching identity, Han said:

> I observed how my mentor taught and communicated with his students and colleagues in the department. I drew out useful lessons for myself from his good characteristics and applied them to my teaching (…) My mentor is enthusiastic and ready to share his accumulated experience during his teaching time with me. He also shows me how to communicate with other instructors or colleagues, how to deal with students' problems. He does these things wholeheartedly (…) I have a deep admiration for my mentor's professional knowledge and radical personality trait. (Han, HEI 4)

In brief, Vygotsky's key principles aforementioned provided the mentors and mentees tools to perform their assigned tasks, promote their personal and professional development, and build up their own identities during and after the mentorship program.

8.2. Knowles's (1970, 1998) Adult Learning Theory

Knowles' (1970, 1998) adult learning theory and Knowles et al.'s (1998) andragogy in practice model that consists of three inter-related rings can also be employed to interpret the mentoring practices in the present study. The model represents the learning process of the three actors – mentees, mentors, and administrators – in the mentorship program at their HEI, with an emphasis on the mentees who were the key actors in the emergence of the MOET-mandated

mentorship program. The outer ring refers to the overall goals of the program and purposes for learning including the institutional growth and societal growth. The middle ring shows differences in a variety of mentoring aspects among the actors and the different institutions. The innermost ring comprises six core principles or characteristics the actors use in the process of learning how to teach, mentor, and manage for the mentees, mentors, and administrators, respectively.

In the mentorship program at the participating HEIs, the mentees, as adult learners, demonstrated use of most of the principles for learning which are associated with the successes and challenges described and discussed in Chapter Five: The Mentees of this dissertation. Specifically, the mentees revealed their real need to know various things as regards teaching, completing office tasks, and participating in extra-curricular activities (Han, HEI 4; Nam, HEI 3; Nghi, HEI 2; Trang, HEI 2). After having understood these responsibilities, the mentees were able to continue their teaching apprenticeship through a series of phases planned by their mentors. In addition, the mentees as apprentice teachers were self-aware of the importance of different sources of support and learned ways to overcome the mentoring-generated challenges in order to improve their teaching (Nam, HEI 3, Nghi, HEI 2). The mentees also had an orientation to learn a variety of new knowledge after they had been able to overcome challenges such as accepting post-teaching feedback and teaching mixed level classes (Han, HEI 4; Trang, HEI 2). The mentees, in addition, were motivated to learn new knowledge of teaching methods and skills. The growth of a passion or love for teaching and a teacher identity influenced by their mentors also motivated the mentees to make efforts to complete their assigned and voluntary tasks during the learning-how-to-teach program (Han, HEI 4, Trang, HEI 2).

The mentors, like their mentees, revealed a number of Knowles's (1970, 1998) adult learner's principles including their need to know and readiness to learn how to integrate information technology into teaching (Yen, HEI 1), the self-awareness of the acquired expertise and experience that supported their mentees' teaching practice (Minh, HEI 4; Tri, HEI 1), the prior experience they acquired from their academic studies, teaching, and mentoring (Minh, HEI 4), and their motivation to review their acquired knowledge of teaching methodology by observing their mentees' lessons (Tri, HEI 1, Yen, HEI1). These principles were aligned with the mentors' perceived successes and challenges as described and discussed in Chapter Six: The Mentors.

As with their mentors and mentees, the administrators' comments also reflected a number of principles of an adult learning while they were managing the mentorship program at the HEIs. The administrators used their own experience to make the mentor – mentee pairings that yielded successes for these two actors in their mentoring interactions (Hau, HEI 4; Thu, HEI 3). They were also aware of being a good listener and sharing ideas in working with their mentors and mentees, and they used this positive characteristic to make their mentorship management run smoothly. (Hau, HEI 4; Thu, HEI 3). Finally, the administrators considered their satisfaction in contributions to the mentees' and mentors' successes to be a motivation for them to seek ways to do their managing work more effectively (Thu, HEI 3). These adult learners' principles were displayed by the administrators in Chapter Seven: The Administrators that described and discussed their successes and challenges during the mentorship program.

In summary, the three actors – mentees, mentors, and administrators – revealed the adult learners' attributes (Knowles, 1970, 1998) when they participated in the mentorship program at

their HEI (See Figure 12). More importantly, a mentorship program in HEIs in Vietnam should

be intentionally built on such principles.
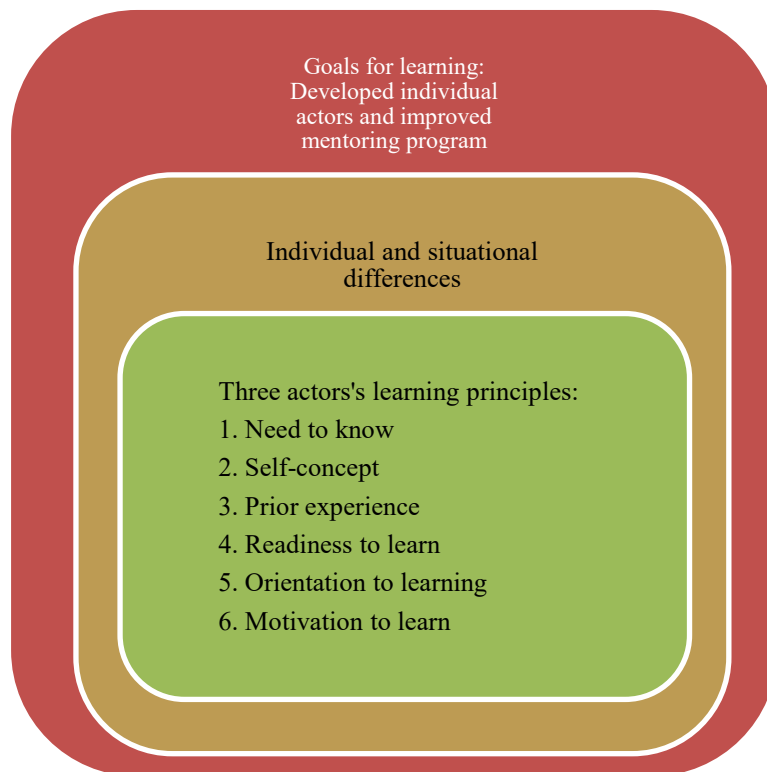
Figure 12. Learning principles of three actors in the mentorship program at HEIs in the MRD of Vietnam. Adapted from Knowles et al.'s (1998) Andragogy in Practice Model.

The following Table 14 illustrates how Knowles' (1970, 1998) adult learning principles

were reported by each of the three actors – mentees, mentors, and administrators - in the

mentorship programs at HEIs.

