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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS IN AN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM

Research Article

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Abstract

This case study aims to explore the professional development experiences of two fourth–year student teachers (mentees, hereafter) and their two cooperative school teachers (mentors, hereafter) in the practicum component of English language teacher education program in a state university. The participants of this study were doing their internship in their last year of pre- service education. In order to understand the mentorship process in terms of professional development practice for those involved, two mentees and their mentors were interviewed. The results indicated that the relationship between mentor and mentee is continuous, dynamic, and fruitful for both parties. Mentees reported that they developed a teacher identity and improved themselves particularly in classroom management. Mentors also stated that they felt refreshed and had the chance to update their knowledge with the help of mentees. Implications for the mentorship and practicum process are discussed based on the results of this study.

Keywords: English language teacher education, professional development, mentorship, practicum, pre-service teacher education

1. Introduction

With the wide acknowledgement of constructivism, practicum experience has become the topic of a larger number of studies (Johnston, 2009). It takes a considerable amount of attention since it includes many sources of social interaction such as peers, learners, supervisors, and administrative personnel in the cooperating schools (Maldarez, 2009). Mentors (classroom teachers) and mentees (preservice teachers) are two main enactors of practicum experience and the relationship between them has a more long-lasting influence on pre-service teachers' career choice and professional development (Leshem & Bar-Hama, 2007). Mentoring is a significant part of teacher education all over the world and it can be defined as knowledge and experience sharing between an experienced (mentor) and inexperienced teacher or teacher candidate (mentee). Tomlinson (1995) states that mentor teachers have two major roles: (1) the coach, challenging and stimulating students' motivation and commitment, and (2) the facilitator, supporting teaching skills, including

counseling. Mentee, on the other hand, is seen as a student who is expected to demonstrate what he has learnt by cooperatively working with his mentor in a reflective, supportive and constructivist atmosphere.

The inclusion of mentoring as a formal part of the teacher education programs dates back to 1980s (Hobson et al., 2009) and since then a considerable body of research has been conducted to investigate the practice of mentoring and mentored learning to obtain information on its nature, advantages, disadvantages, failures, roles of parties etc. (McIntyre, Hagger, & Wilkin, 1994). Recent research focuses on various themes within mentoring such as the need for critical reflection in mentorship (Jacobs, 2006), the leadership function of mentorship (Zepeda, 2012), and the complicated relationship between evaluation and mentorship (Burns & Badiali, 2015; Nolan & Hoover, 2010).

In today's world, the field of teacher education is witnessing a recent transition that requires more practice and experiential learning and reflection. This transition in teacher education is called "practicum turn" by Mattesson, Eilerston, & Rorrison (2012). With this transition, practicum experiences, the significance of mentorship, the role of school context and cooperating teachers have become critical topics to be discussed recently. Exploring (1) the interaction between pre-service teachers and mentor teachers, (2) how they build a relationship, (3) how experienced mentor teachers guide and assist inexperienced novice teachers has become quite significant. How pre-service teachers review the mentorship and in which ways the mentorship contributes to their professional development worth further investigation. Similarly, seeking for how mentor teachers get benefits through this mentorship relationship is also noteworthy. By exploring the first-hand experiences of mentors and mentees, a close examination of the mentorship process is vital to provide suggestions for the improvement of the practicum component of teacher education programs. In order to better understand the mentoring experience, the roles of the parties and the level of their cooperation should be clear.

In Turkey, clinical supervision model is employed to educate pre-service teachers in practicum. This model involves classroom practice, and it is closer to formative evaluation and based on mutual trust and reflective dialogue between all teachers (Glickman, Gordon & Ross-Gordon, 2010). It also aims at introducing pre-service teachers to the professional teacher community. Recent studies on mentorship in Turkey seem to acknowledge the value of mentorship in language teacher education and they report on common problems and failures as well as benefits and gains. Ekiz (2006), in his study on mentorship, for example, concluded that communication between mentor and mentee in the mentoring experience is of utmost importance. Isıkoglu, Ivrendi, and Sahin (2007) reported similar findings in their study that pre-service teachers had trouble in building professional and fruitful relationships with their mentors. Such findings are not limited to mentor teachers; dissatisfaction of pre-service teachers with their supervisors at their universities has been reported in many recent studies (Gömleksiz, Mercin, Bulut, & Atan, 2006; Kiraz & Yıldırım, 2007).

1.1. Research Questions

With the purpose of gaining a deep understanding of the mentorship process in the practicum for pre-service English as a foreign language teacher (EFL teachers) in Turkey, this qualitative case study aims to answer the following question:

1. How do pre-service EFL teachers and mentor teachers in the cooperating schools view mentorship experience in terms of benefits, drawbacks and the contribution to their professional development?

This study focusing on practicum experience with a social constructivist approach is believed to help teacher educators understand the dynamics of the mentorship at practice schools and contribute to improvement of practicum which is substantial part of the language teacher education.

