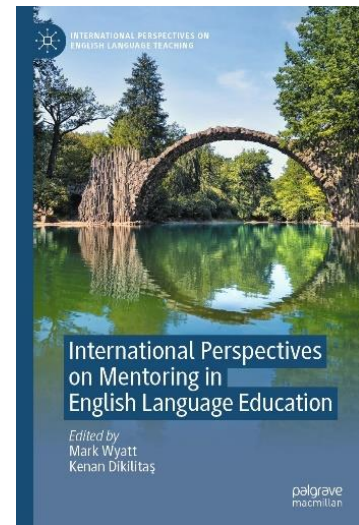


International Perspectives on Mentoring in English Language Education

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International Perspectives on Mentoring in English Language Education is a groundbreaking compilation of research studies reflecting the depth and breadth of recent developments in mentoring in educational contexts. It is hard to overestimate the amount of authorial and editorial effort that has gone into producing a book that synergistically brings together both localized pedagogy and transnational practice. My hope is that the foretaste below will create intellectual hunger in the readers, and they will crave for the whole feast.

In Chapter 1, Mark Wyatt and Kenan Dikilitaş, in their capacity as authors and editors of the volume, describe how the terms ‘mentor’ and ‘mentoring’ have emerged as important concepts in English language education since the 1980s. The aim of the volume is also clearly stated, namely, “to cast a spotlight on internationally situated, transnational and interculturally-performed mentoring practices” (p. 2). The issues of mentor roles and qualities, the need for mentors’ ‘critical consciousness regarding social change’ (p. 6) and the significance of mentor-mentoring are discussed, followed by the consideration of various mentoring contexts, which also guides the sequencing of the chapters. The insights coming from research undertaken in different educational settings encompass the mentoring of language learners, pre-service and novice teachers, in-service teachers, teacher-researchers, and the mentoring of teacher-research mentors. The introductory chapter also highlights recurring ideas, such as reflexivity, reciprocal and mutual mentoring, and collaborative inquiry. All these are fleshed out in the subsequent chapters that I will review briefly from my own perspective as a teacher educator and an emerging teacher-research mentor.

The mentoring of language learners is the topic of the first couple of chapters, and even though the contexts are widely different, the positive outcomes of students peer-mentoring each other and, ultimately, their teacher educator is an appealing idea that corresponds to my own experience. In Chapter 2, Maria Eleftheriou, Zahraa Al-Dawood, Konstantina Spyropoulou and Roger Nunn describe a peer-mentoring model whose aim is to train students to support their fellow learners in their writing assignments. The peer-mentors, who are also co-authors of the chapter, provide first-person accounts of what they have gained through the mentor training, whose effectiveness is confirmed by the high degree of satisfaction of their mentees. Chapter 3, written by Anne Burns, deals with how the long journey that doctoral students make can be scaffolded by building a community of novice researchers where students use dialogic interaction and collaboration to share their experiences and their growing competence as researchers.

You can’t but celebrate the way Chapter 4 focuses on the mentoring models that Peter De Costa’s PhD students (themselves teacher educators) had created under challenging circumstances in Nepal and China. Laxmi and Luqing were both able to find creative solutions to the “dual demands of being a mentor and being in need of one” (p. 54). Laxmi

resorted to using his personal blog as an effective platform to create a community of professional practice while Luqing, lacking any mentorial support, turned to her students to provide her with guidance and help her localize the issues for her course aimed at developing critical thinking skills.

In Chapter 5, Hoa Thi Mai Nguyen and Thi Lan Anh Tran explore the tensions that may arise when pre-service teachers' expectations and their school mentors' requirements are misaligned or there is a divergence between the teaching methods acquired by the pre-service teachers and those prevalent at the schools where they gain their school-based professional experience. Nguyen and Tran stress that the pre-service teachers' negative experiences might be due to the school mentors' dominant role rooted in Vietnam's Confucian cultural tradition based on the 'master-disciple' notion of mentoring.

I was looking forward to reading Elena Ončevska Ager's piece (Chapter 6) on how she moved away from what she perceived as her 'directive supervision' style because this is an issue that I am also struggling with in my own mentoring practice. Using Systematic Informed Reflective Practice (SIRP) based on Malderez' (2015) work, Elena has created a mentoring model for herself that constitutes "a clear departure from judgementoring" (p. 88). The five-step SIRP process encourages mentees to notice what goes on in the classroom and explore salient episodes in order to make informed practical decisions. Analyzing some transcribed excerpts from post-practicum discussions, Elena concludes that SIRP "has potential to promote agentic development in teacher educators adopting mentor roles" (p. 100).

In Chapter 7, James M. Hall and Fiona Copland write about a related topic, namely, how mentors can move from monologic to dialogic talk in their post-observation feedback (POF) sessions. Based on extracts taken from James' meetings over a year-long period with his junior high school mentee, Risa, it is evident that with the help of his mentor for his doctoral studies, James was able to gradually create the conditions of dialogic and reciprocal discussions through making a conscious effort to avoid offering quick solutions and direct advice.

Still focusing on in-service language teachers, Mark Wyatt (Chapter 8) discusses how Malderez and Bodóczy's *Mentor Courses* (1999) inspired him to design an INSET and Mentoring module that was offered to Omani in-service English language teachers in their third-year BA studies. The author stresses that the humanistic philosophy underlying Malderez and Bodóczy's book is still relevant for mentoring conversations "with its emphasis on relationship building and its provision of highly engaging reflective and interpersonal activities" (p. 127). Consequently, the module was set up with the aim of fostering group dynamics while developing both the 'supporter' and 'educator' mentoring roles of participants.

