

**“I would like her to...:” ELT Student-Teachers’
Reflections on Mentoring Practices**

Esra ORSDEMİR*

Rana YILDIRIM

Faculty of Education, Cukurova University

Adana 01330 Turkey

Email: eorsdemir@cu.edu.tr

Abstract

Attention to the crucial role of mentors in preparing student-teachers for their future profession has significantly increased in the past few years. However, most teacher education programmes tend to assign mentors from the present pool of teachers in schools without any special preparation (Okan & Yıldırım, 2004). This leads to mentoring practices with mentors being unaware of what is actually expected of them. Drawing on this, this study explores mentoring practices and mentor growth areas as perceived by three student-teachers in a 12-week practicum period in a Turkish English Language Teaching (ELT) context. Data was acquired through interviews and student-teacher journals in which they wrote about their experiences with their mentor. The findings revealed that while modelling of teaching and the personal attributes of the mentor were reported as the most common mentoring practices, practices related to feedback, pedagogical knowledge and system requirements were found to be employed rarely. The student-teachers reported the rarely employed mentoring practices as the mentor’s possible growth areas. The study offers invaluable implications for designing and implementing mentor training programmes.

Keywords: Mentoring, mentoring practices, ELT student-teachers, pre-service teacher education, Hudson's mentoring model

Introduction

Over the recent decades, the importance of practicum for teacher education has started to receive more attention as it is considered to be one of the most crucial parts of professional development in student-teaching (Borg, 2003; Walkington, 2005). Most student-teachers believe practicum to be the most important learning experience in learning to teach since it gives room to reason about their practices with the help of their mentors (Johnson, 1996). However, it is a common practice in most teacher education programmes to assign mentors from the present pool of teachers in schools without any special preparation (Altan & Saglamel, 2015; Clarke, Triggs & Nielson, 2014; Okan & Yildirim, 2004), and that the existing mentor preparation is reported to be unsubstantial in many mentoring programs to date (Beutel & Spooner-Lane 2009; Davis & Higdon 2008). As a consequence, mentors participate in practicum although they are unaware of their roles in mentoring student-teachers, which results in ineffective mentoring practices (Hudson, 2010; Okan & Yildirim, 2004; Wang & Odell, 2002; Zeichner, 2010).

The picture is almost the same in the mentoring schemes in Turkey where the mentors (as in the case of the ELT department under investigation) are not selected based on some certain criteria nor are they trained to become mentors. Instead, some subject teachers are assigned as mentors by the school principals. Local research has provided evidence that mentoring practices are obscure and dissatisfying mostly due to mentors' lack of professional development leading to negative learning experiences for the student-teachers which usually impinge their development as prospective teachers of English (e.g. Gurbuz, 2006; Saglam, 2007; Sarıcoban, 2008; Yavuz, 2011; Yildirim & Orsdemir, 2014). Drawing on this, the purpose of this study is to explore an EFL

mentor's mentoring practices and growth areas as perceived by the student-teachers.

Literature Review

Roles and Responsibilities of Mentors

According to Anderson and Shannon (1988), mentoring can be best defined as a nurturing process in which a more skilled or experienced person teaches, sponsors, encourages, counsels, serves as a role model, and befriends a less skilled or less experienced person for the purpose of promoting the latter's professional and personal development. Malderez and Bodoczky (1999, p.4) emphasise five different roles for a mentor. These roles are being a model who inspires and demonstrates, an acculturator who provides a clear understanding of the education system, a sponsor who introduces the mentee to the appropriate people, a supporter who acts as sounding board and provides safe opportunities for the mentee to discuss teaching practices, and an educator who facilitates pedagogical ideas to help the mentee achieve professional learning objectives.

Long (1997) suggests that mentors must embrace the roles to deal with issues related to the practicum partnership with the university, the classroom, school management and the teaching context, the wider school and community, and professional development. He also claims that to adopt these roles, the mentor needs to develop certain skills, namely communication, conferencing, reflection, role modelling, observation, feedback, assessment, conflict resolution, sensitive lesson intervention, team leadership, formative and summative evaluation, and self-reflection skills.

A significant part of the mentor's role is also to exhibit certain personal attributes that would support and aid the development of the student-teacher (Ackley & Gall, 1992; Ganser, 1996, Hudson, Skamp & Brooks, 2005). Brooks, Husbands, and Sikes (1997) list some personal qualities of a mentor such as honesty, openness, sensitivity, enthusiasm, sense of humour, organization, self-awareness and reflectiveness. In addition

personal attributes like being approachable, patient, and understanding (Gray & Smith, 2000) also are reported to be essential. According to Ackley & Gall (1992), attributes to instill positive attitudes (Feiman-Nemser & Parker, 1992) and confidence (Beck, Czerniak, & Lumpe, 2000; Enochs, Scharmann, & Riggs, 1995) for teaching and to assist student-teachers to reflect on their teaching experience (Bryan & Abell, 1999) require mentors to be encouraging, friendly, attentive and supportive. In related studies, mentors felt that achieving a personal connection with a student-teacher was a precursor to being an effective mentor (Clarke, 2006; Haigh, Pinder, & McDonald, 2006). Furthermore, Draves (2008) found that without a trusting and respectful relationship, student-teacher learning was lacking.

Mentor roles also address issues related to system requirements (Hudson et al, 2005). According to Hudson (2004), mentors need to be familiar with the content of the current system, the EFL curricula, and how it can be implemented in the school to provide a systematic direction for teaching. Hence, the mentor must give attention to directing the student-teachers' attention to how system requirements are implemented within the school setting through outlining relevant school policy (Riggs & Sandlin, 2002) and curriculum (Hudson, 2004, Hudson et al., 2005). Similarly, Smith (2000) suggests that the mentor should also present a framework for regulating the quality of teaching practices. In this case a mentor should not only give emphasis to the system of the school but also that of the practicum. To regulate effective practicum experience, the mentor should be aware of the procedures, roles and responsibilities of individuals in the practicum.

