VOICES AND PRACTICES FROM THE INSIDE: EXPLORING WHAT MATTERS TO ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL) MENTOR TEACHERS

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Voices and Practices from the Inside: Exploring What Matters to English as a Second Language (ESL) Mentor Teachers

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Abstract

This dissertation investigated how ESL mentor teachers conceptualize their work as mentors and what practices they use and value to support the development of future English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers. This qualitative case study draws on data from online semi-structured interviews with 14 ESL mentor teachers who mentor ESL pre-service teachers. Theoretically, this study relied on Vygotskyan Sociocultural theory perspective on language teacher education (Vygotsky, 1978, 1979), a Funds of Knowledge perspective (Moll et al., 1992), and a Situated Learning perspective (Lave & Wenger, 1991). The research questions that guided this study were: How do ESL mentor teachers conceptualize their work as mentors? and How do ESL mentor teachers mentor *in action*?

The findings in this study suggest that ESL mentoring is a process that requires time and three foundational skills: Patience, listening, and honesty to be able to support pre-service teachers in their learning-to-teach-process. During the mentoring process, mentors utilize different strategies to support their mentees. These strategies include safeguarding time before the school day, engaging in reflective dialogue, building relationships with students and colleagues, advocating for pre-service teachers, and developing specific mentoring supports that serve a dual purpose—supporting both mentees and mentors. This research contributes to and broadens the existing body of knowledge regarding pre-service teacher mentoring in the field of multilingual education.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CT	Cooperating Teacher
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ESL	English as a Second Language
ESOL	English to Speakers of Other Languages
IOCY	Immigrant-Origin Youth Community
MLLs	Multilingual Learners
NNEST	Non-native English-speaking teacher
PSTs	Pre-Service Teachers
SCT	Sociocultural Theory
TEP	Teacher Education Program
WIDA	World-Class Instruction Design and Assessment

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The clinical experience—also referred to in the literature as student teaching, field experience or internship—is a central and invaluable component of most teacher preparation programs (Lawley et al., 2014; Rajuan et al., 2010; Yin, 2019). It holds the potential to significantly enrich the development of pre-service teachers' (PSTs) beliefs and knowledge (Borko & Mayfield, 1995; La Paro et al., 2018). It is within this context that intentional guidance and support through mentoring become critical for PSTs. Mentor teachers play a *vital* role in the preparation of future teachers and their classrooms constitute one of the most important features of the teacher preparation program (TEP; Baco et al., 2023; Kaka, 2019; Russell & Russell, 2011). Yet, little is known about how mentor teachers think about their work or how they enact their mentoring practices.

In particular, we do not know much about English as a Second Language (ESL) mentor teachers. ESL is a field of growing importance due to increased language diversity in U.S. classrooms. Multilingual learners make up a substantial portion of the student population in U.S. schools (Linares, 2022; Yoon, 2021). Many of these students, are also part of the immigrant-origin youth community (IOCY) (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2018). The IOCY comprises 26% of the population younger than 18 and is projected to grow to 30% before the middle of this century (Karras et al., 2022). More often than not, these students face multiple barriers to their success, have inequitable educational opportunities (Porras, 2019; Vera et al., 2021), and may experience discrimination and microaggressions from teachers and peers (Arora et al., 2021; Vera et al., 2021) who have little understanding of cultural diversity and may oftentimes perceive them and interact

with them from a deficit-perspective. ESL teachers, therefore, play a key role supporting multilingual learners' development and social emotional well-being, and meeting their unique needs and rights (Heineke & Vera, 2022; Kim & Morita-Mullaney, 2020; Yoon, 2021). A large body of research has established the importance of well-trained ESL teachers who have the pedagogical content knowledge, skills, and dispositions to serve students from various cultural, linguistic, and academic backgrounds (Heineke & Vera, 2022; Johnson & Golombek, 2020; Nieto, 2017) and collaborate alongside general education teachers to advocate for the academic and socioemotional needs of these students (Linville, 2016, 2019). I argue that an underexplored aspect of this preparation is the key role played by ESL mentor teachers.

Teacher mentoring is broadly described as the activity of guiding PSTs in their learning and development through a mutual relationship based on trust (Hobson et al., 2012; Izadinia, 2016; Johnson, 2003). Not surprisingly, most studies on teacher mentoring tend to focus solely on PSTs (Hastings, 2004; Hennissen et al., 2011). Among the benefits of good mentoring practices for PSTs findings highlight the development of PSTs teaching behaviors and strategies (Hobson et al., 2012), the enhancement of PSTs' confidence in teaching and managing the classroom (Giboney Wall, 2018; Izadinia, 2016), and the role of mentors in providing feedback (Kaka, 2019), psychological support, and facilitating PSTs' induction into the community of practice (Hobson et al., 2009).

The benefits of mentoring are not limited to PSTs. The education system as a whole also benefits from the role mentors play in the preparation of PSTs. Over the past 15 years, research has repeatedly suggested that mentoring can be beneficial in reducing

some of the reasons why teachers leave the profession (Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004; Kissau & King, 2015). When PSTs are assigned to a mentor, there is a higher retention rate in the field since having a supportive mentor helps PSTs reduce the so-called reality-shock when they enter the profession (Gaede, 1978). In addition, in recent years researchers have investigated how the attributes of effective mentors impact PSTs' later workforce outcomes. For instance, Goldhaber and colleagues (2017) reported that first-year teachers can be as effective as typical third-year teachers if they spend their student teaching experience in the classrooms of highly effective teachers. Consistent with Goldhaber et al. (2017), Ronfeldt et al. (2018), found that PSTs were more instructionally effective when they learned to teach with more instructionally effective mentors. Their results indicated that when mentors received higher observational ratings and value-added model (VAM) scores, PSTs also received higher observational ratings and VAMs.

Prior research captures the benefits of mentoring both for PSTs and the education system in general, along with providing insights into the fundamental role mentors occupy in PSTs' learning-to-teach process. However, how mentors view their work and what actually happens in the activity of mentoring itself remain unclear. It seems that much of the research on mentoring highlights the product of mentoring rather than focusing on the mentoring process itself. Unpacking the mentoring process—and particularly the mentoring process for ESL teachers—is important to refine our understanding of the types of interactions and experiences that promote the development of ESL teachers, so that we can better target supports for mentors and PST's. To gain a deeper understanding of what actually occurs in the mentoring process, more research is needed on how ESL mentor teachers think about their work and what happens in the

activity of mentoring. To access this knowledge, it is imperative that we go directly to the source, that is ESL mentor teachers themselves. Only through mentors' own voices and practices, will we be able to know the stories of what mentoring means to them, how they learned to become mentors, and what they actually do and value in their practice to support PSTs.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore how ESL mentor teachers conceptualize their work as mentors and what practices they use and value to support the development of future ESL teachers. By documenting what the mentoring process looks like from a mentors' perspective, through mentors' own voices and practices, my work will inform teacher education programs and school districts with regard to how to support ESL mentor teachers. Although informative, research on the outcomes of mentoring for mentees and mentors tells very little of the actual mentoring processes that lead to those outcomes. Thus, research on the mentoring processes may contribute to provide a more in-depth understanding of what supports and conditions are needed to help ESL mentees develop to become teachers. Mentor teachers play a vital role in introducing PSTs to the field of education and, in turn, PSTs will eventually be teaching children and youth. To create spaces where multilingual learners have meaningful and quality learning experiences, feel valued, heard, and included, there is an imperative need for teachers to embrace their assets, work in collaboration with colleagues (e.g., content teachers), and have the skills and are ready to advocate for their students when necessary to disrupt deficit assumptions. Therefore, the crucial and indispensable role and impact that ESL mentors have in the preparation of future ESL teachers cannot be overlooked.

Recognizing the vital role ESL teachers and therefore the mentors of these teachers play in the current educational context in U.S. public schools, I investigate the following research questions within the context of a secondary TEP in a large Southeastern University:

1. How do ESL mentor teachers conceptualize their work as mentors?
2. How do ESL mentor teachers mentor *in action*?
    a. What strategies do they employ in supporting PSTs?
    b. How do they employ these strategies?
    c. Why do they report using these strategies?

Definition of Terms

In this study, *multilingual learners* are defined as students learning English as a second or additional language in U.S. public schools. This term will be used interchangeably with students. *Pre-service teachers* (PSTs) are defined as students who are in a teacher preparation program learning to teach before assuming full-time teaching responsibilities. This term will be used interchangeably with *mentee*. *General education teachers* are defined as teachers trained to provide instruction across multiple subjects (e.g., math, reading, science), typically for certification. Some develop content expertise by selecting a concentration or continuing their education in a masters program that is subject-specific. This term will be used interchangeably with grade or content level teacher(s). *Collaborative teachers or collab teachers* are defined as general education teachers who co-teach with ESL teachers. Also, *mentor teachers* are defined as experienced teachers who have or are developing the knowledge and skills to support PSTs in their teaching placement. These teachers have been officially asked by their

institution to serve as mentors for PSTs. While *cooperating teacher(s)* (CTs) still remains a widely used term in the literature and it is often used interchangeably with mentor teacher, I will use the term *mentor teacher.* I will use this term to better honor and respect the work of these teachers since the origins of the term CT, position mentors in a place of lesser value compared to university-based teacher educators. However, when I refer to a specific study, I try to be faithful to that study and use the term for mentor teacher used by the authors.

Significance

Studying ESL mentors in the actual activity of mentoring and hearing their voices is vital to understand mentors' process of knowledge construction and how they make meaning of the practice. If there is an understanding of how mentors think about their work, what matters to them, and what they value in the support they provide PSTs, teacher education programs and school districts will be better equipped to implement policies and design training that align with mentors' values, practices, contexts, and teaching philosophies. For example, if by observing mentors' practices and engaging in dialogue with them, we learn that they emphasize a social justice approach with their PSTs, then such an approach should be part of mentor training programs and of the TEP curriculum. Conversely, if mentors mention a specific challenge they usually face, then strategies or theories that help address those challenges should be included as well. If mentors feel heard and perceive themselves as active participants in decision making (e.g., PSTs' placement expectations, being informed about PSTs' course content, being in communication with the instructors delivering course content), teacher education programs will begin to pave the way for the development of a deep sense of trust and the

creation of a space where mentors also have a say in the preparation of PSTs. Strong relationships require good communication; however, for healthy and productive communication to take place, all the actors involved must have a say and be heard. If the goal is that future ESL teachers enter the profession confident that they can do the job they have chosen to undertake and be well prepared to undertake the responsibility that it implies to be a teacher, then it is crucial that their mentor teachers are heard since they are the first point of contact of PSTs in the field. To make this possible, it will be vital for teacher education programs to acknowledge mentors' voices and learn what happens within the mentoring practice.

Dissertation Roadmap

This chapter provided a brief purpose and justification for the study, including making clear a problem statement and the significance of this study. In Chapter 2, I build on the justification for the study with a review of the literature on mentoring in preservice teacher education. I also detail the theoretical frameworks that inform the methodology and analysis of the study. In Chapter 3, I outline the research design and provide details about the study's context and participants, the types and procedures for data collection, the methods of data analysis, and my positionality within the study. The subsequent two chapters, 4 and 5 present the findings for the study. Finally, in Chapter 6, I present a summary of the main findings, as well as implications and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents a review of the literature pertaining to mentoring of PSTs in K-12 contexts. It comprises two main sections: a review of relevant studies on mentoring/mentor teachers and a description of my conceptual framework. The first section provides a foundational understanding of mentoring and mentor teachers. Following this, the review expounds on the pivotal role mentors play in the preparation of PSTs, the possible challenges mentors face, mentor training and preparation, and the limitations found in the literature. The second section presents the conceptual framework through which to view ESL mentor teachers' practices and conceptualizations.

Defining Mentoring: The Term Mentoring in the Literature

In the literature, teacher mentoring is broadly described as the activity of guiding PSTs in their learning and development through a mutual relationship based on trust (Hobson et al., 2012; Izadinia, 2016; Johnson, 2003). However, there are different understandings of what mentoring is. In other words, the literature does not provide one single definition of the term. Different authors highlight distinctive elements within this activity. Regardless of the element that each of these definitions highlights, there seems to be agreement in the literature that mentoring is a complex and multifaceted activity (Hall et al., 2008; Hawkey, 1997; Jaspers et al., 2014). Some authors allude to the importance of context in mentoring (Ambrosetti, 2014; Fairbanks et al. 2000; Feiman-Nemser, 2003). For example, Clarke and Mena (2020) define mentoring as an activity contingent upon "the immediacy of action setting" (p. 1). Along the same lines, Fairbanks and colleagues (2000) define mentoring as interactions constructed "in response to the contextual factors they encounter" (p. 103). Others point to the power dynamics inherent

in the mentor-mentee relationship (Anderson, 2007; Bullough & Draper 2004; Lu, 2013). Conversely others argue against the presumptions of rank and hierarchical relationship between mentors and mentees and thus view mentoring as a relationship of "equal partners" (Awaya et al., 2003, p. 48). Additionally, other researchers underscore the developmental aspect of mentoring; for example, Orland-Barack (2014), defines mentoring as "the mediation of professional learning" (p. 180).

Perhaps the most comprehensive definition that the literature offers—and that I am aware of—is the one by Ambrosetti (2014). What makes this author's definition compelling is that she defines mentoring by *what it is* and *what it is not*. In Ambrosetti's (2014) view, mentoring is "a holistic process that includes three components: relationship, developmental needs, and contextual elements" (p. 31) and it "is not a natural ability that people inherently have…" (p. 30). Ambrosetti's (2014) definition by negation is an important and powerful statement that undercuts conventional wisdom that a good teacher will make a good mentor. This conventional wisdom has limited understanding of mentoring practices in the field of PST education since it assumes that teaching and mentoring skills are the same. However, mentoring requires a specific set of knowledge and skills that are different from teaching students. For example, mentors need to know about PST learning and development, model teaching practices, and be able to unpack their teacher knowledge among other things.

Similar Yet Distinct: Mentoring, Coaching, and Supervision

Adding another layer of complexity to the conceptualization of mentoring in the literature, is the use of the terms mentoring, coaching, and supervision as synonyms (Ambrosetti, 2014; Mok & Staub, 2021). These terms might be closely related but are yet

distinct and more often than not, supervision and coaching are described as specific approaches mentors use to support the development of PSTs during their clinical experience. The difference between these terms lies in their focus. Mentoring approaches tend to be more general (e.g., offering emotional support, discussing broad pedagogical topics), while coaching approaches are performance focused (e.g., how to improve lesson planning) (Becker et al., 2019; Mok & Staub, 2021). Mok and Staub (2021) explain that some coaching approaches have been adapted to provide instructional support to PSTs during their field-experiences such as "content-focused coaching" (see Becker et al. 2019). Something similar happens with the term supervision. Even though both terms, mentoring and supervision, involve "an interpersonal relationship that is built on purposeful social interactions" (Ambrosetti, 2014, p. 31), mentoring is more concerned with the development of that relationship—mentor-mentee—whereas supervision has at its core the evaluation of the PST.

Methods Used to Study Mentor Teachers

Mentoring has been widely studied in the literature and authors have used a diversity of methods in their research. Most studies use qualitative methods (e.g., Eck & Ramsey, 2019; Goodwin et al., 2016; Guise et al., 2016; Pu & Wright, 2022; Yoon & Kim, 2019). These studies mainly focus on understanding the experiences and perceptions of PSTs and mentors or mentor-mentee interactions and they use relatively small samples. Most of these studies rely on written reflections, open-ended surveys, and/or semi-structured interviews. Only a few studies use video recordings of, for example, post-observation meetings between mentors and mentees and audio recordings of mentor-mentee interactions.

While qualitative methods are the most widely used, there are also a number of studies that use quantitative methods (e.g., Goldhaber et al., 2020; Krieg et al., 2020; Matsko et al., 2020; Ronfeldt, 2018). In general, these studies are interested in measuring the effectiveness of mentors and mentees, different aspects of mentoring, or the sorting of PSTs to specific mentors—mentor-mentee matches. There is also an even smaller number of studies that use mixed-methods designs (Fives et al., 2016; Hobson et al., 2012). These studies are mainly interested in identifying trends and making comparisons across time periods or linking quantitative outcomes to qualitative processes.

Mentoring: Conspicuous Absence

It is worth noting that oftentimes, the term mentoring is not explicitly defined in the literature. From the 40 studies reviewed for this paper, more than half did not provide a straightforward definition of the term. One reason for the absence of an explicit definition might be that authors regard the term as self-explanatory. However, we learn from the literature itself that it is vital to know how mentoring is conceptualized so as to understand what intentions motivate the practice (Kemmis et al., 2014).

