

Supervised but not mentored: A survey of experiences of ESL beginning teachers in secondary schools in Central Mindanao

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Abstract

During the first year of teaching, beginning teachers need assistance in the form of support as they traverse the different stages of professional development (Farell, 2002). With this, guidance and tutelage from colleagues and administrators are found to be helpful to alleviate stress in teaching and strengthen retention among teachers (Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004; Johnson et al., 2005; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004 in Hobson, Ashby, Malderez & Tomlinson, 2009). In addition, it was found that mentoring beginning teachers can increase their students' motivation and critical thinking skills (Summers, 1987). Thus, this paper investigates the experiences of ESL beginning teachers in mentoring and supervision in public and private junior and senior high schools in Maguindanao. Using a 17-item survey questionnaire (Liu & Johnson, 2006) and semi-structured interview guide, results revealed that beginning teachers in both school types experienced supervision from administrators in the form of classroom observation. However, these beginning teachers did not experience any formal mentoring from colleagues. Findings suggest that mentoring should precede supervision and that a well-structured formal mentoring programs be organized and implemented in basic education institutions.

Keywords: beginning teachers, mentoring, supervision

Introduction

During the first or second year of teaching of beginning teachers, they need assistance in the form of support as they traverse the different stages of professional development (Farell, 2002). There can be challenges and anxieties that these novices face (see Lee, 2017). In fact, one study found that the majority of teachers wanted help primarily in the area of teaching resources and materials (Ngoh & Tan, 2000). In a similar vein, Odell in 1992 found that beginning teachers identified emotional support, which reduces their sense of isolation, as the most helpful factor in their development. With this, existing studies reveal that one way to help beginning teachers in their transition is through mentoring (McIntyre & Hagger, 1996; Carter & Francis, 2001; Marable & Raimondi, 2007).

In the Philippine context, however, there is a rare case of formal peer mentoring among newly-hired teachers who are only starting their teaching careers in the academe. This might be attributed to more duties expected from the seasoned teachers or lack of technical and practical skills to do peer mentoring. This is in stark contrast to western practice, particularly in Australia. As part of the induction program of beginning teachers, teaching mentors who are more experienced in teaching are assigned to them (New South Wales Department of Education and Training, 2006 in Michael, Kelly, & Carty, 2009).

On the other hand, supervision in schools are common practices not only abroad but also locally. The teachers, whether beginning or tenured, have been supervised and observed, especially the new ones who experience being observed once in a while in their first year of teaching. With the foregoing argument, this paper will try to account for the experiences of beginning English teachers with regard to mentoring from colleagues and supervision from administrators. A number of studies about teacher mentoring have been found by scholars in the field, and this will be discussed in the succeeding paragraphs

Mentoring and effects of mentoring to beginning teachers

Bey (1995) argued that mentoring is a term defined as a collaborative partnership where individuals

partake and cultivate mutual interests. Mentors may assume different roles which include teaching, encouraging, counseling, and role modeling. In as early as 1980's, mentoring has become a strategy of school administrators to lessen attrition rate of starting teachers and provide them with a seamless and efficient transition into a teaching culture of the school environment (Wang & Odell, 2002). Donitsa-Schmidt and Zuzovsky (2016) pointed out that low status of the teaching profession and some attractive job opportunities for English teaching graduates abroad are some of the reasons why there is a shortage on EFL teachers in Israel.

A number of studies have explored beneficial effects of mentoring to teacher retention and development in general. For example, Claycomb in 2000 saw mentoring as one strategy which addresses retention of beginning teachers in their first year of teaching. This is also linked to the development of their professional and personal competence in the field. Whereas, mentoring can be a crucial factor particularly for Filipino ESL emerging teachers in public and private schools.

Boyer (1999 cited in Michael, Kelly, & Carty, 2009) found that special education teacher's considered mentoring as one factor that influence them to stay in the field of teaching. Moreover, Lortie (1975, cited in Boreen, 2009) pointed out that attrition among teachers is heavily caused by isolation where he described beginning teachers as compartmentalized into "egg-crate classrooms." Teachers particularly the new ones tend to be outcast in the group of more seasoned ones. In addition, Ishler (1998) in Boreen (2009) enumerated other problems for the beginning teachers. These include too high self-expectations, lack of encouragement, help and assistance from fellow teachers, and a principal who may give frequent criticism and very little to no support. These factors, together with low salaries, have caused many teachers who are starting in their careers to leave teaching and look for other career opportunities.

