

YU Ka Nok

A project entitled

Mentorship in Helping Final Year Pre-Service Teachers' Transition

Submitted by **YU Ka Nok**

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Declaration

I, YU Ka Nok declare that this research report represents my own work under the supervision of Dr. WONG Mei Yee, and that it has not been submitted previously for examination to any tertiary institution.

YU Ka Nok

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Abstract

The research aims to investigate the transition of final year pre-service teachers from pre-service stage to in-service stage. Meanwhile, the research explores their experience of mentorship, in order to discover how mentorship helps final year pre-service teachers' transition and the ways of improving mentorship. This research has adopted qualitative research method. Semi-structured individual interviews have been conducted to five final year pre-service teachers who have recent experience of teaching practicum with formal mentorship involved.

In the findings of the research, it is understood that mentorship offers multiple forms of assistance to final year pre-service teachers, which can minimize their transition shock and difficulties. However, there are various limitations of mentorship such as lack of learning opportunities for mentees to experience in-service teachers' work, which reduce the functions of mentorship in helping final year pre-service teachers' transition. Moreover, the research also reveals the problem of communication and power relationships that appeared in mentorship. Based on the findings and discussion of this study, the research provides empirical data to discover the ways of mentorship helps final year pre-service teachers' transition, and it raises suggestions to reduce certain barriers of mentorship.

Keywords: final year pre-service teachers, transition, mentorship, in-service

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

Teacher training that are held by many universities or educational institutions in the world, provide to individuals who would like to become qualified teachers. These individuals are called pre-service teachers, they learn and prepare to be in-service teachers. Through teacher training, pre-service teachers are educated in theories, subject knowledge and teaching pedagogy. They learn the nature of education and develop teaching strategies in classroom context.

Teaching practicum is the major part in teacher training, for pre-service teachers to spend time in school observation and engage in teaching in real practice, in order to gain their own practical experience of teaching by applying knowledge that they learnt from teacher training (Kari & Lilach, 2005; Ulla, 2016). However, practical work is regarded as the most demanding and challenging task for pre-service teachers, as theories and knowledge learnt in teacher training cannot fully prepare them in actual teaching (Kim & Tan, 2011; Haigh et al., 2007). Kwan and Lopez-Real (2000) claimed that university and placement schools form partnerships to offer mentorship to pre-service teachers. Mentorship is treated as the major support during pre-service teachers' teaching practicums, to offer teaching experience and help them to improve their teaching performance.

In the local context, the Education Bureau in HKSAR (2018) listed out that any person who would like to register as a qualified teacher, should hold a recognized 5-year Bachelor's Degree in Education or Postgraduate Diploma in Education. There are five universities offer teacher training programmes, i.e. "The University of Hong Kong, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong Baptist University, The Education University of Hong Kong and The Open University of Hong Kong". In the curriculum of teacher training, teaching practicum is compulsory to all pre-service teachers. Use the Education University of Hong Kong as an example, students in teacher training programmes (i.e. pre-service teacher) have two compulsory teaching practicums with formal mentorship. No pre-service teachers are allowed to graduate without passing the required teaching practicums.

Pre-service teachers in final year are expected to gain sufficient subject knowledge and teaching pedagogy after a few years of teacher training. They are going to become beginning in-service teachers very soon after their graduation. For final year pre-service teachers, teaching practicum is not just a chance for them to apply theories in real teaching, but also for them to work towards achieving stages of graduate career, to make successful transition from pre-service to in-service stage, to build professionalism and efficacy for future teaching (Hudson et al., 2016; Jamil et al., 2012; Yuan & Lee, 2014). These studies show the importance of successful transition of pre-service teachers in final year. Therefore, this

research aims to explore how mentorship help final year pre-service teachers successfully transit from pre-service to in-service stage.

Chapter 2 - Theoretical Framework

Based on the goal of this research, multiple literature of scholars' research has been reviewed to discover three major aspects, including final year pre-service teachers' transition, the functions of mentorship, and relationship between mentorship and transition.

2.1 Process of Transition

Various studies had discussed about the process of transition of final year pre-service teachers. Maldrez et al. (2007) proposed the whole process of final year pre-service teachers transit to become in-service teachers:

1. they learn the concept of teacher identity and teacher professionalism
2. they form sense of themselves as a real teacher
3. they aware their reasons of teaching
4. they build actual relationships with other significant stakeholders, such as other teachers, students and students' parents
5. they concern about individual teaching

The typical role of pre-service teachers is pre-service and novice. Nevertheless, for final year pre-service teachers, they are required to transit their role, responsibilities and capabilities to in-service level (Lee & Feng, 2007). Therefore, during their transition process, they should take actions such as self-reflection when engaging in collaborative teaching lessons with mentors and do exploration in independent teaching. Their emotion should also assume themselves as professional in-service teachers, rather than pre-service or beginning teachers (Brown et al., 1989; Mockler, 2011).

Pre-service teachers in final year who have successfully transited into in-service stage, should be able to build effective relationships with other significant parties such as students and acquire sufficient capabilities for individual teaching (Maldrez et al., 2007). Also, they should be capable to tackle different kinds of unexpected challenges in classroom (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). Furthermore, Roth et al. (2007) indicated that if final year pre-service teachers successfully transit to in-service situation or even develop to achieve professional level, their teaching efficacy, autonomy and motivation will be higher, which would also improve their teaching competence. More importantly, a successful transition of final year pre-service teachers can enhance their teaching effectiveness and thus benefit students' learning.

