Uncovering the Challenges of Cooperating Teachers in Shaping Pre-Service Teachers: A Case Study

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Abstract:- Cooperating teachers play a crucial role as mentors, creators of supportive learning environments, and models of effective communication and collaboration. This study uncovered the challenges faced by cooperating teachers in shaping pre-service teachers in selected public schools of Ozamiz City during the School Year 2023-2024, utilizing a case study design with purposive sampling of fourteen participants. In-depth face-to-face interviews were conducted to glean insights from cooperating teachers, followed by data analysis using Yin's (2014) six-step method and HyperResearch software. Results unveiled the multifaceted role of cooperating teachers, demonstrating their mentorship, guidance, and the facilitation of supportive learning environments while modeling effective communication and collaboration. Challenges encountered included non-compliance and late lesson plan submissions, necessitating the tackling of time management issues and finding a balance between teaching quantity and quality. Adapting to diverse pre-service teacher needs and learning styles posed a challenge, leading to the implementation of support mechanisms, including ongoing mentoring, feedback, collaborative structures, and community practice engagement. To optimize the mentorship experience, cooperating teachers actively engaged in ongoing professional development and specialized training. They advocated for the establishment of mentorship networks and recognition and sought access to resources for innovative teaching. Despite facing challenges, cooperating teachers underscored the importance of ongoing professional development in guiding pre-service teachers effectively. The study recommends that Top Management of cooperating teachers and Teacher Education Institutions elevate mentorship by prioritizing continuous training, establishing networks, and providing resources for innovative teaching practices, thereby fostering a supportive and enriching learning environment for pre-service teachers.

Keywords:- *Collaboration, Mentorship, Professional Development, Recognition, Support Mechanisms.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Effective mentorship relies on the pivotal role of cooperating teachers in guiding student teachers, emphasizing the importance of understanding best practices. Encouragement and support for the student teacher's efforts, coupled with attentiveness to their mindset, attitude, and well-being, represent foundational best practices in fostering a positive mentoring relationship. Effective mentorship involves the demonstration of teaching methods, explanation of classroom management techniques, and modeling of effective practices, as outlined in best practices for mentoring roles (Nesbitt & Barry,2022). A collaborative mentorship program can significantly contribute to the success of both mentors and mentees. Building a program involves strategic planning, including goal-setting, creating a timeline, and budgeting for additional resources. Beyond the traditional classroom, mentorship is recognized as an essential tool for teacher education, facilitating knowledge and experience sharing. Additionally, mentorship programs extend beyond education into professional development, enhancing employee engagement and fostering personal and professional growth (Schwan et al., 2020).

Mentorship in teacher education represents a hierarchical relationship where mentors, possessing extensive experience and knowledge, guide pre-service teachers (PSTs) in their journey toward becoming educators (Lu, 2013). This transition from cooperating teacher to mentor is central to the educational landscape, necessitating a profound understanding of the qualities essential for effective mentorship, including strong leadership, open-mindedness, humor, and adaptability, as identified by cooperating teachers (Lewis, 2017).

The mentorship experiences of PSTs during their training are invaluable without the support from cooperating teachers. These provide opportunities for reflection, learning from challenges, and personal growth (Jita, 2022). This journey often involves school-based mentors and cooperating teachers collaborating closely with university programs during teaching practicums, playing a

pivotal role in guiding PSTs through the intricacies of practical teaching experiences (Nketsia, 2023).

Cooperating teachers (CTs) are key participants in ensuring a valuable experience for the student teacher (ST) during teaching practice (Tsikati & Dlamini, 2019). They play a crucial role in the education and professional development of pre-service teachers during their practicum and student teaching experiences. They are seen as providers of the learning needed for future teachers in the classroom or school, essentially serving as mentors. Their role is multifaceted and involves mentoring, guiding, and providing support to aspiring educators (Lu, 2013). Mentoring encompasses both pre and post-teaching practice, addressing pedagogy, teaching materials, and utilizing technology for instruction(Suryati et al., 2023).

However, cooperating teachers often encounter various challenges in fulfilling this vital role. One of the primary challenges faced by cooperating teachers is related to the readiness and preparedness of pre-service teachers. A percentage of pre-service teachers' problems are attributed to cooperating teachers. These issues may encompass pre-service teachers not being adequately prepared for the classroom environment or lacking essential pedagogical knowledge and skills. As a result, cooperating teachers must invest additional time and effort in providing guidance and support (Lu, 2013). Understanding the role of a cooperating teacher can be challenging since there is no official definition of this role (Lewis, 2017). This lack of clarity can affect the effectiveness of teacher mentorship programs. The CTs noted that establishing rapport with the STs was essential and that head teachers needed to visit the STs in the respective classes they teach (practice) (Tsikati & Dlamini, 2019).

Furthermore, the commitment level of cooperating teachers can be a significant challenge. Some teacher education programs struggle to find cooperating teachers who are fully committed to the mentoring process. The willingness and dedication of cooperating teachers play a role in the effectiveness of the mentorship provided to pre-service teachers. Ensuring that cooperating teachers are genuinely engaged in the process is crucial for the success of teacher education programs (Parks, 2020).

The challenges experienced by both pre-service teachers (PTs) and cooperating teachers (CTs) during the practicum period were investigated. The difficulties that cooperating teachers encountered while mentoring pre-service teachers included managing their classroom responsibilities, adjusting to mentorship roles, creating a conducive learning environment, assessing PTs, and ensuring their professional growth (Mutlu, 2022). Furthermore, a recent study examined the mentoring processes of pre-service teachers and identified several issues faced by CTs, including a lack of feedback, mentee exploitation, and time constraints (Suryati, 2023). These challenges highlight the complexities of the mentorship relationship and the need for support and resources for both PTs and CTs. When pre-service teachers encounter

challenges or struggles in their field experience, their mentor teachers often face the dilemma of how to proceed (Burns, 2019).

Moreover, a study identified and examined the specific challenges that cooperating teachers encounter while working closely with pre-service teachers. These challenges could include issues related to classroom management, communication, pedagogical differences, and adjusting to the mentorship role (Lewis,2017). Challenges may arise regarding the extent of difficulty on the part of cooperating teachers or mentors, impacting the quality of the observation experience for pre-service teachers. Cooperating teachers or mentors struggled to provide timely and constructive feedback to pre-service teachers (Abas, 2016). Furthermore, pre-service teachers encountered slight difficulties in various support areas, like administrative support and cooperation with their mentors, building mentor-mentee relationships, receiving guidance and feedback, and managing their responsibilities during their teacher education programs. Hence, to ensure a more supportive and effective teacher preparation program, the cooperating teachers' side may also be studied. (Abas, 2021).

In the context of secondary education, cooperating teachers face specific challenges when supervising student teachers. This included difficulties in balancing their teaching responsibilities with mentoring duties and ensuring that student teachers receive the necessary support and feedback. In addition to their difficulties was the challenge of aligning the teaching practices of student teachers with the school's curriculum and educational standards. They reported that ensuring that student teachers' lessons and activities were in line with the school's requirements posed a significant challenge. Moreover, they also encountered difficulties in evaluating student teachers' progress, providing constructive feedback, and making recommendations for improvement (Cogle, 2017).

Additionally, pre-service teachers frequently encounter challenges when learning to teach, particularly in the context of educational institutions. These challenges underscore the critical role of cooperating teachers, who offer essential guidance, share their experiences, and help PSTs navigate the complexities of becoming educators. Furthermore, the cooperating teachers play an important role in the pre-service teachers' journey in their lives (Lu, 2013). Hence, there is a significance in understanding the challenges faced by cooperating teachers in mentoring pre-service teachers to enhance the overall teacher education experience (Mutlu, 2022).

