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## The Impact of Mentors on the Development of Teaching and Learning Skills for Internship Teachers

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### ABSTRACT

National College of Education operate with the goal of creating trained teachers by providing pre-service training. Here, teacher trainees who study for two years are paired with a school for their third-year internship. In providing professional training to these interns, Mentors play a crucial role. However, a significant gap has been observed between the interns and the Mentors. This results in interns being unable to properly acquire the role model from the Mentors. When trainee teachers are appointed, they do not achieve sufficient teaching-learning capabilities. Furthermore, there are limited studies examining the outcomes of guidance for trainee teachers (Rebecca.S, 2017). Therefore, there is a need to remove this research gap. The aim of this study is to enhance the teaching ability of Interns by identifying the relationship between their learning-teaching skills and the contributions of Mentors. This study is designed in Survey method. To conduct the research, the researcher used Vygotsky's social cultural theory, Bandura's self-efficacy theory, and the Biggs 3P Model. In this mixed method is applied, the contributions of Mentors is independent variable and the skill development of teacher trinees is dependent variable. Structured questionnaires, observation, and various research tools were used to collect direct and online data from them, which, when analyzed using Excel software, revealed a correlation of  $+ 0.715$  between the two variables. This study emphasizes that the contribution of Mentors is essential for the development of teaching-learning skills of teacher trainees, and it suggests that trainers should provide feedback in other contexts such as learning-teaching and integrated activity methods.

Keywords: Internship Teacher, learning – teaching, Skill development, Mentors, National College of Education.

### 1. Introduction

The Ministry of Education of Sri Lanka has recognized that “good teachers are the key to improving the quality of education” (MOE, 2004). Schools have been established in the motherland of Sri Lanka with the aim of overcoming future challenges and creating a positive image in the country, leading to a prosperous and well-being. Teachers are appointed annually to build a well-rounded community in schools. There are Twenty National Colleges of Education with the aim of providing pre-service training to produce trained teachers. Teacher trainees selected for these colleges of education are provided with two years of in-house training and a third year of full-time teacher training. The contribution of mentors is essential to improve the performance of third-year teacher trainees during their internship period. Therefore, this study examine how the role of mentors helps in developing the teaching skills of pre-service teachers.

#### 1.1 Research Background

The third year Teacher trinees of the National Colleges of Education are supervised by the school principal, an academic lecturer from the College of Education, and a Mentor. A mentor is appointed by the school principal from among his teaching staff to closely monitor these teachers who are attached to the school, provide them with the necessary advice, and guide them into becoming prospective teachers. They should be someone who is qualified to guide student teachers - experienced in teaching and familiar with the specific curriculum(Internship Guid, National College of Education). In this way, Mentors act as key personnel in the internship program.

The mentoring relationship between mentors and internship teachers is an important issue during this period. Because it helps them improve their performance and teaching skills through the feedback provided by the mentor(Sushma.N,2019). Mentors play a key role in shaping teacher trainees into effective teachers. Mentors play a key role in shaping the teaching practice of pre-service teachers( Peter.H & Sue.H, 2010).

Oteh(2001) said that teaching practice is a very important part of pre-service teacher training. The role of mentors is a very important factor in the professional development of teacher trainees. This process refers to the proper management and support to the teacher trainees attached to them. Mentoring is a process that can shape the entire human society(Smith,2007). mentors play an important role in helping to build trust through observation and feedback (Kidd, Brown, and Fitzallen, 2015). During this period, they gain experience in participating in teaching, co-curricular activities, project work, Action Research, and school management. Mentors are adapted to guide and assist teacher trainees in carrying out their roles

appropriately (Laila .H & Abdullah.S, 1998). Therefore, the role of mentors is essential to develop the skills of college of education Teacher trainees during their internship period. This is why this study attracted the attention of the researcher.

### **1.2 Justification**

The purpose of providing school education is to provide “conceptual education” to all for the purposes of preserving the Sri Lankan identity, addressing all issues, and creating a balanced society (National Education Commission, 2021).

There is a close link between quality teaching and better student outcomes (Zammit et. al, 2007). The quality of classroom learning and teaching influences students' ability to become achievers (AISV, 2006). A study conducted in Finland has established that teachers are the most influential people in students' achievement and their interest in learning (Eduardo, 2015). Accordingly, the study indicates that teachers who inspire confidence in students and teach them have a 68.7% impact on their achievement levels.

