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Teaching By Example: Evaluating Mentoring Practices Among Cooperating Teachers

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Abstract

Student teaching internship serves as the most significant component in a teacher education program. While most of the studies center on the experiences of cooperating teachers, only a few are investigated on the encounters of pre-service teachers. This descriptive-correlational study aimed to assess the mentoring practices of the cooperating teachers along three key dimensions: personal, pedagogical, and professional mentoring. The study involved 62 purposively-selected pre-service teachers enrolled in the second semester of 2023-2024 at a private Catholic university. They were randomly deployed in the three public and one private cooperating schools in Ozamiz City. The study revealed that the cooperating teachers highly practiced personal mentoring practices ($M=3.57$), pedagogical mentoring practices ($M=3.50$), and professional mentoring practices ($M=3.45$). The study also found no significant correlation between the teachers' mentoring practices and their age and years of experience as cooperating teachers. However, there was a significant correlation between their years of teaching experience and their personal and pedagogical mentoring practices. Based on the results of the study, it was recommended to conduct continuous orientations and training for cooperating teachers to better equip them with mentoring skills. Further, the study supported to conduct a qualitative inquiry to clarify and deduce pre-service teachers' experiences.

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Introduction

The most impactful element of a teacher education program is thought to be the student teaching experience, which molds student teachers into experienced educators (Izadinia, 2015). The relationship pre-service teachers (student teachers) have with cooperating teachers—also referred to as mentors or associate teachers—is essential to their feeling of accomplishment during school deployment (Ó Gallchóir, 2019). The success of the practicum depends largely on the quality of the mentor-mentee relationship (Graves, 2010).

As the Department of Education (2007) imposed, a student teacher pertains to a student who undergoes practice teaching. He/She should be assisted by his/her mentor or cooperating teacher who is assigned to guide him/her in the development of professional competencies, attitudes, and behaviors. However, in the practical setting, reports from the student teachers reveal some inadequacies from their mentors. As mentioned by Hudson and Hudson (2017), there are occasions when tensions occur in their relationships.

There are several literature that lay out the significance of good and effective mentoring with student teachers. Napanoy et al. (2021) argued that apart from the pedagogical challenges student teachers face in their deployment, mentor support (referring to the cooperating teacher) boosted their confidence and reduced professional isolation. Izadinia (2015) also found that positive relationships of the mentors with their student teachers during deployment provided them with constant emotional and academic ease. Positive relationships are pivotal for advancing any organization. In teaching where relationships exist on multiple levels, a key part of the mentee's learning will be about learning how to develop positive relationships, which can be modeled and facilitated by the mentor. Mentors supporting mentees implies a trusting and

respectful relationship, and regardless of subject areas, it appears that the mentoring relationship, including psychosocial support, can have an effect on the quality of the mentoring (Hudson, 2016).

However, challenges in mentoring have already been described in published literature. In an earlier study, Rajuan et al. (2007) argued that the initial stage of mentoring consisted of complex social interactions that can be problematic when student teachers and cooperating teachers differed in their expectations concerning the professional purposes of their work together. This was further supported, ten years later, by the data of Hudson and Hudson (2017) who identified several conflicts in mentoring which included personal, pedagogical and professional conflicts with their mentees. They highlighted specific resolution strategies such as: maintaining a positive professional relationship; providing regular feedback as a mechanism that develops a willingness to address issues; sharing responsibility for teaching, among others. Afterall, role modelling helps shape a student teacher's identity to becoming a teacher (Izadinia, 2015).

Much of the focus on studies related to mentor-mentee relationships in teacher education centers on the part of the mentor (cooperating teacher). In fact, Hudson and Hudson (2017) suggested that further research is required about the tensions pre-service teachers experience with their mentors and ways in which these tensions can be resolved. Moreover, Ó Gallchóir et al. (2019) echoed the belief of Izadinia (2017) that the voice of the pre-service teacher (or mentee) is often absent in the literature. This gap prompted a need to examine mentors' actual practices during the practicum, as there might be a mismatch between their espoused theories and theories-in-use. More research seems to be needed to examine mentor

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teachers' actual mentoring practices from the perspective of their mentees (Izadinia, 2015).