It is evident from the literature that there is not one fixed and absolute definition of the term mentoring. How mentoring is conceptualized, its purpose, how it is enacted, and how the people involved in the mentoring relationship relate to one another will be contingent upon what mentoring means to them. This can be affected by many factors; for example, individuals' own past experiences with mentoring relationships, cultural differences around understanding mentoring relationships—these become particularly important for supporting PSTs from minoritized backgrounds, especially if mentors and mentees have different views of the role of mentors (e.g., whether the mentor's role is

evaluative versus relational). These conceptualizations will naturally impact mentoring practices and vice versa.

Toward a More Multifaceted Definition of Mentoring

In the remainder of this paper, I build on Ambrosetti's (2014) definition of mentoring. I retain her focus on mentoring as a holistic process that is not an innate ability, and I include additional elements. I define *mentoring* as a holistic activity that includes: relationship, developmental support, understanding of teaching and teacher learning, and intentionality; and I argue that it is embedded in the context where it happens. Mentoring is a practice that is grounded in the present, with an understanding of the past, and with a vision to the future; it is not an innate ability with which teachers are born.

Mentor Teachers: Enactors of Practice

Mentors are at the center of the mentoring practice. The terms *mentor teacher* (Goodwin et al., 2016), *cooperating teacher* (Fives et al., 2016), *school-based teacher educator* (Parker et al., 2021), and *master teacher* (Torrez & Krebs, 2012) have all been used to identify the teacher who has taken up the additional responsibility—either by personal choice or assignment by the school administration—of providing support to a PST during a clinical experience (Fives et al., 2016; Goldhaber et al., 2020; Hennissen et al., 2011). In the literature, mentors are typically defined by their role, which seems to reflect the view of mentoring as an activity and the nature and complexity of the work mentors do. For example, Matsko et al. (2020) refer to mentors "as *models* of exemplary teaching practices" and "as facilitative *coaches* of teacher learning" (p. 42). Parker and colleagues (2021), on the other hand, define mentors as being "the link between learning

theory and implementation of teaching practice" (p. 66). And, while Krieg et al. (2020) describe them as "supervisors" (p. 229). No matter what roles authors stress in their definitions, the literature leaves no doubt about the important role mentors play supporting the development of future teachers (Ambrosetti, 2014; Hobson et al., 2012).

The Roles of Mentor Teachers and Their Benefits

For Pre-Service Teachers

The context of the clinical experience might at times be challenging for PSTs because they are learning to navigate the complexities involved in teaching in "real life." Research suggests that the success of the clinical experience is connected to the relationship between mentors and PSTs (Ellis et al., 2020; Graves, 2010). This is why there has been special interest in identifying the roles of mentors and their significance (Ambrosetti & Deckers, 2010). Mentors are identified in the literature as having special importance and influence (Krieg et al., 2020), and PSTs consistently identify their student teaching experiences as the "single most important factor in their preparation for teaching" (Parker et al., 2021, p. 66). As such, mentors have a strong influence on how PSTs come to understand and engage in instructional practices and in the teaching profession in general (Clarke et al., 2014, Kang, 2021). Mentors often guide PSTs in a variety of ways that range from practical everyday matters such as "safety, due process, when a counselor should be consulted" (Awaya et al., 2003, p. 53) to effective instructional approaches (Mena et al., 2017; Nguyen & Parr, 2018).

Among the benefits of good mentoring practices for PSTs, findings highlight the role of mentors in modeling teaching practice by making their thinking visible to PSTs (Matsko et al., 2020), coaching (Matsko et al., 2020), developing PSTs' teaching

behaviors and strategies (Hobson et al., 2012), enhancing PSTs'confidence in teaching and managing the classroom (Giboney Wall, 2018; Izadinia, 2016), providing feedback (Kaka, 2019,) and facilitating PSTs' induction into the community of practice (Hobson et al., 2009). In addition, mentors provide emotional and psychological support to PSTs (Marable & Raimondi, 2007). Izadinia (2016) illustrates this type of support by drawing on semi-structured interviews, reflective journals, and observation checklists. The researcher examined changes in eight PSTs' professional identities during their practicum working alongside a mentor. Her findings revealed that by the end of the practicum the PSTs had gained confidence and teacher voice, overcome fears, and "felt more like a teacher" (Izadinia, 2016, p. 138). Even though this study reports data from a four-week practicum and more time might be needed to see the impact of mentoring overtime, it still offers a glimpse of the positive influence the work of mentors has on PSTs' development.

The roles mentor teachers serve working alongside PSTs are multiple and contingent upon context, expectations, goals, philosophical orientations, and the people involved in the mentor-mentee relationship (Ambrosetti & Dekkers, 2010; Butler & Cuenca, 2012; Clarke et al. 2014). This might be a reason why mentors' roles in the literature are not always explained or defined clearly (Ambrosetti & Dekkers, 2010). Another reason might be that roles change as the relationship between the mentor and the mentee evolves (Rajuan et. al. 2008); therefore, the stage of the relationship will have an impact on how the relationship functions and the roles the participants undertake (Bouquillon et al., 2005). For instance, a PST starting the practicum will generally need more guidance than a PST who is at the end of the practicum (Ambrosetti & Dekkers,

2010). This highlights the need to have more clarity regarding the roles mentors play in the development of PSTs.

Different authors have attempted to describe and conceptualize the multiple roles mentors play and their responsibilities in supporting PSTs (Clarke et al. 2014; Parker et al., 2021). For example, Butler and Cuenca (2012) drew on empirical research and explored the various conceptualizations of the role of mentor teachers in the literature. In their work, they presented a taxonomy of the mentor teacher as: 1) instructional coach, 2) emotional support system, and 3) socializing agent. Although at first sight, this classification might seem limiting and restrictive in that three categories cannot even begin to reflect the work mentors do, the authors make a significant contribution to the literature for different reasons. First, in their literature search they only focused on mentoring of PSTs. This is important because even though there are many similarities between the roles mentors undertake when they mentor PSTs versus in-service teachers, the nature of the work is substantially different. Second, they chose studies that investigated how mentors went about the process of constructing their roles. This focus on identity is also important since it provides information not only about how mentors see themselves but also how they interact with others. Most importantly, by streamlining the roles of mentors they aimed to bridge the gap and offer a "common language" (Butler & Cuenca, 2012, p. 303) between universities and school-based experiences.

Clarke and colleagues (2014) embarked on a similar task. In their extensive review of more than 400 studies over the past six decades, the authors drew on Brodie et al.'s (2009) notion of categories of participation and conducted a thematic analysis. This led to 11 categories related to the different roles mentors play in their involvement with

teacher preparation: Providers of feedback, gatekeepers of the profession, modelers of practice, supporters of reflection, gleaners of knowledge, purveyors of context, conveners of relation, agents of socialization, advocates of the practical, abiders of change, and teachers of children. These categories provide an in-depth understanding of the intricacies and complexity of the multiple and diverse roles mentors play. The chief value of Clarke et al.'s (2014) work, and which is sometimes overlooked, is its clear acknowledgement that mentors view themselves as teachers of children first. The fact that mentors see their students as their main priority and responsibility has a direct and strong impact on how they enact their role as mentors. This is critical information for researchers, TEPs, and school districts alike when they think about designing mentor training.

Mentors' Vital Role: What Happens When There Is No Mentor?

In an attempt to learn more about the vital impact of mentors on PSTs, some researchers investigated what happens when PSTs are not assigned a mentor. They concluded that PSTs felt overwhelmed and struggled implementing their practice. In a study of the performance of PSTs, Kissau and King (2015) reported that compared to PSTs who had a mentor, the ones who did not were more likely to struggle when having to decide what and how to teach. Similarly, Hodges (1982) explored what happened in the absence of a mentor teacher. She designed a practicum that did not include a mentor. Her rationale behind this decision was that classroom practices did not align with the methods the PSTs were learning in the TEP. The author placed five PSTs in classrooms alone to complete the clinical experience requirements. The PSTs reported having various crises throughout the practicum; they specifically struggled with content and classroom management. The researcher documented that all of the PSTs were "overwhelmed by the

actual experience of teaching" (Hodges, 1982, p. 26). This led her to conclude that the five PSTs had been unable to successfully navigate classroom practices without a mentor teacher.

Challenges for Mentors and Mentees

Even though the literature is clear about the benefits of mentoring and the critical role mentors play in the development of PSTs (Hennissen et al., 2011), mentors and mentees do not always report positive aspects of mentoring (Ambrosetti, 2014). Research has identified barriers for mentees and mentors alike. Mentees sometimes report lack of time and silencing by mentors who might be reluctant to adopt new ideas and strategies as challenging (Patrick, 2013). In her qualitative study of conflicting mentor-mentee narratives, Patrick (2013) found that mentors tended to position mentoring as a "one-way teaching process" (p. 208) where mentees' views were not fully included in the practice. Similarly, Butcher (2002) explored how PSTs perceived the mentoring they received and found that spaces for dialogue in which mentors modeled, guided, advised, and questioned PSTs were not adequately offered. Like mentees, mentors also face barriers such as increased workload, stress associated with added responsibility, unclear expectations on the part of the TEP about their role, and uncertainty about how to assess mentees and how to mentor (Walkington, 2005) among other things.

What Do We Know about How Mentor Teachers Learn to Provide Support to PSTs?

In light of the wealth of research that supports the vital role mentors play in the preparation of future teachers and the impact they have in education at large (Ambrosetti & Dekkers, 2010; Goldhaber et al., 2018), it would be fair to expect that TEPs and school districts would make joint efforts to engage in collaborative work with mentors and

provide training and preparation for their work with PSTs. Research indicates that training has the capacity to enhance the positive impacts of mentoring (Ambrosetti, 2014) and instruct mentors in the specialized set of knowledge and skills they will need to serve as a quality mentor (e.g., knowledge about teacher learning; Gareis & Grant, 2014). Yet, mentors are not provided substantive training to engage effectively in their role (Matsko et al., 2020, Russell & Russell, 2011). Sometimes, mentors receive "training" by means of orientations, information sessions, slides, or handouts (Matsko et al., 2020; Wilson & Huynh, 2019). The focus of these training sessions is to provide general information about the work they are expected to do with their mentees or logistical information about the TEP. However, training that aims at the development of mentoring skills and practices is generally absent. Therefore, we do not really know much about how mentors learn to support PSTs.

What we do know though, is that in the absence of training, research suggests mentors usually draw on their own experiences as PSTs (often many years ago) and reproduce methods of their past mentors (Clarke & Mena, 2020; Hobson et al., 2009). Put simply, "they often mentor as they were mentored" (Clarke & Mena, 2020, p. 1). Research suggests that for mentoring to be effective, mentors' practices and behaviors should meet certain criteria since it is not so much mentoring as a practice that is beneficial, but the quality of mentoring is what matters (Hennissen et al., 2011; Hobson et al., 2012).

Few studies focus on *what* mentors learn when they participate in mentor training courses and from opportunities to talk to others about their mentoring experiences (Hobson, 2009; Kwan & Lopez-Real, 2005). Ambrosetti (2014) investigated the changed

understandings and practices of mentors after participating in a mentoring course intended to prepare them for mentoring PSTs. She used surveys to collect data about the course and what the participants learned. The 11 teachers who participated engaged in professional conversations and reflective activities, developed knowledge of mentoring (through reading research) and applied the knowledge to their own context. The findings revealed changed understandings of mentoring as well as changed practices in mentoring.

In a more recent study, Parker et al. (2021) outlined the first year of a three-year project to train PK–12 mentors. The 32 mentors who participated in this study were at the time of the study serving as mentors of elementary and secondary PSTs. The authors developed five "theory to practice" (Parker et al., 2021, p. 68) modules using teacher inquiry as an overarching framework for the training. Each module meeting was followed by clinical activities that had to be implemented by the mentors in their school sites. Data were collected through reflections, module artifacts, and end-of-training surveys. Their findings revealed that mentors were able to identify characteristics of a quality mentor and that the training had a positive impact on their development. Most mentors felt that their feedback became more specific, purposeful, and timely and that they developed greater awareness and knowledge of co-teaching models to support PSTs.

However, the findings also revealed that despite involving the participants as equal partners in the creation and enactment of the training, mentors still struggled to make an identity shift from teachers to teachers of students of teachers (Parker et al., 2021). Furthermore, mentors did not engage in critical reflection on their own practice. These findings open a window to start examining from mentors' own perspectives and active participation how they define effective mentoring. One way to learn this, may be

conducting interviews with mentors and explicitly asking them how they conceptualize effective mentoring. Nevertheless, we still have little information about the processes of knowledge construction these mentors went through, and we do not actually know if their practices were modified since the authors do not provide observational data to corroborate their findings.

The field's understanding of mentoring is still rather limited regarding *how* mentors learn to mentor PSTs. There does exist in the literature, though, one study about how mentors learn to mentor in-service teachers. Even though there are differences between mentoring PSTs versus beginning teachers, Stanulis and Ames (2009) offer us a glimpse into what the process of mentoring looks like. The authors examined how an experienced teacher, Debbie, learned to mentor as she attended ongoing professional development and worked with first- and second-year teachers during a school year. The researchers explored how she put into practice what she was learning about mentoring. To examine Debbie's learning, they collected data by means of observations of a mentoring cycle with her mentees, and by attending biweekly mentor study groups. The triangulation of data allowed the researchers to obtain multiple perspectives and gain a deeper understanding of her learning. They found that she was able to connect the readings (theory) in the course to her mentoring practice, thus bridging the gap between theory and practice. Moreover, Debbie became intentional and explicit in her interactions with her mentees. To enact her role as a mentor, Debbie was also able to bring together her "prior beliefs, knowledge, experience, and the ideas she learned through her mentor professional development" (Stanulis & Ames, 2009, p. 10). Although the researchers only studied one mentor in a particular context, this study hints at the complexity of

mentoring and how important it is to continue studying mentors in their contexts so as to be able to design effective training programs and support their development.

Limitations in the Literature

A Comprehensive Perspective of the Literature: Reproducing Long-Held Assumptions

Based on my in-depth analysis of the empirical research on mentoring in PST education, it seems that some of the limitations in the literature are closely related to long-held assumptions about the nature of mentoring that the literature itself has been trying to demystify. In other words, some of the assumptions the literature points out are in fact reflected in the research. Below I list these long-held assumptions and analyze how they are silently embedded in the research itself.

Assumption 1: Good Teachers Make Good Mentors

In 1950, Andrews claimed that serving as a CT necessitates a particular set of knowledge and skills that require advanced training (Andrews, 1950). Other scholars in the field second Andrews' (1950) argument and emphasize that mentoring is "not something that comes automatically or easily to classroom teachers" (Feiman-Nemser & Carver, 2012, p. 357). Even though scholars started making this claim more than 70 years ago, in the literature there are only a few studies that focus on the training of mentors and try to understand the set of knowledge and skills required to be an effective mentor teacher (Guise, 2016; Parker et al., 2020). This means that the majority of mentors that participate in research studies are untrained and rely on their teaching skills to support PSTs. Therefore, we still do not have a clear understanding of how mentors go about mentoring and what the process of knowledge construction about mentoring practices is like.

Assumption 2: The Primary Beneficiary in the Mentoring Relationship Is the Mentee

The available research literature provides a growing body of empirical evidence for the fundamental role mentors play in supporting PSTs and the benefits both mentors and mentees can reap from engaging in a mentoring relationship (Izadinia, 2016; Feiman-Nemser, 2001). However, most existing studies on teacher mentoring tend to focus solely on PSTs (Hastings, 2004; Hennissen et al., 2011). In comparison, relatively limited attention is given to mentor teachers and how they view their roles as mentors, their preparedness to enact this role, and the challenges they might face due to being unsupported. Even though a number of studies claim to include mentors' perceptions—by means of reflections, interviews, or open-ended surveys— they mostly feature reports from PSTs or examples of the techniques used by mentors but rarely do we hear mentors' voices explicitly. Therefore, we are still not clear about how mentors think about the practice, their reasons behind the supports they provide, how they define effective mentoring, or how they view their roles in their specific contexts. It is also unclear what matters to them, if they are satisfied with the place they are given and with the compensation they receive for their work (if any), if they encounter any contextual constraints (e.g., state and school policy, the broader social context) in enacting their role, or how those constraints impact their practice.

Lu (2013) for example, investigated issues in the relationship with mentors and PSTs and their resolutions in the context of a K-6 teacher education program. She collected data by means of semi-in-depth interviews with PSTs, mentors, and university supervisors to include the "voices of all stakeholders in student teaching" (Lu, 2023, p.

20). Lu's findings, though, focus on only two of the seven mentors who participated in the study. However, the voices of the eight PSTs and seven university supervisors are present. Similarly, Torrez and Krebs (2012) wanted to understand what makes a quality practicum experience from the perspectives of both the PSTs and mentors. Their sample consisted of 174 PSTs and 80 mentor teachers from a K-8 TEP. The researchers gathered data through an open-ended questionnaire and follow-up focus group. One of the items in the questionnaire was "characteristics of success" (Torrez & Krebs, 2012, p. 490) and within this item there were two additional items: 1. "successful teacher candidates" (p. 490) and 2. "successful master teachers" (p. 491). The authors explained that item one included the perspectives of both PSTs and mentors. However, only PSTs were asked to list the characteristics of successful mentors. There is not only underrepresentation of mentors; in addition, it is not uncommon to see in the literature that the characteristics or qualities of mentors are usually based on others' perceptions.

