

MENTORING FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:
A TRAINING PROGRAM FOR TEACHER LEADERS TO MENTOR
IN-SERVICE ENGLISH TEACHERS



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IN-SERVICE ENGLISH TEACHERS

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Mentoring for Professional Development:

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

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- this thesis contains no material that has been submitted or accepted for a degree or diploma in any other educational institution;
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ABSTRACT

Mentoring for Professional Development:

A Training Program for Teacher Leaders to Mentor In-service English Teachers

The study systematically designed, implemented, and evaluated a mentor training program for teacher leaders. The mentor training program had the goal of improving teacher leaders mentoring skills to help in-service language teachers in their teams grow professionally. The research employed a three-phase structure. Phase one focused on a needs assessment of teacher leaders responsible for a group of in-service teacher. Through interviews and lesson observations, the study investigated teacher leaders' expectations and perceived needs regarding effective mentoring practices of the teacher leaders in the given context. This collected data directly informed the program's content and design. Phase two involved the implementation of the training program incorporating seven teacher leaders from 5 different private schools. To assess the program's impact, pre- and post-training interviews and lesson observations were compared. Phase three sought to evaluate the program and identify sustained changes. Teacher leaders provided feedback on the training's effectiveness, and further lesson observations were conducted to identify any observable differences in their teaching and mentoring practices. The analysis and comparison of interview responses and observational data revealed positive changes in teacher leaders' understanding of their roles, particularly in observation and feedback skills. Participants reported satisfaction with the program's content and tasks, and offered suggestions for future improvements to both content and delivery.

ÖZET

Mesleki Gelişimi Destekleme Amacıyla Mentorluk:

Lider Öğretmenlerin İngilizce Hizmet içi Öğretmenlerine Mentorluk Yapabilmesi
için bir Eğitim Programı

Bu çalışma, lider öğretmenler için sistematik olarak bir mentorluk eğitimi programı tasarlamış, uygulamış ve de değerlendirmiştir. Bu mentor eğitim program, lider öğretmenleri hizmet içi dil öğretmenlerine mentorluk uygulamaları ile daha iyi destek vermelerini sağlamayı amaçlamıştır. Bu amaçla, çalışma üç aşamadan oluşmuştur. İlk aşamada, lider öğretmenler mentorluk uygulamalarından beklentileri görüşmeler ve ders gözlemleri yoluyla araştırılmış ve buna göre bir eğitim programı tasarlanmıştır. İkinci aşamada, toplam beş okuldan yedi lider öğretmene eğitim programı uygulanmıştır. Programın etkisi, eğitim öncesi ve sonrası yapılan görüşmeler ve ders gözlemleri karşılaştırılması yoluyla araştırılmıştır. Üçüncü aşamada ise lider öğretmenlerden tasarlanan eğitim programını iyileştirebilmek için değerlendirmeleri istenmiştir. Uygulama lider öğretmenlerinin cevaplarının analizi ve karşılaştırması, lider öğretmeni eğitim programının rollerini anlamalarında ve de özellikle gözlem ve dönüt uygulamalarında olumlu değişikliklere yol açtığını göstermiştir. Eğitim programına katılan uygulama lider öğretmenleri sunulan içerik ve görevlerden memnun kalmış, eğitimin uygulanmasıyla ilgili zamanlaması ve sunuş şekli açısından önerilerde bulunmuştur.

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*To my amazing children,
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the overall purpose and significance of the study. It presents the background to the study in the first part, and then focuses on the research questions and the importance of the study in the relevant field.

1.1 Background to the study

The shift from teacher knowledge acquisition to dynamic competencies such as critical thinking, creativity, and collaborative problem-solving necessitates a fundamental re-evaluation of pedagogical practices and, critically, of teacher development itself. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), through its influential "Future of Education and Skills 2030" project and the recent "Teaching Compass" policy paper (OECD, 2025), unequivocally positions the teacher leader as the pivotal agent of change in this evolving educational landscape.

The OECD's vision posits that teacher leaders are not passive recipients of curriculum directives but rather active co-designers of learning experiences, adaptive experts, and drivers of change (OECD, 2025). This elevated conceptualization of teacher leader agency fundamentally reorients the discourse around professional growth, moving away from prescriptive, top-down training models towards approaches that empower educators to innovate and lead. Central to this paradigm shift, and explicitly articulated within the Teaching Compass framework, is the indispensable role of teacher leaders, who are positioned not just as facilitators of

individual teacher development but as crucial architects of systemic evolution and resilience within educational institutions.

The significance of teacher leaders spans several critical dimensions for the future of teaching and learning. Firstly, they are paramount for fostering continuous professional growth. For novice teachers, the provision of robust teacher leader guidance offers a vital bridge between abstract theoretical understanding and the nuanced realities of classroom practice. Effective teacher leaders provide mentoring and support that enables new educators to "research, collaborate, and reflect," thereby cultivating a strong professional identity and foundational competencies from the outset (OECD, 2025). This "quality induction," rooted in ongoing, direct guidance from teacher leaders, is critical for mitigating early career attrition and solidifying pedagogical efficacy. Beyond initial years, experienced teacher leaders cultivate a culture of inquiry and critical reflection, encouraging their peers to scrutinize existing practices, integrate emerging technologies, and embrace interdisciplinary approaches. This internal, bottom-up capacity building, grounded in real-world application, proves more sustainable and contextually relevant than externally imposed development initiatives.

Secondly, teacher leaders are instrumental in driving pedagogical innovation. The cultivation of future-ready competencies requires a departure from traditional, didactic instruction. While the OECD provides the global policy context, academic literature provides the empirical justification for elevating the role of the teacher leader. Scholarship on school improvement confirms that leadership is most effective when distributed throughout the organization, moving away from a single leader towards a collaborative model (Spillane, 2006; Harris, 2002). Teacher leaders fulfil

this distributed function by serving as a powerful, endogenous mechanism for both school-wide reform and organizational resilience (York-Barr & Duke, 2004).

The significance of this role spans several critical dimensions such as systematic improvement and professional growth and retention. Systematic improvement and teacher leadership is consistently correlated with the successful implementation of educational change and the creation of strong Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) (Lieberman & Miller, 2004). The PLC model, championed by DuFour and Eaker (1998), is foundational for sustained teacher development, as it promotes ongoing collective inquiry and action research. In terms of professional growth and retention, by cultivating a culture of inquiry and serving as internal change agents, teacher leaders foster critical reflection and provide the necessary job-embedded support that increases teacher job satisfaction and commitment, thereby mitigating teacher attrition (York-Barr & Duke, 2004).

The essential function of the teacher leader is realized through the provision of high-quality, peer-led professional development (PD). To effectively train teacher leaders to execute this role, the training programs themselves must align with empirically validated standards for PD effectiveness. Research mandates a move away from one-off, top-down instruction toward models that are sustained and iterative. Studies demonstrate that PD must be of sufficient duration and intensity (e.g., often exceeding 14 hours in duration) to produce a statistically significant and lasting impact on teacher practice and, subsequently, student achievement (Yoon et al., 2007). The models should be also be active and context-specific. High-quality PD must incorporate active learning and collaboration in a job-embedded context to ensure coherence with local school goals and standards (Garet et al., 2001). There should be a focus on transfer of training. Crucially, seminal research established that

training focused on theory and knowledge alone leads to minimal transfer of skills to the classroom (often less than 10%). However, the addition of collegial peer coaching and follow-up support dramatically increases the accurate application of new skills in practice (to 75-90%) (Joyce & Showers, 1993). This peer-coaching mechanism is the most vital component in ensuring that PD translates to practical pedagogical change.

Finally, teacher leaders serve as vital conduits between policy and practice, interpreting broader educational reforms within specific school contexts and providing invaluable feedback to policymakers. Furthermore, they also contribute significantly to teacher well-being and retention, offering peer support, practical advice, and advocacy, which are essential for attracting and sustaining a robust teaching workforce. Despite the growing recognition of teacher leaders, particularly within the influential framework of the OECD, there remains a notable gap in understanding the practical implementation and effectiveness of teacher leader-led training programs for teacher leaders. How do teacher leaders effectively equip their peers with the skills and dispositions necessary to become impactful teacher leaders themselves? What are the specific mechanisms through which such programs contribute to broader pedagogical innovation and foster stronger professional learning communities? While the theoretical benefits of such programs are increasingly articulated, empirical evidence on their design, challenges, and impact, especially from a situated, bottom-up perspective, is still developing.

1.2 Statement of the problem

This thesis aims to address this gap by exploring the dynamics and needs of teacher leaders by providing a training program for other teacher leaders. Employing a

qualitative case study approach, this research will investigate the design, implementation, and perceived outcomes of the teacher leader training program designed by the researcher. However, a critical gap remains in the empirical literature regarding the situated effectiveness of programs explicitly designed to develop teacher leaders as trainers of their peers. While we have validated principles of effective PD, we lack comprehensive, in-depth studies that investigate the implementation and impact of these teacher leader-led programs within the local school context. Specifically, the literature is underdeveloped in providing empirical evidence on context and impact. The complex interplay between the local cultural and structural conditions of a school and the dynamic processes involved in a peer-led professional learning intervention, particularly how the learning is negotiated and situated by the participants in their everyday practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991). This requires moving beyond general efficacy studies to investigate context-specific factors (Garet et al., 2001). In addition, implementation and impact stays underdeveloped in literature. The specific design characteristics, challenges, and mechanisms that ensure a teacher leader-led program maintains fidelity to models developed while achieving measurable impact on the participants' professional identity and leadership capacity within their unique organizational setting (Joyce & Showers, 1993).

This study provides a comprehensive, situated, and empirical case study of a teacher leader-led training program, examining its design, the implementation challenges experienced by the trainers. By delving into the experiences of teacher leaders involved in the training, and those being trained, this study seeks to illuminate the critical processes through which such initiatives contribute to the professional development of educators, enhance the collaborative culture of schools,

and ultimately support the overarching goals of future-ready teaching and learning articulated by the OECD. Through this investigation, the thesis will contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the practical implications of teacher leader agency and bottom-up professional development in shaping the future of education.

1.3 The purpose of the study and research questions

The present study, arising from the necessities outlined above, aims to design and implement a mentor training program based on the needs of teacher leaders fulfilling the role of mentor teachers in the K-12 Turkish EFL context. The study addresses the following research questions:

- i. What are the reported mentoring practices and needs of the teacher leaders in English K-12 context?
- ii. What are the observed classroom practices of the teacher leaders?
- iii. In what ways did the training program affect the previously reported mentoring practices of the teacher leaders?
- iv. In what ways did the training program affect the observed classroom practices of the teacher leaders?
- v. How do the teacher leaders evaluate the proposed mentor training program in terms of content, delivery, structure, and the pacing?

1.4 The significance of the study

This study holds significant importance for several reasons, contributing to both the practical landscape of educational leadership and the academic understanding of professional development interventions.

Firstly, this research is the first of its kind to specifically investigate the design, implementation, and impact on practice of a dedicated teacher leader training within the Istanbul school district. While teacher leadership and mentoring are widely recognized as vital for school improvement, the effectiveness of tailored training programs in fostering these roles is often underexplored in specific local contexts. This study offers unprecedented insights into how such a course is conceived, developed, and put into practice in this unique setting, providing valuable, context-specific lessons for other districts contemplating similar initiatives.

Secondly, the research uniquely investigates the effect of this training course on practice as well as the perspectives of both the teacher leaders who received the training. This dual perspective is crucial, as it will be investigated via observations and interviews. It moves beyond simply evaluating the course content to examine its tangible impact on actual teaching behaviors, mentoring strategies, and the professional growth of teachers within the district. Understanding this real-world application, particularly the observable changes in practice, is key to identifying effective strategies for sustainable professional development.

Finally, the study contributes to the broader body of literature on teacher leadership and professional learning. By meticulously documenting the pre- and post-intervention states of teacher practice and perceptions through a rigorous qualitative case study, this research offers rich, contextual data. This detailed account can enhance theoretical understandings of how professional development translates into changed practices, thereby informing future research designs and policy decisions aimed at strengthening teacher leadership and improving educational outcomes.

1.5 Definition of key terms

The definition of the key terms according to how they are used for the purposes of the study are listed alphabetically below to prevent any definitional variance.

Teacher Leader/Mentor teacher (TL): they are responsible for supervising and guiding English teachers in their department. The term mentor and teacher leaders may be used interchangeably in the study.

Ministry of National Education (MNE): Ministry of National Education is the government department responsible for primary and secondary education in Turkey.

Mentoring: Ambrosetti and Dekkers (2010) define mentoring as a non-hierarchical, reciprocal relationship between mentors and student teachers working together for specific professional and personal outcomes within a specified timeframe. Mentoring conducted by teacher leaders includes the activities, roles, and responsibilities undertaken by a mentor in connection with the teaching practice of teachers.

Mentor training program (MTP): Mentor training program defines a kind of in-service training for teachers' leaders assigned as mentors with the aim of increasing awareness on teachers' teaching skills and professional growth in general. The mentor training program aims to help the teacher leader act as an effective mentor.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section presents the theoretical rationale behind the present study. It will focus on the theoretical overview of mentoring practices in the school context. It continues with the definition of teacher leaders as mentors in the school context and examines their relationship with reference to the previous studies. The definition is developed further by a discussion of mentoring models and mentoring practices for professional growth in the school context. Then, mentoring practices in a school context and previous research in both global and school contexts are presented.

2.1 Theoretical framework

Being a lifelong learner requires ongoing professional change (Burns, 2020). The nature of forming information and identity in the profession of teaching has many variables such as classroom practices, teachers' previous education, and their daily dialogues with other teachers. The change towards a wiser, more knowledgeable, intellectual way is key to professional growth. To understand the nature of continuous professional growth and the place of mentoring in such a practice needs a theoretical lens encompassing various approaches.

2.1.1 Constructivism

As a theory of learning, constructivism argues that knowledge is constructed through reflections and experience rather than being transmitted from a source to the receiver (Williams & Burden, 1997). Existing knowledge and new experience are used to adjust and internalize knowledge. We reflect on new experiences and refer to our

prior knowledge to make sense of new experiences. Constructivism as a learning theory rejects the belief that knowledge can be transferred from one person to the other with no experience. In the same lens, constructivism postulates that input received during teacher education or training is filtered by any trainee, mentee, or teacher candidate. The individual trainee mentee or teacher refer to their cognition, to what they already know to be able to make sense of any new experience or classroom practice. They reflect on their new practice or experience to be able to build new knowledge by using the new experience and the prior knowledge. This process is a journey of self-awareness and discovery with the help of reflecting on the new input or experience.

2.1.1.1 Critical constructivism

Critical constructivism (Kincheloe, 2004) bases its principle on the fact that individuals can create an awareness of their prior experience by filtering social and cultural environments while constructing knowledge. Joe L. Kincheloe's critical constructivism is an educational philosophy that emphasizes the social and cultural contexts of knowledge construction. Kincheloe states that knowledge is socially constructed: that knowledge is not objective or absolute, but rather forged by social, cultural, and historical factors. Kincheloe (2004) also acknowledges that power relations influence knowledge, in so much that dominant groups in society often shape knowledge in ways that serve their interests, while marginalizing or excluding other perspectives. Kincheloe says to counter this threat; critical thinking is essential. Therefore, individuals need to develop critical thinking skills to question and challenge existing knowledge, and to construct their own understanding of the world. Such empowerment, Kincheloe says, is a goal of education: Education can empower

learners including not just students but fellow learners like teachers and teacher leaders, to become agents of social change, to challenge injustice, and to create a more equitable and just society. Like the dialogic approach, critical constructivism values collaborative learning. Learning can be a collaborative process, where individuals work together to construct knowledge and develop their understanding. Kincheloe's definition of critical constructivism (2004) recognizes the importance of multiculturalism and diversity in education, and seeks to create inclusive learning environments that value all students' and learners' perspectives. Like the dialogic approach, reflection and action are interconnected: Critical constructivism emphasizes the importance of reflection on one's own learning and experiences, and encourages students to take action grounded in their learning. Joe L. Kincheloe's critical constructivism is a complex and multifaceted theory that has had a significant impact on education and continues to impact the development of mentoring systems and processes.

Teacher education and teacher professional development in the lens of critical constructivism goes further than the perspective described in constructivism while forming knowledge. It perceives constructivism as a limited interpretation of teaching practice since it is not holistic enough to take the context and culture into consideration. Critical constructivist teaching empowers all participants to challenge prescribed models shaped by the specific context and the individual's cultural and social norms (Kincheloe, 2005).

2.1.1.2 Socio-Constructivism in teacher mentoring

Socio-constructivism (Berger & Luckman, 1966; Vygotsky, 1978, Searle, 1995; Lave & Wenger, 1991) posits that knowledge is not passively received, but actively

constructed through social interaction and shared experiences. In the context of teacher mentoring, this perspective emphasizes the collaborative nature of the process, where both the teacher leader and teachers actively participate in co-constructing knowledge and developing professional growth. This section of the literature review explores the key tenets of socio-constructivism and its implications for effective teacher mentoring programs.

There are several key tenets of socio-constructivism some of which are particularly relevant for mentoring. Firstly, socio constructivism involves social interaction: Learning is a social process that occurs through interaction with others. In mentoring, this involves dialogue, observation, and collaborative problem-solving between mentor and mentee. Secondly, socio constructivism involves a shared understanding whereby knowledge is not transmitted directly but co-constructed through shared experiences and negotiated meanings. The teacher leader and teachers actively participate in creating a shared understanding of teaching practices and professional development goals. Learners are not passive recipients of information but actively engage in the learning process. In addition, socio constructivism's focus on reflection means teachers are encouraged to reflect on their practice, experiment with new strategies, and take ownership of their professional growth. A key component of constructivism is Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD): Vygotsky's concept of the ZPD highlights the importance of scaffolding and support in learning. Teacher leaders provide appropriate guidance and support to help mentees progress beyond their current level of competence. In addition, socio constructivism relies on contextualized learning, learning situated within specific social and cultural contexts such as schools and their departments. Ideally, therefore,

mentoring programs can be tailored to the specific needs and challenges of the mentees and their teaching environments.

Therefore, if teacher mentor programs are to be informed by socio-constructivist principles, they can involve and foster collaborative relationships between the teacher leader and teachers, where both parties are valued and respected. They can also make sure that teacher leaders encourage teachers to engage in reflective practice, analyzing their teaching experiences and identifying areas for improvement.

Mentor programs can involve elements of action research whereby mentees are encouraged to conduct action research projects to investigate and improve their teaching practices. Mentoring can be integrated into professional learning communities (PLCs) to create a supportive and collaborative environment for teacher development. Mentoring programs can be culturally responsive, taking into account the diverse backgrounds and experiences of mentees.

There are several studies and research that demonstrate the effectiveness of socio-constructivist approaches to teacher mentoring. For example, (Lopez, 2013) found that collaborative mentoring relationships, characterized by mutual respect and shared decision-making, led to significant improvements in teacher efficacy and student achievement. Similarly, Morton (2005) reported that mentees who participated in action research projects mentored by experienced teachers showed significant gains in their pedagogical knowledge and skills.

Therefore socio-constructivism provides a valuable framework for understanding and improving teacher mentoring practices. By emphasizing collaboration, reflection, and contextualized learning, socio-constructivist approaches

can help the teacher leader and teachers to co-construct knowledge, develop effective teaching practices, and foster professional growth.

In this seminal work Vygotsky's (1978) outlines his concept of sociocultural theory, emphasizing the role of social interaction and cultural tools in cognitive development. Similarly in another seminal work concerning communities of practice, Wenger (1998) explores how knowledge is created and shared within communities of practice, providing a framework for understanding learning in social contexts.

Darling-Hammond, L., & Richardson, N. (2009) review the research on effective teacher development, highlighting the importance of collaborative learning, reflective practice, mentoring and coaching. Guskey, T. R. (2000), discusses the importance of aligning professional development with teacher needs and providing opportunities for ongoing learning and reflection, including mentoring. Joyce, B., & Showers, B. (2002), presents a model for effective staff development that emphasizes active learning, collaborative inquiry, and coaching.

2.1.1.3 Collaborative constructivism

Similar to socio constructivism, collaborative constructivism is a learning theory that emphasizes the importance of social interaction and collaboration in the construction of knowledge. It is grounded in the idea that learning is an active, social, and constructive process. In a collaborative constructivist learning environment, students work together to solve problems, share ideas, and build on each other's understanding.

Key principles of collaborative constructivism, like socio constructivism involve social interaction and active learning. Social interaction ensures that learning is a social process that is enhanced by interaction with others. Whereas active

learning ensures that learners are actively engaged in the learning process, constructing their own understanding. This constructive process means that learning involves building on prior knowledge and experiences. In addition, collaborative constructivism's focus on collaboration means that learners work together to achieve common goals.

There have been several pieces of research on collaborative constructivism, proving positive effects on learning outcomes and the development of social and emotional skills: Studies have shown that collaborative constructivist learning can lead to improved academic performance, critical thinking skills, and problem-solving abilities. For example, a meta-analysis by Johnson and Smith (1984) found that cooperative learning strategies have a positive effect on learner achievement. Collaborative constructivist learning can also promote the development of social and emotional skills, such as communication, teamwork, and empathy. For example, a study by Slavin (1995) found that cooperative learning can improve learners' self-esteem and motivation. There are however challenges and limitations involved with collaborative constructivist learning. For example, it can be difficult to implement effectively in large schools and departments, and it may not be appropriate for all learners.

2.1.2 Collaborative enquiry

Professional development models benefit from some tools to construct knowledge critically as well as dialogic learning and teaching. Collaborative enquiry is one of them and can result in meaningful shifts in classroom practice and teacher knowledge (Cobb et al, 2003). As a tool of professional growth, professional communities use collaborative enquiry to co-construct knowledge by generating

ideas and new strategies together. (Huberman, 1995). In mentoring contexts, collaborative enquiry can be an effective tool used and referred to as a tool in CPD models since the teacher leader and teachers can construct knowledge together with the guidance of teacher leaders. Their relationship has a progressive discourse, which is defined as an “understanding through collaborative discussion and exchange of ideas” by Bereiter (2002). Such a discourse involves stages like understanding the problem (creating awareness about their own practice and beliefs), achieving perspectives (recognition of other’s point of views) and commitment (involving in social exchange of ideas, discussions). Collaborative inquiry and dialogic learning can make the teacher leader and teachers in-service creators of new teaching practices in a specific micro context via examining and exchanging ideas in a shared responsibility. An inquiry-based process that encourages reflection and collaboration supports confident and informed actions (Akcan, 2011).

An ideal mentoring program can bear the aforementioned theoretical framework in mind. The theory of learning critical constructivism, dialogic learning and inquiry collaborative enquiry as a theory of learning and professional development in in-service training is crucial to promote a fruitful mentoring program for all stakeholders and both parties. An effective mentoring program can not only train mentors to be able to use classroom practice to help mentees teach more effectively using inquiry-based techniques but also train them on soft skills in order to be able to build a good relationship within the principle of equal participation as learning partners.

2.1.3 Communities of practice

Etienne Wenger's work (1998) on communities of practice (CoPs) is a prominent theory in organizational learning and knowledge management. A CoP is a group of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly. There are three essential elements to the CoP:

Domain: The area of shared interest or expertise.

Community: The social relationships and interactions among members.

Practice: The ways of doing things, including shared routines, language, tools, and stories.

In a CoP learning is experienced as participation. Learning happens through active participation in the community and engagement with its practices. Similarly, learning involves identity and belonging: CoPs provide a sense of identity and belonging for members, shaping who they are and how they see themselves. CoPs are not just social groups; they are learning organizations. Learning is a social process deeply rooted in the interactions, relationships, and shared experiences within a community. CoPs can foster innovation, improve performance, and enhance organizational learning. Understanding the dynamics of CoPs can help organizations create more effective learning environments.

There are several implications for organizations who use CoP such as school mentoring programs. Firstly, organizations can support the formation and growth of CoPs by providing resources, facilitating interactions, and recognizing their contributions. Organizational leaders can play a crucial role in fostering a culture that values learning and collaboration that underpin CoPs in an organization.

CoPs can be used to address specific challenges, such as knowledge transfer, innovation, and employee engagement. In his later work on CoPs, Wenger has

further developed the concept of CoPs, emphasizing the importance of boundary objects, communities of interest, and the role of social learning in a rapidly changing world. He has also explored the implications of CoPs for leadership, innovation, and social change. Overall, Wenger's work on communities of practice has provided a valuable framework for understanding how people learn and grow together in organizations and other social contexts.

2.1.3.1 Communities of practice and teacher learning

Communities of practice (CoPs) have emerged as a powerful framework for fostering teacher learning and professional development. By providing a supportive and collaborative environment, CoPs enable educators to share knowledge, solve problems, and develop their practice collectively. This literature review explores the link between CoPs and teacher learning, examining the key elements of CoPs, their benefits for teachers, and the challenges and considerations for their implementation.

2.1.3.2 Key elements of communities of practice

CoPs are defined by a domain, a shared area of interest or expertise that unites the members of the CoP. In the context of education, this could be a specific subject, grade level, pedagogical approach, or educational technology. They are also defined by their community or the group of individuals who interact regularly and build relationships based on shared interests and goals. CoPs in education can include teachers within a school, district, or even across different institutions. The activities and processes that members of the CoP engage in to develop their knowledge and skills. This can involve collaborative lesson planning, peer observation, action research, or professional development workshops.

Communities of Practice have many potential benefits for Teacher Learning. They can enhance teachers Knowledge and Skills: CoPs provide opportunities for teachers to learn from each other, share best practices, and develop new skills. By fostering a sense of community and belonging, CoPs can help teachers feel more connected and supported in their work. In addition, when teachers collaborate and learn together, they are better equipped to create engaging and effective learning experiences for their students. CoPs can increase teachers' sense of autonomy, ownership, and professional growth, leading to greater job satisfaction and retention.

Time commitment of teachers and administrators represents a challenge to implementing CoPs. Building and sustaining a CoP requires a significant time commitment from all members. In this sense, effective leadership and facilitation are crucial for ensuring that CoPs are productive and meet the needs of their teachers. Technology can be a valuable tool for supporting CoPs, but it is important to select and use technology wisely to avoid creating additional barriers. Finally, it is important to establish clear goals and objectives for CoPs and to regularly assess their impact on teacher learning and student outcomes.

Communities of practice offer a promising approach to supporting teacher learning and professional development. By carefully considering the key elements of CoPs, addressing the challenges of implementation, and providing ongoing support and evaluation, educators can create vibrant and effective CoPs that lead to significant improvements in teaching and learning.

2.1.3.3 Communities of practice and teacher mentoring

Communities of Practice (CoPs) and teacher mentoring are interconnected concepts that both aim to foster professional growth and development among educators. Both

teacher mentoring and CoPs aim to enhance teachers' skills, knowledge, and expertise. Both provide a supportive environment where teachers can connect, share ideas, and learn from each other. Both encourage ongoing professional development and a growth mindset.

CoPs enhance mentoring by broadening the teachers network capable of expanding the mentoring relationship beyond a one-on-one dynamic, offering a wider range of perspectives and experiences. In addition, CoPs can serve as a repository of knowledge, tools, and best practices that both the teacher leader and teachers can access. CoPs provide a platform for collaborative problem-solving, where the teacher leader and teachers can work together to address challenges. Finally, CoPs can foster a culture of mentorship within the school or district, where experienced teachers naturally take on mentoring roles.

Likewise mentoring can supports school CoP. Mentors provide individualized support and guidance to mentees within the CoP, helping them navigate challenges and achieve their goals. Mentors can help teachers stay engaged and motivated in the CoP, ensuring they actively participate and benefit from the community. Teacher leaders can help mentees develop specific skills, such as leadership, communication, and collaboration, which are essential for effective participation in a CoP. Teacher leaders can also facilitate knowledge sharing within the CoP by sharing their expertise and experiences with teachers.

In essence, CoPs and mentoring can be seen as complementary approaches to professional development. CoPs provide a broader, community-based framework for learning and growth, while mentoring offers personalized support and guidance. When combined effectively, they can create a powerful synergy that drives significant professional development for teachers.

2.1.4 Experiential learning and teacher mentoring

Experiential learning and teacher mentoring are two distinct yet interconnected approaches to professional development. Experiential learning emphasizes hands-on experience and reflection, while teacher mentoring provides guidance and support from experienced educators.

Experiential learning is a theory developed by David Kolb (1984) that posits that learning occurs through a cycle of concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. In the context of teacher education, experiential learning can involve activities such as classroom observations, lesson planning, teaching simulations, and student teaching. These experiences provide opportunities for teachers to apply theoretical knowledge, develop practical skills, and gain valuable insights into the realities of teaching.

Teacher mentoring involves a supportive relationship between the teacher leader and teachers. Mentors provide guidance, support, and feedback to mentees, helping them to navigate the challenges of teaching and develop their professional skills. Mentoring relationships can take various forms, including formal programs and informal peer support.