One other role of the mentor is to share pedagogical knowledge with the student-teachers. The mentor's pedagogical knowledge is one of the essentials of teaching practice (Hudson, 2004) since it is stated that their knowledge of how to teach can guide student-teachers in understanding their own practices (Bishop & Denley, 1997; Bryan & Abell, 1999). Although pedagogical knowledge shows differences according to the field

specialized in, it can be summarised in general terms as providing a viewpoint in planning (Gonzales & Sosa, 1993), timetabling and preparation of teaching (Williams, 1993) and the implementation of teaching (Briscoe & Peters, 1997) , classroom management strategies (Feiman-Nemser & Parker, 1992), teaching strategies (Lappan & Briars, 1995), questioning skills (Hudson, 2004), problem solving strategies (Ackley & Gall, 1992) and assessment techniques (Corcoran & Andrew, 1988). Articulating viewpoints in regards to these dimensions of classroom instruction can scaffold the development of the student-teacher and help them to make their experience meaningful.

Modelling of teaching practices is another crucial role of the mentor. Modelling of teaching is assumed to have an effect on the student-teachers' development since it allows them to understand their strengths and weaknesses (Hudson, 2004). Modelling of teaching practices involves domains such as displaying a well-designed lesson (Ball & Feiman-Nemser, 1988), enthusiasm for teaching (Feiman-Nemser & Parker, 1992), hands-on experience for the student-teacher (Asunta, 1997), classroom management strategies (Gonzales & Sosa, 1993) and good rapport with students (Ramirez-Smith, 1997). Klausmeier (1994) further adds to this list the ability to model effective teaching strategies and manage time. Such modelling allows student-teachers to observe and understand effective teaching practices (Hudson, 2002) which can enhance their self-efficacy in the long run (Bandura, 1981). Relevant studies assert that the prominence of modelling in mentoring practices results from the belief that university coursework is too theoretical and that modelling practice can provide the necessary balance between theory and practice (e.g., Evans & Abbott, 1997). Sudzina, Giebelhaus, and Coolican (1997) suggested that mentors are either modellers of practice or co-constructors of practice. While the modelling of practice remains traditional, drawing on two or more approaches to practice might enhance student-teacher learning (Grove, Strudler & Odell, 2004).

Providing feedback is another essential role of the mentor (Broad & Tessaro, 2009; Clarke, 2006;). Through feedback, the

mentor can articulate in a constructive manner their opinions on the student-teachers' development during practicum (Hudson, 2004). As suggested by Hudson and Skamp (2003), there is no feedback from mentors that has a similar impact as negative feedback. Hence, it is crucial for the mentor to provide constructive feedback which can, in the long run, contribute to instilling confidence in the student-teacher (Hudson, 2004). Another crucial mentor role is orienting and socializing the student-teacher into the school community. Research suggests that mentors are a powerful factor in the socialization of students into the profession within the practicum setting (Applegate & Lasley, 1982). Brooks and Sikes (1997) claimed 'induction of student-teachers' to be one of the mentor responsibilities. Mentors provide student-teachers with information about the school, introduce them to the teaching staff, draw attention to policies and rules, and outline expectations about professional involvement such as meetings.

A further role of the mentor is to assess the student-teacher in regards to his/her professional achievement in practicum (Brooks & Sikes, 1997). Similarly, Clarke et al., (2014) refer to such a role as 'Gatekeepers of the Profession', since mentors provide both formative and summative assessment of student-teachers. As a result, they contribute to their overall grade in practicum courses which has the power to affect the entry of student-teachers to the profession (Ellsworth & Albers, 1991).

Lastly, one more interesting role defined by Clarke et al., (2014) is 'Gleaners of Knowledge'. Related research suggests that a crucial motivator to become a mentor is to polish one's own professional knowledge as a result of the interaction with someone who is learning to teach (Clarke, 2006; Evans & Abbott, 1997; Ganser, 1996). In a study conducted by Campbell and Williamson (1983) it was found that teachers who mentored student-teachers found the chance to reflect on their own teaching. Similarly, it was reported in Koskela and Ganser's (1998) research that mentors articulate personal gains and change in terms of receiving new ideas and strategies from their student-teachers. Parallel to these

findings, Lopez-Real and Kwan's (2005) study showed that mentors' perceptions of teaching changed as a result of working with student-teachers. Arnold (2006) suggested that such benefits occur because having a student-teacher provides a purposeful focus for the mentor to examine their own classroom practices.

Problems and Challenges in Mentoring

As discussed above, the research on mentoring student-teachers emphasises that effective mentoring practices embrace a range of roles, skills and responsibilities on the part of the mentor. However, both global and local research has reported on problems and challenges associated with mentoring practices. For example, Maphalala (2013) examined the role perceptions of mentors in a teacher education programme and found that a common understanding related to mentoring practices did not exist between the school and the faculty. Further, Altan and Saglamel (2015) concluded that the subject teachers assigned as mentors have to care about both their pupils and student-teachers, which according to Mutlu (2014) prevents them from finding adequate time to provide feedback for student-teachers' performance. There is also evidence suggesting that existing feedback practices tend to be narrow, particularistic, and technical (Clarke et al., 2014; Clarke, 2006) and feedback given by mentors seem to be technical in the sense that it highlights the what and the how of practice instead of the why (John, 2001). In addition, instead of providing new perspectives in regards to student-teachers' practices mentors commonly validated prior knowledge in feedback sessions (Chaliès, Ria, Bertone, Trohel, & Durand, 2004).

Another problem concerns the nature of relationship between the mentors and the student-teachers. Researchers found that building trust, emotional support, and encouragement are the most important mentoring activities (Cameron, Dingle & Brooking, 2007; Cameron, Lovett & Garvey Berger; 2007; Sag, 2008; Sudzina, Giebelhaus & Coolican, 1997). Such a case, in which any of these elements is missing, brings about the risk of hampering

positive learning environment for the student-teachers' professional growth (Sudzina et al., 1997).

One other obstacle reported to hinder the student-teachers' growth as teachers is the practice of 'judgemental mentoring' (Hobson & Malderez, 2013, p.2) where a mentor reveals "...too readily and/or too often her/his own judgements on or evaluations of the mentee's planning and teaching..." Kullman (1998) warns that if a mentor cannot keep the balance between a developmental and judgmental role, student-teachers may experience the fear of revealing their own problems and questions about teaching not to seem weak. A related critical problem was reported on by Maynard (2000) who investigated how good mentoring practices was perceived by student-teachers. Maynard (2000) concluded that the participating student-teachers demanded mentors with a developmental role who can give the student-teachers the opportunity to shape their own teacher identity and teaching style rather than imposing their own.

