Research Article

# SHARE: A MENTORING STRATEGY FOR PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS

Ethel Abao[1] Helen Boholano[2*] Filomena Dayagbil[3] and Jewish Merin[4]

[1,2,3,4]Cebu Normal University, Philippines

*Corresponding Author, E-mail: boholanoh@cnu.edu.ph

## Abstract

The preparation of fourth-year education students to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application in the context of teaching and learning is greatly aided by student internship. This is the process where the pre-service teachers are exposed to a diverse range of competencies required for the real world of teaching. The purpose of this study is to learn more about how SHARE, a cutting-edge mentoring program specifically designed for aspiring teachers, has affected student teachers' experiences. In addition to exploration, the study looks deeper into the mentoring process itself, looking at how this ground-breaking approach encourages the growth of vital 21st-century abilities like teamwork, communication, and original problem-solving among trainee teachers. The study aims to provide important insights for boosting the efficiency of teacher preparation programs and ultimately elevating the standard of instruction in our classrooms through a thorough analysis of these experiences.

**Keywords:** Student Internship, Innovative Teaching Methods, 21st Century Skills, Creative Problem-Solving, Quality of Teaching

## Introduction

Student internship is designed to prepare the fourth year education students in the application of theories learned into their teaching-learning practice. Since they are made aware that the higher the quality of teaching, the higher the quality of learning, they should see the classroom as a stimulating avenue where abstract concepts are made tangible by carefully weaving and translating theories into realistic practices.

The pre-service teachers of Cebu Normal University, College of Teacher Education have been exposed and immersed to the different competencies needed in the real world of teaching. As observed by professional education teachers who are as well mentors, noted that once the pre-service teachers (student teachers) particularly those in the elementary level are assigned in the laboratory school for their student teaching, some of them if not many, are still wanting in their art and skill in teaching. A number of them disclosed that they

find difficulties in classroom management and the use of appropriate strategies in teaching, lesson designing and assessment. On the part of the student teaching mentors, they have assisted student teachers in their field exposure. They check lesson plans, conduct post conferences and expose student teachers in various curricular and co-curricular activities while in school. However, there is a need to intensify the mentoring activities and innovate ways of mentoring student teachers to better prepare them for the real world of teaching.

Being conscious of producing quality education graduates who are relevant to the global market, this research endeavors to develop and validate a mentoring strategy that revolutionizes pre-service education and training in the country.

## Objective of the Study

The study aims to explore student teachers' experiences in the implementation of SHARE, a mentoring strategy for pre-service teachers. It is also the interest of this study to delve deeper into the mentoring process and how the strategy facilitates the development of the 21st century skills of collaboration, communication, and creation among apprentice teachers.

## Research Methodology

### Research Design

To acquire a thorough knowledge of student teachers' experiences and the mentoring process, the study used a qualitative research design. Conversations, interview and journals become the bases of analyzing student teacher-mentor interactions, experiences and reflections during the try-out of the develop SHARE strategy. To learn more about pre-service teachers' experiences with, perspectives on, and insights into the SHARE mentoring technique, researchers conducted focus groups with mentors and pre-service teachers.

### Research Participants

The participants of the study were the student interns and mentors in the Integrated Laboratory School handling Mathematics, Science and English.

### Research Instrument

Open-ended questions and in-depth discussion are permitted in these interviews. To get a complete picture of student teachers' experiences and the mentoring process, observation was conducted by the researchers throughout their classroom activities, mentoring meetings, and participation in extracurricular and curricular activities.

### Data Gathering Procedure

The SHARE mentoring strategy is a comprehensive method for empowering pre-service teachers and putting them in a position to meet the needs of 21st century education, as described in its phases. A closer examination of each stage of the SHARE method and its possible impact on teacher development will be provided in this narrative discussion.

In the first stage of SHARE *(Set Goals),* the emphasis is on defining precise teaching objectives and forging a solid mentor-mentee connection. Goal-setting is stressed in order to give pre-service teachers a clear direction for their teaching practices. This stage also emphasizes the need of rapport-building, emphasizing the necessity of a trusting and relaxed mentor-mentee relationship for successful mentoring.

