



The Effectiveness of Mentoring in ELT Context

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ABSTRACT

The teachers, in their beginning stages of learning, about teaching strategies and meeting students' learning needs, require more practical ideas on how to choose and behave effectively to be a successful teacher. Accordingly, the purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of mentoring, as a tool for aiding teachers' development, and teacher's portfolio assessment of the teaching skills of Iranian ELT teachers. Classroom observation via a checklist as well as an interview was used to examine the effectiveness of mentoring in Iranian ELT context. The findings indicated the effectiveness of mentoring in the teaching skills of teachers as well as some of its shortcomings.

Keywords: *Mentoring, ELT, Teacher Education, Sandwich Feedback*

Introduction

It is obvious that students have different learning needs and styles (Dewey, 1993; Vygotsky, 1986; Woolfolk & Margetts, 2010). Not only do the factors such as gender and physical circumstances affect the teaching-learning process, but also students' learning needs depends principally on social, cultural, and academic parameters (Burton, Weston, & Kowalski, 2009; Snowman et al., 2009).

Drawing on theories such as Gardner's multiple intelligences can assist instructors to choose appropriate strategies and techniques for addressing learning needs (Snowman et al., 2009). They claim that effective teachers select strategies that are appropriate to the context of the students,

too. Determining and selecting appropriate teaching strategies as well as recognition of the preferred learning styles become a higher-order thinking challenge for teachers.

The teachers, in their beginning stages of learning about teaching strategies, need to know students' learning requirements and have more practical ideas on how to choose and behave effectively. The different university courses present teaching strategies across different curriculum areas just through analyzing theories behind teaching strategies and connecting theory to practice remains as a prerequisite for teachers (Hudson & Hudson, 2011). Significantly, schools are places for connecting theory with practice and show that understanding just theories is not enough to help them put into the practice.

Adding to the heavy tasks that lie before them are the common stressors of being hired late in the summer, arriving mere days before their students, being expected to set up their classrooms, master their content, and prepare meaningful lessons that will address the needs of various learners, ultimately to be measured by assessments with which they may or may not be familiar (Feiman-Nemser, 2013).

The teachers face essentials that extend to many domains or areas: instructional needs, system needs, resource needs, emotional needs, executive needs, parental needs, and disciplinary needs (Villani, 2002). According to the Texas Beginning Educator Support System, beginning teachers most often report the following challenges, in priority order: classroom discipline, motivating students, dealing with individual differences, parent relations, planning class work, evaluating student' work, insufficient materials and supplies, students' personal problems, and relations with colleagues (Pan, 2000). The above-mentioned needs can also intensify or lessen the depending on the following phases of the first year of teaching: anticipation, survival, disillusionment, innovation, and reflection (Moir, 1990).

Villani (2002) stated that the lack of teaching experience coupled with their highly demanding roles has led to a steady increase in new teachers exiting the profession after only a few years of practice. As teachers move through these consecutive phases during their first year of teaching, their needs can fluctuate between areas. This study examined the extent to which beginning teachers' needs are addressed by participation in certain mentoring program components.

The literature (Cherubini, 2007; Fletcher & Barrett, 2004; Maciejewski, 2007; Wong, Britton, & Ganser, 2005) indicated support systems such as induction training and mentoring may influence teacher effectiveness and student achievement. According to Maciejewski (2007), additional support structures or systems such as induction training and mentoring programs are desperately needed for new teachers.

Problems in the early years of teaching often result in overtiredness and high teacher dropout rates with early attrition being an international issue (Harfitt, 2015; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). One reaction to these worries has been the introduction of various mentoring programs to support teachers in their early career phase (Alhija & Fresko, 2010). However, mentoring is a contested concept, employed differently in a variety of settings and for different purposes.

The activities and actions, concepts, meanings and concomitant social relations associated with mentoring also vary between national contexts so that what is described as mentoring practices in one setting may look quite different from another setting.

The challenges that novice teachers even some of the teachers who work for many years face when they enter their classrooms has been well documented. Often, new educators struggle with the transition from the theoretical world of their teacher preparation programs to the reality of classroom management, changing environments, and professional isolation. Feeling unprepared and overwhelmed, new teachers are often reluctant to engage their more professional colleagues for help, fearful that they will appear incapable. Countless new educators find themselves alone in their classrooms, unsure of their next steps or who to reach out to (Mascelli, 2016).