Therefore, a better society can be built only through better teachers. For this, the National College of Education are working to create better teachers by providing pre-service training (Colleges of Education Act, No. 30, 1986).

The role of mentors is important here. mentors play a key role in shaping the teaching practice of pre-service teachers (Peteer.H & Sue.H, 2010). Internship training is provided in schools with the main objective of developing the teaching skills of prospective teachers under the guidance of a mentor (Ekundayo, 2014). Mentoring is an important component of educational experiences (Rose, 2003). Mentors are the main personnel involved in providing guidance and career assistance to teacher trainees. However, the student-teacher often does not properly practice the teaching skills learned theoretically. Even in the internship school mentors do not provide sufficient assistance to Trainees to improve their teaching techniques (Ogonor and Badmus 2006). Since there is limited research examining the effects of mentoring on pre service teachers, the researcher seeks to examine the role of mentors in the development of preservice teachers' teaching skills.

### **1.3 Problem statement**

The teachers in the training program do not have sufficient learning and teaching skills when they are appointed. Therefore, there is a need to find out the reasons for this and reduce these gaps.

#### **Nature of the Research Problem**

Professional mentoring will help to further enhance their teaching skills and bridge the gap between theory and reality For trainee teachers who are attached to schools from the College of Education. However, it has been observed that trainee teachers do not arrive at the classrooms on time when they suddenly visited by supervise. Even experienced teacher trainees who are well-versed in block teaching activities struggle with teaching. Some do not maintain lesson notes properly and also make limited use of teaching and learning aids. When the trainees were questioned in this regard, it was revealed that the interventions of the mentors were minimal. When asked mentors, they say that they provide appropriate guidance and that trainees are reluctant to come for advice.

Trainee teachers often do not properly practice the teaching skills they have learned theoretically. mentors do not provide sufficient assistance to trainees to improve their teaching techniques (Ogonor and Badmus 2006). Same time, Parveen (2012) through his research, he has highlighted that collaborative planning between mentors and teacher trainees is insufficient and needs to be further encouraged. He also suggested that trainee teachers should be given the opportunity to discuss the curricula with relevant professional mentors before entering the classroom. Johnston(2015) said that future studies should focus on the proper mentoring relationship between mentors.

Meanwhile, Marlies Baeten and Mathea Simons (2016) in their study on mentors and trainees as partners in teaching, they recommended examining the collaboration between mentors and trainees in higher education learning-related fields.

Therefore, the topic of "The Impact of Mentors in Developing the Teaching Skills of internship teacher" has been chosen to fill these research gaps.

### **1.4 research objectives**

Develop the teaching skill of the teacher trainees by increasing the guidance activities of the mentors. In that sense, it is believed that this study will pave the way for the production of teachers with teaching skills in the National Colleges of Education.

### **1.5 Specific objectives**

1. To identify the challenges faced by teacher trainees in classroom learning and teaching.
2. To explore the activities undertaken by mentors for the development of teacher trainees' teaching skills.
3. Analyzing the level of effectiveness of teacher trainees in their teaching activities.
4. Interpreting the relationship between teacher trainees' learning-teaching skills and the guidance of their mentors.

### 1.6 limitations of the study

Although there are twenty National Colleges of Education throughout Sri Lanka, only teacher trainees who are attached for internship from the six Tamil-language National Colleges of Education are taken for the study. These trainees are attached to Tamil-medium schools located in educational zones located in the areas near the college.

Table 1.2 limitations of the study

National College of Education	Population	
	Teacher Trainees	Mentors
Addalaichenai NCOE	348	250
Baticolao NCOE	352	170
Jaffna NCOE	370	56
Vavuniya NCOE	366	110
Dharganagar NCOE	234	73
Sripaatha NCOE	422	95
Total	2092	754

Source : Internship Record Book

## 2. Literature Review

The theories on which the study is built, such as Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, Bandura's self-efficacy theory, and Biggs's 3P model, are also discussed. and also discussed mentors history, Mentorig, internship, important of mentors and characteristics of good mentors.

### 2.1 Theories related to the research problem

#### 2.1.1 sociocultural policy

The sociocultural policy of Vigotski (1978) mention about mentorig. Vygotsky's concept of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) has traditionally been applied to children. The scaffolding approach can be used in adult participation in internship. The distance between what an individual can achieve on their own and what they can achieve with the help of a professional is defined as ZPD Furthermore, ZPD points out the difference between doing a task independently and doing it with guidance, using the learner's ability (Vigotski, 1978). Teaching and learning occurs when assistance is provided in the ZPD for any activity that requires assistance in education. This assistance is provided by a teacher, an expert, or a highly qualified person (More knowledge others - MKO). As a result, the teaching process involves facilitating processing through the ZPD. Adult learners can benefit from the support of a mentor during any educational event because mentors have walked the same path as the learners.