The mentor introduces criteria in the second phase *(Have Criteria),* that are in line with 21$^{st}$ century abilities including communication, teamwork, critical thinking, and creativity. Mentors assist pre-service teachers to think about how they might incorporate these skills into their teaching practices by incorporating them into the mentoring process. This strategy emphasizes the value of comprehensive skill development while also preparing instructors for the modern classroom.

The third stage *(Allow Teachers' Input)* places special emphasis on two-way communication. Pre-service teachers have the chance to share their thoughts and suggestions with mentors on how to make lessons better. Between mentors and mentees, this open discussion encourages collaboration and mutual learning, enabling a lively interchange of ideas and viewpoints.

Support from a mentor *(Render Support)* can take many different forms, such as official and informal activities, observations in the classroom, opinions on particular subjects, sample demonstrations, and more. This stage demonstrates the all-encompassing nature of mentoring, in which mentors actively involve pre-service teachers in their educational journey in addition to providing guidance. The use of technology, such as watching current films, gives mentoring a contemporary touch.

Reflection and feedback *(or Echo)* are encouraged throughout the last stage. Pre-service teachers and mentors exchange observations, remarks, and lessons learned. With the help of this reflective approach, it is possible to grow and improve continuously by highlighting the strengths (Leaps), the areas that still require improvement (Limits), and the suggestions (Lessons) for the teaching practice.

The SHARE mentoring approach's main objective is to provide pre-service teachers more power. They should discover techniques that make teaching and learning more pleasurable and meaningful during this process. In order to meet the demands of students in the 21$^{st}$ century, the strategy encourages teachers to develop new teaching strategies and materials or alter existing ones. With a focus on resourcefulness and simplicity, children are encouraged to think critically and develop values outside of the classroom.

### Data Analysis

This study employed thematic analysis to examine the interview transcripts, observational notes, and document analysis findings. The reoccurring themes, patterns, and important ideas were determined in relation to the experiences of student teachers and the effects of the SHARE mentoring approach.

### Ethical Considerations

Informed consent from all participants were gathered before the data collection. This endeavor is purely for academic activities and all names of the participants were withheld.

## Results and Discussion

The mentees who are the fourth year students of the Bachelor of Elementary Education are the selected student teachers who teach English, Science and Math in the elementary department respectively expressed their varied responses to the following queries based on the phases of SHARE. The following themes emerged:

### Theme 1: Passion for Imparting Knowledge

All of the mentees spoke with a sincere zeal for passing on their knowledge to their students. They consider teaching to be a wonderful profession that enables them to inspire students to study and develop while also sharing what they have learnt. The mentees' enthusiasm for educating their kids is the first common theme. Their comments reflect this passion, as they indicate a strong desire to instruct and motivate their students. Mentee 1 asserts that "*being an educator is a very noble profession," demonstrating their high appreciation for education* (Mentee 1). Some mentees say that "*teaching allows them to keep learning and obtain new experiences, which can help them become more successful teachers*" (Mentee 3).

Literature has acknowledged teaching as a noble profession. According to Darling-Hammond (2017), teaching is frequently regarded as a noble vocation because it helps to mold the next generation and promote intellectual development.

### Theme 2: Influence of Family and Environment

Some of the mentees report that having parents or other family members who are teachers has influenced their choice to become teachers. They consider teaching to be a legacy that should be handed on to the following generation. The importance of this stage is emphasized by Mentee 2, *who claims that "it is here that students must lay a strong foundation in fundamental ideas"* (Mentee 2).

An established idea in primary education is the value of a solid foundation. Smith and Wilhelm (2018) address how primary education creates the foundation for future academic performance and lifelong learning in support of this.