These challenges extend to their interactions with cooperating teachers and administrative support (Napanoy et al., 2021). Another study highlights that linguistic incompetence and decision-making can also pose challenges for pre-service teachers during their practicum experiences (Mutlu, 2014). Hence, cooperating teachers play a role in guiding and mentoring pre-service teachers (Batugal, 2021).

Overall, pre-service teachers undergo a multifaceted training process, and challenges can arise in areas such as observation, linguistic competence, and decision-making. Cooperating teachers serve as mentors to guide pre-service teachers through these challenges, ensuring their preparedness for a teaching career. They also had difficulties in mentoring pre-service teachers (Batugal, 2021). Effectively preparing future educators requires a critical understanding and proactive addressing of these challenges.

Beyond its immediate context, this study contributes to the broader field of education by shedding light on the complexities of teacher mentorship and recognizing its pivotal role in developing effective teachers (Ndebele, 2022). It aligns with existing research focusing on the challenges faced by PSTs as they learn to teach, highlighting the central importance of mentorship in this process (Abas, 2016; Mutlu, 2012.

Based on the previous studies, there's a need to emphasize a personal growth mentoring approach that recognizes mentor teachers as empathetic counselors addressing personal needs (Orland-Barak, 2021). It is also essential to explore the impact of peer mentoring interventions on pre-service teachers' psychosocial support perceptions (Nguyen, 2013; (Jita, 2022); & (Suryati, 2023). Additionally, it is necessary to address the gap among pre-service teachers highlighted through mentor feedback (Moussaid, 2017). Lastly, assessing the overall impact of coaching, mentoring, and supervision, as well as the experiences that cooperating teachers extended to pre-service teachers during practicum, is required (Mok, 2021).

The researchers identified an apparent knowledge gap in the prior research concerning the specific knowledge gaps among pre-service teachers, particularly in understanding the areas where they may be lacking. In addition, the prior research did not address the subject of tailoring mentorship and support to address these identified weaknesses. This encompasses several unexplored dimensions that lately have attracted research attention in other disciplines (Mubuuke et al., 2020); (Teaching, 2023); (Giles et al., 2020)). The exploration of the specific knowledge gaps among pre-service teachers should be further investigated to provide an understanding as to why such is not the case with the existing research on teacher mentorship (Miles, 2017).

Hence, this study will uncover the challenges of cooperating teachers in the public schools of Ozamiz City Division in shaping pre-service educators of Misamis University during the SY 2023-2024. The landscape of teacher education institution and the cooperating schools of Ozamiz City Division finds itself at a critical juncture, deeply intertwined with the enduring Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) established in early 2000. This MOA has long governed the deployment of pre-service teachers (PSTs) within the region, forging a symbiotic relationship between educational institutions and the practical training ground of classrooms.

The result of this study will contribute to enhancing teacher preparation and support in the implementation of Experiential Learning Courses for teacher education programs. Specifically, the researchers sought answers to the following questions:

- How do cooperating teachers perceive their roles, responsibilities, and interactions with pre-service teachers?
- What challenges do cooperating teachers face when mentoring pre-service teachers?
- What support mechanisms were employed to address the challenges encountered by cooperating teachers in their role as mentors to pre-service teachers?
- How can Teacher Education Institutions and Cooperating School's top management enhance the mentorship experience for cooperating teachers through the introduction of improvements and additional support mechanisms?

II. METHODS

This study used a qualitative approach employing Yin's (2014) case study design. The research design was well-suited for the investigation as it enabled an in-depth exploration of complex issues within the real-life context of mentoring pre-service teachers. Yin's case study design allowed for a detailed exploration of their experiences and the challenges they encountered during the mentoring process. It enabled the researchers to delve into the nuances of these challenges within the context of teacher education.

The study was conducted in the public elementary and secondary schools in Ozamiz City. These schools were staffed by cooperating teachers who mentored and supervised the pre-service teachers in certain Teacher Education Institution during their practical training. Fourteen cooperating teachers from public schools were selected based on these criteria: (1) possessed a minimum of three years of teaching experience within the education field; (2) demonstrated a consistent track record of very satisfactory performance in their teaching roles; (3) had a minimum of one year of experience in mentoring and guiding pre-service teachers during their teaching assistantships and internships; and (4) were willing to participate in the study.

The researchers structured interview guide questions tailored to each research question. The questions were designed to elicit detailed responses and insights into their experiences and perceptions. A structured interview guide questions helped gather rich qualitative data to analyze the challenges and perceptions related to mentoring pre-service teachers. The interview guide questions consisted of opening, core, and exit questions. The contents of the interview guide questions were presented first to selected experts for the validation process, and a pilot was tested on selected participants not included in the study to ensure the reliability of the instruments.

In gathering the data, the researchers first asked the Graduate School of Northwestern Mindanao School of Science and Technology for approval of data collection for the study, then sought permission from the cooperating school principals for their approval of the conduct of the study to the target participants. All participants were given their informed consent obtained in writing before the interview after having their study's goals and significance explained to them. Participants received information about the study's goals, potential advantages, confidentiality protection, and how to get in touch with the researcher if they had any inquiries. The conditions of participation, which included the freedom to decline or leave the study whenever one desired without incurring penalties, were made clear. Each participant underwent a 40-minute interview at a prearranged time and date.

The six-step method of Yin's data analysis (2014) was used to analyze the transcriptions. The procedure consisted of the following steps: planning, designing, preparing, collecting, analyzing, and sharing. With the HyperResearch software, the participants' responses were categorized, coded, and put together to compose themes.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study uncovered the challenges of cooperating teachers in the public schools of Ozamiz City Division in shaping pre-service educators in Ozamiz City during the SY 2023-2024. It included 14 female cooperating teachers, with a predominant 35.71% holding a Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEED) degree. Other degrees included Bachelor of Secondary Education in English (BSEd-Eng, 14.29%), Bachelor of Secondary Education in Math (BSEd-Math, 14.29%), and advanced degrees like Master of Arts in Education - Curriculum and Assessment (MAEd-CAR, 14.29%) and Master of Arts in Education - Educational Management (MAEd-EM, 28.57%). On average, the cooperating teachers were 39.14 years old, with 6.357 years of mentoring experience, having mentored an average of 1.857 pre-service teachers. To maintain participant anonymity, each participant will be referred to as P1, P2, P3, and so on.

The study presented results in themes derived from four main objectives: exploring cooperating teachers' perceptions of their roles and interactions with pre-service teachers, identifying challenges faced in mentoring, examining support mechanisms employed to address these challenges, and suggesting improvements and additional support mechanisms to enhance the mentorship experience through collaboration between Teacher Education Institutions and Cooperating School's top management.

A. Roles and Responsibilities of Cooperating Teachers with Pre-service Teachers

The first objective centers on the roles and responsibilities of cooperating teachers, encompassing the vital themes of mentoring and guiding pre-service teachers, creating supportive learning environments, and modeling effective communication and collaboration.

B. Mentoring and Guiding Pre-service Teachers

The cooperating teachers embodied a shared dedication to guiding and mentoring pre-service teachers on their path to becoming successful professionals in the field of education. They shared a collective commitment to nurturing the next generation of educators. P1, the cooperating teacher, emphasizes a comprehensive set of responsibilities geared towards empowering aspiring educators with the necessary information and skills to thrive in their future roles. P2, on the other hand, highlights the importance of constructive feedback, practical insights, and the creation of a supportive learning environment as essential components in the developmental process. Lastly, P10 underscores the cooperative teacher's role in exposing pre-service teachers to a diverse array of productive teaching and learning experiences, emphasizing the dynamic nature of the mentorship process. Together, these perspectives merge to form a multifaceted approach aimed at cultivating confident, skilled, and adaptable educators.

