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THE ROLE OF MENTORING IN ESL CLASSROOMS  
IN THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

A THESIS IN TEACHING ENGLISH TO SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES

Presented to the faculty of the American University of Sharjah  
College of Arts and Sciences  
in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the degree

MASTER OF ARTS

by  
AZZA MAHMOUD GAMAL EL DIN  
B.A. 1986

Sharjah, UAE  
June 2011

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We approve the thesis of Azza Mahmoud Gamal El Din

Date of signature

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Dr. Rodney Tyson  
Associate Professor  
Thesis Advisor

---

Dr. Cindy Gunn  
Associate Professor  
Graduate Committee

---

Dr. David Prescott  
Associate Professor  
Graduate Committee

---

Dr. Pia Anderson  
Program Director, MA TESOL

---

Dr. Mark Rush  
Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences

---

Dr. Gautam Sen  
Vice Provost for Research and Graduate Studies

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## THE ROLE OF MENTORING IN ESL CLASSROOMS IN THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Azza Mahmoud Gamal El Din, Candidate for the Master of Arts Degree

American University of Sharjah, 2011

### ABSTRACT

It is widely accepted that an effective mentoring program helps novice teachers with varied backgrounds in their professional development. Appointing experienced teachers to guide and support novice teachers is one way to provide professional development for both new and veteran teachers. The benefits of mentoring are both career related and psychosocial. Even though there has been much study on mentoring programs, very little investigation has been carried out so far in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The MAG program's vision is to create schools that prepare students to be active UAE citizens in the international, academic, business, and social arena. The program assigns two teacher mentors for each MAG school to work in correlation with the English staff towards achieving this vision. As a teacher mentor, I co-teach with MOE teachers for assigned periods in their classrooms. In addition, I model and support a learner-centered classroom environment that supports the needs of all learners. I also collaborate with colleagues in the preparation, implementation and evaluation of curriculum materials and learning experiences. The research reported here first examined the attitudes of UAE Ministry of Education (MOE) high school teachers who are part of the *Madares Al Ghad* (MAG) program about being involved in a mentoring program. Second, the research also examined the beliefs and attitudes of MOE high school teachers who are not part of the

MAG program about being involved in a mentoring program. The Ministry of Education has been studying the idea of enlarging the program to include more schools. Finally, the research study investigated the extent to which mentors influenced teaching practices in the classroom.

I collected both quantitative and qualitative data using questionnaires and interviews. I surveyed 100 male and female English teachers from different educational zones in Dubai, Sharjah, Ras Al Khaimah, Ajman, Fujairah, and Um Al Quwain. The first group consisted of 50 MoE teachers who are part of the MAG program, and the second group consisted of 50 MoE teachers who are not part of the MAG program. In addition, I conducted individual interviews with 15 teachers from both of the above mentioned two groups. Finally, I surveyed 13 teacher mentors to gain further insight into how they believe their advice and contributions influence teaching practices in the classrooms. The findings of my study revealed that both the MoE MAG and non-MAG teachers held positive attitudes towards the idea of being involved in a mentoring program. The findings of my study also highlighted the vital role of mentors in providing teachers with guidance and support, helping them develop professionally, observing classes, and providing teachers with constructive feedback. In addition, the results also suggested the importance of building good rapport with teachers in order to have a successful mentoring relationship.

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I would like to extend my thanks to my colleague, Shahla Yassaei, for all her support and for always being there by my side. She was a true friend as well as a sincere advisor throughout this long journey.

## DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my beloved family: to the memory of my father, who taught me that education is what gives value to a person's life. To my mother, who has always been there for me and my family, praying for me every day.

To my beloved husband, my sons, Ibrahim and Abdul Rahman, and my sweet daughter, Hoor, who have lived through this long journey with me. You have put up with a lot. Thanks for all your support and I love you, "I DID IT!"

## CHAPTER ONE

### OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

I have been working as an ESL teacher for more than 20 years. I have taught primary, preparatory, and secondary students. I was hired by *Madares Al Ghad* for the position of a teacher mentor in my school three years ago. *Madares Al Ghad* vision is to create public schools that prepare students to be active UAE citizens in the international, academic, business, and social arenas. *Madares Al Ghad* project has three main goals:

- (a) Create a world-class educational system consisting of effective schools.
- (b) Increase the capacity of UAE educators to create and sustain a learner-centered environment.
- (c) Increase language proficiency of grade 12 graduates to make direct entry into higher education, the work world, and active citizenship possible.

However, I have never forgotten how lonely I felt when I started going to my classrooms for the first time. In those days, I would have really appreciated having someone guiding me and supporting my teaching attempts. Novice teachers usually feel very eager and very excited to be in the classrooms; however, they are sometimes faced with disruptive students and situations that they are unable to deal with. Thus, they start discovering things for themselves, but this is not an easy task, especially when there is no guidance. Gordon and Maxey (2000) cite the following comment of a novice teacher who did not get any kind of orientation to help us imagine how that teacher felt at the beginning of his teaching career: “They just gave us our books and said: ‘Here you are’” (p. 58).

I personally believe that it is very important to devote time to help novice ESL teachers who are setting out on teaching careers. They are the teachers who carry out the majority of the teaching responsibilities, and have a direct influence on the learning process of students. However, Holloway (2001) points out that the mere presence of a mentor is not enough; the mentor’s knowledge of how to support a new teacher and skill at offering assistance are also fundamental. Unfortunately, I have found during my years of teaching that there is usually very little team work among

teachers. I believe that teachers really miss the advantages of working collaboratively with their colleagues. Busch (1985) conducted a study where he asked some professors who were currently mentoring graduate students in educational programs in colleges and universities in the United States about the positive aspects of being a mentor. They mentioned that the most significant benefit was seeing the career and intellectual growth of the mentee as well as their own career development.

Bullough and Draper (2004) also conducted a study including nine secondary school teacher mentors to explore their experience of mentoring. Six of the nine were new to mentoring and three were well-experienced veteran mentors. All mentors recognized that giving emotional support to their mentees was central to their role. They also mentioned the importance of being sympathetic, that is being able to know how the mentees felt and then appropriately respond to each situation. However, they commented that sometimes they found this role to be a heavy burden and impossible expectation. Blank and Sindelar (1992) explain, “Mentors function in numerous roles, but primarily they promote the new teachers’ professional competence and personal growth” (p. 23). In addition, they play the role of kind and thoughtful friends. They provide assistance, support to their mentees, and share their achievements with others. My research seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What do *Madares Al Ghad* (MAG) high school ESL teachers think of their involvement in a mentoring program?
2. Do non-MAG teachers think they might benefit from a mentoring program in their schools? If so, how?
3. How and to what extent do mentors believe they influence teaching practices in the classroom?

The Ministry of Education launched the *Madares Al Ghad* project in August 2007, which is based on the idea of having a teacher mentor for each grade level. A mentor works collaboratively with the grade level team to plan, develop, and adapt materials and activities that could be implemented in the classrooms. According to Wajnryb (1992), a mentor’s job is “to help the trainees understand the various processes involved in the teaching and learning of language” (p. 5). This research aims to examine mentees’ and mentors’ perceptions of the effectiveness of a

mentoring program in ESL classrooms to ascertain whether it is beneficial for teachers or not. This research has implications for policy makers as well as educators with regard to implementing mentoring programs in public schools.

In order to gain further insight into the current mentoring practices in the MAG schools in the UAE, I conducted my research with three major groups of ESL teachers. The first group consisted of 50 Ministry of Education teachers who work in MAG schools, and have been involved in a mentoring program for more than three years. The second group consisted of 50 Ministry of Education teachers who are not part of the MAG program, and have never been involved in any mentoring program. The third group consisted of 13 mentors who have been working with the MAG program for the last three years. Participants were both male and female teachers who worked in the Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Umm Al Quwain, Ras Al Khaimah, and Fujairah educational zones.

Data were obtained from three questionnaires, one for MAG teachers, one for non-MAG teachers and one for mentors (see Appendices A, B, and C), and were completed by participants from each of the different groups. Questions were mainly designed to closely study perceptions of participants related to the research questions. I also included some open-ended questions in order for teachers to add their remarks, and to elicit qualitative responses regarding respondents' perception of the role of mentoring in ESL classrooms in the United Arab Emirates. Moreover, I interviewed 10 teachers in each group to better understand their attitudes towards mentoring programs in ESL classrooms. Data from questionnaires were analyzed to determine frequencies and percentages for each response. Means were calculated for all responses, and the results are presented in quantitative tables and charts. Finally, the answers of the three groups are compared and supported by qualitative data including quotes from interviews and open-ended questions.

### Overview of the Chapters and the Appendices

Chapter one has presented the introduction, statement of the problem, significance of the study, research questions, and summarized the design of the study as well as participants of the study. A review of the literature is provided in chapter

two. It discusses the history and definitions of mentoring. It also highlights the role of e-mentoring. It provides an overview of the mentoring role and the traits of successful mentors. In addition, it highlights some traits that disqualify people as mentors. The chapter also reviews the importance of professional discussion for a mentoring program. Finally, it emphasizes the importance of assessing teaching and mentoring. Chapter three provides a detailed description of the participants, the methodology, and the procedures followed to conduct the surveys and the interviews. Chapter four presents data analysis and the findings of the study. Chapter five contains a summary of the findings, conclusion and implications, a discussion of the limitations of the study, and recommendations for further research.

There are five appendices. Appendix A is the MAG teachers' survey. Appendix B is the non-MAG teachers' survey. Appendix C is the teacher mentors' survey. Appendix D includes the interview questions for the MAG teachers. Finally, Appendix E includes the interview questions for non-MAG teachers.



## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

#### Introduction

The relationship between teaching and learning is a multifaceted and appealing one. Teachers should never stop learning; they should always seek to remain updated with the latest ideas and methods in the field of teaching. However, some novice teachers need some guidance and support on a daily basis. I think it is not advisable to leave novice teachers alone in the classrooms; they need to be involved in a mentoring program. For novice teachers, joining a mentoring program raises their awareness as instructional problem-solvers and decision makers. As for experienced teachers, mentoring a colleague increases understanding of the different learning situations and problems faced in the classroom.

#### History and Definitions of Mentoring

Teaching is the only profession that requires novice teachers to do the same work as experienced professionals. Teacher mentoring programs have been discussed and implemented widely in the United States, Australia, and the United Kingdom. Gross (2004) claims that the idea of mentoring is ancient. The term “mentoring” dates back to Homer’s *Odyssey*. Mentor was entrusted with watching over King Odysseus’s son, Telemachus, while Odysseus was at war. Mentor became the young prince’s counselor, guardian, and guide. Jane (2007) mentions that in the Bible there are various examples of mentoring. These can be seen in the relationship of Barnabas to Paul, Paul to Titus, Elizabeth to Mary, Naomi to Ruth, Moses to Joshua, as well as David to Jonathon. Mentoring occurred in a variety of ways in Biblical times. For example, Ruth saw Naomi as a person whom she wished to model her life on. Another good example of mentoring is Jesus’ close relationship with his twelve disciples. With regard to the origin of the word “mentor,” Pask and Joy (2007) note that it comes from the Latin/Greek word “mens – a mind” and its derivative “mentor – a thinker.” Thus, they point out that “literally a mentor is a thinker [who] helps another person also to think” (p. 8).

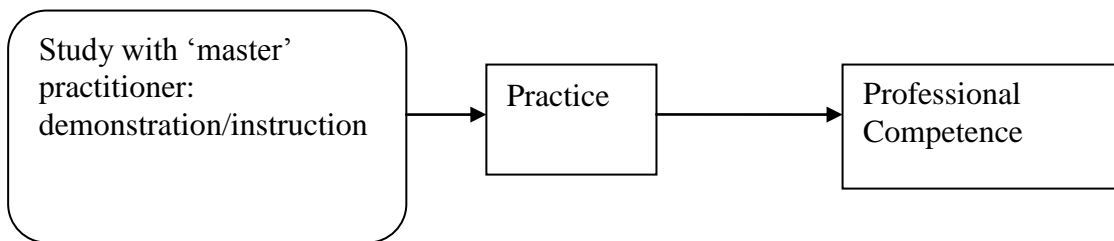
However, in modern times businesses have used mentoring to help junior or novice employees advance. According to Malderez and Bodoczky (1999), the modern idea of mentoring started in the British education system in 1992. Field and Field (1994) point out that in England and Wales in 1992, schools and higher education institutions started placing student teachers in schools for 120 days out of 180 days of the Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) course. This shows that two-thirds of the PGCE was delivered in schools by school teachers and one third was delivered in universities by teacher education staff. Arthur, Davison, and Moss (1997) date back the origins of mentoring in Initial Teacher Education (ITA) in the UK to the year 1987 when Oxford University and its allied schools working with a supportive Local Education Authority (LEA) introduced the “internship scheme.” This advancement entailed cooperation between the school and the university in the form of subject teachers becoming mentors and taking part in training student teachers, who were placed in pairs or groups of up to ten in each school.

In addition, in 1994 the Scottish Office Education Department (SOED) published a press release which informed schools and teacher institutions that a mentoring system would be introduced in August 1995. Arthur, Davison, and Moss explain that this “included a role for classroom teachers to participate in the “supervision, training and assessment of students’ preparing for teaching” (p. 18). Jane (2007) points out that since the early 1980s formal mentoring programs started in the American education sector. Later, in the 1990s, similar programs were employed in Australia. Randall and Thorton (2001) point out that “the mentor on pre-service teacher education programmes is a classroom teacher who accepts a novice teacher into their classroom for a period of teaching practice” (p. 13).

A review of the literature related to this topic reveals a perplexing range of interpretations of the term “mentoring.” Isaac (1989) believes that in the educational community, mentoring might be defined as “a professional life-preserver for the beginning teacher” (p. 8). Jane (2007) states that “in western culture the term ‘mentor’ is generally associated with a person who has knowledge or expertise in a specific area” (p. 181). Granade (2004) points out that many people have started to perceive mentoring as a “tool for addressing problems of attrition in the pool of the most highly qualified educational personnel” (p. 15).

Wallace (1991, p. 6) discusses the “craft model” as a major model of professional education. In this model, the knowledge of the profession is inherent in an experienced “professional practitioner,” or mentor. The young mentee learns by following the mentor’s instruction and advice. By following this process, proficiency in the craft is transferred from generation to generation. Wallace represents the model as follows:

Figure 1: Wallace (1991) “The Craft Model” (p. 6)



Gray (2001) views “mentoring” as the appointment of nominated teachers to undertake the training of student teachers in schools. Scherer (1999) points out that a mentorship agreement is mainly based on “how well the mentor and the mentee match in such aspects as commitment, accessibility and teaching assignments” (p. 207). Arnold (2006) observes that mentoring is a kind of personal and professional collaboration which usually engages more experienced practitioners in guiding and assisting less experienced ones. He adds that the most important aspect of mentoring is to create a balance between support and challenge. He further explains that mentees joining a mentoring program need to reflect on both their teaching practices and broader educational concerns.