Table 14. *Knowles' (1970, 1998) adult learning principles reported by three mentoring actors.*

Adult learning principles	Mentees	Mentors	Administrators
Need to know	"When I received my mentor's feedback on some shortcomings in my teaching, I realized I still have some teaching shortcomings. Then I looked back on them and found ways to overcome them in the next lesson" (Han, HEI 4)	"My mentees are active and good at information technology or IT. They often show their IT strengths in their teaching practice (…) For those mentees who are good at IT, they teach me many useful things as a trade-off for	

		how I supported them" (Yen, HEI 1)	
Self- concept	"When I made lesson plans and faced some content that was hard to understand, I phoned these instructors [informal mentors], and they were ready to explain it to me carefully until I got through it. That made me feel more self-confident to teach in front of my class" (Han, HEI 4)	"Participating in the mentorship program, I had to prepare things for myself. I first read materials and regulations related to mentoring, including things mentors and mentees would do. However, these written documents did not work in the real situation. I also revisited my teaching knowledge and teaching methods I used. In addition, I predicted prospective problems related to students in order to help my mentees feel less shocked or disappointed with their unexpected shortcomings in future teaching" (Tri, HEI 1)	
Prior knowledge		Normally, I give feedback in a gentle voice using mitigating words. I do not criticize mentees by saying that they will never teach well if they keep repeating their teaching shortcomings. Generally speaking, I respect mentees. I speak to them in a gentle voice and share with them similar stories of my former apprentice teaching. I expect them to think about their shortcomings carefully" (Lan, HEI 2)	"Because some new instructors seem rather timid and less confident, they should be mentored by the same gender instructor. This way of matching makes mentees expose their personal feelings and experiences to their mentors more easily because they have mutual understandings. However, the most important factor that affects the effectiveness of the mentoring relationship is mentors' enthusiasm in mentoring and

			orientating mentees towards their optimal ability development" (Thu, HEI 3)
Readiness to learn	"I was assigned to teach a lesson in the course on English business. I was hesitant because it was totally new to me. I did not know if I could finish teaching the lesson well with my immature experience (…) That lesson left me with a strong impression. It went by very smoothly. It was like every student in class understood one another and collaborated with me to finish the lesson successfully. (…) That was one of the most significant moments in my mentorship program" (Nam, HEI 3)	"Although I am middle-aged and considered to be an experienced instructor, I always want to continue to learn. At the moment, I would like to have mentor, but finding a mentor for me is not easy. Fortunately, I have learned much from observing the other instructors' teaching. Observing the older and more experienced instructors, I have learned useful things. Observing the younger instructors or mentees has even brought me good things" (Yen, HEI 1)	"My happiness is that I have an opportunity to assign tasks for mentors and mentees. This shows one of my ways to support them. When they faced any difficulty, they asked for my advice. That I helped them solve their problems made me feel honored and happy" (Hau, HEI 4)
Orientation to learning	"Actually, every mentor guides her or his mentee but does not force the mentee to strictly follow any fixed pattern of teaching. Therefore, I could create my own teaching style" (Trang, HEI 2).	"Participating in the mentorship program, I had to prepare things for myself. I first read materials and regulations related to mentoring, including things mentors and mentees would do. However, these written documents did not work in the real situation. I also revisited my teaching knowledge and teaching methods I used. In addition, I predicted prospective problems related to students in order to help my mentees feel less shocked or disappointed with their unexpected shortcomings in future teaching" (Tri, HEI 1)	
Motivation to learn	"I have gradually realized that I am quite able to teach after being supported and encouraged by the mentor and other instructors" (Nghi, HEI 2)	"The current mentorship program has brought me some benefits. First, I have an opportunity to review my learned knowledge. This review is very important.	

		When I mentored new instructors, I realized that I had to review and update my knowledge. This is like what people call the faded-away knowledge. The teaching methods that have not been used for a long time will fade away. In addition, there were some problems in teaching that required me to solve. Although I am considered as an experienced instructor, my solutions to those problems were not as effective as the younger's ones" (Tri, HEI 1)	

Table 14 reveals that the mentees practiced five of Knowles' six principles, the mentors all six, and the administrators two of the six. Among the three actors in the mentorship program, the administrators displayed the least evidence of practicing the adult learning principles of Knowles (1970, 1998). This could be because the administrators were very experienced in having taken the roles of both a mentee and a mentor before, as well as having managed the mentorship program at their HEIs for years. Additionally, this could suggest that they could benefit from creating opportunities to chat more with the mentees and mentors with the desire of learning more about their perspectives of the program, especially during rapidly changing times.

8.3. Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory of Human Development

The present study explored the practices of the MOET – mandated mentorship program at the four HEIs in the MRD of Vietnam. Utilizing a qualitative interpretive approach, the study yielded a variety of findings related to three actors – mentees, mentors, and administrators – Through individual interviews they reported their thoughts, experiences, and expectations during the process of reciprocal interactions and revealed numerous successes as well as challenges. The nested nature of this study about the mentorship program at these HEIs can be elucidated by

employing Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory of Human Development. As Figure 13 reveals, the individual, dyadic and triadic interactions described by the key actors took place in a highly localized microsystem – the English Department of each HEI. The Department was subject to the rules, regulations and guidelines of the institution. Consideration of such policies revealed the influence of the mesosystem on the mentorship program. With all participating HEIs being subject to national standards in all aspects of their institutional decision-making, including the MOET-mentorship program, the program was also influenced by this exosystem. Of course, with Web 2.0 research studies and the rapid free flow of ideas around the world these days, the macrosystem also influenced all of the other systems as well.

ME + MR + AD
[Microsystem]

Participating HEIs in
the MRD
[Mesosystem]

VN MOET-mandated
mentorship program
[Exosystem]

World literature on
mentorship
[Macrosystem]
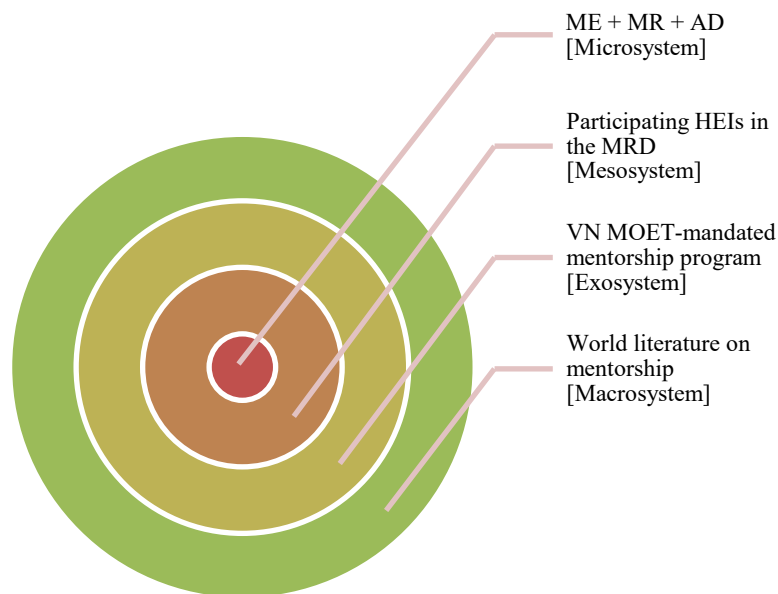
Figure 13. Ecological systems of mentorship at HEIs in the MRD of Vietnam. Adapted from Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory of Development.