Rasmussen (2001) stated that the ZPD supports the learning and development process of children and adolescents. According to the concept of ZPD as outlined by Vygotsky (1978), individuals learn best through collaboration with others. It has been noted that by working with highly capable (MKO) individuals, learners engage in learning better and absorb new concepts, psychological tools, and skills.

The term "scaffolding" was introduced in learning while providing a practical explanation of the teaching concept in ZPD Bruner (1976). Sociocultural theory and the ZPD concept form the basis for the conceptualization of scaffolding (Berk 2002). Wells (1999) described scaffolding as the implementation of the ZPD concept of Vygotsky (1987).

The primary purpose of scaffolding in teaching is to consider transferring responsibility for a specific task to a student, in light of the characteristics of the ZPD (Mercer & Fisher, 1993). They point to teachers working collaboratively with students in building knowledge and skills. After the student has mastered the subject with the help of the scaffolding, the student is again allowed to do the task independently. As students master their tasks, the support provided to them is reduced and they are held accountable for their own development. Here, scaffolding supports student development.

Over the past few years, scaffolding has been interpreted in many ways to describe all kinds of support and guidance (Boblett, 2012). In that way, a professional mentor acts as a scaffold when guiding teacher trainees. A scaffold is an instructional structure in which the professional models the desired learning techniques, and responsibilities are gradually transferred to the learners.

The ZPD is defined as the gap between the level of development an individual can achieve on their own and the level of development they can achieve with the help of others. Getting help from others is called scaffolding. Accordingly, there are activities in which individuals can succeed through their own efforts and those in which they can succeed with the help of others. The first is the situation of teacher trainees who can carry out teaching activities on their own initiative without the help of others. The second is the situation of teacher trainees who need the help of others, that is, a mentor, and who can carry out teaching activities better with that help. Thus, in professional orientation, the assistance or encouragement provided by mentors to help teacher trainees achieve optimal teaching standards is also part of the scaffolding.

### ***2.1.2 the presage-process-production model of the biggs***

Learning is a powerful process involving teachers, students, and learners. Biggs' 3P model was developed to describe the interactions between teachers and students. This is seen as related to the learning process and the teaching process. The 3P model describes three things where learning-related factors are found. The first stage of this model is the presage stage, which is the stage before learning takes place. Next is the stage where learning is taking place. Finally, the stage where learning outcomes are produced.

The prior knowledge, abilities, and skills of the trainee are described in a presage manner to help them learn new knowledge that may or may not impact their learning processes and outcomes. This stage is affected by both activity and production at the same time. The process level is found next to the presage level in the 3P model. This situation indicates that trainees are reluctant to follow the tasks set by their mentors. It is observed how trainees handle the task in an operational setting. These processes are determined by their observations of training systems, their objectives, their tendencies, their decisions for immediate action, and their approaches to the learning task. Finally, the productive stage of the trainee's learning is observed. This model describes both low- and high-level cognitive outcomes. It has been shown to help encourage collaboration in learning situations.

The collaborative nature of working with mentors keeps trainees positively motivated and engaged with their learning techniques. After being trained by their mentors, trainees in this model of training It is important to describe the contribution of changes at different stages in the level of their knowledge, skills, and abilities.