Experiential learning and teacher mentoring are closely intertwined. Mentoring can enhance experiential learning by providing guided reflection, personalized support, practical guidance and networking opportunities. Guided reflection means that mentors can facilitate reflection on experiences, helping mentees to identify key learning points and connect their experiences to theoretical frameworks. Personalized support means that mentors can provide tailored support and feedback grounded in the specific needs and challenges of each mentee. Practical Guidance means that teacher leaders can offer practical advice and strategies for

addressing classroom challenges and improving teaching practices. Finally, teacher leaders can connect teachers with other educators and resources, expanding their professional networks.

Conversely, experiential learning can enrich the mentoring relationship by providing shared experiences, fostering collaboration and enhancing professional growth. Both the teacher leader and teachers can benefit from shared experiences, such as classroom observations and lesson planning. Experiential learning activities can provide opportunities for the teacher leader and teachers to collaborate and learn from each other. Enhancing Professional Growth: Both the teacher leader and teachers can grow professionally by engaging in reflective practice and applying new knowledge and skills.

Several studies have demonstrated the positive impact of combining experiential learning and teacher mentoring. For example, a study by Zeichner and Liston (1996) found that teachers who participated in a mentoring program that emphasized reflective practice and collaborative inquiry developed a deeper understanding of teaching and learning. Similarly, a study by Guskey and Yoon (2009) found that mentoring programs that incorporated opportunities for peer observation and collaborative problem-solving were more effective in improving teacher practice.

Experiential learning and teacher mentoring are complementary approaches to professional development that can significantly enhance teacher growth and development. By combining these two approaches, educators can create a rich and supportive learning environment that fosters reflection, collaboration, and professional growth.

2.1.5 Dialogic learning

Freire's dialogic learning emphasizes the role of a teacher and a student to "be partners in the learning process" (1970:75) by asking teachers to identify themselves as co-learners. The power of dialogic learning is the fact that it invests in the evolution of teacher practice by making it less authoritative but more collaborative and jointly responsible. In this sense, the dialogic learning designed to help educators to transform education can also be used to understand and summarize a good mentoring model since mentoring also aims to change teaching practice by creating a comfort zone between mentor and mentee to discuss instructional practices or to handle other constraints by modelling, observing, giving feedback, asking inquiry-based questions. A good teacher leader in the role of a mentor can be a learning partner who can use reflective dialogues to guide teachers to transform their prior knowledge in a desired direction (Boreen, 2009). The dialogic relationship also may promote a good relationship between the teacher leader and their teachers by changing how they see each other's roles. The goal of mentoring is to strengthen the ability of a mentee to be able to apply their knowledge and prior experience to new situations. Practices such as mentoring help transformational learning since such practice helps teachers reflect on our teaching over a period of time (Horn & Kristin, 2021). Self-discovery and change are easier with the help of mentoring practices since it is not possible for teachers to be able to observe and reflect on their own teaching. The teacher leader can develop positive relationships through reflective dialogues for a long time to empower teachers' self-discovery. The connection of dialogic learning supports reflective dialogue and a positive relationship by placing teacher leaders and teachers as a learning partner.

Dialogic learning (DL), a pedagogical approach emphasizing dialogue and interaction, has gained significant attention in the field of education. Dialogic learning, rooted in the work of Vygotsky (1978) and Bakhtin (1994), is a pedagogical approach that prioritizes meaningful interaction and shared understanding. It moves away from traditional teacher-centered models, where knowledge is passively transmitted, towards a more dynamic and collaborative environment where learners actively construct meaning through dialogue. Mentoring, on the other hand, is a supportive relationship between a more experienced individual (mentor) and a less experienced one (mentee) aimed at fostering professional growth and development.

When applied to mentoring, it fosters a reciprocal learning environment where both mentor and mentee actively engage in collaborative dialogue, share perspectives, and co-construct knowledge. This approach moves beyond the traditional hierarchical model, where the mentor primarily imparts knowledge and the mentee passively receives it. As a learner-centered approach DL emphasizes collaborative dialogue and critical thinking, which has allowed it to gain significant traction in education.

2.1.5.1 Key principles of dialogic learning in mentoring

There are a number of key principles around dialogic learning that have particular relevance to teacher mentoring (Kram, 1985; Talbot Denny & Henderson, 2018; Jones Tones & Foulkes, 2018). The first of these is equitable participation whereby both the teacher leader and teacher are valued participants in the learning process. Their voices are heard, and their perspectives are respected. Equitable participation allows for collaborative knowledge construction in so far that learning is not solely the responsibility of the mentor. Teachers actively participate in the learning process,

ask questions, and contribute their own insights. When participation is equitable, meaningful dialogue can occur so that interactions between both parties are characterized by open, honest, and respectful communication. Collaborative dialogue is used to explore ideas, challenge assumptions, and deepen understanding through meaningful conversations that create meaning and contribute to the development of a shared understanding. In addition, mutual respect and trust between the teacher leader and teachers can make for effective dialogic learning. Both the teacher leader and teachers feel safe to share their thoughts and feelings without fear of judgment. By emphasizing critical thinking (the ability to question, analyze, and evaluate information thoroughly) and reflective practice, dialogic encourages teacher leaders and teachers to regularly examine their learning process. This process helps them identify areas for growth, adjust their approaches, and deepen their understanding. All the above allow learning and growth to take place within the zone of proximal development (ZPD), where learners can accomplish more with guidance and support from learned others.

Implemented in such a way, the principles of dialogic learning have many benefits for mentoring, creating a more engaging and effective learning experience for both the teacher leader and teachers, as well as increasing motivation since mentees are active participants. Since dialogic learning fosters strong communication skills, which are essential for both personal and professional development, communication can improve and contribute to well-being and a better school climate. Dialogic learning builds stronger relationships between the teacher leader and teachers, grounded in mutual respect and trust. Similarly dialogic mentoring can lead to greater autonomy for teachers who become more self-reliant as they take ownership of their learning.

Herman and Mandell (2004) as well as other scholars, Bjuland and Helgovold, (2018), have outlined some of the practical applications of dialogic learning in mentoring including regular check-ins and feedback sessions as dialogues, with both the teacher leader and teachers actively sharing their thoughts and perspectives. Those dialogues can include collaborative goal setting and joint problem-solving to address and learn from challenges with both the teacher leader and teachers contributing their insights. Other practical applications have included mentoring circles for peer-to-peer learning and support (Darwin and Palmer, 2009) as well as reflective journals where the mentee can maintain reflective journals to document their learning experiences and insights.

Therefore, dialogic learning provides a powerful framework for transforming mentoring relationships into a more effective and engaging experience of learning. By fostering the value of equitable participation, collaborative knowledge construction, and meaningful dialogue, the teacher leader and teachers can create a mutually beneficial learning environment that fosters growth, development, and success.

Several studies (Alexander, 2017; Graham 1999, Coombs and Goodwin, 2013) have demonstrated the positive impact of dialogic learning embedded in teacher mentoring on teacher outcomes, including improved professional achievement and social-emotional development. Similarly, research on mentoring has shown its effectiveness in fostering professional growth, job satisfaction, and career advancement (Okurame, 2012; O'Callaghan, 2016). However, there is limited research that specifically focusses on and examines the intersection where the principles of dialogic learning and mentoring meet.

Researchers (Griffiths et al 2020) have suggested that the effective integration of dialogic principles into mentoring relationships requires both the teacher leader and teachers to adopt strategies that would be practical and progressive in their nature. They should create a safe and supportive environment by fostering open communication and mutual respect. They should engage in active listening so as to pay attention to the mentee's perspective and validate their experiences. They can ask probing questions in order to encourage critical reflection and deeper understanding. In addition, by providing constructive feedback they can offer specific and actionable feedback that focuses on growth and development. They can work together to establish clear and achievable goals collaboratively for the mentoring relationship. Regularly reflecting on the mentoring experience, can lead to them identifying areas for improvement and celebrating successes.

Scholars (Haneda, 2017; Resnick et al, 2018) have suggested areas in which future research may heighten our understanding and practice around the role of the dialogic in mentoring. They suggest exploring the specific challenges and opportunities of implementing dialogic learning in different mentoring contexts as well as investigating the impact of dialogic learning on outcomes, such as career advancement and professional development. The aim across most research is to use research to develop and evaluate training programs to equip teacher leaders with the skills and knowledge needed to facilitate dialogic learning.

Teacher mentoring programs are essential for supporting new teachers and fostering professional growth. However, research suggests that these programs often lack equity, leading to disparities in participation and outcomes based on factors such as race, ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic status. This study has considered the

challenges and opportunities for creating more equitable teacher mentoring programs.

Mentoring programs often rely on voluntary participation, which can lead to self-selection bias. Teachers from marginalized groups may be less likely to volunteer due to systemic barriers, lack of awareness, or fear of judgment.

Mismatches between the teacher leader and teachers based on race, ethnicity, gender, or other demographic factors can hinder the effectiveness of mentoring relationships. Teachers may benefit more from teacher leaders who share similar backgrounds and experiences. For example, a lack of cultural competence among teacher leaders can create barriers for teachers from diverse backgrounds (Rhodes, 2012). Teacher leaders may not understand the unique challenges faced by teachers from different cultures or may make assumptions that hinder effective communication and support. In addition, systemic barriers, such as limited resources, inflexible scheduling, and lack of administrative support, can disproportionately affect teachers from marginalized groups. These barriers can make it difficult for them to participate in mentoring programs or fully benefit from them. To alleviate these potential filters, opportunities for creating more equitable programs can be adopted such as proactive recruitment efforts can reach teachers from underrepresented groups. This may involve using culturally relevant messaging and offering flexible participation options. Schools could also consider intentional matching whereby the matching the teacher leader and the teachers is based on shared interests, experiences, and cultural backgrounds (Rhodes, 2012). This can enhance the quality of mentoring relationships and improve outcomes for teachers from diverse backgrounds. Schools or organisations can provide cultural competency training (Rhodes, 2012) for teacher leaders to help them develop the

skills and knowledge needed to effectively support mentees from diverse backgrounds. This training can address implicit bias, cultural humility, and culturally responsive pedagogy. In addition, creating a supportive environment for mentoring can involve providing adequate resources, flexible scheduling options, and administrative support. This can help to reduce barriers to participation and ensure that all teachers have equal access to mentoring opportunities.

Creating equitable teacher mentoring programs requires a multi-faceted approach that addresses the challenges of selection bias, matching disparities, cultural competence, and structural barriers. By implementing targeted recruitment strategies, intentional matching, cultural competency training, and structural supports, educators can create more inclusive and effective mentoring programs that benefit all teachers.

By conducting further research and implementing evidence-based practices, educators can create more equitable and effective teacher mentoring programs that support the professional growth of all teachers and improve student outcomes. Qualitative studies or mixed methods studies such as this one can explore the lived experiences of the teacher leader and teachers from diverse backgrounds to gain a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities for equitable participation. Experimental studies such as this one can test the effectiveness of different interventions aimed at increasing equitable participation in teacher mentoring programs. Future longitudinal studies can track the long-term impact of equitable mentoring programs on teacher retention, student achievement, and school climate.

2.1.5.2 Meaningful dialogue in mentoring

Mentoring relationships are often characterized by the quality of dialogue between the teacher leader and teachers. Meaningful dialogue goes beyond simple information exchange; it involves deep listening, empathy, and a shared exploration of ideas. This section of the literature review examines the key characteristics of meaningful dialogue in mentoring and its impact on mentee development.

Several key characteristics contribute to meaningful dialogue in mentoring. Firstly, through active listening, teacher leaders who actively listen demonstrate genuine interest in the teachers' thoughts and feelings. They pay attention, ask clarifying questions, and avoid interrupting. In addition, empathetic teacher leaders create a safe space for teachers to share their experiences and perspectives without judgment. Teacher leaders' interactions with teachers in this space can validate teachers' emotions and experiences. Moreover, meaningful dialogue between the teacher leader and teachers thrives on open and honest communication. In this way, both the teacher leader and teachers can feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and feelings openly and honestly. As a result, respect is essential for building trust and fostering a positive mentoring relationship. Teacher leaders value teachers' perspectives and treat them with respect. Underlying all those principles are that teacher leaders provide constructive feedback and challenge teachers to grow, while also providing support and encouragement.

Meaningful dialogue has a strong impact on teacher development, improving and enhancing self-awareness through reflective conversations, where teachers gain deeper insights into their strengths, weaknesses, values, and goals. Likewise meaningful dialogue provides a safe space for teachers to explore challenges and develop effective problem-solving strategies. Similarly, when teachers feel heard,

understood, and supported, they develop greater confidence in their abilities.

Meaningful dialogue also helps teachers clarify their career goals, identify opportunities, and develop the skills needed to succeed.

It also builds strong and trusting relationships between the teacher leader and teachers, which can have a lasting positive impact on each of their professional careers. Therefore, meaningful dialogue is a cornerstone of effective mentoring. By cultivating active listening, empathy, openness, respect, and challenge, mentors can create a supportive environment where mentees can thrive and reach their full potential.

2.2 Professional development and mentoring

Three major teacher training models, utilized for different purposes, are evident in the relevant literature. The first one is known as the craft model or the apprenticeship model, which perceives the mentor as the expert to be model as the name suggests (Freeman, 2008). The trainee is expected to role model the mentor or the trainer and show the desired behaviour. The second one is known as the competency-based model (Wallace, 1991), which aims to create a coherence between theory of teaching and actual practice. In this model, the trainee is expected to behave in line with scientific research and modern theoretical approaches of teaching. Although the role of the trainer is not as limited as in the apprenticeship model, it is still restricted to giving feedback and forcing the trainee to teach using their competencies acquired from theoretical input. It encourages trainees to use a prescribed way suggested by the theory. The trainer's main duty is to enforce and support behaviour in compliance to the theory of teaching in use. The third model of teacher training is the reflective practitioner model, which is grounded in the reflective practices of teachers and

guidance and coaching of the mentor or the trainer (Wallace, 1991). This model depends more on the relationship between the trainer and teacher when compared to the other two models.

Continuous professional development (CPD) is defined as teaching-related activities that help enhance teacher cognition. English language teachers are exposed to a wide range of professional development activities all around the world. The opportunities for continuing professional development are likely to feed teacher knowledge (Al Samari, 2016). Teacher cognition is related to teacher knowledge in the sense that we build on what we know and shape our understanding of the world by using our knowledge of teaching and constructing this knowledge (Borg, 2003). That is why teacher autonomy and the construction of knowledge have been a prominent research area in teacher education. CPD may be a mix of formal or informal activities aiming to improve teachers' knowledge and practice of teaching (Borg, 2003). Various institutions may have different policies on CPD activities or they may have none, meaning it is an undefined individual journey for the teachers in their own particular context (Borg, 2009). That is to say, an ELT teacher may rely on their own willingness to improve themselves as a teacher or the ways to improve are defined by policy, depending on the context they inhabit.

CPD models in the relevant literature try to address this possible variation in context for teachers by adopting different theoretical models such as the cascade model or the input model. These models aim to create a change by using a top-down teacher development training program. Traditional models of CPD perceive professional activities as passing knowledge to teachers in a more top-down manner (Wyatt & Ager, 2017). On the other hand, some bottom-up approaches to professional development emphasize that teachers can be guided to set their own

goals (Collins et al., 1991). CPD literature shows a change in trend towards using a school-based, enquiry-based program to help in-service teachers develop. The need for regular support and guidance to new pedagogies make mentoring program a good option as a CPD model (Malada, 2004). More recent CPD models adopt a bottom-up model and want teachers to reconstruct the knowledge, transform ideas, practices via common enquires, sharing activities (Orland-Barak & Tillema, 2006). In recent models of CPDs, teachers are encouraged to improve their degree of autonomy; in a way being in control of their own teaching skills and development as a teacher. Most top-down CPD models have started to be perceived as demotivating and modern CPD policies seem to focus more on awareness raising via bottom-up strategies using the power of interaction, conversations and dialogues between teachers (Wyatt & Ager, 2017).

In bottom-up CPD models it is easy to see the power of knowledge construction whereas in the older models of CDPs a vast amount of the knowledge teachers was exposed to was meaningless (Hardy & Melville, 2013). Conversation and dialogues have vital importance in knowledge construction and teacher autonomy in teacher education, especially in bottom-up models of CPD (Zellermayer & Tabak, 2001).

2.2.1 Models of CPD

CPD (Continuing Professional Development) of teachers can be based on different approaches and use various models such as the training model, the award bearing model, the deficit model, the cascade model (Kennedy, 2005).

2.2.1.1 The training model

This model of training in-service teachers has been universally used to update teachers regarding new approaches, techniques. The training is delivered by a trainer mostly called as an “expert” (Day,1999). This is generally characterized by an authoritative figure trying to force a standard based view of teaching. Like other top-down CPD models, this model is criticized for not taking micro classroom context into consideration. The facilitator giving the training is generally outside of the context of the participant teacher, which may overshadow the needs of the participant teachers. Although it may be seen as an ineffective method to support classroom-based instruction, it may work well to introduce new methods. The internalization of the knowledge, how knowledge is used in practice limits the effect of the method (Kennedy, 2005).

2.2.1.2 The award bearing model

The model depends on completion of award bearing programs, either validated by leading universities or other authorities. Most course based or certificate based professional development models depend on training given externally. Therefore, this type of training is seen as limited in terms of its effect on classroom instruction. Solomon and Tresman (1999) define this criticism as an academic versus practical battle in award-bearing courses.

2.2.1.3 The deficit model

Another model to train teachers on their teaching skills and personal skills, the deficit model depends on performance-based management. The deficit model posits CPD activities to overcome or fix the schools perceived weaknesses of teachers. The

evaluation of the performance shows the weaker areas in teachers' actions. Boreham (2004:9) mentions the issue of individual performance versus organizational level deficit and mentions that "collective effective competence is dependent on leadership". In this model, a greater efficiency of the organization and the individual is the main aim, which in turn shapes the CPD activities of the school and the individual.

2.2.1.4 The cascade model

This model of CPD depends on the idea of teachers getting training on a skill or new method from an external source and spreading the knowledge from the training by passing the information or knowledge by training their colleagues in their own context (Solomon and Tresman, 1999). Although it is a cost-effective and practical method for organizations with the number of teachers, the content of the training is generally limited to knowledge or information, which makes "what" or "how" more important than "why" when it comes to the focus of the teacher training (Nieto, 2003).

2.2.1.5 The standards-based model

This model of teacher training mostly depends on the behavioristic perspective of learning. The effectiveness of the teacher and the student learning is argued to have a scientific connection (Beyer, 2002:243). The competence of the teacher is of high importance since by the model's logic, the set and aspired standards of the school can only be reached by raising the total competence of the teaching staff. In this context, the tension and debate between perceived competence and top down standards become the focus of the CPD (Kennedy, 2005). The standards set clear aims for

teachers to reach by taking responsibility for their own professional growth.

Standards creating a common language and uniformity can be listed amongst the advantages of this model (Kirk et al, 2003) On the other hand, the pressure on teachers to reach a certain standard without enough guidance may increase the level of stress of teachers and decrease the effectiveness of the model. In addition, the macro set standards and micro factors may not overlap if the standards are imposed by a top-down source. This top-down source of standards may have a global perspective to reach comparable national standards in education by raising the ability of a population to be able to compete in a global economy rather than quality assurance in a certain context as mentioned by Beyer (2002).

2.2.1.6 Mentoring as a model of professional development

Development is a term used to refer to transformation or change towards greater vision, self-expression and better results with the students in a teaching context (Conco, 2004). Teacher development defines having a set of skills to be able to change such as being able to think critically as well as having the necessary knowledge in the subject area content and the pedagogy of teaching. Evans (2002) defines professionalism as multi- faceted encompassing behaviours, attitudes and intellectual values. Evans (ibid) explains why they all need to be focused on to be able to stay developed in a teaching context. Professionalism is defined as the manner of delivering the service in the target profession in line with the common norms whereas professionalism is defined as the total of the skills, knowledge and procedures that help teachers achieve success (Evans, 2002). Professionalism is also seen from a continuum perspective by Hoyle (2012). For example, a restricted teacher would have a professionalism level of using intuition and experience only

grounded from their classroom experience whereas an extended professional teacher would be depended more on an intellectual, wider vision, and research- based approach to teaching. In this sense professional development aims to take each professional teacher from a restricted professionalism to an extended professionalism.

Mentoring serves as a tool for professional development for the in-service training of teachers and creates a platform for teachers to provide mutual support by disseminating best practices and encouraging peer networking. Mentoring as a tool for professional development is widely used in the UK, as well as many other countries (Rhodes & Beneicke, 2002). From in this context, mentoring is a long-term shared relationship based on coaching, counselling, and mutual support. Smith's (2007) definition of mentoring focuses on aspects of its hierarchical nature by referring to the role of mentor to not only support but also challenge enough to make progress in relation to professional skill sets.

The mentoring process in in-service training includes phases such as reflective inquiry, systematic and structured observations, and formative assessment. The role of a mentor in these stages will be discussed in detail in the next part of this chapter. However, all of the roles adopted by mentors in order to support the professional growth of teachers focus on ways to guide teachers to create a transformation by restructuring or structuring their knowledge with the help of observations, conferences, reflective inquiries and mentor's guidance and coaching. Mentoring as a tool of professional development aims to create a transformation and a dynamic structure in school culture (Grossman, 2008; Rhodes, 2012) as well as improving each individual professional; not just mentees but also mentors.

The one-to-one relationship in mentoring to promote professional growth creates a collaboration which may serve to meet different needs such as formative or

summative purposes. In the first model, the collaboration aims to meet developmental needs. This means mentors use a formative system, which aims to develop the skill set and pedagogical knowledge of the mentee. When mentoring adopts a performative model, it aims to evaluate performance and develop this performance based on mentors' judgement (Lawy & Tedder, 2011).

To summarize, various models can be adapted in continuous professional development. The school context, climate, teaching culture, practical dynamics can play a vital role in adapting any one or all of these models. All of the models listed above and mentioned in the related literature such as the training model, the cascade model, the deficit model, the standards-based model possess their own strengths and weaknesses. One can be a better fit in a traditional setting with a higher population of teachers such as the cascade model, whereas another one like mentoring, can be more effective in specific subject areas such as language teaching. In modern approaches, context has become an important factor when deciding what is a good fit; therefore, CDP approaches such as mentoring has its advantages since it depends on close one –one relationship which allows both parties to take contextual factors into consideration and find solutions, actions plan together.

2.3 Teacher leadership

The swiftly changing global educational landscape, shaped by profound societal, technological, and environmental shifts, demands new expectations for teaching and learning (OECD, 2025). Within this evolving context, educational discussions are increasingly leaning away from rigid, top-down structures, and instead view teachers as active contributors and agents of progress (OECD, 2025). A central thread weaving through this evolving perspective is the growing recognition of teacher

leadership—a multifaceted concept that embraces both formal roles and the less formal but powerful influences teachers bring to improve teaching, learning, and the overall school environment. This section synthesizes key insights on teacher leadership, drawing from influential academic works and recent policy suggestions from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

The OECD's "Teaching Compass" policy paper (2025) offers a contemporary framework that clearly emphasizes the importance of teacher leaders. It envisages teachers as "co-designers of learning, adaptive experts, and drivers of change" (OECD, 2025). This broader understanding of teacher influence naturally points towards a model of shared leadership, where expertise and guidance are not vested solely in school principals but are distributed across the entire professional community. The OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) further supports this evolving viewpoint, particularly the TALIS 2018 Results (Volume II): Teachers and School Leaders as Valued Professionals (OECD, 2019b), which explores how teachers and school leaders perceive their roles, well-being, and professional tasks, hinting at various forms of teacher involvement in leadership:

- Collaborative Teamwork and Professional Learning Communities (PLCs): The report consistently points to the deep significance of teachers engaging in collaborative professional learning, often within PLCs (OECD, 2019b). PLCs serve as vital frameworks where teachers collectively explore practice, exchange insights, and find solutions to challenges (DuFour et al., 2006; Chen, 2018). In these settings, more experienced teachers often naturally step into guiding roles, facilitating discussions, supporting peers, and nurturing collective inquiry, reflecting a form of situated teacher growth and development (OECD, 2019b).

- **A Sense of Ownership and Influence:** Volume II examines the degree to which teachers feel they can influence decisions affecting their schools and classrooms (OECD, 2019b). When teachers have more autonomy, they seem more inclined to take initiative and demonstrate leadership in areas like curriculum development, teaching approaches, and school improvement efforts. This sense of empowerment can certainly encourage teachers to become proactive drivers of change.
- **Informal Contributions:** While principals hold designated leadership positions, the report acknowledges that teachers frequently undertake substantial tasks traditionally associated with leadership, including aspects of management, curriculum shaping, and peer guidance (OECD, 2019b). These contributions represent valuable, though sometimes informal, leadership functions.
- **Mentoring and New Teacher Support:** The report details the prevalence and nature of mentoring and induction programs for new teachers (OECD, 2019b). Mentoring emerges as a clear and widely valued form of teacher leadership, where experienced teachers offer crucial guidance, support, and help new colleagues integrate into the profession, potentially impacting their efficacy and retention (Allen, 2010; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

TALIS 2018 Results (Volume I): Teachers and School Leaders as Lifelong Learners (OECD, 2019a) reinforces these themes by examining continuous professional development (PD). It suggests that effective PD often involves collaborative learning, peer observation, and instructional coaching—activities where teacher leaders frequently play a key part in facilitating colleagues' learning and introducing new teaching approaches. The report also indicates that strong school leadership tends to foster environments that are more conducive to teacher learning and a more

shared approach to leadership (OECD, 2019a).

Theoretical Underpinnings and Nuances of Teacher Leadership

The OECD's policy suggestions are well-rooted in extensive academic research that has shaped our understanding of leadership in educational contexts.

- **Distributed Leadership:** This influential concept proposes that leadership is not merely about the actions of those in formal roles, but rather a "practice of leadership" that is stretched across leaders, those being led, and their specific circumstances (Spillane, 2006; Camburn et al., 2003). This perspective subtly shifts the focus from a single leader to the collective leadership capacity within a school, suggesting that leadership tasks are often shared, delegated, and emerge from interactions among individuals, thereby placing teachers at the heart of the leadership process (Leithwood & Louis, 2012). It implies that teacher leadership can be informal, evolve organically, and be deeply connected to the context.
- **Instructional Leadership:** While often seen as a principal's domain, instructional leadership—which is about directly enhancing teaching and learning—is increasingly understood as a responsibility that can be shared (Desimone, 2009; Hallinger, 2005). Teacher leaders frequently carry out important instructional leadership functions by demonstrating effective teaching, offering peer feedback, leading curriculum discussions, and championing innovative teaching methods (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).
- **Professional Learning and Navigating Change:** Teacher leaders appear vital in fostering effective professional learning and guiding educational change. They often translate broader reform ideas into practical classroom strategies, de-risk experimentation, and build internal capacity for ongoing improvement (Fullan,

2001; Timperley, 2011). Their role in establishing and maintaining Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) seems crucial, as these are primary avenues for collaborative inquiry, mutual support, and collective pedagogical growth (DuFour et al., 2006; Chen, 2018). Effective professional learning often seems to be rooted in actual practice and tailored to specific teacher needs, reflecting a bottom-up approach that teacher leaders are particularly well-placed to facilitate (Borko, 2004; Robinson et al., 2009).

- **Mentoring as a Form of Teacher Leadership:** The consistent emphasis on mentoring suggests its significant role as a direct and impactful expression of teacher leadership (Allen, 2010; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Experienced teachers, acting as mentors, offer essential guidance, support, and help new colleagues integrate into the profession, potentially contributing significantly to both their efficacy and retention (OECD, 2019b).

The body of work on teacher leadership reveals several important nuances. Firstly, teacher leadership does not always take the form of a designated role with a specific title or extra pay. It often manifests as informal influence, peer coaching, and a proactive championing of beneficial practices (OECD, 2019b). Secondly, its effectiveness seems heavily dependent on a supportive school culture and the active encouragement and empowerment from school principals, who need to cultivate an environment where teachers feel comfortable taking initiative and embracing leadership responsibilities (OECD, 2019b; Fullan, 2001). Thirdly, practical challenges such as a lack of dedicated time, heavy workloads, and insufficient formal recognition can sometimes hinder teachers from engaging in or sustaining these valuable leadership activities (OECD, 2019b).

In conclusion, the understanding of teacher leadership has evolved from an

emerging idea to a cornerstone of effective educational reform. Supported by extensive research and championed by international bodies like the OECD, teacher leaders are increasingly seen as vital for encouraging pedagogical innovation, nurturing professional growth through mentoring and collaborative learning, and ultimately fostering resilient, adaptable, and future-ready school systems. Their capacity to lead from within, often in varied and less formal ways, suggests they are indispensable figures in shaping the ongoing evolution of teaching and learning.

2.4 Mentoring and teacher leaders

The effectiveness of mentoring practices for in-service teachers in a school context is the special interest of the study in hand. Therefore, exploring the nature and the role of such practices in a school context is necessary as well as defining the role and the skills of a “teacher leader” and “teachers” in the mentoring practices in school context. In this study, “teacher leader” is seen as the person with more experience/ better skills in the profession of teaching in a specific context. “In service teachers” is seen as the new or novice teacher to the school context who needs guidance and support in terms of professional development or other teachers who need support to develop professionally. In the context of this study, in-service teachers with experience or no experience of teaching. Any teacher who gets guidance on pedagogical skills as well as career development is referred as in-service teacher in the role of mentees.