> *P1: "As a cooperating teacher, I have a variety of responsibilities... My ultimate goal is to empower them with the information and abilities they need to become assured and productive teachers."*
> *P2: "To provide constructive feedback, share practical insights, and create a supportive environment for them to develop their teaching skills and grow professionally."*
> *P10: My role as a cooperating teacher in mentoring and guiding my pre-service teachers is to expose them to different and productive teaching and learning experiences.*

P3 brought forth the idea of creating an environment that was not only supportive but also constructive, with a focus on building confidence and reigniting a passion for learning within pre-service teachers. Finally, P4 highlighted the significance of a supportive classroom setting for the application of theoretical knowledge, coupled with encouragement for self-reflection, experimentation, and innovation.

> *P3: "As a cooperating teacher, I perceive that my role is to provide a supportive and constructive environment for the pre-service teachers... Build confidence and instill in their hearts and reminds a passion for learning the concepts in the field of education."*
> *P4: "To provide a supportive environment both inside and outside the classroom setting so the pre-service teacher can apply theory to practice, foster through feedback and constructive criticism. To allow opportunities for them to lead, allowing room for experimentation or innovation. To encourage them to self-reflect and analyze their teaching experiences critically."*

Mentoring significantly contributes to the professional development of novice teachers, positively influencing teacher retention (Hobson, 2009). Notably, during a year-long placement in a high-needs U.S. school, pre-service

teachers not only experienced the immediate effects of mentoring but also saw lasting influences on their overall professional development and career aspirations (Garza et al., 2019).

Pre-service teachers benefit significantly from mentoring, particularly in the development of pedagogical knowledge, system requirements, personal attributes, modeling, and feedback (Ndebele & Legg-Jack, 2022). This mentoring activity is crucial for the professional development of effective teachers, emphasizing the importance of mentors supporting student teachers in acquiring the necessary skills and competencies for the teaching profession.

Understanding what influences the selection of teaching methods and outlining learning activities poses challenges for pre-service teachers. Emphasizing the importance of comprehending the content before choosing teaching activities and instructional strategies is crucial. (Kola, 2021).

There is a need for mentorship programs in teacher education. Mentor teachers and cooperating teachers should actively engage in directed models of guidance, emphasizing practical experiences and providing targeted support for pre-service teachers. These mentorship initiatives should tailor their approaches to the unique challenges, recognizing the significance of context-specific support. Furthermore, mentor teachers should adopt a personal growth mentoring approach, acknowledging and addressing the personal needs of pre-service teachers. This can contribute not only to their well-being but also foster a positive and supportive learning environment.

Teachers are seen as providers of the learning needed for future teachers in the classroom or school, essentially serving as mentors. Their role is multifaceted and involves mentoring, guiding, and providing support to aspiring educators (Lu, 2013).

C. Creating Supportive Learning Environments

Creating environments that not only support the application of theoretical knowledge but also foster the development of practical teaching skills. Collectively, the participants' perspectives underscore the multifaceted roles and responsibilities of cooperating teachers in creating environments conducive to the growth and success of pre-service teachers. The lines articulated by participating cooperating teachers, namely P5 and P6, emphasized the pivotal role of guidance and mentorship in shaping the development of pre-service teachers toward a supportive learning environment. P5 and P6 both underscore the crucial responsibility of cooperating teachers in serving as guides and mentors, illuminating the path for aspiring educators to navigate the complexities of theory and practice, leading to a supportive learning environment.

P5: "As a cooperating teacher, I see my role as a guide and mentor to pre-service teachers...
I have to create a supportive learning environment enabling the application of theoretical knowledge in actual classroom settings, fostering the development of teaching skills (P5)."
P6: "As a cooperating teacher, my role is to provide guidance and support to our pre-service teachers... I have to create a positive learning environment and share my experiences with and help them develop skills to have effective teaching (P6)."

Simultaneously, the insights of cooperating teachers P7 and P8 delve into the dynamics of interactive relationships and effective classroom management. Their contributions highlight the importance of nurturing a connection between cooperating teachers and pre-service teachers, fostering a learning environment that fits open communication and collaboration. Additionally, the significance of providing a conducive real-life classroom setting, devising varied lesson plans, and prioritizing effective classroom management emerges as integral components in cultivating a supportive learning environment.

P7: "Helping my pre-service teachers and mentoring them is by creating an interactive relationship, being an open-minded cooperating teacher (P7)."
P8: "I consider myself significant to pre-service teachers... providing them with a conducive real-life classroom setting, developing lesson plans using various methodologies, and most especially classroom management (P8)."

Cooperating teachers show that helping pre-service teachers isn't just about giving information; it's also about preparing them for the unexpected things that might happen in class. P11, the teacher who helps, shared a commitment to guiding and supporting new teachers. This included sharing helpful ideas, giving useful feedback, and making a positive learning space to help new teachers learn important skills and gain confidence in class. At the same time, P12 talked about the mentor job of giving practical advice to new teachers. This advice gave them a heads-up about possible issues during teaching.

P11: As a cooperating teacher, I will guide and support the pre-service teacher by sharing with them, offering constructive feedback, and facilitating a positive learning environment to help pre-service teachers develop their skills and confidence in the classroom.

P12: In mentoring and guiding pre-service teachers, my role is to give them experience-based inputs, which could give them heads-up for any unexpected incident inside the classroom in the middle of the delivery of instruction.

The CTs noted that establishing rapport with the STs was essential and that head teachers needed to visit the STs in the respective classes they teach (practice) (Tsikati & Dlamini, 2019). The challenges experienced by both pre-service teachers (PTs) and cooperating teachers (CTs) during the practicum period were investigated. The difficulties that cooperating teachers encountered while mentoring pre-service teachers included managing their classroom responsibilities, adjusting to mentorship roles, creating a conducive learning environment, assessing PTs, and ensuring their professional growth (Mutlu, 2022).

Cooperating teachers, as pivotal mentors for pre-service teachers, must actively guide and mentor, creating supportive learning environments where theoretical knowledge meets practical teaching skills. Establishing interactive relationships, prioritizing effective classroom management, and providing experience-based inputs are crucial. Constructive feedback and the creation of positive learning spaces contribute to the holistic development of pre-service teachers, ensuring they are well-prepared for the dynamic challenges of their future roles as educators.

D. Modeling Effective Communication and Collaboration

The past experiences of cooperating teachers underscore the effectiveness of modeling communication and collaboration as practices, playing a key role in fostering these qualities within the teaching and learning process. The cooperating teachers reflected their evolving roles and responsibilities in modeling and facilitating impactful communication and collaboration between educators and pre-service teachers. P5 and P6 centered on the provision of positive feedback and collaborative efforts in lesson planning. Their past experiences are characterized by a focus on highlighting positive interactions and successful collaborations during the planning stages, emphasizing the pivotal role of open communication and a shared commitment to the learning process in the implementation of effective teaching methods.

P5: "One positive interaction involved a pre-service teacher who demonstrated enthusiasm and a willingness to learn. We collaborated on lesson planning, and the teacher effectively implemented innovative teaching methods in the classroom. This experience highlighted the importance of open communication and a shared commitment to the learning process (P5)."

P6: "After their teaching demonstrations, I provided positive feedback to them like acknowledging the creativity of the given activity, giving clear instructions to the pupils and how they managed well the classroom (P6)."