In various global contexts and the local context under investigation, most of these problems are attributed to another problem which is the absence of a proper and systematic mentor selection and training scheme and hence mentors' lack of awareness of their roles, responsibilities and required knowledge and skills in the mentoring process (Ambrosetti, 2012; Ekiz, 2006; Hudson & Hudson, 2010; Yavuz, 2011). In line with the discourse on problems in mentoring student-teachers, the research reported on here aims to investigate ELT student-teachers' views about the mentoring practices and growth areas of their mentor during the practicum. The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the mentoring practices from the ELT student-teachers' perspective?
2. What are the mentor's growth areas in the process of mentoring from the ELT student-teachers' perspective?

For the purpose of investigating mentoring practices and mentor growth areas in this study, Hudson's Five Factor Model of mentoring (2005) is used (see Figure 1).

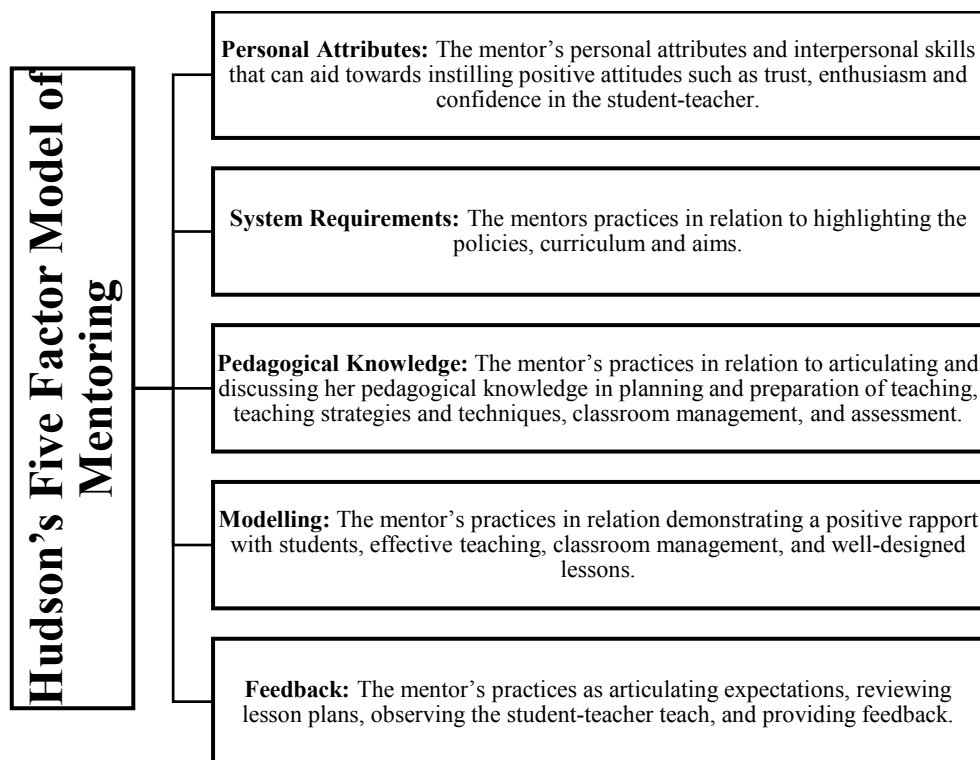


Figure 1. Adapted from Hudson's five factor model of mentoring

Method of the Study

Research Context

The study was carried out in the practicum context of an ELT department in a Turkish public university. Teaching practicum in the department is employed in the final year of study for both fall and spring terms. In the fall term, the student-teachers are required to take the course titled 'School Experience' and in the spring term, they take the course 'Teaching Practice.' As a requirement for both courses, student-teachers are assigned to schools in groups where the school principal appoints a mentor to work with them during a 12-week period. For the first 10 weeks of the course 'School Experience,' student-teachers are required to carry out observations through the following tasks focusing on various aspects of school and classroom instruction:

- School principal and school issues
- Observing a Teacher's day

- Observing a Pupil's day
- Observing lesson management and class control
- Observing types of questions, questioning skills and oral feedback
- Observing teaching techniques
- Observing group and pair work
- Observing assessment and evaluation of students' work
- Observing the use of textbook
- Preparing and assigning worksheets
- Planning and microteaching (in the final two weeks)

Following these observations, they are expected to discuss their experience with their mentors and then write reflection reports to be evaluated by their university supervisor. The university supervisor is expected to give feedback in relation to these reflection reports. For the last two weeks of this course, instead of classroom observation, the student-teachers are required to plan and carry out micro-teaching practices under the supervision of their mentors. In the second term while taking the 'Teaching Practice' course, student-teachers do their practice teaching under the supervision of their mentor and the university supervisor. In this course, student-teachers are required to prepare lesson plans, teach accordingly, and are assessed on their performance. This study took place in the first term of the practicum when the student-teachers were at schools for observing and reflecting on their observations.

Participants

The participants of this study are three student-teachers who were, at the time of the study, in their final year of ELT bachelor degree programme in a Turkish state university where the medium of instruction is English and had taken the prerequisite courses to commence their teaching practice. While two of the participating student-teachers were male, one was female. Regarding the selection of participants, criterion sampling was utilised. The logic of criterion sampling is choosing cases that

meet certain criteria (Patton, 1990, p.183). The main criteria used in selecting the participating student-teachers in the study were their willingness and persistence in keeping a journal and participating in the interviews in regard to their experience with their mentor. The mentor with whom the student-teachers were assigned to work was a female English teacher with the teaching experience of 18 years. She received her bachelor degree in ELT and had been involved in mentoring pre-service ELT teachers within the last 12 years though she had never received any formal training in mentoring.

Data Collection Tools and Procedures

In order to gain insight into the research questions, data was collected by means of student-teacher journals and interviews during the 12-week practicum experience. Employing journals as a data collection tool gives the researcher the participants' personal accounts of observations, feelings, reactions, interpretations, reflections, hypotheses, and explanations (Elliott, 1991). Based on this, the student-teachers were invited to keep a journal in which they reflected on their experiences in the first term of practicum. To guide their reflections, they were asked to respond to the following prompt in their journals every week:

- The thing about my mentor this week was...
- The thing about the students this week was...
- The thing about my peers this week was...
- The thing about myself this week was...

While the main focus in the analysis was on the entries related to the first prompt, their responses to the other prompts also contributed to better understanding their experience.