In the Philippines, teacher attrition seemed to be a natural phenomenon particularly among private schools particularly in Mindanao. More workload and uncompetitive salary scheme have resulted to turnover of teachers over the years. Beginning teachers most likely stay for a year or two to gain teaching and relevant professional experience and eventually transfer to government schools where higher salary and less working preparations are offered. However, one key factor to keep teachers from leaving, as already mentioned above, is mentoring. In Hobson et al. (2009), scholars such as Ingersoll and Kralik (2004), Johnson et al. (2005), and Smith and Ingersoll (2004) argued that those who are mentored are less likely to leave teaching and less likely to transfer from one school to the other.

Besides addressing the risk of teacher attrition, increased job satisfaction, greater effectiveness with different students, and better instructional problem solving are results of beginning teachers being mentored found in studies of new teachers in the Santa Cruz New Teacher Project (Moir, Gless, & Baron, 1999).

In addition to the aforementioned advantages, Summers (1987) pointed out that mentoring beginning teachers can increase their students' motivation and critical thinking skills. This means that teachers who become more effective in classroom teaching potentially increases student learning. Moreover, a similar finding was revealed in Fletcher and Strong's (2009) study. They found that greater academic achievement was observed in classroom where beginning teachers went through regular mentoring activities.

Similarly, Stanulis and Floden's (2009) findings revealed that emerging teachers who underwent an intensive, structured mentoring activities showed higher levels of student engagement than those who did not. In a similar vein, Mathur, Gehrke, and Kim (2012) concurred that rigorous, well-structured mentoring program and activities will positively impact not only beginning teachers' decision-making and classroom practice but also students' academic achievement. With all the advantages one can benefit from mentoring, Baecher (2012) in his research recommended that beginning teachers be assigned with a faculty member with an extensive and/or current Pre K–12 ESL teaching experience who will serve as their instructors.

Instructional supervision

Classroom observations are part of school administrators' duties to ensure monitoring and classroom delivery of teachers. Observers who may be the dean, program heads, principals and coordinators, and in some cases, colleagues, rate multiple dimensions of teaching based on the established constructs found in the observation sheets.

There is an abundance in definition of the term supervision. One is given by Goldsberry (1988) where he defined it as an organizational accountability and task that focused on the evaluation and improvement of present

practices. In a more contextualized sense, language teaching supervision is defined by Wallace (1991) as the responsibility of monitoring and refining the quality of teaching carried out by other colleagues in an educational situation. In addition, it is seen as a continuing activity of teacher education where the supervisor oversees classroom activities executed by the teacher with an aim to improving classroom instruction (Gebhard, 1990a). Meanwhile, supervisors' roles include visitation and evaluation of teachers where they discuss lessons with them and comment on the strength and weaknesses of the classroom instruction (Bailey, 2006).

Freeman (1982) characterized three different approaches in observing classroom teachers and giving them feedback, and these are the supervisory option, the nondirective option, and the alternatives option. The first one is influenced by the conventional directive model where the supervisor is regarded as the expert and gives regulatory suggestion. The nondirective option, on the other hand, is contrary to the first one. In this approach, the supervisor listens without bias as teachers explain their work and translate their actions in the classroom. In the alternatives option, giving suggestions or offering assistance to teachers to discover a variety of ways of doing things in the classroom are the supervisor's responsibility.

Aside from administrators who usually do supervision and observation, colleagues other than those who hold administrative posts can also do such a task. Scholars such as Grossnickle and Cutter (1984), Hanson (1992), and Singh (1984) pointed out that supervision through peer assessment can improve teachers' performance to which the institutions and faculty can benefit from. This may revive faculty interest in teaching and training. Also, it can arouse teacher motivation and develop the regard and professional growth of the teachers.

One more thing that supervision does is that it can contribute to teachers' classroom improvement. For example, Rahmany, Hasani, and Parhoodeh (2014) explored attitude towards supervision and its influence on Iranian EFL classroom decision making. They found that supervision greatly affected their decision making, classroom improvement, and teaching skills. Moreover, Merç (2015) found that Turkish EFL teachers see classroom observation as a prized basis of feedback about strengths and weaknesses of teachers' classroom teaching skills and it encourages thorough preparation and development of classroom activities in the foreign language classrooms. In the same manner, Lawson (2011) argued that continued classroom observation program is very successful in improving teachers' classroom practices in a constructive way with the help of the feedback received from colleagues. Similarly, in 1998, Wang and Seth posited that such a classroom observation, besides its educational experience, provides a collaborative learning opportunity which allowed teachers and observers to learn from one another.