### ***2.1.3 Self-efficacy theory (set)***

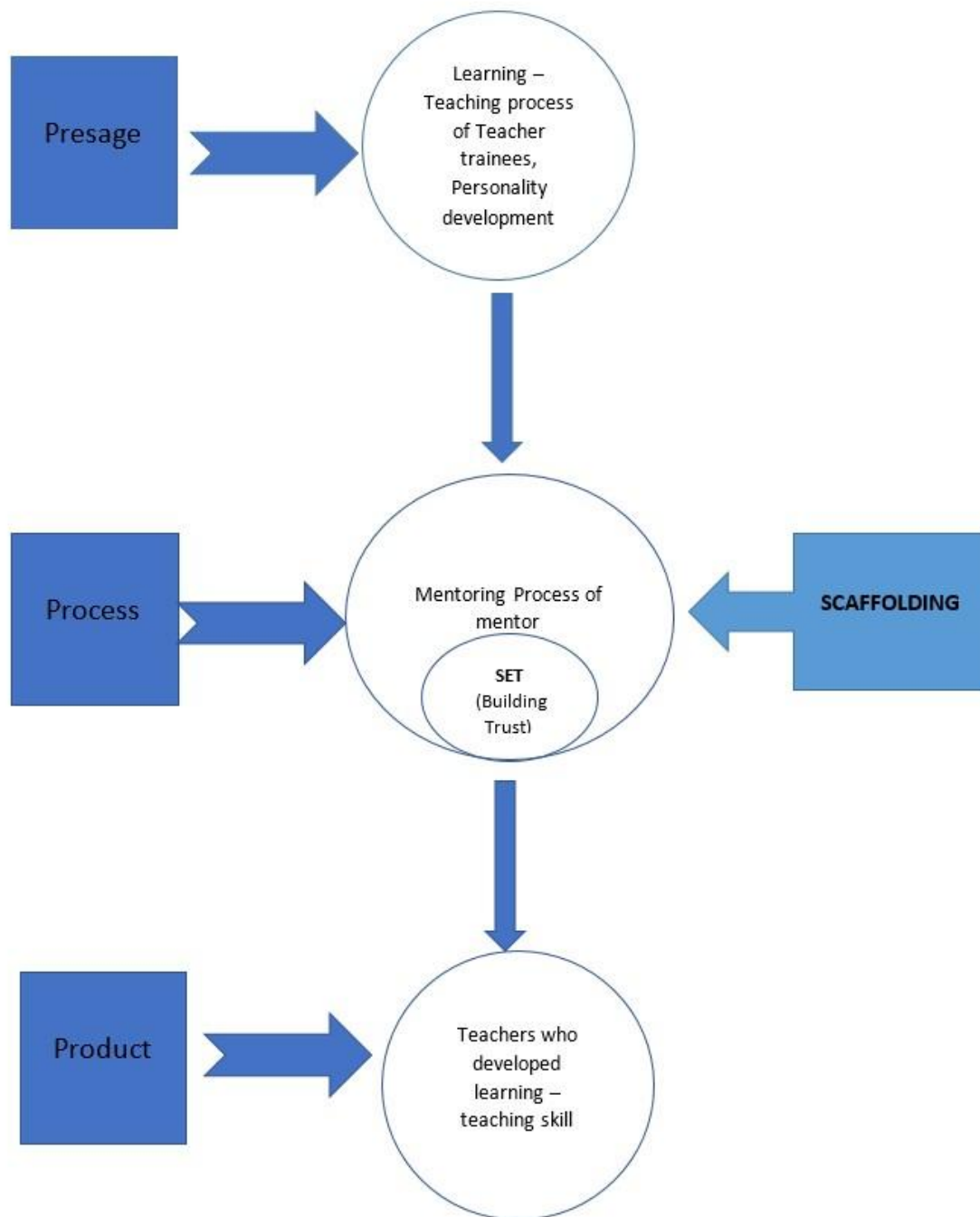
Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy theory (SET) provides a new perspective on human behavior in relation to outcomes. Specifically, the belief that one can achieve a particular outcome underpins an individual's success, and one's self-efficacy influences their success. This suggests that an individual's self-confidence can either enhance or diminish the likelihood of achieving the same outcome (Bandura 1986). Simply put, this theory can be summarized as 'Confidence paves the way for success.'

According to the self-efficacy theory of Bandura (1977), self-efficacy involves an individual's belief in their ability to perform a specific task or achieve goals. This belief is directly related to job satisfaction for classroom teachers (Hasselquist, Herndon & Kitchel, 2017). Furthermore, higher performance can be achieved through positive feedback. Positive experiences in the first year are associated with quality mentoring experiences (Colson, 2017). A positive relationship has been identified between the self-efficacy of new teachers and the support they receive from their mentors, according to a study conducted by Woolfolk & Hoy. The aforementioned literature demonstrates that there are positive outcomes in the self-efficacy of trainee teachers through mentors.