Mentoring could also be visualized as an exchange of gifts. Gehrke (1988) suggests that a definition of mentoring “should be steeped in the vocabulary and the spirit of the gift .... The definition should capture the giving and receiving, the awakening and the labor of gratitude” (p. 194). Connor and Pokora (2007) define mentoring as “learning relationships which help people to take charge of their own development, to release their potential and to achieve results which they value” (p. 6).

Furthermore, they believe that the mentoring relationship assists insight, learning, and change. Kochan and Trimble (2000) participated in a collaborative mentoring relationship between both of them which included elements of cooperation, shared decision making, and systems thinking. They reflect on their mentoring experience as “a relationship that provided opportunities for [them] to develop dispositions and abilities that have been invaluable in strengthening [their] capacities to grow personally and professionally” (p. 20).

Allan (2007, p. 198) believes that it may be beneficial to consider the mentoring life cycle with its sequence of phases:

Initiation phase: Building rapport – getting to know each other

Goal-setting phase: Setting goals and making plans to achieve them

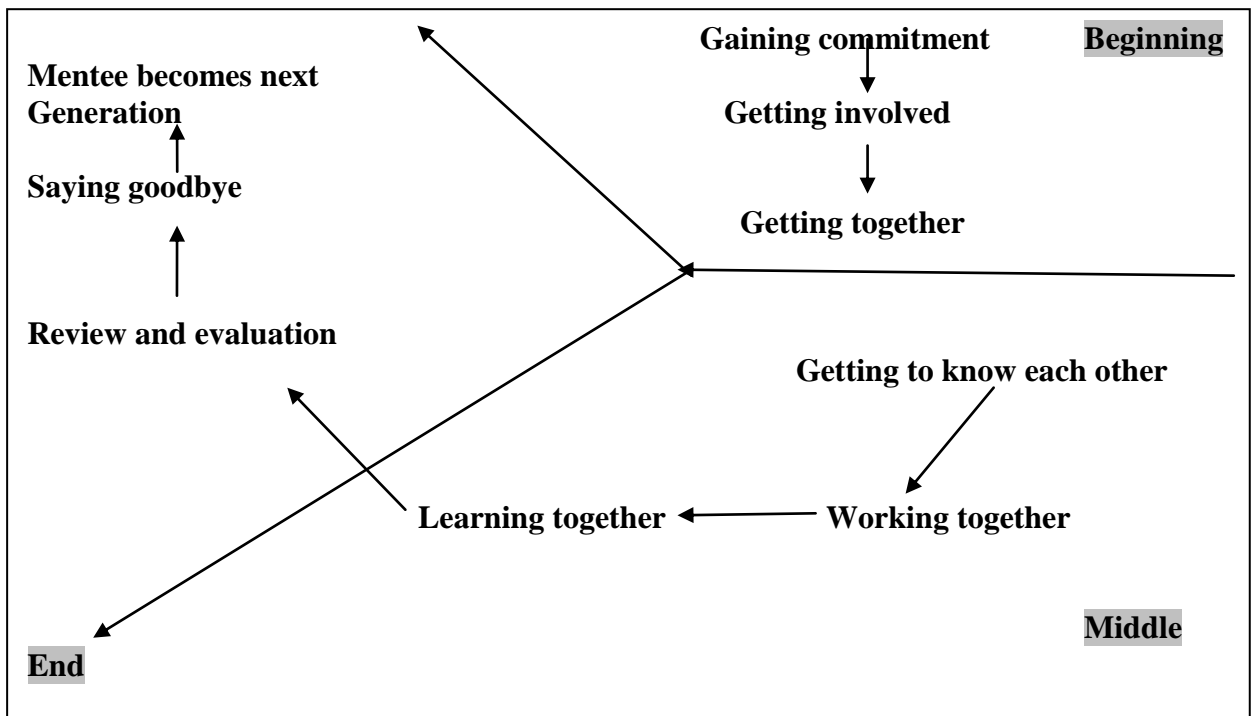
Developmental learning phase: Working together towards achieving goals

Winding-down phase: Reviewing outcomes and evaluating the process

Dissolving the mentoring relationship: Ending the mentoring relationship; but professional friendship may continue.

Carnwell-Ward, Bossons, and Gover (2004) add that an effective mentoring relationship will follow a lifecycle. At the end of the lifecycle, as illustrated in the figure below, there is a phase of evaluation and, if it is found beneficial and suitable to both mentor and mentee, then a new phase of relationship could start between the same partners.

Figure 2: Carnwell-Ward and Gover (2004) “Mentoring Relationship Lifecycle”



Zutter (2007) points out that the mentoring partnership includes various stages. First, there are the initial trust building and informative phases followed by the mentor being a facilitator and motivator for the mentee. The final stage involves the mentees using their own plan to accomplish the goals they set out to attain.

Gaies and Bowers (1990) refer to “clinical mentoring” as a constant procedure of mentee development that is built on direct observation of classroom teaching performance. They divide clinical mentoring into three stages: a pre-observation discussion between the mentee and the mentor, in which they decide the general and specific objectives of a classroom visit; the observation itself; and a post observation analysis, in which they examine points of strengths and weaknesses and suggestions are made to enhance succeeding classroom implementation. According to Gaies and Bowers, clinical mentoring aims at encouraging more effective teaching.

Kamhi-Stein and Oliveira (2008) propose the notion of “mentoring as transformational leadership” (p. 41). This view of mentoring includes three principal attributes. First, mentoring is viewed as a dyadic relationship, one in which both mentee and mentor gain from the relationship. Second, both the mentor and the

mentee create learning opportunities at different levels that help them to grow both professionally and personally. Third, as the mentor-mentee relationship develops, there is a spiral process of meeting goals, setting new and higher goals accompanied by higher expectations, and creating conditions to meet such goals.

### E-mentoring

The information age is changing the nature of many relationships, including mentoring. Bierema and Merriam (2002) expand the definition of traditional mentoring to include computer-mediated communication (CMC) or “e-mentoring.” They define e-mentoring as a “computer mediated, mutually beneficial relationship between a mentor and a [mentee] which provides learning, advising, encouraging, promoting, and modeling that is often boundaryless, egalitarian, and qualitatively different than traditional face to face mentoring” (p. 219). This definition has two components that distinguished e-mentoring from traditional mentoring: the boundarylessness of e-mentoring and the egalitarian quality of the exchange. E-mentoring is boundaryless in that it provides the opportunity for relationships that cross boundaries of time, geography, and culture. This cannot be offered under the traditional model of mentoring. In addition, it has the ability to cross obstacles of race, gender, age, geography, and hierarchy that are hardly crossed in traditional mentoring.

Brockbank and McGill (2006) point out that the term “e-mentoring” is used when mentoring is performed electronically by e-mail or any other method. They argue that the boundaryless claim mentioned in Bierema and Merriam’s (2002) definition of “e-mentoring” suggests that it will be neutral and not influenced by an individual’s race, gender, age, or status of where he or she lives. Megginson, Clutterbuck, Garvey, Stokes, and Garrett-Harris (2006) predict that “e-mentoring” will be adopted and more schemes will use it due to its advantages: time and space independent, offering time for reflection, removing symbol of domination that get into the way of diversity mentoring, and retaining a permanent record for subsequent analysis” (p. 255).

Stone (2004) mentions that “distance mentoring” and “virtual mentoring” have been used as synonyms for “e-mentoring” (p. 76). She adds that on one hand research

has highlighted the benefits of virtual mentoring over traditional mentoring. Virtual mentoring programs offer more flexibility in regard to time because when two people are separated by various time zones, the number of hours they are available for each other decreases. It also allows individuals from different parts of the country to team up, which can make the mentoring experience broadening for both. On the other hand, there are negative aspects to virtual mentoring. It lacks the openness of interpersonal communication that matures in face-to-face mentoring. Stone reports the feedback of a mentee who mentioned that when she asked for guidance regarding some Web resources it took her mentor several days to reply. However, other mentees reported that they found their engagement in virtual mentoring a fun challenge. It helped them to develop their communication skills, especially their ability to deliver their ideas through e-mails.

#### What a Mentor Is

Policy makers, school administrators, and teachers should be aware of the important role a mentor can play in ESL classrooms. Considering the importance of the mentoring role, the selection and training of appropriate mentors must be a significant concern. Shea (2001) believes that “a part of a mentor’s role is often simply to be there for the mentee, to listen, to comfort, [and] to be a friend” (p. 39). Teacher mentors play a significant role in any successful school. This is illustrated in Malderez and Bodoczky’s (1999) statement that mentors who are part of formal professional development schemes play the roles of models, acculturators, sponsors, supporters, and educators. In addition, a mentor provides teachers with a multiple range of materials that can be implemented in a language classroom. Granade (2004) associates the term mentor with “wisdom and counseling” (p. 3). She points out that refining one’s skills is best achieved in a setting where coaching and feedback as well as encouragement are offered.

Gray (2001) uses the term “mentor” to describe a teacher working with student teachers in their specialist subject. Thus, the role of a teacher is to help novice teachers refine their teaching methods, and understand the learning needs of all students. A mentor should be a skilled and trained person who is able to observe, perceive, and identify skillful practices performed in the classroom. Furthermore,

mentors can help make the teaching responsibilities of mentees manageable and thus enhance the teaching environment. Randall and Thornton (2001) state that the term “mentor” has connotations within the language which imply the idea of “warmth, experience, and sympathetic guidance” (p. 14).

Arnold (2006) highlights some of the necessary qualities for a good mentor from two perspectives: “personal and interpersonal skills” and “professional qualities and knowledge” (p. 118). He mentions that the establishment of a personal nurturing relationship with the mentee promotes an environment of development. He believes that a good mentor should possess interpersonal communication skills. Finally, Gaies and Bowers (1990) believe that the role of the mentor is quite clear. It involves using classroom observations to determine defects and to bring these to the mentee’s awareness. This entails showing the mentee that what was done in the classroom can be done in a better way.

According to Blank and Sindelar (1992), “mentors appear to be a unique blend of intuitive sensitivity and technical expertise” (p. 23). Pungur (2007) points out that the mentor “provides front line advice, support, and feedback to the mentee. Mentors assist [mentees] in developing classroom management skills, gaining familiarity with teaching resources, lesson planning, and reflective practice” (p. 269).

### The Mentoring Role

Mentoring must be connected to a vision of good teaching if it is to contribute to constructive educational reform. The role of a mentor is different from that of a coach or an advisor, although these formal roles can lead to a mentoring relationship. Cranwell-Ward, Bossons, and Gover (2004) highlight the difference between coaching and mentoring. Coaching is seen as remedial activity, whereas mentoring is viewed as a positive, developmental intervention. The National Academy of Sciences (1997) in the USA states that there is a basic difference between a mentor and an advisor. Mentoring is more than advising; it is a personal as well as a professional relationship. In addition, an advisor might or might not be a mentor depending on the quality of the relationship. The essence of mentoring has been described by the National Academy of Sciences as being an advisor, teacher, role model, and friend.



Boreen and Niday (2000) support this view by arguing that mentoring is more than an opportunity to give advice. They perceive it as the two-way exchange of listening and questioning. In addition, they believe that this relationship should take place before novice teachers' first entrance into the school.

Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (1996) claim that the role of the mentor is versatile and complicated. They believe that in addition to offering advice and support there is a huge interpersonal and psychological dimension to the mentoring relationship. Jane (2007) points out that for an efficient mentoring relationship to develop, it is necessary that the mentor should have good interpersonal skills and the ability to:

- listen very attentively
- deal with differences of opinion in a non-judgemental manner
- ask open-ended questions rather than closed ones
- focus on the mentee's agenda
- show flexibility and be creative
- use these interpersonal skills for the benefits of the other person
- leave the mentoring role when it is no longer appropriate or requested as sometimes "letting go" can be a difficult element of mentoring (p. 186)

In spite of the different contexts and practices that are connected with the mentoring relationship, Garvey and Alred (2003) state that a vital aspect of mentoring is that it is a kind of learning relationship between mentor and mentee. They add that to initiate and maintain a mentoring relationship demands certain personal qualities and skills from the mentor. For instance, a mentor should have "relevant experience and skills, well developed interpersonal skills, a desire to help and develop another person, an open mind, flexible attitude, and recognition of one's own need for support, time and willingness to develop a relationship, an ability to listen challenge and support, and the ability to build and sustain trust" (p. 4). Pungur (2007) argues that mentors are responsible for providing assistance and modeling professional behaviours through the progress of kind and encouraging relationships, and are also responsible for holding the key evaluator role.

Cullingford (2006) mentions that many schools and colleges do their best to support the mentoring programs and make systems of mentoring succeed. However, he reports a case study that came to the conclusion that the mentoring system only worked in certain conditions. These were when the mentees had the qualities of appreciating the mentor, were good listeners, were willing to ask for help and to act on advice, recognized their own mistakes, reflected on their own experience, used procedures, and being good with interpersonal skills. Garvey and Alred (2003) believe that a true mentoring relationship requires certain qualities and skills from the mentee as well. These include “commitment to one’s own learning, a flexible approach to one’s own learning, honesty and openness about one’s own behavior, time and willingness to develop a relationship, reflective and reflexive abilities, and the ability to build and maintain trust” (p. 4). In addition, Wittenberg (1998) contends that a successful mentoring program also depends upon the attitude, learning ability, and values of the mentee. Some of these traits are being committed to the organization, willing to learn and succeed, ambitious and ethical, focused and highly motivated.

McNamara (1995) conducted an exploratory investigation in English primary schools to examine how mentees’ classroom practice was influenced by the guidance and assistance provided for them by their school teacher mentors. He concluded, “An evident implication which may be easily drawn is that since teaching is fundamentally a practical activity which relies upon the capability to cope with given circumstances, mentors... may be regarded as useful insofar as they are able to help students to adapt successfully to the requirements and exigencies of the classroom in which they learn to teach” (p. 59).

Bullough and Draper (2004) also conducted a study involving nine secondary school teacher mentors to explore their experience of mentoring. Six of the nine were new to mentoring and three were well-experienced veteran mentors. All mentors recognized that giving emotional support to their mentees was central to their role. They also mentioned the importance of being sympathetic, that is, able to know how the mentees felt and then appropriately respond to each situation. However, they commented that sometimes they found this role to be a heavy burden and impossible

expectation. Blank and Sindelar (1992) state, “Mentors function in numerous roles, but primarily they promote the new teachers’ professional competence and personal growth” (p. 23). In addition, they play the role of kind and thoughtful friends. They provide assistance, support, and admiration to their mentees, and share their achievements with others.

