

The Online Co-Mentoring Practices in the Turkish Efl Context: Benefits and Challenges

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ABSTRACT

Mentoring is considered to play a significant role in the formation of the pre-service teachers' emerging identities during the practicum period. A lot of studies into teacher education indicate its beneficial impact in many significant ways such as introducing them into the discourse community of the profession, providing them with constructive feedback on their lesson plans and practice teaching performances, providing moral support for the novice teachers during the practicum, acting as a facilitator and a guide in their transition from the student role to the teacher role. However, there have been some problems in the proper fulfillment of all the abovementioned roles. The affective concerns and some procedural concerns of the student-teachers have generally been reported as challenges in the mentoring process.

Therefore, alternative practices are needed enrich the existing mentoring experiences at the tertiary level. The present study, which has a mixed method research design, aims to investigate the benefits and challenges of online co-mentoring practices in a 14-week school experience course offered in the senior year of an undergraduate level in the fall semester of the 2012-2013 academic year in a Turkish EFL context. The participants are 28 EFL pre-service teachers of English and 8 co-mentors assigned to these students in addition to the school-based mentors. The data was collected via an expectation paper at the beginning of the study, a questionnaire administered at the end of the term and a semi-structured interview. The quantitative data was analyzed through the SPSS 18 and the quantitative one through the content analysis. The results indicated a relatively high level of satisfaction among the student-teachers in terms of detailed feedback provision, the development of alternative viewpoints into the teaching and the learning process, valuable insights into the materials development, and some challenges concerning the online nature of the study.