By excluding mentors' voices, the field is certainly missing a part of the story. Consequently, PSTs still remain the primary beneficiaries in this relationship since most of the research-based knowledge focuses on their development and well-being. However, if new teacher development is an important priority, there is an imperative need to make mentor development a priority as well, so mentors also become primary beneficiaries (Feiman-Nemser & Carver, 2012). Doing so will allow the field of teacher preparation to have a more complete understanding of the process of mentoring. Twenty-five years ago, Wideen and colleagues (1998) argued that "what we learn from studying the process of learning to teach depends on whose voices are being heard" (p. 156). As a field, it seems we are still not really doing this in terms of listening to mentors' voices.

Assumption 3: Mentor Relationships Look the Same across Settings

In the literature of mentoring, there is a strong emphasis on context as it impacts and shapes mentoring practice and relationships among mentors, PSTs, TEPs, and mentors' students (Ambrosetti, 2014; Feiman-Nemser, 2003). Moreover, context appears to be one of the elements that is most often present in the definitions of mentoring in the literature (Clarke & Mena, 2020; Fairbanks et al., 2000). Nevertheless, from the articles reviewed for this paper, only one study explicitly highlights context and treats it as a key element that impacts and shapes the mentoring activity. In their conceptual piece, Roegman and Kolman (2020) use systems and complexity theory to highlight the multiple messages and pressures mentors navigate across the contexts of K-12 education, teacher preparation and their role as mentors in their work with PSTs. The authors make visible an additional layer of complexity that is key in understanding mentors' practices which is the broader socio political and cultural context.

There seems to be a disconnect between what is known so far about mentors and the research that is being done. Even though prior research has highlighted these assumptions for a long time, it seems that there is still a need to understand mentors and their work more in-depth.

Methods of Data Collection

As noted earlier, a vast majority of the studies on mentoring and mentor teachers use qualitative research designs. These methods are valuable in providing rich descriptions of complex phenomena and illuminating participants' experiences and interpretations which fit well with the study of mentoring. While prior research has offered empirical evidence that supports the role of mentoring in PSTs' professional

development, our understanding of mentoring is still rather thin. Part of the issue might be that research on mentoring is difficult to do given the nature of the mentoring relationship itself. There are things that happen within the activity that are difficult to study, for example, informal teaching and learning that happens outside the classroom context (e.g., in-the-moment mentor-mentee interactions that happen during breaks, lunch times or before or after school). On the other hand, most of the studies have focused on participants' perceptions and retrospective accounts of their mentoring practices usually through reflections, surveys, or interviews completed at the end of the mentoring experience. Though these methods provide information of great value regarding participants' own perspectives, they do not offer a full picture of what actually happens in practice since there can be, for example, a mismatch between participants' perceptions and what actually do and opportunities to see how participants make meaning of their practices in action will be missed. Therefore, data such as video recordings or fieldnotes of observations of mentoring practices and interactions between mentors and mentees, or mentors and TEPs, would provide a more holistic understanding of mentoring. For instance, Fairbanks et al. (2000) explored how effective mentors supported PSTs during their practice teaching. Besides collecting mentors and mentees' written reflections and interviewing them, they also videotaped PST-mentor conferences. This allowed the researchers to see how mentors mediated PSTs' understanding in dialogue with one another and how they made sure PSTs became aware of their own practices. For example, in one of the conferences, a mentor (Malanie), commented on a PST's (Sharyl's) interaction with a student with whom Sharyl had been having difficulty communicating. Melanie pointed out what Sharyl did by making her actions visible and offering a

rationale for why that was important: “The way in which you handled him was so exceptional. You told him straightforwardly what was going on, but you told him in a way that showed you cared and gave him dignity” (Fairbanks et al., 2000, p. 105). Having access to this data source helped the researchers have a more holistic understanding of what happens in practice.

The Product Versus the Process in Mentoring

Most of the current research examining mentoring practices has typically focused on outcomes of mentoring (e.g., the benefits of mentoring, the characteristics of effective mentors) (Hobson et al., 2012; Marable & Raimondi, 2007). These studies offer valuable empirical evidence that supports what mentors learn—from mentoring PSTs or from engaging in training—and how that learning impacts mentors’ professional growth. This focus on the product of mentoring, although informative, falls short in illuminating the process of mentoring as it unfolds. Prior research seems to suggest that mentors most often construct knowledge about mentoring when they engage in activity with PSTs. That is, most of their learning seems to happen while mentors are engaged in mentoring. Unpacking the process of mentoring is important to gain insights not only into what mentors do, but also into *how* and *why* they do it and how that leads to their learning. In order to gain a deeper understanding of the practice, more research on the process of mentoring is needed.

Limited Content-Specific Research

Mentoring has been endorsed by numerous TEPs to support the development of PSTs in their clinical experience (Hobson et al., 2009; Miller et al., 2019; Kissau & King, 2015). Consequently, extensive research has been done to learn more about mentoring

practices in K-12 education. Most studies seem to treat mentoring as a general practice and it is not uncommon to see studies that 1) do not distinguish between subject areas (e.g., some studies put together math and English language arts or music and drama) and 2) do not distinguish between grade levels (e.g., some studies put together elementary and secondary). Even though all of these studies have made contributions to the field, mentoring in PST education implies more than learning instructional pedagogy from the mentoring relationship. “Pre-service teachers need to be guided in the application of proper content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and content pedagogical knowledge” (He, 2009, p. 273). Therefore, more research that has a content-specific focus would add to the knowledge base on mentoring and provide more detailed understandings of the specific elements that are at play in a specific subject area.

This might be a reason why only a limited number of studies focus on mentoring for ESL teachers. When we turn to the literature of mentoring of English language teachers, most of the studies reflect the limitations outlined in this paper (e.g., a focus on PSTs, not distinguishing between grade levels). Also, some studies were done in contexts that differ significantly from mentoring of PSTs in K-12 education (e.g., programs for international foreign language teaching assistants or international students at U.S. universities; Johnson, 2003; Yoon & Kim, 2019). Most importantly, some studies were conducted in contexts where English is taught as a foreign language (EFL; Gan, 2014; Osam & Balbay, 2004). This is an important distinction to consider since this difference will have an impact on a number of aspects: 1) how the language is viewed (e.g., asset/deficit views of languages); 2) how the language is taught (e.g., different contexts will have different language goals which will impact how instruction is delivered); 3)

how the broader social context affects students—and their families—both inside and outside the classroom; and 4) the demographic makeup of teachers and students (e.g., it is generally more common in EFL contexts for teachers and students to share the same mother tongue and culture. Whereas in an English as a second language (ESL) context teachers often work with students who have diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds different from their own). It will also affect additional aspects; 5) how ESL teachers are perceived and positioned in their school contexts (e.g., how much they are valued by other colleagues and the administration); 6) how fluid or difficult collaboration and communication with other colleagues is; 7) differences in linguistic and cultural background between mentors and mentees (e.g., a mentor who is a native speaker of English and a mentee who is a non-native English-speaking teacher (NNEST) or vice versa), among other things; 8) the different language programs offered in the school (e.g., self-contained class, push-in); and 9) how different cultures conceptualize relationships (e.g. transactional versus relational).

Conceptual Framework

ESL Mentor teachers' practices with mentees hinge on many factors; their pedagogical content knowledge, personal experiences, social interactions, and the contexts of their current and past instructional experiences combine in their mentoring process. In order to understand how ESL mentors conceptualize and enact mentoring I draw from a Vygotskyan sociocultural theory (SCT) perspective on language teacher education (Vygotsky, 1978, 1979), funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 1992), and situated learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991); and I argue that the context in which mentoring occurs is vital to understanding the practice. By getting inside mentors' practice (e.g., asking

mentors how they think about it) and observing them *in action*, I hope to understand and explain *what* mentors do with PSTs, *how* they do it, and *why* they do it. Below I describe how elements from the theories combine to explain mentors' practices (see Figure 1 and 2).

An SCT Perspective on Language Teacher Education

Before Becoming a Mentor Teacher

An SCT perspective on language teacher education argues that learning is mediated and happens in social activity. Therefore, the character and quality of social interactions are key to understanding the learning process. From an SCT perspective, learning is an intentional, deliberate and goal-oriented activity in which teacher educators and PSTs engage. It is vital for PSTs to be exposed to relevant academic concepts—more systematic generalizable knowledge (e.g., theories of language learning)—by means of "intentional and well-organized instruction" (Johnson & Golombek, 2016, p. 5). Once these concepts are internalized, PSTs begin to use them as "tools for thinking" (Johnson & Golombek, 2016, p. 5) and they can reconstruct and transform their practices and make them more theoretically and pedagogically sound. In other words, PSTs will be able to reason and make informed decisions to teach effectively and adequately in different contexts for different pedagogical reasons. This process is dynamic and ever changing since one cannot separate the person from the context. Therefore, understanding the context of the environment that an individual is functioning in is key to understanding their development. Thus the importance of considering who is in the space and the interactions that occur in said space. Specifically, it is important to understand any

explicit attempts to change or impact the environment to further an individual's development.

As a Mentor Teacher

Mentor teachers have usually been in the field for quite some time before they become mentors. They have already or they are expected to have already been through the process of becoming a teacher described above. Mentors will have to learn to "unpack" the tools they have already internalized through their instruction, professional development activities, and years of practice and make them available and accessible to PSTs and themselves (e.g., make their thinking visible to mentees). Mentors will go through the opposite process from the one described above: They have to learn to go from the "internal" to "the external." However, this unpacking is neither arbitrary nor a mere list of do's and don'ts that mentors share with their mentees. Mentors make these tools accessible to PSTs through intentional, explicit, and goal-oriented means.

A Funds of Knowledge Perspective

The richness of students' lived experiences tends to transcend that of school experience (Andrews & Yee, 2006) and it is important for teachers to acknowledge and honor those experiences within the classroom context. Similarly, teachers' experiences are not confined to the classroom walls and teachers also have different types of knowledge besides the formal educational sources that help them in the meaning-making process inside the classroom. Mentors and mentees bring into the mentoring practices their funds of knowledge. I expand on Moll et al.'s (1992) definition of funds of knowledge as the "historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household and individual functioning and wellbeing"

(p. 134) and extend its scope to adopt a more comprehensive conceptualization of funds of knowledge (Barton & Tan, 2009; Nelson, 2001). I highlight the relevance of these not only as *sources* of knowledge but also as *areas* of knowledge (Hogg, 2010) that originate from an individual's life experiences—both in formal and informal settings (e.g., knowledge of students and policies, life skills, knowledge of popular culture, linguistic/cultural knowledge and beliefs). I also add individuals' life stories and histories as essential elements that shape their funds of knowledge.

Mentors bring into their practice all of their funds of knowledge and use them to mediate their mentees' learning by helping them see by means of explicit examples that all of the additional knowledge and skills they have can be used and applied in their instruction. In addition, they help them see that students also bring a wealth of funds of knowledge that can be used in the classroom to mediate their understanding (e.g., by drawing from students' interests to choose materials). Mentors, PSTs, and students will share and use their funds of knowledge while acquiring more in the process.

A Situated Learning Perspective

Learning to be a mentor is a very complex activity since a great part of the process happens in action. That is to say, mentoring happens as mentors are teaching. In this process of continual interaction and engagement with their mentees, the mentor's identities are also impacted. Situated learning theory (Lave, 1996) helps explain how mentors' identities are shaped in the mentoring process. This theory considers the ways people learn primarily as they become members of a *community of practice* (Lave &Wenger, 1991). Learning is fundamentally about acquiring an identity—that is learning to *be* a certain way. According to this view, skills, knowledge, practices and identity are

all wrapped up together. Lave (1996) explains, referring to tailors in Liberia and lawyers in Egypt, that masters become part of the everyday life of their apprentices who in turn, become part of the master's practice. It is in doing this activity and in *becoming part of* the activity that masters and apprentices "construct identities in practice" (Lave 1996, p. 157). Who mentors and mentees *are* becoming in this process shapes crucially and fundamentally what they know.

The Role of Context

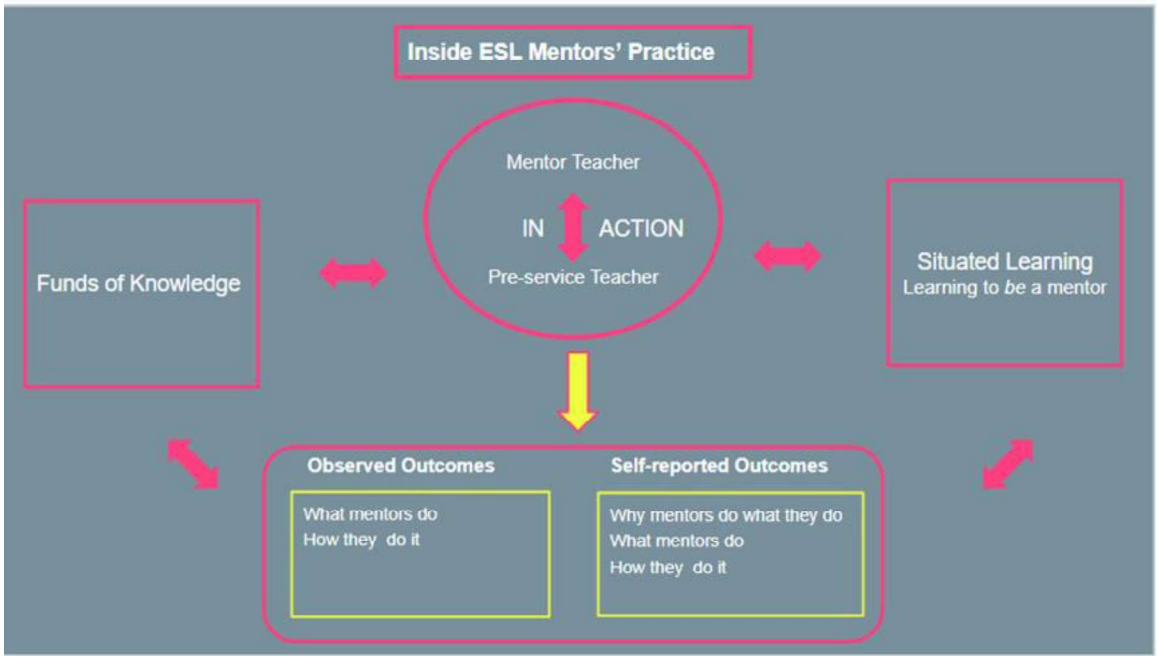
To these elements, I add context as an overarching and vital element that impacts the mentoring practice. This practice is not only affected by the physical setting of the classroom but also by what happens beyond its walls. Therefore, the context also includes the school, the teacher education program, and the broader sociopolitical context. In other words, the mentoring activity will be impacted by the location of the school, policies, communication—or lack of—with the TEP, and the resources available.

For ESL mentors, collaboration with colleagues from different subject areas is key to supporting their students. This collaboration will be impacted by how the ESL teachers are positioned within the school context, how their students are viewed, and the type of program the school offers (e.g., push-in versus whole class ESL instruction). Mentor teachers' work will also be impacted by school language policies (e.g., the language programs available for students and what is required from ESL teachers, English only policies). Moreover, language adds another layer of complexity for ESL mentors (e.g., mentors working with students or mentees who have different cultural backgrounds, mentees who come from international contexts, language-related identities of mentors and mentees—bilingual, monolingual, or mixed pairing).

In their work as mentors, teachers will also have to interact with TEPs. Research suggests that alignment and coherence between mentor teaching and what happens in the TEP is important and has a major impact on mentoring practice and also the relationship between mentor and mentee (Grossman et al., 2012). Therefore, fluid and clear communication will be key for mentors' work. Last but not least, mentoring practice will also be impacted by the broader socio-political context, local, national, and international (e.g., immigration regulations).

Constructs from these theories capture how different elements interact to shape the mentoring process. SCT helps explain the role of meaning making and intentionality in the activity of mentoring. Funds of knowledge are instrumental in shaping that meaning making process. In terms of situated learning and the construct of identity, this takes the focus off what is going on in the minds of people and shifts it to the human and built environments in which people learn. And it helps explain the "ways of becoming a participant, ways of participating, and ways in which participants change" (Lave, 1996, p. 15). By getting inside the practice of mentors and observing them in action within their specific contexts, one can gain a more comprehensive understanding of mentor teachers' practices and the support they provide PSTs.