1.2. Formal Mentorship for Pre-service EFL Teachers in Turkey

In order to familiarize the reader with the practicum experience that the pre-service teachers have in teacher education programs in Turkey, a brief description of the program will be provided. Those who want to work as a language teacher in state schools should receive a bachelor's degree in an English Language Teaching program offered by the faculties of education in Turkey. The universities are tied to the Counsel of Higher Education in Turkey. Thus, as a part of the higher education curriculum, all the faculties offer the same program and the practicum experience across the country. In the fourth year of the program, senior students (henceforth pre-service teachers) have to complete their practicum courses by going to schools appointed for the whole year. The level and type of schools could vary. Depending on the negations with schools and directorate of national education, pre-service teachers could go to a primary school, a secondary school or a high school

The practicum courses include two-hours of face to face course at the department and four hours of teaching and observation in the practice schools. Within the lectures, student teachers are provided with current theories about language learning and teaching as well as tasks to observe their mentors. These observation tasks focus on issues such as classroom management, use of first and second language, and use of instructional materials in the class etc. In the practicum schools, they are required to complete the assigned tasks and the other tasks assigned by the mentor such as preparing quizzes, invigilating the exams, helping students.

2. Method

This was a qualitative case study, which took its merit as social constructivism. Social constructivism focuses on socially and historically negotiated views of the participants, which are formed through never ending interaction with others (Creswell, 2013). In this sense, social constructivists focus on the interaction among the individuals and value the process paving the way for the construction of meaning. This study analyzes the reported perspectives of the mentors and mentees on their own professional development through the lens of social constructivism.

For the research purposes, the holistic, multiple case study design (single-unit of analysis) (Yin, 2009) was adopted. We collected the data from two schools, but we focused on the same aspect of the case "mentorship" as perceived by mentees and mentors. To learn their perceptions of this practice, we used interviews as data collection tool and the data were analyzed using content analysis which will be explained in detail later.

2.1. Context of the Study and Participants

The study involved four participants working at different sites. There were two different schools (High School A, High School B) and two teachers of English mentoring two pre-service teachers (mentees) as can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. *Overview of multiple-case study participants*

Mentee	***Mentor***	***Supervisor***	***The School***
Esra (S)	Doğa (T)	İpek	High School (A)
Memedov (S)	Rüzgar (T)	İpek	High School (B)

S: student (pre-service teacher), T: mentor teacher at the high schools

The school A with one mentor and one mentee counted as one case, the school B with one mentor and one mentee counted as another case, which made the study a multiple case study. Since the main aim was to understand and explore the learning experiences and professional development process of each participant, this study adopted a holistic perspective across the cases based on single unit of analysis.

At the Department of Foreign Language Education (henceforth, FLE) the study was carried out, under the supervision of a faculty member who has a doctorate degree in foreign language teacher education, six pre-service teachers are assigned to one mentor teacher to take the school experience course in the first semester which is the first part of the practicum.

In the 2013-2014 academic year, among one hundred twelve pre-service teachers who had taken their School Experience course as a prerequisite of the practicum in the fall semester, only seven of them continued to work with the same school and the same mentor teacher in the spring semester for the Practice Teaching course. Some students changed their mentors but continued to work in the same school and others started to do their practicum in a different school. There were various reasons for these changes related to cooperating school, mentee, mentor or the university. Pre-service teachers might not want to continue their practicum for the logistic or time-schedule problems or they might want to work with a different student group to have a different experience or they might have problems with the mentors.

Considering the situation described above, only the participants who had been working with each other in the practicum for the two semesters were selected. In order to better represent a clearer picture of relationship between mentors and mentees, it is thought that the mentors, mentees and supervisors should work together for two academic semesters. Thus, only seven mentees met this criterion and could be recruited as a participant in the study. Among these seven mentees, only two of them and their mentors accepted to participate in this study. The researchers applied and received approval from the university's Human Subjects Ethics Committee. This study had a small number of participants; however, the number was enough to achieve the purpose of the study which is to discern themes concerning common views and experiences among homogeneous participants.

2.1. Data Collection and Analysis

In order to unearth the participants' perspectives and opinions, one-to-one and semi structured interviews were conducted with each mentee and mentor. The interview as data collection method was efficient as we wanted to like to hear participants' own voices. The interviews lasted 27 minutes to 59 minutes. They were conducted in Turkish, participants' native language. Interviews were audio-recorded, and interviewers took notes during the interview. The interviews were verbatim transcribed, and all the interview transcriptions were copied for three researchers.

As for the data analysis framework, the data analysis spiral suggested by Creswell (2013) was employed. The whole data were read to get the sense of it by each researcher. While reading, researchers reflected on them and wrote short notes. After reading all data, the descriptive coding process began. As Creswell (2013) suggests, researchers should be open to additional emerging codes during the analysis. Such a perspective was adopted by the researchers and new codes like being more productive, self-reflection, gaining confidence and positioning one-self as a teacher in a classroom came into being. First of all, all researchers did open coding; they tried to reduce the memoing notes to initial codes. Then they conducted axial coding, spent effort to find the connection among the initial codes and reach categories. Considering the codes, themes were identified for each case. At the end of the coding process, the analyses conducted by three researchers were compared in order to ensure reliability of the interpretations. The intercoder-agreement was calculated as around 90. Based on the analysis of mentors' professional development, the researchers came to an agreement that personal growth should be assigned as one of the major themes. In the final section of the analysis, each researcher compared the themes across the cases and different and common themes across cases were identified.

3. Results and Discussion

This section will provide readers with the results and discussion. First, we will depict the mentorship practice in each school, that is, case by case. Secondly, we will present the thorough analysis of the data under the categories of *benefits to mentees* and *benefits to mentors*. We will present discussion of the results linking it to the recent literature. As a validation strategy, we tried to provide rich and thick description to the readers. This strengthens the transferability of the research findings to the other settings as suggested by Creswell (2013).