Acting on what is suggested by Fraenkel and Wallen (1990), the participants were interviewed in order to support and check the impressions the researchers gained through the journal entries. The interviews were held once every three weeks as a follow-up to their journal entries. Within the interviews, the student-teachers were invited to elaborate on what they had written about the specific mentoring practices employed and their

perceptions of their mentor's growth areas. The interviews were conducted in Turkish and each lasted about 20 minutes.

Data Analysis

The data obtained from interviews and journals was analysed through content analyses in NVivo 10. To reiterate, the coding of the data was based on a theory-driven approach of mentoring practices proposed by Hudson et al. (2005). On uploading all the relevant data into NVivo, the initial stage of analysis began. In this stage, the texts and transcriptions acquired from each data collection source were gone through to identify and categorize the recurring themes concerning the mentoring practices suggested by Hudson (Patton, 1990). For inter-coder reliability purposes, both researchers did the coding individually. After the completion of the coding, a meeting was organised to discuss and reach a consensus on the coding of data.

Findings

The findings concerning mentoring practices and mentor's growth areas as perceived by the students-teachers participating in the study are presented in this section. In the presentation, findings acquired both from the journals and the interviews were considered. Pseudo-names are used in the presentation of the findings pertaining to the student-teachers. In Figure 2, findings related to what the student-teachers think of the mentoring practices they have received are presented.

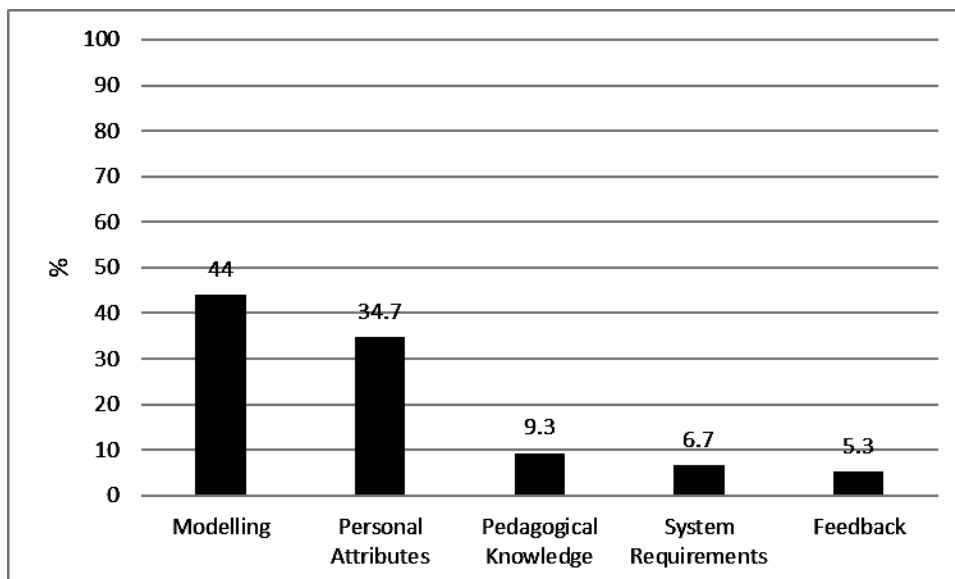


Figure 2. Mentoring practices reported by the student-teachers

As Figure 2 depicts, the student-teachers' descriptions of mentoring practices include all the dimensions of the mentoring model suggested by Hudson et al. (2005). The most frequently cited theme is *Modelling* (44.0%) which represents student-teachers' experience of observing the teaching skills of the mentor such as classroom management, use of teaching strategies, techniques and various materials. The following remark illustrates Ali's experience of observing the mentor modelling:

"I was really excited to observe the teaching strategies and techniques we learnt at university being put into practice by our mentor...I felt that I could also be useful for my students in teaching through using pictures and realias as she does....Also I observed that teaching is not just using different kinds of material but also using the lesson time as effectively as possible".

(Ali's journal entry)

The second most frequently cited theme is *Personal Attributes*" (34.7%) which includes remarks related to mentors being supportive, sharing, instilling a positive attitude as well as the interpersonal skills of the mentor. This aspect of mentoring

practices seems to be appreciated by almost all the participating student-teachers. Below are some supporting remarks from the interviews:

“On the first day of practicum we immediately realised my mentor’s energy without knowing that she was an English teacher. While we were waiting for our university supervisor in the teachers’ room she walked in and started talking to us. When she found out that we were ELT student-teachers she got very excited and told us she was an English teacher as well. I suddenly felt a mutual trust between us. I think that is why all the student-teachers wanted to work with her”.

(Burak’s interview)

“As a mentor she shares everything with me. For example she shares her lesson plan before each lesson and informs me about what we are going to do and we work as partners in the classroom. I think we get along very well”.

(Ceyda’s interview)

“Our mentor is great. She always tries to help us whenever we have a question, she shares everything she knows with us...this week I asked her about yearly plans and she said she would show me her own plan”.

(Ali’s interview)

Aspects of mentoring practices such as *Pedagogical Knowledge* (9.3%), *System Requirements* (6.7%), and *Feedback* (5.3%) were also reported by the student-teachers but less frequently than the first two aspects. The following excerpts are remarks representing these mentoring aspects:

“In my observations today I realised that my mentor did not get upset with the students who had not done their homework. This seemed very interesting to me so I asked her during the break the reason for her behaviour. She explained if she had gotten angry or given a punishment to the 2nd graders she could have demotivated them towards learning English”.

(Burak’s Journal remark for *Pedagogical Knowledge*)

“During practicum I learnt a lot from my mentor such as administrative issues. I feel very lucky to have learnt such things before being appointed to a school as a teacher”.

(Ali’s Journal remark for *System Requirements*)

“This week I asked my mentor if I can teach. She said it was fine with her and she would sit at the back of the class and help me if I needed it. If it was another teacher, he/she would have not come to the class at all or sat at the back and done other things. But she kept an eye contact with me at every stage and kept smiling. At the end of the lesson she said nice things but said nothing about my weaknesses. She only said things like your classroom management was good, great job!”

(Ali’s journal remark for *Feedback*)

As Figure 3 indicates the student-teachers claim that their mentor needs further improvement in all the dimensions of Hudson et al.’s (2005) mentoring model apart from *Modelling*.