8.3.1. Mentees in relationships with mentors and administrators [Microsystem]

The mentorship program was established to assist mentees in the initial stage of their teaching career. It also supported the development of mentees in a variety of ways including personal and professional knowledge; relationships between them with their assigned mentors, informal mentors, peer mentees, students, and other people within and across their department; and establishment of a teacher identity. It was these relationships that resulted in both accomplishments and challenges of mentees while they were navigating through the learning-to-teach program. Mentees perceived a variety of benefits regarding their personal and professional development thanks to various interactions with their formal mentors. They did not encounter any major difficulties with their mentors having a different age or gender. From the mentees' viewpoint they valued their mentors' professional life over chronological age, and they held the firm belief in the Vietnamese lifetime educational philosophy that goes, "Tôn sư, trọng đạo" [Honour teachers, respect their teachings]. In addition, mentees stated that the older mentors had more experience to share, so they put their trust in their mentors. Further, mentees sought additional supports from informal mentors who offered them mentoring-related advice and from peer mentees who assisted them in solving mentee-related problems. These bi-directional communications and interactions (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) influenced the mentees' development in their learning-to-teach program.

8.3.2. Participating HEIs in the MRD of Vietnam [Mesosystem]

Various aspects of the mentees' development depended on the mesosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) where the mentorship program implemented at the researched HEIs played a crucial role. In other words, the HEI's mentorship program fostered the mentees' personal and professional growth with their mentors' assistance. The HEIs strictly followed the MOET-mandated mentorship program. However, each of them implemented the mentorship

program in their own ways both because they were not guided by any officially endorsed

mentoring document from an authority such as the MOET and because they had to adapt to their

local contexts. The absence of such a national document led them to produce institution – written

guidelines for their own use. These self-written mentoring guidelines were rather general and

used for mentoring in all disciplines. The EFL faculty reported that their needs were unique and

that they should have their own mentorship guidelines. Thus, to improve the current mentorship

programs at these HEIs, an official mentoring guide could be written and endorsed by the active

mentoring actors -mentees, mentors, and administrators- of these HEIs. It could be used as an

official document to guide the future mentoring practices at these HEIs and possibly introduced

to other interested HEIs in the MRD.

8.3.3. Vietnam MOET – mandated mentorship program [Exosystem]

The mentees' professional development is influenced by the exosystem or the guidelines

of the mentorship program that is compulsorily implemented for new teachers from K – tertiary

public education in Vietnam. The required mentorship program lasts for 6 months, 9 months, and

12 months for kindergarten and primary education, secondary education, and tertiary education,

respectively. Although the mentorship program is mandated for all levels of education in

Vietnam, the MOET did not endorse any official document to guide it, except a promulgated

mentoring statement that was mentioned in the introductory chapter of this dissertation. This

statement consists of a few general guidelines that are used for all levels of mentoring.

Therefore, it was challenging for the participating HEIs to apply this statement to their specific

EFL faculty mentoring situations. The mentees, mentors, and administrators did not directly

participate in the production of this statement. However, their personal and professional

development were differently influenced by it.

The MOET-endorsed mentoring guidelines begin to form expectations of all actors within its borders. The approval of a national mentorship program to improve instruction in HEIs throughout Vietnam sets standards and expectations for performance within and beyond HEIs. As these understandings and related practices filter down through the other systems, we should see change in not only HEIs, but the society in general.

8.3.4. World literature on educational mentorship [Macrosystem]

The present study was conducted in the context of mentoring new faculty members of the HEIs in the MRD of Vietnam. The different phases of the study were supported by a variety of studies published globally and elucidated by sociocultural theories. From reviewing the literature on mentoring in various fields with a focus on higher education mentoring, the study yielded a myriad of findings about practices pertaining to three actors – mentees, mentors, and administrators – in the mentorship program at their HEIs. This literature review also provided a theoretical foundation for the study to interpret its data and identified concurrences and differences between its findings and those of other research in the mentorship field. Further, the world-wide literature review on mentorship showed global influences on the mentorship programs in the present study. Such influences also filter down through the exosystem where they may result in new or transformed policies, to the mesosystem where changes in local practices may take place, to the microsystem and actors themselves.

In summary, nested in Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory, the development of a mentorship program in HEIs in Vietnam requires attention appropriate to each system. A study similar to this one in five or ten years from now would enable a comparison and activation of the chronosystem.

8.4. Social Constructivist Paradigm

The present study investigated the EFL faculty mentorship programs at the HEIs in the MRD of Vietnam regarding its successes and challenges as reported by three actors - mentees, mentors, and administrators. These successes and challenges were identified in different aspects of mentoring such as the mentee-mentor pairing, the administrator's monitoring, the roles, expectations, and experiences of mentees, mentors, and administrators, and the formal and informal types of mentoring. Within the triadic mentoring practices, the knowledge of personal and professional development was constructed out of the reciprocal interactions between the mentees and others including their mentors, administrators, peers, students, and the context in which the mentees located their teaching practice. Just as the mentees experienced positive and negative influences in various aspects of mentoring such as teaching and doing office work, so did the mentors notice impacts on teaching, research, mentoring, and academic service during the process of mentoring. The mentees established their own identities from being an apprentice instructor with freshly acquired knowledge of teaching to aspirations of becoming a tenure-track instructor with more profound knowledge, while the mentors consolidated their distinct identities as a senior instructor and obtained more recognition for their positive contributions upon completion of the mentorship program. In the same vein, the administrators' knowledge of criteria for pairing and monitoring the mentee – mentor performances was also constructed out of intercommunication with and management of these two actors. Such an established identity of the mentees relied on the personal and professional scaffolding of the mentors while they were navigating through the mentorship program. They both supported each other by constructing and enhancing the knowledge of mentorship in the same way as Denzin and Lincoln (2011)

described reproducing the situational and experiential images of the researched through their individuality, subjectivity, and voice.

In the present study, the social constructivist paradigm, as embedded in the educational theories of Vygotsky (1978), Knowles (1970, 1998), and Bronfenbrenner (1979), supports the claim that knowledge is constructed through interactions with other people in determined contexts rather than generated from individuals themselves. By interacting with one another in the triadic circle, all of the actors produced substantial knowledge and practical skills of teaching and mentoring not only for the mentees at their early career stage but for the mentors and administrators in their mid-to-late career stages as well.

In conclusion, this chapter interpreted the findings of the interviews with mentees, mentors and administrators of the mentorship program through the lenses of three educational theoretical works (Vygotsky, 1978; Knowles, 1970, 1998; and Bronfenbrenner, 1979) and social constructivist paradigm. The next chapter will provide the summary statements, limitations, and recommendations of the study.

Chapter Nine:

Summary of New Findings, Recommendations, Comparing Findings of the Previously Reported Studies and This Study, Limitations, and Future Research

This chapter begins with a summary of the new findings about the three actors in the mentorship programs at their HEIs. These new findings will be added to the literature about mentorship in Vietnam and may be of value to other Asian nations with mentorship programs at their HEIs. The chapter then presents recommendations and a brief comparison of the results of the studies previously reported in the literature review and this study. It continues with a statement of the limitations of the study and then concludes with a series of topics for future research that are grounded on the limitations of the study.