2.2 Transition Shock and Difficulties

Most of the pre-service teachers had encountered reality shock and difficulties when they transit from pre-service to in-service stage (Lee & Feng, 2007). Especially for final year pre-service teachers, they should transit their actions, roles and mental development from learners to teachers immediately to immerse in teaching works. However, Yuan & Lee (2014) described that there is a distinct discrepancy between what the pre-service teachers had envisaged before teaching practicum and what they had actually experienced in teaching practicum. They felt shock and frustrated due to significant differences in the process of transition, result in higher attrition in teaching effectiveness (McDonough & Brandenburg, 2012; Kim & Cho, 2014).

Moreover, many pre-service teachers especially for those who are in final year believed their professional growth in teaching were progressed through coursework in teacher training and teaching practices. However, they felt difficult to integrate theories and knowledge that they learnt at teacher training and transform in their actual teaching. The pedagogical skills and subject content knowledge of final year pre-service teachers have been exposed in classroom, their view of teaching and expectation of personal achievement in teacher training may be different with teaching practice in reality, made them experience transition shock (Allen & Wright, 2014). As a result, teaching practicum has been frequently found to be the most

challenging task of many pre-service teachers, because there is a huge difference in transiting from teacher training to actual teaching practice in classroom.

2.3 Mentorship

Mentorship provided by placement schools and universities are the official and major support to pre-service teachers in teaching practicum. Jacobi (1991) listed out the most common practice of mentorship include experienced teachers or senior educators to be mentors to assist their mentees who are pre-service teachers, by facilitating them to connect their learning in teacher training to teaching practice. The author also suggested multiple key components as the basis of mentorship in education, such as relationships between mentors and mentees are personal and reciprocal, mentorship should provide direct assistance to help pre-service teachers to develop teacher professionalism. Hobson et al. (2009) showed their appreciation of mentorship, by stating that mentorship is very essential in teacher training as pre-service teachers can learn to alleviate any uncertainty and understand the required basic skills of in-service teachers from their mentors.

Mentorship can be taken in three structures, i.e. formal, casual and informal, aimed at bringing positive experience to pre-service teachers through professional interactions and constructive conversations with mentors (Fuentes et al., 2014). There are three major natures of mentorship in recent education field, including supervision, support and collaboration, to

help pre-service teachers improve their teaching practice (Kemnis et al., 2014). A batch of supervisory actions such as questioning and assessing performance should be involved in interactions between pre-service teachers and their mentors, implied that mentors are responsible in supervision and decide mentees' grade of teaching performance (Mena et al., 2017). In supervisory mentorship, the performance of mentees and experience of mentors are crucial in the period of teaching practice.

In addition, mentorship provides chances for pre-service teachers to take part in a developmental process with support from mentors, to learn about skills, knowledge and shape their attitudes to be professional teachers (Ambrosetti, 2010). Mentors help pre-service teachers by acting as cooperating teachers in practice schools, which can directly help their practicum. Collaborative mentors would be responsible for demonstrating teaching, observing mentees' performance and being counselors (Fairbanks et al., 2000). Moreover, mentors may share resources such as teaching materials and do evaluation with providing feedback to final year pre-service teachers (Walkington, 2005). In supportive and collaborative mentorship, frequency and effectiveness of offering assistance by mentors are essential during teaching practicum.

2.4 Relationship of Mentorship and Transition

From the review of the above literature, final year pre-service teachers face difficulties in transition while mentorship in education is the crucial support to them. Mentorship is deemed to be the major support to pre-service teachers and the most effective way to reduce their transition shock in real teaching (Dikilitas et al., 2018; Kim & Cho, 2014). Since mentors must have experienced similar transition difficulties with mentees as they were also pre-service teachers in their teacher training. They would understand the issues and difficulties of their mentees' transition, thus they can share their personal experience and provide effective assistance in the real context of teaching, in order to help mentees in transition.

In mentorship, roles of mentors are generally expected to be feedback provider, observer, role model and counselor. They provide constructive feedback about pre-service teachers' performance in teaching practicum, mentees can then do reflection and explore on how to improve their performances. Hence, mentorship can help mentees to alleviate the gap between teacher training and real teaching (Pekkanli, 2011; Kwan & Lopez-Real, 2005). Through face-to-face conversations and exchange of ideas, mentors can provide suggestions to final year pre-service teachers in their teaching pedagogy in real practice, by imparting their situation-specific knowledge and practical knowledge to mentees, to minimize their transition difficulties and enhance their teaching professionalism (Ximena & Mendez, 2008; Mena et al., 2017).

Mentors can help pre-service teachers with something more than teaching, such as share teaching resources and help in adaptation of job reality and school culture (Kim & Cho, 2014). Moreover, Hennissen et al. (2011) mentioned that mentorship helps pre-service teachers through offering emotional and psychological support, in order to address mentees' stress and needs in new environments. Through mentorship, final year pre-service teachers who experience transition shock and difficulties can get help from their mentors, prepare them to deal with challenges that appear in real teaching and classroom, adjust and adapt into new environments in placement schools (Heirdsfield et al., 2008). The above literature reviews can be drawn into a summary that mentorship is an essential component to mentees and it is closely related to help final year pre-service teachers' transition.