### Theme 3: Desire to Change Lives

The ambition to transform lives and have a positive impact on the world via education runs through the mentees like a common thread. They consider teaching as a way to develop students' minds and make them better citizens. One way some mentees discuss continuing their education and acquiring new experiences is by teaching. They think that by teaching, they can develop personally and become better instructors. "*The desire to alter lives and have a positive impact on the world via education is a characteristic shared by the mentees*". (Mentee 1)

Mentor-mentee relationship is a regular meeting each week to support in overcoming any barriers that are affecting in the teaching and learning process. This could range from: helping time management, discussing problems and assisting with lesson planning. The support, are on the areas of confidence and motivation, personal management in the teaching experience.

In addition, Mentor 3 emphasized the advantages of getting experience and becoming involved in students' lives, as well as the difficulties of managing varied learners and ensuring that learning is pleasurable.

### Theme 4: Benefits and Challenges of Teaching

There are also benefits and challenges in teaching English, Math and Science.

Mentee 1 emphasized "*the advantages of teaching, including knowledge expansion, developing relationships with students, and fostering a pleasant learning atmosphere.*" They did, however, also highlight difficulties, such as the need to learn challenging material and classroom management. Mentor 4 stress on the joy of teaching as well as the difficulty of adjusting to a new environment, managing finances, managing a classroom, and creating lesson plans. According to her "*teaching is enjoyable and fun*".

Moreover, Mentor 3 emphasized the advantages of encouraging creativity and innovation but also recognized difficulties in providing students with a consistent education and developing lesson plans.

The mentees' reasons for wanting to become teachers are consistent with a number of well-established ideas in educational psychology and teacher preparation. These themes include a strong enthusiasm for teaching, the understanding of the fundamental nature of elementary education, the impact of family and environment, the value of interpersonal relationships, the desire to make a difference in people's lives, professional development via teaching, and intrinsic motivation. These themes illustrate the various motives and ideas that influence people to become educators while illuminating the complicated and nuanced nature of the teaching profession.

### Theme 5: Importance of the 4 Cs (Critical Thinking, Communication, Collaboration, Creativity)

Mentee 3 appreciates how the 4Cs are included into the classroom since it has enhanced their capacity for critical thought. The theme highlights the beneficial effects of mentoring on mentees' self-assurance, professional development, and drive to become successful teachers in the twenty-first century. The mentoring process is heavily reliant on preconference meetings, ongoing education, and the role of incentive in teaching and learning.

Conscious of the 21st century skills, the mentor presented the use/inclusion of 4 C's in the lesson design. The individual mentees were then given opportunities to explain/ discuss how each would satisfactorily carry out the 4 C's in the teaching-learning activities. These are: Communication; Collaboration; Critical Thinking; and Creativity.

Once the topic/competency is given to the individual mentee to do teaching demonstration, the individual mentors allows each mentee to explore and think critically how the latter wanted it carried out following the 4C's. This time the mentor facilitates the discussion, thereafter have the agreed strategies and activities written in the lesson design.

*Theme 6: The Impact of Mentorship on Teaching Performance*

Positive experiences in the SHARE program by the mentees (Mentees 1, 2, 3, and 4) demonstrate the tremendous impact mentors have on their ability to teach. Mentors who offer helpful criticism, encouragement, and encouraging feedback help mentees advance as teachers. A student-teacher-centered approach to education is promoted by this constructive mentor-mentee connection, which also fosters increased confidence and open communication. The following are the narratives of the mentees:

*The importance of mentors who don't offend the mentees' sentiments, who valued their mentor's constructive criticism and open-mindedness. This emphasizes the mentor's function in fostering a helpful learning environment and helping mentees gain confidence. (Mentee 1)*

*Through one-on-one mentoring, SHARE assisted us in enhancing our lesson delivery, increasing our confidence, and learning useful teaching techniques. This demonstrates how the mentor may help teachers become more prepared and effective teachers. (Mentee 3)*

The mentees stressed the need of having honest conversations with their mentor during which suitable teaching strategies and critical thinking were discussed. This emphasizes the mentor's function in fostering introspection and critical thought. The importance of mentoring is shown by the mentees' good experiences, which is a key element of the SHARE program. The mentees commended mentors who offered helpful criticism and fostered an accepting environment for conversations. Building the mentees' confidence and facilitating their professional development as instructors depends heavily on this beneficial mentor-mentee relationship.