### Role Modeling

Mentees may benefit from observing mentors model instructional practices. Modeling can occur in several ways, for example, by observing the mentor’s class or by modeling through team teaching. Stone (2007) states that “a role model is a person so effective or inspiring in some professional or personal way that he or she is a model for others” (p. 172). When people take up the role of a mentor, they are aware that they will be role models for their mentees. Thus, this places a great pressure on the mentor to be a good role model. According to Flynn and Stack (2005), mentoring involves a lot of role modeling followed by moments of reflection on the mentee’s performance. Mentoring may also involve opportunities for the mentee to perform under the attentive eye of the mentor. This is also followed by retrospective analysis or immediate correction if feasible. Kochan and Trimble (2005) view mentoring from a different perspective. In their mentoring relationship, the mentee is not waiting to be discovered but someone who is willing to discover herself or himself, and the mentor, instead of serving as a font of perfect knowledge, becomes a co-learner in a course of discovery.

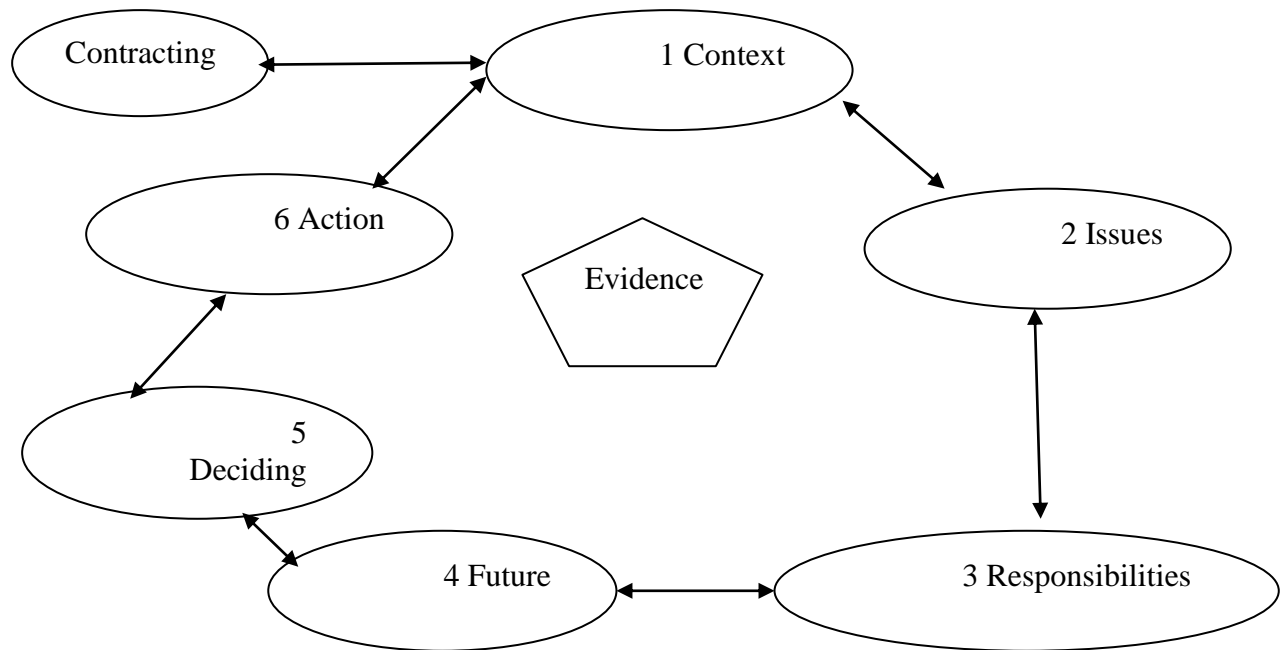
Hudson and Millwater (2008) conducted a study involving 24 mentors to examine the mentors’ perceptions of mentoring second-year preservice teachers for teaching English and, in particular, the teaching of writing. The preservice teachers were from one Australian university. The mentors were provided with basic guidelines for mentoring by the university. The results of the study illustrated the importance of developing collaborative and professional mentoring relationships, modeling the teaching of writing, and providing useful feedback on the mentee’s progress on teaching writing. As for modeling, one of the mentors suggested that any modeling would be useful to the mentee including “demonstrating a ‘bad’ lesson and

comparing it to a well-planned lesson” (p. 7).

Observations help teachers reflect on their own teaching practices, and develop new strategies to deal with them. Learning is an important factor in the professional development of novice teachers. Lesson observations are crucial to learning and necessary to future instruction. Arthur, Davison, and Moss (1997) state that most subject mentors consider the establishment of a focus as the key to effective lesson observation, especially in the early stages, when student teachers may be weighed down by the number of different issues involved in teaching a lesson. The mentor has to observe teachers in action and provide timely and ongoing support. As Malderez and Bodoczky (1999) point out, the notion of reflection has three facets: “holding up the mirror,” “thinking over,” and “modelling” (p. 19). A mentor may sometimes need to act as a mirror to provide the mentee with a clear view from a different perspective. Later on, the process of reflection usually leads to the tendency of “thinking over,” which takes place during regular discussion. Finally, the mentor provides the mentee with a model of the best principles in real practice. Gordon and Maxey (2000) declare that mentors should be aware of the fact that they will be requested one day to model effective techniques for mentees. Thus, they should be ready to explain to mentees why, how, and when they use specific techniques in the classroom. Hudson and Millwater (2008) believe that supervision, unlike a mentoring relationship, doesn’t provide any modeling of practice. It is a more distant relationship, and its main purpose is performance assessment.

Pask and Joy (2007) provide us with a model of the mentoring-coaching cycle based on another one that has been developed through research and practice at the London Centre for leadership in learning—a part of the Institute of Education, University of London. Participants of the training programmes are provided with a copy of the model in which each phase is color coded to indicate its force and spirit, as follows:

Figure 3: Pask and Joy (2007) “The Mentoring-Coaching Cycle”



As for the contracting stage and the evidence symbol are related to all parts of the process. Phase 1 (Context) symbolizes the signal to “Go.” Phase 2 (Issues) represents the stage where caution is required. Phase 3 (Responsibilities) indicates that the mentee needs to stop until there is obvious evidence that he/she wants to change and will take the responsibility for whatever comes next. Phase 4 (Future) offers an opportunity for “blue sky thinking.” Phase 5 (Deciding) illustrates that this stage depends on the decisions made in the previous phase. Phase 6 (Action) signifies the sense of taking control.

#### Traits of Successful Mentors

Effective mentoring depends on the thoughtfulness and good interpersonal skills of the mentor. In order to be able to meet the needs of the mentees, mentors need to possess various characteristics. Heller (2004) argues that a skillful teacher is not essentially a skillful mentor. The skills are different. Dealing with adult learners is totally different from dealing with young learners. We should bear in mind that novice teachers are certified as professional, unlike students facing classes for the first time. Johnson and Ridley (2004) compare the mentor and mentee relationship to a

seed that needs nourishing to sprout and grow; people as well need the proper components in their environments to prosper. A fundamental ingredient for growth in a mentorship is emotional warmth. Mentees in all fields consider a mentor's kindness and attentiveness among the most vital mentor qualities. Johnson and Ridley (2004) state that "mentor warmth charges the mentorship with positive emotional valence" (p. 44). On the other hand, mentors with emotional coolness tend to limit the value of their relationship with their mentees. In this kind of relation, mentees do not feel safe, respected, or cared about. Thus, they will neither blossom nor reach their full potential. Hudson and Millwater (2008) highlight the fact that the mentoring relationship must be flexible to address the mentee's direct needs; however, this demands mentors to be aware of the precise mentoring practices favoured by current literature.

Stone (2007) points out that a successful mentor is a person who has strong interpersonal skills; this includes having good communication skills as well as being an active listener. She adds that a good mentor has contacts both within and outside the organization and remarkable influence within the company, and recognizes others' accomplishments. This can be very motivating for the mentees as the mentor acknowledges their accomplishments. She adds that a good mentor is an excellent supervisor in the sense that he or she is able to give feedback that emphasizes the desired performance and to coach to improve performance. Finally, an excellent mentor knows the field well, accepts the risk that comes with mentoring, and is willing to be available to help another advance in the organization.

Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (1996) emphasize that being a mentor demands the ability to exploit many sensitive and complex skills, such as providing a model of good teaching practice, showing a willingness to work with the mentee in a variety of situations, listening, responding, and advising. In addition, being a mentor involves observing the mentee closely and detecting specific concerns for discussion, and performing evaluation and appraisals in a compassionate manner. Rowley (1999) identifies six basic but essential qualities of the good mentor. Some of the qualities are being committed to the role as a mentor, accepting the mentee, being skilled at providing instructional support, being effective in different interpersonal contexts,

being a model of a continuous learner, and communicating hope and optimism.

According to the National Academy of Sciences (1997) in the USA, good mentors are “able to share life experiences and wisdom, as well as technical expertise. They are good listeners, good observers, and good problem-solvers. They make an effort to know, accept, and respect the goals and interests of a [mentee]” (p. 2). Wittenberg (1998) states that the mentor must be someone who is sensitive and understanding of the [mentee’s] needs, responsive, with excellent interpersonal communication skills, and is objective and clear during the thinking process. Blank and Sindelar (1992) assert that mentors should be “highly proficient instructors with a strong base of pedagogical knowledge and successful experience who are motivated to pass on their accumulated knowledge to the next generation of teachers” (p. 23). They point out that they have specific criteria for choosing mentors for the Morton High School in Berwyn/Cicero, Illinois. Morton High School is a large high school district with 4,800 students and 350 faculty and administrators. They hire twenty to thirty new teachers each year. At Morton, the main focus is on the professional development of teachers. The real secret behind the success of the mentoring program at Morton is the selection of good mentors. They believe that mentors should be excellent teachers, they should be “team players,” and they should have a subject area/grade level “match” with new teachers.

#### What Makes Bad Mentors

Stone (2004, p. 13) believes that before starting any mentoring relationship mentors should evaluate not only their best qualities, but their weak ones as well. She mentions some traits that disqualify people as mentors:

- Too dictatorial – intolerant of others’ mistakes
- Like to be in control, in the limelight
- Very poor at keeping in touch
- Take no interest in others’ aspirations
- Judgmental
- Disloyal, unlikely to keep confidence
- Unapproachable, hard to approach

- Very poor communicator
- Poor in keeping commitments; make time for things but then abandon for something else you deem more important
- Very biased viewpoint and not willing to consider others' points of view

Shea (2001) explains that research on mentoring skills indicates that some behaviors should be avoided to help the mentoring relationship succeed. These behaviors are criticizing, giving advice, and rescuing people from a self-inflicted folly. She adds that the psychiatrist, Dr. Eric Berne, pointed out that these behaviors are the elements of negative psychological games that involve put-downs of another person

### Benefits for Mentors

As a mentor acquires valuable mentoring experience, he/she comes across important skills in counseling, time management, and leadership. There is a lot of respect and admiration involved; many teachers understand and appreciate the value of mentors in assisting a new teacher. Several studies have acknowledged the positive effects of mentoring on the mentors themselves. Warring (1990) provides an example of the Bloomington mentoring program which was applied and assessed through the shared efforts of a local college and a suburban school district. The College of St. Thomas and the Bloomington public schools have been working in both pre-service and in-service teacher education. The mentor-mentee program in Bloomington includes suggestions for developing mentorship programs. Mentors who joined the program enhanced their own teaching styles and strategies as a result of being involved in the program. They reported receiving social and emotional support from colleagues, administrators, and other mentors. All mentors believed that mentor and mentee activities were productive. Gordon and Maxey (2000) ascertain that mentoring is the foundation for many successful teacher development programs. They point out that according to a beginning teacher mentor,

Being a mentor keeps me current, when I have to answer my mentee's questions, it makes me ask, "Why am I doing what I am doing?" In discussing philosophy, problems, or techniques with this new teacher, I find out what I really believe. That makes me a stronger person and a better teacher (p. 34).



Saffold (2003) points out in the city of Milwaukee policymakers were mainly concerned about hiring and preserving a strong teaching force. Thus, the city of Milwaukee set up the Dorothy Danforth Compton Fellowship Program in 1996. The aim of the program was to recruit, prepare, and retain, new middle school teachers. The program lasted for one year, and when the teachers completed the program successfully, they were guaranteed a contract in the Milwaukee Public Schools. Teachers worked with mentors who helped them try new teaching strategies that went beyond the traditional textbook curriculum. Saffold states that in spite of the fact that mentors support and sustain new teachers, the mentoring helps refresh and sustain experienced teachers as well. Veteran teachers who take the role of mentors increase their knowledge of performance-based standards, and reinforce their teaching and leadership skills. Through the mentoring relationship and experience, mentors began to appreciate what they had learned over the years. As one mentor stated,

I have developed quite a big bag of tricks over the years, I guess I really never thought about it, but when I walk into a teacher's room and see the problems that he or she is having, I remember why I came up with some of my strategies. (p. 83)

Both mentors and mentees benefit from reflections. Reporting and discussing classroom practices help mentors develop as educators and mentees learn how to assess their own work.

Stone (2004) adds that mentors learn from mentees; they may be able to teach them a new job-specific skill or help them enhance their people-development skills. She also reports that mentors point out that mentoring someone assists their own professional growth, making them more beneficial to their organization. Furthermore, mentoring will give mentors a fresh perception of their own performance. Mentors also receive recognition from peers and colleagues for being effective at developing mentees. They will also get extra work done as mentees will want to pay them back for their counsel and support. Thus, they will eagerly help them with a project if the need arises.

Zutter (2007) provides an example of the most prominent development programs, which is the Faculty Mentoring Program. It is one of the few structured

faculty-to-faculty mentoring programs in a Canadian postsecondary institute; it is called the MacEwan program. Zutter states, “For the mentor, the relationship with the mentee provides a sense of professional pride and accomplishment, ideas for integrating new practices and technology into their teaching, [and] help with special projects” ( p. 77). Carpenter and Blance (2007) believe that classroom teachers have the opportunity to grow professionally by paying back to their profession through mentoring. Furthermore, they benefit from an infusion of new ideas that boosts their own professional growth and development.

Heller (2004) suggests that mentoring programs “would have the added benefit of providing a career ladder for teachers, supporting the concept of master teachers and teacher mentors” (p. 7). She notices that the only way to grow professionally in the field of education currently is to leave the classroom and become an administrator. Excellent teachers should be rewarded with more advanced teaching responsibilities, as well as with high salaries. Finally, the National Academy of Sciences (1997) points out that there are some reasons for being a good mentor. It helps mentors to achieve satisfaction, attract good mentees, stay on top of their field, develop their professional network, and extend their contribution.