2.5 Arguments on Current Phenomena of Mentorship

Some literature described mentorship as a power relationship with hierarchy, because mentors were older with achievements and got all the powers to lead mentorship, while they were also responsible for judging and grading. Sometimes mentees felt forced to follow their mentors, as they held opposite opinions from their mentors but they were restricted by mentors' instructions. This kind of mentorship inhibits final year pre-service teachers' natural teaching plan and hinders their development of their own teaching style for future in-service teaching (Savage et al., 2004; Ebmeier, 2003).

On the same side, there are various barriers of maintaining mentorship. Ssemata et al. (2017) listed out the factors that will destroy mentorship, including mentees' inactive communication for maintaining stable relationships, mentors' lack of trust to share issues, unable to understand others' expectations, conflicts of personality and interest. The study drew our attention on multiple problems appear in mentorship that would reduce its function on helping final year pre-service teachers to transit themselves into in-service stage and minimize effectiveness of their teaching performances.

2.6 Purpose of The Study

From the review of literature, many scholars pointed out that pre-service teachers especially those in final year faced transition shock and difficulties. Various studies illustrated mentorship in education help final year pre-service teachers' transition and benefit their future teaching, such as minimizing their transition shock and maximizing teacher professionalism. The relationship of transition and mentorship has been investigated in different literature.

Majority of scholars put their attention on the actions of mentors in helping final year pre-service teachers' transition. Therefore, further research could be conducted to explore from the perspectives of final year pre-service teachers. This empirical study had been started to investigate the application of mentorship in helping final year pre-service teachers' transition into in-service stage. The study focuses on final year pre-service teachers' experiences of

mentorship, their perception of ability for transition, and the reasons for using mentorship to help their transition. Guided by this aim, three specific research questions are set:

1. What are final year pre-service teachers' experiences of mentorship in teaching practicum?
2. How do final year pre-service teachers perceive their abilities to transit into in-service stage?
3. Why use mentorship to help final year pre-service teachers' transition?

Chapter 3 - Methodology

3.1 Qualitative Research

To explore in-depth information about final year pre-service teachers' transition and how mentorship can help their transition, a qualitative research method was used in this study.

Fossey et al. (2002) listed out various data collection methods of qualitative research, such as semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions can be developed to collect data like participants' observations and experiences. In this research, the interviews were collecting data about final year pre-service teachers' experience of mentorship in reality, their perceptions on abilities to achieve in-service stage, and how mentorship helps them to transit.

3.2 Data Collection

A semi-structured format of individual interview was conducted with the participants. Each interview lasted about 60 to 90 minutes. The interviews were conducted in the mother tongue

of both the researcher and the participants, Cantonese. Before the interview was conducted, the author had asked for the interviewees' consent of audio and written record of the interview. All interviews were recorded for academic research purposes under permission of interviewees.

14 open-ended questions that were set according to the three research questions had been asked in each interview. In the interview, the participants had shared their experience of current mentorship during teaching practicum. Then, they were encouraged to share their perceptions of abilities to transit into in-service stage. More questions had been asked to investigate the reasons for using mentorship to help final year pre-service teachers' transition in the interviews. Based on the discussion with the participants, various follow-up questions had been asked to gain deeper insight.

3.3 Participants

Data collection period were held in December 2020 to February 2021. The participants of this study are five final year pre-service teachers from different teacher training programme in EdUHK. All of them had recent experience of teaching practicum with formal mentorship involved. Their mentorships were compulsory and official, provided by placement schools and EdUHK during their teaching practicum. The purpose of interviewing final year pre-service teachers is to understand the functions of mentorship and the ways to help their

transition. It is believed that the view of final year pre-service teachers will influence the way of mentorship to provide help in the future. All the data had been used to investigate the application of mentorship in helping final year pre-service teachers' transition. Their participation was voluntary with clear understanding of the research purpose and the use of collected data.

Snowball sampling method was applied in this study to invite participants because the author knows little of final year pre-service teachers from different teacher training programmes. The author first contacted an acquaintance who fit the conditions of this study: final year pre-service teacher from EdUHK who recently have teaching practicum with formal mentorship involved, to share the purpose of this study, and invite the participants to refer more individuals who fit the conditions to the author. Then, the author would contact more voluntary interviewees to conduct more interviews.

Table 1: Overview of the participants' teaching subjects and teaching sectors

Name code of the five participants	Teaching subjects	Teaching sectors
Interviewee A	General Studies	Primary school

Interviewee B	Business, Accounting and Financial Studies (BAFS)	Secondary school
Interviewee C	Music	Secondary school
Interviewee D	Mathematics	Primary school
Interviewee E	Chinese	Secondary school

All the participants in this study were studying different subjects, so they taught different subjects in teaching practicum. They were confirmed that they had taught at different schools and their mentors were different people. This can ensure the diversity of collected data in the study.

3.4 Data Analysis

All the interview audios were transformed into Chinese transcripts. Translation into English was done if the responses of the participants were selected in this paper, to preserve the original ideas of the interviewees. Further analysis had been developed in this paper to draw a framework of all the collected data. After all data collection and analysis, there are three focused categories, including (1) final year pre-service teachers' experience of mentorship, (2) final year pre-service teachers' perception of abilities to transit, (3) how mentorship help final

year pre-service teachers' transition. This research was carrying out the findings based on these three categories.

