

Mentees' Agency in Practicum: A Qualitative Study of Two Teacher Education Programs in Vietnam

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Abstract : The relationship between mentors and mentees in teaching practicum has received the attention of researchers and been widely investigated. Mentors' authority and power have captured a large and growing body of the literature in the field of teaching practicum. This article revisits mentor-mentee relationship and shifts the focus to mentees' agency in planning and delivering lessons, an area which has been under-researched. Drawing on Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development and Harré's Positioning Theory, this qualitative study examines how mentees responded to mentors' instructions in practicum. Interviews and classroom observations were conducted with 20 participants including both mentors and mentees across two English language teacher education programs in two different geographical locations in Vietnam. The result indicates that regardless of the similarities and/or differences of the programs, mentees' agency varied in accordance with their identities in specific contexts. Specifically, mentees follow or resist to mentors' feedback and instruction in revising their lesson plans and delivery these lessons, depending on their professional identities and institutional conditions. This study contributes to the importance of supporting the agency of mentees in teacher education.

Keywords : mentors, mentees, relationship, agency, professional identity, teacher education

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