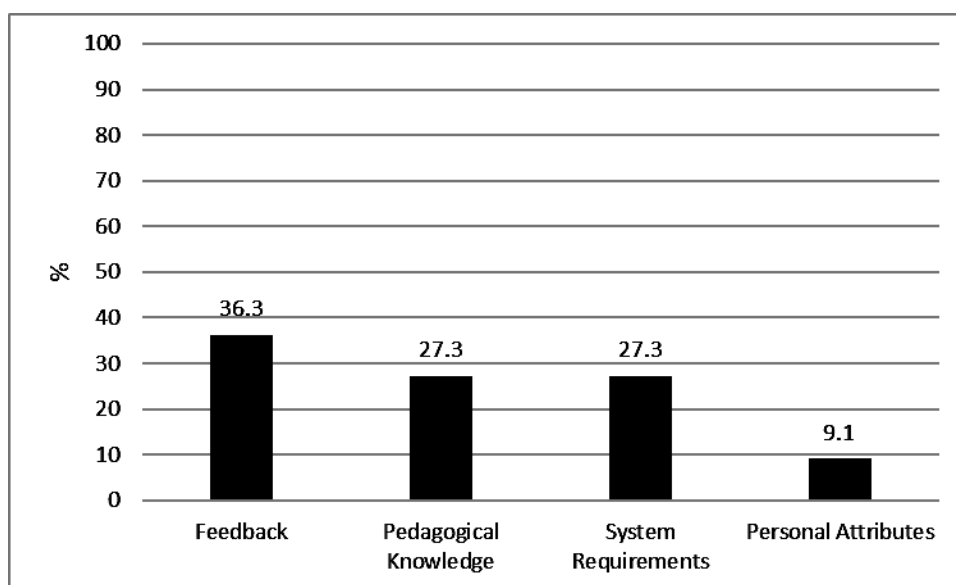


Figure 3. Mentor’s growth areas reported by the student-teachers

It can be seen from Figure 3 that the most commonly cited mentor’s growth area by the student-teachers is related to giving *Feedback* (36.3%). Two of the student-teachers, for example,

articulated issues related to the mentor's feedback in the mentoring practices they had gone through:

"...I asked my mentor to comment more on the things I do right and wrong during the lessons and to give related feedback. She seemed a bit bemused but since then she has started to contribute more".

(Ali's interview)

"...in the last lesson my friends and I taught while our mentor was observing us...she suddenly interrupted, suggesting that we do an activity and we panicked and got confused. It would have been better if she had told us what to do before and had evaluated our performance at the end of the lesson".

(Burak's interview)

Next, student-teachers expressed their need for assistance in *Pedagogical Knowledge* (27.3 %). One student-teacher's remark from his journal illustrates this:

"As a mentor she neither provides viewpoints nor makes suggestions. For example, she never discussed with me how I can manage noise in the classroom. But she as a teacher is good at this. I observe her when she raises the volume of her voice and taps the table to control the classroom. But like I said she never discussed this issue with me even though she observed that I had difficulty".

(Ali's journal entry)

Another student-teacher's remark from the interviews seems to support this:

"I would like her to provide more viewpoints on what I am doing because sometimes she observes that I have difficulty in some areas but we never discuss this together. I think the reason for this is that she herself is new to young learners, being in her first year with them and that she does not totally feel comfortable".

(Ceyda's interview)

One other mentor's growth area articulated by the student-teachers was *System Requirements* (27.3%). Regarding this, student-teachers expressed their need to receive a sufficient amount of support concerning school procedure and specific practices. Below is an excerpt from a student-teacher's journal which seems to support this:

"I think that a mentor's role is not only to develop our teaching skills but also being eager to inform us about certain school procedures like break time duties, filling in formal documents, and dealing with administrative issues".

(Burak's journal entry)

Finally, the least frequently cited mentor's growth area concerns *Personal Attributes* (9.1%). For example, Ceyda's remark in the interview implies this:

"Our mentor was a very warm-blooded, however sometimes I felt as though she did not know how to approach us".

Discussion and Conclusion

The first research question sought answers to the mentoring practices from the ELT student-teachers' perspective. The findings revealed the mentoring practices that the student-teachers experienced focused on *Modelling*, *Personal Attributes*, *Pedagogical Knowledge*, *System Requirements* and *Feedback* respectively. The student-teachers' frequent references to *Modelling* as a mentoring practice clearly showed that it was the most dominant of all aspects of mentoring that they witnessed. Such dominance of *Modelling* was also reported by other research studies (Yildirim & Orsdemir, 2014; Yildirim & Orsdemir, 2016). These studies conclude that mentors do not display mentoring practices other than modelling how to teach, and that an effective mentor training is needed to improve the quality of mentoring experiences. It does not mean that *Modelling* is not a necessary

practice in the mentoring process, but mentoring requires a broader conceptualisation which should go beyond *Modelling*.

Following *Modelling*, one other dominant mentoring practice was found to be related to *Personal Attributes* of the mentor. The student-teachers referred frequently to positive characteristics of their mentor. Relevant literature suggests practices related to *Personal Attributes* are desirable in mentoring as these attributes form the foundations of effective mentoring practices (e.g. Anderson & Shannon, 1988; Clarke, 2006; Ligadu, 2008).

Findings also show that the mentoring practices related to *Pedagogical Knowledge*, *System Requirements*, and *Feedback* were found to be very rare. Regarding *Feedback*, numerous researchers have agreed on its significance in mentoring student-teachers effectively (Bishop, 2001; Haney, 1997; Little, 1990; Malderez & Bodoczky, 1999). Yet, evidence acquired showed that feedback almost did not exist in the student-teachers' practicum experience. This brings about two main questions among others. The first question concerns if the mentor has an awareness of and skills in giving feedback. The second question is related to the mentor's availability.

Clarke et al. (2014) claim that mentors find giving feedback challenging since they might lack the relevant skills to do so. Malderez and Bodoczky (1999), and Fletcher (2012) add to this by stating that giving feedback requires certain training on the part of the mentor. Concerning the second question, Hobson (2002) claims the mentor must find sufficient time to give feedback to the student-teachers. Considering the practicum context under investigation where the mentor's main responsibility is teaching full-time, devoting time to feedback sessions for the mentor may not be realistic.

The findings also revealed that another rarely employed mentoring practice is related to *Pedagogical Knowledge*. There is evidence indicating that the mentor of the student-teachers very rarely articulated the rationale behind her decisions in planning and implementing her classroom teaching and management strategies. To frame and reframe the practice and experience of

the student-teacher, the mentor needs a repertoire of pedagogical content knowledge (Clarke et al., 2014) so that she can provide the student-teacher with various viewpoints on teaching. This can also explain why practices in relation to pedagogical knowledge were so rare.