At its core, the relationship between experienced and novice teachers relies on the responsibilities and expertise of mentoring, even though the goals of mentoring initiatives can differ across schools. The mentor teachers may have different roles assigned by the school such as leading a team of teachers or teaching,

as well as being a mentor in a specific context. For these reasons, the literature review will now focus on various definitions of mentoring, mentors, and mentees as well as the different roles practiced by teacher leaders. The teacher leaders can act as mentors in some contexts in Turkey, as in the context of this study. Therefore, teacher leaders and mentor teachers will be interchangeably used to refer to the person guiding a less experienced or skilled teacher in the context of the present study. In the present study, teacher leaders with more experience and skills are believed to encourage, assess, and support new teacher and novice teachers' professional development and personal development (Anderson, & Shannon, 1988). The professional development of teachers aims to raise both teaching skills and pedagogical content knowledge of teachers. That is why teacher leaders in such practices act as a teacher trainer, guide, counsellor and assessor. The roles of teacher leaders will also be explained by referring to the theoretical mentoring approaches behind each role.

The practice of guiding a less experienced person in an occupation may be seen as a type of coaching, counselling or mentoring grounded in a theoretical approach and purpose (Roberts, 2000). From a holistic perspective, mentoring is a one-to-one relationship based on collaboration and learning. If we adopt this perspective of the mentor mentee relationship, professional support given in the same occupation by a more skillful and experienced person to a less experienced and skillful person is a type of mentoring work on a planning, practice, and evaluation level (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

According to Cullinford, mentoring helps teachers, especially novice teachers develop a sense of belonging (2016:60). Kram (1988) emphasizes the importance of the psychosocial guidance given by mentors to develop self-esteem and competence.

Mentors provide support to the other teachers in the team in order to equip themselves with vocational skills to overcome difficulties in the relevant profession. Starting from the 1980's, mentoring became a preferred strategy for vocational development in many work areas (Feiman- Nemser, 1996). The popularity of mentoring in teaching programs correlated this trend since mentoring programs offer benefits in in-service training of teachers for different purposes (Little, 1990).

When it is applied in a teaching context, it can focus on pre-service mentor programs and in-service mentor programs such as induction programs or part of professional development activities. Mentoring and coaching model of professional development is used widespread in many countries and it is perceived as a tool for the professional development of teachers in many subject areas (Long et al, 2012). For example, induction programs use mentoring for developmental purposes as a tool to introduce a system to a newly appointed teacher. Induction programs benefit from a match of an experienced teacher in that context with a newly hired teacher. The relationship grounded in lesson observations and the mutual exchange of viewpoints and ideas can help new teachers to adapt to the school environment and policies (Long et al, 2002), and also develop their subject content and pedagogical knowledge, defined as pedagogical content knowledge by Schulman (1987).

Within the teaching context, mentoring can be positioned as a one-to-one relationship (Kennedy, 2005) between a less experienced and more experienced teacher (Clutterbuck, 1991). The definition of experience is away from its literal meaning of “teaching years” and can be seen as expertise in a specific aspect of teaching or the teaching content.

The collaboration and support between the teacher leader and teachers is vital in terms of supporting the professional development of mentees as well as supporting

their acceptance of the professional community development of teachers. In such collaboration and support, a reciprocal relationship is fostered in which “the teacher leader and teachers work towards specific professional and personal development” as proposed by Ambrosetti and Dekkers (2010). The ultimate aim is to promote the professional and personal development of both parties by them realizing their different roles throughout the process.

Mentoring as a model of professional development is common practice as referred to in recent literature (Kennedy, 2005). Examining professional development from a theoretical perspective as well as teacher training models in the literature is vital to be able to draw conclusions about the nature and the purpose of mentoring practices as professional development models. It is also crucial to see how mentoring models in-service training are used to be able to understand the relationship between the teacher leader and teachers in various contexts. For this reason, this section will look at teacher training, teacher training and professional development, mentoring models in pre-service training, in-service training, and mentoring as a model of professional development.

2.4.1 The baseline of knowledge for teacher leaders as mentors

The work of Darling-Hammond, Hyler, and Gardner (2017) strongly implies that teacher leaders need a solid foundation of knowledge and skills to effectively collect and interpret data during lesson observations. They emphasize that effective professional development for teachers (and by extension, mentors) can be content-focused. This means teacher leaders need a deep understanding of the subject matter, pedagogy, and curriculum to accurately assess teachers’ instruction. Teacher leaders need to be able to recognize effective teaching strategies within the specific content

area being observed. This requires a strong knowledge base in that content. Teacher leaders need to be familiar with research-based effective teaching practices. This includes knowledge of different pedagogical approaches, classroom management techniques, and assessment strategies. Without this knowledge, mentors may struggle to identify and analyze the mentee's strengths and weaknesses during the observation.

Mentors need to be proficient in various data collection methods, such as taking detailed observation notes, using video recordings effectively, and analyzing student work samples. This requires training and practice in these methods to ensure that data collection is accurate and reliable. Teacher leaders can be able to provide expert support to teachers grounded in the data collected. This requires teacher leaders to have a strong understanding of instructional strategies and the ability to translate data into actionable feedback and guidance. In essence, Darling-Hammond, Hyler, and Gardner (ibid) suggest that teacher leaders can possess a strong foundation of knowledge in content areas, pedagogy, data collection, as well as coaching and feedback skills. This "baseline of knowledge" enables mentors to collect meaningful data, analyze it effectively, and provide targeted support to their teachers, ultimately leading to improved teaching practices and student outcomes.

Hattie and Yates (2014), in their work on visible learning, emphasize the importance of mentors having a deep understanding of effective teaching strategies and their impact on student learning. They argue that teacher leaders need to be able to recognize and analyze the effectiveness of different instructional approaches in order to provide meaningful feedback to mentees. This aligns with the idea of pedagogical knowledge as a baseline. Guskey (2000), who has extensively researched professional development, highlights the need for mentors to have a

strong understanding of adult learning principles and the change process. He argues that mentors need to be able to create a supportive environment for teachers to learn and grow, which requires knowledge of how adults learn best. This adds the dimension of understanding that teachers are learners as another baseline knowledge required for designing and implementing mentoring systems and more specifically for mentors themselves. Borko (2004), in her work on teacher professional development, emphasizes the importance of mentors having content-specific pedagogical knowledge. This means that teacher leaders need to have a deep understanding of how to teach specific content areas effectively. This builds on Darling-Hammond's point about content knowledge, adding the crucial link to pedagogy.

Some researchers also go beyond just knowledge and include other essential qualities in the "baseline" for mentors. Mentors need to have strong interpersonal skills, communication skills, and the ability to provide constructive feedback. Mentors can be empathetic, supportive, and committed to the growth of their mentees. Therefore, effective mentors need a strong foundation of knowledge, skills, and dispositions to support their mentees. This baseline allows them to collect meaningful data, provide targeted feedback, and ultimately contribute to the mentee's growth and development.

2.4.2 The role of teacher leader perspectives

Mentors bring a wealth of diverse perspectives to the mentoring relationship, shaped by their experiences, values, and goals. Understanding the different types of perspectives in their roles is necessary to better understand teachers dynamic. Some teacher leaders have a desire to give back and share knowledge and are motivated by

a genuine desire to contribute to the development of others and share the wisdom they've gained throughout their careers. They find fulfillment in guiding and supporting the next generation. Some teacher leaders have a strong commitment to development and have a strong belief in the potential of their teachers and are committed to helping them reach their full potential. They see mentoring as an investment in the future and are dedicated to providing the necessary guidance and support. Some focus more on growth and learning recognizing that mentoring is a reciprocal often transactional process. They understand that they can learn and grow from their teachers as well. This reciprocal learning dynamic can be a significant source of motivation for mentors. Other teacher leaders often feel a sense of responsibility to their teachers. They are committed to being a reliable source of support and guidance, and they take their role seriously. Similarly, teacher leaders value the opportunity to build meaningful relationships with their teachers. They understand that trust and rapport are essential for a successful mentoring relationship and strive to create a safe and supportive environment. Mentors often have benefited from mentorship in their own careers and understand the positive impact it can have. They want to pay it forward and provide the same opportunity to others. It is important to understand that not all of the preceding motivations are isolated nor do they reflect any kind of continuum. Teacher leaders may have different and mixed motivations for participating in a mentoring program. Some may be seeking to develop their leadership skills, while others may be looking for a way to stay connected to their field. Teacher leaders may come from diverse backgrounds and have varying levels of experience. Some may be seasoned professionals, while others may be earlier in their careers. This diversity can enrich the mentoring relationship. They may also have different time constraints and may be able to dedicate varying

amounts of time to the mentoring relationship. Teacher leaders have different communication styles, and it's important for them to be aware of their own style and adapt it to the needs of their teachers (Kupersmidt & Rhodes, 2014; Ragins & Kram, 2007).

2.4.3 The role of context sensitivity and culturally responsible teaching in mentoring

A context-sensitive approach to teacher mentoring recognizes that effective mentoring practices are not one-size-fits-all. It takes into account the unique circumstances of the mentee, mentor, and the environment in which they work (Orland-Barak & Hasin, 2010). Context sensitivity in mentoring means adopting a sense of situational awareness when planning program content since each school has its own culture, values, and expectations. Teacher leaders need to be aware of these and help teachers navigate them.

They also need to help them understand the specific needs and demographics of the student body in order to help them. In addition, teacher leaders must consider the available resources and any limitations within the school context. Louis & Marks (1998) discuss the importance of school context in teacher development and the need for teacher leaders to be aware of the specific challenges and opportunities within the school. Research on culturally responsive teaching (Brown, 2004; Milner, 2011) highlights the importance of understanding the student population and tailoring teaching practices accordingly. This extends to mentoring, as teacher leaders can help teachers develop culturally responsive practices.

2.4.4 Time and logistical constraints for teacher leaders

Teacher leaders are often experienced teachers who already have full workloads.

Finding the time to dedicate to mentoring can be a major challenge. Research consistently shows that mentors identify time constraints as a primary obstacle. For example, a study by Smith and Ingersoll (2004) found that lack of time was the most frequently cited barrier to mentoring by both teacher leaders and teachers.

Coordinating schedules between teacher leaders and teachers can also be difficult, especially in busy school environments. Finding common time slots for meetings, observations, and feedback can be a logistical hurdle. Effective mentoring requires a sustained commitment over time. Both teacher leaders and teachers need to invest significant time and effort to build a relationship and engage in meaningful mentoring activities. Research suggests that mentoring programs that provide dedicated time for mentoring activities (e.g., release time for mentors, common planning time for mentors and mentees) are more likely to be successful (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Even the design and structure of the mentoring program itself can create logistical challenges. Some research has focused on the importance of clear guidelines, expectations, and support systems for teacher leaders and teachers to ensure smooth implementation of the program. Logistical constraints can have detrimental impacts onto teacher mentor systems. Time and logistical constraints can lead to less frequent and less effective mentoring interactions, which can ultimately undermine the goals of the program.

Mentors who feel overwhelmed by time constraints and lack of support may experience burnout, which can negatively impact their own teaching and their ability to effectively mentor others. Both teacher leaders and teachers may be more likely to drop out of mentoring programs if they perceive the time and logistical demands to

be too burdensome. Hunzicker (2013) discusses the logistical challenges of setting up and running effective programs, including resource allocation, finding appropriate mentors, and the general organization of the program itself. Moir & Gess (2001) outline suggestions for systemic supports needed for new teacher success, and time is a recurring theme. In order to addressing the challenges schools need to recognize the importance of mentoring and prioritize it by allocating resources and providing support for teacher leaders and teachers. In addition, schools can implement flexible scheduling options, such as release time, extended school days, or online mentoring platforms, which can help overcome time constraints. Moir& Gess-Newsome (2013) outline suggestions for systemic supports needed for new teacher success, and time is a recurring theme. They discuss how schools need to restructure to provide time for mentoring. Simplifying program procedures, providing clear guidelines, and offering administrative support can also help reduce logistical barriers (Fletcher, 2012). Ingersoll & Strong (2011) often highlight the interplay between time, resources, and program design. Utilizing technology can facilitate communication, scheduling, and resource sharing, making mentoring more efficient and accessible.

2.4.5 Skills and roles of teacher leaders as mentors

There are some fundamental skills necessary for effective mentoring. These skills help in-service teachers and teacher leaders through a transformational learning process. When leaders are in collaboration with teachers, they are expected to adopt specific stances. The stances can also be seen as a “continuum of interaction” (Lipton, Wellman & Humbard, 2001). One end of the continuum can take an instructional stance, in which teacher leaders transfer information regarding policies, curriculum. Next, teacher leaders adopt a collaborative stance, and they work

together with their mentees to achieve goals. At the other end of the stance, teacher leaders act as a facilitator, they provide prompt questions to help teachers reflect and develop more. When they adopt a facilitative stance, they change their language from “I” and “we” language towards “you” language (Horn & Kristin, 2021). Another skill set necessary for effective mentoring is being able to adopt different roles when needed. Each role adopted by a mentor is functionally different such as defining expectations, setting goals, helping or measuring (Killian and Harrison, 2006). Although not hierarchically ranked, Horn and Kristin (ibid) identify some roles to be vital for success.

In the context of the study, a teacher leader acting as mentor for in-service teachers is expected to adopt some of the roles summarized in Table 1. For example, they may need to act as a collaborator in learning together, leader to guide transformation, data collector to be evidenced based.

Table 2. below also shows some models of mentoring by illustrating the roles adopted by mentor teachers. The summary within the scope of mentoring by Parker emphasizes the various purposes with different types of mentoring work. For example, teacher leaders can act an instructional coach if the teacher needs help on a specific instructional skill. Alternatively, teacher leader can provide professional support on social side or choose a more developmental mentoring model in which mentee’s overall personal and professional growth becomes the focus.

Table 1. Description of Mentor Roles (Adapted from Horn and Kristin, 2021)

Mentor role	Function/ Description
Advocate	This role is mostly used at the beginning of the year. Mentor as an advocate to help mentee when they seem to not act on their own behalf e.g. handling school policies, materials, folders etc.
Catalyst	Mentors act as a catalyst when a mentee is hesitant about a specific action. Mentor may encourage mentee towards new undertakings during collaborative conferences.
Collaborator	Mentor acts as a collaborator when mentee asks for assistance e.g. how to develop materials, how to analyse student work.
Data collector	This is a role a mentor adopts during classroom observation as part of conference data conference cycle. The focus is on observable student and teacher behaviour.
Demonstrator	Mentor adopt this role when mentee needs a visual example of a specific instructional strategy. For example, mentor can teach a model lesson when mentee invites mentor after building mutual trust.
Facilitator	Mentor acts as a facilitator when mentee is ready to solve problems independently but still needs some support. Mentors uses prompt questions to activate mentee's problem-solving skills.
Instructor	Mentor can be an instructor, a person who teaches a practical skill, content, or a process, when a mentor cannot solve a challenge. Mentors can not depend on this role not to limit mentee's independence but refer to it when needed.
Leader	Mentors can have a vital influence on a mentee's transformational change or a system's transformation by directing mentees in a desired direction.
Learner	Mentors are lifelong learners. Mentoring process can help them grow professionally.
Trusted Listener	A mentor can be an attentive listener and can respect confidentiality in all stages of the mentoring process.

Table 2. Summary of Mentoring Models and Roles (Parker, Zenkov, Glaser, 2021)

Scholar	Mentor Role
Butler and Cuenca (2012)	Instructional coaches Emotional support, socializing agents
Schatz- Oppenheimer (2017)	Professional responsibility Knowledge of teaching Knowledge of mentoring processes Personality characteristics Professional skills
Hall et al. (2007)	Providers of emotional and professional support
Cochran Smith and Paris (1995)	Transmission orientation Transformational orientation
Feiman – Nemser (2001)	Educative mentoring
Van Ginkel et al. (2006)	Developmental mentoring Instructional mentoring

2.4.6 Data collection in mentoring - lesson observation

Data collection is crucial in the teacher mentor-mentee lesson observation process (Joyce & Showers, 2002; Hammond et al, 2017). It provides objective evidence, facilitates reflective growth enhances communication and collaboration and improves instructional practices.

Objective evidence is required to reduce potential biases on the part of the mentor. Data collection helps minimize subjective interpretations of teaching practices. By focusing on specific observable behaviors and events, it provides a more objective basis for feedback and reflection. Similarly, objective data allows

teacher leaders to provide specific, evidence-based feedback to teachers. This helps teachers understand their strengths and areas for improvement more clearly.

Data collection facilitates reflection and growth by identifying patterns. Data can reveal patterns in a teacher's teaching, highlighting areas where they consistently display mastery or areas to improve. This allows for targeted professional development. Furthermore, by collecting data over time, the teacher leader and teachers can track progress and measure the effectiveness of interventions or strategies.

Data collection enhances communication and collaboration. Data provides a common language for mentors and mentees to discuss teaching practices. It facilitates clear and focused conversations about instruction. Similarly, data can inform the development of shared goals for improvement, fostering a collaborative approach to professional growth.

In addition, data can be used to make informed decisions about instructional strategies, classroom management techniques, and curriculum development. The process of data collection and analysis also encourages a culture of continuous improvement in teaching practices.

Darling-Hammond, Hyler, and Gardner (2017), in their work on effective teacher professional development, highlight the importance of observation in the mentor-mentee relationship. They stress that observation of a mentee's teaching practice is a crucial first step in providing meaningful feedback. This allows teacher leaders to gain a firsthand understanding of the mentee's strengths and areas for growth. The authors advocate for using a structured format for observations. This ensures that teacher leaders focus on specific, observable behaviors and practices, rather than relying on subjective impressions. Observations can be centered on

particular instructional practices that are the focus of the mentoring relationship. This helps to ensure that feedback is targeted and relevant. Observation can be followed by a reflective conversation between the mentor and mentee. This allows the teachers to process the feedback, ask questions, and develop strategies for improvement.

In essence, Darling-Hammond, Hyler, and Gardner see observation as a vital tool for supporting teacher growth. By providing a structured approach to observation and emphasizing its connection to feedback and reflection, they help to ensure that the mentoring process is effective and impactful.

2.4.7 Personalized support in feedback

Studies have explored how feedback from multiple sources (coaches, peers, and students) impacts teacher change. For example, Keiller's (2020) research highlighted that effective feedback in mentoring requires structure and that experienced teachers benefited most from feedback when it was personalized and focused on specific areas for improvement (Keiler et al., 2020). This research emphasized that feedback is most effective when it's tailored to the individual teacher's needs and context.

Haidusek-Niazy et al (2023) case study examined the teacher leader and teachers' relationships during a challenging time for teachers. The study found that personalized support and a sense of equality in the teacher leader and teachers' relationship were crucial for successful mentoring, especially during times of crisis. This research highlighted the importance of understanding the teacher's individual challenges and providing support that addresses their specific needs. Similarly, Schlaack (2023), discusses the importance of mentoring in a Professional Development School (PDS) setting. Schlaack emphasize that relevant feedback is only possible when the mentoring relationship is strong and the teacher leader understands

the teacher's individual perspectives, attitudes, and emotions. This again underscores the need for mentors to get to know their teachers on a personal level to provide truly effective feedback. Another research, Okumuş et al (2022) examined the impact of mentoring feedback on teacher practices and concluded that mentoring feedback improves teacher practices when it focuses on specific areas like instructional practices and clarity in teaching. This supports the idea that feedback can be targeted and relevant to the individual teacher's needs and goals.

Language in mentor-mentee feedback is also an area of focus for research. Asencion Delaney (2012) literature review article explores mentoring programs and practices for language teachers, with a focus on how language impacts the mentor-mentee relationship and professional development. It looked into both pre-service and in-service contexts. Cameron et al (2023) study examines how a mentor workshop addressing language attitudes affected scientific communication skills in STEM trainees. It highlights the impact of language diversity and discomfort on mentee-mentor interactions. Perez Berbain et al's (2023) article investigates how mentoring, viewed as a social process, influences English language teachers' professional development. It emphasizes the importance of interaction and communication in successful mentoring.

2.4.8 Providing mentor training for teacher leaders

The type of training for effective mentoring may vary according to the need and the context. A top-down to training can be used or a more bottom-up design can be used to meet the needs of the school involved. Hobson (2009) mentions using universities as part of mentor training programs also empowers the contribution of such training to teacher preparation programs (pre-service training). It may bridge a way between

universities and in service programs in schools. In designing a training for teacher leaders as mentors to support professional development, Ganser (2002) mentioned effective mentoring skills from the literature can be taken as a basis. The alternative would be taking the needs of the school into consideration by collecting data on the needs stated by the teacher leaders and the teachers. The latter will be preferred in order to address the needs of the school in the context of the study better. As mentioned earlier, bottom- up professional development models are more effective to bridge the theory and practice; the bottom model will be preferred to offer a more customized content of training.

Teacher leaders' roles have a lot of skill sets in common with good teachers. Their role as a teacher and a mentor, or a leader and a mentor, is a different role although it might be seen as an overlap. Their role as a mentor requires skill sets beyond instructional and emotional assistance. Effective mentoring targets a sustainable influence on teachers' teaching skills and professional career. To illustrate, a "train -the- trainer" model aims to train mentors using a theory to practice approach by having some input modules and having some space for teacher leaders to apply what they have learnt.

The content of the training program may focus on areas such as teachers' professional development, student learning, lesson observation and how to provide feedback, as well as communication skills with adults (Parker et al., 2021).

The content of the training can be offered in modules. Each module can focus on an area in need such as feedback or adult education etc. A sample of a modular training program is studied by Parker et al.(ibid). They designed a five-module training program for teacher leaders and mentor teachers. Each module helped teacher leaders to act as co-creator and part of the training by focusing on some

questions. For example, module 1 provided a context for mentoring by asking “what is inquiry?” whereas the module helped mentors explore some co-teaching models together with their mentees. Module 3 was mainly on how to give constructive feedback and how to take feedback. Module 4 was on communication skills and model 5 focused on assessing the experience of mentoring by examining mentor role.

The timing of the training has a vital importance as well. *When* we offer the training may have as much effect as *what* we offer in it. The relevant literature mentions this, calling it “Just in time” training (Ganser, 2002). It focuses on training teacher leaders at the right time not to cause overloading in their training schedule. For example, classroom observation techniques can be a focus of a training just before classroom observations are set with their teachers in their own school academic calendars.

2.5 Mentoring practices and previous studies

Although limited in number, there are some important studies on both mentoring and teacher leaders as mentors in the literature in international context as well as some local studies.

2.5.1 International context

Mentoring has pre-service and in-service practices in different parts of the world and has been used for various reasons. In most pre-service training, mentor teachers are assigned to mentor student teachers during their practicum practices. They are assigned according to their experience and personal choice of being mentor teachers (Yamasaki, 2016). In some countries like Singapore and the Netherlands, special attention and a more systematic training is given to mentor teachers; however, in

most contexts mentor teachers helping student teachers during pre-service training depends on their own skills, experience and knowledge to realize the role of a mentor teacher. In some countries like Norway, teacher leaders adopt the role of being a mentor as well as having their other duties and responsibilities in the same school context (Snoek, 2011).

2.5.1.1 International studies on mentoring

Mentoring practices in in-service training have various purposes such as initial teacher training for novice teachers or an induction purpose for new teachers.

Mentoring is also used as a tool of professional development in some countries. For induction programs, USA and Canada offer certificate programs or module courses to experienced teachers. The criteria to be a mentor and the type of the support changes from context to context. Overall, it is hard to say that teacher leaders or mentor teachers supporting novice teachers go through systematic and well-designed programs to be an effective mentor.

Ingersoll, R. M., & Strong, M. (2011) emphasize the need for more research on the effectiveness of mentoring programs and their impact on teacher retention. Feiman-Nemser, S., & Parker, J. V. (1993) highlight the importance of ongoing professional development, including mentoring, and calls for more research on how to effectively support novice teachers. Darling-Hammond(2000) discusses the critical role of effective teachers in student learning and calls for more research on teacher induction programs, including mentoring, to improve teacher quality. More specifically, Villegas& Lucas (2002) call for more research on mentoring programs that specifically address the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse teachers. Ladson-Billings (1994) emphasizes the importance of culturally relevant teaching

and calls for more research on how to support teachers of color through mentoring. Cuban (2001) raises concerns about the overreliance on technology in education and calls for more research on how to effectively integrate technology into teacher mentoring programs. Warschauer (2000) discusses the potential of technology to support language learning and calls for more research on how to use technology to enhance teacher mentoring. Grossman & McDonald, (2008) argue for the importance of teacher leadership and call for more research on how mentoring can support teachers in developing leadership skills. Day & Sachs (2004) review the literature on leadership development and call for more research on how mentoring can contribute to the development of teacher leaders.

Weinberg (2021) highlights the importance of finding the right balance between support and challenge in mentoring relationships. Weinberg emphasizes the need for teacher leaders to provide guidance underpinned by their own experience while also encouraging teachers to develop their own problem-solving skills. The NIET report (2025) explains "Why New Teacher Mentoring Falls Short, and How to Fix It" (National Institute for Excellence in Teaching) and describes the common challenges in new teacher mentoring and offers recommendations for improvement. The report stresses the importance of clear goals, structured support, and ongoing professional development for mentors. In particular, it says mentor program needs can be focused on the work of the teacher rather than the profile of the teacher themselves.

Ben-Amram & Davidovitch (2024) explore the motivations and experiences of mentor teachers, providing insights into their perspectives and needs. It emphasizes the importance of recognizing the value of mentors and providing them with opportunities for growth. They provide a holistic model for a mentorship

program that is designed to resolve the problem wherein the teacher leader or mentor teacher does not have the knowledge and expertise in all dimensions of teaching necessary in the postmodern era. Experienced leaders may have focused on content knowledge whereas, for example, the actual needs of the teacher may have been socioemotional learning, something less familiar for the mentor.

Efron et al (2021) examine the effect of cultural filters on mentoring interactions and professional growth of teachers. Findings indicate that context specific mentoring has positive elements on the effectiveness. They also claimed that the lifelong learning process of teachers and mentors are affected positively from the context supported by mentoring practices.

Ewing (2021) examines the effect of support given during mentoring in in-service training to novice teachers. The article supports the positive effect on staff retention and teaching quality especially when external mentors are used to guide internal mentees.

Muhayimana (2021) studied teacher's perceptions of mentoring programs. She used a five-factor model to identify teachers' opinions. Hudson et al. (2013) developed a five-factor model from a study with 331 pre-service teachers, to display five qualities of effective mentors: (a) personal attributes, (b) the system requirements, (c) pedagogical knowledge, (d) lesson modelling, (e) feedback. Muhayimana's study used the FFM model by Hudson et al. (2013) in a Likert scale survey format to collect data. Results showed most mentors are perceived as supportive regarding personal attributes of mentors. Most mentees reported that mentors helped them improve their speaking and listening skills more than writing, grammar or personal communication skills. Regarding pedagogical knowledge of mentors, mentees reported that they helped them reflect on their teaching but not

much (37.5 %) with lesson planning or discussions on skills needed to perform duties. Almost 41 percent of the participants thought they got help on effective classroom management skills. The level of enthusiasm (38, 1 %) or the amount of support via the hands-on teaching examples (34.2 %) seemed not to satisfy most of the participants. The amount of written (40.5%) and timely (24.3 %) feedback was not at a satisfying level, either. Overall, the study reported that 45.2 % of the teachers believe that they got enough help in terms of career related or psycho-social elements.

Hudson (2013) stated the effect of mentoring on professional development, enhanced communication skills and leadership roles. The roles adopted by mentors when they guide their proteges support them to be more effective teachers as well as creating an opportunity to evaluate their professional development (Daly & Milton, 2017; Ponte & Twomey, 2014). Mentors get some benefits from mentorship as they get more insights into their own teaching and create awareness about the complexities of the educational system as well as helping them equip with better leadership skills (Gilles & Wilson, 2004). Allen et al. reported that 70% of the participants in his study showed development through self-reflection and the process of mutual collaboration. There are many opportunities within effective mentoring for both mentor and mentees since it depends on mutual willingness to create ideas on instructional pedagogy. This creates an opportunity for mentors to be involved in the pedagogical aspect of teaching more in order to be able to offer effective classroom practices.

2.5.1.2 International studies on teacher leaders and mentoring

To understand how to balance the needs of teacher leaders and teachers, it is necessary to understand how they can be effectively placed together. Sak's (2024) research examines the various needs of new teachers and the techniques that teacher leaders can use to effectively support them. It provides a comprehensive overview of the mentoring process and offers practical guidance for teacher leaders. The research concludes that the needs of teacher leaders involve four major aspects, such as building relationships, being in a common grade level, developmental components, and lastly education and training. In addition, techniques that mentors implement for mentoring new teachers consist of five major aspects such as establishing relationships, identifying mentees' needs, conducting meaningful mentoring, providing meaningful support, and finally meaningful listening (Sak, 2004:1). Gholam (2018) shares the experiences of a novice teacher in a mentoring program, providing valuable insights into the benefits and challenges of mentoring from the mentee's perspective.