3.1. Case 1: High School A

Esra (S) was a senior student in the department of foreign language education. She went to her practice school for one day every week during the fall and spring terms to do her practicum. Her mentor teacher was Doğa (T), who was teaching ninth graders in the same school. Thus, Esra (S) worked with ninth graders during these two terms. She had to go to the school with her peer (another pre-service teacher who was going to the same practicum school together and was assigned to the same mentor with Esra); however, it was not possible for them to stay together for four hours in the school due to clashes in their schedule. One of the biggest problems in practicum was to match mentees with mentors and find a suitable time for them.

Esra (S) and Doğa (T) met once a week in the school and they made a phone conversation before Esra's teaching sessions. The topics of their meetings were about the lesson plan and activities Esra (S) would conduct in the class. At the end of the first term, they also had dinner together. In the first term of the practicum, Esra (S) had some observation tasks such as observing teacher talk, teacher instructions, student behaviors, and school culture. In addition to these observations, she had three micro teachings and paired teachings. Furthermore, she once graded one of the questions in the exam that the mentor gave to her students. She stated that her mentor teacher never assigned her too much work:

"Unlike other mentors that my class mates worked with, my mentor never gave us too much work. Some of the mentors just left mentees in the classroom alone and gave them some work. My mentor teacher left us alone in the classroom for at most five minutes during the whole term."

Esra found her mentor very helpful and she thought that her mentor was continuously guiding her. She thought that she was lucky as other mentors did not welcome and respect mentees. For instance, in some practicum schools, mentors did not let mentees know about the extra-curricular activities such as picnics. Thus, mentees sometimes went to school, however; they could not teach or observe the class due to social activities held on that day. On the other hand, Doğa (T) always called Esra (S) in advance to let her know about the organizations or unplanned events. Thus, Esra (S) believed that Doğa (T) valued her. To her, in a good mentor-mentee relationship, a mentee should respect the mentor and the mentor should care for the mentees. Esra was quite satisfied with the feedback she received. Doğa (T) warned Esra (S) against the possible problems that she could face with in the future. As regard with the content of the feedback she received, Esra gave examples:

"For instance, I'm conducting an activity in the class and giving three minutes to students and get three learners to speak. My mentor says I wish you would get five learners to speak. As it is not my fault, she also accepts that she is giving feedback for the sake of giving it. She says she gives feedback in order to make me see different applications. She says she is aware of the time limitation I have. She says your future lessons will last longer so in the future you can involve more learners."

Doğa (T) had been working as an English teacher for twenty-four years and had been mentoring pre-service teachers for thirteen years. She had been working with the department for four years, so she was familiar with the mentees and supervisors working there. She also stated that she had worked with other universities and mentees in the past. Although she was quite experienced, Doğa (T) believed that enthusiasm for teaching was more important than experience. For her, even young teachers could be mentors if they had enough enthusiasm for teaching. In addition, she thought that a mentor teacher should share his/her professional experiences with mentees, show them how to cope with unexpected problems to develop their problem-solving skills and broaden their horizons in terms of teaching. She believed mentoring was so important that if a mentee happened to cooperate with a mentor not guiding well, the mentee might decide not to teach in the future. Thus, a mentor should be a role model in every aspect.

There were some factors hindering the practicum process according to Doğa (T). Although in terms of grading, mentor's evaluation made 30% of mentees' final grades, Doğa (T) believed that mentors do not have enough voice in the grading process. She remarked that "If needed, I criticize mentees harshly. I know I'm supposed to do this. However, I also know that the grade I give do not have a significant impact." In addition to this problem, Doğa (T) mentioned heavy course load of the mentees at university and limited time set for micro teachings. She stated the course load prevented mentees from coming to the practice school for extra activities which would help them to gain further experience at schools.

3.2. Case 2: High School B

Like Esra (S), Memedov (S) was also a fourth-year student in the department of FLE and had been visiting High School B for two academic semesters. He had been working with Rüzgar the mentor teacher; and observing and teaching the same preparation students for a year. He visited the school four hours a week, no more than officially required.

Memedov (S) and Rüzgar (T) met weekly and had a nice relationship. While Memedov (S) was in the school, they had face-to-face communication. During the breaks, they tried to catch up with their personal and academic lives. For instance, Rüzgar (T) had asked about Memedov's MA application. In addition, Memedov (S) also called Rüzgar (T) to ask about the materials he had prepared and the content of the lesson.

Since the beginning of the practicum, Memedov (S) conducted observations on how Rüzgar (T) controlled the class, "how he calms down a student when s/he speaks", how he made eye-contact as well as how he delivered instruction. Memedov (S) taught some courses and checked the calculation of exam scores. What he did as an extra work was teaching to another group of learners when their teachers were absent. Memedov (S) was quite happy with working with Rüzgar (T). He believed that Rüzgar (T) understood what the mentees experienced in the practicum process. For him, Rüzgar was a problem solver, supporter and an effective guide. Rüzhar (T) was such an open and extrovert person that he even led students made jokes on himself. Memedov (S) put overemphasis on Rüzgar's empathizing skills. He said:

"He gives examples from his own life starting like "when I first started to teach" …Once while my peer was teaching, he couldn't answer a question and simply said 'I don't know'. Upon this incident, Rüzgar (T) told us when he first started, he couldn't know, either; and he suggested us to say, 'I don't know' to learners, learn it later, and share it with them."

