

Mentoring Practices: The Perspectives of Principals, Mentors and Novice Teachers

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Rationale of the Study

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- The rationale of this study is based on addressing a gap that has two dimensions.
- The 1st dimension of the gap relates to the scarcity of studies in Lebanon that particularly explore the perspectives of principals, mentors and novice teachers on mentoring practices implemented in their schools.
- The 2nd dimension of the gap is related to elucidating particularities in the mentoring practices that are directly related to the cultural context.

Purpose of the Study

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1. To describe the mentoring practices as defined by novice teachers, mentors and principals at nine private schools in Beirut
2. To explore their perspectives towards the implementation of mentoring practices at their schools
3. To identify the aspects of mentoring practices that they find to be helpful or not so helpful
4. To explore their recommendations on improvement of current practices

Research Questions

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1. How is mentoring defined in the context of participant private schools in Lebanon from the perspective of principals, mentors and novice teachers?
2. What forms of mentoring support [in terms of structure/design, approach and content] do novice teachers receive in private schools in Lebanon?
3. Which aspects of the mentoring practices implemented do principals, mentors and novice teachers find helpful or not so helpful?
4. What are the recommendations of principals, mentors and novice teachers to improve the quality of the mentoring practices employed at their schools?

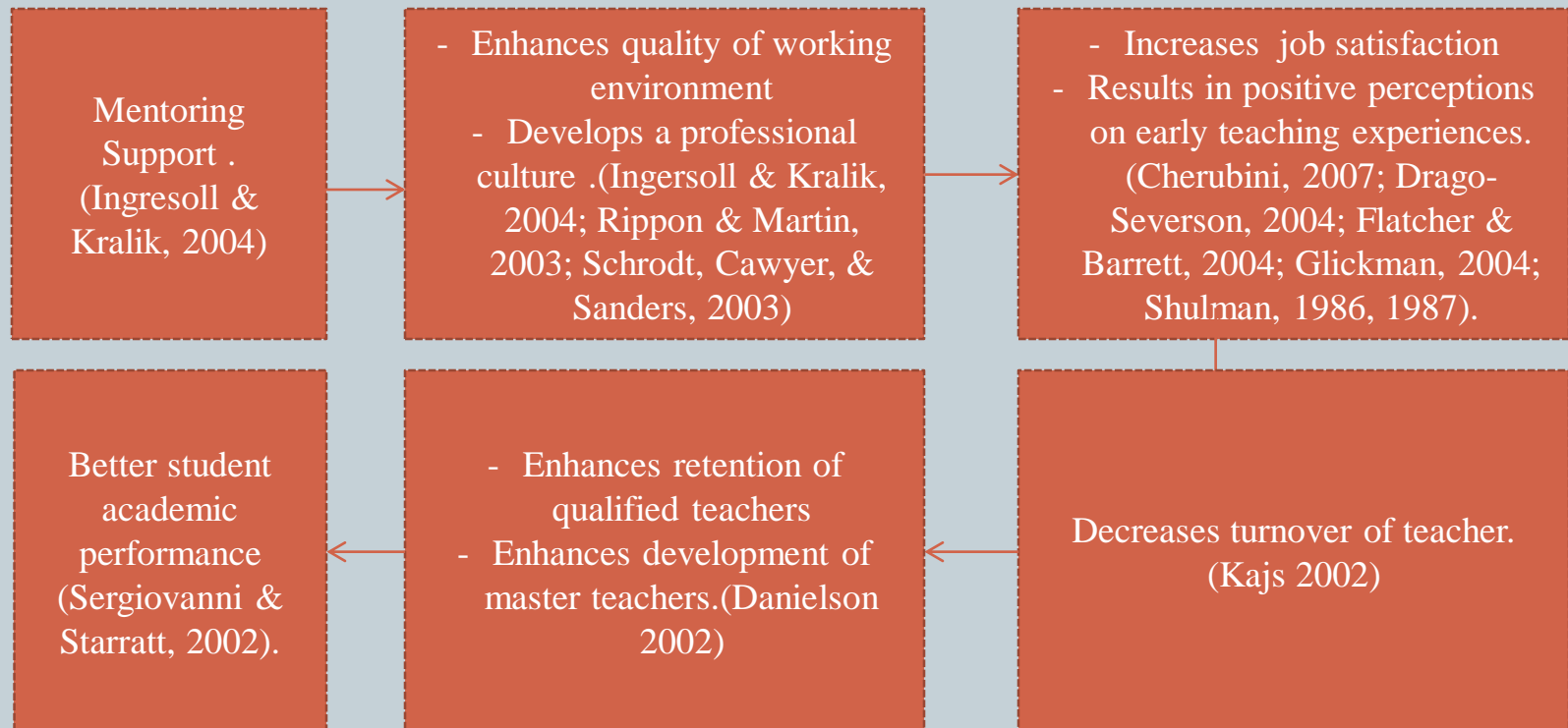
Definition of Mentoring

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- For the current study, a combination of definitions for mentoring presented by Noe (1991) and Feiman-Nemser (2003) will be adopted as an operational definition.
- Noe (1991) defines mentoring as a one-to-one relationship between a more experienced member (mentor) and a less experienced member (mentee) of the profession.
- The relationship is developed to promote the professional and personal growth of the mentee through training, support, and guidance. Through personalized attention and providing emotional support, the mentor transfers needed information, feedback, and encouragement to the mentee.

Results of Mentoring Support

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The Theoretical Framework

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- Successful mentoring practices
- Shulman's "Model of Pedagogical Reasoning and Action" (1987)
