

Mentoring Program for Novice Teachers in the First Year of Teaching

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Once the teachers have graduated from the period of formal training (teacher-preparation program), in their first year of teaching, they will face the realities that may be very challenging. The social, political, and cultural situations in the school can be very different from those in the teacher-preparation program. Moreover, the programs are unable to reproduce environment similar to those teachers face when they begin working at schools. Furthermore, changing the conceptions of being students to teachers is not a simple transition for novice teachers, and the content of the subjects learned in the previous teacher-education program cannot help them to cope with the problems of teaching in the real context. Consequently, the novice teachers are shocked, and feel isolated and anxious. It will, of course, impact on their performance in teaching and their professional development.

Regarding the situation above, novice teachers, in their first year of teaching need assistance and support to navigate them through their teaching experience. In this paper the writer discusses one method in enabling the novice teachers to respond to this transition, i.e. mentoring.

Key words: mentoring, novice teachers

Introduction

The social, cultural, and political conditions in the school can be very different from those in the teacher education training program (i.e. in a university). Theoretical content of the subjects learned by the students- teachers in the teacher training program is not able to help them in dealing with problems the new teachers usually find in their first year of teaching, for examples, the learners' discipline, motivation to learn, different interest and ability, and so on. Those different conditions are the factors that make the novice teachers not ready to work in a new place. Even, they will be shocked and insulted with those situations. Furthermore, the transition status from being a student to a teacher, makes them act unconfidently in teaching. As a result, those various challenges will impact on their teaching performance and their professional development. Consequently, assistance and support must be required to guide the novice teachers to pass through their next teaching experiences.

There are two approaches suggested to prepare the novice teachers to cope with the challenges they may find in their first year of teaching (Farrel in Burns and Richards, 2009). The first approach addresses the issue of the transition period above by making connection between the teaching of the first year and the teaching preparation courses in the teacher education program. Farrel also suggests that the course content might include the development of skills in the anticipatory reflection where the students - teachers have opportunities to discuss and thus become aware of the transition from the teacher-education program to the real world of teaching.

The second approach is to build school-teacher educator partnerships. Through an induction program, the novice teachers can get educator mentors to assist and support them during the transition period from pre service education to first year of teaching. This program can be done with the collaboration with the teacher-education program. The next part of this article will discuss on the process of assisting and supporting by educator mentors or mentoring process in the first year of teaching for novice teachers.