System Requirements which provide a regulative framework for quality teaching (Smith, 2000) in mentoring practices was another scarcely observed practice by the student-teachers participating. This can be interpreted as a result of the content of the observation tasks that student-teachers are required to carry out. There are no tasks in relation to analysing the curriculum, the code of the school and the instruction or discussion of the roles and responsibilities of individuals during the practicum phase. As suggested by Hudson (2010) with such topics included in the observation tasks, awareness can be created in both the mentor and the student-teacher about the system requirements which the student-teachers might meet in their future profession.

The second research question guiding the study investigated the mentor's growth areas in mentoring from the ELT student-teachers' perspective. The findings suggest that the student-teachers' accounts of the mentoring practices they experienced seem to be influential on their determining their mentor's growth areas. For example, *Modelling* was not evidenced to be one of the growth areas of the mentor as it was the most common mentoring practice reported. In a similar manner, the evidence acquired from relatively smaller number of references to *Personal Attributes* suggests that the student-teachers were mostly content with the mentor's personal attributes because they reported to witness many positive personal features of their mentor during the process.

Feedback was found to be the most frequently cited growth area for the mentor. This seems to explain why mentoring practices related to feedback were scarcely reported on. This finding corroborates with other studies (Jones, 2000; Walkington, 2005) in which student-teachers call for the need of feedback for their development in teaching. Bailey (2006) suggests feedback

increases teacher awareness and results in promoting positive change in teaching behaviour, thus mentors “need to be informed carefully about how to supervise, effectively communicate with, and give feedback to student-teachers in post- lesson conferences” (Akcan & Tatar, 2010, p. 166).

In parallel with the evidence showing that the student-teachers rarely experienced their mentor’s sharing her *Pedagogical Knowledge* with them, this aspect was reported to be a further mentor’s growth area by the student-teachers. The student-teachers in this study expected their mentor to articulate her point of view in regards to the underlying reasons for her behaviour and actions in teaching. Zanting, Verloop, and Vermunt (2001, p.59) emphasise that “stimulating student-teachers to gain access to their mentors’ practical knowledge by prompting mentors to articulate this knowledge and students to ask questions is frequently overlooked, both in the research and practice of mentoring.” There is evidence that the picture, in the context of mentoring in this study, is no different.

Furthermore, the findings showed that the student-teachers felt the need for their mentor’s development in providing mentoring practices with a focus on *System Requirements* (e.g. aims, curriculum, and policies). Hudson (2010, p.35) states that “...an education’s system requirements must be made more explicit for preservice teachers at all levels of engagement” and “...final-year preservice teachers...need to know about the practicalities of an education’s system requirements.”

Paradoxically, the overall evidence acquired indicates that the mentor in this study models the teaching of EFL but does not provide feedback, pedagogical knowledge or system requirements at the same level. This suggests further research is needed to further investigate why this is the case.

This research is not without limitations. First, the sample size is small, thus its findings cannot be generalized. Second, two data collection tools, namely semi-structured interviews and journals were used, but the addition of classroom observations would support and triangulate the data acquired. Despite these

limitations, the study adds to previous research and offers valuable implications for teacher education. One implication is that the mentors' school responsibilities and teaching load should be reduced to make room and time for mentoring practices and professional development. Another implication concerns making provisions for designing in-service mentor training programmes with a focus on the roles and skills of an effective mentor. Such programmes should be designed and implemented through 'a symbiotic relationship' (Lu, 2008) between the university and the practicum schools after a thorough analysis of the needs, roles and responsibilities of mentors and student-teachers and the contextual factors present at schools. Obviously, such mentor training programmes require a great deal of time, staff and financial resources, as well documented by previous research in other contexts (e.g. Kerry & Farrow, 1995). Nonetheless, the governmental education bodies should make an effort to provide the necessary support to create an environment where student-teachers, university supervisors, and mentors help each other to make the school experience genuinely educative.

The Authors

Esra Orsdemir (corresponding author) is a research assistant at Cukurova University, Turkey and teaches at undergraduate level as well. She is the vice coordinator of the practicum course at the ELT department. Her research interests include mentoring, practicum, and student teacher learning. She can also be reached at esraorsdemir@gmail.com.

Rana Yildirim is an associate professor in the ELT Department of Faculty of Education, Çukurova University, Turkey. She has an MA from Çukurova University, Turkey, and an MSc and a PhD TESOL from Aston University, UK. She teaches on both the undergraduate and graduate programme, and supervises MA and PhD students. Her research interests include teaching English to young learners, teacher professional development, and giftedness in language learning. She can be reached at ranayil@cu.edu.tr.

References

- Ackley, B., & Gall, M. D. (1992, April). *Skills, strategies and outcomes of successful mentor teachers*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco.
- Akcan, S., & Tatar, S. (2010). An investigation of the nature of feedback given to pre- service English teachers during their practice teaching experience. *Teacher Development, 14*(2), 153-172.
- Altan, M. Z., & Sağlamel, H. (2015). Student teaching from the perspectives of cooperating teachers and pupils. *Cogent Education, 2*, 1-16.
- Ambrosetti, A. (2012). Reconceptualising mentoring using triads in pre-service teacher education professional placements (Unpublished doctoral thesis). Central Queensland University, Rock-hampton, Queensland
- Anderson, E. M., & Shannon, A. L. (1988). Toward a conceptualization of mentoring. *Journal of Teacher education, 39*(1), 38-42.
- Applegate, J. H., & Lasley, T. J. (1982). Cooperating teachers' problems with preservice field experience students. *Journal of Teacher Education, 33*(2), 15-18.
- Arnold, E. (2006). Assessing the quality of mentoring: sinking or learning to swim?. *ELT journal, 60*(2), 117-124.
- Asunta, T. (1997). Inservice Science Courses for Primary Teachers: Implementation of Different Types of Inservice Training Courses in Finland. *Science Education International, 8*(3), 18-23.
- Bailey, K. M. (2006). *Language teacher supervision: A case-based approach*. Ernst Klett Sprachen.
- Ball, D. L., & Feiman-Nemser, S. (1988). Using textbooks and teachers' guides: A dilemma for beginning teachers and teacher educators. *Curriculum Inquiry, 18*(4), 401-423.
- Bandura, A. (1981). Self-referent thought: A developmental analysis of self-efficacy. *Social cognitive development: Frontiers and possible futures, 200*(1), 239.