In a private Catholic university in Ozamiz City, student teachers who are enrolled in practice teaching are deployed in both private and public basic education schools. The program aims to prepare the student teachers in their future responsibilities through an immersive experience. While they are deployed, they are assigned to cooperating teachers who are tasked to guide them as they accomplish their required work, such as but not limited to: preparing lesson plans, assisting during daily teaching, conducting assessments, and managing actual teachings. From the researcher's observations

and initial conversation with the student teachers, it was revealed that there were difficulties on the part of the cooperating teachers in fulfilling their duties diligently.

Amidst a number of existing research that delineate the challenges of cooperating teachers in handling their student teachers (Baluyos et al., 2024; Dela Cruz & Vasquez et al., 2020; Cabanlit, 2019), this study was conducted through the lens of the student teachers. The goal of the study was to mediate the problems encountered by cooperating teachers to shed light on how they can be helped in managing proper mentoring. The study determined the cooperating teachers' mentoring approaches. In particular, it answered the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the cooperating teachers in terms of:
 - 1.1. Age;
 - 1.2. Years of tenure as a teacher; and
 - 1.3. Years of tenure as a cooperating teacher?
2. What is the cooperating teachers' level of mentorship practices in the following aspects:
 - 2.1. Personal;
 - 2.2. Pedagogical; and
 - 2.3. Professional?
3. Is there a significant correlation between the cooperating teachers' level of mentorship practices and their profile when grouped according to:
 - 3.1. Age
 - 3.2. Years of tenure as a teacher; and
 - 3.3. Years of tenure as cooperating teachers?

Materials and Methods

The study made use of descriptive-correlational research design. A descriptive correlational design is a study in which the researcher has a single group and simply tries to provide static pictures of situations and establish the relationship between two variables (Brodowicz, 2024; McBurney & White, 2009). The rationale for this approach was that the quantitative data and results on the cooperating teachers' level of mentoring practices provided a general picture

of the research problem, meanwhile, they were compared with their demographic profile to determine the relationship of the variables.

The study was conducted at a private Catholic university in Ozamiz City, Mindanao. The university is accredited Level 2 by the Philippine Accrediting Agency for Schools, Colleges, and Universities (PAASCU). Under the College of Teacher Education (CTE), the university offers

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the following programs: Secondary Education, Elementary Education, Physical Education, and Technology and Livelihood Education. As a university committed to excellence and work-ready graduates, it guarantees that it follows the program requirements in teacher education specifically in deploying its student teachers, who are enrolled in Practice Teaching, to both private and public cooperating schools. CTE oversees and monitors the program ensuring that all student teachers are well-guided and equipped with the necessary competencies after completing the practice teaching program. This study involved 62 student teachers who were selected through purposive sampling. These students were enrolled in Education Internship Courses during the second semester of academic year 2023-2024. In the selection of the respondents it was ensured they meet the following criteria: (1) that they were officially enrolled in the Internship Course, (2) that they have completed the 360 hours of practicum deployment in their cooperating school, (3) that they had at least 7 actual teachings with their assigned cooperating teacher, and (4) that they were willing to participate in the study.

The study utilized a researcher-made survey questionnaire as the main instrument. The instrument was ensured of validity by ensuring that the indicators were based on existing literature. On the other hand, reliability was ensured through carrying out Cronbach's alpha. From the test, the instrument yielded an alpha of .96 which means that the questionnaire bears excellent internal consistency.

Informed consent was obtained from the respondents. It was ensured that the respondents

were aware of their responsibilities in partaking in the study. Voluntary participation was also emphasized in the study. This ensured that the respondents were not coerced nor inflicted upon with force to participate in the study. However, the researcher made sure that majority of the respondents answered the survey to yield a generalized and more conclusive outcome of the evaluation.

The questionnaire was distributed through google form. This is done because of the geographical limitation of the researcher to the participants during the time the data collection was conducted.

Weighted mean was used to describe the cooperating teachers' level of mentoring practices. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was also used to determine the correlation between the teachers mentoring practices with their age, years of tenure as teachers and years of experience as cooperating teachers.

In the conduct of the study, the researcher was guided to follow ethical procedures. Informed consent from the participants were obtained. They were explained and discussed of the purpose of the study. Voluntary participation was also highlighted in the study. It was ensured that the study did not impose any form of risk and harm to the respondents. Ultimately, respect for person was highly valued all throughout the study. The responses of the participants from the survey were treated with utmost confidentiality and anonymity. The researcher also conformed to the Data Privacy Law to ensure the protection and security of the data gathered.