Bass-Isaac (1989) concludes that the mentoring process provides the mentor with a solid ground to present his/her vast knowledge and proficiency. He adds that not only is the mentee saved from the cavity of professional seclusion, but the mentor is as well. Little (1990) confirms that the benefits for the mentor start with the position linked with the title, compensation, and other resources that it brings. He adds that whatever the reasons that lie behind teachers’ primary response to mentoring as a career incentive, the ultimate intensity of the role lies in the experience it offers to the mentors themselves. To sum up, unlike mentoring in business and industry, mentoring in the field of education “neither promises nor is premised upon an advancement incentive, but rather on other dimensions of work that contribute to career satisfaction” (Little, 1990, p. 333).

### Professional Discussion

By encouraging observation and discussion about teaching practices, mentors can help mentees develop tools for constant progress. According to Routman (2002),

educators often misjudge the value of professional discussion in the development of teachers, but one of the most influential tactics to developing confidence about teaching practices is ongoing professional conversation among colleagues.

Furthermore, Moffett (2000) has noted, “More than almost any other factor, the sense of a professional community enhances student achievement” (p. 36). Hudson and Miller (2008) argue that if the mentoring relationship is shared equally between the mentor and the mentee with opportunities for cooperation, challenges, and two-way dialogues, then “mentees can be empowered and more open to develop practices or theoretical frameworks rather than alienated from the task of reframing their own teacher identity or being fearful of making a transition to a safer place of operation” (p. 2).

Furlong (2000) asserts that routing and structured discussions between mentors and mentees present a crucial part of all teacher education programs in England, as mentors have access to different forms of practical, professional knowledge as they know the school, the students, and the curriculum. Through their professional discussions with mentees, they sharpen the focus for them, guide their perception, and help them enter that professional language.

Mentoring strategies that promote development and change are those that reflect the principles of real-life teaching experiences, foster problem solving and reflection, and build on teacher knowledge and experiences. Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (1996) suggest that after class observations, the mentor should conduct a review meeting with the mentee during which constructive feedback is given and debriefing takes place. The main aim of this meeting is to provoke reflection on the part of the mentee, both through the setting of a predetermined agenda and in the opportunity for an open discussion about other issues. At the meeting, an action plan for further professional development will be agreed upon.

### Assessing Teaching and Mentoring

A mentoring relationship should be beneficial for both the mentor and the mentee. From the mentee’s standpoint, it is essential to play a dynamic role in pinpointing and conveying his or her needs and expectations in the mentoring

relationship. At the same time, the mentee has the right to discuss and evaluate the mentor's advice. Even though, the mentor can offer a unique and helpful perception, the mentee should evaluate the mentor's advice according to his or her own values, goals, and expectations. Evaluation is an essential component of any mentoring system. Data gathered through evaluation provides two types of information. It measures the effectiveness of the mentoring process, and it provides information regarding the influence of the mentoring relationship on the mentees. Feimenr-Nemser (1996) states,

If mentoring is to function as a strategy of reform, it must be linked to a vision of good teaching, guided by an understanding of teacher learning, and supported by a professional culture that favors collaboration and inquiry. (p. 1)

Gordon and Maxey (2000) point out that informal discussion between the mentor and the mentee facilitates ongoing constant evaluation of the mentee's needs. Malderez and Bodoczky (1999) point out that an important aspect of understanding professional development is that the mentee is the initiator and the decider in all aspects of the process:

Mentees participate in a teaching/learning event, then describe, interpret and evaluate that event, and go on to draw up action-plans for their own further learning, which may include drawing on others' interpretations of available data, before acting again and so on. (p. 120)

On the other hand, Arnold (2006) explains that mentoring programs should be assessed for three main reasons: as part of evaluating the mentoring program to measure how well the individual mentors are performing, to take some decisions regarding future plans, and to notify future mentors of training needs. Mentoring is usually associated with the retention of teachers as well as improvement in students' achievements. Brown (2007) states that in mentoring programs both sides of the team benefit: the mentor and the mentee. First, the mentor is requested to accurately analyze another's teaching and in so doing he or she is sharpening his or her metacognitive ability to reflect on the teaching process. Second, the mentee is pushed out into what might otherwise be some self-satisfaction into a sharp perception of his or her own areas of strength and weakness.

Effective mentoring programs highlight the role of the mentee at the centre of the learning process, and the support provided by the mentor who acts as a coach and a critical friend. The formation of a successful mentoring program is an innovative process. It takes a lot of time and effort to make the program work and to be able to measure its outcomes. Successful mentoring programs should have clear objectives and goals. Blank and Sindelar (1992) present an example of a successful mentoring program at Morton High School in Berwyn/Cicero, Illinois. The main characteristic of their mentoring program is that it takes theory and puts it into practice. For both, the mentor and the mentee, mentoring was a positive professional development experience. For the mentor, mentoring was a means of renewal. As for the mentee, it was a means of survival.

Field and Field (1994) state that “teachers who undertake the responsibility of mentoring a student teacher during a practice teaching session should have some understanding of how student teachers feel in their role as developing teachers in a school environment” (p. 27). The mentors need to encourage student teachers to reflect on, and convey, their experience during the practicum, and then take into consideration what these students write in their reflective journals. Arnold (2006) leaves the final word to a mentee who took part in a mentoring program in a large military EFL school in the Middle East. He appreciated the program because it provided him with “special experience and special skill that you wouldn’t get just by pushing someone into the pool.” He added, “You must teach someone swimming” (p. 124) before they go in the classroom.

Although a lot of research has been conducted on mentoring, and there is a considerable corpus of recent literature on school-based mentoring there is still a need for more research, specifically as to how mentors may influence teachers’ teaching practices in the classroom. The idea of mentoring was first implemented as part of the *Madares Al Ghad* program three years ago. As a result, I decided this investigation of teachers’ opinions regarding their involvement in a mentoring program. In addition, I will add to the literature the extent to which mentors in the MAG program believe they influence the teaching practices in the classroom.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the research method, study area, experimental materials, data collection methods, and the statistical treatment used for data analysis.

#### Design of the Study

A preliminary investigation of the literature indicates that benefits may ensue to teachers as a consequence of involvement in a mentoring program. It implies that workplace training and learning arbitrated by mentors has the potential to support novice teachers in their professional development. The evidence in the literature points out that learning and training in the workplace can reflect real change in individuals, groups, and organizations. Thus, mentoring can be considered as an effective tool in helping teachers develop professionally. The primary aim of this study was to investigate the following specific research questions: First, what do *Madares Al Ghad* (MAG) high school teachers think of being involved in a mentoring program? Second, do non-MAG teachers think they might benefit from a mentoring program in their schools? If so, how? Finally, to what extent do mentors influence teaching practices in the classroom? Thus, the study was an endeavor to highlight the role of mentoring in ESL classrooms in the United Arab Emirates. To achieve the purpose of this study both quantitative and qualitative data were collected.

I chose to use both surveys and interviews for data collection due to the fact that each approach has positive attributes, and combining quantitative and qualitative approaches can result in gaining the best of both research worlds. As Richards (2003) points out, “qualitative research is soft, speculative, and concerned with ‘data’; quantitative research is scientific (experimental), serious, and concerned with facts” (p. 8). According to Denzin and Lincoln (2008), qualitative researchers “seek answers to questions that stress how social experience is created and given meaning [whereas] qualitative studies emphasize the measurement and analysis of causal relationships between variables, not processes” (p. 14). Furthermore, Lazaraton (2000) states that both quantitative and qualitative methods “highlight reality in a different, yet complementary, way” (p. 180).

Data were collected from different sources which included teachers' questionnaires, teacher mentors' questionnaires, and teachers' interviews (see Appendices A, B, C, D, and E). Teachers' questionnaires were filled in by 100 MAG and non-MAG high school teachers. These teachers were male and female teachers from six educational zones in the UAE- Fujairah, Ras Al Khaimah, Umm Al Quwain, Ajman, Sharjah, and Dubai. The two questionnaires were designed to gather data from the two groups of MAG and non-MAG teachers. The participants from each group were asked to read the statements and choose among five responses: "Strongly Agree," "Agree," "Disagree," "Strongly Disagree," or "Not Sure." Moreover, teachers' questionnaires contained two open-ended questions to encourage participants to briefly add their comments or suggestions. In addition, 15 high school teacher mentors participated in a questionnaire as a way of reflecting on their current practices in the schools. The questionnaire was adapted from Hudson and Millwater's (2008) study on mentors' views about developing effective teaching practices. It was used as a basis for my study. Some adaptations took place according to what I found relevant. They were asked to read the statements and choose among four responses: "Always," "Usually," "Sometimes," or "Never."

To understand teachers' perceptions of the role of mentoring in ESL classes in the United Arab Emirates, I also used interviews as a qualitative method of collecting data. According to Lichtman (2006), qualitative researchers conduct interviews in order to give the participants the opportunity to share their stories without following a prearranged format. Thus, I chose to conduct semi-structured interviews to provide the participants with the chance to express their points of view. Miller and Glassner (2004) point out that according to their personal experience interviewees are mainly concerned with the outcome of the interview: "Those concerns extend beyond matters such as the protection of confidentiality. Interviewees want to know that what they have to say matters" (p. 131).

## Data Collection

I collected the data throughout the academic year 2010-2011. I depended on a colleague in each of the schools included in my study to survey the teachers in his/her school using a standardized procedure. At the beginning they thanked the teachers for participating in the survey. After that they explained why such data is being gathered and its potential uses. The teachers' interviews were conducted in February 2011 by me. Interviews were arranged with teachers from each group who agreed at the end of the questionnaire to be interviewed. Teachers were asked semi-structured interview questions (see Appendices D and E). At the beginning of the interview, I explained to the participants in detail the purpose and aim of the study. In addition, I informed them that they had the right to be anonymous and that all the information would be confidential. I asked them to express their opinions freely about their views of the role of mentoring in ESL classrooms.

## The Characteristics of the Researcher

Having worked as an ESL teacher in the UAE for nearly 20 years, I have developed an awareness of the educational context as well as the professional training and support that teachers receive. After being hired by *Madares Al Ghad* as a teacher mentor, I was able to measure the extent of professional training and support offered to ESL teachers. The greatest benefit of an exchange of information and experience between teachers and mentors lies in the enlivening feeling that teaching at its most insightful level is a shared experience between practitioners.

## The Participants

In order to have a clear investigation of the role of mentoring in ESL classrooms, I decided to involve three groups in this study. The participants chosen for this study were experienced and novice high school teachers selected from different government schools. Their experience ranged from one year to 35 years. The first group consisted of 50 male and female teachers who were currently working in *Madares Al Ghad* schools. Teachers who took part and completed the questionnaire were from different Arab countries: Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Iraq, Tunisia, and the United Arab Emirates. A corresponding number of male and female secondary



teachers who were currently working for non-MAG schools also participated as the second group in this study. They were also from different Arab countries: Egypt, Syria, Jordan, and the United Arab Emirates. Finally, unlike the other two groups, the third group of participants consisted of international teachers who worked as teacher mentors in *Madares Al Ghad* schools. Teacher mentors who participated and completed the questionnaire were from Turkey, New Zealand, Egypt, South Africa, Tunisia, Malta, and Palestine.

The two groups of male and female teachers were selected from MAG and non-MAG secondary schools for boys and girls. The first group consisted of 30 males and 20 females from various MAG schools. These schools were Al Jurf in Ajman, Al Safa in Dubai, Mariya Al Qubtiya in Dubai, Muath Bin Jabal in Sharjah, Al Mualla Girls Secondary School in Umm Al Quwain, and Hamad Bin Abdullah Al Sharqui in Fujairah. 10 of the surveyed participants were interviewed; six of them were males and four were females. There were two from Fujairah, three from Ajman, four from Dubai, and one from Umm Al Quwain.

The second group consisted of 15 males and 35 females from different non-MAG schools. These schools were Al Raya in Dubai, Princess Haya in Dubai, Anas Bin Al Nathar Boys' School in Fujairah, Hamraniya and Al Hamham Girls' Secondary Schools in Ras Al Khaimah, and Al Ghubaiba and Waset Secondary Schools in Sharjah. Five of the surveyed participants were interviewed, two males and three females.

As for the teacher mentors, the study was conducted with eight females and seven males working in different MAG schools. Their schools are Hamad Bin Abdullah Al Sharqui in Fujairah, Al Rams in Ras Al Khaimah, Al Mualla Girls' Secondary School in Umm Al Quwain, Al Jurf in Ajman, Muath Bin Jabal and Al Nouf in Sharjah, and Mariya Al Qubtiya and Al Safa in Dubai.

## Design of the Instruments

### Questionnaires

In order to obtain data for this study, three survey instruments were designed (see Appendices A, B, and C). The surveys were distributed to three groups: MAG teachers, non-MAG teachers, and teacher mentors. The purpose of the surveys was mainly to obtain an overall picture of the current mentoring practices by teacher mentors in ESL classrooms. Each questionnaire contained three sections. The first section gathered data about the demographics of the participants. Each participant was asked to give information about his/her gender, teaching experience in general, and the number of teaching years in the United Arab Emirates in particular. In addition, each participant had to mention the grade level he/she was currently teaching and the educational zone. As for the non-MAG teachers, they were asked to mention if they had ever worked with a mentor before. Regarding the teacher mentors, they were asked to state their mentoring experience in general and the number of mentoring years in the United Arab Emirates in particular.

The second section included quantitative close-ended statements, and Likert scale formatting was used to determine teachers' perceptions of the role of mentoring in ESL classrooms. The responses for MAG and non-MAG teachers included "Strongly Agree," "Agree," "Disagree," "Strongly Disagree," or "Not Sure." The responses for the teacher mentors included "Always" (meaning all the time), "Usually" (meaning most of the time), "Sometimes" (meaning from time to time), and "Never" (meaning not at all). Participants were asked to respond by ticking the box that actually reflected their opinion.

The third section included two open-ended questions to obtain qualitative data that highlighted teachers' perceptions of the role of mentoring in ESL classrooms. Berg (2001) points out that "qualitative research properly seeks answers to questions by examining various social settings and the individuals who inhabit these settings" (p. 6). In addition, Wallace (1998) mentions that open-ended questions are "more likely to yield more unexpected (and therefore, perhaps, more interesting) data" (p. 135). Analysis of the questionnaires, distributed in both MAG and non-MAG schools, as well as the open-ended questions helped me answer my first and second research

questions. In addition, the information from the surveys was used to provide me with some feedback of the current mentoring practices in various MAG schools. Finally, analysis of the teacher mentors' questionnaire and the open-ended questions helped me answer my last research question.