According to Faez and Antonella (2012), novice teachers after completing university courses for ELT felt moderately prepared to teach ESOL to adults and better prepared after gaining some teaching experience. A closer investigation by Faez and Antonella (2012), however, showed that despite the overall increase in teachers' feelings of preparedness, some teachers reported a decrease and others no change at all. This variation appears to reflect the impact of classroom experience, the nature of employment, and the specific tasks and teaching contexts.

Another study by Eslami and Fatahi (2008) reported that Iranian novice EFL teachers feel more positive in applying instructional strategies than in managing an EFL class. It shows that theoretical courses at universities are not adequate for them to be an effective teacher without any practical ideas.

To address these apprehensions, schools and policymakers in some countries have explored the role of a mentor and the action of mentoring as a way to address teacher needs. The term mentor and the act of mentoring is one that engages and supports two parties in various contexts (Mascelli, 2016).

Research also identified key features of strong initiation programs that aid the mentor/mentee relationship. Studies have identified the importance of sufficient meeting time for mentor and mentee pairs to meet as a key component of an induction program. This line of research has also revealed the importance of pairing mentors and mentees who work in similar content areas and teach in close physical nearness, such as the same hallway, wing, or area of the school. Finally, strong induction programs are characterized by providing education resources such as time, planning materials, and classroom materials (Anderson & Shannon, 1988).

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of mentoring which is not studied in Iranian TEFL classes on any sorts of teachers especially novice teachers' teaching skills. Therefore, attending a professional teacher as a mentor in the novice teachers' classroom to observe their activities and tasks and giving appropriate sandwich feedback and make a portfolio for each teacher to examine the effectiveness of mentoring in Iranian EFL context was the aim of this study.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of mentoring on teaching skills of Iranian EFL teachers, and it is a qualitative research. Accordingly, the following research questions were addressed in this study:

1. Does mentoring affect the teaching skills of Iranian EFL teachers?
2. Does the teacher portfolio assessment affect the teaching skills of Iranian EFL teachers?

Methodology and Methods

In order to conduct this study, fifteen female novice teachers who worked in three different English language institutes participated in the mentoring program. They were informed about the research process, and they agreed on a mentor attending their classes to observe their teaching process and give feedback.

Participants

Table 1 shows more details about each participant. In order to keep anonymity, privacy, and confidentiality of the participants, their names are mentioned as alphabet letters and the name of institutes where they worked are not mentioned in the study. The teachers were conversant about the purposes of the study, and they were guaranteed that the result of the study would not affect their occupation position at all. They were confirmed that the result of the study would be intimate, and it could help their professional development as well. Table 3.1 shows complete information about the participants in detail. The column 'level of English knowledge' is the teachers' own idea about their level of general English knowledge out 1 to 3 (1=intermediate, 2=upper-intermediate, 3=advance).

Table 1
Participants' Profile

Teachers	Years of experience	Level of English	Academic Degree	Number of Session	Age	Explanation
A	3	3	BA	10	39	After 8 sessions the objectives were met but the observation continued for ensuring the mentoring effectiveness.
B	1	2	BA	10	31	After 9 sessions the objectives were met but the observation continued for ensuring the mentoring effectiveness.
C	2	3	BA	10	28	After 7 sessions the objectives were met but the observation continued for ensuring the mentoring effectiveness.
D	2	3	BA	10	30	After 8 sessions the objectives were met but the observation continued for ensuring the mentoring effectiveness.
E	1	1	BA	10	25	After 8 sessions the objectives were met but the observation continued for ensuring the mentoring effectiveness.
F	3	3	MA	10	27	After 7 sessions the objectives were met but the observation continued for ensuring the mentoring effectiveness.
G	1	2	BA	3	34	The teachers did her best and there was no need for mentoring more.
H	2	1	BA	2	28	The teacher did not allow the mentor to attend and observe her classes more than 2 sessions.
I	3	2	BA	2	30	The teacher did not allow the mentor to attend and observe her classes more than 2 sessions.

J	3	2	MA	4	24	The teachers did her best and there was no need for mentoring more.
K	4	2	BA	4	32	The teachers did her best and there was no need for mentoring more.
L	4 months	3	BA	10	22	After 8 sessions the objectives were met but the observation continued for ensuring the mentoring effectiveness.
M	1	2	BA	10	24	After 8 sessions the objectives were met but the observation continued for ensuring the mentoring effectiveness.
N	1	2	BA	10	23	After 7 sessions the objectives were met but the observation continued for ensuring the mentoring effectiveness.
O	2	1	BA	10	23	After 8 sessions the objectives were met but the observation continued for ensuring the mentoring effectiveness.