Chapter 4 - Findings

4.1 Final Year Pre-service Teachers' Experiences of Mentorship

During the interviews, each participant in this study responded to the first research question

“What are final year pre-service teachers’ experiences of mentorship in teaching practicum?”.

To begin with, they were asked to share their experiences of mentorship, including the

advantages and limitations of their current mentorship in teaching practicum, as well as the

conditions of their ideal mentorship. Their actual experience of mentorship and perception of

ideal mentorship are essential for further discussion of the importance and functions of

mentorship.

Table 2: Advantages of mentorship

No. of participants	Advantages of mentorship
5	Mentors provided feedback and suggestions
2	Mentors were experienced in-service teachers
2	Mentors provided mental support

1	Mentors provided information about my students
1	Mentors shared their own past experience
1	Close communication with mentors
1	Clear instruction (e.g. no. of teaching periods, date of meetings)

Mentorship is essential to final year pre-service teachers as it offers multiple support and assistance to them. All participants supported that mentors provided professional feedback to enhance their teaching performance and concrete suggestions such as how to design teaching materials to raise students' learning motivation. It found that from the participants' view, these kinds of support are the basis of mentorship that should be provided to mentees.

Moreover, Interviewee C appreciated that mentors shared their past experiences of teaching and their methods to solve problems that appeared in the classroom, which enhanced her problem-solving skills. Interviewee A and D mentioned that mentors provided mental support and encouragement, to help them adapt in a new working environment with stressful working situations. Moreover, interviewee E pointed out that the communication and relationship between his mentors and himself were close and effective, by indicating:

Interviewee E: "I know in-service teachers are very busy. Luckily this time [this teaching practicum] my mentors are willing to maintain a close communication with me, so I can keep asking questions and request for feedback and suggestions about my teaching design."

Analyzing all the responses about the advantages of mentorship from the participants, it found that mentorship mainly provide assistance in teaching, helping the mentees to improve their teaching performance. Meanwhile, mentorship also offer some support that more than teaching, such as mental support to help mentees adapt into the working environment.

Table 3: Limitations of mentorship

No. of participants	Limitations of mentorship
3	Mentors were without experience in teaching or mentoring
3	Mentors were too busy
2	Mentors were not willing to provide help/ not supportive
2	Learning opportunities depends on mentors' distribution
2	No chance to attend administrative meetings
2	Mentors limit my opportunities to design teaching materials
1	No chance to communicate with students' parents
1	No chance to be responsible in school activities
1	Too high expectation from mentors

On the other hand, there were various limitations of mentorship which would reduce its functions to final year pre-service teachers. Most of the participants claimed that their mentors were too busy at work and not willing to provide help, causing mentors' assistance were not immediate and they were difficult to ask questions. Interviewee A, B and D stated that their mentors were lack of experience in mentoring or teaching, which weaken the functions of mentorship. Moreover, interviewee B and C mentioned that their learning opportunities in

teaching practicum were limited by mentorship, because mentees' workload depended on mentors' distribution. Interviewee A indicated that her mentors have high expectations on her performance, which restricted her self-development and flexibility in designing teaching. In addition, the participants pointed out that they did not have chance to communicate with students' parents, be responsible in school activities and attend administrative meetings.

However, these works were general and compulsory workload of in-service teachers. Lack of these learning experiences would hinder their transition into in-service stage.

Analyzing all the ideas about the limitations of mentorship from the participants, it found that the functions of mentorship in helping final year pre-service teachers to transit had been reduced, due to mentors' distribution of work to mentees, the willingness of mentors to provide help, mentors' lack of experience in mentoring and teaching, and mentees' lack of experience in-service teachers' work.

Table 4: Final year pre-service teachers' ideal mentorship

No. of participants	Ideal mentorship
5	Experience the work of real in-service teachers
3	Mentors provide feedback and suggestions in teaching
2	Develop effective and close communication with their mentors
2	Flexibility in design teaching materials and construct teaching
1	Mentors share information (e.g. students' learning abilities)

Through the responses of participants, there are a total of five conditions to constitute ideal mentorship. The interviewees pointed out that mentors should provide useful teaching feedback and suggestions for improving their teaching performances, while mentors should also share information of students' learning abilities and personal characteristics. With reference to the responses of the advantages of mentorship, these kinds of assistance had already been provided in their experiences of current mentorship.

However, there are various distinction between their ideal mentorship and actual mentorship in reality. All interviewees stated that ideal mentorship should provide sufficient opportunities for them to experience the ordinary work of in-service teachers. For example, they have similar number of teaching periods, they can be responsible in administrative work and participate in school activities. However, the participants did not have any relevant opportunities in reality. Another difference between their ideal mentorship and what they had experienced is communication. Interviewee C and E wanted to develop effective and close communication with their mentors, but their mentors were too busy and not willing to support them in reality. Additionally, Interviewee A and D indicated that they could enjoy flexibility in designing teaching materials and construct teaching in the classroom, while both of them were restricted to design their own teaching materials by mentors and limited to carry out their ideal teaching activities under COVID-19 in reality. With reference to the responses in sharing the limitations of mentorship, these kinds of assistance had not been offered in their

experiences of current mentorship. The distinct difference between their ideal mentorship and actual mentorship represents mentorship has room for improvement to support final year pre-service teachers.