### Interviews

Fifteen high school teachers from both groups of participants, MAG and non-MAG schools, three males and seven females, were interviewed. A number of questions were prepared to further investigate teachers' perceptions of the role of mentoring in ESL classrooms (see Appendices D and E). Interviews were arranged with teachers from each group who agreed at the end of the questionnaire to be interviewed. I implemented Berg's (2009) ten commandments of interviewing: never begin an interview cold; remember your purpose; present a natural front; demonstrate active listening; think about appearance; interview in a comfortable place; don't be satisfied with monosyllabic answers; be respectful; practice, practice and practice some more; and finally be cordial and appreciative. At the beginning of the interview, I established good rapport with the interviewees, and then I communicated to the interviewees what I wanted to know. When the interviewees gave me short answers, I asked them politely to elaborate saying, "Can you tell me more about that?" At the end of the interview, I thanked them for participating in my research and asked them if they had any questions regarding my research.

Following Richards (2003) piece of advice, "There is, in fact, a golden rule for all interviewing: Always seek the particular" (p. 53), I contacted these teachers and asked to meet them for 10-15 minutes to discuss their responses to the survey in more depth. According to Wallace (1998), interviews and questionnaires are two techniques that entail extracting information from interviewees: usually accurate information about themselves and their schooling situation, or attitudes/opinions on various concerns. The purposes of the interviews were to elicit participants' thoughts and reflections about the role of mentoring in ESL classrooms and to allow them to express their positions and opinions.

I conducted semi-structured interviews. I prepared a set of structured interview questions (see Appendices D and E). However, I added more questions as the discussion proceeded with the interviewees. I started each interview with some questions about their teaching experience and then moved to more specific questions about the teacher mentors' roles in their schools. I tried to be a good listener and not to interrupt the participants. Richards (2003) states, "In interviews we are only concerned with encouraging the speaker, not with putting our point across, so the skills we need are still collaborative but they are focused on drawing from the speaker the richest and fullest account possible" (p. 50). During the interview, I did not comment on the interviewees' answers by praising them. I tried to be a good listener as well as an encouraging and motivating interviewer.

The interviews were an important source of data contributing to this research. Thus, I followed Berg's (2009) piece of advice, "In order to acquire information while interviewing, researchers must word questions so that they will provide the necessary data" (p. 115). In addition, I asked "questions in such a manner as to motivate respondents to answer as completely and honestly as possible" (Berg, 2009, p. 115).

### Data Analysis

The data gathered from various sources using both quantitative methods, from the three surveys, and qualitative methods, from the interviews, were analyzed and the findings are discussed using figures, pie charts, and bar charts in chapter 4. In addition, interviews were transcribed to support the findings of the three surveys. Appendices F, G, and H show final analysis of the three surveys completed by the MAG and non-MAG high school teachers, as well as the teacher mentors.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA ANALYSIS, FINDINGS, AND DISCUSSION

#### Introduction

In this chapter I will report on the results and findings of the study. The chapter starts with an introduction. The second section presents the demographics of the participants and the results of the analysis. The third section discusses MAG high school teachers' perceptions of being involved in a mentoring program. The fourth section provides the data based on how the non-MAG high school teachers believed they might benefit from a mentoring program in their schools. Finally, the last section discusses the extent to which mentors influence teaching practices in the classroom.

The aim of this study was to investigate the role of mentoring in ESL classrooms in the United Arab Emirates. The main questions of the study were the following:

1. What do *Madares Al Ghad* high school teachers think of being involved in a mentoring program in their schools?
2. Do non-MAG teachers think they might benefit from a mentoring program? If so, how?
3. To what extent do mentors influence teaching practices in the classroom?

I undertook most of my data analysis during the second phase of my study. This included analyzing the questionnaires, transcribing the interviews, and establishing files for each group of participants. I also did some preliminary data analysis by reading through the data and noting some observations. This preliminary analysis helped me be more focused in my research. This enabled me to develop detailed themes to further categorize the data. After that I analyzed the data in a deeper and more focused way. The data were collected from various MAG and non-MAG schools around the Emirates of Fujeirah, Ras Al Khaimah, Umm Al Quwain, Ajman, Sharjah, and Dubai. The total number of surveys included in the data analysis was 115 collected from three groups (see Table 1).

Table 1: Background Data about the Participants (n=115)

MAG Teachers (n=50)		Non-MAG Teachers (n=50)		Teacher Mentors (n=13)	
Males (n=30)	Females (n=20)	Males (n=15)	Females (n=35)	Males (n=8)	Females (n=5)

### Demographics

There were 113 ESL teachers and teacher mentors who participated in the study. There were 17 females and 33 males from different MAG schools. They all completed the questionnaires, and 10 of them were interviewed. Teachers who took part and completed the questionnaire were from different Arab countries: Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Iraq, Tunisia, and the United Arab Emirates. Most of them were experienced teachers. Table 2 summarizes the collected demographic data of MAG teachers who participated in the study.

Table 2: Demographic Data of the MAG Teachers Who Participated in the Study (n=50)

Experience					
Gender	1-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	Above 20 years
Males (n=33)	1	12	5	7	8
Females (n=17)	2	1	7	4	3

There were 38 females and 12 males from different non-MAG schools. They all completed the questionnaires and five of them were interviewed. Teachers who took part and completed the questionnaire were from different Arab countries: Syria, Jordan, Egypt, Tunisia, Palestine, and the United Arab Emirates. Table 3 summarizes the collected demographic data of non-MAG teachers who participated in the study.

Table 3: Demographic Data of the non-MAG Teachers Who Participated in the Study (n=50)

Experience					
Gender	1-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	Above 20 years
Males (n=12)	2	1	4	3	2
Females (n=38)	8	3	3	18	6

Teacher mentors who participated and completed the questionnaire were from Turkey, New Zealand, Egypt, South Africa, Tunisia, Malta, and Palestine. Table 3 summarizes the demographic data of teacher mentors who participated in the study.

Table 4: Demographic Data of Teacher Mentors Who Participated in the Study (n=12)

Experience					
Gender	1-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	Above 20 years
Males (n=8)			2	4	2
Females (n=5)			1	3	1

The questionnaires were analyzed using frequencies and percentages. A Likert scale was used to indicate responses of “Strongly Agree,” “Agree,” “Strongly Disagree,” “Disagree,” and “Not Sure” in the teachers’ questionnaires. As for the teacher mentors’ questionnaires, they included “Always,” “Usually,” “Sometimes,” and “Never.” All of the 100 teachers completed the close-ended statements, whereas only 60 answered the open-ended questions: 39 MoE MAG teachers, and 19 MoE non-MAG teachers. All teacher mentors completed the close-ended statements in their questionnaires. I have also provided tables to summarize all teachers’ and teacher mentors’ frequencies and percentages (see Appendices F, G, and H). Qualitative data from open-ended questions and interviews were categorized following carefully reading and identifying teachers’ responses.

## Findings

### MAG Teachers' Questionnaires and Interviews

Before analyzing the data I went through the questionnaires and the interviews several times to be able to form a clear picture of the data as a whole. I am a novice researcher, but I found that my research questions, the literature review I completed, and the data I collected helped me to analyze the data in a more focused way.

Analysis of the qualitative and quantitative data pointed out that the majority of MoE teachers benefited from being involved in a mentoring program. This finding was revealed through the study's instruments: the questionnaires and the interviews. Specific Likert-scale statements that pointed out this finding were statements 3, 4, 6, and 8. These statements reflected that the majority of teachers in this study developed professionally after being involved in a mentoring program (see Appendix F). In addition, the open-ended questions clearly pointed out other aspects in the mentor teacher's role. Furthermore, the interviews highlighted the type of relationship that should exist between the mentor teacher and the mentee.

The questionnaire items that aimed to investigate whether MoE teachers benefited from being involved in a mentoring program or not were divided into three areas. My purpose was to put together the statements that were relevant in order to facilitate the writing of a comprehensible description of each group of participants. Responses were subsequently divided according to these categories:

1. Responses to statements 1, 2, 5, and 7 were classified under "Guiding and supporting teachers." From responses to these items, I was able to determine the level of support teachers were receiving from their mentors.
2. Responses to statements 3, 4, 6, and 8 were classified under the category "Teachers' professional development." Replies to these statements allowed me to know the extent to which being involved in a mentoring program helped teachers develop professionally.
3. Responses to statement 9 were classified under the category "Feedback." Responses to this statement helped me identify the type of feedback that teachers received from their mentors.



## Guiding and Supporting Teachers

In an endeavor to study the amount of guidance and support that the teachers were receiving from their mentors, four statements mainly focused on this issue (see Table 5). The first statement addressed holding regular meetings between teachers and mentors. In response to statement number one, “My mentor teacher and I meet on a regular basis,” 96% (48/50) emphasized that they meet with their mentor teachers on a regular basis. The results reveal that nearly all participants had regular meetings with their mentors. However, one of the male teachers mentioned, “Sometimes, when we have some paperwork like correcting exams which has to be finished in a limited time, mentoring sessions can be extra burden at that time.” In addition, another male teacher indicated that their being involved in a mentoring program adds to their work load due to the fact that they have to teach 20 periods per week, and prepare supplementary materials that meet their students’ needs as well as deal with the regular school responsibilities. Another female teacher responded that being involved in a mentoring program does not really add an extra burden to her work load due to the fact that time devoted to meetings or discussing issues with mentor teachers has a positive effect on her classroom performance. She added that the more time they spend on discussion, the smoother her lesson will be.

Another interviewed female teacher said, “Sometimes when I want to plan my lesson or even when I have a lesson to present, I ask for my mentor’s advice and support.” She also added, “This is in regard to lesson planning and academic advice, but I also seek her advice on personal issues.” This response clearly highlights an important aspect in the mentor and mentee relationship, which is building good rapport. One of the experienced female teachers said, “I often like to share ideas on planning, and to discuss class and students’ affairs with my mentor.”

Additionally, nearly all participants (56% strongly agreed and 42% agreed) expressed their agreement that their mentor teachers are always willing to provide guidance and support when needed. As for teachers’ satisfaction regarding the level of support they are continuing to receive from their mentor teachers, more than three-quarters expressed their satisfaction with the amount of support they were receiving from their mentor teachers as 82% (41/50) strongly agreed or agreed. An experienced

teacher stated that her mentor teacher is of great support to her and helpful whenever needed. Another respondent mentioned a very important role for the mentor teacher in his school which is solving problems that concern the relationship between teachers and the school administration. One of the female teachers stated, “The mentor teacher supports the teacher academically.” A male teacher signified that the mentor teacher in his school is not only helping the English teachers, but he is also helping teachers in other departments in the school. One of the male teachers wrote that he thinks the role of the mentor teacher is great as he adds so much knowledge and many techniques in teaching the four skills. Another experienced teacher mentioned, “I think they are devoted and hardworking. They are great helpers especially to new teachers who joined the school.” One of the teachers who seemed to disagree with this statement, however, indicated that the role of the mentor teacher is to hinder the work and it is limited to giving orders to others. He also added that his mentor teacher never listens to other teachers’ opinions.

In terms of the mentor teachers’ role in supporting teachers in trying out new skills, 88% (44/50) of the teachers agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. A female teacher declared that the regular meetings which were held by the mentor teacher supported her in trying out new skills. She said, “My mentor teacher guided me in trying out new listening strategies with my students. She encouraged me to train my students to listen and write down their notes. After that I gave them a task which they answered using their notes.”

Table 5: Providing Guidance and Support

No	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Sure
1	My mentor teacher and I meet on regular basis.	24 48%	24 48%	2 4%		
2	My mentor teacher is willing to provide guidance and support when needed.	28 56%	21 42%	1 2%		
5	I am very satisfied with the level of support I am continuing to receive from my mentor teacher.	14 28%	27 54%	8 16%	1 2%	
7	My mentor teacher supports me in trying out new skills.	19 38%	25 50%	5 10%	1 2%	

The information assembled from the interviews helped to enrich the findings of this quantitative study. A number of interviewed teachers stated that they sometimes ask for help from their mentor teachers. Another teacher mentioned that most of the time her mentor provides her with supplementary materials, assists her during the lesson by working with low achievers, and provides her with quizzes. A male teacher stated that his mentor supports and guides him by presenting model lessons that clearly show him the model way of teaching. In addition, most of the interviewees stated that their mentor teachers set the weekly, monthly, semester, or yearly plan. One of the female teachers mentioned, “Regarding the yearly as well as the weekly plan, the mentor places the team on the right track.” Another female teacher pointed out that in her school the work is divided between teachers and mentors. When I asked teachers to list three areas where they get most help from their mentors, they mentioned the following areas:

- Lesson planning
- Constructive feedback

- Supplementary materials
- Test Correction
- Inspiring the teacher with new ideas
- Classroom management
- Teaching the four skills
- Professional development
- Weekly overviews
- Co-teaching
- Covering classes
- Supporting weak students individually

### Professional Development

Statements number 3, 4, 6, and 8 were designed to identify teachers' perceptions of the role the mentor teacher plays in developing them professionally (see Table 6). Responses to statement 3, "My mentor teacher has helped me develop professionally," which was about teachers' perceptions of the mentors' role in developing them professionally, provided especially useful insight. 86% (43/50) strongly agreed or agreed that their mentor teachers helped them to develop professionally. However, 12% (6/50) disagreed with the statement, and 2% (1/50) expressed their uncertainty. Statistical results of statement 4, "My mentor teacher has introduced me to instructional approaches/strategies that I was not aware of before," showed that 76% (38/50) strongly agreed or agreed. Nonetheless, 22% (11/50) selected disagree, and 2% (1/50) chose not sure. In response to statement 6 which asked respondents to verify whether their mentor teachers hold professional development sessions that meet their needs, 88% strongly agreed or agreed, and only 12% disagreed or strongly disagreed. A similar percentage was found in the responses to statement 8, "My mentor teacher supports me in expanding my knowledge." 84% strongly agreed with the idea that their mentor teachers supported them in expanding their knowledge, whereas 16% registered their disagreement. However, no further explanation was provided by the teachers through the open-ended questions or the interviews.

Table 6: Professional Development

No	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Sure
3	My mentor teacher has helped me to develop professionally.	22 44%	21 42%	4 8%	2 4%	1 2%
4	My mentor teacher has introduced me to instructional approaches/strategies that I was not aware of before.	14 28%	24 48%	10 20%	1 2%	1 2%
6	My mentor teacher holds professional development sessions with me that meet my needs.	14 28%	30 60%	4 8%	2 4%	
8	My mentor teacher supports me in expanding my knowledge.	15 30%	27 54%	5 10%	3 6%	

### Constructive Feedback

The majority of teachers maintained overall positive attitudes towards the type of feedback that they receive from their mentors. The results illustrated that the majority confirmed receiving constructive feedback from their mentors. For example, of the 50 participants, 90% (45/50) strongly agreed or agreed that they receive constructive feedback from their mentors (see Table 7). For more elaboration, the issue of feedback was touched upon during the interviews. All interviewees stated that they accept any type of feedback from mentor teachers as long as it is constructive feedback that enables them to gain more knowledge, which is reflected in the improvement of the quality of their classes. One female teacher pointed out, “Any feedback would be accepted whether it was positive or negative. Negative feedback

means that I need to change and improve my teaching strategies. Positive feedback confirms that I am on the right track.” Two interviewees stated that they prefer to get feedback that is related to all aspects of their teaching. One of them said, “It helps me a lot in my future plans and in dealing with low achievers.” Another male teacher said, “I prefer having positive feedback as it pushes me forward to do my best.” Regarding classroom observation, most of the teachers prefer having the mentor teacher observing their lessons once a week as an informal observation or according to the teachers’ needs. One of the teachers said, “I don’t mind if she observes my classes once or twice a week and it is up to her to stay for the whole lesson or to observe only part of the lesson. Sometimes I ask her to focus on a specific part of the lesson whether it was prepared by me or by the students. Her comments on whatever she observes during the lesson are welcomed.”