Figure 1. Framework for Teacher Mentor Action

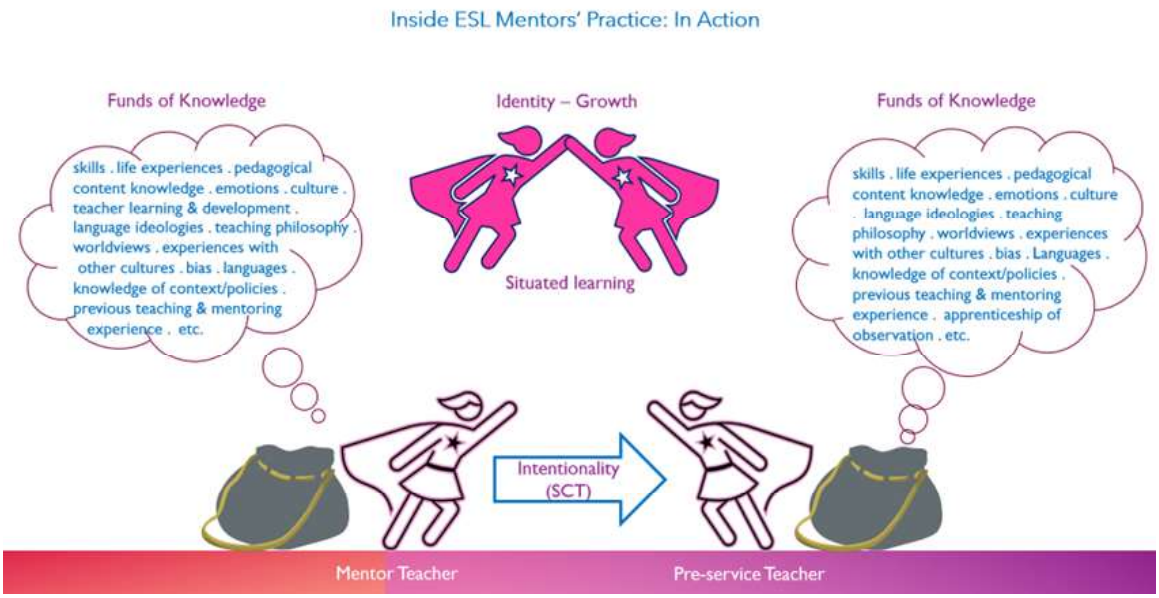


My conceptual framework reflects my initial conceptual understanding of what happens inside the mentoring practice. At the center of the framework, there is a circle that reads *mentor teacher in action* since studying what happens inside this practice is of interest to this study. The bidirectional arrow that connects mentors to PSTs illustrates the fact that mentors are often intentional, deliberate, and goal oriented in their interactions (e.g., planning/teaching together, debriefing conferences) and that through this activity they learn from the PSTs as well. The circle connects to the left to a box that reads *funds of knowledge* by means of a bidirectional arrow. Using a bidirectional arrow to connect the circle to the box, I demonstrate the interconnection between the bodies of knowledge mentors bring into their practice and the fact that in the activity of mentoring they acquire more knowledge. To the right, the circle connects to a box that reads *situated learning* and makes reference to the mentor's identity development. Both mentors and PSTs come in contact as they are and with what they bring. However, the activity of mentoring can

transform them. At the bottom, the circle and all the other boxes connect to a box with outcomes. This box contains *observed outcomes* and *self-reported* outcomes. By means of class and planning/debriefing meetings observations, I will be able to see in action what mentors do with PSTs and how they do it. The interviews with mentors will provide insights into why mentors report doing what they do with PSTs since my questions will be directed at eliciting their reasoning behind their actions. In addition, contextual factors (e.g., language policies, physical space, resistance from teacher collaborators) impact the mentoring process and in turn, this process impacts the context. I initially included a circle that surrounded the practice to signal that this activity happens within a specific context (see Appendix A); however, I felt that doing so was not necessarily reflecting my holistic vision about context since the perimeter of the circle did not help me explain 1) the relationship between the practice and the context and how they influence each other and 2) that the context exceeds the classroom/school context to include the broader local and international sociopolitical context. Therefore, even though context is a key element of my framework, I am still in the process of thinking how I can better represent it in my visual.

To illustrate this process in action, I have added another visual that captures this activity more vividly.

Figure 2. Framework for Teacher Mentor Action - In Action



This visual represents my initial understanding of how I see ESL mentoring *in action*. In this framework the mentor teacher is carrying a sack that contains the funds of knowledge they bring into the mentoring practice. Both the mentor and the PST seem to be taking flight since I wanted to convey the idea of action/movement/doing and transformation. The two come in contact as "they are" and with what they bring. However, the activity of mentoring transforms them. They develop, "construct their identities in practice" (Lave, 1996, p. 157) and each gets "a part of the other." This is why on the top right we can see the mentor and the PST with "filled suits", representing all they have acquired in the process and how their connection impacts their practice and shapes their identity. The arrow that reads *intentionality* serves the purpose of connecting the process of mentoring with SCT and the fact that mentors are intentional, explicit, and goal oriented. The bigger picture portrays a classroom since this activity is context-bound. However, this classroom does not have walls since we are also influenced by the

world outside the classroom and our life experiences, and in turn, the activity also influences the context.

Summary of Chapter

This chapter has reviewed the relevant literature related to mentoring and mentor teachers and outlined the conceptual framework guiding this study. A definition of mentoring and descriptions of the roles of mentors and their benefits both for PSTs and education as a whole were presented. Gaps in the current knowledge were determined with a special focus on the field of ESL. A rationale for the current study was supported through this review of the literature. In the next chapter, I will outline my methodological approach to exploring how ESL mentor teachers conceptualize their work and how they enact their practices as mentors of ESL PSTs.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This qualitative case study explored how ESL mentor teachers conceptualize their work as mentors and what practices they use and value to support the development of future ESL teachers. Specifically, I sought to understand how ESL mentors think about their work and explore what happens in the actual mentoring practice. To investigate this phenomenon, I approached my study from a constructivist perspective paradigm. Ontologically, this worldview suggests that reality is socially constructed and that there are multiple realities. Hence, from this perspective, reality is subjective, multiple, and a social construct. It is therefore best studied within the socio historical context where it takes place (Chilisa & Kawulich, 2012; Erickson, 1986). Epistemologically, this paradigm argues that knowledge is subjective and that "meaning is constructed based on people's own understandings of their worlds, experiences, interactions with events, and circumstances in their lives" (Battacharya, 2017, p. 2). Put simply, people make meaning in action, and different people will make sense differently even if there are apparent surface similarities. From an axiological standpoint, constructivists assert that social inquiry is value-bound and value-laden. In other words, constructivist researchers make the value-laden nature of the research visible by reporting their values and biases related to the topic under study (Chilisa & Kawulich, 2012). This approach leads to research questions that help answer how participants are experiencing and making meaning of a particular instance within a particular context. It requires researchers to study the phenomenon using different sources of data (e.g., observations, interviews, document analysis) so that they can do a more comprehensive analysis of how people are making meaning in interaction.

In alignment with this paradigm, I aimed to answer the following research questions:

1.How do ESL mentor teachers conceptualize their work as mentors of ESL PSTs?

2. How do ESL mentor teachers enact their practices?

a. What strategies do mentor teachers employ in supporting PSTs?

b. How do they employ these strategies?

c. Why do they report using these strategies?

Taken together, these research questions provided insight into 1) how mentors think about their work, and 2) what mentors do "in action" to materialize their mentoring practices (see Appendix B).

This chapter describes the methodology for the study and includes the following sections: 1) rationale for research approach, 2) description of the context of the study, 3) description of the sample, 4) methods of data collection, 4) data analysis, 5) ethical considerations, 6) issues of trustworthiness, and 7) limitations of the study. This chapter concludes with a brief summary.

Rationale for Qualitative Research Design

Qualitative research methodology is grounded in a researcher's interest in understanding how people experience and interpret the complexities of the world around them in a particular context at a particular point in time (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Qualitative research is then both situated and naturalistic (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). Researchers conduct research in the settings in which the events, phenomena, and processes naturally happen (e.g., classrooms, community sites, etc.) and attempt to

achieve a holistic understanding. Qualitative research asks “why” or “how” questions (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003) which seek to uncover how people make sense of their lives and the world around them.

A qualitative methodology is appropriate for this study because I am interested in understanding how mentors interpret their experiences and what meanings they attribute to them. The focus of qualitative research is on process, meaning and understanding, and acknowledging the primacy of context (Merriam, 2009) which aligns well with the focus of my study and my research questions.

Rationale for Case Study Approach

The approach to qualitative research that I employed is case study (Merriam, 1988; Stake, 1988). Similar to other types of qualitative research, case study methodology is interested in meaning and understanding, considers the researcher as the primary instrument of data collection and analysis, applies inductive strategies to data analysis, and its end product is typically highly descriptive. Merriam (2009) defines case study as “an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system” (p. 40). Case study research explores a “real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 96). The unit of analysis is a group of ESL mentor teachers. Case study methodology helps researchers do an intensive description and analysis of a bounded social phenomenon (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). A case study approach is appropriate when researchers seek to explore some process or phenomenon within the specific context in which it takes place (Merriam, 1998). Its

focus is on understanding a situation and the ways in which people make meaning of it. Case study is therefore an appropriate design to help me answer my research questions.

Research Context

The study took place within the context of a secondary TED in a large reseacrh Southeastern University. The program offers a Master of Teaching (M.T.) degree and teacher licensure with an endorsement in ESL (grades PreK-12). This is a post-graduate TEP for those who have already completed an undergraduate degree, but do not yet hold a teaching license. This one-year cohort-based program runs from June through the following May each year. One of the main components of the program is the clinical experience, which is intended to provide students with the actual experience of classroom teaching. It consists of Internship I (fall semester) and Internship II (spring semester). These two internships differ in the number of hours the PSTs are required to be in school and also in their roles and responsibilities.

Internship I is a part-time (16-24 hours a week) semester-long student teaching internship. Each candidate works closely with an assigned mentor teacher for half of the week (either half-days across the week or 2-3 full days/week), observing and assisting the mentor in their duties. The candidate gradually assumes responsibility for individual lessons and micro teaching opportunities each week. Internship II is a full time (40 hours a week), semester long student teaching internship. The candidate works closely with a mentor teacher and gradually assumes all classroom duties (planning, instruction, assessment, parent relationships and communication, and do other various school duties) and demonstrating all competencies across the semester.

Research Site

This research study was conducted in the university's local partner schools. The schools are spread across two nearby districts, *Oak Hill* and *Maple Park*, where PSTs do their clinical experience. Since these PSTs will be granted a state-wide K-12 certification to teach in public schools when they graduate, they are placed either in an elementary, middle, or secondary school.

The focal districts in this study contain a total of 24 schools combining elementary, middle, and high school. They offer a range of settings representing rural, suburban, and small urban contexts, and variation in student population size and EL percentage: Oak Hill School District (OHSC) has a population of 60% students (7% EL) and Maple Park School District (MPSD) has 14,000 students (10% EL). Other than English, the most common languages represented in these districts are Spanish, Arabic, Mandarin, Vietnamese, and Russian, among others.

Research Participants

I recruited (n=13) ESL mentor teachers who work in public schools in Oak Hill and Maple Park (grades PreK12) and were currently mentoring or had mentored PSTs in the University's TEP. The participants in the study mirrored the demographic composition of U.S. teachers with all of the participants self-identifying as white women (n=13; 100%; see Appendix C). The criteria outlined by the TEP to serve as a mentor teacher for the program are: Mentors must have served as classroom teachers for a minimum of three years and hold an endorsement in the area in which they will provide mentorship. In addition to demonstrating high-quality teaching, mentors must be strong collaborators and reflective practitioners. There is no mentor application process in place.

The teacher education office at the university works with school districts and school administrators to identify potential mentor teachers. Potential mentor teachers receive a survey and if they are interested in serving as mentors, they will fill it out. All mentorship pairings are subject to school and district level approval.

Teachers who serve as mentors receive 90 points toward the 180 points needed to renew their teaching license the first time they mentor a PST. However, if they continue mentoring successive PSTs in the same renewal period, they do not receive additional points to their license. Close to the end of the semester, mentors receive a compensation of $300 for their work in internship I and $500 for their work in internship II. There is no formal mentor training program currently in place. Mentors receive a 25-page internship handbook with general information about the program, a pacing guide, and instructions about the observation cycles that the PSTs have to complete.

I invited all the ESL mentor teachers who have mentored ESL PSTs in the TEP (n=15) to participate in my study. I recruited 13 mentors in total and selected 2 of them for in-depth analysis in order to learn more about what actually happens in the activity of mentoring. The selection of mentors for in-depth analysis was contingent upon the number of PSTs and mentors who consented to participate in my study.

Participant Recruitment

Mentor Teachers

I requested and received the names and contact information (email address) for the 15 eligible study participants from the TEP director at the university. I contacted the eligible participants by email. In my initial email, I introduced myself, provided an overview of my study, and informed them of their responsibilities in the study and the risks of participation. The mentors who replied to my email and agreed to participate,

received the consent form. I also reminded them that their participation in the study was voluntary, that they could withdraw from the study at any time, and that their identity would remain confidential. All communication was relayed through participants' and researchers' institutional-provided email.

Pre-service Teachers

Even though the focus of this study was mentor teachers, I still needed to receive research consent from PSTs since they work in close collaboration with mentors and are part of the work mentors do.

Per Institutional Review Board (IRB) request, I recruited PSTs (n=4) before recruiting mentors. I requested and received the names and contact information (email address) for the eligible study participants from the TEP director at the university. Once I received the information, I contacted the eligible participants by email. In my initial email, I introduced myself, provided an overview of my study, and informed them of their responsibilities in the study and the risks of participation. The PSTs who agreed to participate received the consent form to sign. I reminded them that their participation in the study was voluntary, that they could withdraw from the study at any time, and that their identity would remain confidential. All communication was relayed through participants' and researchers' institutional-provided email.

The PSTs who agreed to participate in my study, determined the number of mentor teachers I recruited for the observation portion of the study (e.g., if a PST did not consent to my study, I did not reach out to the mentor they had been assigned to do their clinical placement).

Access to Site

After being granted IRB approval from the university, I reached out to the Central District Office for Oak Hill County and Maple Park County to gain their institutional approval. Once this office approved my study, I emailed the principals in the schools where the mentors of the ESL PST who had consented to participate in my study worked to inform them that my study had been approved and introduced myself. Some of them replied to my email and copied the mentors in their email. Others offered to make a connection to the mentors. I thanked the latter and said that I was going to reach out to mentors myself. I sent an individual email to the mentors to invite them to participate in my study.

Role of Researcher

As the researcher, I took the role of "observer as participant" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 144) because my presence and activities were known to the group but my participation in the setting was secondary to my role as observer. Reflecting on this role, I think I was positioned both as an insider and an outsider. I was an insider because I am an experienced ESL teacher and have also served as a mentor. This helped me better connect with my participants and attend to activities that might pass inadvertently to others. However, I was also an outsider because my interactions with mentors in this study were from the role of researcher. This may have impacted how my participants viewed me and interacted with me. To build rapport with them, I used my insider's knowledge as an ESL teacher, former mentor, and multilingual learner.

Methods of Data Collection

Case study research rests upon multiple sources of evidence to capture the case under study in its entirety and complexity (Merriam, 1998). I collected data utilizing the following methods: 1) in-depth semi-structured interviews, 2) classroom observations, and 3) observations of planning /debriefing meetings between mentors and PSTs. However, for the purposes of this dissertation, I focused on the data derived from the in-depth semi-structured interviews.

Table 1 below summarizes the data collection instruments that I used.

Table 1. Data Collection Instruments

Individual in-depth semi-structured interviews	I conducted one individual interview with each mentor. This interview was conducted on participants' availability.
Classroom observations ["School day shadowing"]	Three classroom observations throughout the semester. During these observations I collected field notes.
Planning/Debriefing meetings	I video/audio recorded three of these meetings.

Interviews

I conducted one in-depth semi-structured interview (Bhattacharya, 2017) of approximately 60 minutes with each mentor teacher. I stated beforehand how much time I expected the participants to devote to the interview (60 minutes), and I made sure I arranged for a space isolated from interruptions. This interview included open-ended questions about what mentors think about being a mentor and mentoring practices. The aim of the interviews was to learn about the experiences and insights of the participants,

specifically for understanding mentors' ways of thinking about mentoring. I followed the interview protocol (see Appendix D) to maintain consistency across interviews and compare responses for each question for the participants in the study. However, I also left room for follow-up questions and for any unexpected turn in the interview if it was relevant to the study. Before starting the interview and recording it, I reminded the participants that: 1) I would be recording the interview, 2) I would be taking notes, 3) if at any point they wanted to skip a question or stop the interview, they should let me know, and 4) that their responses would remain confidential.

Before the actual interviews, I conducted a pilot interview with four former colleagues who have served as mentor teachers to make sure my questions made sense and were well aligned with my research focus. I adjusted the interview questions taking into consideration their feedback and interpretations. Even though I had arranged the interview meeting to be for an hour, most of the interviews did not last more than 45 minutes on average.