9.1. Summary of New Findings

Guided by three educational theoretical lenses of Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural Theory of Development, Knowles' (1979, 1998) Adult Learning Theory, and Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory of Human Development, the present study conducted an investigation into successes and challenges experienced by three actors - mentees, mentors and administrators - participating in the mentorship programs at the higher education institutions in the MRD of Vietnam. Having employed the interpretive qualitative research methodology, the study collected data from two semi-structured face-to-face interviews for each of the ten faculty members at four HEIs, including four novice faculty members as mentees, four experienced faculty members as mentors, and two senior faculty members as administrators. The interview data was analyzed and interpreted by utilizing the thematic approach of Braun and Clarke (2006). The findings from the interview data were elucidated by the findings from the literature review and three educational theoretical works. This convergence yielded a number of noticeable

themes reflecting the successes and challenges that each study participant perceived while navigating through the mentorship program at her/his HEI. In addition, this study surfaced a number of emerging themes from each group of actors who distinctly perceived accomplishments and obstacles reflected in varying aspects of mentoring and presented in the following section:

9.1.1. The mentees

Among data collected from mentees' interviews, a number of new findings as regards successes and challenges they experienced from the mentorship program are noted.

1. The mentees were inspired by their mentors to start building their teaching identity. The mentorship program and work with their formal and informal mentors positively influenced their decision to remain in the teaching profession after completing their apprenticeship.

2. The mentees established a harmonious working relationship with their mentors. They entered the mentorship program with a strong spirit of learning how to teach as an apprentice instructor, and they tried their best to perform the assigned tasks. They did not intentionally and purposefully create any contradictions with their mentors and constantly considered them to be MKOs from whom they could seek support in order to do their mentoring work successfully.

3. The mentees did not encounter any conflicts related to gender and age differences with their mentors. In terms of gender difference, the mentees highly valued their mentors' expertise over their gender identity.

4. The mentees encountered shortcomings including their sole use of available textbooks and pacing of lessons (Han, HEI 4; Trang, HEI 2). Mentees had to learn how to manage

their time in order to complete all of their assigned tasks satisfactorily during their teaching apprenticeship. Support from formal and informal mentors motivated them to do so.

5. The mentees reported facing mental tension or anxiety when their teaching was observed by their mentors and/or other instructors. Their anxiety became more serious if their observed teaching was evaluated for credits; this is one of the requirements in their teaching apprenticeship (Nghi, HEI 2; Trang, HEI 2). However, the mentees did not feel so stressed when they were observed teaching a lesson that was not evaluated for credits. The mentors' feedback could worsen the mentees' anxiety, depending on its tone. Fortunately, the mentees were able to overcome these stressors after they had had more teaching practice. The positive mentorship experience left the mentees aspiring to choose teaching as a career.

6. The mentees reported that they would appreciate an officially endorsed mentoring document.

9.1.2. The mentors

Mentors in the present study experienced a number of distinct successes and challenges during the mentorship program at their HEI.

1. The mentorship program offered them a good chance to review teaching methods and classroom management skills (Minh, HEI 4; Tri, HEI 1).

2. The mentors acquired information technology skills. Seeing their mentees using newer teaching techniques and approaches also motivated them to learn more new teaching methods, especially in the area of informational technology (social media and Web 2.0 resources).

3. The mentors, like their mentees, did not experience any considerable conflicts with their mentees regarding age and gender differences (Lan, HEI 2; Minh, HEI 4; Yen, HEI 1). The mentors felt more comfortable addressing the mentees in face-to-face communication or academic conferencing and did not hesitate to make appointments to discuss any mentoring-related issues with their mentees. The mentors were motivated to contribute to the mentees because of the latter's respect and admiration for their experience.

4. The mentors were challenged by working with mentees with immature teaching behaviors (Yen, HEI 1) and had to remind them to keep a certain social distance from their students.

5. The mentors encountered some dissonance with their mentees (Minh, HEI 4; Tri, HEI 2) regarding different teaching approaches. A mentorship training program could benefit from attention to the possible discord of preferred teaching methods between different generations of instructors.

6. The mentors reported that they would appreciate an officially endorsed mentoring document.

9.1.3. The administrators

The present study revealed a number of new successes and challenges experienced by administrators at the participating HEIs during the mentorship program.

1. In order to match the mentors with the mentees purposefully and intentionally, the administrators created criteria (Hau, HEI 4; Thu, HEI 3). Pairing was also done on the basis of a professional age rather than a chronological age.

2. The administrators perceived themselves to show respect to their mentees and mentors by being good listeners.

3. The administrators were occasionally troubled by cross-gender matching (Hau, HEI 4) for cultural reasons.

4. The administrators (Hau, HEI 4; Thu, HEI 3) reported that they would appreciate an officially endorsed mentoring document.

9.1.4. The mentorship program

Reflecting on the overall study it is clear that **t**he success of the mentorship programs at the participating HEIs emerged from a variety of factors.

1. There must be willingness on the part of all actors to share information freely and openly in the mentorship program.

2. All actors reported a desire for a MOET officially endorsed mentoring document to specify program expectations, enhance outcomes and reduce challenges.

3. In the researched mentorship programs the work of the three actors was interdependent. Their interactions supported their personal and professional development and the successes identified by each actor showed reciprocal benefits to all.

4. By seeing mentorship as a form of professional development for both mentees and mentors, all parties could engage more fruitfully.

5. Adopting Vietnamese values and practices supported the successes and challenges of the mentorship program.

9.2. Recommendations

1. All participants reported a desire for more official direction, in particular an officially endorsed guide for EFL faculty mentorship. Thoughts for such a document have been recorded in Appendix H.

2. Since there was no assessment plan for the performance of the actors in the mentorship program at the participating HEIs, perhaps criteria for such assessments could assist in resolving problems. This could be included in the mandated guide.

9.3. Comparing Findings of the Previously Reported Studies and This Study

Aligning the findings of the present study with those reported in the studies on educational mentorship elsewhere in the world over the past 40 years, as summarized in Table 2 in Chapter Two: Review of the Literature, the researcher identified a number of similarities and differences between those published in the period from 2011 to 2020 and this study. All of these studies, this one included:

- maintained a variety of definitions of mentorship that were generated in conformity with each specific mentoring context or setting;

- were aimed at promoting the immediate mentoring actors' personal and professional development, with more attention to the mentees' integration into their new teaching environment;

- found the mentees benefited from the informal (unassigned) mentoring provided by other faculty members and mentee peers in addition to their formal (assigned mentors); and

- found that the support of informal mentors supported the work of the mentors.

The present study findings did not support the role of autonomous learning of the mentees as found in other studies during this decade, although it did underpin the importance of the mentees' professional development in other ways.

Nor did it report a number of other types of mentoring such as group mentoring, tele-mentoring, and electronic mentoring as found in other studies.

In addition, this study did not mention the longitudinal effects of mentoring on the mentees, mentors, and institutions over the long term because it was being conducted while the mentorship program at their HEI was in progress.

9.4. Limitations of the Study

A number of limitations from this study need to be identified. First of all, the study only employed individual face-to-face semi-structured interviews as a key method to collect data; no on-site observation or verification of any of the activities described by the actors took place. In addition, the researcher was unable to obtain the institution-issued mentoring documents as reported by a couple of the study participants. What was provided consisted of just some briefly jotted notes recorded in the departmental meeting minutes prior to the commencement of the mentorship program. Such a document would also offer an additional support for the study findings. The study also excluded the involvement of the institution's rectorate board. Since the mentorship program is mandated by the MOET to support all novel faculty members to socialize them into their new working environment, the rectorate board's voice could also have been heard so as to receive a more well-rounded view on the implementation of the mentorship program at their HEIs. Further, students' perspectives on their novice and experienced instructors (who participated in the mentorship program) could provide a valuable perspective on the successes or failures of the mentorship program as well. Additionally, the number of participants was small

(10 faculty members) and the two-round interview time for each of them was approximately 45 minutes and 20 minutes respectively. A larger number of participants and an extended interview time could have provided more mentoring – related ideas. In addition, the study focused only on the EFL faculty mentorship at four multi-disciplinary HEIs. The situation in other faculties or at other HEIs could differ considerably. Finally, as a qualitative study the findings are not generalizable nor applicable beyond the context in which the data was collected.