In addition to being able to empathize with the pre-service teachers, there was another positive characteristic that Memedov (S) mentioned about Rüzgar (T). Memedov (S) showed appreciation for the style and content of the feedback provided by Rüzgar (T). Rüzgar (T) gave motivating feedback which increased preservice teachers' self-confidence. He believed that detailed feedback was technical and what was technical could be performed better with experience. Memedov (S) received feedback when he asked for it in general and he particularly underlined that Rüzgar (T) mostly gave feedback on feeling comfortable in the class and all feedback he had received so far had motivated him.

Rüzgar was a very experienced teacher. He had been teaching English for 23 years and he worked in various teaching contexts, from primary schools to secondary schools, vocational schools to Anatolian high schools. As a mentor teacher he had already been in cooperation for four years with the department where mentees were students. Among other universities he had worked, Rüzgar (T) placed a particular importance to the department of FLE since he believed pre-service teachers from this department were very self-disciplined.

Unlike Doğa (T), Rüzgar (T) regarded teaching as a profession based on performance and experience. He believed that the more experienced a teacher became, the more comfortable he felt in a classroom in delivering instruction and managing learners. That is why, he believed a mentor teacher should be a role model for the inexperienced mentees who felt stressed while teaching because of learners, peers and mentor teachers watching them with a critical eye. Besides, the role modelling of mentor teachers became more significant to him since he believed preservice teachers take their first steps into the profession with mentor teachers. Mentor teachers should be modelling in various aspects: establishing rapport with learners, delivering instructions and maintaining relationship with parents and administration. Still, he stated that mentorship was not challenging; it was not beyond what a teacher could do in his daily life at school.

He further commented on how he regarded mentees and how mentees regarded him as a mentor teacher. He saw mentees as a colleague although they could not see themselves as a teacher:

"This is a guided relationship. Students are here for a course. As a result, the course is given through you. Naturally, the student-instructor relationship in the university goes on here. No matter how hard I try to treat them like a colleague, this student-instructor relationship is still existent, and it is hard for pre-service teachers to overcome it. … Pre-service teachers are still having trouble in adopting to this colleague role."

Having described different cases from high schools A and B, it is time to understand the contribution of the mentorship experience to mentees and mentors. From now on, the findings will be presented thematically under two main groups as benefits to mentees and benefits to mentors.

3.3. Benefits to Mentees

The main aim of this study was to explore and gain deeper understanding of the areas that mentees had development and improvement throughout the practicum. Based on the transcriptions, emerging themes from the data were as follows: *classroom management, self as a teacher and instructional process* (Table 2).

Table 2. *The Areas the Mentees Develop Throughout the Practicum*

classroom management	**instructional processes**	**self as a teacher**
monitoring students	planning: preparedness, flexibility in planning, material adaptation, curricular decisions	developing a teacher identity relationship between teacher and student
problem solving skills	Pedagogical content knowledge: grammar teaching, vocab teaching	positioning oneself as teacher
having eye contact	delivery: increasing learner motivation	gaining awareness of teaching as a profession
keeping students on task		gaining confidence as a teacher to be

It is understood from what mentees and mentors reported that all these areas lead to formation and development of teacher identity. In this sense, the mentorship process provided mentees with invaluable experience on the way of becoming a teacher. Each of these areas are further explained in the following sections of this article.

3.3.1. Classroom management

The most obvious benefit of mentorship was the development of classroom management skills. It included skills as monitoring students, problem solving, having eye contact and keeping students on task. Both mentors and mentees commented on classroom management issues as an improved area. For instance; Memedov (S) who worked with Rüzgar (T) for two semesters, particularly underlined the development of his classroom management skills. He claimed that as a result of his cooperation with his mentor he was now able to solve problems more easily compared to the beginning of the semester. He explained this as:

"When a problem occurs, I can provide better solutions. Previously, when a student asked a question and I didn't know the answer, I was panicked. Right now, I have learnt how to deal with such situations from the mentor teacher. For example, if a student asks what that word means, and I don't know the answer, I give them a task and I tell them at the end of the task, I will tell what it means. During the task, I look it up from the dictionary or ask the mentor teacher."

He further commented on how he improved to make eye-contact for classroom management as seen in this excerpt:

"I am better at classroom management. I can easily make eye-contact. While I was doing something on one side, I could realize what the students were doing on the other side. I can calm them down easily."

In the same vein, Rüzgar (T) strongly supported the idea that mentorship contributed to the professional development of mentees, especially in classroom management. However, before elaborating on how the mentees' managing skills developed so far, he emphasized that pre-service teachers from the department of FLE were quite competent in pedagogical content knowledge; therefore, the major area needed to be improved was classroom management. He stated that mentees improved in calming down the learners, attending to them, using voice appropriately and using teacher zone:

"What I noticed about pre-service teachers is that they gained significant experience in classroom management. I mean how to silence learners. In the beginning they asked learners to write their names on post-it notes. After a while, they realized this doesn't work. They see how important to directly address to them with their names. Or they realized how significant to use their voice effectively…if the board is here, when they first taught; you realize they use only the space in front of the board. However, as the time passes, they started to use all of the classroom space. They could easily move in the class… at first asking learners to remove their desks for group works was difficult for them to do but later on they could easily group learners."