I audio/video recorded the interviews using a recording device to ensure "that everything said is preserved for analysis" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 131). I kept a pencil and a notepad handy to take down notes during the interviews to record hunches, feelings, gestures, and follow up questions. I was also mindful of the fact that sometimes after the interview, in casual conversation, something relevant to the study could come up. When that is the case, I wrote it down on my notepad or asked my participants if it was ok with them that I turned my recording device on again.

Transcription

Data collected through video/audio recording devices was transcribed using Zoom's transcription feature. I started with the initial transcriptions as a base, and then I edited the transcripts based on the audio- and video-recordings. Transcriptions followed orthographic conventions (Jenks, 2011) in which the primary function was to capture the content of what was being said. Excessive utterances and fillers such as um, uh, and like were omitted.

While revising the video files, I paid attention to participants' tone of voice and facial expressions (e.g., laughter, sarcasm, etc.) I included the voice of my participants in the presentation of my research findings by using direct quotes from the transcription of these interviews.

Observations

To collect data from my in-depth analysis, I observed mentors by means of "school day shadowing" which also included doing class observations, attending mentor-mentee planning and/or debriefing meetings.

Shadowing/ Classroom Observations

I did "school day shadowing" three times throughout the semester. I spent the whole school day with mentor teachers to see their daily routine with PSTs and collected field notes. These observations helped me gather information about what mentors actually did "in action" and how they did it. They also helped me gain a more holistic understanding of mentors' collaboration—or lack thereof—with other teachers, their interaction with the school context, and their interactions with PSTs. In addition, during these shadowing days I conducted three classroom observations.

I wrote fieldnotes and used a "code sheet" (Merriam, 1998) to record what I saw and heard related to mentors' practices. I was particularly interested in observing how mentors made their thinking visible and unpacked their ESL teacher knowledge to make it accessible to PSTs (see Appendix D).

Going about Observations

I first mapped the space with objects and actors. I made a drawing of the space or asked for permission to take a photograph of the space making sure no students appeared in the picture. In other words, I took a panoramic view of the space and described it in as much detail as I could. At the beginning, I focused on making broad observations. However, as I continued my study, I sharpened my focus of observation. I kept a timestamp in my field notes. This allowed me to understand and remember the chronological progress of events. When permitted, I tried to position myself in different parts of the classroom each time I did an observation. This helped me pick up on different dynamics.

As soon as I finished my observations, I did the write ups of my field notes. This document included different levels of abstraction ranging from description to low level inferences and high-level inferences. Descriptions made up the bulk of my observation. Low level inferences indicated the function of an exchange or interaction. They helped me tie observables together into more meaningful descriptions of events. Thus, transforming thin description into thick description. High level inferences helped me tie larger activities and events together in some conceptual or theoretical sense. In other words, they helped me think more deeply about what an action might mean in terms of

the overall study. I marked off inferences in a consistent manner (see Appendix E). I also added documents referenced in the field notes (e.g., a worksheet) to my write-ups.

At the end of my write ups, I reflected on the following questions: What information were you able to gather? What did you choose to focus on and why? What did you ignore and why? What level of detail did you document? What was challenging conducting these observations? What would you do similarly or differently moving forward? (Bhattacharya, 2017). These reflective questions helped me observe gaps in my field notes and learn more about myself as a researcher as well.

Planning/Debriefing Meeting Observations

In the school shadowing days, I video/audio recorded three planning/debriefing sessions between the mentors and the PSTs. While I recorded these meetings, I additionally took down notes. The data gathered from this source also helped me customize a potential successive interview to better understand the process of mentoring.

Observation Methods

I wrote field notes during the observed activities and after each observation I found a quiet place to write down field notes in narrative form. I made sure my notes were "highly descriptive" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 151) and that I showed and not just told. I also added to them my observer's comments in order to document my reflections, hunches, and thoughts. This helped me engage in "some preliminary data analysis" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 152). After taking the field notes, I composed write-ups of each field note. I made sure that in my write ups there was a balance between detailed description, low level inferences (e.g., emotional tone, function of an

exchange), and high-level inferences (e.g., what an action might mean in terms of the overall study) as explained above.

Data Analysis

Data for this study included transcripts from 13 interviews with mentor participants. During data collection and analysis phases, I wrote analytic memos to document my hunches, reactions, and thoughts. I started my analysis as soon as I started collecting data. These memos allowed me to continually reflect on "coding processes and code choices; how the process of inquiry is taking shape; and the emergent patterns, categories, and subcategories, themes, and concepts" within the data (Saldana, 2021, p. 44). Throughout data collection, I reflected on trends and themes I noticed, utilizing constant comparative methods (Corbin & Strauss, 2015) as an iterative process involving multiple cycles of coding.

Interview transcripts were uploaded into analytic software for coding. To address research question one, I focused on identifying participants' conceptualizations of mentoring in interviews. In the first cycle of coding, I took an inductive approach (Charmaz, 2014; Miles et al. 2020). I focused on identifying instances in which the mentor-participants articulated specific mentoring definitions or conceptualizations. I tracked key phrases that explicitly or implicitly denoted mentors' definitions of mentoring such as "mentoring is …" (Jessica), "a good mentor (is)…" (Emily), or "... is critical in mentorship" (Kate). Using the statements that preceded or followed these definition cues, I developed a set of 18 codes capturing participants' conceptualizations of mentoring. As I gained greater understanding of mentors' experiences, I collapsed similar codes into broader categories.

To address research question two, I focused on the strategies mentors reported using to support PSTs. Through the same method I used for the interviews, I developed a second set of inductive codes to describe the different strategies mentors use to support PSTs. I engaged in a second cycle of coding to identify how mentors used those strategies and why. I developed a set of 14 codes (As I coded, I also created a table that consisted of three columns: strategy, how, and why. This allowed me to gain a more nuanced understanding of what I was identifying in the data.). As I gained greater understanding of mentors' strategies, I collapsed similar codes into broader categories.

An important part of coding and the process of developing themes involved a search for disconfirming evidence. Finding this evidence pushed me to refine my conclusions (Erickson, 1986; Miles et al., 2020; Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012). The process of integrating new codes, categories, and disconfirming evidence into the analysis served to sharpen and deepen themes, as well as my overall understanding of the participants and their connections to one another.

Researcher's Positionality Statement

In qualitative research, the researcher is regarded as "the primary source of data collection and analysis" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 16). Contextualizing the researcher's role in the research process is vital not only for researchers to intentionally reflect on their identity, but "it also helps readers to understand the researcher's personal investment in the case" (Duff, 2007, p. 131). Here I reflect on my own subjectivities by asking myself: Who am I as a researcher? Why am I choosing this topic? What is my desire in this study? How might this influence my thinking as regards the research?

I was born and raised in Buenos Aires, Argentina—South America. I can say that I grew up as the proud daughter of a Spanish immigrant who was literally shipped to Argentina at the age of 16 in the aftermath of the Second World War, and of a hyper socially aware normal school teacher. I was a very small child when democracy was restored in the country after seven years of de facto military government. This is called *última dictadura militar* ("last military dictatorship") because there have been several in the country's history and no others since this one ended. What was different about this one, though, was the horrendous human rights crimes that were committed, including torture, extrajudicial executions, and the imprisonment of thousands without a trial. The hallmark of political repression, however, was the practice of enforced disappearance of people and the closure of universities (schools of law, social sciences, and philosophy and humanities). Growing up in the aftermath of these events allowed me to see active social efforts to promote healing, restore human rights, and raise social awareness. These changes were reflected in education and society at large. Social movements became very prominent and critical pedagogies (e.g., Freire) started to be widely used in public schools. It was within this context that I was able to develop from a very young age a strong sense of social justice and social awareness and came to value education as a means of liberation and a human right.

I was trained to be a language educator and started teaching when I was 18 years old. I taught a wide range of students in different educational settings. In 2017, I moved to the United States to pursue a master's degree in teaching English as a second language (MATESL). During this time, I mentored a PST. Until then, I had not heard about mentors since this was not a role that existed in the schools I worked at in Buenos Aires.

This experience made me reflect on the role ESL mentors play in the learning-to-teach process of PSTs and sparked my current research interest. However, my focus regarding mentors has certainly changed since I started my Ph.D.

Before the Ph.D. I have always been immersed in a language teaching context—a context in which being bilingual and multicultural are regarded as assets, cultural humility is the standard, and my own social and professional identities were never a problem. Since I started the Ph.D., however, for the first time in my teaching career and my time in the U.S. I was no longer immersed in a language teaching context. That meant to me realizing that what I used to take for granted (e.g., bilingualism as an asset or cultural humility) was not necessarily the rule; what used to be an asset could actually become a deficit in a different context. I was forced to recognize and experience first-hand how my social positions as a foreigner from South America and non-native speaker of English negatively influenced my colleagues' perceptions of me. Experiencing such a deficit perspective was a transformative process, one that made me deeply aware of the consequences of being perceived by others in a deficit way (e.g., feeling invisible, needing to advocate for opportunities that are granted for others, etc.). This awareness made me—and keeps making me—reflect on the profound emotional, cognitive, and physical implications that such a burden has on the learning process. And I keep reflecting that if these types of deficit-oriented interactions negatively affect learning in a context where awareness of these issues is arguably the highest, how much more detrimental are these interactions in contexts where there is less awareness and where the subjects of these interactions are developing children and youth. If it has been brutally negative for me as a grown-up adult with the support, tools, and education to advocate for

myself, how much more it may be for children. Although I was obviously aware of deficit views at a cognitive level, being the subject of deficit perspectives shifted my research priorities from instructional aspects to also include other aspects of ESL teachers mentoring (e.g., asset framing) as foundational in their work.

As a language learner, a teacher, and a former mentor, this research speaks closely to me. My desire for this study comes from both my own experiences as a student and educator and my research agenda for the preparation of teachers who work with culturally and linguistically diverse students. It is for this reason that I have decided to investigate how ESL mentor teachers conceptualize their work as mentors and how they enact their practices.

Role of Researcher

As the researcher, I held the role of "observer as participant" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 144) because my presence and activities were known to the group but my participation in the setting was secondary to my role as observer. Reflecting on this role, I was positioned both as an insider and an outsider. I was an insider because I am an experienced ESL teacher, a ML, and I also served as a mentor of a PST in another institution. This helped me better connect with my participants and see things that might pass inadvertently to others. However, I was also an outsider because my interactions with mentors in this study were conducted from my role as a researcher. This may have impacted how my participants viewed me and interacted with me. I used my insider's knowledge as an ESL teacher, former mentor, and language learner to build rapport with them.

Credibility and Standards of Quality

Producing valid and reliable knowledge in an ethical manner is an endeavor of all research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). To address concerns of rigor and trustworthiness, I made purposeful efforts to ensure the credibility, consistency, and transferability of my study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I used the following strategies: audit trail, memoing, and rich, thick descriptions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

To strengthen the credibility of my findings, I engaged in audit trail. I presented my reader with a detailed description of "how data were collected, how categories were derived, and how decisions were made throughout the inquiry" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 252). I did this by keeping a detailed log of the entire research process This written record included process notes about data collection, my reflections, questions, memos written during data collection and analysis periods and the decisions I made throughout my research inquiry (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

I also engaged in consistent and thorough memoing throughout the data collection and analysis phases, I reported my findings using rich, thick descriptions of the research setting and participants, and a detailed description of the findings with excerpts from participant interviews and snippets of field notes from observations (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Maxwell, 2013; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). All of these strategies were employed against the backdrop of reflexivity upon my biases and positionalities by keeping a reflexive journal of my memos to continually engage in deep reflection of the trends and patterns I was noticing.

Ethics and Confidentiality

In qualitative research, potentials for harm are prevalent due to the personal nature of the work (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Therefore, "any method decision is an ethics decision" (Markham, 2005, p. 811). The choices researchers make to represent participants and the context will have an impact on how these are interpreted and understood by readers (Markham, 2005). This is why it is important that researchers do in-depth reflective work on how ethical frames influence findings.

This research has been reviewed according to the university IRB procedures for research involving human subjects. Research requires effort to maintain privacy and confidentiality to ensure the protection of participants from harm. For these purposes, no participant names or identifying information, like phone numbers and email addresses, were recorded with the data, and all reported data during and after the study was anonymized. All names referenced in this study (e.g., names of participants, schools) were protected with assigned pseudonyms and anonymization of all write-ups (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The participants in this study voluntarily signed a consent form in order to participate. Consent forms for all participants required them to acknowledge the details of the study, the voluntary nature of participation in the study, and the understanding that they may withdraw from the study at any time without question or penalty.

Data Management and Storage

All data and materials were digitally stored in the university's protected cloud-based storage system. Only the researcher had access to these folders. Video recordings will be maintained until the end of data analysis, at which time the recordings will be

deleted. Transcriptions and other de-identified data will remain on these folders for potential follow up study.

Most data were reported in aggregate. For example, I reported common themes that emerged across the dataset (e.g., frequent mentor actions or topics discussed by a majority of participants). Throughout my report, I illustrated these themes with individual quotations. The participants were given a pseudonym to ensure that they were not individually identifiable.

If at any point during the life of the study a participant decides to withdraw, all artifacts collected from this participant will be deleted immediately. Any video segment featuring this participant will be cut.

Limitations

As is typical with any study, there are some limitations. First, my sample of mentor teachers is in some ways a convenience sample. That is, my status as a graduate student in the TEP allowed me convenient access to this group of participants. At the same time, this was also a purposive sample (Patton, 1990). The university's secondary program has a long history of credentialing teachers, and I was interested in studying ESL mentor teachers who mentor teacher candidates in an ESL licensure program. Second, although I initially planned to analyze data lesson plans with feedback from mentors, I found that mentor teachers' practices with PSTs were significantly different to what I expected. For example, the mentors did not necessarily provide written feedback on lesson plans. Feedback was provided in other forms and in some instances it was absent. This impacted the amount of data I was able to collect. In addition, although I was

trying to design my study so you could capture those in-the-moment interactions, that was extremely hard to do and I missed some of those interactions.

Last, the pool of participants for this study was relatively homogeneous in that their backgrounds may not be vastly different from one another. In future research, it would be informative to examine mentor teachers who come from various linguistic and cultural backgrounds; for example, mentors who are not native speakers of English, or who did part of their teaching careers abroad. Last, this study only included the perspectives and practices of mentor teachers thus excluding the perspectives of PSTs and the TEP. Future work should explore the perspectives of teaching candidates and university-based teacher educators.

Summary of Chapter

In this chapter, I presented the proposed methodology for my research project and provided justifications for design decisions, data collection procedures, and data analysis. The chapter moved through each of these steps providing context and information about participant sampling and recruitment processes. Data triangulation, articulation of my own positionality and subjectivity, and consistent memoing via audit trail were presented as means to strengthen the credibility of my study. Additionally, I addressed issues of ethics and confidentiality and I concluded with the limitations of the study.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

In this study, I explore how ESL mentor teachers conceptualize their work as mentors and what practices they use and value to support the development of future ESL teachers. I specifically analyze 1) how mentors think about their work, and 2) what mentors do "in action" to materialize their mentoring practices. By amplifying the voices and practices of mentors themselves, I learn about the narratives surrounding mentoring—what it signifies to them, how they acquired their mentorship skills, and the tangible methods and principles they employ to support PSTs. A deeper understanding of this phenomenon contributes to the teacher education literature and practice by shedding brighter light on: 1) the focal points of ESL mentors' thinking and 2) the strategies they prioritize to foster the development of future ESL educators.

In alignment with my research questions, the findings are clustered in two main sections that make up two distinct chapters. In this chapter, I discuss the findings concerning mentor teachers' conceptualizations of mentoring. In the sections below, I describe the themes and subthemes I generated from the individual in-depth interviews with mentors. These include: 1) Mentoring: A process that requires three foundational elements, 1a) patience, 1b) listening, and 1c) honesty, and 2) navigating the multifaceted dimensions of time in mentorship dynamics, 2a) Mentoring: A process that requires time.

Before discussing mentors' conceptualizations of their practice, it is important to first examine the perceptions mentors have of their role. Understanding how mentors perceive their role is important, as it shapes their approach to mentoring and informs their interactions with PSTs. In the upcoming section titled "Why Are Mentors Important? Insights from the Inside," I explore the perspectives shared by mentors, illuminating their

unanimous recognition of the vital role they play in shaping the development and growth of PSTs.

Why Are Mentors Important?: Insights from Within

"Oh my goodness. I think mentors are critical!" This emphatic and passionate assertion, by Courtney, a secondary school mentor, resonates with the sentiments echoed by all of the mentor participants in this study. Each mentor acknowledges they play an important role—if not the most important—in supporting the development of PSTs. Britney, an elementary school mentor, goes as far as to assert that without a mentor "it's impossible to develop your teaching practice." Such resounding endorsements underscore the indispensable role mentors believe they have in supporting the development and growth of PSTs and emphasize mentors' invaluable contribution to the teaching profession at large.