Results and Discussions

Profile of Cooperating Teachers

One of the goals of the study is to determine the demographics of the cooperating teachers in terms of age, years of tenure as teachers and

years of experience as cooperating teachers. These factors are believed to have effects of the mentoring styles of the cooperating teachers and

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provide impact to the deployment experiences of pre-service teachers.

Figure 1 presents the trend of the age group of the cooperating teachers in the four cooperating schools where the pre-service teachers were deployed.

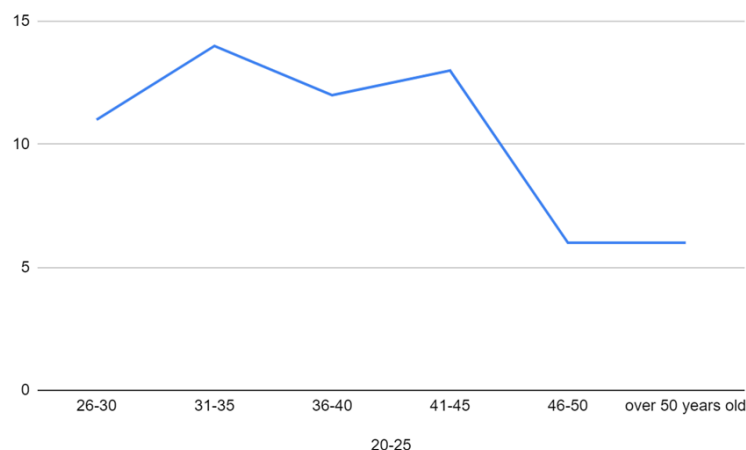


Figure 1. Age Group of Cooperating Teachers

Figure 1 presents the trend of age groups among the cooperating teachers from the different cooperating schools. It is revealed that those who are assigned with pre-service teachers are commonly between the ages of 31-35 and 41-45, comprising 14 and 13 of the 63 evaluated cooperating teachers respectively. These teachers are within the young and middle aged

adults (Francisco, 2020). In the study of Taguba (2020), teachers between ages 31-40 already have acquired the necessary expertise in teaching. The author describes these teachers as having instructional competencies. This characteristic significantly aligns to positive outcomes on student performance.

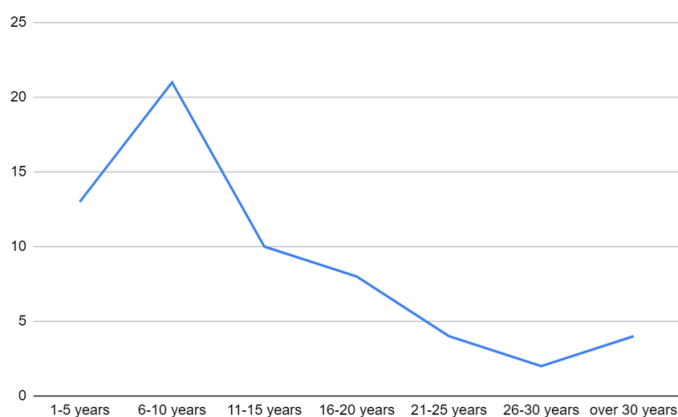


Figure 2. Years of Tenure of Cooperating Teachers

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In addition, Figure 2 reveals the trend of the tenure of cooperating teachers in terms of their number of years as teachers in the field. From the data, 21 (33.1%) of the cooperating teachers have already served between 6-10 years in the Department of Education. These teachers are already equipped with experiences in handling

students and performing their duties and responsibilities in school. In the study of Kudinov et al. (2018), teachers with 5-20 years of experience have high satisfaction with professional activities. They add that these teachers show high levels of optimism, activity, creativity, and transformational tendencies.