Table 7 Constructive Feedback

No	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Sure
9	My mentor teacher provides me with constructive feedback	17 34%	28 56%	4 8%	1 2%	

Nearly all interviewees agreed that they are tolerant and open to different viewpoints from their mentors, as they don’t like just one way of doing things and at the same time they want to benefit from their expertise. One of the female teachers said, “If my mentor has any viewpoints, I like listening to her. If her ideas can be implemented in the class, I’m willing to do so. However, sometimes some ideas cannot be implemented in the classroom; thus, I explain my opinion and recommend some changes in the plan.” Another female teacher mentioned that her mentor likes taking risks in applying new ideas in the classroom, and they sometimes feel uncomfortable. Nonetheless, when they apply these ideas in the class, they work well. A male teacher mentioned that discussing different viewpoints depends on the personality of the mentor as some mentors think that they are the only source of knowledge, and they do not accept any suggestions from the teachers.

Teachers' responses varied when asked to mention one thing they would like to change about their mentor teacher. Few of them stated that there is nothing they want to change about their mentor teachers. One female teacher stated, "She is a real supporter and partner and I like her the way she is." One of the female teachers smiled and said that she wanted her mentor to reduce the number of meetings because sometimes they meet twice a week. One of the female teachers stated that she wants to work with a professional mentor. Surprisingly, another teacher requested, "mentors should not treat us as if they are our superiors."

Finally, all teachers agreed that they would encourage fellow teachers to join mentoring programs due to the following reasons:

- Being part of a mentoring program, things are totally different from before. The mentor is always present with his or her innovative ideas, supplementary materials, and professional development sessions. On the contrary, in the past supervisors used to attend lessons and give their feedback whether it was negative or positive. Their feedback decided the teacher's status in the school. In addition, they informed the teachers before their visit; thus, it was a kind of artificial observation whereas the mentor can observe your lesson at any time.
- Being involved in a mentoring program means partnership, shared responsibility, more team work, and less individual effort.
- Teachers who are not involved in a mentoring program are not aware of the teaching standards. Schools lack consistency as each teacher is doing something different.
- Teachers will have direct contact with mentors where they will get the opportunity to gain more knowledge.
- Mentors are excellent at organizing teachers' work. Working with a mentor makes teachers learn new things. Thus, this will lead to a more successful educational process and more effective professional development.

## Non-MAG Teachers' Questionnaires and Interviews

Analysis of the qualitative and quantitative data pointed out that the majority of non-MAG MoE teachers believed that they might benefit from joining a mentoring program. This finding was revealed through the study's instruments: the questionnaires and the interviews. Specific Likert-scale statements that pointed out this finding were statements 1, 3, and 4. These statements reflect that the majority of teachers expected to develop professionally after joining a mentoring program (see Appendix G). In addition, the open-ended questions clearly pointed out other benefits that teachers thought they might attain if they were involved in a mentoring program.

Responses to a demographic question, "Have you ever been involved in a mentoring program before? If so, explain briefly," implied that few of the participants had a successful mentoring experience. Five female participants stated that they worked with a mentor teacher before. One of the female teachers mentioned that she worked with a mentor teacher in a model school in Dubai. Another female teacher said, "My mentor was rather helpful." One of the teachers pointed out, "My mentor helped me in my classes and in preparing my lesson plans. She introduced me to new educational approaches and strategies. I was lucky to work with her as I learnt many things regarding teaching." Another teacher added that she worked with a mentor teacher for four years when she started her career as a teacher in 1990. This experience took place in Egypt in one of the international schools. She said, "It was a rich experience as I was new and needed support." Furthermore, two more female participants stated that they themselves were mentoring students of year four from the Higher Colleges of Technology.

The questionnaire items that aimed to investigate whether non-MAG MoE teachers think they might benefit from a mentoring program or not were divided into four areas. My purpose was to put together the statements that were relevant in order to facilitate the writing of a comprehensible description of each group of participants. Responses were subsequently divided according to these categories:

1. Responses to statements 1, 3, and 4 were classified under "Teachers' professional development." Responses to these items reflected teachers' perceptions regarding the efficiency of a mentoring program in developing



them professionally.

2. Responses to statement 2 were classified under the category “Guiding and supporting teachers.” Replies to these statements allowed me to know the level of guidance and support that teachers expected from their mentors.
3. Responses to statement 5 were classified under the category “Feedback.” Responses to this statement helped me identify the type of feedback that teachers expected to receive from their mentors.
4. Responses to statement 6 were classified under the category “Joining a mentoring program.” Responses to this statement helped in having a clear picture of teachers’ willingness to join a mentoring program.

### Professional Development

In an attempt to study teachers’ perceptions of the efficiency of a mentoring program in developing them professionally, three statements were devoted to examine this issue (see Table 8). The first statement addressed teachers’ views about whether a mentor might help them develop professionally or not. Statement 1 said, “A mentor teacher might help me to develop professionally.” In responding to this statement, 94% (47/50) favored the statement, while 4% (2/50) did not, and 2% (1/50) expressed their uncertainty. The results reveal that the majority of teachers believed that a mentor teacher might help them develop professionally, and thus they are willing to be involved in a mentoring program. A female teacher wrote, “Being involved in a mentoring program will enrich my teaching techniques and at the same time it will enhance cooperation.” In replying to statement 3, which is “A mentor teacher might introduce me to instructional approaches/strategies that I was not aware of,” 94% (47/50) agreed or strongly agreed. The fourth statement, which states that “A mentor teacher might hold professional development sessions that meet my needs,” was utilized to measure how much teachers believed they might benefit from the professional development sessions held by teacher mentors. 64% (42/50) strongly agreed or agreed. Further explanatory findings were obtained through the open-ended questions. One of the female teachers illustrated through the open-ended questions that being involved in a mentoring program might impact teachers’ academic

performance in the following areas:

- Having professional development as they may be exposed to new methods and strategies that they did not use before
- Learning new teaching approaches
- Being up to date with the latest teaching strategies

Another female teacher accentuated that a mentoring program impacts teachers' academic performance by "increasing their knowledge of the teaching process." One of the female teachers commented, "Being involved in a mentoring program completely changes the methodology and teaching techniques." An experienced teacher asserted that a mentoring program might include personal development as well as special academic performance. She commented, "I think this supervised experience is linked to the success of all teachers. Actually, it provides valuable professional development for both new and veteran teachers." One of the female teachers who had a past experience in a mentoring program pointed out, "Mentoring really improves teachers' teaching skills. In addition, they can perform better in teaching their classes by implementing the new and practical methods that were presented by their mentor teachers."

Table 8: Professional Development

No	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Sure
1	A mentor teacher might help me to develop professionally.	14 28%	33 66%	1 2%	1 2%	1 2%
3	A mentor teacher might introduce me to instructional approaches/strategies that I was not aware of.	11 22%	30 60%	6 12%		3 6%
4	A mentor teacher might hold professional development sessions with me that meet my needs. <b>*One response missing</b>	12 24%	30 60%	4 8%	1 2%	2 4%

### Guiding and Supporting Teachers

Statement number two was utilized to examine teachers' perceptions of the level of guidance and support they expect to receive from their mentor teachers (see Table 9). Replies to "A mentor teacher might provide me with guidance and support when needed" revealed that nearly all teachers expressed their agreement. 94% (47/50) strongly agreed or agreed. Through the interviews, the respondents specified four areas where they expected to get help from a mentor teacher:

- Planning
- Feedback
- Supplementary materials
- Teaching techniques

This is very different from the MAG teachers' responses because the MAG teachers have been working with mentor teachers for the last four years, and they know exactly the areas where mentors guide and support teachers. As for the non-MAG teachers,

these are their expectations of the areas where they might receive guidance and support from their mentor teachers.

Table 9: Guiding and Supporting Teachers

No	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Sure
2	A mentor teacher might provide me with guidance and support when needed	13 26%	34 68%	1 2%		2 4%

### Constructive Feedback

The majority of the surveyed non-MAG teachers seemed to express favorable attitudes towards getting constructive feedback from mentor teachers (see Table 10). This is exemplified in teachers' responses to statement 5, "A mentor teacher might provide me with constructive feedback." For example, in their responses 86% (43/50) strongly agreed or agreed. A female interviewee indicated, "I would accept both positive and negative feedback from my mentor teacher. If the feedback was positive, it would encourage me to always do my best. In addition, if it was negative, it would guide and help me to improve my teaching performance." Another female interviewee stated, "I would accept any type of feedback, even if it was negative because I could benefit from it in improving my teaching performance." She added, "I want my mentor teacher to be frank with me." Furthermore, one of the male interviewees pointed out, "Any comments regarding my teaching performance would be beneficial so as to review my mistakes, and to find new teaching techniques."

One of the interviewees responded to the question, "Would you feel comfortable working with a mentor and having him/her observe your lesson?" by saying, "It depends on the nature of the mentor teacher. If she is helpful and has a cheering personality, I will accept her in my class. Otherwise, I won't as her presence might be reflected on my teaching performance." Another female interviewee refused to be observed by a mentor teacher, "except for the Inspection Team from the

Knowledge and Human Development Authority in Dubai.” She further explained, “The observer who attended my classes was outstanding. Her comments were respectable and logical.”

Nearly all interviewees agreed that they would be tolerant and open to different viewpoints from a mentor as long as they are stated in an appropriate way. One of the female interviewees pointed out, “If her comments are logical and to the point, for sure I will accept them.” She added, “The mentor can make a teacher listen and accept her comments if she is educated, qualified, well-prepared, and can add something new to the teacher.” Another female teacher said, “Yes, if I feel that her viewpoints are more beneficial.”

Table 10: Constructive Feedback

No	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Sure
5	A mentor teacher might provide me with constructive feedback	13 26%	30 60%	2 4%		5 10%

#### Joining a Mentoring Program

Contrary to my expectations, it was surprising to see the high number of teachers who agreed that they would like to join a mentoring program (see Table 11). Out of the 50 respondents, 35 seemed to strongly agree or agree with the statement, “I would like to work with a mentor teacher.” On the other hand, seven teachers strongly disagreed or disagreed, and eight teachers were uncertain. A number of teachers, 38, elaborated in the open-ended section of the questionnaire that being involved in a mentoring program might assist teachers to perform better because guidance and feedback clarify things and pave the way towards excellence. One of the female teachers indicated that what she felt would be particularly effective about joining a mentoring program is “cooperating with others, exchanging experience, and discussing problems you may face during the teaching process and finding solutions.” Contemplating the effectiveness of being involved in a mentoring program, another female teacher wrote, “A mentoring program would provide me with personal

development, more experience in teaching, and high achievement for students.” A male teacher highlighted some of the benefits he might attain from a mentoring program, like “helping new teachers, practicing micro teaching, and discussing problems.” However, one female teacher responded, “I think involving old-hand teachers in a mentoring program won’t have any benefits.” Another female teacher wrote, “We might benefit from a mentoring program if the mentor is knowledgeable enough.”

When asking teachers if they would be interested in joining a mentoring program, one of the male teachers answered, “Of course, in order to widen my knowledge.” On the contrary, an experienced female teacher stated, “No, as I heard from the teachers who went through the mentoring experience, it includes a lot of work.” Another female teacher pointed out, “No, it is only for new graduates, or for teachers who are moving from cycle 1 to cycle 2 or from cycle 2 to cycle 3, and not for experienced teachers. Even when we attend workshops or seminars, they don’t add anything new to us as experienced teachers.”

Table 11: Joining a Mentoring Program

No	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Sure
6	I would like to work with a mentor teacher	13 26%	22 44%	6 12%	1 2%	8 16%

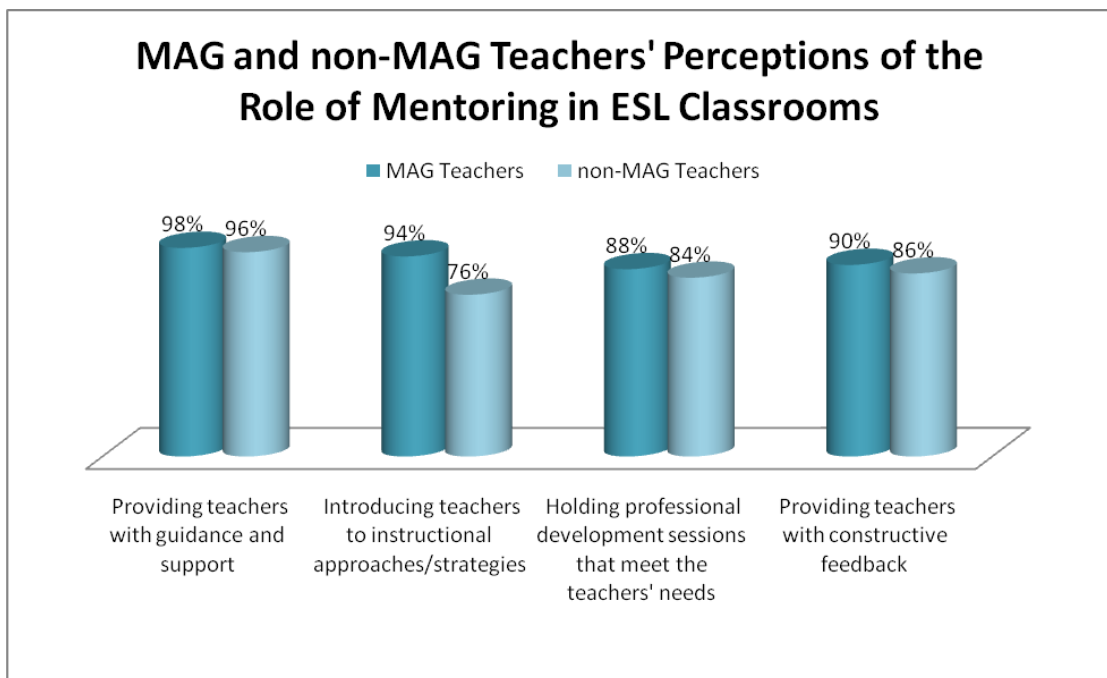
#### Comparison between MAG and non-MAG MoE Teachers’ Perceptions of the Role of Mentoring in ESL Classrooms

Results obtained from MAG and non-MAG teachers’ questionnaires, open-ended questions, and interviews revealed that teachers’ perceptions were significantly in line with one another (see Figure 1). For instance, considering mentors’ roles in providing teachers with guidance and support, 98% of the MAG teachers and 94% of the non-MAG teachers strongly agreed or agreed that the mentor teacher can provide teachers with guidance and support. Likewise, 82% of the MAG teachers and 76% of the non-MAG teachers believed that mentors introduce teachers to new instructional

approaches and strategies. In addition, 88% of the MAG teachers and 84% of the non-MAG teachers strongly agreed or agreed that mentors hold professional development sessions that meet the teachers’ needs. What is more, in terms of constructive feedback, 92% of the MAG teachers and 86% of the non-MAG teachers strongly agreed or agreed that mentors provide their teachers with constructive feedback.