Similarly, the contributions of cooperating teachers P7 and P8 delved into the development of listening skills and the provision of constructive feedback. In the past, these educators actively cultivated an attitude of active listening, underscoring the importance of pre-service teachers being receptive to constructive comments and suggestions. These practices, rooted in past experiences, were instrumental in

fostering communication and collaboration within the teaching and learning process. Together, these insights reflect the evolving roles and responsibilities of cooperating teachers in modeling and facilitating impactful communication and collaboration between educators and pre-service teachers.

P7: "I build an attitude of being a listener to any student teachers (P7)."

P8: "It is always overwhelming when pre-service teachers listen and follow constructive comments or suggestions that I share with them every after teaching/demonstration (P8)."

Focusing on modeling effective communication and collaboration, P13 highlights the importance of a positive learning environment in developing skills and fostering collaborative relationships for pre-service teachers. In a complementary manner, P11 underscores their commitment to building trust and open communication with aspiring educators. By acting as a role model for effective teaching, P11 aims to demonstrate the principles of clear communication and collaboration. They consistently provide feedback and encourage reflective practices, fostering an environment where open dialogue and shared insights contribute to the growth and development of pre-service teachers. In essence, both participants highlight the pivotal role of modeling effective communication and collaboration as foundational elements in the mentorship of future educators.

P13: A positive learning environment helps develop their skills and collaborative relationships.

P11: I strive to build trust and open communication with them. Model their effective teaching. Give them regular feedback and encourage them to reflect all the time.

Cooperating teachers are essential contributors to the development of pre-service teachers by adapting their roles over time. They serve as models and information sources, aiding in the improvement of teaching skills and the development of instructional strategies. This evolution extends to emotional development, where cooperating teachers support pre-service teachers in adopting effective practices (Roberts, 2014). Additionally, the cooperating teachers act as a support system to make pre-service teachers comfortable in their field experience (McCarthy & Quinn, 2010). Their pivotal role is acknowledged by student teachers, who consider them among the most important contributors to their teacher preparation programs (Clarke et al., 2014).

Modeling effective communication and collaboration by cooperating teachers is integral to fostering impactful teaching and learning processes. Emphasizing positive feedback, collaborative lesson planning, active listening, and constructive feedback, these educators draw on past experiences to shape a conducive learning environment. The commitment to building trust, open communication,

and serving as role models for effective teaching is consistently highlighted. This mentorship approach, rooted in modeling communication and collaboration, contributes to the growth and development of pre-service teachers, emphasizing the evolving responsibilities of cooperating teachers in guiding educators toward effective educational practices.

E. Challenges Faced by Cooperating Teachers when Mentoring Pre-service Teachers

The second objective delves into the challenges faced by cooperating teachers during the mentorship process, spotlighting themes such as time management challenges, the delicate balance between quantity and quality of teaching, and the adaptation to diverse needs and learning styles of pre-service teachers.

F. Non-compliance and Late Lesson Plan Submissions

In navigating the theme of "Non-Compliance and Communication Challenges" within the context of mentoring pre-service teachers, the candid reflections of participating cooperating teachers, as articulated by P1, P5, and P9, shed light on the complexities faced in their mentoring roles. P1's narrative exposes the challenge of encountering a pre-service teacher resistant to guidance, with a persistent gap between the advice given and its implementation, signifying communication hurdles. P5 delves into challenges stemming from differing teaching philosophies and learning styles, presenting potential communication obstacles leading to non-compliance with suggested approaches. Furthermore, P9 adds a layer of complexity by addressing the timely submission and quality of lesson plans, pointing to communication issues and non-compliance, as pre-service teachers sometimes compose plans during observation time. Together, these narratives encapsulate the diverse range of non-compliance and late lesson plan submissions that cooperating teachers grapple with while undertaking the crucial task of mentoring pre-service teachers.

> P1: "Hard headed, every time I gave advice, it seems she doesn't follow. She always nods but never follows."
> P5: "Challenges were varying teaching philosophies, adapting to different learning styles, and managing classroom dynamics."
> P9: "Usually, they submit their lesson plans late, and sometimes they write their lesson plans during observation time."
> P1: It is disappointing that she never listens to or accepts my advice with regard to lesson planning.
> P4: However, it is sad to note that one of them failed to grasp the essence of teaching - the value of integrating daily life activities into the concept of Science.
> P13: Sometimes passes the lesson plan late and listens to teachers' advice.

Pre-service teachers encounter challenges in understanding the factors influencing their choice of teaching methods and designing learning activities. Emphasis is placed on the necessity for pre-service teachers to grasp the content before selecting teaching and learning activities, as well as determining the instructional strategies to be employed. (Kola, 2021).

Cooperating teachers often face challenges related to non-compliance and late submissions of lesson plans while fulfilling their vital role as mentors to pre-service teachers. The impact of mentoring on pre-service teachers' reflective capacity and incorporation of teaching strategies into their practice is acknowledged (Gomez, 2020). Additionally, mentoring influences pre-service teachers' self-efficacy and progression through stages of development (Kola, 2021). Effective lesson planning is emphasized for its role in teachers evaluating instructional strategies and reflecting on improving their teaching (Mkhasibe & Mncube, 2020). Evaluating and improving classroom management skills is also a concern, as investigated in the study on the evaluation of pre-service teachers' classroom management skills (Lamb,2021).

Addressing the challenges faced by cooperating teachers in mentoring pre-service teachers, particularly concerning non-compliance and communication, reflections from participants reveal intricate complexities. Pre-service teachers need to recognize the diverse nature of these challenges. Guidance from cooperating teachers may encounter resistance or difficulties due to differing teaching philosophies and learning styles. The timely submission and quality of lesson plans also pose significant considerations. Acknowledging and understanding these complexities is crucial for fostering effective communication, collaboration, and successful mentorship.

G. Time Management Challenges

Cooperating teachers were challenged with time allocation in mentorship as they had their teaching responsibilities aside from the mentorship that they did with the pre-service teachers. Participant 6 talked about how it was tough to find enough time for mentoring because of their teaching duties. Participant 7 pointed out the difficulty of handling a bunch of teachings in a short time, highlighting the pressure of meeting deadlines. Participant 9 gave advice, saying they told trainee teachers to be smart about their time and make sure to submit lesson plans on time.

> P6: "Since we have our teaching responsibilities, it is challenging for us to find dedicated time for mentoring our pre-service teachers."
> P7: "The number of teachings they have to finish for a short period is sometimes challenging."

In the realm of mentorship, time constraints played a pivotal role in the guidance provided by past participants. P9, recalling their mentoring experiences, previously emphasized the necessity for pre-service teachers to manage their time wisely, stressing the timely submission

of lesson plans. This highlights the perpetual challenge of aligning mentorship efforts with the limited time available for effective guidance. Meanwhile, P10 reflected on a historical tendency among pre-service teachers to become overly engrossed in subject matter, diverting attention from essential aspects of classroom management. The past scenario illustrates how time constraints in mentorship can be further complicated by the need to balance subject-specific focus with broader teaching responsibilities. Furthermore, P11 delved into the potential repercussions of negative instructions, indicating the importance of time-sensitive and constructive feedback to navigate challenges effectively. These past instances underscore the ongoing struggle mentors face in navigating time constraints while ensuring comprehensive guidance for future educators.

> P9: "I told them to manage their time wisely and submit their lesson plans on time."
> P11: Negative instructions may involve cautioning against favoritism and neglecting the individual needs of students.