4.2 Final Year Pre-Service Teachers' Perception of Ability to Transit

The participants in this study had responded to the second research question “How do final year pre-service teachers perceive their abilities to transit into in-service stage?”. They were asked to share their perceptions of transition, and the abilities which should be equipped for successful transition.

Table 5: Final year pre-service teachers' perceptions of transition into in-service stage

Interviewee	Do you think you can transit from pre-service stage to in-service stage in teaching successfully?
Interviewee A	No, need transition period (i.e. 1 semester)
Interviewee B	Yes
Interviewee C	No, need transition period (i.e. 1 year)
Interviewee D	Yes
Interviewee E	Yes

Three out of five interviewees believed that they could successfully transit into in-service stage now. Their responses are quoted as follow:

Interviewee B: “Mentors have given positive feedback to me, prove that I have potential to be in-service teachers. [...] I became more confident in teaching and I had close relationship with my students. My students also gave positive feedback to my teaching, most of them were willing to attend my class, which proved my transition would be successful. [...] My teaching performance in teaching practicum showed that I had sufficient subject knowledge. I had already equipped some basic skills of in-service teachers, such as classroom management skills and teaching skills.”

Interviewee D: “Through mentorship and teaching practicum, I found out my strengths and weaknesses in teaching, and understood students’ learning needs. There is still more than half of a year before my graduation, I have enough time to further improve my teaching skills, by revising the knowledge that I had learnt in the past and learning new teaching techniques.”

Interviewee E: “I can know my teaching effectiveness by observing students’ willingness to attend my lesson. I saw that my students were happy in my lessons, I had a close connection with them. My teaching was high quality. Students’ positive reactions made me perceive that I could transit into in-service stage successfully.”

From these quotes, it is evident that positive feedback by mentors could prove final year pre-service teachers’ transition became successful. Their close connections with students and students’ willingness to attend their lessons raise their confidence in transiting into in-service stage. Other reasons for their successful transition such as their level of subject knowledge, classroom management skills and teaching skills could reach the level of in-service teachers. They had gained sufficient teaching experience in teaching practicum and mentors had provided effective suggestions for them to improve their teaching skills before graduation, which benefit their transition into in-service stage.

Another two interviewees perceived that they could not successfully transit into in-service stage now and they needed a transition period. Both believed their level of subject knowledge, classroom management skills and teaching skills could not reach the level of in-service teachers in current stages. Their sharing is quoted as follow:

Interviewee A: “Students’ learning abilities were out of my expectation. [...] I have low resistance of stress, but I know most of the in-service teachers have very high pressure.”

Interviewee C: “I do not know how to handle administrative work and collaborate with other teachers, because mentorship did not provide chances for me to experience in-service teachers’ work.”

From these quotes, it shows that there were differences between what the participants had expected and what they had experienced. They pointed out that mentorship did not offer learning opportunities for them to experience in-service teachers’ work, which hindered their transition into in-service stage. Based on what had shared in the interviews, the five interviewees had different reasons for successful transition and unsuccessful transition. It is worth noting that mentorship affect final year pre-service teachers’ perception of abilities of transition, because the reasons of the participants' transition became successful or not were closely related with mentorship, either in positive or negative ways.

Table 6: Abilities that should be equipped for transition

No. of participants	Abilities that should be equipped for transition
4	Active learner; Communication skills with students & students' parents; Collaboration skills with colleagues; Abundant subject knowledge, teaching skills, classroom management skills
2	Mental preparation for transition from pre-service to in-service
1	Clear understanding of teaching curriculum; Clear understanding of in-service teachers' work and requirements; Time management skills; Organization skills; Know current trend of education and current affairs; Skills of analyzing Chinese articles; Ability to provide effective feedback to enhance students' learning

The participants were asked to share any abilities that they thought should be equipped for their transition. Most of them pointed out that final year pre-service teachers should be active learners with enough mental preparation, as they must encounter many difficulties when transiting themselves from pre-service to in-service stage. Interviewee D shared that “final year pre-service teachers should have a clear understanding of the requirements and responsibilities of being in-service teachers”. Other interviewees hold a similar view by mentioning that “abundant subject knowledge, teaching skills and classroom management

skills should be equipped for transition because these are the basic skills of in-service teachers.”

To raise teacher professionalism when transiting into in-service stage, the participants emphasized that communication and collaboration skills should be equipped, as in-service teachers have many chances to communicate with students and their parents and collaborate with colleagues. Meanwhile, “lack of experience in-service works such as communicate with students' parents and collaborate with colleagues” has also been highlighted from the participants' responses in the previous session. Therefore, “experience in-service works” become an essential element for final year pre-service teachers' transition.

4.3 Reasons for Using Mentorship to Help Final Year Pre-Service Teachers' Transition

During the semi-structured interviews, the interviewees in this study listed out various difficulties during their transition, and how mentorship helped them to reduce their transition shock and difficulties.