Simon Borg (Chapter 9) looks at how a teacher development project (English Language Initiative for Secondary Schools – ELISS for short) for government secondary school teachers of English in the large state of Maharashtra (India) switched from the 'cascade' model to mentoring. The latter specifically aimed at helping teachers to develop as classroom practitioners. By a rather ingenious arrangement, which allowed attendees of the earlier cascade workshops to participate, altogether 420 mentors engaged with 6,300 teachers forming a highly effective professional learning community.

Mentoring often takes place in transnational contexts leading to cross-cultural encounters, and the risk of misunderstandings is always there, especially when people use the same language but come from different cultural backgrounds. In Chapter 10, Melissa K. Smith and Marilyn Lewis provide a detailed account of an incident when an American mentor asked her Chinese teacher mentees to establish a peer-mentoring relationship with

another colleague. Despite the universal human trait of wishing to collaborate harmoniously, the relationship between the mentor and the mentees took a downward turn because the Chinese teachers were uncomfortable with the concept of peer-mentoring. When analyzing the reflections of the mentor and some of her mentees, it transpires that the misunderstanding was caused by a combination of cultural, societal and personal factors.

Nevertheless, mutual accommodation may be required even when people speak the same language and share the same culture in situations where new roles need to be undertaken, as in Kenan Dikilitaş and Simon Edward Mumford's piece (Chapter 11). This was the case of the teachers who, in pairs, were asked to take on the role of bilingual teachers and co-teach preschool children English and Turkish. Supporting these teachers required 'transformative mentoring', namely, supporting them in the new context of bilingual co-teaching, which meant "learning to teach together, and learning to teach two languages" (p. 181).

In Chapter 12, Judith Hanks, Ines K. Miller and Maria I. A. Cunha discuss what elements of Exploratory Practice can be extended to the kind of mentoring that is based on "collaboration, collegiality, and co-production" (p. 194). Applying the key principles of Exploratory Practice to mentoring, the authors recount several examples from their own practice when two-way mentoring relationships were established and led to 'mutual mentoring' (p. 196).

Collaborative communities can be built successfully by Language Teacher Associations, which can promote the empowering of teachers, argue Kuchah Kuchah and Amira Salama (Chapter 13) based on the activities of Africa ELTA (founded in 2014 with 22 member associations). They contend that teacher mentoring in the African context needs to take into account both global trends and local realities. This implies that mentoring needs to gradually move away from transmission-based approaches and establish "a collegial relationship between mentors and mentees" (p. 214).

Going 'glocal', namely, combining localized practice and global developments in teacher-research mentoring is the central theme of Chapter 14, which deals with how a teacher-centered approach starting from classroom practitioners' situated practice can create the conditions for the effective (and affective) mentoring of teacher-researchers through transnational schemes. The chapter author, Richard Smith has been working on teacher-research mentoring schemes for a number of years in Latin America and South Asia and recently in Africa as well. The author provides a detailed account of the highly successful mentoring schemes and presents how teacher-research mentors, using their specialized skillset, can support practitioners researching their classrooms.

Under the extraordinary circumstances of the global epidemic, teacher-research mentoring, just like most other educational activities, moved over to the online space, but Claudia Bustos-Moraga and Steve Mann explore this modality drawing on interviews and audio or video meetings between mentors and mentees in a project that started well before the pandemic (Chapter 15). The study examines how mentors and mentees in Chile, Peru and Mexico collaborate entirely online —synchronously and asynchronously— over an extended period of time.

The challenges described by Bustos-Moraga and Mann, such as the need for cameras to be switched on in mentor-mentee meetings to establish social presence are further explored in Chapter 16 dealing with how 'mentoring presence' can support international teacher-researchers via online teacher-research mentoring. The study examines online interactions between teacher-research mentors and mentees utilizing and further developing the Community of Inquiry (COI) framework, which "provides three relevant presences that shape the online mentoring experience, i.e. social, cognitive and teaching presence" (pp.

270-71). Kenan Dikilitaş, *Aslı Lidice* Göktürk Sağlam, Mariana Serra, and Ruben Daniel Mazzei present a rich tapestry of these interwoven presences showing how the first, namely, social presence is a key element in establishing and maintaining “trust, collaboration, and peer-learning” (p. 274).

In Chapter 17 the author-editors, Mark Wyatt and Kenan Dikilitaş, reflect on how current transnational mentoring practices may be used to inform future developments. As mentoring is gradually changing from “a top-down, hierarchical relationship” (p. 287) into a process characterized by mutual and reciprocal mentoring based on trust and psychosocial support, future needs in a global context are also spelt out. These concern addressing issues of social injustice and inequality, the provision of guidance in low-resource environments, as well as efforts to incorporate mentoring into teacher education courses.

Altogether, *International Perspectives on Mentoring in English Language Education* is a volume that splendidly reflects the richness of mentoring experiences gained in strikingly different contexts in recent decades. Although my own experience as an emerging teacher-research mentor influenced which chapters resonated with me the most, all of them are suffused with a philosophy of mentoring that focuses on humanistic, reflective and collaborative approaches.

Highly recommended.

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