Theoretical Considerations

This paper is anchored in two approaches to mentoring and supervision. These are Peer Mentoring Model (Kram & Isabella, 1985) and In-service Training and Development Framework (Freeman, 1982).

Peer Mentoring Model states that "peer relationships offer an important alternative to conventional mentoring relationships by providing a range of developmental supports for personal and professional growth at each career stage" (Kram & Isabella, 1985: 116). This concept underscores a link among teachers especially the experienced teachers mentoring and assisting the novice ones. When peer mentoring is realized, progress may be expected both in personal and professional aspect of the teachers.

Moreover, In-service Training and Development Framework has three types, but only two models seem to apply to this study: Supervisory option and Alternatives option. The former was inspired by the conventional directive model. This is where the teacher regards the supervisor as the expert and gives directing recommendations. Meanwhile, the alternatives option concerns about the supervisor giving suggestions or proposing assistance to teachers which may be of help to learn various ways of doing routines and practices in the classroom.

Despite the overwhelming foreign literature of teacher mentoring and its positive effects to teacher retention and student achievement, there have been scarce documentation on how ESL teachers particularly those who are starting yet in their professional careers experience mentoring. Moreover, classroom supervision studies despite its assuring and developmental goal, have been less documented for the local context especially for public and private basic education schools in southern Philippines. This study then will be conducted to address such a gap in the body of knowledge. Also, this study will inform academic institutions' standing practice in mentoring and supervision of teaching faculty members who may have been facing challenges brought about by work

demands such as classroom instruction preparation, classroom management, academic policies, and relating with colleagues; therefore, it is very crucial and interesting to know emerging ESL teachers' experience with their colleagues' assistance and administrators' supervision in carrying out classroom instruction on the one hand and adjusting on the professional environment on the other hand.

Research Questions

This study aims to determine the experiences of ESL beginning teachers in mentoring and classroom supervision in public and private high schools in Cotabato City, Maguindanao. Specifically, this paper attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What are the experiences of the English beginning teachers in peer mentoring?
2. How do they perceive supervision through classroom observation by colleagues and administrators?

Methodology

Participants

As shown in Table 1, there are 73 participants who answered the survey questionnaire of this study. They were purposively chosen full-time ESL junior and senior high school teachers who were on their first year or second year of teaching during the school year 2017-2018. They came from eight private schools and ten public schools in Cotabato City, Maguindanao. From this population, there were six ESL teachers who agreed to qualify their experiences in mentoring and supervision in an interview.

Table 1

Profiling of the ESL Beginning Teachers

<i>School Type</i>	F	%
Public	36	49.3
Private	37	50.7
Total	73	100
<i>Department</i>	F	%
Junior High	6	8.2
Senior High	67	91.8
Total	73	100
<i>Date hired</i>	F	%
2016	32	43.8
2017	41	56.2
Total	73	100
<i>Age</i>	F	%
21-25	52	71.2
26-30	20	27.4
31-35	1	1.4
Total	73	100
<i>Gender</i>	F	%
Male	15	20.5
Female	58	79.5

Total	73	100
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<i>Graduate studies</i>	F	%
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with units	17	23.3
MA degree holder	6	8.2
none	50	68.5
Total	73	100
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Research Instrument

The Hiring and Procult survey by Liu and Johnson (2006; *see* Appendix 1) was adapted. Only the Part 3 (Professional Culture) of the said survey questionnaire was specifically utilized for the data gathering. The 17-item survey questionnaire is composed of two parts. The first part describes mentoring activities composed of nine questions, and the second part is about supervision with eight survey questions. In addition, I used a semi-structured interview guide to generate the accounts in mentoring and supervision of the participants (*see* Appendix 2).