Esra (S) who gave credit to the education she received at university, told that ELT program at the university enabled her to be already good at classroom management. While thanking to her education she received, she accepted that real classroom environment was different:

"When you enter a classroom, you enter into a completely different world. Your behaviors definitely change after you see this world. I do not suffer trauma thanks to my education, I don't have much problems. I try to improve myself by changing my methods if they don't meet my needs."

She further stated that building rapport with the students made her job easier. She addressed to them with their names and tried to talk to them which were the things that helped her build an intimate relationship with the students. When one student distracted the attention of the whole class, she warned him/her softly. She also mentioned that her mentor teacher appreciated her classroom management abilities such as monitoring students and keeping them on task.

All these remarks fit into Fullers' teacher development model (1969, 1970 as cited in McLaughlin & Hanifin, 1994). At the survival stage of this model, teachers who are new to the profession usually have concerns about classroom control and management, which drives them to take care of those issues. Since these mentees had their first professional experience, their (relatively) higher emphasis on contribution of mentorship to classroom management was welcomed. As Day (1990) also states classroom management is "a topic about which student teachers often know little and have a great deal of anxiety" (p. 53). Therefore, mentees' focusing on how mentors dealt with the class and mentor teachers' feedback on this issue naturally facilitated improvement in classroom management. Besides, as Hobson et al. (2009) suggest, it is widely acknowledged that the most notable benefit of mentorship to the mentees is the development of managing skills, which is also found in the present study.

3.3.2. Instructional processes

This second category included themes as 1) planning: preparedness, flexibility in planning, material adaptation, curricular decisions; 2) pedagogical content knowledge: grammar teaching, vocabulary teaching and 3) delivery: increasing learner motivation. In this area of teaching, Memedov (S) and his mentor noticed progress in planning lessons, delivering instructions and increasing pedagogical content knowledge. To begin with, Memedov (S) made progress on pedagogical content knowledge and gained flexibility in curricular decisions for planning. While he was dealing with an unexpected problem during the teaching task, he learnt a new grammar point from his mentor teacher and explained this as:

"I was teaching topic of reported-speech and telling them *can* changes to *could* and *will* to *would*. One student asked what *should* turned into. I was stuck. I told him that he could see it in the examples. However, there was not any examples. I asked it to the mentor teacher, and he gave me the explanation"

With regard to curricular decisions in planning, Memedov (S) expressed how Rüzgar (T) taught him to be flexible and go beyond the syllabus when needed. Rüzgar (T) was also quite cognizant about the improvements that mentees gained thanks to the mentorship. He particularly highlighted that pre-service teachers learnt to involve all learners during the lesson and motivate them:

"They gained experiences in how to involve learners, how to engage and motivate unwilling learners…last week while one mentee was teaching, three or for learners weren't engaged with the lesson and at first the mentee couldn't deal with them. I observed it and I told him to try something. S/he tried and engaged all the students. It was good."

Esra (S) appreciated her mentor's strategies to draw students' attention such as acting out and doing role-plays while lecturing. On the other hand, she had contradicting thoughts about the contribution of practicum on the pedagogical content knowledge. She found her courses at the university so effective and efficient that she believed practicum could not contribute to her pedagogical content knowledge. Here is an excerpt showing her discomfort about the competence of her mentor:

"I don't think I learn new things about content or methodology. I only observe my mentor teacher in order to see the management and monitoring. But I cannot say she teaches very well. Actually, I find some mistakes in her teaching… She has great problems in pronunciation even which ELF (English as a Lingua Franca) theories cannot explain. I cannot know how to say these things to her. … Her students need to respect her, and I try not to ruin the ecosystem of the classroom. So, I keep silent."

The analysis revealed that the contribution of practicum on instructional processes is limited yet quite valuable. Particularly, mentees' recognition of asking for help when needed and the possibility of becoming flexible during teaching is a crucial step for professional development. Similar results were also expressed by Lindgren (2007). However, very few instances were present in the accounts of mentees' regarding the improvements in instructional processes. As Hobson et al. (2009) brought to our attention, the presence of limited examples for developed teaching skills as a result of a successful mentorship process is quite common in research on mentorship. One of the reasons might be the fact that there is an overemphasis on mentorship as promoting affective and psychological support for mentees rather than academic knowledge-based support (Hobson et al., 2009).

3.3.3. Self as a teacher

As the last category *self as a teacher* area had sub-themes as 1) relationship between teacher and student, 2) positioning oneself as teacher, 3) gaining awareness of teaching as a profession, and 4) gaining confidence as a teacher to be.

To begin with, Esra (S) had positive comments on how mentor-mentee relationship developed her as a teacher to be. She talked about her becoming aware of her weaknesses and strengths. She stated that she chose high school as a practice school since she was anxious and scared to teach high school student. She had already experienced and enjoyed teaching young learners; however, she thought that she would have great problems in working with high school learners. Thus, she saw practicum as a chance to prepare herself for this learner group. In this respect, Esra learnt a lot from her mentor teacher during the practicum. She pointed out that:

"When I mention one of the student's misbehavior, my mentor teacher makes me see the student's psychological problems and makes me re-evaluate this student's misbehavior. She makes me consider different perspectives before I judge someone and look from different angles- like doing yoga. This will help me a lot when I become a teacher. Now, when I reflect on it, I realize how much I learnt from my mentor teacher."

