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## PROFESSIONAL ACCULTURATION OF MENTORING AND MENTORSHIP PROGRAM FOR TEACHING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (TESL): BASIS FOR POLICY RECOMMENDATION

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### ABSTRACT

This qualitative research was conducted to ascertain the professional acculturation of mentoring and mentorship program for teaching English as a Second Language (TESL): bases for policy recommendation. Findings revealed that teachers had experiences in classroom observation with feedback, collaborative planning, early career mentorship, culturally responsive teaching, digital integration and recognition systems. As they transitioned to the public schools, they had almost the same experience but additionally enhanced as tenured teachers mentor through providing hands-on guidance, giving constructive feedback, collaborative planning, continuous professional development and structured onboarding. These results lead to policy recommendations such as: institutionalizing a standardized (TESL) mentoring and mentorship system, implementing structured onboarding and certified mentor preparation, ensuring protected time and developmental feedback mechanisms, strengthening collaborative professional learning and continuous development, and leveraging digital tools and recognition systems to sustain mentorship.

**Keywords:** *Professional Acculturation, Mentoring, Mentorship Program, Policy Recommendation*

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## INTRODUCTION

Teaching in 21st century was much more than just delivering lessons; it is also about interacting with students, providing an inviting and inclusive classroom environment, and promoting both intellectual and social development.

As Darling-Hammond (2020) points out, "successful teaching requires a deep understanding of diverse student needs, mastery of content or material, ability and flexibility to adapt teaching methods or change teaching techniques so that every learner stays engaged."

At the heart of this professional journey is acculturation - a process where teachers are adapting to culture, expectations, norms and values of school and the community that is essential when entering a new environment for easy alignment of teaching style with the norms of the institution fostering growth and ability to meaningfully contribute to the school for a continuous learning experience that could shape career over time.

For English teachers, mentoring has important role for this.

Mentorship programs offer guidance, encouragement, and constructive feedback to help teachers feel supported as they transitioned professionally for a strong bond or relationship with co-workers, learners, and other stakeholders thus enabling them to further enhance their teaching skills, personal development, growth, and confidence highlighting importance of meaningful connections between mentors and mentee. Moreover, such things help teachers understand how to navigate school systems and build collegial relationship in becoming a great part of the larger educational community (Ingersoll, 2019).

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This study looked into how mentoring and mentorship program guide teachers in their profession as basic education in the Philippines has undergone significant reforms, most notably the MATATG Curriculum, which aims to streamline learning competencies, improve literacy and numeracy and strengthen values formation among learners. While this curriculum promises to ease the academic load of students and make learning more relevant, it also presents challenges for teachers who must adjust their instructional strategies, classroom management, and professional responsibilities.

One effective way to address this challenge is through mentoring and mentorship program that provides guidance, collaboration, and emotional support to help teachers adapt. Based on observations and discussions with colleagues, many educators have expressed the need for stronger peer support especially in lesson planning, assessment, and differentiated instruction in addition to the culture that teachers are exposed to in the new work environment.

Inspired by these experiences, the researcher sought to conduct this study on how mentoring can strengthen support systems and build resilience benefiting educators, learners, and the institution as a whole.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

**Research Methodology**

This section presents the fundamental procedures associated with phenomenological research methodology and elaborates on its components, including the research tool, research

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framework, research approach, participants of the study, sampling strategy, validity of the research tool, methods of data gathering and processes for data analysis.

## Research Method

This descriptive study involved a face-to-face interview aimed at gathering insights as part of a qualitative research approach that primarily sought to investigate the professional adaptation within mentoring and mentorship programs for Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL). The focus was on policy suggestions directed at educators who have moved from private to public educational institutions.

As stated by McCombes (2022), the goal of descriptive research is to methodically and precisely portray a population, circumstance, or phenomenon. It employs inquiries such as what, where, when and how or why in order to discern characteristics, frequencies, patterns and classifications. Additionally, it seeks to collect pertinent data related to the issue the researcher aims to investigate.

## Research Design

This research adopted a qualitative methodology that utilized a phenomenological framework to gain insights into individuals' personal experience, understanding and views of reality. This approach proved effective because it allowed the researcher to uncover precise answers relevant to the research issue.

As noted by Creswell (2013) and Fundal (2021), phenomenology is a qualitative research method that emphasizes the shared experiences of individual within a particular

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group. The primary aim of this approach is to uncover the true essence of the specific phenomenon under investigation.

**Participants of the Study**

The study involved ten certified professional educators from Iloilo City who made the shift from private educational institutions to public schools within the Division of Iloilo City. These individuals were intentionally chosen based on specific criteria pertinent to the goals of the research. Consequently, a total of ten (10) individuals were enlisted for participation in the study. They were chosen through the following criteria: (a) they were all teaching English as a Second Language0, (b) their age ranged from twenty-five to thirty (25-30) years old, and (c) most of them were able to teach for one to five years (1-5) in private schools before transitioning to being a permanent public school teacher in their specific chosen school, where they applied before. In conclusion, a method referred to as purposive sampling formed the basis for selecting the individuals who participated in the study.

**Sampling Design**

In the study's sampling design, the researcher employed purposive sampling. As noted by Hassan (2022), this method involves intentionally selecting participants who are most likely to provide relevant information to address the research issue. This sampling approach is commonly utilized in qualitative research since it allows the researcher to identify individuals who have firsthand experience with the subject matter and who possess traits closely connected to the phenomenon under investigation. This sampling method was suitable for the

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study which aimed to create a comprehensive understanding of the professional acculturation experiences of teachers instructing (TESL) within mentoring and mentorship settings.