Procedure

Before the conduct of the study, research matrix, research questionnaire, consent to participate in the study, and letter to conduct the study duly signed by the research mentor were sent to the schools division superintendent for public schools and school presidents and principals for private basic education institutions in Cotabato City. These schools offer both junior and senior high school education. After seeking the approval of the school authorities, data gathering began. Research assistants explained the objective of the study and the survey questionnaire, together with the consent to participate in the study, to the teacher respondents. Due to busy schedules of the participants, the survey questionnaires and consent were collected after a week. It should be noted that some data were gathered through Google forms. These were sent to the respondents via email, especially for teachers who have been teaching in critical areas that the research assistants were not able to access.

Moreover, since the participants were in Mindanao, a phone interview was done for practicality purposes. The participants gave their consent at the onset of the interview. They were asked to record themselves on the other line while the interview was going on for transcription. All the calls made over the phone were recorded and sent to the researcher via electronic mail.

Data Analysis

The data gathered from the survey were processed using SPSS version 23. The interview transcripts, on the other hand, were analyzed and clustered around themes. Note that I translated some interview transcripts from Filipino to English. These were checked by an intercoder who is an English Language Education graduate student. We reached a 95% agreement. Issues on translation were resolved by agreeing on the common word or phrase to be used for translation.

Results and Discussion

In this section, I will discuss the findings of the study. First, I will present the results of the survey for mentoring followed by the qualitative results. After, I will discuss the numerical results of supervision which will be complemented by the results of the interview.

Mentoring

It is interesting to find out that in Philippine setting, official mentors are not provided for the ESL beginning teachers even in other content areas. This implies that these teachers do not receive formal coaching and mentoring from more experienced colleagues despite the overwhelming empirical evidence of the beneficial aspects of mentoring of emerging teachers (Claycomb, 2000; Moir, Gless, & Baron, 1999; Stanulis & Floden, 2009). I assume that lack of structured mentoring program in our context is attributed to the complex roles and

workloads of teachers in the school.

Table 2

Official Mentoring experience of ESL beginning teachers

	F	%
Yes	0	0
No	73	100
Total	73	100

Upon conducting the interview with some participants, they qualified their answers in the survey. Azan, a private senior high school teacher, shared, “*No. We didn’t have any formal mentoring session in our department.*” Moreover, Lyn who teaches in a public senior high school appeared to be quite surprised with my question. She said, “*Ay wow. A big question—a nice question, actually wala. Haha.*” (Wow! A big question—a nice question, actually there’s none [laughter]). This statement is not only a deliberate expression of non-existence of a mentoring program. She also exclaimed with the expression of *ay wow* which conveys a surprise and the use of rhetoric *a big question—a nice question* which suggests sarcasm.

These findings imply that a formal mentoring program is non-existent in the academic environment of the participants despite the fact that many scholars have already found various beneficial outcomes it has such as decreasing teacher attrition (Claycomb, 2000; Boyer 1999 in Michael et al., 2009) and increased student achievement (Mathur et al., 2012).

Although there are no explicit formal mentoring programs, participants concurred that they experienced a sort of ‘orientation program’ from their colleagues. They pointed out that usually on the first day of class, they would get petty talks from their colleagues.

I had one with our colleagues or co-teachers wherein they taught us how to make our daily lesson log... it happened when I first enter the school... My first day in school, but after that one I don’t really experience any mentoring at all.

Here, Amy, a junior high school teacher in a public school maintained that she was taught how to make a Daily Lesson Log (DLL), which is used as a lesson plan of the day. However, this initiative from a colleague was rather a one-shot deal. Succeeding sessions no longer took place among them. In addition, a peer teacher would also give advice about proper decorum with students outside the classroom.

First one is... is maintaining professionalism inside and outside the classroom. Because, you know, I am a young beginning ESL teacher so uhm... it was also expected that uh uh I would meet students who were older than me. So the very first thing that I could really remember coming from the mouth of my seasoned colleagues, the very first thing is to be professional inside and outside the class. Another thing is, that I could still remember, is uhm uhm the value of punctuality.” (Azan, private SHS teacher)

A beginning teacher might handle students who are older or even much older than him. So, Azan was made aware by a colleague on how to deal with students who were older than him. Also, he added that he was told to come to class on time.

A more practicable advise was given to Jess who handles students in a private junior high school.

Sa first day of teaching they provided that I should be more patient in students because yun na nga, inaware nila ako the background ng mga students... They are good but sometimes yung too much na. And of course, ahmm... with the activities sa kanila they said that avoid masyado yung tiring na mga activities... wag masyadong...magbaba sa level nila...