*Theme 7: Challenges and Suggestions for Improvement in the SHARE Program*

Despite the many advantages of the SHARE program, the mentees also noted problems and opportunities for improvement. These difficulties include the need for more support resources, schedule issues, and the lack of mentor availability. Here are the narratives of the mentees:

*The problem of mentor availability due to responsibilities associated to research, which raises the possibility that this may have an effect on mentoring effectiveness. Setting goals was hampered by the time mismatch between the mentor and the mentee. (Mentee 4)*

*Limited classroom space is one issue that might make it difficult to provide the best learning environment. This emphasizes how crucial a supportive learning environment is for efficient instruction. (Mentee 1)*

Some mentees expressed worries about the availability of mentors, particularly when mentors had commitments connected to research. The mismatch between mentor and mentee schedules was identified as a challenge, making it challenging to define and achieve goals effectively. This could affect the caliber and consistency of mentoring.

*Theme 8: Classroom Management and Teaching Strategies*

The importance of classroom management strategies in the teaching and learning process is highlighted by this theme. Effective classroom management is a key component of good instruction and is crucial in fostering an environment where students can learn. This conversation will center on the ways in which mentors and teachers may close the gap between classroom instruction and real-world application. Belos is an example:

*I have experienced that my mentor imposed efficient classroom management. The mentor's guidance on discipline and engagement techniques for the classroom. (Mentee 2)*

For a school environment to remain orderly and disciplined, effective classroom management techniques are crucial. They may significantly affect students' engagement and general learning results.

*Theme 9: Alignment of Theory and Practice*

The importance of mentors in bridging the gap between academic theory and real-world classroom experiences is emphasized by this theme. Effective teaching requires balancing academic knowledge with real-world classroom experiences. To address the particular requirements of their students, educators must modify and improve their approaches.

Effectively implementing classroom management tactics can be difficult for teachers. Discussions of these issues and suggested solutions might yield insightful information.

With an emphasis on goal-setting, criteria-based assessment, open communication, all-encompassing support, and reflective practice, the SHARE mentoring technique offers a comprehensive approach to teacher development. It is intended to provide future teachers with the skills they need to be successful 21st century learning facilitators. This narrative discussion's practical execution and data analysis plan show a dedication to evaluating and enhancing the strategy's efficacy.

## Conclusion

The results of this study highlight the important role that strong mentoring plays in preparing aspiring teachers for the challenging requirements of the 21st century classroom. Moreover, this study emphasizes the complexity of teaching and the crucial part that mentoring plays in forming the next generation of educators. It also emphasizes the value of continual professional development and assistance for teachers in order to help them succeed in the 21st century classroom, in line with a commitment to assessing and enhancing teaching techniques for the gain of both educators and students. The SHARE mentoring approach has shown its ability to bridge the gap between theory and practice in teacher education by emphasizing collaborative learning, communication abilities, and innovative teaching methods. These issues have important implications for teacher training programs, highlighting the value of cutting-edge mentoring strategies like SHARE in developing the future generation of educators. Such strategies can help to advance the teaching profession

and ultimately raise the standard of instruction in schools by focusing on the development of both pedagogical skills and essential 21st century competences.

## Recommendation

Based on the findings of the study, the following are recommended:

1. Continually improve the SHARE mentoring approach based on input from mentors and student interns.

2. Elements of technology and online resources maybe considered to facilitate mentoring interactions, especially in cases of remote or blended learning environments.

3. Create a database or repository of best practices, lesson plans, and instructional materials that student interns can use.

4. Ensure that mentoring programs include inclusive teaching methods that cater to the various requirements of students in diverse classrooms, including those with disabilities and those from diverse cultural backgrounds.

## References

Darling-Hammond, L. (2017). Teacher education around the world: What can we learn from international practice? *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 40(3), 291-309.

Smith, F., & Wilhelm, J. D. (2018). Reading don't fix no Chevys: Literacy in the lives of young men. Teachers College Press.