9.5. Future Research

Although there were a limited number of participants in this qualitative research study, the study's findings give credence to future explorations.

1. Since the HEIs in this study have similar characteristics and operating mechanisms, and most of the actors are recent graduates of their HEI and familiar with one another, this familiarity yielded more benefits than barriers for them during the mentorship program. If the context of new faculty recruitment were different, would the mentorship program result in such perceived outcomes? A study on impacts of a mentorship program involving participants who have not experienced a pre-established relationship is worthy of attention.

2. The informal mentorship was reported to take place by the mentors in this study and by the Vietnamese EFL mentees in Nguyen's (2008) study. This revealed that an informal mentorship was essential to them. However, the mentors in this study encountered one institutional barrier that is their support for unassigned mentees had to be approved by the institutional administrators. An investigation into hidden institutional barriers and ways "to jump over" them is worthy of consideration.

3. The mentors of the participating HEIs reported receiving various types of compensation for their mentoring work, all inadequate in their minds. However, they did not report this issue to their institutional administrators. With such a feeling of inadequate compensation, will the mentors continue to want to participate in future mentorship programs at their HEIs? How does the compensation for mentoring work influence its outcomes?

4. This study employed semi-structured face-to-face interviews to collect data from the mentees, mentors and administrators. The mentees' teaching performance was directly assessed by their mentors and then reported to the administrators for a final evaluation. No students' assessment of their instructor-mentees was reported. Could the mentee assessment be conducted by both the mentors and students? How might this effect the mentees' performance in the mentorship program?

5. The voices of students were absent in this study. It would be invaluable to add their perspectives on the changes of their instructor-mentees.

6. The present study did not delve deeply into all aspects of the mentee - mentor relationships, particularly those related to their imagined expectations and experienced realities. An exploration of mentors' and mentees' expectations of each other and the degree to which their expectations were satisfied offers a venue for interested researchers. Mentees feedback about mentors should also be considered.

7. This study did not mention the longitudinal effects of mentoring on the mentees, mentors, and institutions over the long term because it was being conducted while the mentorship program at their HEI was in progress. The longitudinal impact of mentorship programs merits further investigation.

8. Administrators in this study sometimes encountered challenges of pairing mentees and mentors of different genders. This finding contradicts what was reported by the mentees and the mentors, so this matter is worthy of future exploration.

9. This study focused on the mentorship program within the EFL Teacher Education Department. Its participants reported not being supported by a distinct document for EFL mentorship. Therefore, an officially endorsed document for EFL faculty mentorship is important for the actors at the participating HEIs. After such a document (See Appendix H for more detail) is created, a study similar to this one could offer interesting comparative results. Researching mentorship in other disciplines in Vietnam would also contribute to the research literature.

This chapter summarized a number of key content areas of the study. It presented a variety of new findings that can be added to the literature about mentorship in Vietnam. It also presented a recommendation that showed three actors' aspiration of an officially endorsed mentorship document. The new findings were then compared with those reported in the previous studies, showing both commonalities and differences with them. Finally, the chapter included limitations of the study and suggested a variety of topics for future research.

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Appendix A: INFORMATION LETTER and CONSENT FORM [to the Mentee]

Study Title: **EFL Faculty Mentorship Programs in Vietnam**

Research Investigator: Supervisor:
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Background
- This study aims to explore successes and challenges in the mentoring relationship regarding your expectations and experiences of the triadic interactions with your mentor and administrator.
- You are being asked to be in this study because you are a novice or inexperienced faculty member who has been assigned a senior or experienced faculty member as your mentor during your apprenticeship at the university.
- I have recognized you as my potential study participant based on your response to my email and your chair's introduction regarding the study participant criteria.
- The results of this study will be used in support of my doctoral dissertation, will be shared with other universities which are interested in second language mentorship, and may be presented at some conferences in education and mentoring.

Purpose
- The primary purpose of this study is to demystify challenges encountered and successes gained by the mentors and mentees in second language mentorship at the higher education level.
- This study also aims at developing a feasible mentorship program which could be of interest to second language teacher education departments at universities in the Mekong River Delta of Vietnam.

Study Procedures
- As a mentee, you will be invited for two semi-structured interviews. The first interview will be scheduled at our mutual convenience before it is conducted by me. It will revolve around your expectations and experiences of the triadic interactions with your mentor and administrator. Your successes and challenges in the mentor – mentee relationship will be explored. The second interview will be scheduled approximately four weeks after the first one and will focus on some particular topics emerging from the first interview. I will travel to your university to conduct both interviews at your offices or at a designated place of your preference.

- Each interview will last for one hour. Both of the interviews will be audio-taped for later data analysis. I will be taking some notes for later use while interviewing you.
- The two interviews will be transcribed verbatim. Then, the transcripts will be sent back to you via email or in-person for verification. You can delete, modify, or supplement any of your ideas before sending them back to me.
- You can use Vietnamese language during the two interviews.

Benefits
- You will be provided with a description of benefits and best practices of second language faculty mentorship in university in addition to its existing drawbacks.
- You will also be introduced to a newly improved mentoring pattern to practice in your current and potential mentorship.
- Your university's competition for prestige and enrollment will be enhanced thanks to its well-prepared faculty who will have matured from this regionally recognized mentorship program.

Risk

- There are no risks anticipated with your involvement in this research study. However, if we learn anything during the research that may affect your willingness to continue being in the study, we will tell you right away.

Voluntary Participation
- You are under no obligation to participate in this study. Your participation is completely voluntary.
- You may also refuse to answer any question which you find private or uncomfortable.
- Even if you agree to participate in the study, you can change your mind and withdraw at any time up to three days after the final transcript has been returned without having to report any reasons. If you withdraw, all of your date will be destroyed and eliminated from the study.

Confidentiality and Anonymity
- Your name will be kept confidential and no identifying information will be included in interview transcripts as well as later disseminations of the study, (i.e., no one will know the names of the participating universities.
- Your computerized interview transcripts will be password-protected, and other written forms of data including my field-notes will be protected in a safety box or a locked cabinet. They all can only be accessed by my supervisor and me and will be discarded after five years following completion of the study.
- You will have the right to a report of the preliminary findings of this study by contacting me to receive a copy.

Further Information
- If you have any further questions regarding this study, please do not hesitate to contact my research supervisor and me via addresses aforementioned.

- The plan for this study has been reviewed for its adherence to ethical guidelines by a Research Ethics Board at the University of Alberta. For questions regarding participant rights and ethical conduct of research, contact the Research Ethics Office at (780) 492-2615.

Consent Statement

I have read this form and the research study has been explained to me. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered. If I have additional questions, I have been told whom to contact. I agree to participate in the research study described above and will receive a copy of this consent form. I will receive a copy of this consent form after I sign it.