As table 1 shows, teacher ‘H’ and ‘I’ did not allow the mentor to attend their classrooms, and they mentioned that they were not satisfied by mentoring, and just 2 sessions of their classes were observed. Teachers ‘G’, ‘J’, and ‘K’ did their best and the mentor realized based on the observation checklist that they did not need mentoring after 3 or 4 sessions. In all the criteria of the checklist, their mark was 3. Therefore, just 10 teachers’ classes were observed for 10 sessions and the study completed by their participation. The other teachers’ participation data were not used in the study and were removed.

Instruments

To conduct this study, the following instruments were used.

Observation Checklist. Observation can be a powerful learning tool for teachers (Wajnryb, 1992). The observation checklist which includes 20 teaching skills were used in this study. This checklist was proposed by the researcher and validated by three experts (See Appendix A). The participants’ teaching were observed by the mentor via this checklist and the participants received sandwich feedback (Figure 1) after each session in the mentoring time. Each individual teacher had a separate mentoring session for reviewing her teaching process in each session. Giving feedback is more effective when negative information is ‘sandwiched’ between positive information (Brinko, 1993). In the mentoring session, the participant was asked to reflect on her teaching activities and the process of teaching in her class. She was asked to come up with her own ideas about positive and strong points as well as areas for improvement. Then the feedbacks were provided by a positive point observed based on the checklist and finished by another positive point and between these two positive points, just one or two areas of improvement were mentioned in a way that the participant herself discovers them. The sandwich feedback technique is a common three-step procedure to provide corrective feedback. The sandwich feedback method consists of praise followed by corrective feedback followed by more praise. In other words, the sandwich feedback method involves discussing corrective feedback that is ‘sandwiched’ between two layers of praise. The ostensible benefits of this technique are twofold: (1) it softens the impact of the criticism or corrective feedback, and, (2) given that a manager is probably more

comfortable with praising the employee, the manager finds it easier to discuss problems with the employee's behavior if this discussion begins and ends by praising the employee (Rao, 2015).



Figure 1. Sandwich Feedback

This checklist includes 20 items with 3 points Likert scale (1=Not observed, 2= More emphasis recommended, and 3=Accomplished very well). Each item in the observation checklist needs criteria and evidence to ensure the observer that the activity is done or not. Therefore, some evidence was proposed to check the teachers' activity related to each item, too (See Appendix B).

Interview. The participants in this study were interviewed about the mentoring program to know their ideas about mentoring and its effectiveness (See Appendix C). The questions of this interview aimed to find the teachers' perceptions about mentoring and show to what extent the mentoring was effective in their profession. The mentoring effectiveness depends on the consequence of teachers' performance and this performance can be measured via observation and the interview with the teachers themselves. The answers to the questions of this semi-structured interview were recorded, transcribed, and coded in order to analyze the participants' attitude toward the effectiveness of mentoring.

Procedure

This study was conducted in two parts. Classroom observation and running mentoring session for each teacher individually after each session and the interview which was held by 6 teachers. In order to conduct this study, first of all, the researcher talked with three English language institutes' principals to inform them about the objectives of the current study. They agreed to cooperate with the researcher.

Before starting the mentoring and attending the participants' classes, the teachers were informed about the objectives of the study, and they were assured that the result of the study not affect their career position at all. They were ensured that not only would the result of the study be confidential, but also they will benefit from the mentoring process and, it could help their professional development. The process of mentoring in the participants' classrooms will be described as follows.

The mentor attended the class of teacher ‘A’ for the first time and observed her class and her teaching process. The teacher started her teaching by reviewing the previous lessons and asking some questions. The mentor just observed the activities and teaching process and rated and recorded the points on the observation checklist. As mentioned earlier, the observation checklist includes 20 items and the checklist is 3-point Likert-scale. All the items on the checklist were marked 1 except four items which were marked 2. Her instructions were not clear and checked (item 2), the language skills were not developed/ practiced effectively (item 9), the teacher did not use board effectively and did not write new language up (item 17), and the learners were not engaged and involved throughout (item 18).

After the class, the mentoring session started and the mentor asked some questions about her teaching process. The mentor asked her own ideas about her teaching strength and areas of improvement. Then the mentor just gave sandwich feedback about the lack of positive classroom atmosphere (item 1) and lack of re-grouping learners appropriately and efficiently (item 14). The given feedback started with some positive points which were observed in her teaching and ended again with some positive points. Between magnifying some positive points, 2 areas of improvement, i.e. items 1 and 14, were reviewed with the teacher and some practical ideas for developing them were given. Using pair work and group work, minimizing teacher talking time (TTT) and maximizing student talking time (STT), and letting the learners move in the classroom while doing activities are ideas which were proposed for the teacher, and the mentor asked her to give her own ideas about the effectiveness of the proposed ways.