Mentors bring forth different insights into why their role is vital. Some mentors highlight the need for real-world teaching experience and mentorship to prepare teachers for the classroom. For instance, Neuquén, a high school mentor, states: "it's so important for PSTs to have experience in the classroom, but not by themselves." Others underscore the value of real-world teaching experience over theoretical learning. Kate, an experienced high school mentor, feels that university coursework "is never going to be the same as direct experience in the classroom and certainly a supported experience is going to be a lot more successful than trial by fire, as they say, just jumping out there." Another group of mentors view their role as vital in decreasing teacher turnover rates thus working for the advancement of a common social good. Jessica, the mentor with the most years of teaching experience in the sample, eloquently illustrates this point: "So, I feel

like that's kind of my role as mentors…our responsibility for our society to try to keep our teachers newer into the profession going." While others, specifically highlight the role of ESL mentors as the only ones within school buildings who have the expertise and training to navigate the unique challenges of teaching MLs. Emma, an experienced teacher and mentor, illustrates this point when comparing mentoring in content areas and ESL:

> I mean with ESOL, you really have to have one [mentor]. I don't really know how you'd do it without one, because I mean, you're in a room where no one else knows how to do your job. It's not like you can model yourself after someone. You know what I'm saying? like the content teacher…usually they're not trained in teaching ESOL

Collectively, these insights underscore the pivotal role of mentors in supporting PSTs and advancing the teaching profession as a whole. Notably, ESL mentors bring a unique expertise and perspective to the mentoring process backed by specialized training and experience in supporting MLs. By equipping PSTs with the necessary pedagogical skills and knowledge to effectively teach MLs, ESL mentors contribute significantly to promoting equity and inclusion within the education system. Below, I explore in depth how ESL mentors think about their practice and what they value.

Mentoring: A Process that Requires Three Foundational Elements

The participants in the study highlight three characteristics they deem indispensable for effective mentoring of PSTs. Patience, listening, and honesty emerge as pivotal attributes that all the mentors emphasize as they engage in guiding and supporting their mentees. These human skills are not merely suggested but are regarded as

foundational elements for mentoring. Below, I examine their significance in shaping the mentorship process and contributing to the professional growth and development of PSTs. After this examination, I will turn to consideration of findings about how mentors navigate time.

Patience

Patience is recognized by participants as a key element in supporting PSTs toward professional growth. Patience seems to transcend mere tolerance for delays or challenges; instead, it entails an understanding of the developmental process inherent in becoming an educator. In other words, patience involves the recognition that growth and development take time, and that challenges and setbacks are integral components of development.

Mentors understand patience from different perspectives. For some mentors, patience is connected to intentional understanding. This means reminding themselves 1) what it was like to not know how to do something, or 2) what it was like to be younger and going through the process of learning how to juggle different responsibilities of adulthood. To make this conscious effort, mentors connect with something from their past history—either personal or professional history. For instance, in our interview, Ashley connects mentoring to her experiences as a sports teacher when she was younger: "the hardest thing about teaching anything is remembering what it was like to not know how to do that. As a teacher you get so *comfortable* doing what you're doing. You forget how *difficult* it is the first time." Emma connects mentoring to her experiences as an ESL teacher and compares mentees with her ESL students: "They don't know the language of being an ESOL teacher *yet,* be patient. So, teach them the language. Be as gracious with them as you would be with *any* student."

Conversely, some mentors view patience as the ability to release control and let go. This conceptualization of patience is linked to the idea of surrender to what is and granting mentees the space and time to naturally unfold. Even though mentors acknowledge this is one of the most difficult things to accomplish as a mentor because mentees are not experienced and "things may go awry" (Jessica), they agree that for it to really be a good mentor experience, you really have to hand over control to PSTs and "let go of how *you* [mentor] would do things and let them *see* how what *they* did works" (Emily, a middle school mentor). Despite acknowledging the inherent difficulty in relinquishing control, mentors emphasize the necessity of 1) empowering PSTs to take ownership of their learning and teaching practices and 2) refraining from imposing their approaches onto their mentees. This involves allowing PSTs the freedom to make mistakes and confront challenges independently, thus facilitating their growth and development. In addition, mentors highlight the importance of embracing the messiness of the teaching process—and by default the mentoring process—recognizing that experimentation and adaptation are essential components of effective teaching and mentoring. For instance, Kate, a teacher with more than a decade of mentoring experience in secondary settings, explains that in her experience as a mentor, PSTs want to try the things they are passionate about and that they are ready to move beyond the learning in their university coursework. To facilitate real classroom experience Kate states that mentors need to have "an ability to embrace the messy" and let things just happen so that PSTs can have their own learning "epiphanies" as they encounter classroom outcomes: "...sometimes they [MLs] are not ready. So, being able to be like,

whoa! It didn't work like we thought. Oh, well, let's talk about; so yeah, embracing the messy at times."

By "embracing the messy," Kate and other mentors push PSTs to reason through their instructional choices. In other words, mentors support mentees in the development of their reasoning teaching (Johnson et al., 2023). This instructional approach does not merely involve imparting curriculum content or honing specific skills. It entails empowering teachers by enhancing their understanding and proficiency in employing various linguistic, cultural, pedagogical, and interactional tools. These resources enable teachers to effectively facilitate language instruction and promote productive classroom environments.

In addition to viewing patience as intentional understanding and releasing control, some mentors perceive it as an unwavering commitment to the growth and success of the PST, even in the face of persistent challenges. This conceptualization of patience as Harper, an elementary school mentor, articulates, entails "not giving up on mentees" by 1) consistently supporting and encouraging them, and 2) not being discouraged by setbacks or obstacles encountered along the way. Patience then, embodies a dedication to the potential of the PST and belief in their capacity to learn and grow overtime. Mentors are committed to make any and every possible effort to ensure that their mentees become well-prepared ESL teachers who are equipped to meet the diverse needs of MLs and navigate the complexities of language education in the U.S. context.

However, oftentimes, mentors are faced with difficult decisions that challenge this approach. This can occur when a mentee fails to meet the expectations of the program—including deadlines, work products, and taking responsibility for planning and

instruction—even after mentors have taken the time to talk about what may be going on and offered additional support. Faced with these dilemmas, mentors prioritize upholding the principle of social justice; this includes preparing highly qualified ESL teachers who can effectively meet the diverse needs of their students, are committed to responsibly and professionally engage in their work, and contribute to a more equitable educational system. In such situations, mentors may advocate for the mentee's redirection or removal from the placement, seeking to ensure that MLs have their rights met and receive quality education. In doing so, mentors work toward creating an education system in which marginalized voices are heard and valued, and where every student has the support and resources they need to thrive.

Listening

Listening is widely recognized among mentors as a vital skill essential for effective mentoring. Mentors conceptualize listening not as the act of hearing words spoken, but rather as the art of understanding the meanings behind those words. This perspective is echoed by Maddy, an elementary school mentor, who emphasized "it's really important that you're listening and you're *really* paying attention to what's in front of you." Listening seen through this lens involves active engagement and seeks to understand the perspectives, concerns, emotional responses, and aspirations of PSTs. It also involves attuning to the nuances of communication—both verbal and non-verbal—and acknowledging the unique experiences, successes and challenges faced by each mentee. Mentors are interested in fostering trust and openness in their mentor-mentee relationship by creating contexts where mentees feel heard, valued, and understood. By

prioritizing attentive listening, mentors create a supportive and empowering environment where their mentees' voices are heard and respected.

Mentors highlight various facets of listening in their work with PSTs. For some, listening entails being aware of their mentees' goals. Having this information, enables mentors to guide mentees "in the right direction" (Maddy). For mentors it is particularly important to learn about the long-term goals of their mentees "right off the bat" (Jessica). They seek to understand: 1) why their mentees are there, and 2) what they are hoping to learn from the field experience. Having this information upfront is vital for three reasons. First, as Maddy indicated, having a long-term goal gives both the mentee and the mentor a clear sense of direction. This helps mentors shape their guidance and support to align with their mentees' aspirations so that their field experience is purposeful and meaningful. Second, when mentors demonstrate genuine interest in their mentees' ambitions, they signal to the mentees that their goals are valued and respected. Third, this allows mentors to listen for difference as Maddy further elaborates "...it's critical, because their goals may be different from *my* goals." This practice of listening for difference takes an added significance in the context of multilingual education. As future ESL educators, PSTs must be equipped to address the diverse linguistic and cultural needs of their students. By modeling a commitment to understanding and valuing the goals of their mentees, mentors prepare PSTs to cultivate a mindset of cultural responsiveness and equity that is essential for creating inclusive learning environments.

Another facet of listening that mentors emphasize is related to getting to know the PST and avoiding making assumptions or generalizations about their background knowledge. Mentors employ the analogy of meeting PSTs "where they're at,"

highlighting the importance of understanding the individual readiness and pace of each PST. Knowing about the experiences PSTs bring to bear to their learning-to-teach process, helps mentors operate within PSTs' zone of proximal development (ZPD; Vygotsky, 1978)—the difference between what a learner can do independently and what they can achieve with guidance and support—and provide appropriate levels of challenge and support helping PSTs build on their existing knowledge and skills. Mentors view PSTs as agents, with full histories, bringing emotional connections to, and orientations, toward teaching. Harper's discussion about the role of listening serves to illustrate this point:

> So, making sure that you're not just saying: 'Oh, well, *everyone* needs to learn how to do behavior management'...it's like your students…you don't want to hold someone's hand who's ready to go a lot faster. But you don't want to push someone into the deep end, either.

The quote from Harper underscores the importance of recognizing individual differences among learners, whether they are PSTs or MLs. By drawing a parallel between teaching teachers and teaching MLs. Harper emphasizes the need for personalized, differentiated instruction tailored to the unique needs and readiness levels of each learner. This comparison cautions against adopting a one-size-fits-all approach. Single pathways are oftentimes exclusionary and perpetuate privilege rather than focusing on learners, learning, autonomy, and empowerment. Instead, mentors are attuned to the diverse backgrounds and experiences of their mentees and students.

It is interesting to note that the responsibility for meeting individuals where they are, does not solely fall on mentors; rather, mentors also emphasize the importance of

mentees recognizing individual differences among mentors. Becky, a middle school mentor, shares a revealing insight from a past conversation with a PST. She recounts that it is a "fallacy" to assume that all mentors arrive with standard curriculum and support from the administration. Instead mentors bring their unique experiences and resources to the table, aiming to both share their knowledge and learn from their mentees. This process involves incorporating existing research and working in collaboration to adapt materials to the specific needs of their MLs.

Honesty

Participants make a clear emphasis on being honest with mentees about the realities of teaching in general, teaching ESL specifically, schools, and policies that impact MLs and in turn teachers' practices—including assessments. For mentors, it is really important that PSTs enter the profession with full awareness of what it entails to be a teacher and what are the moving pieces that ESL teachers have to navigate. This is why mentors make an intentional effort to involve PSTs as much as possible so that "they are not surprised" (Becky) about the demands of the job. This commitment to honesty, however, goes beyond merely being aware about expectations of what teacher life looks like. In fact, mentor teachers' rationale is rooted in an approach to social justice. Mentors recognize the importance of preparing strong, competent, and highly qualified teachers that are aware of the unique challenges MLs face in an educational system that oftentimes turns their back on them. By holding PSTs to high standards, mentors are not only investing in the success of individual teachers but also advocating for the rights of MLs. Mentors are committed to preparing dedicated and skilled educators who can effectively

address their students' diverse educational needs and navigate the complexities of language education.

While all of the mentors across the sample value honesty and "being real," different mentors emphasize varying aspects of this commitment. In addition, it is not uncommon for mentors to highlight multiple facets of honesty simultaneously in their mentoring. For some mentors, honesty is about not sugarcoating the profession. This layer of the honesty component serves the purpose of deconstructing any romanticized notions of teaching that PSTs may bring along such as the belief that the teacher will stand in front of a class and the students will obediently listen to instruction and participate in activities. As Jessica observes in our interview, many PSTs may underestimate the challenges of managing behavior in the classroom, which can lead to a stark realization when faced with the reality of maintaining a conducive learning environment. Jessica emphasizes the importance of allowing PSTs to experience these challenges firsthand and learn from them through reflection and collaborative problem-solving with her. Using dialogue as a mediational tool, Jessica addresses these moments of cognitive/emotional dissonance to support productive teacher development. Moreover, Jessica's insights highlight the significance of addressing the idealistic perceptions that PSTs may hold about teaching, recognizing that while idealism can be beneficial, it must be balanced with a realistic understanding of the profession to effectively navigate its challenges. By acknowledging the idealism of PSTs while also preparing them for the realities of teaching, mentors like Jessica play a crucial role in the professional development of future educators.

A number of mentors think of honesty as the deliberate disclosure of the realities of ESL teaching. Mentors emphasize the demanding and multifaceted nature of ESL teaching, underscoring that it is "a hard and really important job" (Emily). Teaching ESL transcends mere language instruction to include a multitude of official and unofficial responsibilities that extend beyond the confines of the classroom. This makes teaching ESL more demanding and multifaceted than what may initially meet the eye. As mentors state, "with ESL there is always more." In the interviews, mentors enumerate an overwhelming number of additional responsibilities to being an ESL teacher. These extend far beyond the conventional duties teachers typically perform (e.g., constant consultations with colleagues, creating their own curriculum while helping other teachers create theirs, ensuring students' needs are met across various contexts). The sheer breadth of these responsibilities, as described by mentors, is so exhaustive that merely listening to them recount their experiences can leave the listener exhausted. Consequently, flexibility and adaptability emerge as paramount qualities for effective ESL teaching, unanimously regarded by mentors as essential. For mentors it is important that PSTs interact with the multiple pieces that make up teaching ESL.

Another facet of honesty lies in mentors' commitment to showing PSTs the real deal. Honesty in this regard, is rooted in the recognition of a notable discrepancy between theoretical knowledge acquired in academic settings and the practical application of that knowledge. Mentors perceive it as vital to their role as translators of theory to bridge this gap and provide PSTs with specific and honest feedback that targets practical applications in real-world classroom environments. All the mentors in this study agree that there is a type of knowledge that is not studied at university: The insider's

knowledge of the classroom and how different factors work in tandem to facilitate—or hinder—language development. Amy, an elementary school mentor, illustrates this point:

> I always feel like my job as the mentor is to be like, this is what you *really* have to do. You know you can read a million books, but it doesn't help you perform well in front of students. It's the on the site training of that tone of voice is not the correct tone of voice to use when you're serious.

Mentors believe that they play a critical role in facilitating this knowledge and recognize the limitations of academic study in capturing the nuanced realities of classroom dynamics. This underscores the indispensable contribution mentors make in guiding PSTs in their field experience.

Lastly, mentors stress the value of self-honesty by being open and vulnerable. This entails confidently admitting when they lack knowledge or feel uncertain about handling a situation. Such honesty manifests in various ways. Some mentors seek support from the TED when faced with challenges beyond their expertise. Others pursue additional professional development to deepen their understanding of a specific practice their mentees are learning or with which they need more guidance. For example, Becky signed up to do a phonics workshop that her mentee was taking to learn alongside her. Ultimately, this facet of honesty is about showing PSTs that learning is a never ending endeavor and that it is important to remain curious and humble. As Maddy aptly puts it "letting them [PSTs] know that even though we have experience, we still have challenges every day in teaching. Letting them see that you're never going to get there and just stop learning, you know." Maddy highlights the notion that learning is a lifelong journey and

encourages PSTs to embrace the process of continuous improvement in their teaching careers. Overall, it conveys a powerful message about the importance of remaining open to new ideas, perspectives, and experiences which takes special relevance when working in contexts of cultural and linguistic diversity.

Honesty in mentoring involves more than just acknowledging challenges; it is about fostering a culture of support and empowerment. By openly discussing the difficulties inherent in the profession, mentors communicate to their mentees that because they know teaching (ESL) is hard, they are there to support them. And even though it is hard they still choose to continue doing it. This message underscores the importance of collaboration and community; recognizing that no one can navigate the complexities of teaching alone. Further, honesty is a catalyst for empowerment, as it acknowledges that admitting areas of uncertainty is a potential growth point. Through honesty, mentors demonstrate that setbacks are temporary, but the determination to overcome them is enduring. This concept is particularly crucial for MLs who need to see the resilience they often bring reflected in the classroom or the school building

These three foundational elements—patience, listening, and honesty—act as the guiding principles that inform mentors' practices and provide them with a solid foundation from which to support the growth of their mentees. Despite the temptation to take control, mentors recognize the importance of relinquishing control and "embracing the messiness" inherent in the learning process.

Navigating the Multifaceted Dimensions of Time in Mentorship Dynamics

Given the nature of the foundational elements outlined above—patience, listening, and honesty—time emerges organically as a relevant theme. These elements of

effective mentoring inherently require time for their development and application within a relationship. Understanding how time interrelates with these elements is essential for their implementation in real-world education settings.