- Glickman's theory "Developmental Approach to Supervision" (2004)
- Drago-Severson's "The Learning-oriented model of School Leadership" (2004)

- The framework comprises the following components:
 - (a) Structural Arrangements Enhancing Supportive Mentoring Practices
 - (b) Supportive Aspects of Mentoring Practices

The Theoretical Framework

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Structural Arrangements

- a) Adopting clear criteria for selecting mentors
- b) Providing incentives to mentors
- c) Matching mentors with mentees
- d) Training of mentors
- e) Commitment
- f) Caring and respect
- g) Clear communication
- h) Mutual understanding of roles and expectations

Supportive Aspects

- a) Engaging in instructionally supportive practices
- b) Engaging in emotionally supportive practices
- c) Engaging in practices that enhance the novice teacher's professional development
- d) Engaging in practices that enhance enculturation
- e) Engaging in practices that enhance the mentor's professional development

Methodology

- Grounded theory
- Grounded theory acknowledges the standpoints of both the researcher and of the participants in the process of interpretive inquiry (Charmaz, 2006).
- In the grounded theory, the researcher starts with the data collection and focuses on the development of concepts and theoretical propositions grounded in the initial data, using an inductive process to develop theoretical understanding through the researcher's observations and interactions (Charmaz, 2006; Merriam 1998).
- Grounded theorists emphasize what people are doing and the meanings of their actions, such as their intentions; their own stated explanations; and their implicit, taken-for-granted assumptions (Charmaz,2006).

Procedures of the Study

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- Selection of schools
- Selection of participants
- Pilot Focus Group Interviews
- Individual interviews
- School documents
- Researcher's journal

Data Analysis

- Data collected during individual interviews were audiotaped then transcribed and analyzed. The data collected were analyzed based on constant comparative method.
- Constant comparative method is about looking for similarities and differences between one occurrence in the data and another which allows to the development of categories and the identification of properties specific to each category.
- Individual profile of each participant was built. Then, a compiled profile of each participant group was formed.
- Conceptual categories emerging from the analysis of data formed the basis to propose a grounded model of mentoring practices.
- The proposed grounded model was compared to the theoretical framework. Similarities and differences were highlighted and interpreted.