- Beck, J., Czerniak, C. M., & Lumpe, A. T. (2000). An exploratory study of teachers' beliefs regarding the implementation of constructivism in their classrooms. *Journal of Science Teacher Education*, 11(4), 323-343.
- Beutel, D., & Spooner-Lane, R. (2009). Building mentoring capacities in experienced teachers. *The international journal of learning*, 16(4), 351-360.
- Bishop, C. (2001). *Case-based learning and the construction of professional practical knowledge in teacher education* (Doctoral dissertation). University of Sydney, 2001.
- Bishop, K., & Denley, P. (1997). The Fundamental Role of Subject Matter Knowledge in the Teaching of Science. *School Science Review*, 79(286), 65-71.
- Borg, S. (2003). Teacher cognition in language teaching: A review of research on what language teachers think, know, believe, and do. *Language teaching*, 36(2), 81-109.
- Briscoe, C., & Peters, J. (1997). Teacher collaboration across and within schools: Supporting individual change in elementary science teaching. *Science education*, 81(1), 51-65.
- Broad, K. A. T. H. Y., & Tessaro, M. L. (2009). Voices from the field: Associate teachers and teacher candidates in learning conversations. *Field experiences in the context of reform of Canadian teacher education programs*, 67-78.
- Brooks, V., & Sikes, P. (1997). *The Good Mentor Guide* (Buckingham, Open University Press).
- Brooks, V., Husbands, C. T., & Sikes, P. J. (1997). *The good mentor guide: Initial teacher education in secondary schools*. Open University Press.
- Bryan, L. A., & Abell, S. K. (1999). Development of professional knowledge in learning to teach elementary science. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching: The Official Journal of the National Association for Research in Science Teaching*, 36(2), 121-139.
- Cameron, M., Dingle, R., & Brooking, K. (2007). *Learning to teach: A survey of provisionally registered teachers in Aotearoa*

- New Zealand*. Wellington, New Zealand: New Zealand Teachers Council.
- Cameron, M., Lovett, S., & Garvey Berger, H. (2007). Starting out in teaching: Surviving or thriving as a new teacher. *SET*, 3, 32-37.
- Campbell, L. P., & Williamson, J. A. (1983). Supervising the student teacher: What is really involved?. *NASSP Bulletin*, 67(465), 77-79.
- Chaliès, S., Ria, L., Bertone, S., Trohel, J., & Durand, M. (2004). Interactions between preservice and cooperating teachers and knowledge construction during post-lesson interviews. *Teaching and teacher education*, 20(8), 765-781.
- Clarke, A. (2006). The nature and substance of cooperating teacher reflection. *Teaching and teacher education*, 22(7), 910-921.
- Clarke, A. (2006). The nature and substance of cooperating teacher reflection. *Teaching and Teacher Education: An International Journal of Research and Studies*, Vol. 22 No. 7, pp. 910-921.
- Clarke, A., Triggs, V., & Nielsen, W. (2014). Cooperating teacher participation in teacher education: A review of the literature. *Review of educational research*, 84(2), 163-202.
- Corcoran, E., & Andrew, M. (1988). A full year internship: An example of school-university collaboration. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 39(3), 17-22.
- Davis, B., & Higdon, K. (2008). The effects of mentoring/induction support on beginning teachers' practices in early elementary classrooms (K-3). *Journal of research in childhood education*, 22(3), 261-274.
- Draves, T. J. (2008). *Nurturing our future colleagues: Cooperating music teachers' relationships with their student teachers*. Michigan State University. Department of Music Education.
- Ekiz, D. (2006). Mentoring primary school student teachers in Turkey: Seeing it from the perspectives of student teachers and mentors. *International Education Journal*, 7(7), 924-934.

- Elliot, J. (1991). *Action research for educational change*. McGraw-Hill Education (UK).
- Ellsworth, J., & Albers, C. (1991). Roles and relationships in the field team. *Unpublished manuscript, BRIET, SUNY at Buffalo*.
- Enochs, L. G., Scharmann, L. C., & Riggs, I. M. (1995). The relationship of pupil control to preservice elementary science teacher self-efficacy and outcome expectancy. *Science Education, 79*(1), 63-75.
- Evans, L., & Abbott, I. (1997). Developing as mentors in school-based teacher training. *Teacher Development, 1*(1), 135-148.
- Feiman-Nemser, S., & Parker, M. B. (1992). Mentoring in Context: A Comparison of Two US Programs for Beginning Teachers. NCRTL Special Report.
- Fletcher, S. (2012). *Mentoring in schools: A handbook of good practice*. Routledge.
- Fraenkel, J. R., & Wallen, N. E. (1990). How to design and evaluate. *Research in Education*. New York, McGraw-Hill Publishing Company.
- Ganser, T. (1996). What Do Mentors Say about Mentoring?. *Journal of Staff Development, 17*(3), 36-39.
- Gonzales, F., & Sosa, A. S. (1993). How Do We Keep Teachers in Our Classrooms? The TNT Response. *Idra Newsletter, 1*, 6-9.
- Gray, M. A., & Smith, L. N. (2000). The qualities of an effective mentor from the student nurse's perspective: findings from a longitudinal qualitative study. *Journal of advanced nursing, 32*(6), 1542-1549.
- Grove, K., Strudler, N., & Odell, S. (2004). Mentoring toward technology use: Cooperating teacher practice in supporting student teachers. *Journal of Research on technology in Education, 37*(1), 85-109.
- Gürbüz, N. (2006). Differing perceptions of pre-service English teachers' strengths and weaknesses in the practicum: A case study in Turkey. *English language teacher education and development, 9*, 39-46.

