

Foreign Language Faculty Mentorship in Vietnam: An Interpretive Qualitative Study

Authors : Hung Tran

Abstract : This interpretive qualitative study employed three theoretical lenses: Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological System of Human Development, Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural Theory of Development, and Knowles's (1970) Adult Learning Theory as the theoretical framework in connection with the constructivist research paradigm to investigate into positive and negative aspects of the extant English as a Foreign Language (EFL) faculty mentoring programs at four higher education institutions (HEIs) in the Mekong River Delta (MRD) of Vietnam. Four apprentice faculty members (mentees), four experienced faculty members (mentors), and two associate deans (administrators) from these HEIs participated in two tape-recorded individual interviews in the Vietnamese language. Twenty interviews were transcribed verbatim and translated into English with verification. The initial analysis of data reveals that the mentoring program, which is mandated by Vietnam's Ministry of Education and Training, has been implemented differently at these HEIs due to a lack of officially-documented mentoring guidance. Other general themes emerging from the data include essentials of the mentoring program, approaches of the mentoring practice, the mentee - mentor relationship, and lifelong learning beyond the mentoring program. Practically, this study offers stakeholders in the mentoring cycle description of benefits and best practices of tertiary EFL mentorship and a suggested mentoring program that is metaphorically depicted as "a lifebuoy" for its current and potential administrators and mentors to help their mentees survive in the first years of teaching. Theoretically, this study contributes to the world's growing knowledge of post-secondary mentorship by enriching the modest literature on Asian tertiary EFL mentorship.

Keywords : faculty mentorship, mentees, mentors, administrator, the MRD, Vietnam

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