Cumulative Profile of Mentoring Practices from the Principal's Perspective

Principals' Perspectives on Definition of Mentoring <i>Principals' Perspectives on Mentoring</i>	Principals
	N=7
Mentoring is support given to a novice teacher by guiding	7
Mentoring is providing academic support	7
Mentoring is providing non-academic support	7
Mentoring is providing emotional support	5
Mentoring is helping novice teacher build skills to improve	1
Principals' Perspectives on Forms of Mentoring	
Supervisory support of the head of department	7
Guiding novice teachers	5
Conducting formative evaluation and giving feedback	6
Supervisory support of the head of division	7
Helping the novice teacher in classroom management	7
Introducing the novice teachers to cases of learners with special needs	3
Conducting formative evaluation and giving feedback	5
Structural arrangements supportive of mentoring practices	3
Assigning lower workload for mentor	3
Offering incentives to mentor	3

Cumulative Profile of Mentoring Practices from the Principal's Perspective

Principals' Perspectives on Supportive Aspects of Mentoring Practices	
Engaging in practices that enhance enculturation	7
Introduction of school mission statement and rules and regulations; introduction of novice teachers to staff and key departments	7
Organizing orientation workshops	7
Providing ongoing academic support	6
Building novice teacher's instructional capacity through demo lessons	4
Helping in planning and delivering instruction	6
Encouraging and monitoring the progress of novice teacher by observing and reflecting on observations	6
Encouraging peer observation and reflection on observation	3
Providing ongoing non-academic support	7
Providing support in classroom management	4
Providing support on dealing with learners with special needs	3
Engaging in emotionally supportive practices	5
Principals' Recommendations on Improving Mentoring Practices	6
Recommendations on Improving Mentoring practices	
Signing early contracts with novices	2
Developing effective mentoring programs	2
Giving lesser workload for mentors	2

A Comparison between the Perspectives of Principals, Mentors and Novice Teachers Models of the Perceived Themes (frequency of responses)

Themes	Principals N=7	Mentors N=15	Novice Teachers N=18
Perspectives on Mentoring			
Mentoring is support given to a novice teacher by guiding	7	10	12
Perspectives on Forms of Mentoring			
Supervisory support of the head of department	7	14	18
Supervisory support of the head of division	7	7	8
Collegial support of peers	*	*	12
Structural arrangements supportive of mentoring practices	3	7	9
Perspectives on Supportive Aspects of Mentoring practices			
Engaging in practices that enhance enculturation	7	12	14
Providing ongoing academic support	6	8	10
Providing ongoing non-academic support	7	7	9
Participants' Recommendations			
Recommendations on Improving Mentoring practices	6	13	6

A Comparison between the Perspectives of Principals, Mentors and Novice Teachers Models of the Perceived Sub-Themes (frequency of responses)

Sub- Themes	Principal s N=7	Mentors N=15	Novice Teachers N=18
Mentoring is support given to a novice teacher by guiding			
Mentoring is providing academic support	7	15	11
Mentoring is providing non-academic support	7	11	*
Mentoring is providing emotional support	5	9	9
Mentoring is helping novice teacher build skills to improve	1	*	*
Supervisory support of the head of department			
Guiding novice teachers	5	10	12
Conducting formative evaluation and giving feedback	6	9	9
Holding regular meetings with novice teachers	*	9	18
Designating specific teachers to mentor novice teachers	*	7	*
Supervisory support of the head of division			
Helps the novice teacher in classroom management	7	7	8
Introduces the novice teachers to cases of learners with special needs	3	*	5
Conducting formative evaluation and giving feedback	5	12	9
Collegial support of peers			
Receiving voluntary ongoing academic and non-academic peer support	*	*	12

A Comparison between the Perspectives of Principals, Mentors and Novice Teachers Models of the Perceived Sub-Themes (frequency of responses)