(During the first day of teaching, I was told that I should be more patient with my students because they may be a little rowdy. I was also advised to make activities that are based on their level and that are not too tiring.)

In this case, Jess was advised by colleagues about the students that they have and that they can be misbehaving anytime. In addition, peers also reminded her to make her classroom activities relevant to her students as they may not do the tasks when they find it too easy or difficult or too tedious for them to do.

In general, these findings would imply that in basic education schools in the region have not looked into coming up with a structured mentoring program that may address work-related encountered by the teachers.

Supervision

With regard to supervision (see Table 3), almost two-thirds of the respondents remarked that they were able to experience to be observed by school personnel during the school year. Classroom observation is a norm in all educational systems where beginning teachers are starting their early professional careers. Mostly in private schools, every now and then, supervisory rounds and pop-in classroom visitations are conducted by subject coordinators and assistant principals to oversee how newly hired faculty members are doing inside the classroom.

Table 3

Classroom observation experience of ESL beginning teachers from any school personnel

	F	%
Yes	53	72.6
No	20	27.4
Total	73	100

However, it is common that school principals usually spearhead supervision through classroom observation. Wallace in 1991 pointed out that the principal has the responsibility to monitor and refine the quality of teaching carried out by other teachers in an educational setting. Forty-nine out of 73 reported that they had been observed by their school principals in their teaching. This classroom observations would take place twice in a school year usually in a span of 30 minutes to an hour. It was also noted that the teachers were given feedback after the classroom observations. In secondary public schools, the principal would usually conduct announced and unannounced classroom observations not only for the purpose of supervision, but also as a dry-run for future classroom visitations by some Department of Education (DepEd) officials.

Table 4

Experience of ESL teachers in classroom observation by the school principal

	F	%
Yes	49	67.1
No	24	32.9
Total	73	100

Frequency of classroom observation

	F	%
once a week	2	2.7
once a year	17	23.3
twice a month	4	5.5
twice a year	26	35.6
Total	49	67.1
Missing	24	
Total	73	100

Length of time

	F	%
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10	2	2.7
15	2	2.7
20	9	12.3
30	12	16.4
40	1	1.4
45	5	6.8
50	2	2.7
60	15	20.5
80	1	1.4
Total	49	67.1
Missing	24	
Total	73	100

<i>Feedback</i>	F	%
Yes	40	54.8
No	9	12.3
Total	49	67.1
Missing	24	
Total	73	100

In Table 5, it can be seen that 49 ESL teachers experienced classroom observation by their subject coordinators and/or assistant principals, and they are monitored as frequent as the principal would observe them. However, coordinators and assistant principals were reported to have observed much more teachers than the principals did where observations would range from 30 to 60 minutes per classroom visit. Meanwhile, giving feedback in oral or written form seemed to be a part of classroom observation of these school supervisors. This particular finding mirrors the usual context of supervision in Cotabato City particularly in private schools. Subject area coordinators and assistant principals usually observe more frequently than the principals do because they are the ones tasked mainly for the area of instruction while the principals take care of school operations in general.

Table 5
Experience of ESL teachers in classroom observation by the subject coordinator and/or other administrators

	F	%
Yes	49	67.1
No	24	32.9
Total	73	100

<i>Frequency of classroom observation</i>	F	%
once a year	17	23.3

twice a month	1	1.4
twice a year	31	42.5
Total	49	67.1
Missing		24
Total	73	100

<i>Length of time</i>	F	%
10	1	1.4
15	8	11
20	3	4.1
30	12	16.4
40	4	5.5
45	4	5.5
50	3	4.1
60	14	19.2
Total	49	67.1
Missing	24	
Total	73	100

<i>Feedback</i>	F	%
Yes	40	54.8
No	9	12.3
Total	49	67.1
Missing	24	
Total	73	100

Although there were a number of observations by more experienced colleagues to beginning English teachers, the data reveals that peer observation was not a routine for them. As can be obtained in Table 6, 44 out of 73 respondents did not experience such a classroom observation from these colleagues while only 29 were observed by senior faculty members. This implies that both public and private schools have peer observation activities, but this is not strengthened as a feature of their supervision program. Also, lack of time of more experienced faculty members to observe beginners' classes may be attributed to bulk of individual workload. Most full-time teaching faculty members have an average of five hours of teaching load per day in private schools while four hours a day is spent in classroom teaching of most public school teachers. This classroom teaching excludes homeroom guidance sessions, class substitution schedules for absent teachers, other assignments and club advisorship, and school forms among others.