_____   _____
Participant's Name (printed) and Signature   Date

_____   _____
Name (printed) and Signature of Person Obtaining Consent   Date

Appendix B: INFORMATION LETTER and CONSENT FORM [to the Mentor]

Study Title: **EFL Faculty Mentorship Programs in Vietnam**

Research Investigator: Supervisor:
Hung Quoc Tran   **Dr. Olenka Bilash**
214 Education South   249 Education South
University of Alberta   University of Alberta
Edmonton, AB, T6G 2G5   Edmonton, AB, T6G 2G5
hqtran@ualberta.ca   olenka.bilash@ualberta.ca
(789) 709-8696   (780) 492-5101

Background
- This study aims to explore successes and challenges in the mentor – mentee relationship regarding your expectations and experiences of the triadic interactions with your mentee and administrator.
- You are being asked to be in this study because you are a senior faculty member who has practiced mentoring for novice or inexperienced faculty member (or mentee) in her/his apprenticeship.
- I have recognized you as my potential study participant based on your response to my email and your chair's introduction regarding the study participant criteria.
- The results of this study will be used in support of my doctoral dissertation, will be shared with other universities which are interested in second language mentorship, and may be presented at some conferences in education and mentoring.

Purpose
- The primary purpose of this study is to demystify challenges encountered and successes gained by the mentors and mentees in second language mentorship at the higher education level.
- This study also aims at developing a feasible mentorship program which could be of interest to second language teacher education departments at universities in the Mekong River Delta of Vietnam.

Study Procedures
- As a mentor, you will be invited for two semi-structured interviews. The first interview will be scheduled at our mutual convenience before it is conducted by me. It will revolve around your expectations and experiences of the triadic interactions with your mentee and administrator. Your successes and challenges in the mentor – mentee relationship will be explored. The second interview will be scheduled approximately four weeks after the first one and will focus on some particular topics emerging from the first interview. I will travel to your university to conduct both interviews at your office or at a designated place of your preference.

- Each interview will last for approximately one hour. Both of the interviews will be audio-taped for later data analysis. I will be taking some notes for later use while interviewing you.
- The two interviews will be transcribed verbatim. Then, the transcripts will be sent back to you via email or in-person for verification. You can delete, modify, or supplement any of your ideas before sending them back to me.
- You can use Vietnamese language during the two interviews.

Benefits
- You will be provided with a description of benefits and best practices of second language faculty mentorship in university in addition to its existing drawbacks.
- You will also be introduced to a newly improved mentoring pattern to practice in your current and potential mentorship.
- Your university's competition for prestige and enrollment will be enhanced thanks to its well-prepared faculty who will have matured from this regionally recognized mentorship program.

Risk

- There are no risks anticipated with your involvement in this research study. However, if we learn anything during the research that may affect your willingness to continue being in the study, we will tell you right away.

Voluntary Participation
- You are under no obligation to participate in this study. Your participation is completely voluntary.
- You may also refuse to answer any question which you find private or uncomfortable.
- Even if you agree to participate in the study, you can change your mind and withdraw at any time up to three days after the final transcript has been returned without having to report any reasons. If you withdraw, all of your data will be destroyed and eliminated from the study.

Confidentiality and Anonymity
- Your name will be kept confidential and no identifying information will be included in interview transcripts as well as later disseminations of the study, (i.e. no one will know the names of the participating universities).
- Your computerized interview transcripts will be password-protected, and other written forms of data including my field-notes will be protected in a safety box or a locked cabinet. They all can only be accessed by my supervisor and me and will be discarded after five years following completion of the study.
- You will have the right to a report of the preliminary findings of this study by contacting me to receive a copy.

Further Information
- If you have any further questions regarding this study, please do not hesitate to contact my research supervisor and me via addresses aforementioned.

- The plan for this study has been reviewed for its adherence to ethical guidelines by a Research Ethics Board at the University of Alberta. For questions regarding participant rights and ethical conduct of research, contact the Research Ethics Office at (780) 492-2615.

Consent Statement

I have read this form and the research study has been explained to me. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered. If I have additional questions, I have been told whom to contact. I agree to participate in the research study described above and will receive a copy of this consent form. I will receive a copy of this consent form after I sign it.

_____   _____
Participant's Name (printed) and Signature   Date

_____   _____
Name (printed) and Signature of Person Obtaining Consent   Date

Appendix C: INFORMATION LETTER and CONSENT FORM [to the Administrator]

Study Title: **EFL Faculty Mentorship Programs in Vietnam**

Research Investigator: Supervisor:
Hung Quoc Tran   **Dr. Olenka Bilash**
214 Education South   249 Education South
University of Alberta   University of Alberta
Edmonton, AB, T6G 2G5   Edmonton, AB, T6G 2G5
hqtran@ualberta.ca   olenka.bilash@ualberta.ca
(789) 709-8696   (780) 492-5101

Background
- This study aims to explore successes and challenges in the mentor – mentee relationship regarding your expectations and experiences of the triadic interactions between your senior or experienced faculty members (mentors) and novice or inexperienced faculty members (mentees).
- You are being asked to be in this study because you are an administrator who has the right to assign mentor – mentee pairings in the practices of mentorship at your department.
- I have recognized you as my potential study participant based on your response to my email and your administrating role in the department regarding the study participant criteria.
- The results of this study will be used in support of my doctoral dissertation, will be shared with other universities which are interested in second language mentorship, and may be presented at some conferences in education and mentoring.

Purpose
- The primary purpose of this study is to demystify challenges encountered and successes gained by the mentors and mentees in second language mentorship at the higher education level.
- This study also aims at developing a feasible mentorship program which could be of interest to second language teacher education departments at universities in the Mekong River Delta of Vietnam.

Study Procedures
- As an administrator, you will be invited for two semi-structured interviews. The first interview will be scheduled at our mutual convenience before it is conducted by me. It will revolve around your expectations and experiences of the triadic interactions between your mentors and mentees. Your evaluations of their successes and challenges in the mentor – mentee relationship will be explored. The second interview will be scheduled approximately four weeks after the first one and will focus on some particular topics

emerging from the first interview. I will travel to your university to conduct both interviews at your offices or at a designated place of your preference.

- Each interview will last for one hour. Both of the interviews will be audio-taped for later data analysis. I will be taking some notes for later use while interviewing you.
- The two interviews will be transcribed verbatim. Then, the transcripts will be sent back to you via email or in-person for verification. You can delete, modify, or supplement any of your ideas before sending them back to me.
- You can use Vietnamese language during the two interviews.

Benefits
- You will be provided with a description of benefits and best practices of second language faculty mentorship in university in addition to its existing drawbacks.
- You will also be introduced to a newly-improved mentoring pattern as a premise for your assigning the current and potential mentor – mentee pairings.
- Your university's competition for prestige and enrollment will be enhanced thanks to its well-prepared faculty who will have matured from this regionally recognized mentorship program.

Risk

- There are no risks anticipated with your involvement in this research study. However, if we learn anything during the research that may affect your willingness to continue being in the study, we will tell you right away).