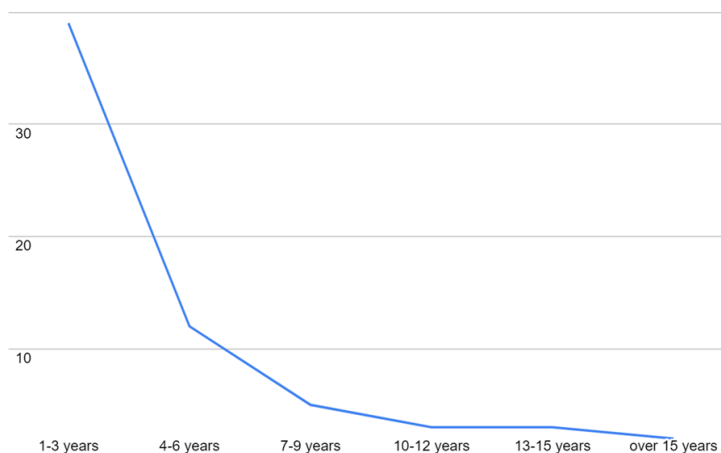


Figure 3. Years of Tenure as Cooperating Teacher

Meanwhile, in terms of the teachers tenure as cooperating teachers, Figure 3 shows that 39 (62.9%) of the teachers have been cooperating teachers between 1-3 years only. However, only 2 (3.2%) have been cooperating teachers for more than 15 years. Regarding the former, teachers with these years of experience as cooperating teachers require training in content knowledge, pedagogical skills, understanding

student learning, and teaching practices to effectively mentor pre-service teachers (Basheer et al., 2012). Sayeski and Paulen (2012) emphasize the significant roles of cooperating teachers in providing relevant mentoring behaviors in shaping effective student teaching experiences through acquiring a good number of mentoring experiences.

Personal Mentoring Practices

Mentoring practices of cooperating teachers are crucial for the development and retention of new educators. Research highlights several best practices that enhance the mentoring experience, focusing on role modeling, professional support, and collaborative approaches. Cooperating teachers significantly influence student teachers by demonstrating effective teaching methods, classroom management, and communication

skills. This modeling helps student teachers decide what practices to adopt in their own classrooms (Nesbitt & Barry, 2022). While these practices are vital, discrepancies exist between how cooperating teachers perceive their mentoring effectiveness and how student teachers experience it, indicating a need for improved training and support for mentors (Nesbitt et al., 2022).

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The following tables present the results of the various mentoring practices of the cooperating teachers from the 3 public schools and 1 private school that serve as cooperating schools for the

pre-service teachers. In particular, Table 1 provides the results of the personal mentoring practices of cooperating teachers as assessed by the pre-service teachers.

Table 1. Personal Mentoring Practices of Cooperating Teachers

Indicators	Mean	Rank	Interpretation
My cooperating teacher/s demonstrate the following practices:			
1. Provide me emotional support and encouragement in order to finish my internship deployment.	3.58	7	Highly Practiced
2. Provide me open and effective communication channels.	3.53	9	Highly Practiced
3. Build a trusting and respectful mentoring relationship.	3.66	1	Highly Practiced
4. Create a safe space for me to express my concerns and ask questions.	3.55	7	Highly Practiced
5. Offer me personalized feedback.	3.60	4	Highly Practiced
6. Show empathy and understanding towards my challenges.	3.63	3	Highly Practiced
7. Engage in regular one-on-one mentoring sessions such as conducting post-conferences every after my teaching.	3.31	10	Highly Practiced
8. Encourage me to set and achieve my personal goals.	3.60	4	Highly Practiced
9. Provide me constructive criticism.	3.60	4	Highly Practiced
10. Demonstrate patience and a positive attitude towards me.	3.66	1	Highly Practiced
TOTAL	3.57		Highly Practiced

Legend: 3.26-4.00-Highly Practiced; 2.51-3.25-Often Practiced; 1.76-2.50-Sometimes Practiced; 1.00-1.75-Rarely Practiced

Table 1 presents the results of the personal mentoring practices of the cooperating teachers, with indicator 10 yielding the highest mean of 3.57. The data indicate that the cooperating teachers frequently demonstrate patience and positive attitude towards the pre-service teachers. Personal mentoring strategies are crucial in providing pre-service teachers with meaningful deployment experiences. Calamlam and Mokshein (2019) report that the exhibition of patience among the cooperating teachers foster a sense of opportunity for the pre-service teachers to learn at their own pace, which is essential in skill and confidence development. This is commonly reflected in the way the cooperating teachers provide constructive feedback, ensuring that the pre-service teachers feel comfortable even when committing mistakes, and most importantly learning from them (Cabanlit, 2019).