Table 6
Experience of ESL teachers in classroom observation by another more experienced colleague

	F	%
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Yes	29	39.7
No	44	60.3
Total	73	100

<i>Frequency of classroom observation</i>	F	%
once a year	10	13.7
twice a month	1	1.4
twice a year	18	24.7
Total	29	39.7
Missing		44
Total	73	100

<i>Length of time</i>	F	%
15	4	5.5
20	2	2.7
30	7	9.6
40	2	2.7
45	1	1.4
50	1	1.4
60	12	16.4
Total	29	39.7
Missing		44
Total	73	100

<i>Feedbacking</i>	F	%
Yes	25	34.2
No	4	5.5
Total	29	39.7
Missing		44
Total	73	100

Unlike in the previous sections, observations conducted by colleagues of the same teaching experience were to a very minimum extent where only 12.3% of 73 teachers were observed by faculty members who are also beginners in the profession. Like classroom observations of more experienced teachers, this is indicative that peer assessment is generally less acknowledged as a means of supervision in the basic education. It can be inferred that supervision is only limited to school administrators such as principals and assistant principals and other people who have supervisory powers such as the academic coordinator or subject area coordinators. Results also show that when peers observed in classes, this would take place very seldom and would last for 30 minutes.

Table 7
Experience of ESL teachers in classroom observation by another colleague of the same experience

	F	%
Yes	9	12.3
No	64	87.7
Total	73	100
<i>Frequency of classroom observation</i>		
	F	%
once a year	4	5.5
twice a year	5	6.8
Total	9	12.3
Missing		64
Total	73	100
<i>Length of time</i>		
	F	%
10	1	1.4
15	1	1.4
20	1	1.4
30	4	5.5
60	2	2.7
Total	9	12.3
Missing	System	64
Total	73	100
<i>Feedback</i>		
	F	%
Yes	7	9.6
No	2	2.7
Total	9	12.3
Missing	System	64
Total	73	100

As regards the frequency of administrators' classroom observation, most ESL teachers preferred to be observed with the same frequency while a considerable number of respondents wanted to be observed more frequently.

Table 8
Frequency of observation by school administrators as determined by the ESL teachers

	F	%
more frequently	25	34.2
with same frequency	27	37
less frequently	21	28.8
Total	73	100

Table 8a

Cross tabulation of school type and frequency of observation by school administrators as determined by the ESL teachers

School type	more frequently	with same frequency	less frequently	Total
Public	8	12	16	36
Private	17	15	5	37
Total	25	27	21	73

In a similar vein, ESL emerging teachers also indicated that they wanted to be observed with the same frequency by colleagues while a similar number of respondents chose to be supervised in the classroom less frequently.

Table 9

Frequency of observation by colleagues as determined by the ESL teachers

	F	%
more frequently	20	27.4
with the same frequency	27	37
less frequently	26	35.6
Total	73	100

The attitudes displayed by ESL teachers from private schools in terms of classroom observations by administrators and colleagues may be attributed to positive perception to classroom observation. These teachers see classroom observations as an opportunity to collaborate with colleagues and gain some insights that may improve classroom instruction (Rahmany, Hasani, & Parhoodeh, 2014; Merç, 2015).

As far as their experience with observing other classroom teachers are concerned, more than half of teacher respondents had not observed any classes at all. On the other hand, only 24 out of 73 had the chance to see other colleagues teaching a class. This result concurs with the findings in previous sections that classroom observation was mostly conducted by school administrators like the principals, assistant principals, and subject area coordinators.

Table 10

Experience of ESL teachers in observing other classroom teachers

	F	%
Yes	24	32.9

No	49	67.1
Total	73	100

While there were a few who experienced peer observation, many were still not able to have the chance to see an actual teaching demonstration of a colleague. This may indicate that despite the idea of peer observation practice in schools, these emerging teachers do not really have the luxury of time to do such a task. It may not be because they do not want to do so, but may be because of diffidence to observe much more experienced colleagues or former mentors turned colleagues and the volume of school work to do.