As mentors guide PSTs through the complexities of teaching, they grapple with different dimensions of time. Each of these dimensions plays a crucial role in the mentoring process shaping the mentor-mentee relationship and facilitating the latter's professional growth. Time appears to be a precious resource for both mentors and mentees. Mentors need dedicated time in their schedules to provide guidance, feedback, and support to their mentees, while mentees need time to learn and develop. In this section, I explore the theme of time and provide insights into how mentor teachers navigate, think about, and allocate their time to effectively support the growth and development of PSTs. Across the sample, mentors underscore the crucial role of time commitment in effective mentoring and the responsibility associated with undertaking the mentoring role. With a simple yet profound statement—if you don't have time, don't be a mentor—mentors emphasize that fostering meaningful mentor-mentee relationships and guiding mentees as they develop professionally demands a substantial investment of time and attention. Time, therefore, becomes an essential element that shapes how mentors think about mentoring and how they enact their practices. Harper illustrates this point: "If you don't have the time to commit, to allow other people the time to ask questions…, then it's not going to work."

Harper's statement underscores the critical role of time commitment in undertaking the role of mentors and in fostering meaningful mentor-mentee relationships to PSTs through their professional journey. As mentors recognize the responsibility

associated with their role, they acknowledge that dedicating sufficient time and attention is indispensable for nurturing the next generation of educators and ensuring their success in their internship. Ashley, a secondary school mentor who retired the day after we did our interview, seconds Harper's view and also highlights the importance of allocating time for one-on-one meetings to support PSTs: "Make sure you can put time in your schedule to meet with this person, one-on-one." As mentors prioritize allocating time for one-on-one meetings and providing support, they attempt to ensure that PSTs receive the guidance and resources they need to navigate their professional development successfully.

Mentoring: A Process that Requires Time

All of the participants in the sample, without exception, view mentoring as a dynamic and ongoing process. They emphasize the significance of giving PSTs time to feel comfortable in the new environment and to progress in their development gradually. Mentors appear to prioritize the process of mentoring over its eventual outcomes demonstrating a keen interest in how PSTs navigate and internalize their learning-to-teach experiences. This understanding underscores the complex and multifaceted nature of mentorship, wherein the focus extends beyond mere attainment of predetermined goals to encompass the holistic growth and development of PSTs within the teaching profession. In line with this perspective, Maddy articulates the importance of going step by step in mentoring, stating: "go slowly, move slowly, one step at a time…One thing you're working on at a time, support them through that here and now, and then move on to the next one. It can be overwhelming for them, you know."

As Maddy's quote illustrates, a focus on process—the sequence of actions and experiences involved in a particular endeavor—inevitably requires being grounded in the present moment. This entails deliberately directing attention to the actions, efforts, and experiences involved in the here and now—as PSTs *are* experiencing their internship. Mentors report wanting PSTs to thrive in their internship and in their future careers as ESL teachers and they recognize that nurturing a strong foundation in the present is crucial for building a successful future. Therefore, grounded in the belief that the present creates the future, mentors stress the significance of actively shaping the current moment. Nonetheless, mentors also acknowledge the daunting nature of being an ESL teacher, where the multitude of tasks and responsibilities (e.g., interacting with general education teachers, caseload management, interacting with families, advocating for students) can detach PSTs from the present moment. Mentors believe that when PSTs feel overwhelmed by the multitude of tasks ahead, they might lose sight of the present moment and the valuable opportunities it presents for meaningful connection and growth. As Maddy suggests, their focus is on progressing "slowly and one step at a time."

Further, participants highlight the distinct aspects of mentoring ESL teachers alluding to the complexity inherent in working in the field of multilingual education—regarding the multiple responsibilities ESL have to attend to (e.g., testing accommodations, caseload management, monitoring advanced students)—and underscoring the importance of gradually introducing PSTs to each aspect of the work. Courtney elaborates on this complexity and explains how she supports mentees navigate these duties,

> …So, I try to chunk it bit by bit, and not involve the student teaching intern in everything *right off* the bat, but kind of starting to talk them through *chunks* of 'okay well, here are some of the things…which one of these you want to learn about a little bit more this time'….

Courtney's perspective emphasizes the importance of pacing and deliberate guidance in supporting mentees' professional growth. Her insights underscore the need to scaffold the learning process to ensure that mentees have positive experiences during their field placement and are equipped with the necessary skills and understanding to thrive in their teaching roles. By breaking down tasks into manageable chunks and gradually involving mentees in different tasks, Courtney seeks to create a structured learning environment that mitigates feelings of overwhelm and fosters confidence. In essence, Courtney's approach exemplifies the nuanced and supportive mentorship necessary for navigating the complexities of multilingual education effectively.

Mentors uphold the conceptualization of mentoring as a process that requires time so strongly that they actively advocate for mentees to have ample time to learn incrementally. Faced with policies that go contrary to this view of learning-to-teach, mentors take the reins and challenge the status quo by doing it *their way.* In the following excerpt, Jessica expresses her concerns about the TEP's approach to student teacher experiences: "I think it's *too* much, *too* fast…and I get it, right? The idea is you're supposed to experience the stress and the planning of a full teacher caseload. Well, they're going to have that soon enough." Jessica wonders if a one-size-fits-all approach is really beneficial for all PSTs by specifically recognizing the unique feature of mentoring a PST—a once in a lifetime experience before mentees start their official practice as

certified teachers. The phrase “they’re going to have that soon enough” represents a unique opportunity for PSTs to establish the foundational skills and resilience necessary to navigate the challenges awaiting them in their future teaching career. Mentors believe that by rushing through this critical developmental stage, there is a risk of inadequately preparing PSTs for the rigors of managing a full teaching caseload independently. Emma reinforces Jessica’s idea by advocating for a more gradual approach, emphasizing the importance of allowing PSTs to focus on quality lessons and reflection rather than overwhelming them with excessive responsibilities: “I think that’s what we should be doing [focus on quality lesson and reflecting on what I did and what I could do better] rather than just here’s what it’s like, because we’ll only just scare them off.” For Emma as well as for Jessica, it is imperative to provide a supportive and gradual transition process. This involves seeking to ensure that PSTs acquire solid foundations and the confidence needed to confront the demands of the profession with competence and resilience when the time comes.

Jessica further demonstrates her approach to mentoring by taking a proactive stance in addressing concerns with the TEP regarding a former mentee. Recognizing the potential implications of strictly adhering to the TEP’s directives on the mentee’s future in the profession, Jessica takes initiative to express her apprehensions and eventually acts on them:

> Last year, [PST] was supposed to take over my whole caseload…And I told [TEP] that ‘I know you want me to do this, but I feel like this teacher will walk out and you’ll never have them in the profession.’ So, should I do it your way, or should I, and so we did it *our way.*

Jessica's assertion, "I know you want me to do this, but I feel like this teacher will walk out and you'll never have them in the profession," underscores her commitment to mentoring and the teaching profession as a whole. By taking charge of the mentorship process, Jessica advocates for her mentee and strives to ensure they work in a supportive learning environment that provides the necessary scaffolds they need to succeed. Her approach does not only attend to her mentee's development as a teacher but also connects with her past experience as a PST. This connection fuels her empathy and understanding of what her mentee is experiencing, as she recalls her own challenges during that time: "when I was a student teacher, I just felt so stressed. I was like not getting any sleep, I was not able to really focus."

It is important to clarify that mentors said that their perspectives do not stem from a desire to shield PSTs from challenges or the realities of teaching. Instead, mentors are committed to exposing PSTs to the authentic demands and complexities of teaching—'the real deal'—as explored in more detail above and in chapter five. However, they emphasize the importance of providing PSTs with the necessary support and foundational skills to effectively confront and overcome these challenges when they do come up in their future practice. Their ultimate goal is to ensure that PSTs develop the resilience and competencies required to address the complexities of teaching MLs. This goal extends beyond imparting pedagogical strategies; mentors also seek to cultivate in PSTs a deep understanding of the systemic inequities often present in educational settings. Mentors aim to cultivate in PSTs a critical awareness of these issues, empowering them to advocate for their students and stand up against injustices—inequitable learning opportunities and/or teaching practices. This also involves fostering collaborative

relationships with colleagues, recognizing that collective efforts are essential in supporting MLs learning to ensure content accessibility.

These examples also shed light on the emotional dimension that mentor teachers identified as inherent in the learning-to-teach process. Mentors exhibit a profound understanding of the impact of emotions on learning. They recognize that stress triggers the release of cortisol, a hormone known to hinder cognitive function. They acknowledge that an overwhelmed mind hinders effective learning and that cognitive overload is counterproductive to the learning process. Consequently, they intentionally work to mitigate overwhelming PSTs (e.g., going one step at a time). Among the mentors interviewed, Jessica, with over 30 years of teaching experience, stands out as someone who vividly recalls the stress and challenges of her own learning-to-teach journey. This enduring memory highlights the lasting impact of emotional experiences on mentorship and stresses the importance of understanding the way emotions and cognition interact in PSTs' developmental process.

In the interviews, mentors also contemplate another dimension of time: The wisdom gained through experience. They emphasize that years of teaching experience and familiarity with the institution are fundamental aspects for effective ESL mentoring, to the extent that being a good mentor appears to hinge on these factors. Amy reflects on her experiences and candidly admits: "I don't think I was a very good mentor my first, like five years of teaching. I was so wrapped up and trying to figure out what I was doing next, I couldn't think out loud as much." Her statement highlights the challenges faced by novice mentors and underscores the importance of time and experience in developing effective mentoring practices. The pedagogical concept of *thinking out loud*—verbally

articulating one's thought process while mentoring/teaching—emerges as a key practice in ESL mentoring. This view resonates with other mentors in the sample. Ashley for instance, when asked how she learned to be a mentor, preceded her answer with the following statement: "Oh, boy! I couldn't have done it until I was at least five years in." Ashley's emphatic acknowledgment, "Oh, boy!," at the outset of her response vividly highlights the belief that effective mentorship demands a wealth of prior teaching experience, further emphasizing the critical role that time and experience in the profession play in shaping successful mentoring practices.

Tenure within the school building is another dimension of time mentors see as key to mentor effectively. This dimension appears to be particularly important for mentors; it even holds greater significance than the years of teaching experience. Mentors regard familiarity with the school building as foundational for understanding its unique challenges and effectively supporting PSTs within this context. In other words, years of teaching experience is relevant for mentor teachers, but knowing the institution well has a greater impact on how they think and enact their mentoring practice. Emily supports this argument by means of a self-evaluation of the previous year's mentoring experience: "I will be forthright in saying that I don't think I did the best job being a mentor teacher this past year. I was *new* to my school building." Emily does not only acknowledge that time in the institution is vital to do a good job as a mentor, but also ponders on the emotional toll of starting working in a new institution as she further elaborates: "I think I was pretty stressed myself…I just felt like my time was really focused on administration, and not as much on mentoring and those important conversations [dialogue between mentor and mentee]." This reflection provides additional insight into the challenges faced by

mentors, particularly when navigating the demands of a new school environment. Her acknowledgment of feeling stressed underscores the adjustment period that accompanies acclimating to a new school setting. In addition, her observation that her focus was primarily on administrative tasks rather than mentoring, serves as a reminder of the competing priorities that mentors often contend with in their roles. Further, Emily capitalizes on her experience and reflects on a potential requisite for mentor recruitment: "I think that should really be an expectation that the mentor teacher sets aside time to meet with their mentee on a routine basis that's scheduled in." This does not only speak to the need for mentors to balance responsibilities (e.g., administrative responsibilities and time for dialogue between mentors and mentees—essential for supporting PSTs effectively) but it also speaks to the need to revise school's and TEP's criteria governing mentor selection.

Time spent within the institution is crucial for ESL mentors, as familiarity with the school and its community enables mentors to establish vital relationships. These include building rapport with colleagues, fostering relationships with administrators, and nurturing connections with students and their families. In our interviews, mentors hint at this singular aspect of learning to teach ESL. Unlike general education PSTs, —that would only need to interact with their mentor teacher and maybe team members of their mentor—ESL PSTs need to learn to interact and collaborate with a huge number of general education teachers. Therefore, time in the institution has a relevant significance for ESL teachers. In addition, ESL mentors recognize that the academic success of MLs relies significantly on the professional relationships and rapport that they can establish with other teachers (e.g., Math, history, etc.). Collaborative efforts between ESL and

content-area teachers are essential for planning effective instruction that supports MLs' equitable access to the curriculum. However, ESL teachers often encounter challenges when content-area teachers are hesitant to collaborate or do not fully understand the unique needs of MLs. This can lead to barriers for MLs in accessing content and may contribute to feelings of isolation and disengagement from the school community. Therefore, the time invested in building relationships with general education teachers becomes paramount for ESL teachers to effectively navigate these challenges and advocate for the needs of their students in their building. Amy' experiences working alongside PSTs serve as illustration of this point. She reflects on her mentoring role during her initial five years at her current school, despite already having eight years of teaching experience. However, she acknowledges feeling less effective with those PSTs during that period, attributing it to the absence of established relationships with her colleagues. As she elaborates,

> …I didn't have the relationship with all the colleagues yet to say 'she's [PST] coming into your classroom.' So I've been at the school now for like nine years. So, it's easy for me to say, 'this is an amazing student teacher, 'here's what she's going to do in your classroom' because I have all those relationships pre-build.

The narrative shared by Amy highlights a significant concern among mentors, particularly regarding the impact of time for building relationships with other teachers on the mentor-mentee dynamic. This perspective, exemplified in Amy' experience underscores the challenges mentors face in effectively advocating for their mentees when they lack established connections with colleagues.This conceptualization of equity as synonymous with time, becomes a source of concern for some mentors. Becky expresses

her concern about these realities. Through a heart-felt account, she sheds light on the relentless efforts of ESL educators to "empower teachers to do some of the scaffolding" and secure access to the curriculum for MLs.

> …How are these baby new teachers going to motivate the whole staff to do the kind of work that's necessary for the students to be able to have access to the curriculum. It's really hard…it takes *time* to stand up and be like, this *needs* to happen, this *needs to happen*, this *needs* to happen.

Becky's quote illuminates her genuine concern for PSTs navigating the educational system and the daunting task of motivating colleagues to prioritize the work needed to ensure MLs' right to education. The repetition of the phrase "this needs to happen" underscores Becky's conviction regarding the urgent need for systemic changes. Becky emphasizes that these changes are crucial for ensuring students' access to the curriculum that require broader, structural changes that go beyond individual actions. However, this repeated assertion also underscores a sense of frustration and suggests a feeling of being overwhelmed by the magnitude of the task at hand and the challenges inherent in advocating for change in the face of systems that do not change and continue perpetuating inequities and placing the burden of responsibility on individual efforts.

It is worth noting that Becky is the only mentor teacher in the sample who was identified as a language learner when she and her family immigrated to the US. Throughout the interview, Becky's emotional intensity and vivid recollection of her experiences as a student were palpable, particularly when discussing the accessibility of content. These moments revealed an even deeper emotional resonance. Her account resonated with a sense of empathy and understanding, perhaps stemming from her own

struggles as a student “not knowing anything”, and “being completely lost.” Her unique perspective likely enables her to empathize more profoundly with the challenges faced by her MLs and her mentees, particularly those who are also MLs. It is evident that Becky’s personal experiences have shaped her mentoring philosophy, infusing it with a heightened sensitivity to the needs and experiences of diverse learners.

The participants’ statements underscore the invaluable role that accumulated experience, both in the form of years of teaching experience and tenure in the school building, plays in shaping effective mentoring practices. Time teaches mentors how to apply their learnings and lets them craft their own story of mentoring. Perhaps the most valuable contribution of time comes from the self-awareness it gives mentors about their strengths, points of growth, and perseverance to working with MLs and toward more equitable educational environments. Therefore, these mentors stress the need for mentors to first establish a solid foundation in their teaching practice, including familiarity with their school network and community before undertaking the responsibility of guiding PSTs.

The chapter that follows, illuminates the dynamic interplay between mentors’ conceptualizations and enactment of those conceptualizations. By scrutinizing how mentor teachers translate their conceptualizations into actionable strategies within the mentoring relationship, I gain a deeper understanding of the complexities inherent in the mentoring process in the field of ESL.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS

In Chapter four, I provided an analysis of mentor teachers' perspectives on mentoring, illuminating their conceptualizations, and the intricate dynamics of mentorship within K-12 PST education. In this chapter, I analyze the various strategies mentor teachers use to support ESL PSTs. Building on the insights gleaned from the preceding chapter, Chapter 5 delves further into the practical implementation of mentors' practices. This transition sets the stage for addressing the next research question posed in this study about how mentor teachers mentor "in action." I specifically seek to understand the strategies mentor teachers use, how they use them, and why they use them. Through this exploration, I provide insights into the effective support mechanisms mentors report employing to foster the professional growth and development of pre-service teachers.