Next session, the teacher ‘A’ changed her plan to some extent to apply the proposed ideas. This time, her teaching activities in items 1 and 14 were better. After the second session, in the mentoring meeting, the development of the teacher in the above-mentioned items was stated by the mentor, and the teaching process of the second session was reviewed, and some practical ideas were given about eliciting information/language from learners whenever possible (item 6) and the need to a variety of interaction while practicing the new language (item 3). In all mentoring sessions, it was considered just to propose the constructive feedbacks through the sandwich approach to be more effective.

Table 2

An Example from a Mentoring Session

<p>Mentor: “I am impressed with your development. You have used suitable activities and tasks for presenting and practicing the new lesson. What do you think about the positive and negative points of your session?”</p> <p>Mentee: “Thank you. As I review my session, I found that the learners need more time to practice and my talking time was high. I have to reduce my talking time and let the learners practice more in group and pair.”</p> <p>Mentor: “You mean that you talked more and it was not necessary?”</p> <p>Mentee: “I think so.”</p> <p>Mentor: “It is a really good point. Sometimes we as teachers think that more talking and explaining aid the learners more. What do you intend to do for reducing talking time?”</p> <p>Mentee: “I think for the next session I should be more prepared and plan for each stage of my presentation.”</p> <p>Mentor: “What do you remember about checking the students learning? Are you sure that all the learners have understood the lesson?”</p>

Mentee: "I do not know. I will ask questions next session to be sure about their understanding."

Mentor: "If they do not answer the questions, do you want to teach again?"

Mentee: "No. We do not have enough time. I will ask them to review themselves and I just mention some important points."

Mentor: "Do you believe that the teacher should check the learners understanding step by step while presenting a new language?"

Mentee: "It is time wasting and it is not possible."

Mentor: "Why do you think it is not feasible? Do you think you need to have a test for each step? Is it just possible to ask some concept questions to check the learners understanding? Can the concept checking questions be helpful?"

Mentee: "I do not know. What do you mean by concept check questions?"

Mentor: "After presenting each new vocabulary or grammar rule, you can ask some questions to check the learners understanding. We need to be sure about their understanding before continuing the lesson. This is a part of our duty in teaching and just teaching and presenting new language is not enough. For example, the target sentence is "Look! They're painting the wall."

Checking questions	
Is it happening now?	Yes
Can you see it?	Yes
Is the painting finished?	No
Are they painting now?	Yes
Is this the past, present or future?	Present

"As you see, by asking these questions we lead the learners to comprehend the concept clearer as well as checking their understanding. Make sure the questions were simple and that no difficult language is required to answer the question. Yes/no questions, either/or questions and simple 'wh' questions are particularly effective. Don't use the new (target) grammar in your questions. Don't use unfamiliar vocabulary. Bring out basic concepts such as 'time' and 'tense' in your questions. Use as many questions as possible to check various aspects of the language and to cover as many learners as possible."

Mentee: "OK. I see. I will ask questions like these."

The process of mentoring and giving feedback continued in this way in all the classes. The process in all the classes was the same, and each session some areas of improvement were discussed by the teachers, and some practical ideas were provided. The teachers' own ideas were asked about each item to push them to reflect on them.

Some teachers met the highest grade (3) in the checklist after 6, 7, or 8 sessions and they did their best in each item (teaching skill). To ensure that the process of teaching was stabilized and the mentoring sessions were effective, the observation continued to ten sessions.

Each teacher's classroom was observed for 10 sessions and the teacher's skills were recorded and marked via the observation checklist. The checklists of each teacher made a portfolio which showed her strength as well as weakness in teaching skills in 10 sessions. Each teacher portfolio was reviewed in front of herself and her professional development was analyzed.

After attending the participants' classes and running mentoring sessions, 6 teachers who participated in the first part of the study were asked to answer the questions of the interview. The questions were provided in advance about mentoring, and its effectiveness on teacher's teaching

were asked, and their answers were recorded and transcribed. The transcription was coded and the following themes were extracted from the interviews' content.