Being aware of students' developmental and psychological characteristics was so crucial that it could save one teacher's career. Esra (S) put great emphasis on this issue:

"Teachers (referring to mentors) are aware that these students are adolescents and they ignore most of the things. This is the most important contribution of the practicum for me since it saved my career. Learning not to take students' behaviors personally saves my life. Sometimes, when one student says something, you just begin thinking about it. This is where you get out of your teacher identity and take it personally. Those who are not aware of this aspect have great problems. I'm very happy because I experienced this beforehand."

This shows how Esra (S) became aware of the fact that she developed an identity as a teacher. With the help of the practicum, she learnt to *position herself as a teacher* and *develop a teacher identity* in the classroom. Thanks to the practicum and mentorship experience, she observed how the teacher reacted to teenagers' behaviors. Esra (S) thought that with the help of practicum, she *builded up confidence* in herself as a teacher. The mentorship experience showed her that she could do this job as a professional. She chose teaching as a career because of a series of coincidences. She stated that before practicum experience, she did not believe in herself and she could not imagine herself as a teacher.

As for self as a teacher, Memedov (S) put special emphasis on feeling comfortable. He constantly underpinned that he became more comfortable thanks to the mentor teacher. He clearly and repetitively expressed the gained sense of comfort in the class. He also commented that he gained self-confidence as well. Overall, Memedov believed he had a fruitful mentorship process through which he made progress on classroom management, instructional processes and how he felt in the class. His final remark on the mentorship was quite critical to illustrate what kind of a transformation he had been through: "He (Rüzgar) could be the ideal teacher. In the past I was afraid of dealing with learners. Now I liked it (teaching) since it is easy." As for how pre-service teachers improved their 'self', Rüzgar underscored that they were no longer shy, and they got used to the real teaching context:

"You can recognize that in the first or second teaching, pre-service teachers were shy, but now they came out of their shelf…they already developed materials and used them. They are already doing all of them, but I realized that they gained substantial experience regarding

their presence as a teacher because it is a real context not a simulation. Real learners, a real class."

Doğa (T) also thought that mentees improved themselves in that they became more relaxed and confident. She described Esra's (S) final teaching as follows:

"She planned the lesson well. She knew what she was going to do. She was confident since she gave what she wanted to give to students. She finished the lesson like a teacher. Her friends (pairs) feel like this as well. She was patient. Normally, she is not a patient person."

Overall, the results of the study indicated that mentees frequently mentioned building up confidence in themselves as a teacher, being more comfortable with students and developing intimate relationship with students. They also learnt to position themselves as teachers in the classroom and not to take misbehaviors personally. It showed that they gained awareness of teaching as a profession. It can be inferred that mentorship experience contributed to their development self-as a teacher. In addition, the mentors observed that the mentees were becoming more patient with the students and they were behaving like a teacher in the classroom. In this respect, the results of this study are in line with the other studies on mentees' development (Valli, 1993; Erginel, 2006; Maldarez, Hobson, Tracey & Kerr, 2007) which suggest that mentees begin to construct a self-image of themselves as teachers during the practicum.

3.4. Benefits to Mentors

As also highlighted by Simpson et. al. (2007), the available research on pre-service field experience is limited to preservice teacher and the supervisor (at the university). Studies on mentor teachers and how they are affected in this experience is scarce. Thus, in addition to exploring the benefits obtained by mentees, this study also focused on how mentors utilized from mentorship program. Limited number of earlier studies with the same focus report benefits such as improvement in teaching skills (Jacobsen, 1992; Odell & Ferraro, 1992), the feeling of improvement in professionalism (Koskela & Ganser 1995; Taharally, Gamble, & Marsa, 1992; Wilson, 1995), increased self-confidence (Odell and Ferraro, 1992; Wilson, 1995), and more reflective practice (Jacobsen, 1992; Wolfe & Stupiansky, 1992). As in line within the scope of our study, in order to address the gap in the mentor literature particularly in the context where this study took place, namely Turkey, participant mentor teachers were asked to reflect on the benefits of mentorship on them. In this part of the paper, the benefits of mentorship to the mentor teachers are presented. Two main categories of benefits for mentors were identified as *personal growth* and *professional growth* (Table 3).

Table 3. *Mentors' development throughout the practicum*

personal growth	**professional growth**
feeling updated, refreshed	developing, adapting new materials,
motivated and enthusiastic	updating tests
being more productive	using new techniques
self-reflection opportunities	

3.4.1. Personal growth

Doğa (T), as being the mentor at high school A was asked to comment on whether or not mentorship provided any benefits to her and if yes, what type of benefits she could talk about.

Main sub-themes found in her response were related to feeling refreshed and feeling motivated as a mentor thanks to the mentoring experience. It is clear from what she told that her understanding of benefits of mentorship has a more sentimental perspective and she highlighted gains like good feelings as a mentor, satisfaction, and happiness.

When asked if she was satisfied with the mentoring program, she clearly stated that she was pleased and satisfied with the experience. She particularly mentioned how refreshed and updated she felt refreshed and updated:

"Whenever I see each wise and responsible young mentee, I feel refreshed once more, I feel as if I am breathing fresh air. I feel like I am gaining something from them."