Another cooperating teacher shared past perspectives underscore the recurrent theme of time constraints as mentors navigate the intricacies of guiding future educators P12 pointed out the challenge of being quick in a short 50-minute class, especially in diverse groups, making it hard to cover everything. P14 briefly shared that time management was a problem they saw while mentoring, mentioning that some new teachers had trouble finishing their lessons on time. These experiences highlight the ongoing struggle with time limitations as mentors guide new educators.

> P12: One is being time efficient given that one class is only for fifty minutes. The teacher struggles to finish the instruction, from motivation to giving assignments within a short time frame, especially in heterogeneous classes.
> P14: I have observed that time management is one of the challenges that I have encountered while mentoring them. Initially, some of them usually cannot finish the lesson at the allotted.

The difficulties that cooperating teachers encountered while mentoring pre-service teachers included managing their classroom responsibilities, adjusting to mentorship roles, creating a conducive learning environment, assessing PTs, and ensuring their professional growth (Mutlu, 2022). the mentoring processes of pre-service teachers and identified several issues faced by CTs, including a lack of feedback, mentee exploitation, and time constraints (Suryati, 2023).

Pre-service teachers faced challenges in classroom management confidence, with subject mentors showing limited impact. They lacked exposure to established rules for reinforcing the consequences of misbehavior. This indicates a need for subject mentors to intensify efforts, accompanying pre-service teachers to classrooms for confidence-building. Additionally, institutions should enhance classroom management programs to better prepare

pre-service teachers for practical and dynamic classroom conditions during teaching practice (Mkhasibe & Mncube, 020).

Cooperating teachers faced significant challenges in time allocation for mentorship due to concurrent teaching responsibilities. The demands of their teaching roles, coupled with the mentorship responsibilities towards pre-service teachers, posed a multifaceted challenge. This was evident in issues such as discipline procedures, work ethic, time management skills, and gaps in knowledge among student teachers (Fritz & Mantooth, 2005). Additionally, the mentor's time constraints could impact the effectiveness of mentorship, contributing to challenges faced by pre-service teachers, including a lack of feedback and guidance. Pre-service teachers face various challenges during their practicum. These challenges include a lack of feedback, mentee exploitation, having to emulate the mentor's style, lack of guidance, and lack of time for mentoring. They also experience tension between their vision and the reality of teaching, classroom management issues, and a lack of supervision.

Additionally, pre-service teachers encounter problems related to students, the cooperating school, the cooperating teacher, the nature of the teacher education program, and dealing with students. Furthermore, they struggle with confidence in teaching and converting ideas into educational practice, resulting in a loss of confidence. These challenges highlight the need for quality mentoring, improved supervision, and support from the university and schools to better prepare pre-service teachers for their practicum experience. (Awad Faek Altarawneh et al., 2023).

Cooperating with teachers and dealing with time constraints due to their teaching responsibilities can enhance mentorship by finding dedicated time for pre-service teachers. Open communication about time availability and setting clear boundaries will foster a more effective mentoring relationship. Implementing practical time-management strategies and collaborative planning can improve the overall mentorship experience.

For pre-service teachers, understanding the time constraints of cooperating teachers is essential. Communicate openly to establish realistic timelines and expectations. Develop time management skills by meeting deadlines, especially in submitting lesson plans. Embrace proactive learning strategies to make the most of the limited time available for mentorship. Collaborate with mentors to streamline processes and ensure a productive mentorship experience.

H. Striking a Balance with Quantity vs. Quality of Teaching

One prominent challenge faced by cooperating teachers in mentoring pre-service educators was adapting to the practices of the latter, particularly concerning the emphasis on quantity over quality in their teachings. The adjustment proved to be a substantial hurdle as pre-service

teachers often prioritized completing a higher number of teaching sessions within a limited timeframe, potentially compromising the depth and effectiveness of each lesson. This shift in focus posed a dilemma for cooperating teachers, who recognized the need for a balanced approach that considered both the quantity and quality of teachings. The challenge underscored the importance of guiding pre-service teachers in finding an equilibrium between meeting quantity requirements and delivering high-quality instruction for a comprehensive and impactful learning experience.

P7 and P8 emphasized the difficulty of completing a significant number of teachings within the limited timeframes of pre-service teachers, with P8 underscoring the rush in finalizing lesson plans without fully internalizing the importance of teaching. P10 adds to this by noting pre-service teachers' occasional fixation on subject matter at the expense of classroom management essentials. These narratives collectively highlight the nuanced struggle mentors face in guiding future educators to strike a balance between the sheer volume of teachings and the depth of meaningful learning experiences.

> P7: "The number of teaching they have."
> P8: "The number of teachings they have to finish for a short period is sometimes challenging because I think all critical teachers want meaningful learning about the field for all the pre-service teachers who will become like one in the future. Pre-service teachers are usually in a hurry to finish the number of lesson plans without internalizing the importance and value of teaching and assurance that learners really learn from them.
> P10: Pre-service teachers were sometimes focused on the subject matter; they tended to forget the essence of classroom management.

Cooperating teachers encountered a significant challenge in adjusting to the teaching practices of pre-service educators. The notable difficulty revolved around the emphasis placed by pre-service teachers on quantity rather than quality in their instructional approaches. This challenge, as observed in mentoring experiences, highlighted a potential misalignment in priorities between cooperating teachers and those in training, adding complexity to the mentorship dynamic (Lewis, 2017); (Suryati,2023).

Cooperating teachers faced with the challenge of pre-service teachers prioritizing quantity over quality can play a pivotal role in guiding them to strike a balance. Encouraging reflective practices and emphasizing the importance of meaningful learning experiences will contribute to a more comprehensive teaching approach. Collaborative planning sessions also aid in aligning teaching goals with realistic timeframes.

For pre-service teachers, understanding the need for a balanced approach is crucial. Acknowledging the significance of both quantity and quality in teaching sessions will enhance the overall learning experience. Collaborate with mentors to create realistic goals, ensuring that the focus on quantity does not compromise the depth and effectiveness of each teaching session. Embracing a reflective mindset and actively seeking feedback will contribute to a more holistic and impactful teaching practice.

I. *Adapting to Diverse Needs and Learning Styles of Pre-service Teachers*

The cooperating teachers' mentorship journey with pre-service teachers uncovers a recurring theme that resonates across their experiences—navigating the diverse needs and learning styles of their mentees. As articulated by P2, the challenges involve addressing varying levels of preparedness, diverse learning styles, and time management. P3 expands on this theme by highlighting the broader spectrum of challenges faced in adapting to individual needs, effective time management, and providing constructive feedback essential for professional growth. P11 further contributes to this narrative, outlining the multifaceted nature of challenges in adapting to diverse learning styles, managing classroom dynamics, and offering constructive feedback on lesson planning. These shared experiences underscore the importance of flexibility and personalized guidance as mentors strive to create inclusive and effective learning environments for the diverse array of pre-service teachers under their guidance.

> "Addressing varying levels of preparedness, diverse learning styles and time management." (P2)
> "The challenges that I have encountered while mentoring pre-service teachers were adapting to their individual needs, managing time effectively, and ensuring constructive feedback that could foster their professional growth." (P3)
> "Challenges include adapting to diverse learning styles, addressing classroom management issues, and providing constructive feedback on lesson planning." (P11).

The mentorship journey of cooperating teachers with pre-service educators consistently reveals a common thread—addressing the diverse needs and learning styles of their mentees. This underscores the complexity of the mentorship process, as cooperating teachers strive to tailor their guidance to the individualized requirements of each pre-service teacher. As highlighted in various studies on mentoring experiences, the ability to navigate and adapt to the diverse learning preferences and needs of mentees is a crucial aspect of effective mentorship in teacher education (Lewis, 2017); (Suryati et al., 2023).