The size of the participant group was determined by the concept of data saturation, where recruitment ended when further interview failed to produce new themes or valuable insights. This approach ensured that the data collected adequate to thoroughly tackle the research questions while maintaining the richness and reliability of the results.

In conclusion, the application of purposive sampling allowed the researcher to focus on cases that provided abundant information, thus enhancing the significance, reliability, and contextual accuracy of the study results.

**Research Instrument**

The researcher employed a self-created interview guide as a tool, which was appropriately assessed for face and content validity by specialists in English and research. This validation ensured that the instrument effectively gathered detailed information during the interview sessions.  Considering that the study required qualitative data, predominantly in narrative for this instrument was deemed most suitable for the purpose.

**Validity of the Research Instrument**

A group of experts was asked to assess the validity of the interview guide questions developed by by the researcher. This panel comprised professionals who have expertise in fields such as English, Professional Education, Educational Management and Qualitative Research. Prior to finalizing the research tool, all suggestions and feedback concerning its

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validity were meticulously evaluated, scrutinized and approved to guarantee that the data gathered were thorough and consistent with the study's objectives.

**Data Gathering Procedures**

In connection to this study, permission was sought for its conduct. The processed commenced once the pre-oral defense committee granted approval for the study. The researcher approached potential participants after their classes and during their available time, inviting them to respond to the questions outlined in the interview guide. Additionally, each participant provided a consent letter. A schedule that accommodated the participants availability was established for the interviews. The interviews were conducted effectively, observing proper protocols and maintaining an appropriate distance. The sessions began with the collection of personal information from the participants which was followed by the core interview questions.

**Data Analyses**

The information collected for the research was interpreted, transcribed and analyzed through thematic analysis. This method was employed to identify recurring themes and patterns within the data. To familiarize with the data, transcription was performed using a cellphone and a computer or laptop immediately following the interviews or data collection process.

Thematic analysis, as defined by Braun and Clarke (2006; in Blanza,2022, serves as a qualitative analytic method aimed at identifying, analyzing and reporting recurring patterns (themes) found within data. This process provides a detailed and organized view of the data

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set. Consequently, the researcher adopted the six-step analysis approach due to its proven effectiveness and broad acceptance. Among these steps are understanding the data, developing initial codes, exploring pattern, evaluating themes, identifying and labeling themes, and producing the final report (Maguire and Delahaunt,2017).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The objective of this study was to explore the professional integration within mentoring and mentorship programs for Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL). This was particularly directed towards crafting policy recommendations in Iloilo City, specifically addressing teachers who moved from private institutions to public schools during the academic year 2024-2025.

A phenomenological approach was utilized in this investigation, aligning with qualitative research methods. This approach was effective as it allowed the researcher to examine a group of individuals in order to gain insights into their overall experiences and specific occurrences they encountered.

The study involved ten licensed professional educators from Iloilo City who had previously taught in private schools and were currently working in various public schools under the Department of Education (DepEd). These participants were intentionally chosen based on criteria that aligned with the aims of the research.

The tool used for research was a questionnaire created by the researcher, which was validated by professionals with expertise in the area. The researcher applied thematic analysis

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to assess the responses given by participants. The data was organized, and relevant themes were identified and categorized.

The study revealed several findings: The teachers experiences concerning the Professional Acculturation of mentoring and mentorship during their tenure in private schools comprised: classroom observations accompanied by feedback, collaborative lesson planning, mentorship for early career educators, teaching that reflects cultural awareness, integration of digital tools, and systems of acknowledgement.

Upon moving to the public school sector, their experiences involved: offering practical support, providing constructive feedback, engaging in collaborative planning, participating in ongoing professional development and experiencing a well-organized onboarding process.

As a result of the study, suggestions for policy changes were put forward.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results, the subsequent observations can be made: Effective teacher preparation needs to involve more than merely imparting new abilities; it must also include cultural and emotional support. The best help combines regular practices, like observing a class and giving feedback on strategies to improve the teaching-learning process, understanding new cultures, and caring for emotional health. This complete approach helps a teacher move from using general methods to teaching with empathy while becoming efficient and effective educator to the learners.

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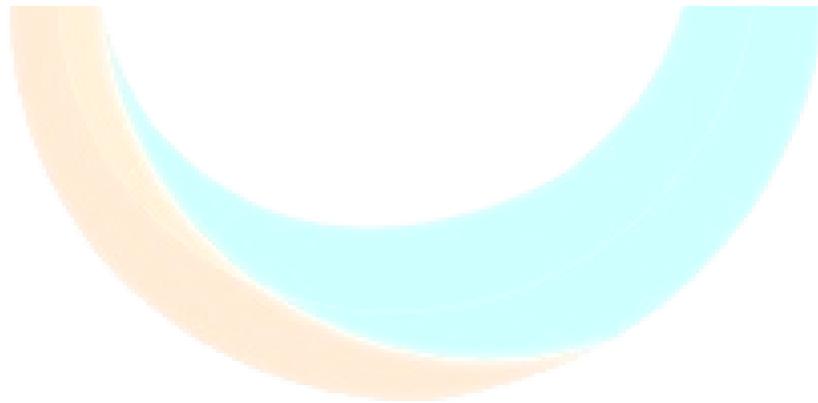
Professional acculturation is an ongoing process that extends beyond initial teacher training. Teachers thrive in environments where they receive both academic and emotional support, especially during transitions to new schools.

The inclusion of continuous professional development, coaching, and cultural responsiveness in teachers' experience suggests that successful teaching goes beyond pedagogy; it involves adaptability, empathy, and engagement with the school's culture and values.

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