In 1977, due to the recognition of the importance of self-efficacy, Bandura increased the understanding of social intelligence theories. The Social cognitive theory (SCT) is linked with self-efficacy. To achieve desired outcomes, Bandura (1986) noted that individuals' knowledge, intelligence, and behavioral capabilities should be considered. Therefore, Bandura (1997) emphasized that one's self-efficacy beliefs must account for the effects of the environment on the social intelligence conditions that can have a positive or negative influence. How individuals experience satisfaction and succeed in their selected environments impact their self-efficacy. This can help create an environment that fosters continued success. From this expanded perspective, flexible approaches for guidance according to the beliefs and capabilities of those affected by interns are necessary.

The self-efficacy of the prospective teacher can be influenced by various factors. These may include resources and supports provided to teachers, professional development, guidance, and opportunities to participate in other training experiences (Bumann & Younkin, 2012). This framework emphasizes the need for prospective teachers to gain confidence in successfully achieving self-efficacy, as well as the necessity of ensuring the success of the internship phase. According to the literature, it can be said that the theory of self-efficacy lays the foundation for achieving the desired outcomes of the mentoring relationship.

The Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT), which integrates measures of self-efficacy, self-regulation, and motivational processes with career behavior, was developed by Lent, Brown, and Hackett (1994). In this framework, self-efficacy is placed in the center of the career development model. It incorporates three components from Bandura's (1986) theory: self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and personal goals (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994). In 2013, this was further integrated with contextual factors. It describes how an individual focuses on their behaviors in different environmental contexts. All four constructs in this theory aim to gain insights into career guidance; they help to understand how the beliefs of interns are influenced through guidance events.

**Theoretical framework****Figure 2.1 Theoretical framework**

The prior knowledge, competencies, and abilities of internship teacher are described in the Presage state of the 3P model. The next stage after the Presage state is the Process state. This state refers to the teacher trainees demonstrating their skills on tasks set by the mentors. The assistance or encouragement provided by the guides to achieve the appropriate teaching quality is also a part of the scaffolding. In this, learning techniques and responsibilities are gradually transferred to the trainees by the mentor. During this time, the concept of self-efficacy (SET) should be instilled in trainees, as it assures them that they can achieve a specific outcome by themselves, since one's self-efficacy impacts their success. The final stage of 3P shows the productive level of the learner's training. To successfully reach this stage, SET must enhance the teacher trainees' self-confidence.

## **2.2 Historical Background**

In Homer's *Odyssey*, the king of Ithaca, Odysseus, entrusted his son Telemachus and his possessions to a man named Mentor during his journey to war. Mentor took it upon himself to nurture the young man to grow responsibly in terms of morality, spirituality, emotional aspects, and mental stability. He served as a teacher, supervisor, and friend, guiding Telemachus to develop into a complete individual, which Odysseus entrusted him with when he returned after a decade of warfare. This is where the term 'Mentor' was introduced (Ragins & Kram, 2007). The potential values of a mentor in human career development were suggested by Levinson (1978) and his colleagues.

Mentorship is a process in which a more knowledgeable and experienced individual facilitates the growth of a relatively new individual through mutual trust and sharing. The concept of mentorship in the educational system has been rapidly evolving since the 1980s as a mechanism for reforming teaching and teacher education (Little & Nelson, 1990). This growth is not only about experienced teachers serving as role models but also about supporting teachers in acquiring new knowledge and being professionally socialized. Traditionally, mentorship has been described as a relationship where older individuals with more experience help younger individuals in their learning (Kram, 1985).

## **2.3 Mentoring, Internship Related Literature**

### **2.3.1 mentoring**

A common criticism found in the literature is that Mentoring is a concept that is difficult to define. Mentoring is often discussed based on activities such as "teaching, motivating, providing advice, and engaging in friendship," which are various aspects that the guide should embody. Furthermore, it emphasizes providing trainees with the best guidance experiences (Anderson & Shannon, 1988). Most definitions indicate that the guide is someone with more experience than the trainee, and the guide is someone who can provide the knowledge and skills required by the trainee (McCormack & West, 2006).

Teacher training in service pre-training is a very important part (Oteh, 2001). Mentors are trained to guide teacher trainees to implement their practices appropriately. That is why the mentoring process plays a crucial role in shaping the personality of the Perspective teacher (Laila .H & Abdullah.S, 1998).

The Mentoring process presented by Moraghan and Lunt (1997) is an action that gradually provides comprehensive assistance and supportive environments to trainees, enabling them to mature. The Mentors acts as a role model, guiding trainees emotionally and fostering entrepreneurial development among them, mentoring serve multiple roles such as motivators, advisors, and friends, providing assistance to trainees. They also propose a methodology that aids in professional entrepreneurship and private development, along with a nurturing relational structure related to the process of career guidance.