To a large extent, there seemed to be a kind of harmony between teachers in both groups regarding the role of mentoring in ESL classrooms. An additional finding to note is that 70% of the non-MAG teachers strongly agreed or agreed that they would be willing to join a mentoring program and work with a mentor teacher. To further illustrate, all interviewees agreed that they would encourage fellow teachers to join mentoring programs. One of the female interviewees commented, “Why not, it’s not an obstacle. Why don’t they get the opportunity to gain more knowledge?” This provides us with clear evidence that the teachers believed that mentors play an effective role in guiding, supporting, and assisting teachers to develop professionally and to enhance their teaching performance.

Figure 4: MAG and Non-MAG Teachers’ Perceptions of the Role of Mentoring in ESL Classrooms



## Mentor Teachers' Questionnaires

The analysis focused on the quantitative data obtained from the mentors' responses to the questionnaires and the qualitative data obtained from the open-ended questions to provide further details about mentoring practices. The questionnaire items which aim to investigate mentoring practices in ESL classrooms were divided into three categories:

1. Responses to statements 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 were classified under the category "Pedagogical Knowledge." Responses to these items guided me in having an idea about specific mentoring practices, and to what extent this might have influenced teaching performance.
2. Responses to statement 9 were classified under the category "Modeling." Responses to this statement reflected how mentor teachers set a good model for teachers.
3. Responses to statement 10 were classified under the category "Providing Feedback." Responses to this statement helped me identify the type of feedback the mentors provided teachers with.

## Pedagogical Knowledge

In an attempt to understand how mentors introduced teachers to different teaching approaches and pedagogical techniques, eight statements were allocated to study this concern (see Table 12). In response to statement 1, "As a mentor I assist teachers with teaching strategies," 92% (12/13) indicated that they "Always" or "Usually" do that. This clearly reflects that mentors believe they guide, assist, and introduce teachers to different teaching strategies. One of the male mentors wrote, "To mentor is like being a critical friend. It is thus important to build on a positive relationship as mentoring is based on this. If you succeed in building that relationship, your influence can be seen in the classroom." Another male mentor commented, "Mentoring can help mentees improve their teaching practices including all areas of teaching such as classroom management, teaching strategies, building rapport with students, etc." Regarding statement 2, "As a mentor I discuss content knowledge with teachers," 100% (13/13) mentioned that they "Always" or "Usually" discuss content



knowledge with teachers. Regarding statement 3, “As a mentor I assist teachers with classroom management,” 69% (9/13) responded that they “Always” or “Usually” do that, whereas 31% (4/13) stated that they “Sometimes” assist teachers with classroom management. Furthermore, in response to statement 4, “As a mentor I review teachers’ daily preparation,” the results revealed that 77% (10/13) “Always” or “Usually” do this.

Responses to statement 5, “As a mentor I assist teachers in setting up their yearly plan,” varied from one mentor to another. 62% (8/13) indicated that they “Always” or “Usually” assist teachers in setting up their yearly plan, whereas 23% (3/13) stated that they “Never” do so. In responding to statement 6, “As a mentor I suggest different assessment tools to teachers,” 100% (13/13) pointed out that they “Always,” or “Usually” do so. The result reveals that all mentors suggest different assessment tools to teachers. Thus, they demonstrate mastery of content knowledge and process skills. One of the male mentors stated, “Mentoring can influence teaching a lot since the mentor usually shares the instructional responsibilities with the MoE teacher.” In replying to statement 7, “As a mentor I raise teachers’ awareness of various questioning techniques,” 77% (10/13) stated that they “Always” or “Usually” do so. Another male mentor added, “Mentoring can help mentees become more self-confident. They may also become more aware of some practices that they have so far been using unconsciously.” Another male mentor asserted that mentoring helps teachers strategize and find effective ways to accomplish or change an instructional practice. In addition, it provides ideas for overcoming obstacles in instruction. The eighth statement which states, “As a mentor I suggest solutions to behavioral problems that teachers might face in the classroom,” 62% (8/13) confirmed that they “Always,” or “Usually” do so, whereas 39% (5/13) stated that they “Sometimes” suggest solutions to behavioral issues that teachers face in the classroom.

Table 12: Pedagogical Knowledge

No	As a mentor I	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never
1	Assist teachers with teaching strategies	8 61%	4 31%	1 8%	
2	Discuss content knowledge with teachers	6 46%	7 54%		
3	Assist teachers with classroom management	2 15%	7 54%	4 31%	
4	Review teachers' daily preparation	4 31%	6 46%	3 23%	
5	Assist teachers in setting up their yearly plan	3 23%	5 39%	2 15%	3 23%
6	Suggest different assessment tools to teachers	6 46%	7 54%		
7	Raise teachers' awareness of various questioning techniques	3 23%	7 54%	3 23%	
8	Suggest solutions to behavioral problems that teachers might face in the classroom	4 31%	4 31%	5 39%	

### Modeling

Statement 9 was utilized to closely study how mentors acted as role models in teaching (see Table 13). In reply to “As a mentor I act as a role model in teaching,” 77% (10/13) stated that they “Always” or “Usually” do so. One of the male mentors wrote, “Mentoring can influence teaching practices in the classroom through modeling of new techniques for teaching and different approaches to instilling learning in students.” A female mentor teacher added, “Teachers can learn good practice by imitating what the mentor practices, especially when they are co-teaching.” Another male teacher declared, “A mentor should set a model for teachers on which they can build up better experiences based on adaptations. Mentoring is a good opportunity for exchanging expertise and ideas related to teaching strategies and

material development.” Finally, three more mentors agreed that mentoring can influence teaching practices in the classroom through modeling teaching strategies, co-teaching, observing, and being observed.

Table 13: Modeling

No.	As a mentor I	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never
9.	Act as a role model in teaching	7 54%	3 23%	3 23%	

#### Providing Feedback

In exploring mentors’ attitudes towards observing teachers and providing them with constructive feedback, statement 10 discussed this issue (see Table 14). In responding to statement 10 which stated, “As a mentor I observe teaching and provide constructive feedback,” 92% (12/13) pointed out that they observed classes and provided teachers with constructive feedback. One of the female teachers wrote, “Providing teachers with positive feedback can influence teaching practices in the classroom.”

Table 14: Providing Feedback

No.	As a mentor I	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never
10	Observe teaching and provide constructive feedback	6 46%	6 46%	1 8%	

In addition, further explanatory findings were obtained by the open-ended questions. They highlighted important aspects in the mentoring role in ESL classrooms. In response to the first question, “In what way do you think mentoring can influence teaching practices in the classroom?”, one of the male mentors pointed out that a mentor can influence teaching practices in the following ways:

- Actively listen in order to develop relationship with teachers and support their decision-making processes related to teaching and learning.

- Offer customized support to help teachers develop problem-solving abilities.
- Challenge teachers to try new strategies, explore new ideas in existing lessons, and make positive changes in their teaching styles.
- Guide teachers in their practices— help them set professional goals in instruction and encourage them to reflect on the development of their lesson plans.
- Collaborate with teacher—develop a give-and-take relationship where each person has input in the professional conversations.

The second open-ended question targeted building rapport with teachers.

When asked, “As a mentor do you think it is important to build rapport in a mentoring relationship? If so, please explain how you try to do that,” all mentors agreed that building rapport with teachers is the foundation of a successful mentoring program. One of the mentors wrote, “Building good rapport is the prerequisite for any training or supporting program. Unless the mentor gains his mentee’s trust and confidence, it will not be possible for the mentee to listen to his advice. The best way to establish that is through role modeling.” Another male mentor added, “Building rapport with the mentee is the entrance towards achievement. Without it the mentoring process will suffer a lot. This rapport will pave the way for the development of the teachers’ skills.” Three of the male teachers added that building rapport in a mentoring relationship can be achieved by:

- Supporting, motivating, helping, and giving feedback to teachers
- Showing interest at a personal level
- Scaffolding on teachers’ personal needs

A female mentor wrote, “Trust is the most important thing. Constant support helps to gain teachers’ respect. Listening to them, asking for their suggestions as well as working as a team.” Another female mentor added, “Good rapport is important in order to place the mentee in a secure situation, so that communication never breaks down. Mentoring is a two way process, in the sense that the mentor and the mentee learn from the mentoring process. This could be achieved only through maintaining a supportive attitude, despite the tension that might ensue.” Finally, one of the female

mentors wrote, “Building rapport can be achieved through listening to teachers, and making them feel that I’m their partner and not their opponent, and through helping them whenever needed.”

In conclusion, findings of this study revealed that all groups—MAG MoE teachers, non-MAG MoE teachers, and mentor teachers—had positive attitudes towards mentoring programs. Both MAG and non-MAG MoE teachers recognized the benefits of being involved in a mentoring program. The data collected from mentor teachers illustrated how mentors can influence teaching practices in the classroom. In addition, it also highlighted the importance of building good rapport with teachers in order to have a successful mentoring relationship.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND LIMITATIONS

In this chapter I recapitulate the major findings of the teachers' and mentors' perceptions of effective mentoring in ESL classrooms. Next, based on the study's findings I suggest some implications for teachers, educators, policy makers, and stakeholders. Furthermore, I point out the limitations of the study, and recommend suggestions for further research.

#### Summary of Findings

The outcomes of the study highlighted important aspects in the mentors' roles: (1) providing guidance and support, (2) helping teachers develop professionally, (3) providing teachers with constructive feedback, (4) setting a role model, and finally (5) having sufficient pedagogical knowledge. The findings revealed that the majority of MAG and non-MAG MoE teachers seemed to hold positive attitudes about being involved in a mentoring program. Also, it showed that MAG MoE teachers would encourage fellow teachers to join mentoring programs so as to broaden their knowledge and share experience. However, it was also interesting to note that a few non-MAG teachers said that they would not be willing to join a mentoring program due to the fact that they heard that it includes extra work load for teachers. As for mentors, they reinforced the importance of building a rapport in the mentoring relationship in order to be able to communicate effectively with the teachers. They also added that mentors needed to be flexible so as to tackle teachers' specific needs. Modeling and co-teaching were articulated strongly by mentors as a way of demonstrating knowledge about different teaching strategies. Teachers' observations of such practices would provide them with the opportunity to identify processes that lead to effective teaching. Both teachers and mentors highlighted the importance of providing constructive feedback as it puts teachers on the right track and encourages them to improve their teaching performance.

## Implications of the Study

The findings of this study support earlier research done by Arnold (2006), Blank and Sindellar (1992), and Gaies and Bowers (1990) which suggests that mentors play an important role in teachers' personal and professional development. A number of implications can be drawn from the present study. First, many researchers have pointed out that the existing literature tends to see mentor teachers as role models, supporters, educators, and counselors. Several general definitions of mentoring suggest that the mentors' role should be of interest to stakeholders, educators, and administrators who struggle to assist novice teachers' entry to the profession. For example, Alleman, Cochran, Doverspike, and Newman (1984) defined mentoring as "a relationship in which a person of greater rank or expertise teaches, guides, and develops a novice" (p. 329). Kram (1983) points out, "The mentor provides a variety of functions that support, guide, and counsel the young adult as this important work is accomplished" (p. 608). In addition, Allan (2007) defines mentoring as "learning by association from a role model" (p. 195). The results of the questionnaires and the open-ended questions in my study indicated that MAG MoE teachers felt comfortable working with mentor teachers who provided them with guidance and support. In addition, most of the non-MAG MoE teachers displayed their willingness to join a mentoring program. I found it encouraging that nearly all of the teachers who did not have the opportunity to join a mentoring program still had some strong positive opinions about mentoring. However, a few of them expressed their concern due to the fact that they heard that being involved in a mentoring program adds to their work load. According to Moffett (2000), "Policymakers need to understand that pressure without support leads to resistance and alienation. Conversely, support without pressure can result in maintaining the status quo" (p. 37). *Madares Al Ghad* was the first mentoring project launched by the Ministry of Education. Therefore, it is suggested that stakeholders, educators, and administrators prepare a kind of orientation to the mentoring role in ESL classrooms to raise teachers' awareness of the role of the mentor teacher.

Another important implication for administrators and policy makers is that although teachers are placed in different schools, sometimes they are not ready for the

profession. As Blank and Sindelar (1992) argue, it takes teachers many years to learn how to teach. They add that in spite of the fact that learning starts in teacher training programs, the most important part of it takes place in schools. For example, I was inducted into the teaching profession without having any support from English supervisors, mentors, or even experienced teachers. I had to find my own way, either sink or swim, to reach the safe end. After conducting this study and reading about mentoring programs, I came to the conclusion that mentoring programs encourage teachers to stay in the profession instead of losing them. Another point of interest related to this issue is whether or not educators, administrators, and policy makers realize that mentoring can increase the prospect that teachers can continue in the profession because they received guidance, assistance, and support and were not left to struggle on their own. While novice teachers may need more mentoring and support, veteran teachers also need considerable time for the planning, reflecting, and interaction with their mentor teachers which makes their time in the classroom successful both for them and their students.

Good mentoring programs are an effective way to foster teachers' professional development and effectiveness. It is not surprising that mentoring plays a fundamental role in teachers' professional success as there is much more to being a successful teacher than just delivering a lesson. Thus, it can provide a foundation for career-long professional growth (Blank & Sindelar, 1992). It is part of the mentor teachers' role in the *Madares Al Ghad* program to create a long-term professional development plan for teachers. They conduct a needs analysis at the beginning of the academic year which provides them with a clear understanding of the academic and professional needs of the teachers. What is more is that nearly all of the teachers' had positive attitudes towards the mentors' roles in developing them professionally. Evidence strongly indicates that mentoring enhances the quality of teaching. Teachers were provided with the opportunity of observing frequent demonstrations of classroom practices and were able to implement new ideas in their classes. Teachers also noted that working with mentor teachers helped them broaden their knowledge.