However, based on the results, the provision of regular one-on-one post conferences with the pre-service teachers has the least mean of 3.31. Although, it is still interpreted as “highly practiced,” there are pre-service teachers who still claim that most of the post conferences are not frequently done. This feedback mechanism is previously explained by Cabanlit (2019). In the same manner, Kula and Guler (2021) mention the need of pre-service teachers to have “one-on-one meetings” with their cooperating teachers in giving them feedback about their teachings. This is also highlighted in the study of Jones et al. (2014) who discuss the essence of the provision of immediate and accurate feedback, which may be in the form of post conferences, supporting the pre-service teachers to assume the role of teachers. In this line, Cabanlit (2019) underscores her findings that one of the difficulties cooperating teachers experience was “to handle a thorough clinical

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observation” since there were teachers who were not conversant with “deeper” processes involved in clinical observation.

Overall, the cooperating teachers of the 4 cooperating schools have highly practiced personal mentoring habits. This demonstrates their ability in supporting the pre-service

Pedagogical Mentoring Practices

Apart from the personal mentoring styles of the cooperating teachers, it is also crucial to look into their practices that demonstrate their adeptness in managing the teaching-learning dynamics. The indicators are based on the dynamics of handling the teaching and learning process. This includes their classroom management skills, integration of various strategies for instruction, utilization of varied instructional materials and resources, and provision of different assessment techniques.

teachers hone their potentials. Nesbitt and Barry (2022) already remind of the vital role of cooperating teachers being role models who exhibit positive behaviors in establishing trust and mutual respect. This enables pre-service teachers to feel valued and supported during their teaching internship experiences.

These expertise serve as the foundation of the pedagogical aspect of the teacher.

This aspect of the cooperating teachers provides pre-service teachers with imperative learning experiences in dealing with their own teaching experiences. Table 2 presents the results of the level of pedagogical mentoring practices of cooperating teachers as assessed by the pre-service teachers.

Table 2. Pedagogical Mentoring Practices of Cooperating Teachers

Indicators	Mean	Rank	Interpretation
My cooperating teacher/s demonstrate the following practices:			
1. Model effective teaching strategies and classroom management techniques.	3.40	10	Highly Practiced
2. Regularly check and collaborate with me in preparing my lesson plans.	3.44	8	Highly Practiced
3. Regularly collaborate with me in preparing my learning/instructional materials.	3.21	12	Often Practiced
2. Conduct regular observation on my teachings.	3.66	2	Highly Practiced
3. Provide me detailed feedback, especially during post conference sessions.	3.53	6	Highly Practiced
4. Introduce me to various instructional methods and tools.	3.35	11	Highly Practiced
5. Encourage me to use differentiated instruction to meet diverse student needs	3.66	2	Highly Practiced
6. Guide me in developing assessment and evaluation techniques.	3.52	7	Highly Practiced
7. Demonstrate how to create a positive and inclusive classroom environment.	3.55	5	Highly Practiced
8. Provide me resources and materials to support my lesson planning and delivery.	3.42	9	Highly Practiced
9. Keep a record of observation and post conferences made with me.	3.58	4	Highly Practiced
10. Provide me the opportunity to teach independently and collaboratively.	3.69	1	Highly Practiced
TOTAL	3.50		Highly Practiced

Legend: 3.26-4.00-Highly Practiced; 2.51-3.25-Often Practiced; 1.76-2.50-Sometimes Practiced; 1.00-1.75-Rarely Practiced

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Figure 2 lays out the various pedagogical mentoring strategies of the cooperating teachers. The results reveal that the 12th indicator is mostly displayed by the cooperating teachers, yielding the highest mean of 3.69. The indicator underscores the provision of the cooperating teachers with opportunities in allowing the pre-service teachers to teach independently and collaboratively. This result aligns with the findings of Jones et al. (2014) as they detailed the experiences of pre-service teachers. Their study reports the development of autonomy to pre-service teachers who assumed control over the classes after the mentoring sessions of the cooperating teachers. The researchers also detail that the assigned cooperating teacher is an experienced professional, who already acquire enough pedagogical knowledge. Likewise, Calamlam and Mokshein (2019) found that based on the cooperating teachers' narrative reflections, student teachers eventually develop independence when constantly monitored and guided. They explain that the cooperating teachers allow their pre-service teachers to make their own decisions such as choosing their own activities for the class.