There is also research into the factors to be taken into consideration when matching teacher leaders and teachers crucial when considering how to facilitate teacher leaders to be able to give advice across a wide variety of experienced teachers. The results of the studies data present important questions about how experience levels can factor into mentor pairings and suggest that it is not always as straightforward as "most experienced with the newest teacher." For example, a very experienced teacher might be too far removed from the challenges new teachers face today. Their advice might be outdated or not relevant to the current educational context. Alternatively, if we pair an experienced teacher leader with an experienced teacher, it may allow them to develop specialized skills, explore new areas of

expertise, or take on leadership roles. It allows them to learn from each other's experiences, share best practices, and collaborate on projects. This peer mentoring often focuses on specific goals, such as improving instructional strategies, integrating technology into the classroom, or developing leadership skills. A little more removed from the traditional model is reverse mentoring where novice teacher leader is paired with experienced teachers. This less common approach can be surprisingly beneficial. Younger teacher leaders can offer experienced teachers' insights into current trends in education, technology integration, and student perspectives. It can help experienced teachers stay current and adapt to the changing needs of students.

When matching teacher leaders and teachers, it's important to consider factors beyond just years of experience. This includes areas of expertise, teaching styles, personality traits, and specific goals. Portner (2008) states that while matching new teacher leaders with experienced mentors is a common and valuable practice, it's important to consider other models, such as peer mentoring and reverse mentoring. Matching can go beyond years of experience and focus on aligning specific needs, goals, and expertise. He states that it is important to be flexible and willing to adapt your mentoring program to meet the diverse needs of both new and experienced teachers.

Academic work has also examined the overlapping skills and behaviors between mentors and leaders. This includes areas such as communication, influence, and the ability to develop others. Studies delve into how mentoring can be considered a form of leadership, particularly in contexts where mentors guide and influence the development of individuals. In the specific field of education, research focuses on the role of teacher mentors as instructional leaders.

Some studies also investigate the effectiveness of mentoring programs, looking at which factors contribute to successful mentoring relationships. Allen et al (2004) meta-analysis provides a strong quantitative overview of the career benefits associated with mentoring, which often include the development of leadership-related skills. Komives et al (2009) provides a comprehensive overview of leadership theories and how mentoring plays a role in leadership development. The text is often used in higher education leadership programs. Day (2000) discusses the overlap of mentoring and leadership, outlining a broad understanding of leadership development, and within that, it touches on the relational aspects of leadership, which strongly relate to mentoring. Ensher & Murphy (2005) provides information about the power dynamics within mentor relationships, and how those dynamics can be similar to those found in leadership relationships. Hobson & Malderez (2013) provide a critical analysis of teacher mentoring, and how the mentor can sometimes overstep the boundaries of mentoring, and into a more judgmental role. Ingersoll & Strong (2011) provide a robust review of the research on teacher induction and mentoring, highlighting the importance of mentors acting as instructional leaders. It is essential to point out that studies into mentoring are usually context based and that mentoring and leadership can vary significantly across different fields and organizations. Prummer et al (2024) have looked at the role of mentoring in developing leaders' emotional intelligence and found that organizational characteristics play a strong role in the extent to which the two are linked.

2.5.2 Turkish context

Most studies in Turkey have focused on mentoring practices with novice teachers during pre-service training of teachers. The number of studies in local context is limited especially on mentoring in in-service training.

There are a couple of studies focusing on mentoring practices in pre-service training. For example, Yirci, Özalp and Kocabaş (2018) studied 171 novice teachers and the efficacy of the mentoring programs at the post-graduation level. The results showed mentoring helps challenges of first-year teachers although an advanced level of support is needed. The findings also showed that novice teachers are supported by mentoring programs at a professional level. They expect to get support on pedagogy and curriculum as well as having a positive relationship with their mentor teachers.

Altay (2015) conducted a needs analysis to design a mentor training program. The training included themes such as mentor preservice relationship adult education observing practice and giving feedback and evaluating teachers' performance. The findings showed a change in mentors' perceptions of mentor requirements as well as a perceived effectiveness of the program.

Mutlu (2022) conducted a case study on designing, implementing and evaluating an online mentor training program in a pre-service language teacher education program. The research reported that online mentor training program made positive changes in mentors' understanding of their roles and especially in their observation and feedback practices.

In the next section, the methodology of the study will be presented. In the final part, research results and implications will be provided.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to address the methods and procedures for developing and conducting the study at hand. The chapter begins with the research questions of the present study and then explains the design and the context of the study. The following part of this section presents data collection and tools, procedures, and data analysis methods in each phase of the study.

3.1 Research questions

This study sought to design, implement, and evaluate a training program for teacher leaders assigned to mentor teachers in the K-12 English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context. The study aimed to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: What are the reported mentoring practices and needs of the teacher leaders in English K-12 context?

RQ2: What are the observed classroom practices of the teacher leaders?

RQ3: In what ways did the training program affect the previously reported mentoring practices of the teacher leaders?

RQ4: In what ways did the training program affect the observed classroom practices of the teacher leaders?

RQ5: How do the teacher leaders evaluate the proposed mentor training program in terms of content, delivery, structure, and the pacing?

3.2 Research design and data collection

The study is structured around three distinct, sequential phases that directly address the research questions: design, implementation, and evaluation of a mentor training program for teacher leaders. This research adopts a qualitative case study design for the interpretation of the data.

Data analysis involved content analysis using open coding to identify meaningful patterns related to the mentoring and leadership performances of teacher leaders (Patton, 2015). Qualitative methods, such as thematic analysis, are necessary for a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the participants' perceptions related to each research question (Dörnyei, 2007). Due to the nature of the qualitative case study design and the small sample size, thematic analysis with open coding was preferred to achieve a deeper understanding of the case.

Data for the study were collected through various sources, including interviews and lesson observations, as detailed in Table 3. This triangulation of data sources aims to enhance the validity and reliability of the findings (Mackey & Gass, 2005).

3.3 The research context and sampling

The study was conducted with 12 participants from 5 different private schools in Istanbul. The participants consisted of the teacher leaders in English language departments. Teacher leaders participated in a needs analysis interview, a training, and a post-interview. The in-service teachers in the English Department came from various backgrounds and experiences of teaching. There were some novice teachers and some experienced teachers in each school. The teacher leaders in the given

school context had a leadership position to manage curriculum, teachers, students, and act as a

Table 3. Research Design and Data Collection

	Dates	Tools	Data sources	Number	Analysis
Phases of the study					
Designing the training program	2022 Spring term	Semi structure interviews	Teacher leaders	17	Content Analysis - open coding
	2022 Spring term	Lesson observations	Teacher Leaders & English Teachers	22	Content Analysis - open coding
Implementing the training program	7 weeks 2022 fall term	Face o face Online Moodle support	Teacher Leaders	7	
Evaluating the training program	2023 Spring term	Semi structure interviews	Teacher leaders	7	Content Analysis – deductive coding
	2023 Spring term	Lesson observations	Teacher Leaders & English Teachers	11	Content Analysis - deductive coding

bridge between administration and teaching staff. The teacher leaders who participated in the study are responsible for creating a professional working environment and offer a high standard of quality in education. They also act as a mentor, teacher trainer, counsellor and an assessor in this leading position as well as teaching the subject area themselves. They act as the head of the department or are in role of a coordinator in their own school. They are supposed to guide both novice teachers and experienced teachers to improve their instructional skills and professional development. They are in close contact with upper administration, other stakeholders such as parents and the students. They are also responsible for the evaluation of the program and the teacher.

They officially observe and give feedback to every teacher in their team twice a term. They are not given any extra formal training on management or mentoring to perform these duties. Most of the time upper management assigns them based on their experience and personal qualities.

The context of each participating school may change according to demographic dynamics like the location and profile of the students. In order to have a homogenous sample for the study, and in order to eliminate the effect of extraneous factors during the study period, two schools from a prosperous area (school A and school C), two schools from a middle-class / working-class area (School B and D) and one from relatively poorer area (School E) are chosen. All schools chosen are parts of chain group of school and privately managed. They all follow the same curriculum and lesson plan and use the same materials.

3.3.1 Sampling

This section details the rationale and application of convenience sampling within this qualitative case study examining the design and implementation of a teacher leader mentor course and its effect on practice within the Istanbul school district.

Convenience sampling, also known as availability or accidental sampling, is a non-probability sampling technique in which participants are selected based on their readily available access and proximity to the researcher (Etikan et al., 2016). This method was chosen for its pragmatic benefits given the exploratory nature and specific focus of this study on understanding the lived experiences and perceptions of teacher leaders regarding the course and its practical application within a specific educational context.

3.3.2 Rationale for using convenience sampling

The decision to employ convenience sampling in this qualitative case study was primarily driven by several practical considerations pertinent to investigating the teacher leadership program in the Istanbul school district:

- **Accessibility to a Specific Population:** The study specifically targeted mentor teacher leaders in the EFL context. Gaining direct access to these key stakeholders through existing professional networks and school channels made convenience sampling the most feasible and efficient approach to data collection process.
- **Time and Resource Efficiency:** As an in-depth case study focusing on a particular program within a defined geographical area (Istanbul), the ability to rapidly access participants (course designers/implementers and participating teacher leaders) was crucial. This method enabled efficient

commencement of data collection without extensive delays, aligning with the project's timeline and resources.

- **Focus on In-Depth Course Evaluation and Impact:** The primary objective of this case study is to gain a rich, nuanced, and in-depth understanding of how the teacher leader course was designed, implemented, and perceived to influence the actual practice of teacher leaders within the given context. Convenience sampling enabled deep, qualitative engagement with a few key individuals directly involved in the course, facilitating the collection of rich, contextual data on their experiences, perceptions, and the perceived changes in practice. This depth of understanding is prioritized over statistical generalizability across a wider population.
- **Exploratory Nature of Course Impact:** As this study investigates a relatively new or specific professional development program within the given context, an exploratory approach is essential to uncover initial patterns, challenges, and successes. Convenience sampling is well-suited for such exploratory phases, allowing for the generation of hypotheses and the identification of key themes that can inform future iterations of the course or subsequent, more extensive research (Patton, 2002).

3.4 Participants for all phases

Participants for this study included teacher leaders within the Istanbul school district in the design and implementation of the teacher leader course program, within the Istanbul school district. Recruitment was primarily conducted through direct contact with the school teacher leaders and relevant administrators within the chain of schools volunteering for the study. This direct access was instrumental in identifying

potential participants who were actively engaged with or impacted by the training course.

The selection criteria for participants were as follows:

- Teacher Leaders: Educators in the İstanbul school district who currently mentor a team of English teachers.

The process involved initial direct outreach to identified teacher leaders and program administrators in a chain of private schools in the İstanbul area, explaining the study's purpose and assuring confidentiality. Following their agreement to participate, informed consent was secured prior to conducting interviews or focus group discussions. This approach ensured that the participants possessed direct, relevant experience and insights into the course and its influence on their professional practice within the local context. More details about the participants in the study are provided for each phase of the study below.

Table 4. The Participant List (Phase 1)

Teacher Leaders in Phase 1- Needs Analysis	Number of in- service teachers they are responsible for	Experience in Leading	Experience in Teaching	Previous Training on leading or mentoring
TL 1	8	10	25	No
TL 2	15	6	18	No
TL 3	9	3	5	No
TL 4	12	6	17	No
TL 5	8	1	3	No
TL 6	15	8	16	Yes
TL 7	20	9	14	Yes
TL 8	10	3	12	No
TL 9	9	5	13	No
TL 10	11	2	4	Yes
TL 11	18	1	6	No
TL 12	14	3	8	No

3.4.1 The participants- phase 1

In the first phase of the study, the participants consisted of 12 teacher leaders who volunteered to be part of the training program as shown Table 4. The teacher leaders were responsible from a number of teachers ranging from 8-25 English teachers. Some were responsible from only primary level while some were managing secondary/high school level. They all worked as a part of chain private school company in İstanbul.

The schools were located in different parts of İstanbul. They were invited for an interview before they were invited to an external mentor training program designed for teacher leaders in their context. Some of these teachers became participants in the training program after the needs analysis phase. The teacher leaders had a variety of experience in both leading and teaching. Some were new to teaching and some were just new to leading. Some others were experienced in both of the roles.

3.4.2 The Participants for Phase 2 and Phase 3

In the second and third phase of the study, the participants consisted of 7 teacher leaders who volunteered to be part of the training program. Eight teacher leaders out of twelve in the first phase of the study accepted the invitation for the face-to-face to training sets. 4 teacher leaders said that they were too busy for a weekly training program. One teacher accepted and attended the first training program; however, she withdrew because of a health issue after week 1 during the training. The total number of seven teacher leaders attended the trainings during the seven-week period of face-to-face trainings as shown in Table 5. The data collected from these seven teachers were included in the second and third phase of the study in hand. The training program was planned to be delivered during spring academic term in 2022.

Table 5. The Participant List (Phase 2 and 3)

Teacher Leaders in Phase 1- Needs Analysis	Number of in- service teachers they are responsible for	Experience in Leading	Experience in Teaching	Previous Training on leading or mentoring
TL 1	8	10	25	No
TL 2	15	6	18	No
TL 3	9	3	5	No
TL 4	12	6	17	No
TL 5	8	1	3	No
TL 6	15	8	16	Yes
TL 7	20	9	14	Yes

3.5 Data collection tools and procedures

3.5.1 Data collection before intervention

The first phase of the study focused on collecting data to understand the needs of the teacher leaders, enabling them to effectively mentor and lead their teams. Data were collected via semi-structured interviews with twelve (12) teacher leaders and through the observation of lessons taught by the teacher leaders. These interviews sought to gather insights into the teacher leaders' needs and expectations regarding a mentoring program and professional development support, drawing upon their perceptions of their current roles and requisite support.

The semi-structured interviews aimed to understand the teacher leaders' needs in depth. They also served a dual purpose: explaining the study and recruiting volunteer teacher leaders for the seven-week training program. Twelve teacher leaders from eight different schools were invited for the semi-structured interview to explain their needs and expectations about a training program. Each school had at least two teacher leaders who are responsible for different age groups such as primary and secondary level. During the interviews, the teacher leaders were asked questions about the components of a possible training program that would enhance

their job effectiveness, and what kind of issues should be included in a mentor-training program, allowing them to elaborate on the answers provided in the accompanying questionnaire.

The semi-structured interviews were conducted individually with each teacher leader via Zoom, lasting up to 20 minutes. The language of the interview was English. The participants were asked to confirm their comfort and willingness to communicate in English; they all preferred English and confirmed their high level of English proficiency. This measure was taken to minimize the possibility of language-based inhibition or misunderstanding. The interviews were audio and video recorded with permission of the teacher leaders. Each interview was transcribed verbatim by the researcher. Each transcription was also reviewed by the participant teacher leader to confirm the accuracy of their answers, thereby ensuring the credibility of the data collected at this stage.

To establish ethical standards, the study received approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) [or specify the Ethical Committee] of the researcher's university (Boğaziçi University) to conduct interviews with teacher leaders and observe their lessons.

The researcher conducted seventeen (17) lesson observations to understand the context and the participants' pedagogical needs. During the observations, the researcher took notes and made comments about weaknesses and strengths of each lesson in terms of teaching skills and techniques. The data collected also aimed to support the design of a mentor training program content by understanding the needs using different resources. The field notes and comments focused on the extent to which each stage of the lesson was student centered

The development of the semi-structured interview protocol for teacher leaders and in-service teachers (Appendix H) was critical for establishing the baseline context and needs before implementing the teacher leader training course. The questions were meticulously crafted for a comprehensive needs analysis, gathering essential insights into current practices, perceptions, and areas requiring support in teacher leadership and professional development within the Istanbul school district. The interview questions were designed to explore several key dimensions.

Baseline Understanding of Teacher Leadership and Mentoring: One set of questions focused on the baseline understanding of teacher leadership and mentoring. Questions were formulated to establish a foundational understanding of participants' current definitions and perceptions. For instance, teacher leaders were asked, "How do you define mentoring and coaching?" (Teacher Leader Q4, Pre-training). This aimed to capture their existing conceptual frameworks and establish a baseline for later comparison with their understanding post-training. Similarly, questions about their comfort levels in leading and mentoring (Teacher Leader Q15, Pre-training) provided a crucial baseline for assessing the impact of the training on their confidence and approach.

Inquiry into Current Professional Development Practices and Attitudes: A significant portion of the protocol focused on existing professional development (PD) structures and perceptions. Questions such as "How do you evaluate your teachers' attitude towards professional development?" (Teacher Leader Q5, Pre-training) and "How do you think lesson observation cycle contributes to in-service teachers' professional development?" (Teacher Leader Q6, Pre-training) were designed to elicit teacher leaders' views on their team's engagement with PD and to assess the perceived effectiveness and contribution of current mechanisms, such as

lesson observation cycles, to in-service teachers' professional growth. From the in-service teachers' perspective, questions like "How do you evaluate professional development activities in your institution?" (Teacher Q6, Pre-training) sought to understand their direct experiences and satisfaction with ongoing PD. Both sets of questions aimed to map the current professional learning landscape and identify areas of strength or areas needing enhancement.

Identification of Existing Support and Gaps: A core objective of the needs analysis was to identify where teacher leaders and in-service teachers felt adequately supported and, crucially, where gaps existed. Teacher leaders were directly asked, "Do you feel you get enough guidance or training about leading, coaching and mentoring your team?" (Teacher Leader Q10, Pre-training). This question was vital for understanding the perceived need for the proposed mentor course. Correspondingly, in-service teachers were asked, "Do you feel you receive enough guidance and feedback from your teacher leader(s) or mentors to support your professional development?" (Teacher Q9, Pre-training), providing crucial insight into the sufficiency of support from the recipients' viewpoint, thereby offering a comprehensive, two-sided perspective on existing gaps. These questions directly informed the perceived necessity and potential focus areas for the training course content.

Understanding Ideal Qualities and Future Expectations: To inform the potential refinement, design, and relevance of the teacher leader mentor course, questions were included to understand participants' aspirations and criteria for effective leadership and mentorship. Asking teacher leaders, "What should be the qualities of an effective mentor teacher?" (Teacher Leader Q13, Pre-training) not only revealed their ideals but also offered insight into their self-perception and

developmental goals. The forward-looking question, "If teacher leaders were given a training on effective mentoring, how should the training support mentor teachers?" (Teacher Leader Q16, Pre-training), directly gathered input on their expectations for the intervention, serving as a critical component of the needs assessment.

By structuring the pre-training interview questions around these thematic areas, the study aimed to gather comprehensive baseline data. This allowed for a detailed understanding of the existing context, current practices, and specific needs of teacher leaders and in-service teachers, thereby informing the subsequent analysis of the teacher leader mentor course's impact on practice.

3.5.2 Data collection after the intervention

Similar to the initial stage, semi-structured interviews were conducted individually with each teacher leader online via the Zoom platform, lasting approximately 20 to 25 minutes. The interviews were conducted in English. Each participant consented to the interview being recorded and subsequently reviewed the transcriptions (member-checking) to ensure the credibility and accuracy of the data. Each interview aimed to understand the teacher leaders' evaluation of the data.

Data collection also included the researcher's field notes from lesson observations. A total of eleven lessons, each lasting 45 minutes, were observed after the training phase. Seven teacher leaders were observed, with field notes and supplementary comments taken during each lesson. The comments focused on the extent to which each stage of the lesson was student-centered. The seven (7) participant teacher leaders, who attended the training, and four other teachers (mentees) in their teams were observed. The teacher leaders and volunteer teachers allowed the researcher to observe the lesson and take notes during the observations.

Following the implementation of the teacher leader training course, a second set of semi-structured interviews was conducted with teacher leaders (Appendix H). The post-training interview protocol was strategically developed to serve as an impact analysis, directly assessing the perceived changes, benefits, and challenges following the intervention. These questions were meticulously crafted to allow for comparison with the pre-training baseline data and to capture new insights related to the course's influence on practice within the given context. The post-training interview questions were designed to explore several key dimensions:

Conceptual Understanding and Self-Efficacy: A primary aim was to evaluate whether the teacher leader training course influenced participants' understanding of key concepts and their confidence in applying them. Teacher leaders were again asked, "How do you define mentoring and coaching?" (Teacher Leader Q1, Post-training) to directly compare their post-training conceptualization with their pre-training definitions. Similarly, revisiting "How comfortable do you feel when you are leading / mentoring?" (Teacher Leader Q10, Post-training) allowed for an assessment of shifts in their self-perceived comfort and efficacy, providing crucial data on the course's impact on their confidence and professional identity.

Changes in Practice and Action: These questions were crucial for identifying tangible changes in professional development practices and the nature of support provided and received. Teacher leaders were asked, "Have you started any other practices or activities have you started during and after the training process to contribute to your teachers' professional development? Why/Why not?" (Teacher Leader Q4, Post-training). This aimed to elicit specific examples of how the training translated into new or modified actions. The protocol included a question for mentees such as, "Please provide specific examples of what they are doing differently and

how these have impacted your learning or practice?" (Teacher Q4, Post-training). These parallel questions directly addressed the practical effects of the course from both the provider's and recipient's perspectives, offering a comprehensive view of changes in practice and support.

Perceived Enhancement of Guidance and Feedback: A core component of effective mentoring is the provision of guidance and feedback. Questions were designed to assess if the training improved teacher leaders' ability to offer this crucial support and if in-service teachers perceived an enhancement. Teacher leaders were asked, "Do you feel you provide your teachers with enough guidance and feedback to support their professional development?" (Teacher Leader Q6, Post-training). This directly probed their self-evaluation of improved capability. For in-service teachers, "Do you feel you now receive enough guidance and feedback from your teacher leader(s) or mentors to support your professional development?" (Teacher Q5, Post-training) directly measured their perception of increased or improved support, highlighting the practical impact of the training on the mentoring relationship.

Course Evaluation and Relational Impact: Finally, questions were included to directly gauge the perceived value and effectiveness of the mentor course itself, and its broader influence on professional relationships. Teacher leaders were asked, "Do you think the content of the training was helpful and effective?" (Teacher Leader Q12, Post-training) to gather direct feedback on the course's utility. Additionally, "How do you evaluate the relationship between you and in-service teachers?" (Teacher Leader Q11, Post-training) explored the potential relational shifts, while for in-service teachers, a question such as "Overall, how has the support you receive from your teacher leader(s) or mentor(s) changed or improved since they underwent the mentor training? Can you give specific examples of how their leadership or

mentoring has influenced your practice?" (Teacher Q10, post-training) aimed to capture the holistic impact of the enhanced teacher leader capabilities on the overall learning environment.

By structuring the post-training interview questions around these comparative and impact-focused dimensions, the study aimed to gather rich, nuanced data. This allowed for a direct assessment of the teacher leader mentor course's influence on professional understanding, practices, and relationships, enabling a comprehensive understanding of its effect on practice within the Istanbul school district.

3.5.3 Data collection -the role of lesson observations in the study

In addition to interview data, direct observation of lessons, both pre- and post-training, constituted a critical component of this study's methodology. This approach was essential for several reasons, directly contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the teacher leader training course's impact on practice as well as needs analysis.

Firstly, direct observation provided empirical evidence and a structured lens into teacher practice. While interviews offered valuable insights into perceptions, beliefs, and self-reported changes, observations allowed the researcher to directly witness pedagogical approaches, instructional strategies, and critical instant decision-making processes in their authentic classroom context (Al-Balushi & Mat Saad, 2021).

Secondly, lesson observations facilitated a comparative analysis of practice before and after the intervention. By conducting observations both prior to the teacher leader training course and subsequent to its implementation, the study could

identify concrete shifts in the teacher leaders' instructional practices. This direct comparison was crucial for evaluating the practical outcomes of the training.

Thirdly, observations served as a triangulation method for the interview data. Triangulation, the use of multiple methods or data sources to investigate the same phenomenon, enhances the trustworthiness and credibility of qualitative findings (Denzin, 1978; Patton, 1999). Discrepancies or alignments between what participants said they did in interviews and what was observed in their classrooms provided deeper, more nuanced insights, thereby validating or challenging self-reported changes in practice.

Finally, lesson observations allowed for the collection of rich, contextual data. Beyond specific pedagogical techniques, observations captured the dynamic interactions and classroom climate. These contextual details were invaluable for understanding the intricacies of the teacher leader role and how the training integrated into the complex realities of the language teaching context in classrooms.

In summary, lesson observations were indispensable for moving beyond perceptions to directly assess the tangible changes in practice attributable to the teacher leader mentor course, providing a holistic and empirically grounded understanding of its impact.

3.6 Phases of the study

3.6.1 Phase 1: Designing the training program for teacher leaders

The first phase of the study included the designing of stages of the proposed training program for teacher leaders in English language teaching context. First of all, it aimed to understand the needs of teacher leaders in each of the six chosen schools when they are mentoring their teachers in their team for professional development.

The first stage in this sense aimed at deciding the content and delivery of the training program by understanding the needs of teacher leaders in the given context.

The researcher also observed 17 lessons in all schools in the study with the permission of the participants in phase 1. The researcher took notes field notes during the lesson observation. The coding aimed to look at the strengths and weaknesses of each lesson observed. The results of the data from lesson observation notes also shaped the training content, especially for the pedagogical knowledge and teaching skills.

The results of both the interviews held before the training and the lesson observation notes formed the content of the training program designed for the teacher leaders participating in the study.

3.6.2 Design and content of the training program

After collecting the data in phase 1, a training program was designed in order to help the teacher leaders mentor their teacher in their team more effectively. In the design of the training program, the qualitative data gathered from participants was used. The qualitative data came from the interviews held with the teacher leaders and lesson observation notes made by the researcher. The first informed the content of the training in all aspects while the second informed the training content in terms of teaching skills and pedagogical knowledge needed.

A modular training program was preferred by the researcher. There were four modules focusing on the needs as a result of data coming from the interview scripts and lesson observation notes. After analyzing the data from the interviews held before the training and lesson observation notes, the researcher focused on four main

areas. The results chapter shows the detailed analysis of both data mentioned here.

The four modules and content of each module of the training can be seen as below:

- Module 1: Understanding the concept of Mentoring and Coaching
- Module 2: Pedagogical knowledge, instructional skills
- Module 3: Lesson observations and giving feedback
- Module 4: Leadership (vision, using soft skills, and creating motivation)

After deciding each module content, face to face training of almost 25 hours was planned for all modules. Face to face training focused on the main problem; the fact that the teacher leaders not having any formal training support in what they do as well as the results of needs analysis done in the first phase of the study.

Following the identification of the themes in the training, the researcher focused on how and what to include in each module. The module objectives were defined to help the participants get the best from each training session (Morrison, et al., 2014, p. 15). In this process, the data obtained in the interview and related literature and sample mentoring programs were consulted. As a result, an outline of the training was prepared as in Table 3.3.

This mentor-training program was developed for the teacher leaders at X Schools. The program aimed to support teacher leaders in their role of mentoring in-service English teachers. In such a way, the program also aimed to support the whole school in-service teachers' professional development by supporting and training teacher leaders to become more effective mentors or coaches. Consequently, the training program was designed to improve the professional development of both teacher leaders and in-service teachers.

At the end of this training, teacher leaders were expected to

- be informed about the concept of mentoring.

- reflect on what mentoring is, the components of effective mentoring, and the roles undertaken by good mentors.
- question the knowledge that their roles as teacher leaders require based on their context.
- be informed about different mentoring or coaching strategies to support teachers' professional development. (e.g. strategies such as co-planning, using collaborative inquiry etc.), and reflect on these strategies.
- explain the importance of observation for teachers' professional development and the steps to follow before and during the observation.
- know how to observe a class in order to support and help develop teachers' pedagogical knowledge and overall professional development.
- comment on the role of feedback and reflection in professional development and reflect on suggested tips and strategies.
- reflect on the training program.

This program was constructed and developed based on the data gathered from and teacher leaders in 5 different schools in the schools in the İstanbul area, Turkey. Each module was supported by an online training component and a live session with an experienced facilitator. The information about each module is summarized in the table 6. below.

Table 6. The Outline of The Training Program

	Session Focus theme	day/time for live sessions	Facilitator
Week 1 Online (Moodle- Neo) + Live Session	Module 1: Understanding Mentoring as a tool of professional development Roles & attributes of a good teacher leader and mentor Strategies for effective mentoring & coaching	Wednesday 19:00- 20:30	Facilitator -1 CELTA tutor, Teacher Trainer
Week 2 Online (Moodle- Neo) +Live Session	Module 2: Pedagogical Knowledge Being learner centred: Interaction patterns- teacher talk time- giving instructions	Wednesday 19:00- 20:30	External Facilitator-2 CELTA tutor, Teacher Trainer
Week 3 Online (Moodle- Neo) +Live Session	Module 2: Pedagogical Knowledge Being learner-centred: Feedback and concept check	Wednesday 19:00- 20:30	External Facilitator-2 CELTA tutor, Teacher Trainer
Week 4 Online (Moodle- Neo) +Live Session	Module 2: Pedagogical Knowledge Lesson shapes (skills & function & language systems)	Wednesday 19:00- 20:30	External Facilitator-3 CELTA tutor, Teacher Trainer
Week 5 Online (Moodle- Neo) +Live Session	Module 3: Observing a lesson How to observe a teacher effectively and support their instructional skills Conference model / walk-in/ informed observations	Wednesday 19:00- 20:30	External Facilitator-2 CELTA tutor, Teacher Trainer
Week 6 Online (Moodle- Neo) +Live Session	Module 3: Giving feedback effectively & Importance of feedback in professional development	Wednesday 19:00- 20:30	External Facilitator-4 Teacher Trainer
Week 7 Online (Moodle- Neo) +Live Session	Module 4: Leadership skills Creating a team spirit (mission- vision- teaching philosophy) Creating motivation for yourself and others Using soft skills	Wednesday 19:00- 20:30	External Facilitator-4 Teacher Trainer

Each theme in the training each module was scattered over 7 weeks taking the aims into consideration. In order to achieve these aims, the following training program in table 5. was designed over 7 weeks period.