Structural arrangements supportive of mentoring practices			
Assigning lower workload for mentor	3	*	*
Offering incentives to mentor	3	7	*
Deciding on criteria for mentor selection	*	1	*
Facilitating collegial relationship	*	7	*
Engaging in practices that enhance enculturation			
Introduction of school mission statement and rules and regulations; introduction of novice teachers to staff and key departments	7	12	14
Organizing orientation workshops	7	7	10
Introducing applications and software used at school	*	5	5
Providing ongoing academic support			
Building novice teacher's instructional capacity through demo lessons	4	9	13
Helping in planning and delivering instruction	6	9	13
Encouraging and monitoring the progress of novice teacher by observing and reflecting on observations	6	7	2
Encouraging peer observation and reflection on observation	3	8	8
Helping in constructing assessments	*	6	8
Helping in checking on and evaluating students' academic performance	*	6	*
Providing novice teachers with previously prepared lesson plans	*	6	*
Providing ongoing non-academic support			
Providing support in classroom management	4	7	9
Providing support on dealing with learners with special needs	3	6	7
Engaging in emotionally supportive practices	5	6	9

A Comparison between the Perspectives of Principals, Mentors and Novice Teachers Models of the Perceived Sub-Themes (frequency of responses)

Recommendations on Improving Mentoring practices

Signing early contracts with novices	2	1	1
Developing effective mentoring programs	2	2	*
Giving lesser workload for mentors	2	6	1
Conducting formative evaluation and giving feedback more frequently	*	2	*
Organizing more of skill building workshops	*	2	*
Encouraging peer observation	*	*	1
Assigning colleagues as mentors	*	*	1
Giving lesser workload for novice teacher	*	*	1

Grounded Model of Mentoring Practices

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Definition of Mentoring

Mentoring is support given to a novice teacher by guiding

Mentoring is providing academic support

Mentoring is providing non-academic support

Mentoring is providing emotional support

Forms of Mentoring Support

Supervisory support of the head of department

Guides novice teachers

Conducting formative evaluation and giving feedback

Holding regular meetings with novice teachers.

Designating specific teachers to mentor novice teachers

Supervisory support of the head of division

Helps the novice teacher in classroom management

Introduces the novice teachers to cases of learners with special needs.

Conducting formative evaluation and giving feedback

Mentoring from colleagues

Receiving voluntary ongoing academic and non-academic peer support.

Structural arrangements governing mentoring practices

Assigning lower workload for mentor

Assigning regular workload for novice teacher.

Offering incentives to mentor

Maintaining a collegial relationship.

Grounded Model of Mentoring Practices

Supportive Aspects of Mentoring Practices

Engaging in practices that enhance enculturation

- Introducing school mission statement and rules and regulations; introducing novice teachers to staff and key departments
 - Organizing skill building workshops
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Providing ongoing Academic Support

- Building novice teacher's instructional capacity through demo lessons.
 - Helping in Planning and delivering instruction.
 - Encouraging and monitoring the progress of novice teacher by observing and reflecting on observations.
 - Encouraging peer observation and reflection on observation
 - Helping in constructing Assessments
 - Helping in checking on and evaluating students' academic performance.
 - Introducing to applications and software used at school
 - Providing novice teachers with previously prepared lesson plans
-

Providing ongoing non-Academic Support

- Providing support in classroom management
 - Providing support on dealing with learners with special needs
 - Engaging in emotionally supportive practices
-

Grounded Model of Mentoring Practices

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Recommendations on Improving Mentoring Practices

- Signing early contracts with novices
 - Developing effective mentoring programs
 - Giving lesser workload for mentors
 - Conducting formative evaluation and giving feedback more frequently
 - Organizing more of skill building workshops
 - Encouraging peer observation
 - Assigning colleagues as mentors
 - Giving lesser workload for novice teacher
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Results

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The findings of the study revealed that:

- the schools lacked institutionalized and documented mentoring programs
- novice teachers were under-prepared
- novice teachers lacked adequate pre- and in-service teacher training
- novice teachers received support (if found) by their superiors and peers
- the participants used the terms coordinating and mentoring interchangeably
- the participants did not realize the difference between mentoring as a function and the formalized supervisory roles held by the school superiors and accordingly regarded their superiors as their mentors
- the mentors (mainly head of departments) followed the directive approach to supervision
- principals and mentors (head of departments and head of divisions) seemed to underestimate the practices of informal support novice teachers received from their peers

Recommendations

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- Recommendations for Practice
- Recommendations for Research