### **2.3.2 internship program**

The internship program is a significant way to provide teacher trainees with practical experience related to real jobs. It offers them an opportunity to integrate theories, plan lessons, critically analyze their and their peers' teaching styles, and improve their performance through feedback provided by the mentor. It also helps them enhance their skills in the teaching profession (Sushma N Jogan, 2019).

Saleha .P, (2012) in his research titled 'Internship Program in Education' has stated the following recommendations to make the internship program very useful:

"The principals and teacher trainees are showing a positive approach to this training program. 87 % participants agreed that the internship program was beneficial to them. 68% participants agreed that this program provided them the opportunity to plan and implement lessons. However, it was believed that they had failed to reflect on and analyze their lesson plans and teaching practices. At the same time, the review found that the duration of the internship program was insufficient. Adequate guidance was not provided to teacher trainees regarding their peers. As a result, they did not have the opportunity to gain the best teaching experiences from their fellow student-teachers. Student-teachers need to create teaching materials. However, they were not guided on how to effectively create and use such materials. During the internship program, student-teachers mostly used teacher-centered teaching methods like lectures).

Kirit Matliwala (2010) In the pre-service training for teachers in the implementation of the training program, it was stated that Internship is very important. Therefore, we must strive to make it successful through our intense efforts. Some strategies need to be followed for the quality improvement of the internship program. According to Sushma,N (2019), the structured training program plays a crucial role in professional education for teachers. It provides direct experiences for trainees in various roles. It imparts philosophical knowledge about strategies and methods for teaching in real life.

Ekundayo, Alonge, Kolawole and Ekundayo, (2014) Teaching practice is the period during which trainee teachers in teacher training institutions and universities undergo practical training in schools. This practice is provided in schools with the primary aim of developing teaching skills for prospective teachers under the guidance of skilled educators. Curriculum preparation, classroom management, communication skills, assessment, and personality development for professional teachers, along with practical training related to the learning process, are provided to student-teachers. Under the continuous supervision of skilled, experienced teachers, this offers opportunities for trainers to utilize various teaching-learning methods in real classroom situations. Andabai (2011) has noted this as the practical application of learning theories and teaching techniques.

### 2.3.3 the importance of guidance for internship teachers.

According to the findings of a study conducted by Orpen (1997), the better the relationship between a mentor and a mentee during a guidance event, the more motivated the mentee feels for hard work, as well as feeling more assured about the organization. The experiences gained through professional guidance are valuable for trainee teachers. These experiences contribute significantly to professional development (Hunt & Michael, 1983).

During the first year of teaching, guidance is very important because it can have a positive impact on the retention rates of new teachers (Henning et al., 2015). Beginning teachers are burdened by the challenging teaching tasks that are associated with high levels of student achievement and behavior (Pazh pazhananil em i 2013). New teachers enter the field of education with challenging teaching tasks that can easily lead to failure (Kidd et al., 2015).

### 2.3.4 characteristics and challenges of effective mentors

Atkinson(1996) has highlighted factors related to Mentors such as high workload for the mentor, lack of special recognition for the mentor, imbalance in the ratio between counselor and trainee, absence of commitment and direct attitude from the teacher towards being a career counselor, lack of appropriate qualifications and training for career counselors, and lack of coordination between counselors and trainees.

## 2.4 Conceptual Map

In this study, the interventions of the mentors are seen as independent variables, and the development of the teaching skills of the trainee teachers is seen as the dependent variable.