Cooperating teachers faced with the challenge of navigating the diverse needs and learning styles of pre-service teachers play a pivotal role in fostering flexibility and personalized guidance. Encouraging open

communication channels and understanding each mentee's strengths and challenges will contribute to a more inclusive learning environment.

For pre-service teachers, recognizing the diverse challenges in mentorship is essential. Actively engaging with mentors to communicate individual needs and learning preferences will enhance the overall learning experience. Embracing a growth mindset and being open to constructive feedback on time management and lesson planning will contribute to professional development. Collaborative efforts between mentors and pre-service teachers are crucial in creating an environment that caters to the unique requirements of each individual, ensuring a more successful mentorship journey.

IV. SUPPORT MECHANISMS EMPLOYED BY COOPERATING TEACHERS TO ADRESS THE CHALLENGES

A. They Encountered Mentoring Pre-Service Teachers

The third objective explores the support mechanisms employed by cooperating teachers to address these challenges. This includes themes like ongoing mentoring and feedback, the formation of collaborative support structures, and the utilization of community of practice and communication channels.

B. Ongoing Mentoring and Feedback

In addressing the challenges encountered while mentoring pre-service teachers, cooperating teachers employ effective support mechanisms with a focus on ongoing mentoring and feedback. P1 emphasizes the importance of continuous guidance, offering feedback and advice to pre-service teachers while encouraging reflective practice for their professional growth. This approach aligns with the sentiment expressed by P3, who advocates for a structured feedback system and ongoing professional development opportunities to address challenges faced specifically during the mentoring process. P5 contributes to the discussion by highlighting additional support mechanisms, such as regular meetings for feedback and reflection, professional development opportunities, and access to valuable resources like teaching materials and instructional guides. Together, these cooperative efforts reflect a commitment to providing sustained mentorship, creating an environment conducive to continual learning, growth, and improvement for pre-service teachers. The ongoing mentoring and feedback mechanisms underscore the dedication of cooperating teachers in supporting the development of aspiring educators.

P1: "Ongoing mentoring, as a mentor, I can provide feedback, and offer advice. Encouraging pre-service teacher to engage in reflective practice that can support their professional growth."
P3: "Support mechanisms for mentoring pre-service teachers included a structured feedback system, and ongoing professional development opportunities were implemented to address specific challenges."

P5: "Support mechanisms include regular meetings for feedback and reflection, professional development opportunities, and access to resources such as teaching materials and instructional guides."

Mentors devised strategies to support and guide novice educators. P10 recommended creating fun and interactive activities. P11 assisted with technical aspects such as crafting lesson plans and managing the classroom. Furthermore, P12 implemented a comprehensive approach, checking lesson plans, engaging in pre- and post-conference discussions, and observing actual teaching sessions. These steps demonstrated how cooperating teachers utilized ongoing guidance and constructive feedback to aid pre-service teachers in their professional development and address challenges effectively.

P10: I encourage them to design interactive and engaging activities.
P11: Assists them technically, especially in the preparation of lesson plans and classroom management.
P12: Checking of the lesson plan, pre-conference, actual teaching observations, and post-conference.

Cooperating teachers proactively address challenges in mentoring pre-service teachers by implementing robust support mechanisms. Central to their approach is the emphasis on ongoing mentoring and feedback. This ensures a dynamic and responsive mentorship process, enabling timely adjustments to meet the evolving needs of pre-service teachers. The integration of continuous mentoring and constructive feedback mechanisms enhances the overall effectiveness of the mentorship experience (Dreer-Goethe, 2023).

Pre-service teachers experienced variations in mentoring processes, including differences in frequency, time, content, support, and feedback. Additionally, findings revealed that pre-service teachers sought guidance on lesson plans from mentor teachers before entering the classroom. The mentor provided feedback on how to handle the students and how to manage the classroom teaching materials and teaching strategies (Suryati et al., 2023).

Cooperating teachers encountering challenges in mentoring pre-service teachers can enhance support mechanisms through ongoing mentoring and feedback. Prioritizing continuous guidance, providing constructive feedback, and encouraging reflective practices for pre-service teachers contribute to their professional growth. Structuring a systematic feedback system and offering regular professional development opportunities are vital components in addressing specific challenges during the mentoring process.

Implementing support mechanisms like regular meetings for feedback, reflection, and access to valuable resources fosters an environment conducive to continual learning and improvement for pre-service teachers.

Additionally, incorporating fun and interactive activities, technical assistance in crafting lesson plans, and comprehensive approaches such as pre-and post-conference discussions can further enhance the effectiveness of mentorship. By actively utilizing these support mechanisms, cooperating teachers can sustain the professional development of aspiring educators, ensuring a positive and enriching mentoring experience.

C. Forming Collaborative Support Structures

In mentoring pre-service teachers, cooperating teachers address the challenges through collaborative support structures. Whether through regular meetings, engagement with colleagues, collaborative planning, follow-up on lesson plans, constant communication, or essential collaborations involving various stakeholders, the overarching theme revolves around the significance of collaborative efforts. These strategies not only aid in addressing challenges but also foster a supportive environment for the professional growth of pre-service teachers. The theme of collaborative support structures encapsulates the cooperative and interactive approaches employed by cooperating teachers to navigate the complexities of mentoring and enhance the overall learning experience for future educators.

The following direct lines of the participants illustrate the overarching theme of forming collaborative support structures, showcasing the cooperative strategies employed by mentors to navigate challenges and provide comprehensive support for the development of future educators. One cornerstone of this theme is evident in the commitment to collaborative meetings, as expressed by P2, who emphasizes the regularity of these gatherings with fellow mentors. The significance of collaborative engagement is further underscored by P4, who highlighted the provision of collaborative interactions with co-workers as a valuable aspect of mentorship dynamics. Another crucial facet is collaborative planning, as articulated by P6, recognizing its role in effectively managing time while providing a structured framework for mentorship activities.

> *P2: "Regular collaborative meetings with other mentors."*
> *P4: "Provision of collaborative engagement with a co-worker."*
> *P6: "Collaborative planning can help us manage our time effectively."*

Complementing this, the theme extends to follow-up practices, as demonstrated by P7 and P9, who stress the importance of continuous engagement through checking lesson plans and following up on teaching schedules.

> *P7: "Having time to follow – up with them, and I am trying to check their lesson plan immediately for them to prepare it ahead of time."*
> *P9: "I collaborate with my student teachers and follow up with them regarding their lesson plans and teaching schedules."*

Additionally, constant communication and the creation of a collaborative atmosphere, as mentioned by P13, contribute to the cohesive support structures fostering a conducive mentoring environment. Essential collaboration, as depicted by P14, brings together cooperating teachers, immediate heads, and pre-service teachers in a unified effort to address challenges and enhance overall performance.

> *P13: Constant communication creates a collaborative atmosphere.*
> *P14: The collaboration between the cooperating teacher, immediate head, and pre-service teachers is essential in addressing certain challenges relating to the performance of the pre-service teachers.*

Cooperating teachers engage in addressing challenges encountered during the mentoring of pre-service teachers by leveraging collaborative support structures. Recognizing the complexities of the mentoring process, educators implement strategies to foster collaborative relationships and support mechanisms. This collaborative approach involves shared responsibilities, ongoing communication, and the establishment of a supportive environment, contributing to the overall effectiveness of the mentorship (Orland-Barak & Wang, 2021). mentor teachers' supportiveness for PTs' experimentation played a critical role in facilitating PTs' desirable changes. Well-structured experimentation created conditions for PTs to notice, leverage, and expand students' sense-making repertoires in classrooms. Mentors' modeling of program-recommended practices was not necessarily related to PTs' progress (Kang, 2021).