- 1- Mentoring effectiveness in general
- 2- Mentoring effectiveness in Iranian ELT context
- 3- The effectiveness of mentoring in this study
- 4- The effectiveness of mentoring on learners' learning

The observation checklist provided some numerical data as well as a descriptive one. Therefore, this study was qualitative and was triangulated by an interview with the participants (Mackey & Gass, 2015) who participated in the first phase of the study.

The data which were collected through the observation checklist were analyzed by estimating mean, standard deviation, and one-sample t-test to understand whether the differences from the median were statistically significant or not. The interviews were coded and the teachers' answers were discussed and analyzed as well.

Results

The present chapter deals with analyzing the data collected through the observation checklist and the interview. In this chapter details of the data analysis and results of the study based on both descriptive and inferential analyses are reported. Then the discussion of the results will be followed.

Analysis of the Observation Checklist to Address the Research Questions

This study aimed to address the following research questions:

1. Does mentoring affect the teaching skills of Iranian EFL teachers?
2. Does the teacher portfolio assessment affect the teaching skills of Iranian EFL teachers?

In order to address the research questions of this study, the observation checklists were marked in the first session for 15 teachers who were ready for participating in the study, and its reliability was measured through Cronbach's Alpha. Table 2 shows the reliability of the observation checklist ($r=.881$).

Table 2
The Observation Checklist Reliability

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.881	20

The checklist included 20 items each one related to a teaching skill category. These items can be categorized in 4 groups as 'classroom management skills', 'presenting new language', 'error correction and feedback', and 'engaging the learners and controlling TTT' that Table 3 shows these categories.

Table 3
Teaching Skills

Teaching skill	Number of items
Skill 1: Classroom Management Skills	1 – 2 – 10 – 15 – 17 - 3
Skill 2: Presenting New Language	4 – 5 – 7 – 9 – 12 – 16 – 19 – 20
Skill 3: Error Correction and Feedback	11
Skill 4: Engaging the Learners	6 – 8 – 13 – 14 – 18

The data obtained in the first session in 15 classes were inserted in SPSS and Table 4 indicates the mean scores of participants in each teaching skill.

Table 4
Descriptive Statistics of Teaching Skills in the First Session

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Classroom Management Skills	15	1.00	3.00	1.6778	.52503
Presenting New Language	15	1.00	3.00	1.4750	.74881
Error Correction and Feedback	15	1.00	3.00	2.6667	.72375
Engaging the Learners	15	1.00	3.00	1.5067	.67556
Valid N (listwise)	15				

Hence, the medium quality value would be 2 ($M = 2$), Table 4 shows that the teaching skills means in ‘Classroom Management Skills’, ‘Presenting New Language’, and ‘Engaging the Learners’ are lower than median and ‘Error Correction and Feedback’ is above the median. To understand whether these differences from the medium were statistically significant or not, One-Sample *t*-test was conducted (Table 5).

Table 5
One-Sample *t*-Test for Analyzing the Teaching Skills before Mentoring

	Test Value = 2					
	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Classroom Management Skills	-2.377	14	.032	-.32222	-.6130	-.0315
Presenting New Language	-2.715	14	.017	-.52500	-.9397	-.1103
Error Correction and Feedback	3.568	14	.003	.66667	.2659	1.0675
Engaging the Learners	-2.828	14	.013	-.49333	-.8674	-.1192

Table 5 indicates that there were significant differences between the obtained mean scores and the median mean score in skills 1 (Classroom Management Skills), 2 (Presenting New Language), and 4 (Engaging the Learners), because of the values under ‘Mean Difference’ is lower than the mean ($M=2$); therefore, it could be concluded that the participants teaching skills need development and reflection.

Table 6 shows the progress of teaching skills of 10 participants who stayed until the end of the study. All the teaching skills’ mean except the first teaching skill (Classroom Management Skills)

are above the median ($p>2$), and it was concluded that the participants had a significant progress in their teaching skills.

Table 6
Descriptive Statistics of Teaching Skills in the Last Session

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Classroom Management Skills	10	1.33	2.83	1.7833	.44479
Presenting New Language	10	2.63	3.00	2.8125	.19764
Error Correction and Feedback	10	3.00	3.00	3.0000	.00000
Engaging the Learners	10	2.40	3.00	2.7000	.31623
Valid N (listwise)	10				

As Table 6 shows, just in skill 1, i.e. classroom management skills, the mean is below the median ($M=1.78$). Therefore, the items in this category need more detail analysis. Table 7 shows that teachers in item 1 (building a positive classroom atmosphere), item 2 (giving instructions clearly and checking the instruction), item 3 (teacher encouraged learner talk and controlled teacher talk), and item 10 (teacher monitored unobtrusively and give support when needed) needed more attention and practice.