As in line with the previous findings (Hobson et al., 2007), there is a sense of becoming re-energized or re-engaged as a result of mentoring experience, which might have positive effect on teaching and learning in general. A mentor who thinks that mentees help her feel re-energized can be assumed to be more motivated, productive and positive which are all significant concepts in the mutual relationship of mentor-mentee.

Doğa (T), who viewed mentorship as a fruitful process not only for mentees but also for mentors, talked about how her motivation as a teacher was influenced in working with mentees. As earlier mentioned, she found the overall relationship quite refreshing and updating which yielded to enthusiasm for teaching which was a very significant phenomenon in the philosophy of teaching. An enthusiastic teacher who functioned as a role model for mentees was undoubtedly had a lot to offer in terms of mentoring. If a mentor had enthusiasm for teaching, it was likely that students could be infected with the same type of enthusiasm which in return would lead to an ideal mentoring experience. Doğa (T) expressed her opinions on this issue as follows:

"At this point, mentoring definitely brings excitement and enthusiasm. The enthusiasm in the mentees' eyes, their enthusiasm for teaching, their behaviors, and all the beauties they bring to class, the message they give to me, all of these definitely contribute to me as the mentor. It is impossible to say there is no contribution. They contribute a lot: they direct me to true path, they refresh me, and they make me run on my true path to reach my goals as a mentor teacher."

As can be seen in the excerpt, one can easily see how the mentor felt enthusiasm obtained from this mutual relationship of mentor and mentee which was found to be a common phenomenon occurring in previous studies as well. For example, Koskela and Ganser (1995) stated that cooperating teachers "... view themselves as learners and many look forward to personal growth in terms of sharing, gaining new perspectives, ideas, and 'catching enthusiasm' from student teachers" (pp. 30, 31).

Motivation is found to occur in both of the mentors' reflections in the interviews. Like Doğa (T), Rüzgar (T) also emphasized that mentorship was a motivating experience not only for mentees but also for mentors. He added that this motivation also affected the lesson itself since it increased the overall "productivity" of teaching-learning process, which became a sub-theme on its own. Productivity was mentioned several times by Rüzgar during interviews. He thought that the role of the cooperating teacher contributed to their productivity in making their own careers and constructing their own identities as the teacher and the mentor. A similar thought on productivity was also explained by Ganser (1996) that, "enhancing and enlarging the role of the co-operating teacher will contribute to the personal and professional satisfaction of many veteran teachers and serve to make their own careers more productive and fulfilling" (p. 289). There is no doubt that this productivity will yield to a more collaborative environment which is a goal of the overall mentorship program. Rüzgar,

in between his lines, actually compared mentor teachers' classroom with mentees and without mentees. He said: "Naturally, this application (mentorship program) has a function of increasing the productivity of mentor's work because he is not alone in his teaching environment anymore."

He believed that being observed by mentees in a classroom changed the atmosphere of the classroom. The mentor teacher became more productive and tried novel things. In this way his routines changed and ordinary things in class were turned to more creative ones thanks to the productivity of the mentors. In addition to becoming more motivated, enthusiastic, and more productive, Rüzgar (T) believed that mentor teachers became more self-reflective in their teaching. They began to question their identities as teachers and their teaching philosophies. Rüzgar (T) thought that being self-reflective as a result of being a mentor meant having an observational eye on their own teaching and thinking about their weaknesses, strengths in this regard, which was a personal virtue gained via mentoring.

3.4.2. Professional growth

Zachary (2000) pointed out that mentors are stimulated both emotionally as well as intellectually through their interactions with mentees. In the case of Doğa (T), based on her reflections during the interviews, the question on the benefits of mentorship on the mentors by the researcher was directly linked to the use of technology, which was indeed a surprise for the researchers whose purpose of asking this question was not limited to and focused on the use of technology in class. Doğa did not reflect much on the professional gains of the mentorship except stating that she was already competent in using computer in class, yet mentorship did not contribute to her professional growth. In this respect, Doğa (T) considered that through mentorship she could only develop herself in terms of technology.

As also stated in Esra's case, Esra (S) emphasized that her mentor teacher, Doğa, had problems in her pronunciation in English. When Esra (T) was asked whether she interfered to correct Doğa's mispronunciation, she stated that she avoided it in order not to ruin the ecosystem of the classroom and did not want to be disrespectful towards her mentor. This also shows that mentors did not get into a mutual relationship with mentees and did not talk about their teaching which may limit their professional growth.

Unlike Doğa (T), Rüzgar (T) repeatedly mentioned the professional development side of the experience. For him, the benefits of mentoring in terms of professional development were being able to use new teaching techniques, updating present knowledge, and developing updated materials and tests. He reported that the greatest and the most common benefit of the mentoring was that teachers updated their knowledge, teaching skills, teaching techniques, methods and activities. This is indeed in line with what previous studies suggested. Bowers (1994) stated that mentorship experience provided the mentors with the chance to include new instructional materials in their own classes as presented by pre-service teachers. For instance, Rüzgar (T) said that "I know some colleagues who began to try new techniques that they never used before." He continues:

"…yes, yes. Mentorship definitely contributes to the mentors. Because now you contact with university students whose knowledge is fresh. They come to school having been trained on material development by taking such a course, hence as a mentor you need to improve your knowledge and develop materials to keep pace with the mentees."