However, it is clear that most of the cooperating teachers lack modelling on various effective learning strategies, methods and tools in teaching. This is evidenced by the low means of indicators 1 and 6 with 3.40 and 3.35 respectively. Although both indicators are still interpreted as "highly practiced," it can be noted that based on the demographics on their tenure as cooperating teachers, most of them are in the first to third year only. These years of experience can be categorized as novice. In the words of

Professional Mentoring Practices

Along with the personal and pedagogical mentoring practices of the cooperating teachers, it is also vital to provide the pre-service teachers to exercise professional activities in their internship experiences. Thus, this study also looks into the various professional mentoring practices of the cooperating teachers encouraging the student teachers to assume their

Basheer et al. (2012), in this experience range, these cooperating teachers have limited formal training in mentorship, which can impact their effectiveness. They still require more training in content knowledge, pedagogical skills, understanding student learning, and teaching practices to effectively mentor pre-service teachers. Also, "novice teachers" in the study of Valdez and Dominado (2020) still experience challenges such as planning and implementing lessons and assessing learning.

Collaboration between the cooperating teacher and the pre-service teacher is essential for effective mentoring leading to establishing a supportive internship environment. However, the data shows otherwise. Among the indicators on pedagogical mentoring practices, the practice on collaborative preparation of learning and/or instructional materials was rated lowest (3.21), which was only often exhibited. This result runs contrary to the findings of Calamlam and Mokshein (2019) who narrate an experience of a cooperating teacher who helps his/her pre-service teacher prepare for his/her final demonstration by cutting out some of the visual materials after the pre-service teacher lost his/her laptop a day before the final teaching demonstration. It states, "This incident showed that the unexpected turns of events need adjustment and understanding. I saw how the CT helped Kai in that pressing moment" (Calamlam & Mokshein, 2019, pp. 25-26).

Overall, the pedagogical mentoring practices of the cooperating teachers are highly practiced with a weighted mean of 3.50.

roles as teachers in the classroom and in the school.

Table 3 presents the results of the level of professional mentoring practices of cooperating teachers as assessed by the pre-service teachers.

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Table 3. Professional Mentoring Practices of Cooperating Teachers

Indicators	Mean	Rank	Interpretation
My cooperating teacher/s demonstrate the following practices:			
1. Allow me to participate in co-curricular and school/community activities.	3.40	7	Highly Practiced
2. Guide me on ethical and professional behavior in the teaching profession.	3.58	2	Highly Practiced
3. Facilitate opportunities for me to observe other educators.	3.48	5	Highly Practiced
4. Orient me more about school policies and procedures.	3.40	7	Highly Practiced
5. Support me as I develop my professional portfolio.	3.16	11	Often Practiced
6. Encourage me to set and pursue my career goals.	3.50	4	Highly Practiced
7. Provide me with pieces of advice on classroom management and student discipline.	3.53	3	Highly Practiced
8. Help me understand the importance of work-life balance.	3.34	10	Highly Practiced
9. Introduce me to various professional networks and organizations.	3.35	9	Highly Practiced
10. Encourage me to participate in professional development opportunities such as attending seminars and trainings.	3.67	1	Highly Practiced
11. Promote to me continuous learning and professional growth.	3.47	6	Highly Practiced
TOTAL	3.45		Highly Practiced

Legend: 3.26-4.00-Highly Practiced; 2.51-3.25-Often Practiced; 1.76-2.50-Sometimes Practiced; 1.00-1.75-Rarely Practiced

As shown in Table 3, the cooperating teachers highly encourage the pre-service teachers in participating in professional development activities such as attending seminars and trainings. The indicator yields a mean of 3.67, which marks the highest compared to the rest. Nesbitt et al., (2022) argue that cooperating teachers need to motivate their pre-service teachers to pursue professional activities. They believe that this would significantly impact the pre-service teachers' career longevity. By actively promoting attendance at seminars, cooperating teachers help pre-service teachers build networks and gain insights into best practices in education (Nesbitt & Barry, 2022). Particularly, the researchers elaborated that some examples of encouraging the student teacher to maintain active memberships in professional organizations included (1) talking to the student teacher about the organizations they can join and the benefits; (2) inviting them to attend organizational events with you; and (3) directly stressing the importance of joining and maintaining their membership throughout their early, mid, and late career stages.

