

## **Linking Theory to Practice: An Analysis of Papers Submitted by Participants in a Teacher Mentoring Course**

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**Abstract :** Teacher mentoring is a complex practical profession whose unique characteristic is the teacher-mentors' commitment to helping teachers link theory with teaching practice in the process of decision-making and in their reflections on teaching. The aim of this research is to examine the way practicing teacher-mentors participating in a teacher mentoring course made the connection between theory and practice. The researchers analyzed 20 final papers submitted by participants in a course to train teacher mentors. The participants were all veteran high-school teachers. The course comprised 112 in-class hours in addition to mentoring novices in the field. The course covered the following topics: The teacher-mentors' perception of their role; formative and summative evaluation of the novices; tutoring strategies and tools; types of learners; and ways of communicating and dealing with novice teachers' resistance to counseling. The course participants were required to write a 4-5 page reflective summary of their field mentoring practice. In addition, they were required to link theories explicitly learned in the course to their practice in the field. A qualitative analysis of the papers led to the creation of the taxonomy of the link between theory and practice relating to four topics: The kinds of links made between theory and practice, the quality of these links, the links made between private teaching theories and official teaching theory, and the qualities of these links. This taxonomy may prove to be a useful tool in the teacher-mentor training processes.

**Keywords :** taxonomy, teacher-mentors, theory, practice, teacher-mentor training

**Conference Title :** ICESLM 2018 : International Conference on Ethnopedagogy, Structural and Logical Models

**Conference Location :** Stockholm, Sweden

**Conference Dates :** July 12-13, 2018