When the participants answered during the interview, one shared that a feeling of reluctance whenever classroom observation takes place in the class. For example, Leah, a private senior high school teacher remarked:

Parang mahiya ako. Mainsecure ako baka ano ang iniisip niya kasi baka against siya. Kasi very subjective siya in my opinion... In different way kami ng pagtuturo then yung nakikita niya sa akin against sa kanya. So ganoon. Nag judge ako sa kanya kahit meron naman criteria pero di natin maiwasan.

(I feel shy. I feel insecure because [the observer] might disagree with me. I think [the observer] is too subjective.. because we teach differently. We follow a certain criteria but we cannot avoid to be subjective.)

When she was asked about her experience with supervision, the teacher felt reluctant because she thought that the observer may not agree with her teaching style. She also pointed out that observer's bias towards his personal way of teaching might affect his evaluation as one can be very subjective even if a specific evaluation tool is used during a classroom observation; subjectivity may still come in play.

Further, Leah added that she thinks observation is not effective. In her statement she said:

In my opinion I think hindi siya effective... because teachers are capable of doing everything because they are being observed but the real sense kapag nasa scenario kana talaga, wala naman talagang totoong nangyayaring effort na ganun.

(In my opinion it is not effective because teachers are capable of doing everything because they are being observed. But the real scenario is that they do not exert effort when no one is observing them.)

She narrated that teachers only prepare everything and play efficient when a classroom visitation is set. This makes this type of supervision less reliable in terms of checking for teachers' efficiency. This implies that once observation is done, teachers would not exert much effort as they exemplified during an actual observation of classes.

Moreover, Carlo, a senior high school English teacher in a public school shared his aversion during a classroom visitation.

If the person that would observe me is my—would be my program head or you know my superior of course, I would feel first nervous. But I would also feel uhm yeah nervous. Sometimes I wish she forgets my class schedule or she's busy so she will not observe in my class.

Like other teachers who are starting in their careers, he confessed that he felt very nervous especially when the program head or coordinator visits the class and conducts an observation. This feeling is rather usual because they may feel very conscious and uneasy which may result to unnatural classroom teaching. In addition, he expressed his reluctance by wishing that the observer misses classroom observation schedule. In a similar vein, Jess also felt shy whenever classroom observation takes place. *"If I'm being observed so parang nahihya ako because i cannot expand. Hindi ko kaya maipakita yung ako kasi there's an eye na nakatingin sa akin."* (If I am being observed, I feel shy because I cannot expand. I cannot do what I really can because there is an eye that watches me.) This remark suggests that observation is not only intimidating but also limiting. Jess believed that an observer is threatening rather than assisting.

Conclusion

The aim of this study is to explore the mentoring and supervision experiences of English as a second language (ESL) beginning teachers in 18 private and public schools in Cotabato City in Central Mindanao. Using one section of Hiring and Procult survey (Liu & Johnson, 2006) and interview, the results revealed that ESL emerging

teachers were not formally assigned with mentors which implies that clear, well-structured mentoring sessions are absent in public and private school systems. This particular finding may not concur with the practices of other countries like Australia and the United States where a more experienced, tenured teaching faculty is assigned to a starting ESL teacher to help them get through the challenges of the academic community. Albeit the beginning teachers did not experience any formal mentoring, they shared during the interview that they received pieces of advice from other peers. These were about professional conduct (e.g. some class routine, punctuality, attitude towards students), but these assistance were rather not enough and erratic. A scenario like this suggests that beginning ESL teachers are on their own and make their way through the different challenges in their teaching.

With regard to supervision, classroom observation was very evident in both public and private schools. School principals, assistant principals, and subject area coordinators are the ones that usually carry out the task of observing classes. This may be due to the fact that these school authorities are the ones who ensure quality classroom delivery of ESL teachers. It can be noted that here in the Philippines, mostly in the private schools, teacher retention especially those that are in contract and those that are not tenured yet have been periodically assessed through classroom observations. Thus, such a supervision of teachers in private schools would likely aim to ensure work retention; hence, supervisors would give regulatory suggestions (Freeman 1982, 1989a in Bailey, 2006). This might account for the teachers' different feelings about supervision. Some would like to be observed more often while others would want less frequently. Some felt intimidated and restrained whenever academic heads visit their classes to conduct observations. These experiences of the ESL novice teachers did not mirror the findings of Wang and Seth (1998) where novice teachers see the importance of supervisory activities that they experience. They argue that aside from educational experience that observation provides, it also offers a collaborative learning opportunity which creates an occasion for teachers and observers to learn from one another. In the case of the participants of the study, partnership seems yet to be developed as the novice teachers are still in the stage where a supposedly constructive experience appears to be a threatening one.