Additionally, I was also interested in studying the qualities of a successful mentoring relationship. Since a mentoring relationship is a personal as well as a



professional relationship, it was revealed that building good rapport with teachers was the cornerstone to a successful mentoring program. It can assist in facilitating teaching practices. It is essential for mentors to build good rapport with their mentees. It needs much patience and dedication from all of the participants who join the mentoring program. In addition, the success of any program depends mainly on mutual understanding among all participants. According to Onchwari and Keengwe (2008), “The important element in mentoring is the relationship that is developed between the mentor and the mentee. Through relationship-building, mentors are able to understand teachers’ areas of needs and support them towards achieving those goals” (p. 23).

The findings of this study highlight the importance of providing teachers with constructive feedback. They may feel more successful when provided with constructive feedback that aims to enhance their teaching practices. Randall and Thornton (2001) argue, “If the teacher believes that the information has been selected to criticize the lesson, then the intervention may be seen as confronting and may produce a defensive reaction” (p. 111). Mentors can do the teachers invaluable benefit by guiding the intervention towards positive feedback. According to Randall and Thornton (2001), supportive feedback is important due to the fact that it provides the basis for establishing a trusting relationship which is essential for any feedback session. They add that in the process of shaping and developing the teacher it is important to emphasize “the good work done (a developmental model) rather than being critical of performance (a deficit model)” (p. 95). Another important point for mentors to take into consideration is that they should vary the ways of advising teachers. One of the beneficial ways is the one that is teacher-directed; the mentors should guide the teachers to reflect on their own teaching performance.

#### Limitations of the Study

This study investigated the role of mentoring in ESL classrooms in the United Arab Emirates. I tried to involve as many participants as possible from different regions in the UAE. It has provided me with deeper insight about the process of mentoring in the *Madares Al Ghad* program. However, there were some limitations.

First, since the beginning of the *Madares Al Ghad* program many people have been criticizing its efficiency. The program was evaluated last year by professors from University of Georgia, and the feedback was positive with a few recommendations. In spite of this, mentor teachers suffer from job insecurity due to the rumors that are spread every year regarding the program's termination. While conducting my study, one of the mentors commented, "Why are you interested in the topic of mentoring? Whatever your findings will be, no one will listen to you." Some mentors feel that their work and efforts inside the schools are not appreciated. The negative attitude of policy makers as well as educators has also affected some of the participants' views of the whole idea of mentoring in *Madares Al Ghad*.

Another limitation that emerged during this study was non-MAG MoE teachers' misconception of the idea of mentoring and the mentors' role. A few of them thought that being involved in a mentoring program might add to their work load. They seemed to have a limited notion of the idea of mentoring in ESL classrooms. In other words they were not acquainted with the mentors' role in guiding and assisting teachers. They were not aware of the different features of the mentors' role in ESL classrooms, and therefore might not have been able to judge the usefulness of being involved in a mentoring program.

It is obvious that in spite of the fact that 35 non-MAG teachers displayed their willingness to join a mentoring program and work with a mentor teacher, one of the teachers was totally taking the opposite side. The teacher had a negative attitude towards the idea of being involved in a mentoring program. It is somehow questionable why only one of the teachers took the opposite side completely against the mentoring program. It might be due to the fact that some teachers still feel that the *Madares Al Ghad* program is not supported by policy makers and educators.

### Suggestions for Further Studies

As the main purpose of this study was to present an analysis of the role of mentoring in ESL classrooms in the United Arab Emirates, further studies are needed to look at the impact of teacher mentoring on students' achievement. Based on the findings of my study, the quality of classroom learning should play a significant role in evaluating a mentoring program. A suggestion for further research is to compare the English results of MAG and non-MAG public schools. Such research would provide insight into how mentoring might impact students' performance.

Finally, policy makers, educators, as well as school administrators' opinions were not included in the study. I think my study would have been more valid if I had surveyed and interviewed some policy makers and school administrators.

### Final Thought

In accordance with the results of this study, and since teachers had positive attitudes towards being involved in a mentoring program, it is worth mentioning that a successful mentoring program should integrate formal and constant training for mentors into its program. Mentoring of novice teachers gives them a solid ground on which to build their career in education, and encourages them to remain in the profession. Novice teachers need guidance and support if they are to continue to grow in their profession. In addition, mentoring is a kind of eye opener for veteran teachers as it always keeps them updated with the latest teaching strategies and approaches.

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## Appendix A: MAG Teachers' Survey

### Teachers' Perceptions of Effective Mentoring in ESL Classrooms

I would like to thank you for doing this survey. The main aim of this survey is for my MA in TESOL as I am studying effective mentoring in ESL classrooms. It is mainly designed to determine the degree to which you are satisfied with the support you have received and are currently receiving from your mentor teacher. The results of this survey might be published, so please be open and honest, as it will be helpful for all. Your time and effort are very much appreciated. I assure you that your responses will be anonymous.

#### **Section One:**

1. Gender  
 Male                                       Female                                      Nationality (optional):  
.....
2. Teaching Experience: ..... years
3. Number of teaching years in the UAE: ..... years
4. The grade level you are currently teaching: .....
5. Educational Zone: .....

**Section Two:**

**Directions: Please check (√) the appropriate option that best suits your opinion.**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Statement</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Not Sure</b>
1.	My mentor teacher and I meet on a regular basis.					
2.	My mentor teacher is always willing to provide guidance and support when needed.					
3.	My mentor teacher has helped me to develop professionally.					
4.	My mentor teacher has introduced me to instructional approaches/strategies that I was not aware of before.					
5.	I am very satisfied with the level of support I am continuing to receive from my mentor teacher.					
6.	My mentor teacher holds professional development sessions with me that meet my needs.					
7.	My mentor teacher supports me in trying out new skills.					
8.	My mentor teacher supports me in expanding my knowledge.					
9.	My mentor teacher provides me with constructive feedback.					

**Section Three:**

1. Do you sometimes feel that being involved in a mentoring program adds an extra burden to your work load? If so, please explain.

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2. Please write any additional comments regarding the role of the mentor teacher in your school.

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Please fill in the information below if you would like to be interviewed. The interview should take about 15-20 minutes and will discuss more issues about your involvement in a mentoring program.

- Yes, I would like to be interviewed.

If yes, Name: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_

- No, I would prefer not to be interviewed.



## Appendix B: Non-MAG Teachers' Survey

### Teachers' Perceptions of Effective Mentoring in ESL Classrooms

I would like to thank you for doing this survey. The main aim of this survey is for my MA in TESOL as I am studying effective mentoring in ESL classrooms. It is mainly designed to determine the degree of support you might receive from a mentor teacher. The results of this survey might be published, so please be open and honest, as it will be helpful for all. Your time and effort are very much appreciated. I assure you that your responses will be anonymous.

#### **Section One:**

1. Gender  
 Male                       Female                      Nationality (optional): .....
2. Teaching Experience: ..... years
3. Number of teaching years in the UAE: ..... years
4. The grade level you are currently teaching: .....
5. Educational Zone: .....
6. Have you ever worked with a mentor before? If so, explain briefly.  
.....  
.....

**Section Two:**

Teacher mentors co-teach with teachers for assigned periods in their classrooms. In addition, they model and support a learner-centered classroom environment that supports the needs of all learners. They also collaborate with colleagues in the preparation, implementation, and evaluation of curriculum materials and learning experiences. Finally, they hold professional development sessions with teachers.

**Directions: Please check (√) the appropriate option that best suits your opinion**

No.	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Sure
1.	A mentor teacher might help me to develop professionally.					
2.	A mentor teacher might provide me with guidance and support when needed.					
3.	A mentor teacher might introduce me to instructional approaches/strategies that I was not aware of.					
4.	A mentor teacher might hold professional development sessions with me that meet my needs.					
5.	A mentor teacher might provide me with constructive feedback.					
6.	I would like to work with a mentor teacher.					

**Section Three:**

1. In what ways do you think being involved in a mentoring program might impact teachers' academic performance?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

2. Please write any benefits you think you might attain if you were involved in a mentoring program.

.....  
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.....  
.....

Please fill in the information below if you would like to be interviewed. The interview should take about 15-20 minutes and will discuss more issues about your involvement in a mentoring program.

Yes, I would like to be interviewed.

If yes, Name: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_

No, I would prefer not to be interviewed.

## Appendix C: Mentor Teachers' Survey

### Teachers' Perceptions of Effective Mentoring in ESL Classrooms

I would like to thank you for doing this survey. The main aim of this survey is for my MA in TESOL as I am studying effective mentoring in ESL classrooms. It is mainly designed to determine the degree to which might influence teaching practices in ESL classrooms. The results of this survey might be published, so please be open and honest, as it will be helpful for all. Your time and effort are very much appreciated. I assure you that your responses will be anonymous.

#### **Section One:**

1. Gender  
 Male                       Female                      Nationality (optional): .....
2. Teaching Experience: ..... years
3. Number of teaching years in the UAE: ..... years
4. The grade level you are currently teaching: .....
5. Educational Zone: .....
6. Mentoring Experience: ..... years
7. Number of mentoring years in the UAE: ..... years

**Section Two:**

**Please choose from the items below the option that most accurately reflects your current practice.**

<b>Always:</b>	<b>all the time</b>
<b>Usually:</b>	<b>most of the time</b>
<b>Sometimes:</b>	<b>from time to time</b>
<b>Never:</b>	<b>not at all</b>

<b>No.</b>	<b>As a mentor I</b>	<b>Always</b>	<b>Usually</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Never</b>
<b>1.</b>	Assist teachers with teaching strategies				
<b>2.</b>	Discuss content knowledge with teachers				
<b>3.</b>	Assist teachers with classroom management				
<b>4.</b>	Review teachers' daily preparation				
<b>5.</b>	Assist teachers in setting up their yearly plan				
<b>6.</b>	Suggest different assessment tools to teachers				
<b>7.</b>	Raise teachers' awareness of various questioning techniques				
<b>8.</b>	Suggest solutions to behavioral problems that teachers might face in the classroom				
<b>9.</b>	Act as a role model in teaching				
<b>10.</b>	Observe teaching and provide constructive feedback				

(Adapted from Hudson & Millwater, 2008)

**Section C:**

1. In what ways do you think mentoring can influence teaching practices in the classroom?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
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2. As a mentor, do you think it is important to build a good rapport in a mentoring relationship? If so, please explain how you try to do that.

.....  
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#### Appendix D: Interview Questions for MAG Teachers

1. Do you ask for help from your mentor, and do you get it? Explain.
2. Ideally, how often do you think a mentor should observe your lessons?
3. What kind of feedback do you prefer to get from your mentor? Why is that type of feedback helpful to you?
4. Please list three areas where you got most help from your mentor.
5. If you could change one thing about your mentor teacher, what would it be?
6. How often does your mentor provide help with long-term course/lesson planning? Explain.
7. Are you tolerant and open to different viewpoints with your mentor? Explain.
8. In general, would you encourage fellow teachers to join mentoring programs? Why?

## Appendix E: Interview Questions for Non- MAG Teachers

1. In general, would you be interested in joining a mentoring program? If yes, why? If not, why not?
2. Please list three specific areas where you would expect to get help from a teacher mentor.
3. Would you feel comfortable working with a mentor and having him/her observe your lessons? Explain.
4. What kind of feedback would you prefer to get from a mentor? Why would that type of feedback be helpful to you?
5. Do you think you would be tolerant and open to different viewpoints from a mentor? Explain.



Appendix F: MAG Teachers' Survey Results

No.	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Sure
1.	My mentor teacher and I meet on a regular basis.	24 48%	24 48%	2 4%		
2.	My mentor teacher is always willing to provide guidance and support when needed.	28 56%	21 42%	1 2%		
3.	My mentor teacher has helped me to develop professionally.	22 44%	21 42%	4 8%	2 4%	1 2%
4.	My mentor teacher has introduced me to instructional approaches/strategies that I was not aware of before.	14 28%	24 48%	10 20%	1 2%	1 2%
5.	I am very satisfied with the level of support I am continuing to receive from my mentor teacher.	14 28%	27 54%	8 16%	1 2%	
6.	My mentor teacher holds professional development sessions with me that meet my needs.	14 28%	30 60%	4 8%	2 4%	
7.	My mentor teacher supports me in trying out new skills.	19 38%	25 50%	5 10%	1 2%	
8.	My mentor teacher supports me in expanding my knowledge.	15 30%	27 54%	5 10%	3 6%	
9.	My mentor teacher provides me with constructive feedback.	17 34%	28 56%	4 8%	1 2%	

Appendix G: Non- MAG Teachers' Survey Results

<b>No.</b>	<b>Statement</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Not Sure</b>
<b>1.</b>	A mentor teacher might help me to develop professionally.	14 28%	33 66%	1 2%	1 2%	1 2%
<b>2.</b>	A mentor teacher might provide me with guidance and support when needed.	13 26%	34 68%	1 2%		2 4%
<b>3.</b>	A mentor teacher might introduce me to instructional approaches/strategies that I was not aware of.	11 22%	30 60%	6 12%		3 6%
<b>4.</b>	A mentor teacher might hold professional development sessions with me that meet my needs.	12 24%	30 60%	4 8%	1 2%	2 4%
<b>5.</b>	A mentor teacher might provide me with constructive feedback.	13 26%	30 60%	2 4%		5 10%
<b>6.</b>	I would like to work with a mentor teacher.	13 26%	22 44%	6 12%	1 2%	8 16%

Appendix H: Mentor Teachers' Survey

<b>No.</b>	<b>As a mentor I</b>	<b>Always</b>	<b>Usually</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Never</b>
<b>1.</b>	Assist teachers with teaching strategies	8 61%	4 31%	1 8%	
<b>2.</b>	Discuss content knowledge with teachers	6 46%	7 54%		
<b>3.</b>	Assist teachers with classroom management	2 15%	7 54%	4 31%	
<b>4.</b>	Review teachers' daily preparation	4 31%	6 46%	3 23%	
<b>5.</b>	Assist teachers in setting up their yearly plan	3 23%	5 39%	2 15%	3 23%
<b>6.</b>	Suggest different assessment tools to teachers	6 46%	7 54%		
<b>7.</b>	Raise teachers' awareness of various questioning techniques	3 23%	7 54%	3 23%	
<b>8.</b>	Suggest solutions to behavioral problems that teachers might face in the classroom	4 31%	4 31%	5 39%	
<b>9.</b>	Act as a role model in teaching	7 54%	3 23%	3 23%	
<b>10.</b>	Observe teaching and provide constructive feedback	6 46%	6 46%	1 8%	

## VITA

Azza Mahmoud Gamal El Din received a BA in English Language and Literature from Alexandria University in Egypt in 1986. She also received a CELTA from Wollongong University in 2008. She has 22 years experience in teaching English as a second language. She has presented several workshops for teachers, and has also participated in seminars and conferences.