Table 7: Transition shock and difficulties

Interviewee	Transition shock and difficulties
Interviewee A	Difficult to follow teaching progress; Limitation on designing teaching activities under COVID-19
Interviewee B	Difficult to set teaching goals based on students' learning abilities; SEN students' learning intention was lower than expectation
Interviewee C	Difficult to manage classroom; Limitation on designing teaching activities under COVID-19
Interviewee D	Set too many teaching goals because did not understand students' learning abilities; Difficult to adapt into new working environment; Difficult to apply theories and knowledge learnt in teaching education to real teaching
Interviewee E	Difficult to apply theories and knowledge learnt in teaching education to real teaching; Difficult to understand students' learning abilities

The participants in this study had encountered different challenges that were out of their expectation during their transition. Interviewee A responded that “I felt difficult to follow teaching progress because my teaching speed was slower than ordinary in-service teachers.”

Due to the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic, interviewee A and C faced limitations on designing and implementing teaching activities in real practice. Therefore, COVID-19 become a large constraint to pre-service teachers as they require to face uncertainty and complexity, and keep changing their teaching pattern in actual classroom. In addition, interviewee B and D felt it was difficult to set teaching goals because they were not able to understand students' learning abilities and needs. Moreover, interviewee D and E stated that

they were unable to apply the theories and knowledge that they had learnt in teaching education in real teaching. They also felt hard to adapt to a new working environment. All interviewees mentioned that they had not predicted these difficulties before they started teaching practicum, so they agreed that the difference of their prediction and reality was large.

Table 8: How do mentorship reduce transition shock and difficulties?

Interviewee	How do mentorship reduce transition shock and difficulties
Interviewee A	Mentors adjusted teaching progress, provided chances to try different teaching methods; Mentors shared practical experiences, such as how to replace group activities in classroom under COVID-19
Interviewee B	Mentors observed mentee's teaching performance, provided suggestions; Shared students' information; Shared teaching materials to gain understanding on students' learning abilities
Interviewee C	"I did not have transition shock, because mentorship had minimized my transition shock" Mentors demonstrated teaching (learnt from observing how could mentors manage the class); "Unfortunately, mentors could not help to solve the problem of designing teaching activities because all teachers were not allowed to use musical instruments under COVID-19"
Interviewee D	Mentors provided suggestions on setting suitable teaching goals; "Mentors provided mental support, to encourage me to not worry about adapting into new environment"

	“Mentors reminded me that I have learnt XXX theories and guided me to apply the theories in suitable learning area”
Interviewee E	Mentors shared their teaching pattern & student’s learning pattern; Mentors provided useful suggestions: apply different theories to different class to cater for individual learning differences

In general, all the final year pre-service teachers interviewed in this study agreed that mentorship can help to reduce their transition shock and difficulties. Response from Interviewee C is worth mentioning here, he said:

Interviewee C “I did not have any transition shock, because mentorship had minimized my transition shock. [...] Mentors had demonstrated their teaching and classroom management. I learnt from observation. [...] For example, when I was observing mentors’ lessons, I saw them using I-message in their class, which reminded me that I could use I-message in my class.”.

Other interviewees supported that mentorship can help them in applying teaching theories in practice. Two interviewees’ responses are quoted as follow:

Interviewee D: “Mentors were pre-service teachers in the past, they had also learnt similar teaching theories in teacher training. Hence, they always reminded me that I have learnt XXX theories, questioning could be at a different level and the relationship between what I have learnt with what I am doing. They guided me to link theories into real teaching, so I became more able to apply effective theories in suitable learning area”

Interviewee E: “Mentors provided many useful suggestions that could gain my understanding on how to apply different theories to different class, to suit the class’s learning abilities and cater for individual learning differences”

From the above quotes, the participants learnt from demonstration of teaching by mentors, and mentors' guidance and suggestions. Moreover, the interviewees had shared more ways of

mentorship helping to minimize their transition shock and difficulties. To alleviate the challenges under COVID-19, the responses of two interviewees are as follow:

Interviewee A: “Mentors had shared their practical experiences and their teaching strategies to me, such as how to replace group activities in the classroom, which helped me a lot in designing my classroom under COVID-19”.

Interviewee C: “Mentors had provided mental support to me, so I became less worried about adapting into a new environment and uncontrollable situations under COVID-19.”

Also, other interviewees appreciated their mentors had shared their teaching materials and teaching strategies, which were useful to gain their understanding of students’ learning capabilities and needs. From the sharing of the five participants, the importance of mentorship to final year pre-service teachers' transition had been emphasized. Mentorship can reduce final year pre-service teachers’ transition shock and alleviate their transition difficulties through various ways, such as demonstration, guidance and share experiences.

Table 9: Mentorship in helping transition

Interviewee	Do you think you can transit from pre-service stage to in-service stage in teaching successfully?	Do you agree that mentorship could help you to transit from pre-service stage to in-service stage successfully in teaching?
Interviewee A	No	Partly agree
Interviewee B	Yes	Agree
Interviewee C	No	Partly agree
Interviewee D	Yes	Agree
Interviewee E	Yes	Agree

From the above table, the significant finding in the result is mentorship is tightly related to the participants' perception of transition. The participants who agreed that mentorship could help them transit from pre-service to in-service successfully, also believed that they could successfully transit into in-service stage now. Interviewee E's sharing is quoted as follow:

Interviewee E: "Through mentorship, pre-service teachers can accumulate sufficient teaching experience. Mentorship is like a safety net for final year pre-service teachers to try more teaching methods to build their own teaching style, and receive chances to adjust their own teaching style by senior professional in-service teachers. This is very important for pre-service teachers to transit into in-service stage in final year."