From the foregoing arguments on teachers' experiences in the academe in Central Mindanao, the results of this study relate to a global picture where educators from other countries, especially those that are developing nations in Asia and Africa, may also have lacking support to teacher mentoring and supervision. With this, the teachers' experiences in this study can be a basis to initiate mentoring and supervision practices in localities abroad.

Pedagogical Implication

These findings call for a well-structured mentoring program to be implemented in the academe specifically designed to cater to ESL novice teachers in the basic education. Tenured and more experienced teachers should be trained to learn the principles and practices of mentoring. Then, they will be assigned to mentor novice teachers so that these teachers will be helped in the course of their adjustments in the academic environment. Also, peer observation should be a requirement for all teaching personnel and not only limited to immediate supervisors as peer supervision may restore faculty interest in teaching and training (Hanson, 1992).

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Appendix 1

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE (LIU & JOHNSON, 2006)

I. PROFILING

Name _____ of _____ School: _____

Type of School: ___Public ___Private Graduate studies: _____

Department ___JHS ___SHS Date hired: ___2016 ___2017

Gender: ___Male ___Female

Age: ___21-25 ___26-30
 ___31-35

II. PROFESSIONAL CULTURE

A. OFFICIAL AND UNOFFICIAL MENTORING

Questions 1-8 refer specifically to an OFFICIALLY ASSIGNED MENTOR you have (or had) in your FIRST YEAR OF TEACHING. If you have (or had) more than one officially assigned mentor, please answer the questions for the one you consider to be your primary official mentor.

1. Do/Did you have an OFFICIAL mentor assigned to you by your school in?

- YES
- NO → GO to Question

2. Approximately how many years of teaching experience does/did this official mentor have?

_____ years.

3. In your teaching, does/did your official mentor...

- a. ...teach at the same school? Yes No
- b. ...teach the same subject(s)? Yes No
- c. ...teach the same grade level(s)? Yes No

4. On average, how often do/did you meet with your official mentor?

B. CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

10. Have any school personnel observed you teach for at least 20 minutes since the beginning of this school year?

- YES
 - NO
-

11. Has the PRINCIPAL observed you teach since the beginning of the year?

- YES → • **How many times?** _____
Approximately how long each time? _____ minutes
- **Did you usually receive oral or written feedback?**
 - Yes
 - No
- NO

12. Has the DEPARTMENT CHAIR/ SUBJECT COORDINATOR or OTHER ADMINISTRATOR observed you teach since the beginning of the year?

- YES → • **How many times?** _____
Approximately how long each time? _____ minutes
 - **Did you usually receive oral or written feedback?**
 - Yes
 - No
 - NO
-

13. Has ANOTHER MORE EXPERIENCED TEACHER(S) OR A MENTOR observed you teach since the beginning of the year?

- YES → • **How many times?** _____
Approximately how long each time? _____ minutes
 - **Did you usually receive oral or written feedback?**
 - Yes
 - No
 - NO
-

14. Has a TEACHER(S) WITH ABOUT THE SAME EXPERIENCE AS YOU observed you teach since the beginning of the year?

- YES → • **How many times?** _____
Approximately how long each time? _____ minutes
 - **Did you usually receive oral or written feedback?**
 - Yes
 - No
 - NO
-

15. In general, would you like to be observed BY ADMINISTRATORS...?

- More frequently
- With the same frequency
- Less frequently

16. In general, would you like to be observed BY OTHER TEACHERS...?

- More frequently
- With the same frequency
- Less frequently

17. Since the beginning of the school year, have you observed another teacher(s) in your school teach?

- YES
- NO

Appendix 2

Interview guide questions:

1. Describe a regular class days of a beginning ESL teacher.
2. How do you feel being a beginning ESL teacher? How has been your experience in your first year of teaching?
3. Describe a formal or informal mentoring session with a colleague or peer. What pieces of advice or mentoring insights do you get from them?
4. How does classroom supervision or observation make you feel? How necessary do you think are classroom observations.
5. Comment on the present mentoring and supervision program in your school. How do you think these should be carried out?

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