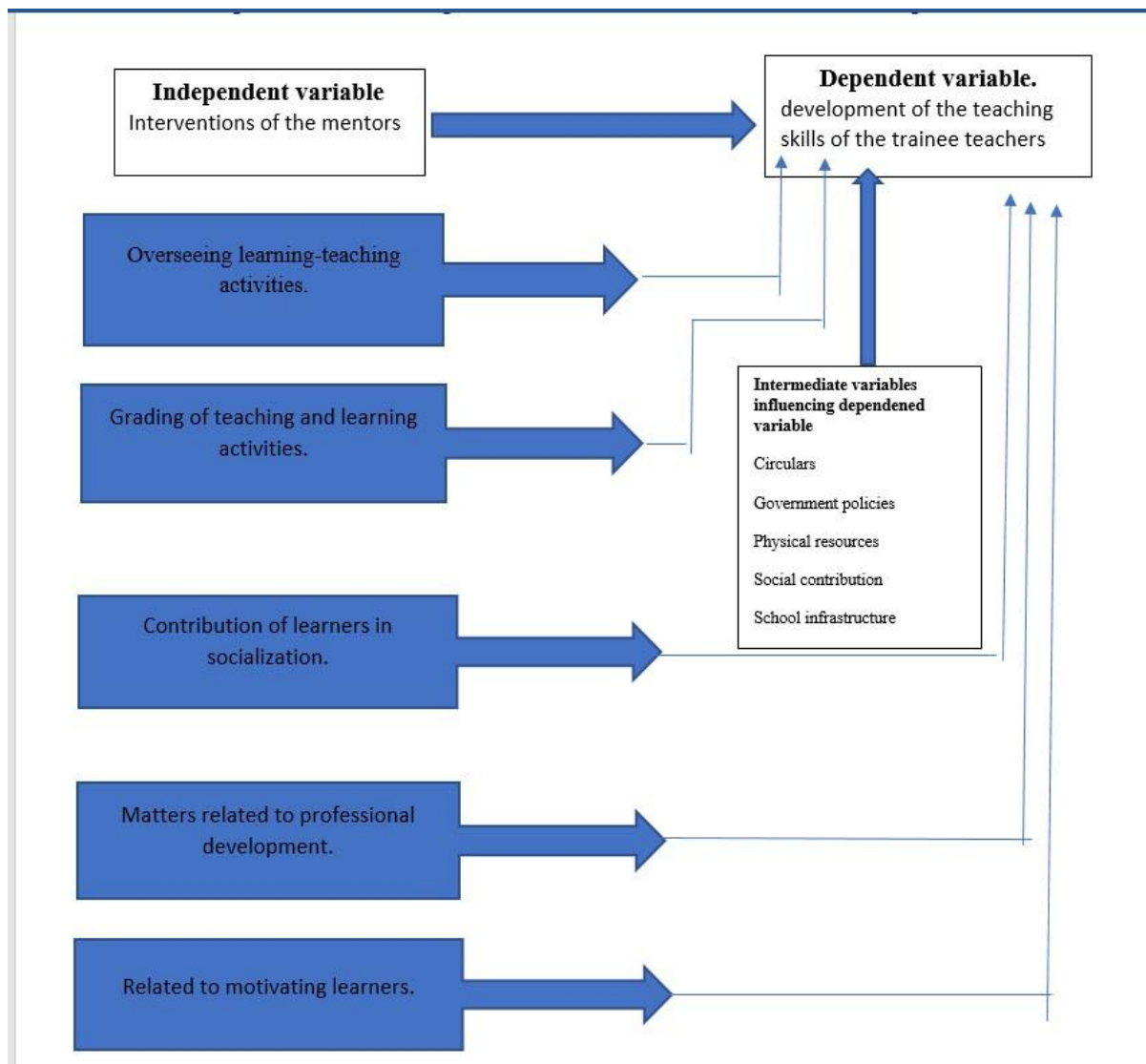


Figure 2.2 Concept map

### 3. Research Methodology

The mixed approach is a good method for integrating perspectives (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie & Turner, 2007). Since data is collected and utilized both quantitatively and qualitatively, this study is structured in a mixed method. Tools such as questionnaires and observation sheets are used for data collection. As qualitative data is collected from the sample population and analyzed, the research is categorized as survey method.

#### Population and Sampling

In survey research, sampling is an important step (Collins, Onwuegbuzie & Jiao, 2007). In this study, a purposive sampling method was used. Accordingly, a sample was drawn from 2092 third-year teacher trainees from six National Colleges of Education, as well as from their mentor