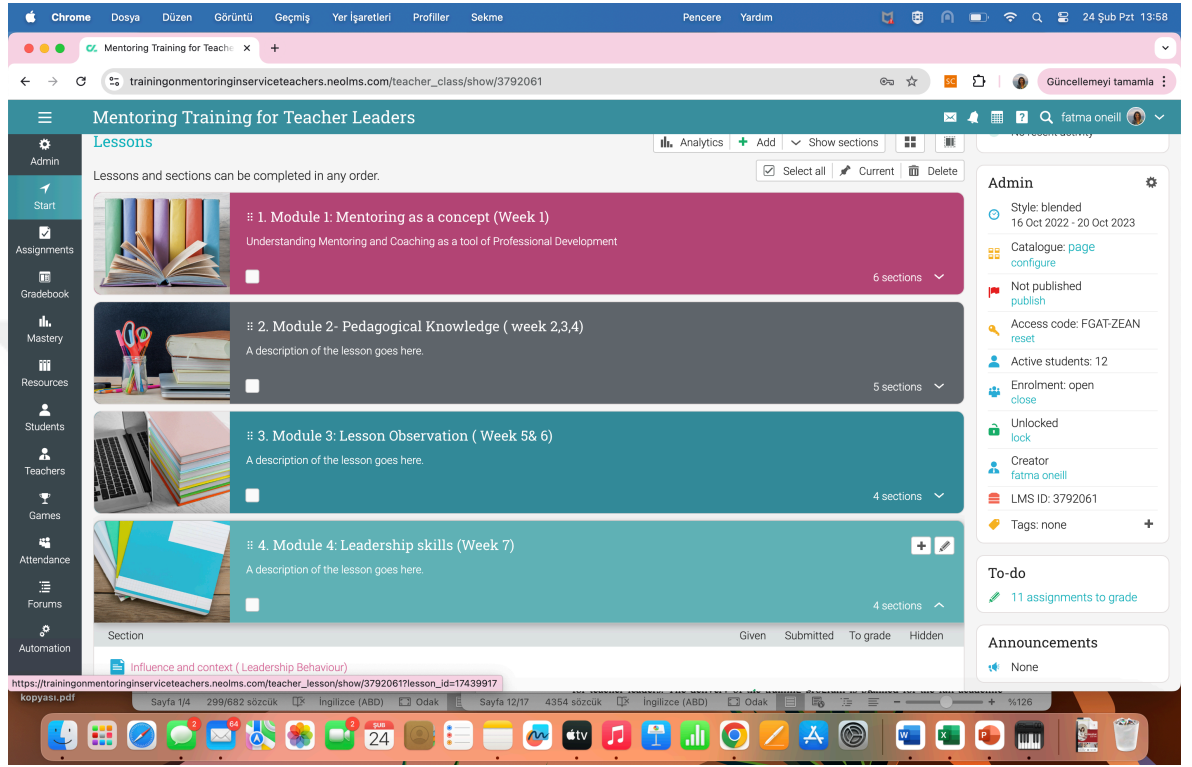


Figure 1. The online mentor training program delivered on neolms

During the interviews all participants preferred a face-to-face training format rather than an online one. Each module was delivered using a face-to-face training session but also Moodle platform to reinforce the face-to-face training. There were two reasons for Moodle platform to be part of the training at this point; to act as a make up for participants missing a face-to-face session and to consolidate on face-to-face training content by offering some extra reading and an online interaction between the participants after the training sessions. The online component was supported via a free Moodle platform called NeoLMS. Each module had some extra readings and also a summary of the face-to-face sessions. Each face-to-face training also included

a short discussion on the Moodle platform with a prompt question to support face-to-face trainings. An overview of the NeoLMS supporting face-to-face trainings can be found in Figure 1.

Each module was delivered with the help of an expert facilitator. The facilitators were also informed about the context and the characteristics, background of the participants.

3.6.3 Phase 2: Implementation of the training program

The second phase of the study included the implementation of the proposed training program for the teacher leaders participating in the study. The delivery of the training program was planned for the fall academic term in 2022.

The total hours of training took place over an academic term. Almost 23-25 hours of face-to-face training was provided over a 7-week period. Moodle platform was open during and after the face-to-face training period for the participants to be able to consult on each module and the content delivered in live trainings.

In this phase, teacher leaders were invited for a face-to-face training over 7 weeks period. The face-to-face training was also planned to be supported by a Moodle platform to let the teachers' leaders consolidate on the content and each training.

Formative evaluation and summative evaluation of the training program was also planned at this stage. Formative evaluation was managed via some online forum including open-ended questions like "What did you most find helpful?" "What else would have helped you more in the session?" etc.

All the planning and organization of the delivery process as well as the outline was supported by researcher. There were four external teacher trainer who supported different modules as a facilitator and trainer.

3.6.4 Phase 3: Evaluation of the training program

The third phase of the training included the evaluation of the training program to suggest further improvement in the training to be able to implement the training in a wider context.

Similar to the first stage, the semi-structured interviews were conducted individually with each teacher leader, which lasted about 20-25 minutes. The language of the interview was English and the interview was held online live using the Zoom meeting program. Each interview aimed to understand the teacher leaders' evaluation of the program. Each participant allowed the interview to be recorded and each participant also checked the transcriptions of the recordings after the transcribing stage to ensure reliability of accuracy of the data.

The data collection was also conducted through lesson observation notes by the researcher. The researcher observed 11 lessons in total each with a length of 45 minutes after the training phase. 7 teacher leaders were observed, and field notes were taken during lesson observation. Minute-by-minute observation notes were also supported by comments taken during the lesson. The comments focused on how the student centered each stage of each lesson was observed. The participant 7 teacher leaders, who attended the training, and another 4 random teachers in their teams were observed. The teacher leaders and volunteer teachers allowed the researcher to observe the lesson and take notes during the observations.

3.7 Data analysis

Data collected in phase one and phase three was analyzed using content analysis. The first phase and the third phase both collected data via interview scripts and fields notes. For each stage, the analysis process has been explained in detail below.

3.7.1 Data analysis before the intervention

The data gathered from seven semi-structured interviews and eleven (11) lesson observations were analyzed using Content Analysis (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2013), following the three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. This stage essentially mirrors the thematic data analysis from the first phase of the study (needs analysis). The researcher also observed eleven (11) lessons across all participating schools in Phase 3 with the permission of the participants, taking field notes during the observations. The field notes from each lesson observation were analyzed using open coding. The coding focused on identifying strengths and weaknesses in the observed lessons. The results of the observation data provided crucial feedback regarding the evaluation and effectiveness of the training program, particularly Module 2: Pedagogical Knowledge and Teaching Skills.

3.7.2 Data analysis after the intervention

The same method as Phase 1 was used for both lesson observations and interviews after the training, but the researcher followed a deductive coding approach and adhered to the main themes that emerged in the first phase of the study. The analysis of post-training interview data adopted a hybrid coding approach, blending elements of both inductive and deductive reasoning. The main themes identified in the pre-training interview phase served as an initial sensitizing framework. The primary

purpose was to assess the impact of the teacher leader mentor course by examining whether these pre-existing themes persisted, evolved, or were replaced by new themes following the intervention. Transcriptions were uploaded into the same MAXQDA project.

The evaluation phase utilized a hybrid coding approach, guided by an initial sensitizing framework to ensure the findings contributed meaningfully to the scholarly discourse. A sensitizing framework, unlike a definitive concept, merely suggests directions along which to look, providing a general framework of understanding rather than a rigid structure for data categorization (Blumer, 1954). This framework established four critical thematic areas for analysis: (I) Skill Transfer and Application was grounded in the work of Joyce and Showers (1993) and Desimone (2009), focusing on peer coaching as the crucial mechanism for moving knowledge to practical use. (II) Organizational Trust and Barriers addressed contextual challenges such as the necessity of trust and dedicated time (Rhodes & Beneicke, 2002), the separation of coaching from evaluation (Zepeda, 2017), and the difficulties posed by organizational power structures on peer collaboration (Boulton & Boaz, 2023). (III) Impact on Professional Identity and Efficacy assessed the affective outcomes of the intervention, drawing on literature concerning the development of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997) and the evolution of professional identity in leadership roles (Avalos, 2011). Finally, the framework was designed to accommodate the (IV) Novel/Emergent Theme: The Emotional Labor of Peer Accountability. This theme focuses on the emotional work (e.g., managing anxiety, suppressing frustration) required by teacher leaders when providing critical feedback to, or holding accountable, their direct colleagues. This specific intersection of emotional labor (Hochschild, 1983) in the context of peer accountability (Burić et al.,

2020) represents the study's significant and intended original contribution to the in-service literature.

The researcher again commenced with open coding, similar to the first phase, but with a deliberate awareness of the established main categories from the pre-training interviews. This allowed for the identification of not only new and emergent themes reflecting changes in perceptions, but also for systematically assessing the continued presence, modification, or absence of the initial themes. Following first coding, a second round of axial and focused coding was conducted. During this stage, newly emergent codes were organized into sub-themes, and then both these new sub-themes and any refined sub-themes related to the pre-existing main categories were consolidated under overarching themes. This iterative and comparative process facilitated a nuanced analysis of teacher perceptions before and after the mentor course, highlighting continuities, changes, and the emergence of new perspectives attributed to the training.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The first section in this chapter (Section 4.1) focuses on the results related to Research Question 1 (RQ1), identifying the reported mentoring practices and professional needs of teacher leaders. The second section (Section 4.2) addresses Research Question 2 (RQ2), detailing the observed classroom practices of the teacher leaders prior to the intervention. The third section (Section 4.3) addresses Research Question 3 (RQ3) and Research Question 4 (RQ4), reporting the comparative results of reported mentoring practices and observed teaching practices, respectively, following the training program. The final section (Section 4.4) presents the results for Research Question 5 (RQ5), focusing on the teacher leaders' overall evaluation of the training program.

All data presented were analyzed using open coding (inductive for the needs analysis—Phase 1, and deductive for the post-intervention data). All themes and terms referenced in this chapter are operationally defined in detail to ensure consistency and clarity for the reader (Appendix I) since clear and precise definition of terms is paramount in qualitative research.

4.1 The reported mentoring practices and needs of teacher leaders before intervention

The first stage of the study focused on understanding the needs and expectations of teacher leaders to inform the design and content of the training program, thereby addressing Research Question 1:

RQ1: What are the reported mentoring practices and needs of the teacher leaders in the K-12 EFL context?

Overall qualitative data analysis revealed that the teacher leaders' needs and perceptions about mentoring clustered around four main themes: Observation, Feedback, Knowledge of Mentoring, and Leadership, each containing several sub-themes (see Table 7). These sub-themes include: Observation skills (use of rubric, field notes, focus areas); Feedback skills (constructive language, oral feedback); Knowledge of Mentoring (mentoring as a concept, pedagogical knowledge); and Leadership skills (personal attributes, creating motivation, and managing policies).

4.1.1 Theme 1: Observation skills

The primary theme identified in the needs analysis was observation skills. All participants reported conducting planned classroom observations as a current mentoring practice (see Appendix H). While most teacher leaders (75.0%) reported using an observation rubric, some (33.3%) also preferred field notes (see Table 7). The main reported difficulty, however, centered on execution: Five of the TLs (41.6%) struggled to select a focus area when observing a teacher. Furthermore, *none* of the participants reported conducting a pre-conference before observations, and the data indicated observations were planned without a structured, formal pre- or post-meeting. Teacher leaders expressed a clear need for instruction on effective observation strategies.

This feeling was captured by one teacher leader (TL 6), who stated she "feels lost in the items and does not feel like she knows what she is observing," adding that guidance on what to focus on would "help that teacher more." Another teacher leader (TL 11) stated, "The problem is the fact that I am not given any support about how to

use that rubric. So, I would like to know more about how to observe effectively first before I say anything to the teacher I am observing” (TL 11).

Table 7. Interview Themes (Before Intervention)

Theme	Sub theme	Details	N (12)	%
Observation Skills				
	Planned classroom observation	Use of an observation rubric/form	9	75.0
		Focus areas	5	41.6
		Field notes	4	33.3
	Peer reflection		2	16.6
Feedback Skills	Oral feedback	Informal Dialogue	12	100
			10	83.3
	Constructive Language-	Positive approach	8	66.6
Knowledge of Mentoring	Mentoring as a concept			
		Roles	9	75.0
		Guidance and support	8	66.6
		Mutual development	5	41.6
	Pedagogical knowledge			
		Teaching Techniques and implementation	8	66.6
		Using technology	3	25.0
		Classroom management	8	66.6
		Content knowledge	4	33.3
Leadership Skills	Personal attributes	Empathy	5	41.6
		Fairness	4	33.3
		Soft skills	8	66.6
	Creating motivation		6	50.0
	Managing policies		6	50.0

Note: %: The number of TLs mentioning the theme /total number TLs .See Appendix I for operational definitions.

4.1.2 Theme 2: Feedback skills

The second major theme was feedback skills, revealing two primary sub-themes: informal dialogue and the constructive language used during feedback delivery. All participating teacher leaders (100%) reported giving oral feedback and preferring informal dialogues when doing so (see Table 7). However, when asked about their comfort level (see Appendix H), 66.6% of teacher leaders reported experiencing challenges when providing feedback and expressed a desire to learn effective strategies for creating a positive approach.

This uncertainty was exemplified by TL 7, who noted, "Some teachers think that I am trying to find something missing. They misread my intention, and I wonder if it is how I say or what I say." (TL7)

4.1.3 Theme 3: The knowledge of mentoring

The third main theme that emerged was Knowledge of Mentoring, comprising the sub-themes of Mentoring as a Concept and Pedagogical Knowledge. The first sub-theme, mentoring as a Concept, revealed that teacher leaders sought a clearer definition and understanding of the roles (75.0%), mutual development (41.6%), and providing guidance and support (66.6%) involved in mentoring.

One participant (TL 3) expressed confusion over the terms "mentoring and coaching," stating: "If I am in a role of a mentor while I am providing this guidance, I would like to know more about what it is and how to do it better, of course. Unfortunately, we just get by leading teachers by common sense and our own experience as a teacher." He expressed a clear need for training on a better understanding of mentoring. This challenge was articulated by TL 2, who stated, "Our teachers' timetables are really busy... I find myself either rushing or telling

them what to do instead of guiding them more." The same teacher leader (TL 2) expanded on this historical difficulty: "When I first started, you know, I didn't know how to support my teachers... some teachers that I was working with were older than me... I did not know how to guide them although I was supposed to."

The second sub-theme under the knowledge of mentoring category was Pedagogical Knowledge (see Table 7). The most frequently cited priority areas for improvement, both for themselves and their teams, were: up-to-date teaching techniques (66.6%), classroom management (66.6%), and using technology (25.0%). Classroom management was often mentioned in the context of new or less experienced teachers. One teacher leader (TL 3) stated: "A new teacher wants to get more help in classroom issues but older ones want to hear new things."

They also mentioned a need for support in areas like technology and techniques related to teaching vocabulary and grammar effectively. TL 4 explained, "But I feel like I need to give more to my teachers. In terms of adopting new strategies, new teaching, such as new words, like teaching lexis... Okay, using technologies, classroom, etc."

4.1.4 Theme 4: Leadership skills

The final main theme derived from the interviews was leadership skills, which encompassed three sub-themes: personal attributes, creating motivation, and managing school policies. The sub-theme Personal Attributes included empathy (41.6%), fairness (33.3%), and soft skills (66.6%). The high percentage for soft skills indicates this area was perceived as highly important for effective team mentoring.

Participants also mentioned the challenge of managing inter-collegial communication. TL 6 highlighted this difficulty, stating: "The most challenging part

is to, I think, balance the communication issues that happen between teachers. If you don't solve that problem, then they won't be able to work collaboratively together and work effectively..."

The sub-theme creating motivation was expressed as vital by 50% of the participating teacher leaders. This indicated a need to learn more about how to create team spirit and motivate colleagues as a leader.

The sub-theme managing school policies was also cited as important by half (50.0%) of the participating teacher leaders. This indicated that aligning teachers with school policies was perceived as a vital part of the leadership role. This bridging role was articulated by TL 4, who stated, "I talk to teachers to mentor them. I am a bridge between administration and my teachers. We talk about parents, and what is needed or asked from the from the administration."

She elaborated on her duties:

"We talk about the policy of what to expect, about our English department expectations... My advice will be first to get you to know the people that they will be working with and the importance of the people. The responsibilities of these people. How do they interact with each other? Expectations of head office on campus. Hmm, what are the expectations? It is also important to know how to work well with everybody. The school has a system., and then this is also very important to follow up with the emails. Communication is really is really important." (TL 4)

In summary, the interview data addressing RQ1 identified observation skills, feedback skills, knowledge of mentoring (particularly pedagogical knowledge), and leadership skills as the four most critical themes for inclusion in the proposed training program. The subsequent stage of the needs analysis focused on lesson observation data to further refine and finalize the training content.

4.2 The observed classroom practices of teacher leaders before intervention

This second stage of the study used lesson observations to more effectively inform the design and content of the training program by addressing Research Question 2:

RQ2: What are the observed classroom practices of the teacher leaders?

Following the interviews, the researcher observed seventeen (17) lessons taught by teacher leaders across five different schools. The lesson observation notes included field notes for each lesson stage. The commentary section of each observation was analyzed using open coding to identify specific weaknesses and strengths in teaching techniques and skills.

Overall analysis of the observation notes revealed three main themes structuring the observed teaching practice: Planning, Interaction, and Delivery, each containing specific sub-themes (see Table 8). It summarizes the observed strengths and weaknesses within these three areas as part of the needs analysis.

Planning has sub-themes such as task design, aims, staging, and materials. Interaction has sub-themes such as student involvement and teacher L2 use, whereas the theme delivery had three sub themes: giving instructions, feedback, and timing.

Table 8. Lesson Observation Themes (Before Intervention)

Theme	Sub - Theme	Strengths			Weaknesses		
			N (17)	%	E.g.	N (17)	%
Planning	Task design				Lack of a clear task e.g. just watch the video	8	47.0
					Lack of communicative tasks	12	70.0
		Context setting	4	23.5	Lack of a lead-in activity	13	75.5
	Aims	A clear main aim	7	41.2	Lack of a clear main aim	10	58.8
	Staging	Smooth transition-	8	47	Lack of sequential organization	9	53
	Materials	Visual and engaging input	6	35.2	-		
		Level appropriate	8	47		9	53
Interaction	Student involvement	Pair work	2	11.8	Lack of Pair/ Group work	15	88.2
		Praising	4	23.5	Lack of involvement (off task)	9	52.9
					High TTT	17	100
	Teacher L2 use	Only L2 use from the teacher	17	100	-	-	-
Delivery	Instructions	Clear simple instructions	7	41.1	Not clear instruction	10	58.8
		Instruction check questions used	5	30	Lack of instruction check questions	12	70
					Long and complex teacher language when giving instruction	10	58.8
	Feedback	Answer key used	12	70	No feedback given	5	30
		Students were involved in FB	5	30	Students were not involved in FB stage	12	70.0
					Lack of variety e.g. only nominating sts all the time	5	30
		Echoing			Repeating sts answers unnecessarily	6	35.2
	Timing				Sts not having enough time for the activity	6	35.2

Note: %: The number of TLs mentioning the theme /total number TLs .See Appendix I for operational definitions.

4.2.1 Theme 1: Planning

The first main theme identified in the observation data analysis was planning, encompassing four sub-themes: task design, aims, staging, and materials use.

The sub-theme task design was revealed to be more a weakness than a strength. Lack of an assigned task was noted in eight lessons (47.0%). For instance, in lesson 14, students were instructed to read a text aloud but were not assigned a gist reading task to confirm comprehension. A more widespread issue was the lack of communicative tasks, noted in twelve lessons (70.0%). This absence is critical in the EFL context, as it fails to provide students with genuine opportunities to practice the target language.

The sub-theme aims was also a primary weakness, with the majority of observed lessons (ten lessons, 58.8%) having unclear aims. For example, in lesson 7, the teacher leader announced the main aim as reading, yet most of the lesson was dedicated to vocabulary, not reading practice. Other issues related to aims involved the teaching of language skills. For instance, in lesson 3, the main aim was listed as listening, but the students were only involved in repetition rather than authentic practice (e.g., listening for gist or specific information). Conversely, seven lessons (41.2%) were observed to have clear aims that were successfully achieved. These effective lessons tended to focus on vocabulary or grammar rather than the integration of language skills (reading or listening).

The sub-theme staging was weak in nine lessons (53.0%) due to issues related to sequential order. These issues included the absence of post-listening or post-reading activities (Lessons 7, 8) or the failure to pre-teach necessary vocabulary before a reading task (Lesson 5). However, eight lessons (47.0%) demonstrated smooth sequential ordering.

The final planning sub-theme, materials, revealed both strengths and weaknesses. Strengths were noted in the use of visual and engaging input, such as songs, role plays, chanting, and rewards, observed in six lessons (35.2%). For example, Lessons 5, 7, and 8 featured interactive activities like counting games and songs, while Lessons 4 and 10 included effective role-play activities. Level-appropriate materials were observed in eight lessons (47.0%) but were lacking (too difficult or too easy) in nine lessons (53.0%). In summary, while materials showed strengths in being visually engaging, the level appropriateness was a noted weakness.

4.2.2 Theme 2: Interaction

The second main theme identified was Interaction, with sub-themes focusing on student involvement and teacher L2 use.

Interaction showed a notable strength in teacher L2 use, as all lessons observed (100%) demonstrated the teacher communicating exclusively in English (L2) with the students (see Table 8). Conversely, student involvement was a clear weakness. Fifteen lessons (88.2%) lacked interaction variety, showing minimal or no use of pair or group work, while only two lessons (11.8%) included any pair work activities.

Interaction issues were underscored by high Teacher Talk Time (TTT) in all lessons observed (100%) (see Table 8). This high TTT demonstrated a clear need to increase Student Talk Time (STT) to balance the interaction pattern, which was primarily teacher-to-student. Furthermore, nine lessons (52.9%) included notes regarding students being off-task or showing low interaction. While four lessons showed instances of teacher praise (Lessons 5, 7, 8, 12), L2 use was the only

consistent strength, contrasting sharply with the widespread weakness of limited interaction patterns (i.e., lack of pair/group work).

This lack of student involvement strongly indicated a need for lessons to be managed in a more student-centered way, shifting the interaction pattern to include more student-to-student talk (STT) through pair or group work rather than relying solely on whole-class activities.

4.2.3 Theme 3: Delivery

The final main theme analyzed was Delivery, which revealed distinct strengths and weaknesses.

The sub-theme instructions was a primary area of weakness, indicating a clear need for training in successful instruction delivery. The main weaknesses observed were: unclear instructions (58.8%), the use of complex language during instruction (58.8%), and a widespread lack of instruction check questions (70.0%) (see Table 9). These issues show a consistent failure to appropriately grade the language to the students' level, alongside the critical omission of checking for understanding. Therefore, raising teacher awareness regarding their language use during instruction delivery was identified as a necessary component of the training to increase lesson effectiveness.

The sub-theme feedback revealed that providing an answer key was a strength in 70.0% of the lessons observed. However, 12 lessons (70.0%) showed a pattern of the teacher providing the answers verbally or writing them on the board for the whole class, a method that limits student involvement. This passive feedback delivery was noted as a weakness, alongside the complete lack of feedback in 30.0% of observed lessons. Consequently, incorporating techniques for increasing student

involvement in the feedback stage (e.g., nominating students to provide answers) was identified as a key training focus emerging from the observation data.

Finally, timing issues were noted as a weakness in 6 lessons (35.2%), where students were not given sufficient time for activities. While not a dominant weakness, this sub-theme was still included under the theme of delivery.

4.2.4 The summary of needs analysis results (RQ1 and RQ2)

The lesson observation analysis (RQ2) highlighted critical areas for improvement:

Task design (specifically, the need for communicative tasks); interaction patterns (high TTT, low student involvement, limited interaction variety); and delivery issues (unclear instructions and passive feedback methods).

In conclusion, the first phase of the study successfully identified the professional needs of teacher leaders within the given context. The combined results from the interviews (RQ1) and lesson observations (RQ2) confirmed four essential themes for the training program: Observation skills, Feedback skills, Knowledge of Mentoring (including pedagogical knowledge), and Leadership skills.

Specifically, the observation data refined the pedagogical content by highlighting the need for: student-centered teaching (via pair/group work), careful instruction delivery, effective planning and staging to serve the main aim, and enhanced feedback and teacher language use. The comments from teacher leaders and the empirical data from the observations were both meticulously considered to structure the training's materials, task designs, content, and delivery.

4.3 The changes in the reported mentoring practices after intervention (RQ3)

The second phase of the study involved the implementation of the designed mentor training program, delivered by external facilitators. A post-intervention interview was conducted with teacher leaders approximately six weeks after the training concluded. This section reports the data analysis related to the third research question (RQ3).

RQ3: In what ways did the training program affect the previously reported mentoring practices of the teacher leaders?

The comparison of teacher leaders' reported practices and perceptions before and after the training is summarized in Table 9. This table highlights the persistence and evolution of the main themes and sub-themes that emerged from the qualitative data, the details of which are discussed in the following subsections.

4.3.1 Theme 1: Observation skills

The first main theme, observation skills, revealed the persistence of the original three sub-themes (use of rubric, field notes, and focus areas) but with notable shifts in emphasis (see Table 10). Prior to the training, the main issues revolved around a perceived lack of knowledge regarding effective rubric use, field note taking, and identifying the appropriate focus area.

After the training, mentions of rubric use decreased from 9 interviews (75.0%) to 4 interviews (57.1%), while the use of field notes dramatically increased in reported practice from 4 interviews (33.3%) to 6 interviews (85.7%). Teacher leaders reported feeling more comfortable using field notes, finding the approach “more timely and friendly.”

Table 9. The Themes of the Interviews with TL (Before and After Intervention)

Theme	Sub theme	Details	N (12)	%	Sub themes After the training	N (7)	%
Observation skills	Planned classroom observation	Use of an observation rubric/form	9	75.0		4	57.1
		Focus areas	5	41.6		6	85.7
		Field notes	4	33.3		6	85.7
	Peer reflection		2	16.6			
					Managing stress of observees	2	28.5
					Importance of lesson observation	6	85.7
					Dealing with Perceptions and biases	2	28.5
Feedback skills	Oral feedback	Informal Dialogue	12	100		7	100
	Constructive Language-	Positive approach	8	66.6		5	71.4
					Attentive listening while giving FB	4	57.1
					building Trust	5	71.1
					Written feedback	3	42.8
Knowledge of Mentoring	Mentoring as a concept	Roles	9	75.0		5	71.1
		Guidance and support	8	66.6		4	57.1
		Mutual development	5	41.6		5	71.4
					Shared roles	3	42.8
	Pedagogical knowledge	Teaching Techniques and implementation	8	66.6		5	71.4
		Using technology	3	25.0		1	14.2
		Classroom management	8	66.6		-	
		Content knowledge	4	33.3		-	
					Interaction	7	100
					Task design	6	85.7
					Grading language	3	42.8
					Instruction	7	100
	Leadership skills	Empathy	5	41.6		2	28.5
		fairness	4	33.3		4	57.1
		Soft skills	8	66.6		5	71.2
		Creating motivation	6	50.0		6	85.7
		Managing policies	6	50.0		4	57.1
					Sharing experience	5	71.4
					Organizational skills	3	42.8
					Delegation	3	42.8

Note: %: The number of TLs mentioning the theme /total number TLs .See Appendix I for operational definitions.

Similarly, the ability to identify a focus area showed an increase in frequency, rising from 5 interviews (41.6%) to 6 interviews (85.7%), indicating greater confidence in knowing what to observe.

This shift was exemplified by TL 2, who stated:

"But I realized that I need to focus more on practice in class. I need to observe exactly the teaching practice and the students - not just tick the list - something I have learned from you in my training."

Table 10. Pre and Post Interview Themes: Observation Skills

Theme	Sub theme	Details	N (12)	%	Sub themes After the training	N (7)	%
Observation skills	Planned classroom observation	Use of an observation rubric/form	9	75.0		4	57.1
		Focus areas	5	41.6		6	85.7
		Field notes	4	33.3		6	85.7
	Peer reflection		2	16.6			
					Managing stress of observees	2	28.5
					Importance of lesson observation	6	85.7
					Dealing with Perceptions and biases	2	28.5

Note: %: The number of TLs mentioning the theme /total number TLs .See Appendix I for operational definitions.