Table 7
Descriptive Statistics of Classroom Management Skills

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic
Item1: positive classroom atmosphere	10	1.40	.966
Item 2: clear and checked instruction	10	1.40	.843
Item 3: Controlling TTT	10	1.40	.843
Item 10: Monitoring and supporting	10	1.30	1.059
Item 15: Time management	10	2.20	.422
Item 17: Using board effectively	10	3.00	.000
Valid N (listwise)	10		

Analysis of the Interview

The interview was conducted with 6 teachers who participated in the study and their responses to the questions (See Appendix C) were recorded. The interview was semi-structured because some new questions during the interview were asked based on the responses. The interview was coded and the following themes were extracted.

- 1 - Mentoring effectiveness in general
- 2 - Mentoring effectiveness in Iranian ELT context
- 3 - The effectiveness of mentoring in this study
- 4 - The effectiveness of mentoring on learners' learning

Table 8 shows the interviewees' responses based on the themes were extracted from their interviews.

Table 8
Summary of Interviews about Mentoring

Theme Teachers	Mentoring effectiveness in general	Mentoring effectiveness in Iranian ELT context	The effectiveness of mentoring in this study	The effectiveness of mentoring on learners' learning
A	It can be effective in some domains like presenting new language	To some extent maybe it does not work	It was effective for me	No idea
B	It can be effective but maybe it is not feasible due to the financial issue	It can be successful in Iran	It was effective in all aspects of my teaching	It was not effective for learners' learning
C	I believe it is really effective	I think it does not work in Iranian ELT context	It was effective for me and let me review my positive and negative points in teaching	It was not effective for learners' learning
D	I think it's effectiveness depends on the continuity of mentoring. Just some mentoring sessions are not effective.	Iranian teachers do not like to be observed and mentoring cannot be feasible.	For me, it was effective	It was not effective for learners' learning
E	It can be effective in some domains like presenting new language	I think it does not work in Iranian ELT context	For me, it was effective	It was not effective for learners' learning
F	It can be effective in some domains like presenting new language	Iranian teachers do not like to be observed and mentoring cannot be feasible.	It was not effective for me	It was not effective for learners' learning

Mentoring Effectiveness in General. Table 8 shows that the interviewees agreed on the effectiveness of mentoring in general but they had different opinions about different aspects of mentoring. They stated that the mentoring can help the teachers reflect on their teaching and show their positive and weak points in teaching while providing some practical solutions for them. It is very popular among teachers that the source of problems in teaching-learning successful is the curriculum and the learners themselves. They do not agree that maybe the problem is the teacher teaching style and process, and mentoring can be effective to reveal this point.

Mentoring effectiveness in Iranian ELT context. The interviewees believed that the mentoring may not be feasible in Iranian ELT context. Most of the teachers, due to the dominated culture and attitude, do not like to be observed and do not accept any kind of feedbacks. They think they are the best, and they do not need even any reflection on their teaching. This attitude may not allow the mentoring to be effective and applicable in ELT context. Although the teachers claim that they agree with mentoring and its effectiveness, they do not agree that they may need mentoring and that it can be also very effective for them.

The effectiveness of mentoring in this study. All the participants, except one of them, stated that the mentoring was effective for them. It showed that if the teachers accept that they need mentoring and agree that it can be very effective in their profession, it would be effective. Although they believed that just some limited sessions are not adequate for the effectiveness of mentoring, they said it was really effective for them. They claimed that mentoring should be part of the teaching-learning process like the assessment for students to let the teachers assess themselves and reflect for coming sessions and classes.

The effectiveness of mentoring on learners' learning. The interviewees stated that although the students had a question about the attendance of a person as a mentor in the classroom, it did not have any significant effect on the students' performance and learning. They stated that this attendance just had a little effect on their classroom management.

Discussion

According to Odell and Huling (2000), mentoring is a kind of proficient practice that happens in the teaching context whenever a qualified teacher supports and leads novice teachers in their teaching practice. This study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of mentoring in Iranian ELT context and to see whether it is worth considering as a professional tool for English language institutes and schools to aid the teaching-learning process. Not only the novice teachers but also the experienced teachers may need to reflect on their teaching activities and process and the mentoring provides a suitable opportunity for all teachers.