Voluntary Participation
- You are under no obligation to participate in this study. Your participation is completely voluntary.
- You may also refuse to answer any question which you find private or uncomfortable with.
- Even if you agree to participate in the study, you can change your mind and withdraw at any time up to three days after the final transcript has been returned without having to report any reasons. If you withdraw, all of your date will be destroyed and eliminated from the study.

Confidentiality and Anonymity
- Your name will be kept confidential and no identifying information will be included in interview transcripts as well as later disseminations of the study (i.e., no one will know the names of the participating universities).
- Your computerized interview transcripts will be password-protected, and other written forms of data including my field-notes will be protected in a safety box or a locked cabinet. They all can only be accessed by my supervisor and me and will be discarded after five years following completion of the study.
- You will have the right to a report of the preliminary findings of this study at the by emailing me to receive a copy.

Further Information

- If you have any further questions regarding this study, please do not hesitate to contact my research supervisor and me via addresses aforementioned.
- The plan for this study has been reviewed for its adherence to ethical guidelines by a Research Ethics Board at the University of Alberta. For questions regarding participant rights and ethical conduct of research, contact the Research Ethics Office at (780) 492-2615.

Consent Statement

I have read this form and the research study has been explained to me. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered. If I have additional questions, I have been told whom to contact. I agree to participate in the research study described above and will receive a copy of this consent form. I will receive a copy of this consent form after I sign it.

_____   _____

Participant's Name (printed) and Signature   Date

_____   _____

Name (printed) and Signature of Person Obtaining Consent   Date

Appendix D: Pre-Interview Activities

Table 1
Examples of Pre-Interview Activities

Getting-to-know-you activities
Both the interviewee and the interviewer make "all about me" posters to bring to the first interview.
These will include pictures of each engaging in your favourite activities and will show or name some of your favourite hobbies, foods, people, and places.
The interviewee is asked to make a drawing, map or diagram showing the important, favourite or most used places in his/her life.
Key word activity: The interviewee is asked to make a list of 20 important words and then to divide the words into two groups.

Activities to Learn About Context
The interviewee is asked to bring a schedule or log showing the parts of a program or time period of interest, e.g., a timetable from their university schedule, a log of how time is spent in everyday life of the course of a week.
The interviewee is asked to draw a map, draw a diagram, or take photographs of the place where the activity of interest occurs, e.g., the classroom, a meeting room, or the computer lab.
The interviewee is provided with a diagram of the context of interest and asked to mark all the favourite and least favourite places in it, e.g., a diagram of the department or Faculty.

Creating a Meaningful Starting Point for Conversation about the Topic of Interest
The interviewee is asked to draw a picture of herself/himself engaging in mentorship or engaging in a favourite part of mentorship.

Facilitating Recall, Analysis, and Reflection
Draw two pictures: one of a good day and the other of a bad day in mentorship.
Draw two pictures: one showing what it was like before mentorship, and one showing what it was like after mentorship.
Draw three pictures showing what it was like at the beginning, middle, and end of mentorship.
Make a timeline listing significant events in your experience of mentorship.
If someone were to make a movie about your experience of mentorship, make a list of key segments or scenes that ought to be included.

Expressing One's Understanding or Personal Experience of the Topic of Interest
Make a poster showing ideas about mentorship (use drawings or pictures and words cut out from magazines).
Using pictures cut out from magazines, make a poster with two sides: one side showing examples of the concept of interest and the other side showing non-examples of mentorship.

Visual Metaphors or Symbolic Representations of Experience
Draw a diagram or pictures showing an important aspect of your mentorship experience, e.g., where your sources of support come from, where your hope comes from.

Use three colours to make a diagram or abstract drawing that shows the way you experience mentorship.

Note: Adapted from *Table 1: Examples of Pre-Interview Activities* by Ellis (2006, p. 119).

Appendix E: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR MENTEE

I. Demographic Information

1. How long have you been teaching in the apprentice phase at your university?
2. Had you taught at another university prior to your current university? If yes, where? For how long?
3. What has your highest academic degree been so far? Where did you earn it? In what field?
4. Which course(s) of EFL have you taught? (e.g., General EFL, ESP, EAP, or ELT)? To what level(s) of student? (e.g., First year to fifth year)

II. Mentoring Program

5. Please describe the mentorship program at your university.
    a. The following will be used to probe for more information if the interviewee does not include them in their overall description.
        i. Is the mentoring program for new faculty at your university that you have been involved in compulsory or optional?
            1. If compulsory, who paired you with your mentor? How has this pairing affected your apprentice teaching?
            2. If optional, how did you find your mentor?
        ii. What type(s) of support have you been offered during this phase? By whom?
        iii. What other things do you think need to be supplemented to the current mentoring program at your university?

III. The Mentoring Practice

6. How did you prepare yourself for the mentorship program? (I will give examples if required: attending a workshop on mentoring, talking with previous mentees, referring to available mentoring documents, etc.)
7. What did you expect from your mentor during the mentorship program? (I will give examples if required: teaching methods, classroom management, teaching resource development, students' personal problems, autonomous learning and lifelong learning, etc.).
8. What actually happened during your mentorship?
    a. Possible probing questions:
        i. Were your expectations met? What types of support did you receive?
        ii. Could you describe one of your meetings with the mentor to make me understand better how the mentoring relationship works?

9. Please describe the benefits and challenges you have experienced from the mentorship program.
   a. Possible probing questions:
      i. Did anything take place that you did not expect? Any unexpected challenges? Conflicts?
   b. Did you experience any conflicts with your mentor? If yes, how did you manage and solve them? Has it affected your communication or relationship with your mentor since then?
10. Please describe how you perceive the mentorship program influencing you as a novice faculty member at the university? Your future career path?

Appendix F: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR MENTOR

I. Demographic Information

1. How long have you been teaching your university?
2. What has your highest academic degree been so far? Where did you earn it? In what field?
3. Which course(s) of EFL have you taught? (e.g., General EFL, ESP, EAP, or ELT)? To what level(s) of student? (e.g., first year to fifth year)
4. How many times have you been appointed as a mentor at your university? How many new faculty members have you mentored so far? How many mentees do you have at the moment?

II. Mentoring Program

5. Please describe the mentorship program at your university.
   a. The following will be used to probe for more information if the interviewee does not include them in their overall description.
      i. Is the mentoring program for new faculty at your university that you have been involved in compulsory or optional?
         1. If compulsory, who paired you with your mentee? How has this pairing affected your mentoring work?
         2. If optional, how did your mentee find you?
      ii. What type(s) of support have you offered your mentee during this phase?
      iii. What other things do you think need to be supplemented to the current mentoring program at your university?

III. The Mentoring Practice

6. How did you prepare yourself for the mentorship program? (I will give examples if required: attending a workshop on mentoring, talking with previous mentors, referring to available mentoring documents, etc.)

7. What did you expect from your mentee during the mentorship program? (I will give examples if required: teaching methods, classroom management, teaching resource development, students' personal problems, autonomous learning and lifelong learning, etc.).
8. What actually happened during your mentorship?
   a. Possible probing questions:
      i. Were your expectations met? What types of support did you offer?
      ii. Could you describe one of your meetings with the mentee to make me understand better how the mentoring relationship works?
9. Please describe the benefits and challenges you have experienced from the mentorship program.
   a. Possible probing questions:

       i. Did anything take place that you did not expect? Any unexpected challenges? Conflicts?

    b. Did you experience any conflicts with your mentee? If yes, how did you manage and solve them? Has it affected your communication or relationship with your mentee since then?