Furthermore, several new sub-themes emerged post-training: Managing the stress of observees and Dealing with perceptions and biases. These were both mentioned by 2 teacher leaders (28.5%) and, despite the low frequency, represent new, positive learning outcomes directly attributable to the training.

A third new sub-theme was the Importance of lesson observation, mentioned by 6 teacher leaders (85.7%). This indicates a high awareness and appreciation for the purpose and value of the process post-training. TL 7 emphasized this renewed motivation stating:

I had a little concern about it, and because people were like, okay, even if you observe, that's nothing is gonna change... But these studies and the training also showed that this is a need. It's a part of the system to improve, so that gave me motivation to do my observations as a leader.

In a similar vein, TL 5 viewed observations as constructive, commenting:

"Observations are good because they create a sharing platform."

In summary, the post-training results for the Observation theme showed a positive shift toward process and purpose. Teacher leaders reported a change in practice (e.g., favoring field notes over strict rubric use), expressed greater confidence in identifying focus areas, and showed a deeper belief in the value of the process (85.7%), indicating that the training successfully addressed the identified needs related to observation

4.3.2 Theme 2: Feedback skills

The second main theme analyzed was feedback skills. Prior to the training, this theme had two primary sub-themes: oral feedback and constructive languages also shown in Table 11.

The sub-theme oral feedback revealed that all participating teacher leaders (100%) initially preferred informal dialogues or "chats" immediately after lesson observations. Critically, none mentioned providing structured or written feedback in the pre-intervention interviews. Following the training, however, three teacher leaders (42.8%) reported that they had started giving written feedback in addition to

their informal oral chats. This change highlights a move towards more structured practice, as articulated by one TL.

Yes, sometimes we do not spare some time for self-reflection, because after each observation we are in a kind of hurry. We have other classes to teach and there's always a rush for something else. So actually. Yes, after the training, I remember taking a specific time taking some, you know, a reserved time to share my ideas with my colleague written and orally. This helped a lot (TL 5, post-interview).

Table 11. Pre and Post Interview Themes: Feedback Skills

Theme	Sub theme	Details	N (12)	%	Sub themes After the training	N (7)	%
Feedback skills	Oral feedback	Informal Dialogue	12	100		7	100
	Constructive Language-	Positive approach	8	66.6		5	71.4
					Attentive listening while giving FB	4	57.1
					building Trust	5	71.1
					Written feedback	3	42.8

Note: %: The number of TLs mentioning the theme /total number TLs .See Appendix I for operational definitions.

All teacher leaders commented on their increased awareness regarding the constructive language used during feedback delivery. Even experienced teacher leaders noted the impact of the training on their word choice. TL 7 emphasized: “I have noticed that the selection of the words, we can be really careful about the word selections”. She added that she now feels more positive about giving feedback overall. This awareness translated into tactical changes, such as moving the focus from problems to solutions and action planning. TL 7 explained the new departmental strategy:

We always talk about the problems. But what if we came up with the solution part? And now we think about the solutions. Now we say then, for our next meeting, let's come up with solutions, suggestions, and an action plan. That

was a new strategy or a decision made in our department (TL 7, post training interviews).

The training also improved the teacher leaders' confidence in handling challenging feedback situations. For instance, one TL recounted a meeting where her feedback was initially misunderstood. She employed newly learned techniques to navigate exchange:

I thought about what I'm gonna say, I prepared myself, and I prepared all the scenarios that can happen at that point. I used re-directing and paraphrasing. For that example, the teacher didn't like the sentence, so I can explain myself with another soft sentence, and by making her say it with the help of questions. So, she left happy, that's why I was happy (TL 7, post training interviews).

The teacher leaders' expressed need for more feedback techniques in the pre-study interviews was addressed through the emergence of two highly frequent new sub-themes post-training: Attentive listening while giving feedback (57.1%) and building trust (71.4%). Teacher leaders reported realizing the importance of being effective listeners. TL 3 summarized this shift in self-perception:

“I was like listening before too, of course, but I am a better listener now, I think when I look at them, I think I know how they feel. I try to see their feelings as well, not just words.”

In short, the post-interview data showed a significant increase in the teacher leaders' awareness of language use and their adoption of new techniques and strategies, such as incorporating written feedback, solution-focused dialogue, attentive listening, and trust-building. This suggests the training successfully enhanced the teacher leaders' skill set for providing effective and supportive feedback.

4.3.3 Theme 3: The knowledge of mentoring

Table 12 displays the third main category, knowledge of mentoring, comparing pre- and post-training interview results across two sub-themes: Mentoring as a concept and Pedagogical knowledge.

Table 12. Pre and Post Interview Themes: The Knowledge of Mentoring

Theme	Sub theme	Details	N (12)	%	Sub themes After the training	N (7)	%
Knowledge of Mentoring	Mentoring as a concept	Roles	9	75.0		5	71.1
		Guidance and support	8	66.6		4	57.1
		Mutual development	5	41.6		5	71.4
	Pedagogical knowledge				Shared roles	3	42.8
		Teaching Techniques and implementation	8	66.6		5	71.4
		Using technology	3	25.0		1	14.2
		Classroom management	8	66.6		-	
		Content knowledge	4	33.3		-	
					Interaction	7	100
					Task design	6	85.7
					Grading language	3	42.8
					Instruction	7	100

Note: %: The number of TLs mentioning the theme /total number TLs .See Appendix I for operational definitions.

Prior to the intervention, teacher leaders expressed a need for clarity on the core components of mentoring, specifically referencing roles (75.0%), mutual development (41.6%), and providing guidance and support (66.6%). Post-training data showed a slight decrease in the discussion of roles (to 71.4%) and guidance and support (to 57.1%), suggesting that the training had addressed these needs, making

them less of an explicit concern. Conversely, mutual development saw a significant increase in discussion, rising from 41.6% to 71.4%. This shift indicates that teacher leaders embraced the idea of mentoring as a two-way learning process.

Furthermore, Shared roles (42.8%) appeared as a new emergent concept. Three teacher leaders mentioned that they had begun to invite their colleagues to observe their own lessons, adopting a new practice of acting as a learning partner and modeling instructions.

The second sub-theme was pedagogical knowledge. Before the training, the most prominent areas of concern were teaching techniques and implementation (66.6%), classroom management (66.6%), content knowledge (33.3%), and using technology (25%).

Post-training, discussion of teaching techniques increased slightly to 71.4%, with most teacher leaders (1, 2, 3, 5) commenting on a positive change in their teaching and a subsequent positive effect on their teams. TL 3 noted the personal benefit:

...reviewing some styles, or like teaching skills like they were effective for me, because, like you're feeling like you're repeating yourself after a while at the same time in this training, I have put so many like, you know, new information onto that. And then I started to discuss everything like some teamwork (TL 3, post training interviews).

Another TL, reflecting on the renewal of her methods, stated:

This is crystal clear that it changed, it definitely changed, actually, it's renewed me. And it just cleaned it to us all over my teaching methods advanced techno straight. I started using them. I thought I found myself using them. Unconsciously in my classes. This helped me. I really wanted to just kind of prepare lively presentations for my students and share with my teachers so I am having more fun classes. There is more fun in my teachers' classes, too (TL 1, post interview).

While using technology remained a low focus (14.2%), classroom management and content knowledge were not directly mentioned post-training,

suggesting these specific needs were either addressed or superseded by more practical, newly emphasized areas.

Instead, several new sub-themes emerged with high frequency, directly correlating to the pedagogical areas highlighted in the needs analysis (RQ2): Interaction (100%), Instruction (100%), Task design (85.7%), and Grading language (42.8).

All teacher leaders (100%) reported an awareness of the need to increase Interaction in their classrooms. TL 1 admitted that group work was previously a "hassle," but now both she and her team feel more confident implementing interactive activities:

I decided to fight with that, and I'm you know, kind of gain, more patience, maybe with more confidence. Now they are going better in my class than before. You know my students are more productive. And this there's more interaction. This started to be the case with my teachers as well. But I need more time for that change in the team (TL 1, post-interviews).

Task design was mentioned by six teacher leaders (85.7%). TL 2 highlighted the shift toward communicative practice, stating, "If a teacher, it's creating an environment in the classroom which is free for students to express themselves in a freeway, and they are ready to speak... this teacher is more successful to me. So, teachers use that language. We are doing this more now." This increased focus also extended to grammar teaching, which became more learner-centered.

Yes, like I don't teach directly and give the rules anymore. I make them bolder, and I make. I make them wonder ask questions and come up with an answer. The end result is the product. Where I want to go, anyway. And I don't just give it to them, and they come up with it. So on, my teachers make the students wonder more and use the language more (TL 4, post training interviews).

Instructions (100%) and grading language (42.8%) also became explicit areas of focus. All teacher leaders reported self-observing their instruction delivery. TL 3 noted that giving clear and visual instructions helped him overcome his hesitation about group work, which used to be chaotic. TL 7 confirmed her enhanced awareness of the need to simplify and grade her language, especially when giving instructions.

the three of the teacher leaders stated an awareness about the teacher grading their language. For example, teacher leader 7 is more careful about their own language and try to simplify their language more especially when giving instructions.

In conclusion, the post-intervention analysis showed a positive change in the teacher leaders' conceptual understanding of mentoring, shifting toward mutual development and shared roles. Crucially, their pedagogical knowledge was directly enhanced, leading to greater self-reflection and reported improvements in key areas like interaction, task design, instruction delivery, and the adoption of a more learner-focused teaching philosophy.

4.3.4 Theme 4: Leadership skills

Table 13 illustrates the last main theme, Leadership Skills, which comprised three initial sub-themes: Personal attributes, Creating motivation, and Managing school policies. Three additional strategic sub-themes emerged post-training: Sharing experience, Organizational skills, and Delegation.

Table 13. Pre and Post Interview Themes: Leadership Skills

Theme	Sub theme	Details	N (12)	%	Sub themes After the training	N (7)	%
Leadership skills	Personal attributes	Empathy	5	41.6		2	28.5
		fairness	4	33.3		4	57.1
		Soft skills	8	66.6		5	71.2
	Creating motivation		6	50.0		6	85.7
	Managing policies		6	50.0		4	57.1
					Sharing experience	5	71.4
					Organizational skills	3	42.8
					Delegation	3	42.8

Note: %: The number of TLs mentioning the theme /total number TLs .See Appendix I for operational definitions.

Pre-training interviews categorized personal attributes into empathy (41.6%), fairness (33.3%), and soft skills (66.6%). Post-training, discussions of empathy decreased (to 28.5%), while the perceived importance of fairness increased significantly, rising from 33.3% to 57.1%.

The use of soft skills and effective communication also saw a slight increase (from 66.6% to 71.2%). Several teacher leaders (TLs 1, 2, 3, 4) reported that the training positively transformed their communication style. TL 2 summarized the key takeaways:

...I started to work more open doors and this helped in my communication and relationship with the teachers. When I observe and guide them for professional growth, I try to be as transparent as possible with my intentions. - open doors in terms of leading is new (TL 2, post training interviews).

Another teacher leader (TL 4) noted that the training helped manage her communication style, leading to better team perception:

I tried to cool myself down and try to understand, try to be a better listener, and try to try to be brief, brief, you know, and clear with my teachers in terms of communication. So, it has been really helpful (TL 4, post training interviews).

The sub-theme creating motivation saw a marked increase in reported frequency, rising from 50.0% to 85.7% post-training. This suggests the teacher leaders not only prioritized motivation but actively adopted strategies to cultivate it. TL 1, an experienced teacher, noted that the training acted as a personal “refresh”:

I am refreshed; I am refreshed. I am 47 years old, and I have been teaching for 25 years, so of course you lose your spirit, you lose your motivation. You may lose your belief in teaching, you'll lose your love for teaching, considering the life conditions that the teachers are facing in real life. So many negative things directly affect you while you are doing your job. So, I was a little bit unmotivated and depressed. But this training probably addresses my needs of coaching, mentoring, and leadership, and they are combined with teaching. So, one side I had information about what I do. But on the other side, my motivation is boosted, and I am refreshed. I think the team is more eager to change and try new things as well (TL 1, post -training interviews).

The third initial sub-theme, managing school policies, maintained a similar level of importance, slightly increasing from 50.0% to 57.1% post-training.

Three new sub-themes related to strategic leadership emerged post-training: Sharing experience, Delegation, and Organizational Skills.

Sharing experience (71.4%) was reported as a new practice where teacher leaders actively encouraged peer-to-peer learning within their teams. This was tied directly to delegation (42.8%), which enabled teacher leaders to distribute responsibilities. TL 1 emphasized the shift from micromanaging to empowering the team:

I was micromanaging all processes. I had this training. So, something has changed in me. So, if you want to change others, you have to change yourself as I change, and number one roles for example, giving more responsibility, making people feel more important and part of sth. ...the whole process started to make changes in that with bits, step by step, I am less tired at the end of the day in this, even when I'm giving feedback. I am not running after them or chasing them for changing this, they make a list as part of the action plan (TL 1-post training interviews).

This increased delegation also influenced organizational skills (42.8%). Three teacher leaders reported that the training positively affected how they manage their time and duties. TL 5 stated: "I'm more organized right now... I know how much time I should spend on a subject, on a thing. I'm doing better at communicating things to the team."

In short, the training fostered a transition from a reactive leadership style to a more strategic and distributed approach. Teacher leaders reported significant improvements in using soft skills and communication (transparency), experiencing a personal motivation boost, and successfully adopting new managerial practices like delegation and enhancing their organizational skills.

4.4 The observed classroom practices of teacher leaders after intervention

This section presents the comparative analysis of the lesson observation data collected after the mentor training program, addressing the fourth research question:

RQ4: In what ways did the training program affect the observe classroom practices of the teacher leaders?

The researcher observed eleven (11) post-training lessons, taught by both teacher leaders and their team members, across five schools. The post-training data was analyzed using the established themes from the needs analysis phase (RQ2)—Planning, Interaction, and Delivery—to identify changes in observed strengths (Table 14) and (Table 15).

4.4.1 Observed strengths after intervention

The post-training observation data revealed a notable increase in the frequency of observed strengths across all three themes in Table 14.

The training demonstrated a strong positive effect on the Planning theme, particularly in the sub-themes of context setting and aims:

*The Context Setting: The number of lessons starting with a context or lead-in activity increased dramatically from four lessons (23.5%) pre-training to 9 lessons (81.8%) post- training.

*Aims: Lessons presented with a clear aim increased from seven lessons (41.2%) to 8 lessons (72.7%).

*Materials: Observed use of visual and engaging input increased significantly from 35.2% to 72.7%, and the use of level-appropriate materials increased from 52.9% to 81.8%.

*Staging: Smooth transitions between activities increased from eight lessons (47.0%) to seven lessons (63.6%).

Crucially, task design, a major weakness in the needs analysis, emerged as a strength post-training with two new sub-themes: Communicative Tasks: Observed in five lessons (45.4%). Inductive Teaching: Observed in seven lessons 63.6%).

Table 14. Observed Strengths Before and After Intervention

Theme	Sub - Theme	Strengths Pre-Training			Strengths After the Training		
			N (17)	%		N (11)	%
Planning	Task design				Communicative Tasks	5	45.4
					Inductive teaching	7	63.6
	Context setting		4	23.5		9	81.8
	Aims	A clear main aim	7	41.2		8	72.7
	Staging	Smooth transition-	8	47		7	63.6
	Materials	Visual and engaging input	6	35.2	-	8	72.7
		Level appropriate	9	52.9		9	81.8
Interaction	Student involvement	Pair work	2	11.8		7	63.6
		Praising	4	23.5		4	36.3
					Prolonged Engagement	7	63.6
	Teacher L2 use	Only L2 use from the teacher	17	100	-	11	100
Delivery	Instructions	Clear simple instructions	7	41.1		7	63.6
		Instruction check questions used	5	30		6	54
					Instructions supported by modelling	6	54
	Feedback	Verbal answer and written answers	12	70.6		11	100
		Students were involved in FB	5	30		8	72.7
					Elicitation	6	54.5

Note: %: The number of TLs mentioning the theme /total number TLs .See Appendix I for operational definitions.

The interaction theme, which had the fewest strengths pre-training, showed the most dramatic improvement. For example, in terms of pair/group work (Student Involvement), the observed frequency of student-to-student interaction (pair or group work) increased sharply from two lessons (11.8%) to seven lessons (63.6%). In terms of prolonged engagement, a new sub-theme, seven lessons (63.6%), indicating sustained, genuine dialogue following the initial teacher-student.

In some other sub areas under interaction like praising and L2 use, the results did not show much change: The frequency of teacher praise increased slightly from 23.5% to 36%, and teacher L2 Use, as the baseline strength remained constant, with 100% of all lessons showing L2 use from the teacher.

The strengths within the delivery theme were also significantly enhanced, particularly in Instruction and Feedback. There was a dramatic positive change in the subtheme of giving clear and simple instructions from 41.1% to 63.6 %. Seven lessons observed seemed to be strong in terms of having clear and simple instructions. In five lessons (30%) observed the teacher leader supported giving instructions by using some check questions whereas six lessons (54%) observed after the intervention seemed to have instruction check questions. As a new sub theme to giving instructions, modelling emerged in post lesson observation data. Six of the lessons (54%) observed had the teacher supporting given instructions by using a model or an example A summary of the changes in terms of observed strengths would be:

- Clear Instructions: Increased from 7 lessons (41.1%) to 7 lessons (63.6%).
- Instruction Check Questions (ICQs): Use of ICQs increased from 5 lessons (30.0%) to 6 lessons (54.5%).

- Modelling: Modelling emerged as a new strength, observed in 6 lessons (54.5%), where teachers supported instructions with examples.
- Feedback: The teacher provided verbal or written answers in all 11 lessons (100%), up from 70.6% pre-training.
- Student Involvement in Feedback: Student nomination and active participation in the feedback stage increased from five lessons (30.0%) to eight lessons (72.7%).
- Elicitation: Elicitation emerged as a new strength, observed in six lessons (54.5%), indicating teachers were drawing answers from students rather than explaining directly.

4.4.2 Observed weaknesses after intervention

The analysis of weaknesses confirmed that the training led to a considerable reduction in the frequency of problematic practices across all themes in Table 15.

The data analysis after the training under the theme of planning included sub-themes such as task design, context setting, aims, staging and materials. All weaknesses related to planning decreased significantly post- training. A summary of the changes can be listed as below.

- Lack of Context Setting (Lead-in): Reduced from thirteen lessons (75.5%) to two lessons (18.1%).
- Lack of a Clear Aim: Reduced from ten lessons (58.8%) to five lessons (45.4%).

Table 15. Observed Weaknesses (Before and After Intervention)

Theme	Sub - Theme	Details	Before the Tr.		After the Tr.	
			N (17)	%	N (11)	%
Planning	Task design	Lack of a clear task e.g. just watch the video	8	47.0	5	45.4
		Lack of communicative tasks	12	70.05	5	45.4
	Context setting	Lack of a lead-in activity	13	75.5	2	18.1
	Aims	Lack of a clear main aim	10	58.8	5	45.4
	Staging	Lack of sequential organization	9	53	4	36.3
Interaction	Student involvement	Lack of Pair/ Group work	15	88.2	4	36.3
		Lack of involvement (off task)	9	52.9	5	45.4
		High TTT	17	100	7	63.6
Delivery	Instruction	Not clear instruction	10	58.8	4	36.3
		Lack of instruction check questions	12	70	5	45.4
	Feedback	Long and complex teacher language when giving instruction	10	58.8	5	45.4
		No feedback given	5	29.4	-	0
		Students were not involved in FB stage	12	70.0	3	27.2
		Lack of variety e.g. only nominating sts all the time	5	30	4	36.3
		Echoing	6	35.2	4	36.3
	Timing	Sts not having enough time for the activity	6	35.2	4	36.3

Note: %: The number of TLs mentioning the theme /total number TLs .See Appendix I for operational definitions.

- Lack of Communicative Tasks: Reduced from twelve lessons (70.0%) to five lessons (36.3%).
- Lack of Sequential Organization (Staging): Reduced from nine lessons (53.0%) to four lessons (36.3%).

The lack of a communicative task were the two sub areas listed in the needs analysis as a weakness. The task-related issues listed themes such as a lack of a task seemed to decrease from 47%. to 45 %. The number of lessons noted down with lack of a communicative task dropped from. 12 lessons (70.05%) to 5 lessons (45.4 %). Only

two lessons observed after the training (18.1%) had no context in a lead-in activity instead of 13 lessons with no set context in the needs analysis phase (75.5%).

Lessons observed with a lack of a clear aim dropped from 10 lessons (58.8%) to 5 lessons (45.4%). Similarly, the lessons observed seemed to have a better sequential order in terms of staging e.g. pre vocab followed by a reading or listening. Nine lessons (53%) were noted with a staging problem in the needs analysis whereas only 5 lessons (36.3%) observed were noted down for sequential issues with activities.

The major weaknesses in Interaction were significantly mitigated. When we look at the second main theme, the amount of interaction after the training in terms of observed weaknesses seems to decrease sharply after the training (from 88.2% to 36.3%). One-way interaction from the teacher to the whole class were noted down to remain as an issue in four lessons (36.3%) in the post training lesson observations. Another aspect of interaction with a weakness was a lack of student involvement e.g. student being off task or not interested in the lesson. This was observed in nine lessons (52.9%) before the training, and dropped to 5 lessons (45.4%) after the training. High teacher talk time decreased considerably after the training (TTT) (100% to 63.6%).

The training successfully reduced issues related to instruction and eliminated the most critical feedback failure. For example, no clear instruction was observed in four lessons (36.3%) instead of ten lessons (58.8%) identified with this issue in the needs analysis phase. Lack of instruction check questions were noticed in twelve lessons (70%) in the needs analysis. This number dropped to five lessons (45.4%) after the intervention. Long and complex teacher language used when giving instructions seemed to from ten lessons (58.8%) to five lessons (45.4) observed.

Another issue that was stated as one of the main themes was the feedback given to the students after each activity and task. No feedback given was a theme that got a noticeable change in frequency. Five lessons (29.4%) were noted down with missing feedback and none of the lessons were noted down with this in the lessons observed after the training.

Lack of student involvement when giving feedback was another issue noted down in twelve lessons (70%). This noticeably dropped to three lessons (27.2%) after the intervention.

Some minor weaknesses remained consistent: a lack of variety in feedback (30.0% to 36.3%), echoing (35.2% to 36.3%), and timing issues (35.2% to 36.3%). These minor increases reflect the shifting focus of observation after major weaknesses were addressed.

4.5 The evaluation of the training program

The final stage of the study focused on evaluating the proposed mentor training program, addressing research question five:

RQ5: How do the teacher leaders evaluate the proposed mentor training program in terms of content, delivery, structure, and pacing?

The themes that emerged from the post-intervention interviews regarding the program's evaluation are summarized in Table 16. Teacher leaders generally agreed on the positive aspects of the training, though some differences emerged in their suggestions for improvement.

4.5.1 Content evaluation

Teacher leaders were highly positive about the program's content, which was designed based on the needs analysis (RQ1 and RQ2), targeting mentoring skills, pedagogical knowledge, observation/feedback, and leadership.

Table 16. The Interview Themes - Evaluation of the Training Program

	Positive	Negative	Suggestions
Content	Refreshing (4)	More time for discussions (3)	Supporting sharing more (4)
	Comprehensive (6)	Attendance (3)	Moodle being active (5)
	Effective (7)		
	Reflective teaching (5)	–	
	Reflective-leading (5)		
	Teaching techniques (4)		
	Supportive Terminology (2)		
Delivery	Face to face (7)		Online communities (2)
	Moodle support (7)		Collaboration between teacher leaders. (5)
Structure	Applicable (7)		
	Helpful Moodle modules (7)		
Time allowed	Feasible (7)	More time for Moodle (3)	
	Enough (7)		

All participants (seven) stated the content was highly effective and comprehensive.

The content was reported to meet its aim, providing helpful strategies and techniques to both experienced and new teacher leaders, particularly in mentoring skills and leading.

One of the main areas of change that was mentioned was in leadership and communication. For instance, TL 3 mentioned that she became a better leader since she has become a better listener now by saying that:

.. I think I accepted every teacher as they were, and this made my job a lot easier. I listen more. I was like listening like before too, of course, but I am a better listener, when I look at them, I think I know how they feel. I used to interrupt more I am giving them space to explain(TL3, post training interviews).

Another teacher leader used a metaphor about how the content was helpful to make her reflection. She revealed this by saying: “I started to feel this whole process of observing as a mirror, and I started to have more empathy.” (TL1, post training interviews)

The content was thought to be highly reflective of both their teaching (5) and their leading/mentoring (5) roles. One participant noted the value of establishing a theoretical foundation for their existing practices, finding the training supportive in clarifying the terminology (2) of mentoring. TL 4 summarized this reflective change:

...as I said, I enjoyed the training, and I found it eye-opening, and then. And it had me notice many of the aspects of my teaching. It made a difference in my teaching 30- 40 percent of change in a positive way (TL 4, post training interview).

The content was also reported as refreshing (4), particularly in terms of teaching terms of teaching techniques (4). For example, one participant said she gives better instructions and uses more group work in her teaching as well. Teacher leader 4 said that these areas showed an improvement of 30-40 percent in her teaching. One of the teacher leaders explained how it helped them reflect on their teaching by stating

...as I said, I enjoyed the training, and I found it eye-opening, and then. And it had me notice many of the aspects of my teaching. It made a difference in my

teaching 30- 40 percent of change in a positive way (TL 4, post training interview).

On the other hand, three teacher leaders suggested that the content needed more time for discussions during the face-to-face sessions, indicating the high value placed on collaborative.

4.5.2 Delivery, structure and pacing evaluation

The delivery method and structure were overwhelmingly positive, with the blended approach seen as a key strength.

Delivery Method: All teacher leaders (7) preferred the face-to-face format for its interactive and supportive nature. All also appreciated that the face-to-face sessions were supported by the Moodle platform. Teacher leaders saw Moodle as effective for post-session reflection and review. One shared this by stating “Discussions on the platform were really effective for me. I could think more afterward.” (TL 3, post-training interviews)

They all also liked the fact that face-to-face training was supported by the Moodle platform. For example, one teacher leader thought the Moodle part was effective since it supported the discussion and made her think about the issues more after the training as well. She said, “Discussions on the platform were really effective for me. I could think more afterward (TL 3, post-training interviews).” Supporting the same idea, another teacher leader commented on how helpful the platform was as follows:

So the best part of those 4 modules, I think, is like it gives you a chance to review all the stuff after a while again and again, because all the methods of those 4 modules, I think, is like it gives you a chance to review all, that stuff, after a while again, and again, because all the materials and the articles that you are presenting us as materials. I downloaded many of them, and I kept all those as a kind of archive in order to go through them one more time, because as a team leader and also as a deputy principal, I thought that there were

many things that really refer to my job and my position (TL 7, post training interviews).

Structure: All participants gave positive comments on the modular system used in Moodle, which provided a feeling of progress and clarity. The face-to-face sessions helped clarify the structure and expectations of the overall course.

Pacing: All participants found the seven-week program duration enough and feasible overall. While some reported personal time issues (TLs 1, 2, 3) and attendance issues for the face-to-face sessions (TLs 4, 5, 7), they agreed that the general flow of the training compensated for these difficulties.

4.5.3 Suggestions for long-term support

The evaluation identified a strong consensus on the need for ongoing support to ensure the long-term application of the training takeaways.

- i. Post-Study engagement: All participants wanted the Moodle platform to remain active after the study concluded, stating this would aid in long-term memory and practice of the techniques.
- ii. Increased sharing and collaboration: Four teacher leaders (TLs 1, 2, 4, 6) suggested more sharing opportunities after the training. Specifically, two teacher leaders (TLs 1 and 3) suggested creating an online community (e.g., via Moodle or Facebook) for teacher leaders to share issues and ideas.
- iii. Peer support: The majority of teacher leaders (TLs 1, 2, 4, 6, and 7) expressed readiness to share what they learned and collaborate with newer teacher leaders. This desire for ongoing peer mentorship was highlighted by a newer TL (five years of experience) who wished she

had received such training earlier and felt online communities would provide much-needed support.

The proposed mentor training program was well-received by all participants. The content effectively served its aim, providing helpful strategies and techniques to both experienced and new teacher leaders, particularly in mentoring skills and leadership. All teacher leaders reported that the study helped them reflect and improve upon their performance as teachers themselves, not just as leaders. The blended delivery method was found to be effective, though there is a strong suggestion to implement formalized, ongoing peer support mechanisms post-training to solidify the knowledge and skills gained.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The final chapter presents a discussion of the study's findings, offering a brief summary and interpretation of the results with reference to the related literature. This chapter also includes the implications, limitations, and recommendations for further research.

5.1 The reported mentoring practices and the needs of teacher leaders before intervention

The first phase of the study, which addressed Research Question 1 (expectations and needs of teacher leaders to fulfil the role of mentoring), revealed core concerns categorized into three main themes: Knowledge of Mentoring/Mentoring Skills, Observation/Feedback, and Leadership.