However, the pre-service teachers perceive that their cooperating teachers have often support them in preparing their professional portfolio. This portfolio, as described by Kula and Guler (2021), are the required files that compile the

necessary documents of the pre-service teachers such as their attendance, evaluation forms, and the likes. In their study, they have found that the cooperating teachers frequently require pre-service teachers to submit their portfolio, but no support is also provided to them. This is one of the conflicts mentioned in their study which needs to be addressed. Eventually, the pre-service teachers will soon join the Department of Education (DepEd). DepEd has already established their monitoring and evaluation system called the Results-based Performance Management System (RPMS). It is an evaluation tool used to ensure quality teacher performance at different career stages. They also present in detail the various Means of Verification (MOV) that serve as proof of the attainment of specific objectives alongside performance indicators, from outstanding to poor performance, to help both ratees and raters in the assessment process (Llego, 2019). Thus, the guidance of cooperating teachers on the pre-service teachers' preparation of their professional portfolios would practice them with their professional works in the future.

Overall, professional mentoring employed by the cooperating teachers is rated highly practiced, with a general mean of 3.45. Effective professional mentoring involves structured feedback and collaborative practices that

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enhance the internship experience (Nesbitt & Barry, 2022).

Relationship of Cooperating Teachers' Mentoring Practices with Their Demographics

Table 4. Significant Difference Between Age and Mentoring Practices

Mentoring Practices	p-value	Interpretation
Personal	.42	Not Significant
Pedagogical	.53	Not Significant
Professional	.52	Not Significant

**Significant at 0.05*

Table 4 presents the results that there is no statistically significant relationship between the cooperating teachers' personal, pedagogical, and professional mentoring practices with their age. It can be noted that the age range of the cooperating teachers are widely spread. Based on their age demographics, most of the cooperating teachers are between the ages 31-35 and 41-45. However, these demographics do not necessarily indicate to have a direct effect on their mentoring practices. The results may suggest that regardless of age, cooperating teachers fulfill their duties and responsibilities in monitoring and guiding the pre-service teachers in their teaching demonstrations. The data recognizes their various capabilities and mentoring practices.

These results are contrary to some findings revealed in some studies. For instance,

Čiučiulkienė and Mičiulienė (2019) report that younger cooperating teachers often adopt a traditional-hierarchical approach, focusing on directive guidance due to their limited experience. In contrast, cooperating teachers with older age, with more pedagogical experience, tend to foster reciprocal relationships, promoting collaborative learning.

From the data, it implies that in the selection of cooperating teachers, it may not be necessary to set age as the main criterion. Despite the disparities of experiences these teachers might have based on their age, they can still perform their responsibilities as mentors. While age affects the mentoring dynamics in student teaching internships, it is also essential to recognize the cooperating teachers' commitment as a vital factor in fostering a supportive internship environment regardless of age.

Table 5. Significant Difference Between Age and Mentoring Practices

Mentoring Practices	p-value	Interpretation
Personal	*.03	Significant
Pedagogical	*.02	Significant
Professional	.25	Not Significant

**Significant at 0.05*

Table 5 shows that there is a statistically significant relationship between the cooperating teachers' years of teaching with their personal

mentoring practices ($p=.03$) and their pedagogical mentoring practices ($p=.02$). As previously presented, 33.9% (21) of the

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cooperating teachers have 6-10 years of experience in teaching. Having this amount of experience equips the cooperating teachers with varied strategies and classroom practices that can be shared to the cooperating teachers. Further, teachers with this number of years of experience already demonstrate trusting personal traits in treating their pre-service teachers.

Experienced teachers often demonstrate enhanced personal attributes, pedagogical skills, and feedback mechanisms, which are crucial for effective mentoring (Sulima & Montales, 2023). Sayeski and Paulsen (2012) discuss that cooperating teachers with more 10 years of experience were rated as “highly effective”. These teachers demonstrate graduate coursework in observation and communication skills—both qualify to their personal and pedagogical mentoring skills. These significant results from the data suggest that years of experience may influence certain aspects of mentoring skills, specifically, in the area of personal and pedagogical mentoring. In other words, the ability of the mentors to provide effective personal pedagogical mentoring depends on the number of years of experience of the mentors, who have gained significant

insights in the dynamics of teaching and learning.