From the response, Interviewee E emphasized that mentorship provided chances to build his own teaching style, which was important for his transition. Moreover, interviewee B and D shared that mentors provided feedback and suggestions that improve their skills of teaching and classroom management. Mentorship also gave them chances to observe mentors' collaboration and communication with colleagues, which enhanced their communication skills and collaboration skills. It should be noted that the participants commented mentorship could enhance their skills of teaching, classroom management, communication and collaboration, while these skills were also the abilities that they perceived should be equipped for their transition process. Therefore, mentorship functions in helping final year pre-service teachers' transition had been proved as mentorship could train final year pre-service teachers' multiple skills for transition.

On the other side, the two participants who believed that they could not transit into in-service stage successfully now, partly agreed that mentorship could help them transit from pre-service to in-service successfully. Their responses are quoted as follow:

Interviewee A: “Only if I can experience in-service teachers’ workload in teaching practicum can make me transit successfully into in-service stage now without a transition period”

Interviewee C: “Only if mentors provide learning opportunities for me to experience in-service teachers’ work, such as handling administrative work, communicate with colleague and students’ parents, which can make me transit successfully into in-service stage now without a transition period”

From the above sharing, the importance of experiencing in-service teachers’ work in teaching practicum had been emphasized. Interviewee D also hold a similar view, by stating

Interviewee D: “It is very important for final year pre-service teachers to have a successful transition, as they will be in-service teachers very soon. Mentorship could be better if I had chance to attend administrative meetings, for me to experience in-service teachers’ work in teaching practicum, which benefits my transition directly”

Furthermore, other participants commented that mentorship could be better, by stating that

Interviewee B: “Mentorship’s effectiveness depends on willingness of mentors to provide help to mentees. [...] some mentors limit the work of mentee as they forced mentees to use their teaching materials, which also limit final year pre-service teachers’ learning opportunities”

Hence, the study raised that mentorship for final year pre-service teachers should include sufficient learning opportunities to experience in-service teachers’ work in teaching

practicum, and mentors should be willing to provide help. These can raise the effectiveness of mentorship and thus facilitate the transition of final year pre-service teachers.

Chapter 5 - Discussion

This study explored final year pre-service teachers' experiences of mentorship, their perception of ability and transition, as well as the reasons for using mentorship to help final year pre-service teachers' transition. Overall, the findings support previous research on the functions of mentorship to final year pre-service teachers. The analysis of the findings also helped to supplement the other existing current literature, especially those studies that had been discussed in Chapter 2 of this report.

5.1 Assistance Provided by Mentorship

Some findings of this study are congruent with the current literature. Similar to the studies of Fairbanks et al. (2000), this study revealed that final year pre-service teachers could learn from observing mentors' demonstration in teaching and classroom management, while

mentors guide mentees to apply suitable and effective teaching and managing strategies. By Walkington's description, this kind of mentorship is collaborative mentorship. Meanwhile, Walkington's study (2005) pointed out that mentorship functions in support, supervision and collaboration, offers help such as providing feedback and suggestions, mental support, assessing mentee's performances, and sharing teaching materials, etc. which is identical to the findings of this study. Furthermore, this study found that mentorship help final year pre-service teachers more than teaching, such as helping them to adapt into new environments and encourage them under stressful working circumstances, which is close to Kim and Cho's study (2014). Based on the findings of this study and the review of literature, we can know that mentorship provides various forms of assistance and help to final year pre-service teachers in reality.

5.2 Mentorship in Helping Final Year Pre-Service Teachers' Transition

This study supported that final year pre-service teachers face large difference between their prediction and their experience in teaching practicum, which is similar to Yuan and Lee's study (2014). For example, they were unable to apply the theories and knowledge that they had learnt in teacher training into their real teaching. The distinct difference made them feel shocked when transiting into real teaching, which is the same as Allen and Wright's study (2014). Like Kim and Cho's study (2014), the participants in this study also showed their appreciation of mentorship minimized their transition shock, through various ways such as

mentors providing suggestions, mental support and guidance, sharing practical experience, and demonstrating teaching. With reference to this study, it proved that final year pre-service teachers require successful transitions and mentorship can reduce their transition shock and difficulties, which is similar to Lee and Feng's study (2007). According to the findings of this study and the review of other current literature, the relationships of mentorship and final year pre-service teachers' transition, the ways of mentorship to reduce their transition shock and difficulties have been found out.

This study raised further arguments to supplement the above literature's interpretations.

Unlike Jacobi's study (1991) by stating that mentors were experienced teachers, this study revealed that some mentors were lacking experience in mentoring and teaching, which would weaken the functions of mentorship. Hence, this study commented that university and placement schools could select more experienced in-service teachers to be mentors to assist final year pre-service teachers, to raise the effectiveness of mentorship.

Furthermore, this study indicated that mentorship did not provide chances for the participants to experience in-service teachers' work, such as handling administrative work, collaborating with colleagues, and communicating with students' parents. From the findings of this study, it

found that the participants believed a lack of experiencing in-service teachers' workload in pre-service stage would slow down their transition and minimize the effectiveness of mentorship to help their transition. These works, which were very common for every in-service teacher, were important for final year to experience before transiting into in-service stage. Therefore, this study advised that the formal mentorship of final year pre-service teachers in teaching practicum can provide more learning opportunities for them to experience in-service teachers' work, such as attending administrative meetings and school activities.