As the analysis of interviews showed, despite the teachers' view about the effectiveness of mentoring in Iranian ELT context due to the cultural issues, it was to some extent effective, and it is worth paying more attention to the use of mentoring in developing the teachers' professional.

A study related to the needs of teachers to mentoring was conducted by Hudson and Nguyen (2008). They reported that the preservice teachers have particular mentoring requirements that may assist their development as EFL teachers and, on the other hand, the experienced teachers do need some other mentoring requirements. Accordingly, in this study, the participants had less than five years of experiences to have a more reliable and valid results.

The results of this study are in line with the study conducted by Hobson (2002). Hobson's findings showed that the student teachers consider mentoring to be a key aspect of school-based ITT, whereas the student teachers' accounts of their school-based experiences suggest that teacher-mentors are not always successful in creating conditions for effective student teacher learning. In line with his study, the results of the current study showed that mentoring was not successful in classroom management part.

The results of the study by Hobson, Ashby, Malderez, and Tomlinson (2009) is in agreement with the results of the current study in terms of effective selection and preparation of mentors. As the participants mentioned in the interview, the mentor himself/herself is very crucial in a successful mentoring. A mentor needs to have adequate effective experiences in teaching and has a lot of in hand practical ideas for each problem in the classroom.

The results of this study are in line with the results of the study conducted by Nguyen and Baldauf (2010). They used peer mentoring to investigate its effect on the EFL pre-service teachers. They stated that providing effective mentoring to pre-service teachers in their field-based practice continues to be a major challenge in teacher education programs because of limited supervision resources. That is, apart from being mentored by their school practicum mentors, pre-service teachers could learn from one another and mentor one another as part of a formal peer mentoring program to assist in the development of their teaching practices.

The results of the study by Lambson (2010) also support the findings of this study. He conducted a case study and explored the experiences of three novice teachers engaged with more experienced teachers in a teacher study group during their first year of teaching. The results of his study proved how, over time, the novice teachers moved from more exterior to more central participation as revealed through changes in their talk and feelings about participating.

The results of this study are also in line with the study by Hudson's (2013). His study explored the mentoring of pre-service teachers in selecting and implementing teaching strategies to meet students' learning needs. As the result of his study showed, pedagogical knowledge practices such as planning, preparation, classroom management, assessment, and problem-solving as key to the mentoring processes.

Hudson and Nguyen (2008) stated that EFL speakers learning to teach EFL may require particular attributes and practices from their mentors to advance their professional school experiences.

Beaven (2012) stated that the approaches to English language teacher education are influenced by different ideas of how teachers learn and what they need to learn. Beaven claimed that materials are self-evidently only one component of teacher education courses, but component that changes according to course objectives and conceptions of teaching and learning. In his article he mentioned some practical guidelines for developing teacher training materials. In line with this study which aimed to develop the teachers' professional, Beaven's guidelines are very helpful for teacher training courses and mentoring sessions. Beaven stated observing your trainer as a strategy for raising teachers' awareness of classroom language and of different teacher roles. In the current study, a mentor observes the teachers' classroom and aids them to raise their awareness but in Beaven's suggestion, the teachers should observe their trainer or mentor's classroom.

Conclusion

This study constituted an attempt to examine the effectiveness of the mentoring on teaching skills of teachers in Iranian ELT context. As it was discussed in chapter 4, the participants in all categories which were observed and had the mentoring sessions have developed their teaching skills, and it showed the effectiveness of mentoring on teaching skills of Iranian EFL teachers. As the literature (e.g.: Cherubini, 2007; Fletcher & Barrett, 2004; Maciejewski, 2007; Wong et al., 2005) indicated, support systems such as induction training and mentoring may influence teacher effectiveness and student achievement. The mentoring itself as well as the teacher

portfolio aid the teachers to review their skills and activities in the classroom and provide the opportunity for reflection. Accordingly, the findings of this study can be listed as follow:

1. Mentoring, as an effective tool, can be very helpful for language teachers to find their areas of improvement and can aid them to reflect on their teaching in order to adopt suitable approaches in teaching.
2. Mentoring provides good chances for the teachers to use a variety of activities and strategies in their classes in order to examine their effectiveness in their classes. Applying different strategies and techniques in the classroom may be difficult for the first time, and due to the lack of awareness about the results of using the specific strategies, some teachers avoid to apply them in their classes. Mentoring gives a clear view to the teachers to know the consequence of specific techniques and strategies and apply them with less hesitation.
3. Mentoring opens a new horizon for the teachers to scrutinize their teaching-learning process intensively and do not follow and make their mistakes again.
4. Mentoring provides more opportunities for the teachers to know and adopt different teachers' ideas in their classes. It can be very useful for a teacher to use the experiences of his/her colleagues to overcome the variety of problems which are in a class.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Classroom observation checklist