Conversely, no statistical difference was found between the cooperating teachers’ years of experience and their professional mentoring experiences ($p=.25$). This result is supported by the work of Kamruzzaman (2023) who argues that years of experience alone do not guarantee effective mentoring. According to him personal attributes and the willingness to adapt to new teaching paradigms are equally crucial for successful mentorship. On the contrary, Sulima & Montales (2023) report that years of experience significantly affect mentors in delivering valuable mentoring practices.

The lack of a substantial correlation between years of experience and professional mentoring raises the possibility that experience is not the only factor that determines professional mentoring. This may suggest the necessity of intentional professional development initiatives, including workshops on career advancement or leadership training, to promote professional mentoring skills in educators of all levels of experience.

Table 6. Significant Difference Between Years as CT and Mentoring Practices

Mentoring Practices	p-value	Interpretation
Personal	.77	Not Significant
Pedagogical	.70	Not Significant
Professional	.62	Not Significant

**Significant at 0.05*

Table 6 reveals that there is no statistically significant relationship between the teachers’ tenure as cooperating teachers based on their number of years and their mentoring practices: personal ($p=.77$), pedagogical ($p=.70$), and professional ($p=.62$). The data suggests that regardless of the number of years of experience of the cooperating teachers in handling pre-service teachers, it does not necessarily affect their mentoring practices. It can be noted that 62.9% (39) of the cooperating teachers only

have 1-3 years of tenure as cooperating teachers. The trend in the number of cooperating teachers significantly decreases as the number of years increases. Reinhardt (2017) discusses that even less experienced teachers can be effective mentors if they receive proper training and support.

This result is strongly refuted by several studies that claimed positive relationship of mentoring practices and their number of years as mentors

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(cooperating teachers). For one, Cabanlit (2019) asserts that experienced teachers are more adept at balancing mentoring and supervisory roles, providing feedback and resources. This enhances the learning experience for pre-service teachers. In the same manner, experienced cooperating teachers are better at role modeling effective teaching methods and classroom management, which is crucial for student teachers' development (Nesbitt & Barry, 2022). Reinhardt (2017) even propounds that experience generally correlates with improved mentoring practices.

The absence of a substantial relationship suggests that mentoring is not a fixed ability that gets better with time. Rather, it is an ever-changing ability that needs to be actively developed by exposure to novel approaches, mentee feedback, and changing teaching strategies. Ongoing professional development

can help even seasoned cooperating teachers improve and hone their mentoring practices.

The results of the study aligns with the principles of Hudson's Mentoring Model (Hudson 2004), which outlines five key factors for effective mentoring: personal attributes, system requirements, pedagogical knowledge, modeling, and feedback (Bird & Hudson, 2015). In conclusion, the findings confirm Hudson's claim that intentional effort, organized assistance, and ongoing professional growth are necessary for successful mentoring. Additionally, the study emphasizes that rather than believing that these skills improve with experience alone, Teacher Education programs should concentrate on creating mentoring competencies specifically on their personal, pedagogical, and professional domains that align with all five of Hudson's mentoring model's elements.

Conclusion

From the results and findings of the study, it can be concluded that mentoring practices is an essential component of the pre-service teachers' internship experiences. The interplay of personal, pedagogical, and professional mentoring strategies provided learning opportunities for the pre-service teachers to enhance their teaching skills and equip them with confidence in completing their responsibilities leading to become independent student teachers. These mentoring practices also increases the conviction of the pre-service teachers to internalize their roles as teachers in the making. Most importantly, they aided the development and refinement of pre-service teachers as they created meaningful and fulfilling internship experiences. On the other hand, the results of the study also implicated continuous mentorship orientations and training among the cooperating teachers to keep them reminded of their crucial roles and responsibilities. These mentorship programs can be created, regardless of their age and experience level, to offer cooperating teachers structured support and guidance. To enhance

their practices and adjust to the needs of their mentees, cooperating teachers might benefit from peer collaboration, coaching sessions, and mentoring frameworks.

The study's potential limitation is on the number of respondents who partake in the study. Thus, the study recommends to increase the pre-service teachers to be involved in future studies. It is also recommended that a qualitative inquiry be conducted among the pre-service teachers to explicitly deduce and clarify the quantitative findings, especially on the relationship of the cooperating teachers' age and tenure of their roles as mentors with their mentoring practices.

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