5.3 Communication in Mentorship

According to Ssemata et al.'s study (2017), it stated that barriers of mentorship including mentees were inactive in maintaining stable relationships and communication with mentors. On the contrary, this study illustrated from mentees' point of view, they observed that their mentors were very busy at their work, they were afraid that they might disturb mentors' work while mentors were responsible for grading their performances, or some mentors seemed not willing to provide help. The participants believed that "the effectiveness of mentorship depends on willingness of mentors to provide help", and "only if the mentors were supportive can help final year pre-service teachers transit successfully into in-service stage without transition period". Therefore, communication between mentors and mentees, and willingness of mentors to provide help are two main factors that would affect effectiveness of mentorship

to help final year pre-service teachers' transition. Thus, suggestions could be raised in this report, such as mentors and mentees should have more two-way communication with each other, to ensure the frequency of providing assistance.

5.4 Power Relationship in Mentorship

Savage et al. 's study (2004) and Ebmeier's study (2003) illustrated that mentorship is power relationship which restrict mentees to form their teaching style. Different with these two literature, this study supported that mentorship acts as a safety net, providing learning opportunities to final year pre-service teachers to try different teaching methods, raise their confidence in teaching and building their own teaching style.

Though mentorship helps final year pre-service teachers to develop their teaching style, they still encountered power relationships in mentorship. In this study, the participants listed out a few limitations of their mentorship, such as, "mentees' learning opportunities depend on mentors' distribution" and "mentors limited my opportunities to design teaching materials".

We can see that mentees' learning opportunities are under mentors' control, mentors have all the powers to lead mentorship. Mentors' unwillingness to provide help and support would directly affect mentees' learning experiences.

Additionally, the communication problem between mentors and mentees that had been discussed in the above section, especially the mentees seldom asked questions actively because they were afraid that they might disturb mentors' work, meanwhile their mentors were also responsible for grading. Ragins (1997) described that mentoring in power relationship involve mentors with superior achievements control over persons, information and resources, which is the same as the responses of the participants. One participant even mentioned that "luckily my mentors were willing to maintain close communication with me". That means mentors who were busy or not supportive are the common phenomenon in mentorship. Though mentorship may not limit mentees to develop their teaching style, the study still obviously showed that power relationships are involved in mentorship.

Chapter 6 - Conclusion

To conclude this study, mentees who were final year pre-service teachers require a successful transition. They encounter shock and difficulties when they transit into in-service stage, while mentorship can help their transition by providing various forms of help to solve their challenges and reducing their transition shock. However, current mentorship is not ideal because they expect to work like in-service teachers through mentorship, to develop abilities such as collaboration and communication for their future independent teaching. Hence, mentorship can provide more learning opportunities for final year pre-service teachers to experience in-service teachers' work, to further foster their transition.

Although this study was small-scale as the number of research participants was small, this study had provided empirical data to supplement current existing literature and raise further arguments. In terms of academic contribution, this study had raised three issues, including the importance of experiencing in-service teachers' work, power relationships in mentorship, and the communication problems between mentors and mentees. In the future, there can be more educational or academic research studies to further explore how mentorship facilitate final year pre-service teachers' future teaching, particularly experience in-service teachers' work, as well as to prevent power relationships and communication problems in mentorship.

(7554 words)

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Appendix - Interview questions

1. 你對啟導計劃的評價是怎樣？What are your impressions of your current mentorship in teaching practicum?
2. 你認為理想的啟導計劃應該是怎樣的？What do you think the ideal mentorship should be?
3. 你認為你參與的啟導計劃有甚麼優點？What do you think are the advantages of the mentorship that you have participated in?
4. 你認為你參與的啟導計劃有甚麼缺點？What do you think are the limitations of the mentorship that you have participated in?
5. 你認為理想的教學實習應該是怎樣的？What do you think the ideal teaching practicum should be?
6. 你理想中的教學實習與你現實中的教學實習有甚麼落差？What are the differences between your ideal teaching practicum and your actual teaching practicum?
7. 你認為為甚麼會有這些落差？What are the reasons for these differences?
8. 請分享你的啟導老師如何幫助你解決這些落差。Please share how your mentors help you to solve these differences.
9. 你認為你在大學學到的教學法理論，能否成功地在教學實習中實踐出來？為甚麼？Do you think the pedagogical theory that you learned in university could be successfully put into practice in teaching practicum? Why?
10. 請分享一些你在教學實習中遇到的困難。Please share any difficulties that you had encountered in teaching practicum.
11. 這些困難是你在教學實習前預計過的嗎？Did you anticipate these difficulties before teaching practicum?
12. 請分享你的啟導老師如何幫助你解決這些困難。Please share how your mentor help you to solve these difficulties.

YU Ka Nok

13. 作為最後一年的職前教師，你認為自己能否成功地由見習教師過渡至前線專業教師？為甚麼？As a final year pre-service teacher, do you think you can successfully transit from pre-service stage to in-service stage in teaching? Why?

14. 你認為啟導計劃能否幫助你成功地由見習教師過渡至前線專業教師？為甚麼？Do you agree that mentorship could help you to transit from pre-service stage to in-service stage successfully in teaching? Why?