10. Please describe how you perceive the mentorship program influencing you as an experienced faculty member at the university? Your future career path?

Appendix G: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR ADMINISTRATOR

I. Demographic Information

1. How long have you been in the administrative position at your university?
2. What has your highest academic degree been so far? Where did you earn it? In what field?
3. Are you still teaching in while in this administrative work?
4. How often have you done the mentor-mentee pairing at your university? How many mentoring cases are there at your department at the moment?

II. Mentoring Program

5. Please describe the mentorship program at your university.

    b. The following will be used to probe for more information if the interviewee does not include them in their overall description.
        i. Is the mentoring program for new faculty at your university that you have been involved in compulsory or optional?
            1. If compulsory, who has the right to do the pairing? How has this pairing been done?
            2. If optional, how do you manage the mentoring pairing?
        ii. What type(s) of support have you offered your mentees and mentors during this phase?
        iii. What other things do you think need to be supplemented to the current mentoring program at your university?

III. The Mentoring Practice

6. How did you prepare yourself for the mentorship program? (I will give examples if required: attending a workshop on mentoring management, talking with previous administrators, referring to available mentoring documents, etc.).

7. What did you expect from your mentees and mentors during the mentorship program? (I will give examples if required: teaching methods, classroom management, teaching resource development, students' personal problems, autonomous learning and lifelong learning, etc.).

8. What actually happened during your mentorship?
    a. Possible probing questions:
        i. Were your expectations met? What types of support did you offer?
        ii. Could you describe one of your meetings with the mentee and mentor to make me understand better how the mentoring relationship works?

9. Please describe the benefits and challenges you have experienced from the mentorship program.

     a. Possible probing questions:
         i. Did anything take place that you did not expect? Any unexpected challenges? Conflicts?
     b. Did you experience any conflicts with your mentees and mentors? If yes, how did you manage and solve them? Has it affected your communication or relationship with them since then?

10. Please describe how you perceive the mentorship program influencing you as an experienced administrator at the university? Your future career path?

Appendix H: A Proposed EFL Faculty Mentorship Guide

Since the MOET-mandated mentorship program is practised differently at each of the four participating HEIs the MRD of Vietnam, its component parts might also be more explicitly identified. Reported in the world-wide research literature on positive outcomes of the mentorship program implemented in HEIs, a number of selected programs (Eisner, 2015; Inzer & Crawford, 2005; Lumpkin, 2011; Office of the Provost, 2016) and the findings of this study could be employed as a starting point for the proposed EFL faculty mentorship program including both formal and informal mentoring supports. It could cover the following major content areas:

1. program design, or a blueprint that guides other aspects of the mentorship program (Inzer & Crawford, 2005; MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership, 2005);
2. program administration, a logical, accurate, and effective system to make a mentorship program run smoothly (Inzer & Crawford, 2005; MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership, 2005);
3. program performance, a core component affecting outcomes of a mentorship program (Eisner, 2015; Inzer & Crawford, 2005; Lumpkin, 2011; MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership, 2005; Office of the Provost, 2016) and including all mentoring activities for the actors in their individual, bi-directional, or reciprocal; and
4. program assessment including a formative and summative evaluations to see the on-going and ending progress of the mentorship program (Eisner, 2015; Inzer & Crawford, 2005; Lumpkin, 2011; MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership, 2005; Office of the Provost, 2016).

To drive a mentorship program, pre-determined goals are essential. Depending on each academic setting, the goals of its mentorship program will be defined prior to its start so as to direct its orientation, operation, reputation, and development. Drawing on the recognized goals in a number of globally published studies (Savage, Karp, & Logue, 2010; Zeind, Zdanowicz, MacDonald, Parkhurst, King, & Wizwer, 2005), the three actors' expectations of one another, and the findings of this study, the proposed EFL faculty mentorship program is expected to attain the following goals:

1. familiarizing new faculty members with the unique administrative structure, committees, academic support service, academic calendar, and access to resources at the institution;
2. facilitating the process of faculty development through the dyadic and triadic relationships;
3. providing new faculty members with opportunities to display their respect and determination through their interactions with mentors and other instructors as well as controlling their despising attitude toward both younger and older faculty members in daily communication;
4. assisting new faculty members in seeking internal or external professional development opportunities;
5. providing new faculty members an opportunity to attain a tenure-track position; and

6. enabling new faculty members to reflect on their mentoring process and decide whether they will retain or quit the teaching profession upon completion of the mentorship program.

To approach these goals, an EFL faculty mentorship guide could be written on the premise of elaborating the MOET's overall mentoring instructions. This guide could specify the major contents of the proposed EFL mentorship program aforementioned and embed the findings of this study. The EFL faculty mentorship guide has a paramount significance for the three actors – mentees, mentors, and administrators - in the mentorship programs at their HEIs. They all thought that it would increase their confidence in the mentorship program and give them clearer direction in mentoring practices. Therefore, this guide could be written by a team of the mentees, mentors, and administrators at the participating HEIs. The researcher will establish writing team after receiving the approval of the participating HEIs' rectorate boards. The proposed EFL faculty mentorship guide could be available for use at the participating HEIs after being piloted and revised. It could also be circulated among HEIs within the MRD and beyond. The first draft of an EFL faculty mentorship guide might be structured as in Table 15.

Table 15. *A Proposed EFL Faculty Mentorship Program Guide.*

An EFL Faculty Mentorship Program Guide
Part 1: Program Design
Time
Venue
Actors
Mentees
Roles of mentees
Characteristics of mentees
Responsibilities of mentees
Benefits for mentees
Formal Mentors
Roles of formal mentors
Characteristics of formal mentors
Responsibilities of formal mentors
Benefits for formal mentors
Informal Mentors
Roles of informal mentors
Characteristics of informal mentors
Responsibilities of informal mentors
Benefits for informal mentors

Administrators

 Roles of administrators

 Characteristics of administrators

 Responsibilities of administrators

 Benefits of administrators

Students

 Roles of students

 Characteristics of students

 Responsibilities of students

 Benefits for students

Part 2: Program Administration

 How the mentorship program is planned, implemented, and monitored

Part 3: Program Performance

 Orientation for mentees

 Contents /Activities

  Academic activities

  For mentees:

   Conferencing

   Teaching practices

   Class observation

   Classroom management

   Receiving and giving feedback

   Doing office work

  For mentors (formal and informal)

   Conferencing

   Mentoring

   Observation of mentees' teaching

   Giving feedback

  For administrators

   Pairing mentors and mentees

   Monitoring mentoring relationships

   Solving mentoring problems

  Non-academic activities from mentees

   Participating in extra-curricular activities

   Dealing with personal issues

  Professional development/Training

Seeking and attending workshops/seminars/conferences

Tenure-track preparation

Lifelong learning

Part 4: Program Assessment

Formative assessment for three actors

Summative assessment for three actors

Overall evaluation of the mentorship program

Renumeration/Compensation

Types of compensation

Alternative Support Sources

Informal mentoring

Cross faculty instructors

Peer mentees

Family members

Availability of facilities