- Haigh, M., Pinder, H., & McDonald, L. (2006). Practicum's contribution to teacher learning to teach. In *British Educational Research Association Conference, University of Warwick, England* (pp. 1-17).
- Haney, A. (1997). The role of mentorship in the workplace. *Workplace education*, 211-228.
- Hobson, A. J. (2002). Student teachers' perceptions of school-based mentoring in initial teacher training (ITT). *Mentoring and tutoring*, 10(1), 5-20.
- Hobson, A. and Malderez, A. (2013). Judgementoring and other threats to realizing the potential of school-based mentoring in teacher education. *International Journal of Mentoring and Coaching in Education*, Vol. 2 No. 2, pp. 89-108.
- Hudson, P. (2002). Mentors and modelling primary science teaching practices. *Electronic Journal of Science Education*, 7(1).
- Hudson, P. (2004). Specific mentoring: A theory and model for developing primary science teaching practices. *European journal of teacher education*, 27(2), 139-146.
- Hudson, P. B. (2010). Mentors report on their own mentoring practices. *Australian journal of teacher education*, 35(7), 30-42.
- Hudson, P., & Hudson, S. (2010). Mentor educators' understandings of mentoring pre-service primary teachers. *The International Journal of Learning*, 17(2), 157-170.
- Hudson, P., & Skamp, K. R. (2003). An evaluation of a mentoring intervention for developing mentees' primary science teaching.
- Hudson, P., Skamp, K., & Brooks, L. (2005). Development of an instrument: Mentoring for effective primary science teaching. *Science Education*, 89(4), 657-674.
- Janas, M. (1996). Mentoring the mentor: A challenge for staff development. *Journal of Staff Development*, 17(4), 2-5.
- John, P. D. (2001). Winning and losing: A case study of university tutor-student teacher interaction during a school-based practicum. *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning*, 9, 153-168.

- Johnson, K. E. (1996). The vision versus the reality: The tensions of the TESOL practicum. *Teacher learning in language teaching*, 30-49.
- Jones, M. (2000). Trainee teachers' perceptions of school-based training in England and Germany with regard to their preparation for teaching, mentor support and assessment. *Mentoring and Tutoring*, 8(1), 63-80.
- Kerry, T., & Farrow, J. (1995). Reflections of Mentoring in a School-Based PGCE Programme. *EDUCATION TODAY-LONDON-COLLEGE OF PRECEPTORS THEN COLLEGE OF TEACHERS-*, 45, 45-53.
- Klausmeier Jr, R. L. (1994). Responsibilities and strategies of successful mentors. *The Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues and Ideas*, 68(1), 27-29.
- Koskela, R., & Ganser, T. (1998). The cooperating teacher role and career development. *Education*, 106-107.
- Kullman, J. (1998). Mentoring and the development of reflective practice: concepts and context. *System*, 26, 471-484.
- Lappan, G., & Briars, D. (1995). How should mathematics be taught. *Prospects for school mathematics*, 131-156.
- Ligadu, C. P. (2008). Developing an alternative program for teacher trainee mentoring: a case study at a Malaysian university. PhD thesis, Faculty of Education, University of Wollongong, 2008.
- Little, J. W. (1990). The mentor phenomenon and the social organization of teaching, review of research in education. *Washington, DC: American Educational Research Organization*.
- Long, J. (1997). The dark side of mentoring. *The Australian Educational Researcher*, 24(2), 115-133.
- Lopez- Real, F., & Kwan, T. (2005). Mentors' perceptions of their own professional development during mentoring. *Journal of education for teaching*, 31(1), 15-24.
- Lu, H. L. (2008). The evolving roles of classroom teachers in pre-service teacher education: A review of literature. *Georgia Educational Researcher*, 6(10).

- Malderez, A., & Bodoczky, C., (1999). *Mentor Course. A Resource Book for Trainer Trainers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Maphalala, M. C. (2013). Understanding the role of mentor teachers during teaching practice session. *International Journal of Educational Sciences*, 5(2), 123-130.
- Maynard, T. (2000). Learning to teach or learning to manage mentors? Experiences of school-based teacher training. *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning*, 8(1), 17-30.
- Mutlu, G. (2014). Challenges in practicum: pre-service and cooperating teachers' voices. *Journal of Education and Practice*. 36(5), 1-7.
- Okan, Z., & Yıldırım, R. (2004). Some reflections on learning from early school experience. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 24(6), 603-616.
- Patton, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods*. SAGE Publications, inc.
- Ramirez-Smith, C. (1997). Isolation to Interaction: Implications for Preparing Preservice Educators.
- Riggs, I. M., & Sandlin, R. A. (2002). Professional Development of Mentors within a Beginning Teacher Induction Program: How Does the Garden (Mentors) Grow?.
- Sağlam, G. (2007). *Perceived roles, responsibilities, and challenges of CT's in the procedure of teaching practice course in practicum*. (Doctoral Dissertation, Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey). Retrieved from: <https://lib.metu.edu.tr/metu-theses-collection-search>
- Sarıçoban, A. (2008). Okul deneyimi ve öğretmenlik uygulaması derslerine ilişkin uygulama öğretmenleri ve öğretmen adaylarının görüşleri. *Gazi Üniversitesi Gazi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, 28(3).
- Smith, D. C. (2000). Content and pedagogical content knowledge for elementary science teacher educators: Knowing our students. *Journal of science teacher education*, 11(1), 27-46.
- Sudzina, M., Giebelhaus, C., & Coolican, M. (1997). Mentor or tormentor: The role of the cooperating teacher in student

- teacher success or failure. *Action in Teacher Education*, 18(4), 23-35.
- Walkington, J. (2005). Becoming a teacher: Encouraging development of teacher identity through reflective practice. *Asia-Pacific Journal of teacher education*, 33(1), 53-64.
- Wang, J., & Odell, S. J. (2002). Mentored learning to teach according to standards-based reform: A critical review. *Review of educational research*, 72(3), 481-546.
- Williams, A. (1993). Teacher perceptions of their needs as mentors in the context of developing school-based initial teacher education. *British Educational Research Journal*, 19(4), 407-420.
- Yavuz, A. (2011). The problematic context of mentoring: evidence from an English language teaching department at a Turkish university. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 34(1), 43-59. DOI: 10.1080/02619768.2010.516431
- Yıldırım, R. & Orsdemir, E. (2014). "Mentoring practices in the practicum: voices of ELT student teachers", Paper presented at *Innovations in pre-service education: The teaching practicum*, Symposium, Divan Hotel, Ankara 18-19 March.
- Yıldırım, R. & Orsdemir, E. (2016). "Mapping Mentor Roles in an ELT Teacher Education Programme", Paper presented at *50th IATEFL Conference*, Birmingham, 13th-16th April.
- Zanting, A., Verloop, N., & Vermunt, J. D. (2001). Student teachers' beliefs about mentoring and learning to teach during teaching practice. *British journal of educational psychology*, 71(1), 57-80.
- Zeichner, K. (2010). Rethinking the connections between campus courses and field experiences in college-and university-based teacher education. *Journal of teacher education*, 61(1-2), 89-99.