As a natural outcome of feeling the need to update prior, existing knowledge, and teaching skills, mentor teachers reported that they came to classes more prepared during mentorship. Rüzgar (T) stated that due to the existence of mentees in class, the classroom atmosphere changed from more informal to formal. These changes included taking things more seriously

and revisiting and checking the classroom routines, materials, and even his own perceptions as a teacher. Rüzgar (T) repeatedly mentioned that mentorship contributed to teachers' understanding of material use. Thus, a teacher who was using the course book as a sole source became interested in finding extra materials and trying new activities in class. This influenced the overall teaching-learning itself in a positive way. Students got the chance to see variety and richness and the teacher himself gained more experience in trying material development, adaptation etc. In regard to materials development, Rüzgar (T) also talked about how the tests used in classroom for evaluation and assessment purposes changed. He said that teachers who used to use same type of questions in the tests felt the need to add variety in their tests. This was because the mentees were taking testing courses at their universities and the mentor felt obliged to show better examples of tests used in classroom.

When Memedov (S) was asked whether he gave feedback to Rüzgar (T) on his teaching, he stated that he never gave feedback to him as he thought that his mentor was experienced enough. Similar to Esra (S) and Doğa's (T) mentorship case, there seems to be no explicit feedback given to Rüzgar (T). Therefore, this study reveals that mentors did not receive any explicit feedback from the mentees for various reasons. Mentors improved their teaching only by reflecting on mentees' and their own practices.

In sum, mentorship contributed to mentors in both affective and professional ways such as feeling updated and refreshed, feeling satisfied, feeling motivated, being more productive, self-reflecting as well as professional gains such as trying new teaching techniques, updating prior knowledge developing and adapting new materials and preparing tests. As seen in the excerpts above, two mentors in this study benefited from mentorship in various ways. While one mentor considered it as a process during which a teacher emotionally and personally developed herself as a teacher, other mentor saw it as a chance to question one's professional competence and performance as a teacher. This variety might be the reason or motive behind becoming a mentor teacher. Hastings (1999) reported similar thoughts on the same issue and stated that teachers (mentors) had "pecuniary, professional and affective benefits" (pp. 22) as motivations for participation in the practicum.

4. Conclusion

This case study aimed to reveal how both pre-service EFL teachers and their mentor teachers view mentorship experience. Based on interviews with two pre-service teachers and two mentor teachers, the study revealed the common themes found on the issues of benefits, drawbacks and the contribution of mentorship experience on their professional development. For the areas that mentees developed with mentorship, three common themes were found as classroom management, instructional processes, and self as a teacher. For mentors, two main development areas were found: professional and personal growth.

From a pedagogical perspective, the results of the study indicated that mentors had crucial role in mentees' practicum experience. The mentees expected to be cared and respected. Therefore, mentors should be aware of this responsibility. In this sense, selection of the schools and mentors should be done with meticulous care. Affective qualities of mentors such as being respectful and enthusiastic as well as their professional qualities should be taken into consideration. Moreover, as mentees highlighted, a particular amount of attention should be drawn to mentor teachers' capacity for empathy as well for their selection since overall practicum is a delicate stage which necessitates tolerance and understanding form mentors' part. The study also revealed that the supervisor and the mentor should work collaboratively to monitor the mentees' performance and work at practicum school. More collaboration is needed. Therefore, teacher education programs may decrease course load of mentees in the senior year, which hopefully will lead to a maximum amount of time spent in

practice teaching schools. This may enable mentees to facilitate an organic bond with both mentors and practicing schools.

In constructivist teacher education tradition, it is acknowledged that teachers learn via collaboration and interaction with each other. In this sense, the feedback given to mentors is as important as the feedback given to mentees. However, the results of this study revealed that mentees do not provide mentors with explicit feedback for various reasons. One motive behind lack of mentee feedback might be their understanding that they are not in a position to provide feedback to mentors who were more experienced than themselves. In that regard, the idea that mentorship as a mutual relationship is based on co-learning should be conveyed to mentees so that they do not refrain from giving feedback and welcoming the notion of critically commenting on their mentors' teaching practices. Mentees should be aware of that mentorship entails open channels of communication, which with contribute not only to their development but also mentors' professional growth. In order to ensure that both parties provide each other with feedback, there may be training sessions about giving constructive feedback within the practicum. In relation to this, in order to increase the quality of mentor-mentee conversation, rather than chit-chat forms, more structured properly scheduled conversation conventions in which constructive comments are neatly-organized can be followed.

The findings of the present study supported the previous findings that mentorship had significant potential to bring about learning from each other in the mutual relationship of mentor and mentee. Gains from mentorship included both personal and professional growth not only for mentees but also for mentors. This study showed that mentorship was a phenomenon more than being a course in a curriculum and its affective characteristic made it something beyond a course. It had a crucial function of shaping pre-service teachers' future lives as well as changing the existing behaviors, routines of experienced teachers. It should be noted that there were variations from case to case in the perception of mentorship and its functions, the roles of mentors, the duties of mentees etc. Still, what was found to be common was that the relationship between mentor and mentee was a continuous, dynamic, and fruitful one.

With regards to suggestions for further research, observations of the post-conferences could be made, and written reflections of the participants could be analyzed. The supervisors and the mentees doing their practicum with their pairs could be involved; the collaboration and the relationship between them are worthy of further exploration.

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