Cooperating teachers in the mentoring of pre-service teachers can benefit significantly from forming collaborative support structures. Regular collaborative meetings with fellow mentors serve as a cornerstone, fostering a sense of community and shared experiences. Collaborative engagement with co-workers contributes to a supportive mentorship dynamic, providing valuable insights and diverse perspectives. Embracing collaborative planning enhances time management and establishes a structured framework for mentorship activities. Follow-up practices, including checking lesson plans and monitoring teaching schedules, ensure continuous engagement and proactive support for pre-service teachers. Constant communication and the creation of a collaborative atmosphere contribute to a conducive mentoring environment, promoting open dialogue and shared responsibilities. An essential collaboration involving cooperating teachers, immediate heads, and pre-service teachers unifies efforts to address challenges comprehensively and enhances overall performance. By actively incorporating these collaborative support structures, cooperating teachers create a nurturing and enriching mentorship experience for aspiring educators.

D. Leveraging Community of Practice and Communication Channels

In addressing the challenges encountered in mentoring pre-service teachers, cooperating teachers strategically leverage a community of practice and effective communication channels. P8 highlights the establishment of a group chat involving assigned coordinators and the college dean, providing a platform for quick resolution of queries, suggestions, and overall support for the pre-service teachers. The weekly meetings further contribute to consistent follow-ups and the provision of necessary support in the teaching internship. P5 emphasizes the value of creating a community of practice among cooperating teachers, fostering an environment where experiences and insights can be shared, and enhancing collaborative learning.

> P8: "The assigned coordinators, together with the college dean, have this group chat too, where we can easily address our queries, suggestions, etc., with regards to all the pre-service teachers assigned to us. Also, they have a once-in-a-week meeting for follow-ups and support needed in teaching internship/profession."
> P5: "Creating a community of practice where cooperating teachers can share experiences and insights is also valuable."

P9 underscores the effectiveness of communication as a key element in overcoming challenges, involving coordination with coordinators, college deans, and pre-service teachers for collaborative understanding of the teaching and learning dynamics. P6 extends this approach, emphasizing the importance of clear communication, goal-setting, constructive feedback, and regular follow-ups in effective mentorship.

> P9: "It is effective since communication is the best key for this kind of challenge. Communicating to the coordinators, college dean, and even to the pre-service teachers is already a form of collaboration, and it is very helpful in understanding the nature of teaching and learning to each one of us."
> P6: "Effective mentorship among our pre-service teachers involves clear communication, setting goals, providing constructive feedback, and fostering a supportive environment. They also need regular follow-ups."

Additionally, P5 advocates for enhanced collaboration through the establishment of efficient communication links between Teacher Education Institutions and district offices, and cooperating teachers. This approach fosters a more responsive framework adept at addressing emerging needs within mentorship. Complementing this, P14 highlights the execution of technical assistants in collaboration with an immediate head, showcasing the leveraging of expertise within the community of practice to address specific challenges.

> P5: "Facilitating effective communication channels between Teacher Education Institutions, district offices, and cooperating teachers would enhance collaboration, enabling a more responsive approach to emerging needs within the mentorship framework."

> P14: Technical assistants were also done with my immediate head for it to address the problem.

In the endeavor to address challenges in mentoring pre-service teachers, cooperating teachers strategically employ a combination of a community of practice and effective communication channels. Research emphasizes that adopting a community of practice approach helps mentor teachers model core teaching practices, actively engaging pre-service teachers in the teaching profession (Orland-Barak, L., & Wang, J. (2021. Additionally, effective communication plays a pivotal role, as poor communication between pre-service teachers and cooperating teachers can create barriers to planning lessons, providing feedback, and facilitating effective teaching experiences (Lawley et al., 2014).

Cooperating teachers can enhance their mentorship practices by strategically leveraging a community of practice and effective communication channels. Establishing a group chat involving assigned coordinators and college deans provides a quick and efficient platform for addressing queries, sharing suggestions, and offering overall support for pre-service teachers. Weekly meetings contribute to consistent follow-ups and provide necessary support during teaching internships. Creating a community of practice among cooperating teachers fosters an environment for sharing experiences and insights, promoting collaborative learning and enriching mentorship.

Effective communication emerges as a key element in overcoming challenges, emphasizing coordination with coordinators, college deans, and pre-service teachers for a collaborative understanding of teaching and learning dynamics. Clear communication, goal-setting, constructive feedback, and regular follow-ups are essential components of effective mentorship. Establishing efficient communication links between Teacher Education Institutions, district offices, and cooperating teachers enhances collaboration and responsiveness to emerging needs within mentorship. The collaborative execution of technical assistants, leveraging expertise within the community of practice, further addresses specific challenges and contributes to a more supportive mentorship framework.

E. Enhancing The Mentorship Experience For Cooperating Teachers

Finally, the fourth objective focuses on enhancing the overall mentorship experience for cooperating teachers, highlighting themes such as ongoing professional development, the establishment of mentorship networks and recognition programs, and ensuring access to resources and support for innovative teaching methodologies.

F. Ongoing Professional Development and Specialized Training

To enhance the mentorship experience for cooperating teachers, a focus on ongoing professional development and specialized training emerges as a central theme, as echoed by the insights shared by the participating teachers.

P2 highlights the value of specialized mentor training to enhance skills, provide updates on best practices, and address emerging challenges. Complementing this perspective, P3 proposes ongoing professional development tailored to mentoring skills, including programs that encourage regular peer collaboration and supportive feedback. P4 contributes insights by underlining the provision of a one-day orientation for critique teachers, outlining essential guidelines for their role. P5 emphasizes the need for Teacher Education Institutions and district offices to prioritize continuous professional development opportunities, ensuring that cooperating teachers stay informed about current pedagogical trends.

P2: "Offering specialized mentor training to enhance mentoring skills, provide updates on best practices, and address emerging challenges."
P3: "Teacher Education Institutions and district division office could introduce ongoing professional development tailored to mentoring skills such as mentoring training programs, facilitating regular peer collaboration, and fostering supportive feedback."
P4: "Provision of a one-day orientation on the do's and don'ts as a critique teacher."
P5: "Teacher Education Institutions and top Management of the district office should prioritize providing ongoing professional development opportunities for cooperating teachers. This ensures that educators stay abreast of current pedagogical trends and continuously refine their mentoring skills."

P6 suggests the creation of mentorship programs specifically designed for cooperating teachers. Additionally, P7 and P8 underscore the demand for more seminars and training sessions for both interns and critique teachers. Together, these varied perspectives collectively emphasize a shared commitment among cooperating teachers towards continuous learning, specialized training, and professional development to enhance their mentoring skills and ultimately deliver a more impactful mentorship experience.

P7: "More seminars and training are needed for the interns and also for the critic teachers."
P8: "Seminars and trainings could also be a big help."
P6: "Develop mentorship programs or professional development sessions designed for cooperating teachers."

Ongoing professional development (PD) and specialized training are integral components in the journey of educators to meet the evolving needs of students and adapt to the dynamic educational landscape. It ensures that teachers stay abreast of advancements in teaching methodologies, educational technologies, and curriculum changes. Effective PD is attentive to assessment, research scale, duration, comprehensiveness, dissemination, context, support and control, and collaboration (Sancar et al., 2021). Specialized training targets specific skills, addressing identified gaps and allowing teachers to refine their instructional techniques and classroom management strategies. They empower teachers to employ innovative and effective methods that cater to diverse learning styles, enhancing student engagement and learning outcomes.

