

How Best Mentors mentor: A Metadiscursive Study of Mentoring Styles in Teacher Education

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Abstract : Mentorship is a commonly used strategy for career development that has obvious benefits for students in undergraduate pre-service teacher training programs. In contrast to teaching practicum, which generally involves pedagogical supervision and performance evaluation by teachers, mentorship is more focused on sharing experiences, supporting challenges, and nurturing skills in order to promote personal and professional growth. To empower pre-service teachers and prepare them for potential challenges in the context of local English language teaching (ELT), an alumni mentoring program was established in the framework of communities of practice (CoP), with the mentors being in-service graduates working in local schools and mentees being students on the teacher-training programme in a Hong Kong university. By triangulating audio transcripts of mentoring sessions delivered by three top mentors with data from questionnaire responses and mentor logs, this paper examines the mentoring styles of the three best mentors from the metadiscursive perspective. It was found that, in a community of practice, mentors who may seem to enjoy a relative more dominant position, in fact, had to strategically and pragmatically employ metadiscursive resources to manage relationships with the mentees and organize talks in the mentoring process. Other attributing factors for a successful mentoring session include mentor personality and prior mentorship experiences, nature of the activities in the session, and group dynamics. This paper concludes that it is the combination of all the factors that constitute a particular mentoring style. The findings have implications for mentoring programs in teacher preparation.

Keywords : mentoring, teacher education, mentoring style, metadiscourse

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