5.1.1 The conceptual need for mentoring knowledge

A significant finding in this phase was the expressed need for a comprehensive knowledge of mentoring as a concept and a role, a finding consistent with earlier studies (Akcan & Tatar, 2010; Mutlu & Kırmızı, 2022; Menegat, 2010). These studies, like the present research, underscore that effective mentoring requires a clear understanding of personal attributes, pedagogical knowledge, observation, and feedback skills.

Teacher leaders need to be able to facilitate guided reflection—helping teachers identify key learning points and connect their experiences to theoretical frameworks to drive professional growth. However, this study found that teacher

leaders require clear expectations about the scope and level of knowledge needed to observe, provide feedback, and facilitate reflection effectively. Without this foundational clarity, the mentor role becomes challenging to fulfill.

The identified needs align with literature that outlines essential skills for mentor training (Lipton, Wellman & Humbard, 2001; Horn & Kristin, 2021; Killian & Harrison, 2006; Parker, Zenkov, Glaser, 2021), including relationship building, active listening, communication skills, empathy, goal setting, and managing challenge/support balance.

5.1.2 Navigating diversity and goal alignment

A key concern raised by participants was the difficulty in adapting mentoring support for both experienced and novice teachers. This challenge centers on preparing for and navigating diverse perspectives within the mentoring relationship.

The literature suggests that rather than focusing solely on *compatibility* (Rhodes, 2023), mentoring can be highly effective when focused on goal alignment (Balcazar & Keys, 2014; Banerjee-Batist et al., 2019). When teacher leaders and teachers share explicit, mutually agreed-upon goals, it creates a sense of shared purpose and direction, boosting motivation and active participation (Balcazar & Keys, 2014). This alignment is often facilitated by deeper values alignment—shared core principles and beliefs—which builds a foundation of trust and understanding (Tuma & Dolan, 2024; Ensher et al., 2002). The teacher leaders' responsibility to connect with the team on this deeper level was referred to in the study's results as a need related to “communication roles”, confirming the literature's emphasis on the mentor's responsibility to connect with and address the mentee's specific needs.

5.1.3 The need for pedagogical knowledge as a baseline

Secondly, the results showed a noticeable disconnect between the teacher leaders' knowledge, the observation rubric, and the observation process itself, suggesting a fundamental weakness in pedagogical knowledge. The need for training in both pedagogy and teaching skills was identified as crucial for teacher leaders to effectively foster the professional growth of their teams.

This finding strongly supports recommendations in the literature:

*Content and Strategy Knowledge: Mentors must be able to recognize effective teaching strategies specific to the content area (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

*Deep Understanding of Effectiveness: Mentors require a deep understanding of research-based effective practices, including pedagogical approaches, classroom management, and assessment, to provide meaningful feedback (Hattie & Yates, 2014).

Without this baseline pedagogical knowledge, teacher leaders struggle to accurately identify and analyze the teachers' strengths and weaknesses during observation. Consequently, Module 2 of the training program was specifically designed to empower teacher leaders in these areas. The results of the research bear out the literature's recommendations: pedagogical knowledge is essential before effective observation and feedback can occur.

5.1.4 The need for effective observation and dialogic feedback

Another critical need revealed by the teacher leaders was guidance on effective lesson observation and the associated feedback skills, particularly in relation to feedback language. Participants specifically requested practical training on how to

instigate meaningful dialogues that would benefit their teachers. Consequently, one module of the training program focused explicitly on lesson observation and feedback skills.

This finding aligns with extensive literature emphasizing that effective mentoring relies on strong feedback and communication skills (Altay, 2015; Parker et al., 2021). The key is shifting the mentor-mentee dynamic from an authoritative relationship to one that is collaborative and jointly responsible (Boreen, 2009). Effective teacher leaders act as a learning partner who uses reflective dialogues to guide teachers toward transforming their practice.

Scholars highlight that effective feedback sessions should be dialogic, with both the mentor and mentee actively sharing thoughts and perspectives (Herman & Mandell, 2004; Bjuland & Helgovold, 2018). Practical strategies to integrate these principles include (Jones et al., 2022; Caban, 2019; Griffiths et al., 2020):

- *Collaborative Goal Setting: Setting goals *with* the teacher rather than imposing them.

- *Constructive Feedback: Providing a safe, supportive environment to challenge, encourage, and promote reflection.

- *Joint Problem-Solving: Addressing challenges through shared contribution and insights.

Failing to implement these clear goals, expectations, and feedback mechanisms risks hindering the overall effectiveness of the mentoring relationship (Cashin & Ellet, 2008). The results underscore the need for teacher leaders to receive specific CPD support focused on the role of feedback and communication to address teachers' situated and context-based needs (Keiler et al., 2020; Schlaack, 2023;

Okumuş et al., 2022). Personalized support is essential for fostering growth, particularly for teachers in the early stages of their careers.

This personalized approach requires feedback to be delivered in a way that promotes reflection and positive change, necessitating that teacher leaders must:

- i. Know their teachers and understand their strengths, growth areas, teaching styles, and where relevant, personal circumstances.
- ii. Highlight strengths to not only address areas for improvement but also build confidence by focusing on accomplishments.
- iii. Ensure a two-way process by encouraging the mentee teacher to share their perspectives and questions, creating a collaborative environment (Barrera et al., 2000).
- iv. Provide holistic support by offering guidance beyond classroom instruction, including assistance with lesson planning, classroom management, and navigating school culture.

By focusing institutional training on lesson observation, tailored feedback, and communication skills with adults (Parker et al., 2021), schools can empower teacher leaders to implement the practical, dialogic strategies requested by the participants in this study.

5.1.5 The sociolinguistic dimension of feedback

Building on the need for effective observation, the focus of the needs analysis extended to the language used during feedback sessions. Research indicates that language in mentoring is fundamentally a social process, where the quality of interaction and communication is paramount for success (Asencion-Delaney, 2012; Cameron et al., 2023; Perez, 2023).

Mentor training programs, therefore, should specifically focus on how language can either support or constrain teacher growth. A lack of careful planning around language, can lead to feedback that fails to account adequately for the diversity of perspectives and experiences within the school context (Johnson et al., 2014; Slavin, 1995; Webb, 1991).

Furthermore, the lack of an existing collaborative learning culture within the participating schools may explain why teacher leaders mentioned the need for specific training on effective feedback and language. Collaborative learning, which requires significant time to yield professional growth, functions best when collaboration is already an integrated part of the school's culture. In time-constrained environments, such as private schools facing standardized curricula, creating this collaborative space is challenging, further underscoring the necessity of targeted training in dialogic feedback skills.

5.1.6 The leadership and the unique mentor role

The final key area identified in the needs analysis was Leadership Skills. Teacher leaders felt they could not rely solely on their tacit knowledge and experience to be effective mentors, suggesting the role is unique and requires specific, formalized training. As one participant noted, while experience taught him the importance of communication, he felt he needed "something extra" to guide his teachers successfully.

This sentiment reveals a critical need for mentor training to address the novice mentor's perception of their own background. Instead of viewing their experience as unsuited or irrelevant, training should help shape the perspective that the mentor's experience and the mentee's inexperience are complementary (Berger et

al., 2015). This framing empowers teacher leaders to better understand how their expertise translates into actionable guidance for their team. Training should therefore focus on the complex dynamics of teacher leadership (Zacvhardy & Fischler, 2014; Raggins, 1997; Clutterbuck, 2020), emphasizing role clarity by defining the specific responsibilities of the mentor, distinguishing it from general management, empowering them by improving skills in motivation, soft skills for communication, and organizational skills as reflected in this study. Furthermore, the study also shows data about leadership development by highlighting how mentoring contributes to the leadership development of both parties, allowing teacher leaders to gain new perspectives from their teachers (Underhill, 2007).

5.1.7 Logistical and contextual challenges

The final set of needs centered on the logistical and contextual constraints of the mentoring role. Teacher leaders consistently expressed concern over time constraints, feeling rushed to fit mentoring within their already busy schedules and those of their mentees. Effective mentoring requires sustained commitment and dedicated time (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). This challenge is logistical, stemming from a lack of dedicated time for mentoring activities (Hunzicker, 2011). To address this, schools must:

- i. Prioritize mentoring by recognizing its importance and allocating resources.
- ii. Offer flexible scheduling: Utilize strategies like release time or online platforms (Moir & Gess-Newsome, 2013).
- iii. Simplify program procedures by providing clear guidelines and administrative support (Fletcher, 2000; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

In line with the literature, the training program focused on these logistical and motivational challenges within the leadership module, aiming to equip teacher leaders with the organizational skills to overcome them.

The need for mentoring support to help teachers—both new and experienced—survive and align with school policies underscores the importance of a context-sensitive approach (Orland-Barak & Hasin, 2010). Effective mentoring is not one-size-fits-all; it must account for the unique culture, values, and expectations of the school environment. Consequently, any institutional training program must include practical help for teacher leaders to guide mentees in navigating their specific school context and maintaining the required professional standards.

5.1.8 Fostering motivation and teacher autonomy

The results from the needs analysis also highlighted the necessity for teacher leaders to know more about how to motivate and communicate more effectively with their teams. This need is intrinsically linked to promoting teacher autonomy, a crucial aspect of effective leadership that empowers teachers to take ownership of their professional growth (Hunzicker, 2011). Teacher leaders can foster autonomy and motivation through several practices, rooted in the principles of collaborative constructivism and reflective practice. Involving teachers in identifying their own professional goals fosters a sense of ownership from the start, rather than relying on a mentor-dictated focus. As suggested by Schön (1983), the need for training in this area may stem from a lack of reflective practice. Teacher leaders should facilitate reflection by asking open-ended questions instead of providing direct advice, guiding teachers to analyze their own practice. This approach is fundamental to developing autonomous professionals. Teacher leaders should move beyond prescribing one

"right" way of teaching. Instead, they should differentiate support by exposing mentees to a variety of teaching approaches, allowing them to choose what works best for them. Creating a safe space for teachers to take risks and framing mistakes as learning opportunities is vital. Leaders should structure their support to gradually reduce direct guidance as the teacher gains confidence and competence. The training program was designed to address the absence of these skills, recognizing that while newer teachers may require more direct guidance (Hobson et al., 2009), experienced teachers benefit from a more collaborative and peer-like relationship (Kennedy, 2011). Ultimately, effective leadership requires adapting motivational and communicative strategies based on the teacher's experience, the school's culture, and available resources.

5.2 The observed classroom practices of teacher leaders before intervention

The second research question focused on the core teaching practices of teacher leaders and teachers, with data obtained via lesson observations to establish the baseline for pedagogical needs. The observed lessons consistently pointed to several specific areas requiring development: student-centred practices (e.g., using pair and group work), instruction delivery, lesson planning and flow, feedback, and teacher language.

5.2.1 The overlap of strengths and weaknesses

The analysis revealed that observed weaknesses substantially outweighed the strengths. A notable finding was the significant overlap between observed strengths and weaknesses, largely attributed to the range in experience of the teachers observed. This heterogeneity underscores a critical consideration for future mentor

training design: pedagogical needs are highly diverse, varying based on experience and context. Novice teachers require support in management and planning (König & Kröner, 2016), while experienced teachers may focus on technology integration (Hughes, 2005) or strategic refinement (Gess-Newsome, 2013). Furthermore, ELT teachers, for example, have specialized needs related to communicative activities and language assessment. This complexity confirms that any effective mentor training must equip leaders with the capacity to differentiate mentoring support based on the specific profile of the teacher.

5.2.2 High-frequency weaknesses informing training design

Given that the aim of the observations was to establish the scope and sequence for the training course, the frequency of observed weaknesses was used to determine the necessary time allocation for each component. The highest frequency weaknesses fell into two broad categories:

- i. Interaction and TTT: A high-frequency weakness was the lack of variety in interaction patterns, indicating a deficit in learner involvement and techniques for effective students.
- ii. Teacher Talk Time: This was a recurring issue, directly indicating a need to increase STT (Student Talk Time) by focusing training on classroom management and maximizing interaction opportunities (e.g., through pair and group work).
- iii. Teaching Techniques: This stemmed from a lack of elicitation and clarification, further demonstrating a need for training in student-active methodologies.

- iv. Instructions: This was a major, recurring weakness, related to instructions being unclear, complicated for the student profile, or leading to students being off-task. The data highlighted the necessity of training dedicated to successful instruction delivery, supported by methods like instruction check questions (ICQs) and modelling.
- v. Planning Issues: The observations showed that lessons frequently lacked a focus on the main aim and suffered from inappropriate lesson staging or flow. This confirmed a foundational deficit in pedagogical design capacity.
- vi. Feedback Delivery: Feedback was consistently identified as a recurring weakness alongside instruction delivery.

Ultimately, the results highlighted the essential role of classroom management as the foundational skill underpinning most other observed weaknesses. Therefore, pedagogical knowledge components of the mentor training program needed to place classroom management and the transition to student-centred learning at the core of their design.

The high frequency of observed weaknesses, particularly the deficit in student-centered learning (SCL), points to a crucial area for mentor support, aligning with the modern pedagogical emphasis on SCL (Kolman et al., 2017).

Teacher leaders can prompt teachers to reflect on how students responded to an activity. Leaders can guide teachers to consider the available and relevant evidence demonstrating student learning. Teacher leaders can model effective student-centered teaching strategies in their own practice, providing concrete examples for their teachers. The training content was explicitly designed to support this SCL skill, drawing a strong correlation between the study's observed

weaknesses and the established literature on effective mentor pedagogical content (Hudson, 2013).

The observation data reinforces the scholarly consensus regarding the essential pedagogical content required of teacher leaders acting as teacher leaders as shown in Table 17.

Table 17. The Alignment of the Results with Mentoring Literature

Scholar(s)	Key Mentor Requirement	Alignment with Study Findings
Hattie and Yates (2014)	Deep understanding of effective teaching strategies and their impact on student learning to provide meaningful feedback.	Directly addresses the pedagogical design capacity weakness and the necessity of improved feedback skills.
Guskey (2000)	Strong understanding of adult learning principles and the change process, emphasizing the need to create a supportive environment.	Adds the dimension of understanding the teacher as a learner—a critical component for successful leadership development.
Borko (2004)	Importance of content-specific pedagogical knowledge—how to teach specific content areas effectively.	Builds upon Darling-Hammond's (2017) point, emphasizing the crucial link between content expertise and practical pedagogy for observation.

By focusing the training on these areas—SCL, instruction, planning, and feedback—the study directly addressed the highest-frequency weaknesses observed in the field, ensuring the mentor training program was grounded in both localized needs and established pedagogical research.

5.3 The changes in the reported mentoring practices of the teacher leaders after intervention

The third research question examined the reported mentoring practices of teacher leaders following the mentor training program. The interview data revealed significant positive shifts in the teacher leaders' perceptions of their roles, particularly concerning lesson observation and feedback.

5.3.1 Evolving perception of lesson observation

After participating in the training, teacher leaders reported an increased awareness of the central importance of lesson observation in the teacher development process, despite acknowledging the time and logistical challenges involved. Their understanding of the observation role evolved to include several key functions such as (pedagogical alignment) ensuring teachers implement effective pedagogical practices (e.g., modeling strategies and offering guidance), helping departments identify areas where additional support or resources are needed, and (shared practice) facilitating the sharing of good teaching methods across the team.

This evolution in perception aligns with research suggesting that mentors' roles shift from providing direct advice to adopting a more facilitative approach (Parathyras & Zorbas, 2020), focusing on empowerment rather than direction. Exposure to diverse mentoring models and best practices during the course (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003) likely contributed to this shift, helping them appreciate the importance of building a strong, trusting relationship with their teachers through observation (Nilssen, 2010).

5.3.2 Expanding understanding of feedback

The importance of feedback was the second major theme to emerge from the post-training interviews, with a notable expansion in awareness. The two sub-themes identified before the training (oral feedback and constructive language) expanded to five sub-themes after the training:

- Oral Feedback
- Constructive Language.
- Attentive Listening

- Building Trust
- Written Feedback

The emergence of attentive listening, building trust, and written feedback as critical concerns post-training is significant. The reported awareness and satisfaction regarding language and content showed that the training successfully helped them provide more effective and constructive feedback.

5.3.3 Feedback techniques, efficacy, and motivation

The post-training focus on the content of feedback highlights the understanding that effective observation generates relevant, content-based feedback. This shared purpose is crucial for the subsequent collaborative, self-reflective stage of discussion and goal setting.

This outcome supports the literature on the link between effective feedback and teacher efficacy and motivation (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). When feedback is specific and supportive, teachers are more likely to feel confident and motivated to improve (Heeralal, 2014). Effective feedback requires employing various techniques to promote growth and development (Le & Vásquez, 2011), including specific and descriptive language, focus on strengths alongside areas for growth, encouraging self-reflection, collaborative, and differentiated discussions. The reported growth in awareness and satisfaction suggests the training successfully introduced these techniques, empowering teacher leaders to move toward a more growth-oriented feedback practice.

5.3.4 The role of active listening and constructive language

A specific finding from the pre- and post-training data was the emphasis on mentor feedback language and being a good listener. While concerns about language are interwoven with feedback techniques, the need for explicit training in listening revealed a key gap.

Teacher leaders, often assuming they are proficient listeners, may lack formal training in active listening techniques (Hudson, 2013). This deficiency can hinder their ability to listen objectively or make them feel inadequate. The participants' request for itemized, practical listening checklists—similar to observation evaluation criteria—is highly significant. This suggests that future training should provide concrete strategies, such as the effective use of open-ended, clarifying, probing, or reflective questions, to ensure the teacher feels genuinely heard and can respond meaningfully.

To summarize the needs concerning observation and feedback, the study suggests that future mentor training models should be built around:

- **Observation Mastery:** Developing a structured protocol focusing on key SCL principles (engagement, questioning, differentiation) and school values (Stanulis & Ames, 2009). Training should offer practice through simulations, peer observations, and video analysis.
- **Feedback Mastery:** Focusing on both delivery techniques and the sociolinguistic dimensions of feedback.
- **Nuanced Application:** Ensuring the training emphasizes culturally responsive mentoring by explicitly connecting the model to the school's core values, thus reflecting the specific needs and socio-emotional context of the community.

5.3.5 Conflation of mentoring and leadership roles

The post-training interview data showed a notable expansion in the theme of leadership. While pre-training themes focused on leading strategies such as motivation, managing policies, and personal attributes, the post-training themes expanded to include delegation, organizational skills, and sharing experience. This expansion is symptomatic of a conflation of the leadership role and the mentoring role reported by the participants. This conflation is interesting because the data suggests mentoring affects leadership, and leadership affects mentoring. Several factors contribute to this such as a shared skill set (Day, 2000), and investing in developing the potential of others. Effective teacher leaders often adopt a guiding role, exerting influence over their mentees' development, which is perceived as a form of leadership (Ensher & Murphy, 2005). In the context of professional development, these leadership qualities are critical (Komives et al., 2013). Teacher leaders must act as instructional leaders, modeling exemplary instruction, guiding problem-solving, and providing clear, consistent, and constructive feedback. As Prummer et al. (2024) indicate, organizational values and school culture can be reinforced when a strong connection is established between mentorship and leadership. The training, therefore, served to not only improve mentoring skills but also to support and clarify the instructional leadership skills required of the teacher leaders, explaining the expansion of themes in the post-training data.

5.4 The observed classroom practices of teacher leaders after intervention

The fourth research question investigated the core practices of teaching among teacher leaders and their team members following the mentor training program. The

Post Lesson Observations (PLOs) served as evidence to evaluate growth and change, providing a direct assessment of the training's effectiveness.

5.4.1 Evidence of improvement in teaching practices

The analysis of "before" and "after" lesson data revealed significant, observable improvements in teaching practices, demonstrating an alignment with the mentor training objectives. The improvements suggest that teacher leaders successfully transferred the knowledge and skills learned in the training to their classroom practice, likely through targeted mentoring that was specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound.

Upon analysis of before and after data, the results presented the opportunity for a number of points to be considered and discussed. These evidence-based points represent improvements in the teacher's performance and can be attributed to the mentor training course. They represent observable changes in teaching practices.

The post lesson observations (PLO) show improved alignment with learning objectives, evidence of more effective differentiation, demonstrate better use of resources and materials and more coherent and engaging lesson structure. In PLO, the teacher leaders and teachers demonstrated improved strategies for managing student behaviour and learning and there was a noticeable improvement in creating more interaction in class.

In the PLOs teacher leaders effectively managed transitions and time. In terms of instructional delivery, teachers' questioning techniques improved and the teacher leaders demonstrated improved clarity in explanations and instructions.

The shift in strengths meant that previously identified weaknesses become strengths and that new strengths developed as a result of the training. In addition,

current strengths were amplified. In terms of weaknesses previously identified weaknesses were addressed or mitigated, and it is possible that the teacher leaders demonstrated awareness of their weaknesses and had gotten strategies for improvement. The strengths displayed in the first lesson were reinforced in the PLO. However, some weaknesses from the first lesson were still present in the second but mostly improved.

Overall, the results showed an alignment with mentor training objectives. Specific skills were targeted and the observed changes aligned with the specific skills and knowledge targeted in the mentor training.

Based on the observed changes, the mentor training was effective in improving the teaching practices. There are several key takeaways from the comparison of the "before" and "after" lessons including improvement in the following areas:

- Increase in variety of teaching techniques
- Decrease in problematic instructions
- The decrease in staging problems
- The decrease in teacher talk time
- The increase in meaningful productive tasks
- Increase in interaction (prolonged engagement)
- Increase in variety of interaction patterns
- Increase in elicitation

These findings indicate that the course content was relevant and highly applicable, allowing teacher leaders to translate theoretical concepts into practical, improved teaching techniques. The success suggests that the implemented mentoring strategies (observation, feedback, modeling) were effective in facilitating professional growth.

5.4.2 Persistent and emerging weaknesses

While the overall trend was positive, the study identified two key areas that require further attention and revision in future training programs: Feedback Mastery and the Quality of Productive Tasks.

The theme of feedback showed the least noticeable change in the PLOs. This persistent issue suggests that the training provided was insufficient in duration or focus to solidify complex feedback skills. Possible reasons include:

- Insufficient Training Focus: The initial training may have been too broad or lacked sufficient practical application
- Teacher Leader Limitation: The teacher leaders themselves may require more in-depth training in feedback
- Further support: Ongoing support beyond the initial training period may be needed.

Persistent issues with feedback indicate a need for a more targeted and sustained approach to professional development, emphasizing ongoing support through regular observations, feedback sessions, and peer collaboration.

In conclusion, the increase in the quality of teaching techniques provides strong evidence that the mentor training course for teacher leaders was a valuable and effective professional development experience. The observed changes aligned directly with the training objectives, validating the needs analysis and the modular design. However, the findings highlight that professional growth is incremental and sustained. While the course successfully addressed foundational skills, some areas like feedback mastery and task design require ongoing support and follow-up training to ensure long-term impact and fully address the evolving needs of teacher leaders (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Kraft & Papay, 2014).

5.5 The evaluation of the training program

The final research question evaluated the training program in terms of content, delivery, structure, and time allowed. The overall evaluation was highly positive, highlighting seven distinct areas of participant satisfaction:

- Alignment of the course content with the teacher leaders' existing roles and needs.
- The opportunity to review, revisit, and consolidate knowledge through online support.
- The comprehensive course content (relevancy, applicability, and importance).
- The necessity of face-to-face contact for interactive, supportive learning.
- Emphasis on listening skills, empathy, and space for participants.
- Promotion of self-reflection as a core professional practice.

The strong positive consensus aligns with similar literature on effective context-specific training (Ascencion-Delaney, 2012; Menegat, 2010), confirming the success of designing a program explicitly to address the participants' needs (Hudson et al., 2010).

The pre-course needs analysis provided a crucial baseline against which the course's alignment was measured. Teacher leaders reported that the content directly matched their roles, which reinforced existing knowledge while providing new skills. This perceived relevance and applicability may have significantly contributed to the desired outcomes—increased confidence, improved mentoring skills, and better mentor-mentee relationships (Pedder & Opfer, 2013).

However, the analysis found that individual experience and beliefs influenced content perception (Borg, 2015), with more senior leaders generally recognizing broader relevance. Furthermore, despite the overall positive reception, there was

evidence of fragmented pre-existing knowledge and some participants feeling overwhelmed by the breadth of information (Doyle Fosco et al., 2023). This feeling may be magnified by their identity as leaders who are often implicitly expected to "know everything" (Wolff et al., 2016).

The use of Moodle support for review, revisit, and consolidation was a key source of satisfaction, aligning with other studies on online support in professional development (Karanfil & Atay, 2020; Ersin & Atay, 2021). The blended model was intentionally designed to provide sufficient depth and breadth, with the researcher's dual role as a teacher trainer ensuring practical, logical progression. The fact that participants reported receiving practical tools and strategies that were immediately applicable demonstrated the content's relevance to their daily challenges (Moore & Kearsley, 2011).

5.6 Implications of the study

The study provides several practical and systemic implications for effective teacher mentoring, particularly within the English Language Teaching (ELT) and similar K-12 contexts.

5.6.1 Model for context-specific training

The proposed training program, with its modular structure and aims-based design, offers a tested model for other schools or institutions seeking to implement professional development for teacher leaders who lack prior formal training.

5.6.2 Leveraging cascade and collaborative systems

The study highlights the potential for implementing a Cascade system (Hayes, 2000), where experienced teacher leaders, having undergone this training, can provide support and training to newer teacher leaders. This approach addresses the logistical challenges of widespread training.

5.6.3 Need for online communities

A strong implication is the necessity of facilitating online or real-time professional learning communities. Such networks would allow teacher leaders to continue mutual learning, share challenges, and access comparable material, providing essential support in contexts where dedicated training assistance is otherwise available.

5.7 Limitations and recommendations for further research

The study provides valuable insights into mentor training design, but its scope presents certain limitations that suggest avenues for future research.

5.7.1 Contextual and generalizability limitations

The study is limited to an English language teaching context in K-12 schools. To generalize the findings on needs and training efficacy, replication in other subject disciplines and sectors is recommended.

5.7.2 Limitations on measuring long-term effect

The data collection was limited to observations and interviews conducted only 5-6 weeks after the training, capturing only the immediate effects. The long-term effects

of the proposed training program, specifically, whether the observed improvements in practice and attitude are sustained remain unknown. Further research is strongly recommended to conduct long-term observations and interviews (e.g., at six-month or one-year intervals) to triangulate the results and determine the real, lasting impact of such a program.

5.7.3 Sample size limitation

The study involved a small number of teacher leaders. While the qualitative depth is strong, the findings may not represent the broader population of teacher leaders. Replication of the study with a larger sample size is recommended to validate the observed themes and potentially reveal broader findings about needs and efficacy.

5.7.4 Narrow focus on mentoring practices

The study focused primarily on the most visible and prominent themes related to mentoring practices (Observation, Feedback, Leadership Skills). Further research could explore the influence of school culture, the perceptions and expectations of school management, and the direct link between improved mentoring and the assessment of student learning.

APPENDIX A

THE CONTENT AND SCHEDULE OF THE TRAINING

This mentor-training program has been developed for the teacher leaders at X College. The program aims to support teacher leaders in their role of mentoring in-service English teachers. In such a way, the program also aims to support the whole school in-service teachers' professional development initiatives by supporting and training teacher leaders to become more effective mentors or coaches. Consequently, the training program is designed to improve the professional development of both teachers and in-service teachers.

At the end of this training, teacher leaders are expected to

- be informed about the concept of mentoring and coaching.
- reflect and comment on what mentoring entails, the components of effective mentoring, and the roles undertaken by good mentors.
- question what their roles as teacher leaders require grounded in their own social, cultural, and teaching context.
- apply different mentoring or coaching strategies to support teachers' professional development. (e.g. strategies such as co-planning, using collaborative inquiry etc.), and reflect on these strategies.
- explain the importance of observation for teachers' professional development and the steps to follow before and during the observation.
- know how to observe a class in order to support and help develop teachers' pedagogical knowledge and increase their capacity in terms of their instructional skills.

- be aware of the role of feedback and reflection in the practicum process and give effective feedback using suggested tips and strategies.
- reflect on the training program.

This program has been constructed and developed based on the data gathered from in-service teachers and teacher leaders. An examination of the two parties' needs and expectations has been incorporated into the design of the four different modules in this training. Each module is supported by an online training component and a live session with an experienced facilitator. The information about each module is summarized in the table below.