To elevate the mentorship experience for cooperating teachers, a key focus should be placed on ongoing professional development and specialized training. Offering specialized mentor training is essential, providing opportunities to enhance mentoring skills, stay updated on best practices, and effectively address emerging challenges. Continuous professional development tailored to mentoring skills, including mentor training programs, regular peer collaboration, and supportive feedback, can significantly contribute to enriching the mentorship experience. A one-day orientation for critique teachers, outlining essential guidelines for their role, further strengthens their preparedness. Prioritizing ongoing professional development opportunities by Teacher Education Institutions and district offices ensures that cooperating teachers remain informed about current pedagogical trends and continuously refine their mentoring skills.

Moreover, the creation of mentorship programs specifically designed for cooperating teachers, coupled with increased seminars and training sessions for both interns and critique teachers, reflects a shared commitment among cooperating teachers towards continuous learning and specialized training. Embracing these strategies will not only empower cooperating teachers but also enhance the overall impact of the mentorship experience for pre-service teachers.

G. Establishing Mentorship Networks and Recognition

In advocating for an enhanced mentorship experience, cooperating teachers emphasize the importance of establishing mentorship networks and recognition. P5 suggests that creating a mentorship network would prove beneficial by providing a platform for sharing best practices and collaboratively addressing common challenges encountered in the mentoring process. This perspective aligns with P6's emphasis on recognition and rewards for cooperating teachers. P6 contends that acknowledging and rewarding the contributions of cooperating teachers to teacher preparation would not only boost morale but also recognize the role they portray in shaping the next generation of educators. Together, these perspectives underscore a collective desire among cooperating teachers for collaborative networks that facilitate knowledge sharing and mutual support, along with the recognition and

appreciation of their significant contributions to teacher preparation.

> *P5: "Establishing a mentorship network would be beneficial, fostering a platform for sharing best practices and collectively addressing common challenges faced in the mentoring process."*
> *P6: "Recognition and rewards for cooperating teachers' contributions to teacher preparation would not only boost morale but also acknowledge the crucial role they play in shaping the next generation of educators."*

Cooperating teachers advocate for mentorship networks that broaden support and recognition mechanisms to motivate and appreciate mentors. These elements contribute to a collaborative and holistic mentorship experience, fostering the continuous development of educators. Mentorship networks provide a broader support system, enabling mentees to tap into a diverse range of experiences and knowledge. Mentorship networks contribute to a culture of collaboration, encouraging the sharing of insights and strategies among mentors. This collaborative environment not only benefits individual mentees but also enhances the overall quality of mentorship programs (Evanick, 2023). Acknowledging and appreciating the contributions of mentors is essential. Recognition serves as a powerful motivator for mentors, reinforcing their commitment to the mentorship process. It also contributes to a positive mentor-mentee relationship (Hager et al., 2023)

In order to enhance the mentorship experience, cooperating schools and Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) should prioritize the establishment of mentorship networks and recognition programs. Creating collaborative mentorship networks, as suggested, offers a valuable platform for cooperating teachers to share best practices and collectively address challenges in the mentoring process. Concurrently, recognizing and rewarding the contributions of cooperating teachers is essential, boosting morale and acknowledging their part in shaping the next generation of teachers. Consequently, top management should actively support the creation of mentorship networks and implement recognition initiatives, fostering a collaborative and appreciative environment that further elevates the mentorship experience for cooperating teachers.

H. Access to Resources and Support for Innovative Teaching

In the pursuit of an enriched mentorship experience, cooperating teachers advocate for enhanced access to resources and support for innovative teaching. P5 emphasizes the necessity of ensuring that cooperating teachers have access to adequate resources and support, underlining the importance of empowering them to implement innovative teaching methods. This sentiment is echoed by P9, who succinctly emphasizes the need for additional teaching resources. Together, these perspectives underscore the collective call among cooperating teachers

for improved access to resources and support systems that facilitate the implementation of innovative teaching approaches, ultimately contributing to a more dynamic and effective mentorship experience.

> *P5: "To further empower cooperating teachers, it is essential to ensure they have access to adequate instructional resources and support for implementing innovative teaching methods."*
> *P9: "Additional teaching resources."*

P13 emphasizes the importance of continuous evaluation and adaptation of support strategies based on feedback, highlighting the dynamic nature of resource provision to enhance overall effectiveness. P14 further underscores the necessity for a resilient support system that inspires and enables pre-service teachers to pursue their passion for innovative teaching. Together, these perspectives illuminate a core strategy of providing ongoing resources and support mechanisms, ensuring a nurturing environment for the development and encouragement of innovative teaching practices among future educators.

> *P13: Continuous evaluation and adaptation of support strategies based on feedback contribute to enhancing overall effectiveness.*
> *P14: They need a support system that can able to allow resilience and keep them to be inspired to pursue their passion.*

In advocating for the mentorship environment, cooperating teachers emphasize the importance of providing pre-service teachers with ample resources. This includes access to teaching materials, curriculum guides, and educational technologies, fostering a comprehensive learning experience(Nesbitt & Barry, 2022). To enhance mentorship, cooperating teachers stress the significance of robust support systems. This involves creating an environment where pre-service teachers feel comfortable seeking guidance and sharing challenges. Open communication channels and mentor availability contribute to a supportive mentorship culture (Bessette & Bennett, 2021).

To elevate the mentorship experience, the top management of cooperating schools and Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) should prioritize improved access to resources and support for innovative teaching. Empowering cooperating teachers with adequate resources and additional support is crucial for the successful implementation of innovative teaching methods, as emphasized by insights from the mentorship experiences. Additionally, recognizing the importance of continuous evaluation and adaptation of support strategies based on feedback, as highlighted, ensures a dynamic approach to resource provision. The establishment of a resilient support system that inspires and enables pre-service teachers to pursue innovative teaching practices passionately is vital. By focusing on these aspects, the top management can significantly contribute to creating

a more dynamic and effective mentorship experience for cooperating teachers and future educators.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Conclusions

Cooperating teachers play a pivotal role in shaping the development of pre-service teachers, extending their responsibilities beyond traditional instruction to include mentoring, creating supportive learning environments, and modeling effective communication and collaboration. This multifaceted approach is crucial for fostering well-rounded and effective educators. However, they encounter challenges such as non-compliance, time management issues, balancing quantity vs. quality of teaching, and adapting to diverse learning styles. Successfully navigating these challenges is crucial for an effective mentorship. Cooperating teachers employ various support mechanisms, including ongoing mentoring and feedback, collaborative support structures, and leveraging community of practice and communication channels. To enhance the mentorship experience, ongoing professional development and specialized training, establishing mentorship networks and recognition, and ensuring access to resources for innovative teaching are essential.

B. Recommendations

Cooperating teachers, serving as mentors, benefit from actively engaging in ongoing professional development and specialized training to enhance their mentoring skills. In addition, top management in Cooperating schools and Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) can prioritize the establishment of mentorship networks and recognition programs. Collaborative mentorship networks offer a valuable platform for cooperating teachers to share best practices and collectively address challenges in the mentoring process. Simultaneously, recognizing and rewarding the contributions of cooperating teachers not only boosts morale but also acknowledges their part in shaping the next generation of educators. Therefore, top management actively supporting the creation of mentorship networks and implementing recognition initiatives fosters a collaborative and appreciative environment, further elevating the mentorship experience for cooperating teachers.

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