Instructor: Date:

Session No: Time of Class:

Location: Course Level:

Respond to each statement using following scale:

1=Not observed

2= More emphasis recommended

3=Accomplished very well

Criteria	1	2	3	Comment/Evidence
1- There was a positive classroom atmosphere				
2- Instructions were clear and checked				
3- Teacher encouraged learner talk and controlled teacher talk				
4- Teacher set the scene and engaged the learners' interest in the topic.				
5- New language was presented clearly and correctly.				
6- Teacher elicited information/language from learners whenever possible				

7- Teacher checked understanding of target language				
8- Learners were given opportunity to practice new language through spoken and written activities.				
9- Skills were developed/ practiced effectively				
10- Teacher monitored unobtrusively and give support when needed				
11- Learner errors and feedback were dealt with in different ways and at appropriate times in the lesson.				
12- pace was varied to suit learners' need				
13- There was a variety of interaction .				
14- Teacher re-grouped learners appropriately and efficiently				
15- Timing was observed and managed well throughout the class.				
16- Teacher use mime. gesture/body language.				
17- Teacher used board effectively and wrote new language up.				
18- The learners were engaged and involved throughout.				
19- The coursebook was adapted suitably				
20 -There was a logical progression to the lesson and the teacher clearly signposted the learners throughout. letting them know what was happening.				

Appendix B: The evidences for classroom observation checklist

Best practice criteria	Evidence
1 Aims were clear.	Lesson plan shows clearly stated aims.
2 The lesson was well planned with attention to anticipated problems and solutions. Teacher taught the learners not the plan.	Lesson plan shows logical staging and included anticipated problems and solutions. But teacher altered the plan to suit needs of learners.
3 There was a logical progression to the lesson and the teacher clearly signposted the learners throughout, letting them know what was happening.	Staging was clear in plan and lesson. Transitions between parts were used to direct learners.
4 The coursebook was suitably adapted to the learners' needs/level.	At no point in the lesson did the learners have problems using the coursebook.
5 Teacher set the scene and engaged the learners' interest in the topic.	A clear context for the lesson was set.
6 New language was presented clearly and correctly.	The teacher dealt with new language, focusing on meaning, form and pronunciation in sufficient depth.
7 Learner errors and feedback were dealt with in different ways and at appropriate times in the lesson.	Error correction was done in class. Different methods were used and it was done at the correct time.
8 Interaction patterns were varied.	Pair work, group work, milling and individual work were all used.
9 Instructions were clear and checked.	Instruction-checking questions were used in class.
10 Teacher checked understanding of target language.	Concept-checking questions and timelines were used appropriately in class.
11 Teacher monitored unobtrusively and gave support when needed.	Teacher monitored all activities, stepping in only when necessary.
12 Teacher encouraged learner talk and controlled teacher talk.	Number of minutes of teacher-talking-time (TTT) vs. number of minutes of student talking time (STT). TTT less than STT.
13 A variety of tasks/activities were used. Pace was varied to suit learners' needs.	The teacher used different types of activities and the learners were given enough time to finish activities.
14 Timing was observed and managed well throughout the class.	The teacher got through the lesson plan. At no point were the learners rushed or had nothing to do.

15 Teacher encouraged peer teaching.	The teacher used group work to get learners to share information and practice language.
16 Teacher used board effectively and wrote new language up.	The board work was clear, organized and legible.
17 Mother tongue was used effectively but not overused.	L1 was used minimally and only if absolutely essential.
18 Learners were given opportunity to practice new language through spoken and written activities.	There were spoken and written practice activities using the new language.
19 Teacher elicited information/language from learners whenever possible.	The teacher used a variety of elicitation techniques for different purposes.
20 Teacher used mime, gesture/body language.	There was evidence of mime, gesture and body language being used to both cut down TTT and maximize STT.
21 There was a positive classroom atmosphere.	Learners were relaxed and responsive to the teacher and activities.

Appendix C: The interview questions

1. What is your idea about *mentoring*?
2. Can be mentoring effective for Iranian EFL teachers based on our culture?
3. Did the *mentoring* in your classes have any significant effect in your teaching?
4. How *mentoring* can be more effective?
5. Did the attendance of the mentor in your classes have any effect on learners' learning?