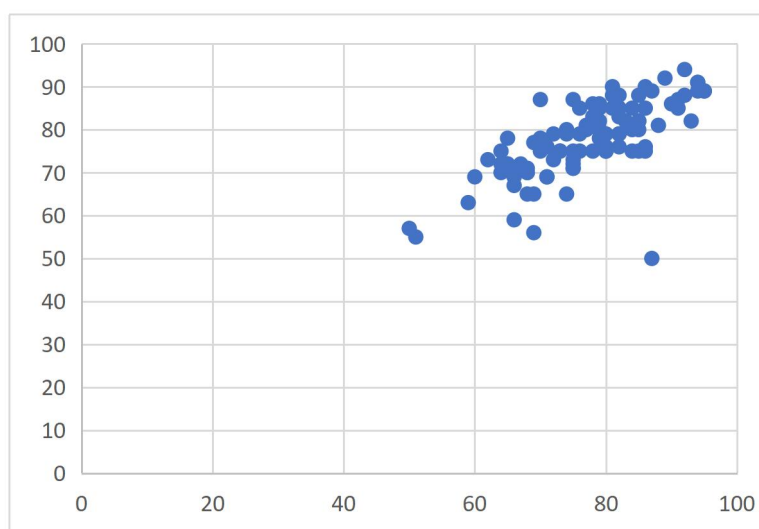
**Table 3.1 Population and sample**

National College of Education	Population		Sample	
	Teacher Trainees	Mentors	Teacher Trainees	Mentors
1. Addalaichenai NCOE	348	250	14	14
2. Baticolao NCOE	352	170	16	16
3. Jaffna NCOE	370	56	20	20
4. Vavuniya NCOE	366	110	15	15
5. Dharganagar NCOE	234	73	15	15
6. Sripaatha NCOE	422	95	20	20
Total	2092	754	100	100

Anthropological data analysis techniques such as classification, organization, and interpretation are used to analyze data collected through tools like questionnaires and observation sheets, while quantitative data analysis techniques use correlation.

### 4. Results and Discussion

From the responses given by the teacher trainees to the questionnaire provided to them, their contributions through their career mentors were calculated in percentage terms. The averages of the scores for teaching by the same trainees were calculated. Then, through correlation, the Professional development of the trainees and the contributions of the career mentors were compared. For this, Spearman's rank correlation method was used, and these variables were plotted as follows:



**Chart 4.12 Scatter graph**



The scatter plot shows a linear relationship, and since the scatter is reduced with the plot close to a straight line, it can be concluded that there is a close relationship between the two variables. The correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) between the two variables was calculated to be 0.715389777.

This substantial finding validates the views expressed in previous studies related to this. Because the mentoring relationship between the mentor and trainee teachers helps trainee teachers to improve their performance and teaching skills through the feedback provided by the mentor (Sushma.N,2019). The mentor plays a key role in structuring the teaching practice of pre-service teachers (Peteer.H & Sue.H, 2010).

## 5. Findings and Recommendations

### 5.1 Research Findings

Therefore, based on the aforementioned correlation coefficient, it can be said that there is a certain relationship between the teaching ability development of training participants and the contribution of the mentor. In other words, as the guidance contribution provided by the mentors increases, the teaching ability of the training participants also improves. From this, it can be concluded that the contribution of Mentors is indispensable for enhancing the teaching ability of training participants.

### 5.2 Recommendations

A trainee must act according to the advice received from the mentor. Embracing new ideas is essential for those undergoing training. To effectively carry out teaching practice, trainees should utilize the feedback received from the mentor. They should maintain reflective notes about their teaching performance. Continuously maintaining such notes helps in identifying the recurring mistakes and persistent problems, thereby serving as a valuable opportunity to overcome these issues.

The Mentor should supervise the learning and teaching of the trainees. Every time such supervision is conducted, the trainees' performance should be assessed based on specific criteria. By assessing based on specific criteria, trainees can understand in which areas they need to improve. Providing the necessary resources. Providing feedback. By continuously giving feedback in both teaching-learning sessions and other practical activities such as integrated exercises, trainees can consistently make progress in their activities. Assisting trainees in their professional development.

Appoint a suitable person with experience in learning and teaching as a mentor. Provide appropriate classes for the trainees and also give them a timetable suitable for their learning curriculum. Trainees should not be used to fill teacher shortages; it must be remembered that they are learners. To work effectively with trainees, mentors should show some flexibility in their schedules and responsibilities.

### 5.3 Suggestions for Future Research

Although this study focuses on the contribution made by mentors in the improvement of teacher trainees teaching skills, there are other factors that influence the development of trainees' teaching abilities. Studies on these factors should be conducted by future researchers.

This study was conducted considering only the Tamil medium National Colleges of Education in Sri Lanka, and the sample selection was made from among them. In future educational research, sample selections should include the entire island so that the results can be generalized to all three medium National Colleges of Education.

There is a lack of research on Tamil-language Mentoring in Sri Lanka, particularly related to teacher trainees, so future studies are expected to focus on such topics.

In teacher training programs, career Mentors face several challenges, including time constraints and workload. There is a need to conduct research on the challenges they encounter.

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