	Moodle Link for asynchronous Training No set time	Session Focus theme	FCT zoom session day/time for live sessions	Facilitator	Zoom link
Week 1 Online (Moodle- Edflow) + Live Session	You will get an invitation to your email for the online class on moodle (Neolms) Please register as a student using the code: FGAT- ZEAN.	Understanding Mentoring as a tool of Professional Development Roles & Attributes of a good teacher Leader and mentor Strategies for effective	October 19 Wednesday 19:00- 20:30	Fatma O'Neill CELTA tutor, Teacher Trainer	https://zoom.us/j/95681146562?pwd=eVhQVSt4MUxZcmp3TEFmV1g3NzU5dz09 Toplantı Kimliği: 956 8114 6562 Parola: 260563

		mentoring & Coaching			
Week 2 Online (Moodle-Edflow) +Live Session	Moodle Class /Neo Lms	Pedagogical Knowledge Being Learner Centred: Interaction patterns- teacher talk time- giving instructions	October 26 Wednesday 19:00-20:30	External Facilitator- 1 CELTA tutor, Teacher Trainer	https://zoom.us/j/97211987215?pwd=c3BzRm9KQUpFSzMrVIVoYUE4SDZ5UT09 Toplantı Kimliği: 972 1198 7215 Parola: 955924
Week 3 Online (Moodle-Edflow) +Live Session	Moodle Class /Neo Lms	Pedagogical Knowledge Being Learner-Centred: Feedback	November 2 Wednesday 19:00-20:30	External Facilitator- 1 CELTA tutor, Teacher Trainer	https://zoom.us/j/93703676627?pwd=cHFZb2xIdEd6RHJNR0xIUUJCL0lQZz09 Toplantı Kimliği: 937 0367 6627 Parola: 673499

		and Concept Check			
Week 4 Online (Moodle-Edflow) +Live Session	Moodle Class /Neo Lms	Pedagogical Knowledge Lesson Shapes (Skills & Function & Language Systems)	November 9 Wednesday 19:00-20:30	External Facilitator- 1 CELTA tutor, Teacher Trainer	https://zoom.us/j/91758154129?pwd=ZHNHNjhWWEo1VzUwYWtWOEdvMTNkUT09 Toplantı Kimliği: 917 5815 4129 Parola: 207142
Week 5 Online (Moodle-Edflow) +Live Session	Moodle Class /Neo Lms	Observing a Lesson How to observe a teacher effectively and support their instructional skills	November 16 Wednesday 19:00-20:30	Fatma O'Neill CELTA tutor, Teacher Trainer	https://zoom.us/j/96322078637?pwd=aytCKzl4dGlYajJZSUpqQ2c4cUhndz09 Toplantı Kimliği: 963 2207 8637 Parola: 383551

		Using various models: Conference Model / Walk-in/ informed observations			
Week 6 Online (Moodle-Edflow) +Live Session	Moodle Class /Neo Lms	Giving Feedback effectively & Importance of Feedback in Professional Development Using Soft Skills and other strategies	November 23 Wednesday 19:00-20:30	External Facilitator- 2 Teacher Trainer	https://zoom.us/j/96690328251?pwd=Vm5CSmFzYkhTeituZ0o4V29ubTZDZz09 Toplantı Kimliği: 966 9032 8251 Parola: 487622

Week 7 Live Session Online (Moodle- Edflow) +Live Session	Moodle Class /Neo Lms	Leadership skills Creating a team spirit Creating motivation for yourself and others Using soft Skills Using Soft Skills	November 30 Wednesday 19:00- 20:30	External Facilitator- 2 Teacher Trainer	https://zoom.us/j/99980374300?pwd=Kzk0U3RrZGJIT1NBL0UvWlFjSHlndz09 Toplantı Kimliği: 999 8037 4300 Parola: 093530
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APPENDIX B
INFORMED CONSENT FORMS

FORMS FOR TEACHER LEADERS

Institution supporting the research: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi

Research: Mentoring As a Tool of Professional Development: A Training Program to

Mentor In-

service English Teachers

Project Manager: Prof. Dr.

E-mail address:

Phone:

Researcher:

E-mail address: :.....

Phone:

Project topic: This research aims to create a training program for teacher leaders on effective mentoring

and to study the effect of such training on English teachers and teacher leaders' professional

development. The study itself specifically targets teacher leaders and teachers of English working in K-

12 schools in the İstanbul area. After receiving formal approval, data will be collected to analyze

participants' needs and decide on the content of the training program.

Informed consent:

Dear Colleague,

This study aims to create a training program for teacher leaders on effective mentoring and to study

the effect of such training on English teachers and teacher leaders' professional development. We kindly

invite you to participate in the study. Teacher leaders participating in the study will be given a training

of 8-10 weeks, a total of 20-25 hours of training. You are expected to spend half an hour for digital

diaries and the digital platform. You need to spend approximately 2- 2,5 hours a week for training

throughout the training period (8-10 weeks). You also need to spare 40 minutes for two interviews in

total (before and after the training program). The content of the training program will be finalized after

the data is collected to analyze the needs (see above).

If you decide to participate in the study, the data will be collected via face-to-face interviews and a

digital diary, and lesson observations. In addition, you will need to fill in the required information on

the attached form. Your name will not be used or referred to throughout the study.

The study is voluntary. You do not need to pay anything for the trainings, you will not be paid any

compensation for your participation either. Teacher leaders attending the training program will be

provided a completion certification at the end of the training program. The training program will be spread into 8-10 weeks.

The data collected from you for the study will not be used for other studies or other purposes. You can withdraw from the study anytime you wish. In that case, the data collected before your withdrawal will not be used, and will be deleted.

Please do not hesitate to ask if you have any further questions before you sign the consent form.

If you have any further questions, you may contact the project manager Prof.

Dr.....'a (Office

Phone:.....). You may consult the Ethics Committee for Master and PhD

Theses in Social Sciences and Humanities (SOBETİK) (.....) concerning

your rights about the

research.

Please inform us if you change your phone number or address.

I fully understand the information stated above and have taken a copy of the consent form.

I agree to participate in this study.

Participant Name / Surname:

Signature:

Date:...../...../.....

☐ I agree to voice recordings of interviews.

INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR TEACHERS OF ENGLISH

Institution supporting the research: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi

Research: Mentoring as a Tool of Professional Development: A Training Program to

Mentor In-

service English Teachers

Project Manager: Prof. Dr.....

E-mail address:

Phone:

Researcher:

E-mail address:

Phone:.....

Project topic: This research aims to create a training program for teacher leaders on effective mentoring

and to study the effect of such training on English teachers and teacher leaders' professional

development. The study itself specifically targets teacher leaders and teachers of English working in K-

12 schools in the İstanbul area. After receiving formal approval, data will be collected to analyze

participants' needs and decide on the content of the training program.

Informed consent:

Dear Colleague,

This study aims to create a training program for teacher leaders on effective mentoring and to study

the effect of such training on English teachers and teacher leaders' professional development. We kindly invite you to participate in the study.

If you decide to participate in the study, the data will be collected via face-to-face interviews and lesson observations. Please be aware of that you need to allocate 40 minutes for two interviews in total.

There will be four lesson observations throughout the research period. Your name will not be used or referred to throughout the study. The study is voluntary. You do not need to pay anything for the trainings, you will not be paid any compensation for your participation either.

The data collected from you for the study will not be used for other studies or other purposes. You can withdraw from the study anytime you wish. In that case, the data collected before your withdrawal will not be used, and will be deleted.

Please do not hesitate to ask if you have any further questions before you sign the consent form.

If you have any further questions, you may contact the project manager Prof. Dr. (Office

phone:.....). You may consult the Ethics Committee for Master and PhD Theses in Social

Sciences and Humanities (SOBETİK) (.....) concerning your rights about the

research.

Please inform us if you change your phone number or address.

I fully understand the information stated above and have taken a copy of the consent form. I agree to participate in this study.

Participant Name / Surname:

Signature:

Date:...../...../.....

☐ I agree to voice recordings of interviews.

APPENDIX C

ETHICAL APPROVAL FORM 1

Evrak Tarih ve Sayısı: 12.04.2022-61595

T.C.
BOĞAZİÇİ ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL VE BEŞERİ BİLİMLER YÜKSEK LİSANS VE DOKTORA TEZLERİ ETİK İNCELEME
KOMİSYONU
TOPLANTI KARAR TUTANAĞI

Toplantı Sayısı : 30
Toplantı Tarihi : 07.04.2022
Toplantı Saati : 10:00
Toplantı Yeri : Zoom Sanal Toplantı
Bulunanlar : P
Bulunmayanlar :

Fatma O'Neill
Yabancı Diller Eğitimi

Sayın Araştırmacı,
"Bir Mesleki Gelişim Aracı Olarak mentorluk: Görevdeki İngilizce Öğretmenlerine Mentorluk Üzerine Bir Eğitim Programı" başlıklı projeniz ile ilgili olarak yaptığınız SBB-EAK 2022/32 sayılı başvuru komisyonumuz tarafından 7 Nisan 2022 tarihli toplantıda incelenmiş ve projenizin ilk kısmı uygun bulunmuştur.

Bu karar tüm üyelerin toplantıya çevrimiçi olarak katılımı ve oybirliği ile alınmıştır. COVID-19 önlemleri kapsamında kurul üyelerinden ıslak imza alınmadığı için bu onay mektubu üye ve raportör olarak Yasemin Sohtorik İlkmen tarafından bütün üyeler adına e-imzalanmıştır.

Saygılarımızla, bilgilerinizi rica ederiz.

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi
ÜYE

e-imzalıdır
Dr. Öğr. Üyesi
Öğretim Üyesi
Raportör

SOBETİK 30 07.04.2022

Bu belge, güvenli elektronik imza ile imzalanmıştır.

APPENDIX D

ETHICAL APPROVAL FORM 2

Evrak Tarih ve Sayısı: 10.11.2022-97037

T.C.
BOĞAZİÇİ ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL VE BEŞERİ BİLİMLER YÜKSEK LİSANS VE DOKTORA TEZLERİ ETİK İNCELEME
KOMİSYONU
TOPLANTI KARAR TUTANAĞI

Toplantı Sayısı : 36
Toplantı Tarihi : 09.11.2022
Toplantı Saati : 16:00
Toplantı Yeri : Zoom Sanal Toplantı
Bulunanlar : Doç. Dr. [Redacted]
Öğr. Üyesi A [Redacted]
Bulunmayanlar : Prof. [Redacted]

Fatma O'Neill
Yabancı Dil Öğretimi

Sayın Araştırmacı,

"Bir mesleki gelişim aracı olarak mentorluk: Görevdeki İngilizce öğretmenlerine mentorluk üzerine bir eğitim programı" başlıklı projenizin ikinci kısmı ile ilgili olarak yaptığınız SBB-EAK 2022/32 sayılı başvuru komisyonumuz tarafından 9 Kasım 2022 tarihli toplantıda incelenmiş ve uygun bulunmuştur.

Bu karar üyelerin toplantıya çevrimiçi olarak katılımı ve oy birliği ile alınmıştır. Onay mektubu üye ve raportör olarak Yasemin Sohtorik İlkmen tarafından toplantıya katılan bütün üyeler adına e-imzalanmıştır.

Saygılarımızla, bilgilerinizi rica ederiz.

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi [Redacted]
ÜYE

e-imzalıdır
Dr. Öğr. Üyesi [Redacted]
Öğretim Üyesi
Raportör

SOBETİK 36 09.11.2022

Bu belge, güvenli elektronik imza ile imzalanmıştır.

APPENDIX E

ETHICAL APPROVAL FORM 3

Evrak Tarih ve Sayısı: 23.03.2023-119243

T.C.
BOĞAZİÇİ ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL VE BEŞERİ BİLİMLER YÜKSEK LİSANS VE DOKTORA TEZLERİ ETİK İNCELEME
KOMİSYONU
TOPLANTI KARAR TUTANAĞI

Toplantı Sayısı : 42
Toplantı Tarihi : 22.03.2023
Toplantı Saati : 14:00
Toplantı Yeri : Zoom Sanal Toplantı
Bulunanlar : Prof. Dr. [Redacted]
Bulunmayanlar : [Redacted]

Fatma O'Neill
Yabancı Dil Eğitimi Bölümü

Sayın Araştırmacı,
"Bir mesleki gelişim aracı olarak mentorluk: Görevdeki İngilizce öğretmenlerine mentorluk üzerine bir eğitim programı" başlıklı projenizin üçüncü kısmı ile ilgili olarak yaptığınız SBB-EAK 2022/32 sayılı başvuru komisyonumuz tarafından 22 Mart 2023 tarihli toplantıda incelenmiş ve uygun bulunmuştur.

Bu karar üyelerin toplantıya çevrimiçi olarak katılımı ve oy birliği ile alınmıştır. Onay mektubu üye ve raportör olarak Yasemin Sohtorik İlkmen tarafından toplantıya katılan bütün üyeler adına e-imzalanmıştır.

Saygılarımızla, bilgilerinizi rica ederiz.

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi [Redacted]
Öğretim Üyesi

e-imzalıdır
Dr. Öğr. Üyesi [Redacted]
Öğretim Üyesi
Raportör

SOBETİK 42 22.03.2023

Bu belge, güvenli elektronik imza ile imzalanmıştır.

APPENDIX F

APPROVAL FROM SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

To whom it may concern,

Permission granted for the request to conduct PhD research below titled as "Mentoring As a Tool of Professional Development: A Training Program to Mentor In-service English Teachers" in Bahçeşehir Schools. The data collection may be conducted when the approval from ethics committee is submitted. English teachers and heads of departments in our campuses may participate if they volunteer to participate in the study.

[Redacted]

Director of Foreign Languages

Bahçeşehir Colleges

[Redacted]
[Redacted]
[Redacted]
22/3/22

Dear madam/sir,

I am a PhD student at Boğaziçi University. The research I wish to conduct for my Doctoral thesis involves data collection on voluntary basis from in-service English teachers and teacher leaders. The thesis title is "Mentoring As a Tool of Professional Development: A Training Program to Mentor In-service English Teachers". This project will be conducted under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Sumru Akcan.

I am hereby seeking your consent to reach voluntary participants from a number of schools in İstanbul provide participants for this project. I have provided you with a copy of my interview questions and lesson observation forms. I will provide you with a copy of the approval letter from Research Ethics Committee before I start conducting the study.

Upon completion of the study, I undertake to provide the Department of Foreign Languages with a copy of the full research report. If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me on [REDACTED]

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

APPENDIX G

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (BEFORE INTERVENTION)

Semi-structured interview questions for teacher leaders (Pre-training / Needs Analysis)

1. How long have you been teaching/leading?
2. Which levels / age groups do you work with?
3. How long have you been working in your current school?
4. How do you define mentoring and coaching?
5. How do you evaluate your teachers' attitude towards professional development?
6. How do you think lesson observation cycle contributes to in-service teachers' professional development?
7. What other practices or activities conducted in your department /institution do you think contributes to teachers' professional development? Why / Why not?
8. How do you evaluate your teachers' teaching skills?
9. Do you feel you give enough guidance and feedback to support your teacher's professional development?
10. Do you think you get enough guidance or training about leading, coaching and mentoring your team?
11. Do you feel comfortable about giving feedback about the lessons you observed?
12. How do you support teacher development for in-service teachers you are leading and mentoring?
13. What should be the qualities of an effective mentor teacher?
14. What should be the qualities of a good teacher?
15. How comfortable do you feel when you are leading / mentoring?
16. If teacher leaders were given a training on effective mentoring, how should the training support mentor teachers?

APPENDIX H

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (AFTER INTERVENTION)

Semi-structured interview questions for teacher leaders (Post- training)

1. How do you define mentoring?
2. How do you evaluate your teachers' attitude towards professional development?
How do you see the relationship between Professional development and mentoring?
3. How do you think lesson observation cycle contributes to in-service teachers' professional development?
4. Have you started any other practices or activities have you started during and after the training process to contribute to your teachers' professional development?
Why/Why not?
5. How do you evaluate your teachers' teaching skills?
6. Do you feel you provide your teachers with enough guidance and feedback to support their professional development?
7. Do you feel comfortable about giving feedback about the lessons you observed?
8. What should be the qualities of an effective mentor teacher?
9. What should be the qualities of a good teacher?
10. How comfortable do you feel when you are leading / mentoring?
11. How do you evaluate the relationship between you and in-service teachers?
12. Do you think the content of the training was helpful and effective?

APPENDIX I

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS FOR ALL THEMES

- Planning: The teacher's preparation for a lesson, including the selection of tasks and activities that align with specific language learning aims (e.g., practicing a specific grammar point or improving fluency). (Richards, 2017).
- Interaction: The patterns of communication between teacher and students, and among students, with a focus on who initiates talk, how much "teacher talk" occurs, and whether the interaction facilitates authentic language use. (Richards & Farrell, 2005).
- Delivery: The way in which the teacher presents information and instructions, including the use of clear, simplified language and concept-checking questions to ensure comprehension, especially in non-English-speaking contexts. (Richards, 2017).
- Staging: The logical and sequential organization of a language lesson, including transitions between activities, and a clear move from controlled practice to more communicative tasks. (Graves, 2000).
- Aims: The clear, specific linguistic or communicative goals for a lesson. For example, "learners will be able to introduce themselves and ask for a name," or "learners will understand the use of the present perfect." (Graves, 2000).
- Task Design: The process of creating learning activities that have a clear purpose, a specific outcome, and a defined process. Effective task design in ELT is learner-oriented, directly supporting a lesson's language or communicative aims (Graves, 2000). A teacher leader's role is to guide a teacher's in designing tasks that align with learner needs and promote genuine language use.
- Instruction Check Questions (ICQs): Specific, closed questions a teacher asks after giving instructions to ensure learners have understood the task. This is an observable behavior aimed at confirming comprehension rather than asking a general, less effective question like "Do you understand?". ICQs are a key skill for mentors to observe and provide feedback on (e.g., "Will you work in pairs or groups?") (Ur, 2012; Harmer, 2015).
- Communicative Tasks: Classroom activities that prioritize meaningful communication and the use of authentic language to achieve a specific goal. The success of the task is determined by whether the learners complete the objective, not by the grammatical accuracy of their language. In a mentoring context, the design and implementation of these tasks demonstrate a teacher's pedagogical knowledge (Richards & Farrell, 2005).
- TTT (Teacher Talk Time): The total duration of a lesson during which the

teacher is speaking. This is a quantifiable measure, often expressed as a percentage of the total lesson time. Mentors use this to help a mentee reflect on the balance between teacher-led instruction and student-led practice, with the goal of increasing opportunities for learner output (Cullen, 1998; Walsh, 2011).

- **Grading Language:** A teacher's purposeful adaptation of their speech to match the proficiency level of their students. This involves simplifying vocabulary, using shorter sentences, and avoiding complex grammatical structures to make instructions and explanations comprehensible. Observing this skill is critical for mentors working with teachers in beginner-level classes (Holliday, 1994; Long, 1983)
- **Eliciting:** The use of questions, prompts, or images to get learners to produce language or ideas themselves, rather than the teacher simply providing the information. This observable technique demonstrates a teacher's ability to facilitate a student-centered classroom (Walsh, 2011; Thornbury, 2006).
- **Instruction Supported by Modelling:** A teacher's practice of demonstrating a task or activity before asking learners to perform it. This can involve performing the task with a student, drawing on the board, or acting out a scenario. This is a highly effective, observable practice that reduces ambiguity and provides a clear example for learners to follow (Bandura, 1977; Richards & Farrell, 2011).
- **Inductive Teaching:** A teaching approach where learners are presented with examples of language and are guided to discover the underlying grammar rules or patterns on their own. This is an observable instructional strategy that fosters problem-solving skills and deeper retention of language rules (Thornbury, 1999).
- **Rapport:** The positive and respectful relationship that a teacher builds with their students. This is operationally defined by observable behaviors such as the teacher's use of student names, smiling, showing genuine interest in students' lives, and creating a comfortable, low-anxiety classroom environment (Harmer, 2007).
- **Praising:** The act of verbally or non-verbally acknowledging a student's effort or achievement. This can be differentiated between person praise (e.g., "You're so clever") and process praise (e.g., "You worked really hard on that task, and your pronunciation has improved"). Mentors can help mentees understand the benefits of focusing on process praise to build a growth mindset (Dweck, 2006).
- **Prolonged Engagement:** The sustained focus of a student on a learning task. This is operationally defined by observing students for signs of active participation, such as focused listening, collaborating with peers, or taking notes, over an extended period. A mentor helps a teacher design lesson that maintain this high level of engagement (Fredricks et al., 2004; Skinner & Belmont, 1993).

- Student-Centered Task Design: The creation of activities that give learners a significant degree of control over their own learning. In ELT, this can be observed through tasks that allow students to choose topics, use authentic materials, and collaborate with peers, with the teacher acting as a facilitator rather than a central source of information (Nunan, 1989; Weimer, 2002).
- Grading Language: The way a teacher adapts their speech to make it accessible to students at different proficiency levels. This is observable through a teacher's conscious use of simplified vocabulary and shorter sentence structures when giving instructions or explanations. (Borg, 2006).
- Context Setting: The way a teacher introduces a topic and tasks to make them meaningful for the learners. In ELT, this involves activating prior knowledge and creating a realistic scenario or problem for students to solve using the target language. (Graves, 2000).
- Echoing: A teacher's repetition of a student's answer. In ELT, this is often a strategy to provide positive reinforcement or to draw attention to a correct utterance, but it can also be a habit that limits student-to-student interaction. (Richards & Farrell, 2005).
- Student Involvement: The degree to which students are actively engaged in using the target language. This can be observed through their participation in pair work, group activities, and spontaneous conversation. (Richards, 2017).
- Instruction: The specific guidance provided by the teacher to help students understand a language point or complete a task. In ELT, this involves modeling, providing clear instructions, and using a variety of pedagogical techniques. (Richards, 2017).
- Teacher L2 Use: The specific vocabulary, syntax, and phrasing used by the teacher, and the way they manage their own language to be comprehensible to learners at their proficiency level. This is a critical competence for an ELT teacher. (Borg, 2006).

Interview Data Analysis Definitions

- Observation skills: The systematic process of gathering data on a teacher's classroom practices with a focus on their instructional choices and how they align with specific pedagogical goals in ELT. In this context, observation is less about checking for adherence to a generic rubric and more about exploring the "why" behind a teacher's decisions. The goal of a mentor is to understand the mentee's teacher cognition, making observation a tool for inquiry, not just evaluation (Borg, 2006).
- Feedback skills: A post-observation conversation that links observed teaching behaviors to the teacher's underlying pedagogical beliefs and knowledge. In an

ELT mentoring relationship, feedback should be a collaborative dialogue that helps the mentee articulate their own rationale for their teaching choices, encouraging them to become a reflective practitioner (Richards & Farrell, 2005).

- **Leadership skills:** The act of guiding and influencing colleagues by modeling effective ELT practices and fostering a culture of professional inquiry. An ELT teacher leader is an expert not just in teaching, but in understanding how teachers learn and change. This involves helping mentees move from a focus on what they are teaching to a deeper understanding of how and why they are teaching it that way (Graves, 2000).
- **Pedagogical Knowledge:** Pedagogical Knowledge: The specialized knowledge of how to teach a second or foreign language. In addition to Shulman's (1986) PCK, this includes specific knowledge of language systems, skills-based instruction (e.g., teaching speaking or writing), and second language acquisition theory. For an ELT teacher leader, this knowledge is critical for providing targeted, context-specific guidance (Richards, 2017). The specialized knowledge of how to teach a second or foreign language. This extends beyond general teaching methods to include a unique blend of content knowledge and pedagogical expertise. This concept, formalized by Lee Shulman (1986) as Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK), is a teacher's ability to transform their understanding of a subject into a form that is comprehensible to learners. In an ELT context, this means an effective teacher leader possesses not just knowledge of language systems and skills (grammar, vocabulary, speaking, writing), but also a deep understanding of second language acquisition (SLA) theory. This allows a teacher leader to provide targeted, context-specific guidance, helping their teachers select the most effective tasks, activities, and language to teach a specific point to a specific group of learners. The terms Pedagogical Knowledge (PK), Content Knowledge (CK), and Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) are all central to Lee Shulman's (1986) work on teacher expertise.
- **Content Knowledge (CK):** This refers to the teacher's mastery of the subject matter itself. In an ELT context, this is a teacher's deep and accurate understanding of the English language. This includes: (1) Linguistic knowledge: Understanding grammar rules, syntax, and morphology. (2) Lexical knowledge: An extensive vocabulary and knowledge of idiomatic expressions. (3) Phonological knowledge: An understanding of phonetics and phonology (the sounds of the language). A teacher leader assesses a mentee's CK to ensure they have the foundational expertise needed to teach the language effectively.
- **Pedagogical Knowledge (PK)** This is the teacher's general knowledge about teaching, learning, and classroom management. Unlike CK, it is not specific to any particular subject. This includes: (1) Knowledge of learners: Understanding student development, learning styles, and motivation. (2) Curriculum knowledge: Knowing how to structure and sequence lessons. (3) Classroom management: Skills for organizing and maintaining a productive learning environment. (4) Assessment knowledge: Knowing how to design and use

different types of assessments. A teacher leader helps a mentee develop their general teaching skills, such as how to give clear instructions or manage a large class.

- **Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK)** This is the most specialized and unique form of knowledge. It is the synthesis of Content Knowledge and Pedagogical Knowledge. It is the knowledge of how to make a (1) Knowledge of what makes a topic easy or difficult to learn for a specific group of learners. (2) Knowing the most powerful analogies, examples, and representations to help students understand a concept. (3) Knowledge of common student misconceptions and how to address them. (4) For a teacher leader in ELT, this is the most critical form of knowledge to develop in a mentee. It's the difference between a teacher who simply knows English (CK) and a teacher who knows how to effectively teach English to others (PCK). The teacher leader's role is to help the mentee bridge the gap between their subject expertise and their teaching practice.
- **Constructive Language:** Communication that uses non-judgmental, exploratory questions to reveal a mentee's underlying beliefs and assumptions about teaching and learning. A mentor's use of phrases like "Tell me more about what you were thinking when..." helps to uncover the teacher's cognition and facilitates a self-directed process of professional growth (Borg, 2006).
- **Informal Dialogue:** Unstructured conversations that occur between a mentor and mentee outside of a formal observation cycle. In ELT, this dialogue is crucial for building the rapport and trust necessary to discuss sensitive topics like language proficiency, teacher identity, and pedagogical dilemmas (Richards & Farrell, 2005).
- **Peer Reflection:** The process of critically examining one's teaching practices, often with a colleague, to identify areas for growth and improvement. In ELT, this can involve joint lesson planning or co-teaching, where teachers engage in "reflective practice" to connect theory and practice, and articulate their personal theories of teaching (Graves, 2000).
- **Mentoring:** A professional relationship in which an experienced ELT professional supports a colleague's ongoing development. This relationship is distinguished by a focus on the mentee's specific context, needs, and beliefs, with the goal of fostering autonomous professional growth (Richards & Farrell, 2005).
- **Mutual Development:** The reciprocal learning that occurs between mentor and mentee. In ELT, a mentor's understanding of their own teaching beliefs can be challenged and deepened by their experience working with a mentee, making it a two-way process of professional inquiry (Borg, 2006).
- **Classroom Management:** The set of skills and techniques used to maintain a positive and productive learning environment. In ELT, this is nuanced by factors like L1 use, mixed-ability groups, and the emotional demands of language learning. For a teacher leader, this involves mentoring strategies for

creating a low-anxiety, high-engagement classroom (Richards, 2017).

- **Building Confidence:** The process of affirming a mentee's strengths and providing support to overcome professional challenges. This is observable in the mentor's use of encouraging language and by the mentee's increased willingness to take risks in the classroom and try new strategies over time. (Graves, 2000).
- **Dealing with Perceptions and Biases:** The act of a mentor guiding a mentee to recognize and critically examine their own assumptions about learners, teaching methods, or classroom dynamics. This is observable when a mentor uses questions to encourage a mentee to reflect on why they may have a particular belief (e.g., "What makes you say that some students are just naturally good at speaking?") (Schön, 1983; Eraut, 1994)
- **Sharing Experience:** The act of a mentor or mentee verbally recounting a past classroom event, professional challenge, or success story. This is a specific type of dialogue that provides a context for reflection and allows a teacher leader to offer a relevant perspective based on their own practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998).
- **Shared Roles:** A collaborative and reciprocal dynamic, characteristic of effective Teacher Leadership, where both the leader and the colleague (mentee) assume positions of both learner and expert, based on the specific context or need. This is operationally defined by the visible flattening of the professional hierarchy, resulting in a mutual exchange of expertise where professional development is non-linear and reciprocal (Borg, 2006; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012).
- **Organizational skills:** The consistent, observable behaviors demonstrated by a Teacher Leader that ensure the efficient, structured, and timely management of their professional duties and the learning environment. When modeled for a colleague, these skills create a predictable, low-stress environment, maximizing instructional time. This is measured by the leader's ability to maintain procedural clarity, resource preparedness, and effective time management across multiple professional roles. Fullan, M. (2015). *The New Meaning of Educational Change*. Teachers College Press. (While broad, Fullan's work emphasizes the necessity of clear, well-managed systems and processes—strong organizational skills—to drive successful school change and implementation.)
- **Delegation:** The observable act of a Teacher Leader strategically assigning specific, bounded professional responsibilities or instructional tasks to a colleague (mentee) with clear expectations and the necessary resources. This transfer of responsibility, which is key to distributed leadership, is measured by the extent to which the colleague is given autonomy over the process and outcome, thus building their capacity and confidence in new roles beyond their classroom (Spillane, 2006).

- Observable Indicators: The Teacher Leader explicitly defining the task's boundaries; the colleague taking ownership of the task's execution (e.g., leading a PLC meeting, designing a new resource template); and the Teacher Leader withdrawing from direct supervision of the assigned task.
- Citation Focus: Spillane, J. P. (2006). *Distributed Leadership*. Jossey-Bass. (Focuses on leadership being a practice distributed across multiple individuals, which is facilitated by delegation.)



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