In our interviews, mentor participants discuss a variety of strategies that they use to support PSTs during the different stages of the mentoring process. In this section, I elaborate on the strategies that I identified as key to supporting the development of PSTs during their field experience: 1) Safeguarding moments: Grounding time, 2) Engaging in reflective mentoring dialogue—disclosing the backstage of teachers' actions: Making mentors' thinking visible, harnessing the power of questions, and empowering feedback, 3) Understanding the foundations to teaching multilingual learners—building relationships: Student-PST connection and building relationships: Teacher-teacher connection, 4) Empowering PSTs: Mentors as advocates, and 5) Developing mentoring supports: Creating personal strategies—implementing self-developed strategies and weathering challenging moments. It is worth clarifying that these strategies, with the exception of safeguarding moments, do not often have clear cut delineations. This

observation suggests that ESL mentorship operates within a dynamic framework, where strategies adapt and evolve based on the unique needs and circumstances of each PST and mentor teacher, and the specific context of their practice. Such fluidity highlights the "messiness" mentors allude to in the interviews as inherent in the mentoring process. This messiness does not escape the current report.

Safeguarding Moments: Grounding Time

All of the mentor participants in this study report on the importance of allocating dedicated time to engage with PSTs before the start of the school day. This "protected time," as some mentors refer to it, is non-negotiable. This means that this time is safeguarded from other obligations or interruptions, emphasizing its significance in the mentoring process. This practice aims to center, orient, and mentally prepare PSTs for the tasks ahead and also allows them time to ask any last-minute questions that may come up. This process of connecting PSTs to the day of teaching is a vital strategy used by mentors due to its multiple benefits. Mentors explain that creating this space does not only help mentees reduce the stress typical of starting any new activity but it also provides a sense of purpose to their day. Thus, it offers a solid foundation that is more difficult to be shaken by setbacks and/or unexpected circumstances that may occur throughout the day.

Different mentors implement this strategy differently. This difference is not necessarily related to a particular mentoring style as much as it is related to the contexts in which the mentorship happens (e.g., elementary versus high school, engagement in collaborative planning with content teachers, language programs the school offers, teaching their own class versus push-in and pull-out). For some mentors, this takes the form of a quick check-in about the plans for the day. Kate illustrates an example of what

this looked like in her daily practice with her former mentee, Ian: “I will loop him in on calendar invite. For example, field trip, science meeting day…today looks like tatata…A quick verbal check-in. Then it’s off to the races.” As she further discusses, this helps them get ready to “hit the ground running” to start the school day.

For other mentors like McKenzie, an experienced middle school teacher, grounding time involves setting up the technology (e.g., computer, slideshow) alongside the PST to prepare to receive all the students. McKenzie explains that as she teaches many classes consecutively, she needs to make sure that the technology functions smoothly to guarantee her students have seamless access to instructional materials for each class. The mentors who adopt this practice have a system in place in which their mentees receive access to all the class materials in advance since during grounding time, detailed discussions about the day’s lessons content do not occur. Conversely, for other mentors, grounding time consists of previewing the lesson and engaging in brief dialogue. During these interactions, mentors and mentees do not only discuss key points of the day’s lessons, but also discuss individual students. Emily, for instance, highlights the importance of addressing specific information about students. This could include new information facilitated by counselors or other service providers, such as special education teachers to ensure that MLs receive the support(s) they need.

In sum, grounding time emerges as a crucial strategy mentors employ. This dedicated time offers PSTs a solid foundation for their day ahead while nurturing the mentor-mentee relationship and fostering a sense of self-confidence in mentees. By providing a space for centering, orienting, and mental preparation, mentors equip their mentees with the tools and mindset necessary to navigate the challenges of the day. The

varied approaches to grounding time mentors use show how it can be adapted to suit various contexts, moments throughout the mentoring process (e.g., beginning, middle, or end of the internship experience) and teaching/mentoring philosophies. Whether it is through quick check-ins, technological setup, or reflective dialogue, this "protected time" before starting the day serves as an opportunity for mentor teachers to provide guidance, set expectations, and establish a supportive atmosphere for the upcoming teaching experiences.

Engaging in Reflective Mentoring Dialogue

Another strategy mentors use with PSTs is engaging in reflective dialogue. It provides a framework for mentors and PSTs to engage in meaningful conversations about teaching practice, instructional decisions, and professional growth. Despite the challenges posed by time constraints, mentors strive to create opportunities to facilitate this type of dialogue. These include scheduled meetings, impromptu discussions—in or outside the classroom (e.g., during lunch, in the parking lot, over text message), a quick note, or thumbs-up signal during class. Mentors seize these fleeting opportunities to creatively connect with their mentees and address teaching challenges. Within this context, mentors employ various strategies to scaffold this reflective process and support the development of PSTs' pedagogical awareness and decision-making skills.

Disclosing the Backstage of Teacher's Actions: Making Mentors' Thinking Visible

Mentors emphasize the importance of making their thought processes transparent and accessible to PSTs. This practice is rooted in the belief that effective mentorship involves not only modeling teaching strategies, but also articulating the underlying rationale behind those actions. By verbalizing their decision-making process and

problem-solving strategies, mentors provide PSTs with insight into the cognitive processes involved in effective language instruction. Put simply, mentor teachers unpack their teaching knowledge to make it visible to their mentees and share not only *what* they do, but also *why* they do it.

This process of thinking out loud happens intentionally throughout the school day. For example, during lesson planning sessions mentors engage in explicit discussions about instructional choices, stressing the considerations and goals that inform their decision-making. According to mentors, this allows PSTs to observe firsthand how experienced educators navigate pedagogical challenges and adapt their strategies to provide effective instruction for MLs. Mentors also seize opportunities to make their thinking visible during debriefing sessions at the end of the school day, to reflect on the outcomes of instructional decisions and explore alternative approaches. By engaging in reflective dialogue, mentors and PSTs co-construct knowledge and deepen their understanding of effective teaching practices.

Mentors also engage in this process of thinking out loud in real-time as they deliver instruction. Mentors find this practice to be particularly relevant for PSTs as it helps them "see live" (Emma) how instruction may not always go as planned, highlighting flexibility and adaptability as critical qualities of effective ESL teachers. This approach provides PSTs with valuable insights into the ever-changing dynamic of the classroom and the need to adjust instructional strategies based on students' responses and evolving circumstances. It also sheds light on the complexity of teacher reasoning and the various things teachers attend to simultaneously. Emma explains what this looks like in practice with her mentee. In the quote below, she describes a conversation she had

with a former mentee during instructional time when she was sharing with him how she was thinking about a situation they were observing in class during push in instruction:

> I'm thinking about 'that student is resisting X, because they're feeling too vulnerable. What's my next strategy? How can I create a space for that student to do their work in *that* moment.' I'm thinking about the student, I'm thinking about their psychology, I'm thinking about all that, and more…

According to mentors, this experience contrasts with the limitations of university coursework, where mentees often engage in scenarios and hypotheticals about teaching practices but without the opportunity to delve into the real-life scenarios that must be thought through. Thus, mentors create this unique space for PSTs to bridge the gap allowing mentees to gain valuable insights into the complexities of real-world teaching and teachers' thinking.

Harnessing the Power of Questions

Another prominent approach mentors report using to support PSTs is the consistent and deliberate use of questions. Mentors actively pose questions that aim at 1) deepening mentors' understanding about how PSTs are perceiving their experiences in the classroom and 2) supporting PSTs' development of their teacher's thinking and self-reflection. In other words, mentors prompt PSTs to consider their actions, decisions, and teaching practices more deeply and push them to provide a rationale for them.

When discussing the questions mentors most frequently ask mentees, mentors outline three key questions: 1) What worked well, 2) what did not work well, and 3) how can we improve for the future. These questions serve as a structured framework for engaging in reflective dialogue and self-assessment. Mentors typically employ this

systematic reflective approach, referred to by Courtney as “reflective processing,” either at the end of each class or at the end of the school day—depending on the mentor's schedule and the demands of each particular day. Mentors are intentional about creating this space for PSTs to debrief the classroom experience. When mentors pose the question ‘what worked well?,’ they encourage PSTs to notice and recognize effective teaching strategies or classroom management techniques. On the other hand, the question ‘what did not work well?,’ prompts mentors and PSTs to identify obstacles or ineffective teaching approaches that may have hindered student learning or engagement and potential areas for improvement openly. Last, the question ‘how can we improve for the future?,’ encourages mentors and mentees to collaboratively brainstorm alternative strategies for future lessons. It prompts them to proactively address areas of growth and consider different alternatives to implement in practice.

While the structured framework of reflective questioning provides a valuable foundation for mentorship and encourages mentees to reflect on their instruction, the questions posed often remain at a surface level, which is not surprising given the shortage of time mentors experience. However, one mentor in the sample adopts a more nuanced approach that goes beyond these commonly asked questions. Kate brings a unique perspective leveraging techniques from her experience as a coach. By integrating her funds of knowledge—in this case her five years of experience training as a coach—Kate pushes PSTs to reflect more in-depth. Kate incorporates additional questions to this framework: 1) “why?”—why something worked or did not work—and 2) “who did it work for?” She explains that this approach pushes PSTs to develop a more critical stance to instructional practices. The “why” question, pushes mentees to elaborate on their

teacher's reasoning. According to Kate, this helps PSTs organize their thinking, clarify their understanding, and generate new insights. The "who did it work for?" question, aims at raising awareness of potential inequities in their teaching methods. This question warrants a critical examination within the realm of multilingual education because it challenges PSTs and mentors themselves to confront the implicit biases and assumptions that may underlie their instructional practices and interrogate whose needs are being met. Thus, Kate guides her mentees to go beyond surface-level reflections and instead consider a more comprehensive view of their teaching practice. Her approach encourages PSTs to critically reflect on whether their instructional strategies adequately support the linguistic and cultural diversity of their students or if they inadvertently perpetuate inequities. In raising this question, Kate underscores the importance of a culturally responsive pedagogical approach and challenges PSTs to move beyond a one-size-fits-all approach to teaching and instead adopt practices that value the linguistic and cultural diversity of their students.

Besides posing questions to PSTs, mentors leverage the questions posed by PSTs as an important source of mentoring. Mentors recognize that the questions raised by PSTs provide valuable clues and indications of their needs, concerns, and areas for further professional development. Consequently, mentors view these questions as optimal venues to differentiate their guidance and provide individualized support to their mentees. Mentors do not only wait for the questions to organically be raised by PSTs, but also explicitly encourage them to ask questions about the things they are noticing. Mentors explain that they expect the question to change as the semester advances, but they deem it important to build a culture of judgment-free question raising space from the start of the

internship—whether part-time or full-time internship. Therefore, mentors prioritize giving time and space to their mentees to first observe them teach and encourage them to ask questions about mentors' instructional decisions (e.g., Why did you do this? How did you plan for that? How do you know?). In this way, mentors initiate a process of metacognitive development in their mentees. Through active engagement with instructional decisions and critical reflection prompted by questions such as why did you do this? and how did you plan for that? PSTs work alongside mentors and analyze teaching strategies, explore alternatives, and evaluate their understanding of pedagogical concepts. Mentors prioritize opportunities for PSTs to observe, ask questions, and reflect, laying the foundation for inquiry-driven teaching practices.

Through this reciprocal exchange of questions and answers, mentors establish a dynamic and responsive mentoring relationship that is centered around PSTs' growth and development. By attending to both the questions they pose and those raised by PSTs, mentors create a supportive and enriching learning environment hoping PSTs feel empowered and comfortable to seek guidance, critically reflect on their practice, and continuously improve as educators.

Empowering Feedback

A significant aspect of mentoring dialogues focuses on providing explicit and direct feedback. The feedback mentors provide typically includes specific examples, actionable suggestions, and constructive criticism aimed at helping PSTs understand their strengths and areas for growth and make necessary adjustments for improvement. Mentors approach feedback with intentionality, leaving no room for ambiguity or uncertainty. By clearly outlining both the strengths that warrant recognition and areas that

require further development, mentors strive to ensure that PSTs have a clear understanding of their progress and of the steps they can take to enhance their skills.

Mentors apply different strategies to deliver feedback. These strategies are not mutually exclusive, and mentors apply them throughout PSTs' placement experience. One of these strategies is focusing on what mentors call 'the glows' first. When providing feedback, mentors typically prioritize highlighting PSTs' dispositions (e.g., desire to learn about their students' backgrounds, focusing on students' assets) and/or effective practices (e.g., use of visuals, message abundancy) before addressing any areas for improvement. In fact, mentors try to make sure that the number of positives always outweighs the negatives. Kelly exemplifies this practice when she describes what she does when she provides feedback: "my goal is to go through *ten* things they did well and *one* thing to work on. You can't work on ten things at once. You can work on *one* thing at once. That's how our brain works." By highlighting PSTs' 'glows' first, mentors attempt to ensure their mentees start to feel more confident about their practice and discover and build on their own strengths as teachers. As Neuquén's quote shows, mentors are not reluctant to provide what they perceive to be negative feedback. On the contrary, mentors report in the interviews to be well aware that the absence of explicit feedback on the things mentees need to improve upon can be detrimental for their development. Moreover, mentors show an open disposition to acknowledging when they themselves "make mistakes" (Kate) or do not know something. However, they consider it important when delivering feedback to PSTs in this stage of their development—pre-service education as opposed to in-service—to place greater emphasis on the positives over the negatives to build their mentees up. Mentors' goals are twofold: First to assist

PSTs in building a strong foundation as teachers so that when challenges arise, they can use those strengths to draw from to overcome contingencies. Second, to model how to provide feedback to MLs. In addition, mentors exhibit an understanding of cognitive processes, recognizing that addressing one specific aspect to improve upon at a time, allows for more effective learning and growth. By making feedback less threatening and more rewarding, mentors think they increase the chances of it being received in a positive way and achieving its intended impact.

Another strategy mentors employ is guiding PSTs to notice what might otherwise go unnoticed during their instructional practices. For mentors, it is important to point out important aspects that may have escaped the attention of mentees but are essential for enhancing the effectiveness of their teaching practice. Mentors selectively implement this strategy when PSTs experience moments of cognitive/emotional dissonance that explicitly prompt them to question why (a) certain aspect(s) of their teaching did not yield the desired results (e.g., “I don’t know why that didn’t work”—referring to a specific strategy). Rather than immediately addressing these concern(s) upon observation, mentors wait for PSTs to verbalize their discomfort. This approach allows mentors to provide a space for PSTs to recognize areas where improvement may be needed before offering explicit feedback on why certain practices may not be or may not have been (as) effective. Once PSTs verbalize their concern(s) and/or discomfort, mentors engage in dialogue to explain the reason(s) that may have made the practice ineffective. Mentors recognize that these moments are potential growth points for the development of PST and should be addressed promptly when they arise.

Amy illustrates this strategy when she retells a conversation she had with her mentee, Allison, who expressed frustration about an activity that did not go as planned and wondered why it had not worked out. In response, Amy said: “it was your directions, they were not clear enough.” Amy first let Allison express her dissonance—mismatch between what she envisioned and what actually happened in practice. Second, she identified the issue—“the directions”—that represented the source of Allison’s dissonance. Third, she provided an explanation for the issue—“they were not clear enough.” Importantly, Amy focused on the action rather than criticizing Allison herself, fostering a supportive learning environment where feedback is constructive and growth-oriented. This approach attempts to ensure that Allison can address the issue without feeling personally attacked, and promotes a positive learning experience for Allison.

In addition, recognizing that Allison may require further assistance, Amy extended her support and provided additional scaffolding in the form of a supplementary resource providing Allison with extra materials to aid her understanding: “I have this article for you to read. Read it, and we’ll talk about it tomorrow.” This action-oriented approach not only fosters dialogue but also aims at bridging the gap between theory and practice by providing Allison with evidence-based resources to apply in her practice. In discussing this strategy, Amy explains that the article she provided was practitioner-oriented and that she intentionally chose it because it “speaks the language of educators” and offers practical insights that mentees can readily implement in their teaching. This echoes the arguments made by all the other mentors in this study about the wide gap they notice between university-based coursework and how mentees experience classroom realities.

The feedback practices mentors employ can empower PSTs by giving them the tools to expand on their self-awareness and consider alternative perspectives to approach their teaching.

By prioritizing PSTs' 'glows' before addressing areas for improvement, mentors build PSTs up, in an attempt to provide them with a strong foundation for their future practice and equip them to apply their learning effectively in the face of challenges. When addressing areas for improvement, mentors prefer 1) focusing on one instance at a time and/or 2) waiting for PSTs to verbalize their dissonance and use those moments as potential growth points providing responsive mediation. In sum, these practices aim at raising PSTs' awareness and empowering them to be better able to reconstruct and transform their practices and make them more theoretically and pedagogically sound.

Understanding Foundations to Teaching Multilingual Learners

The mentors in this study have at the center of their practice both their MLs and their mentees. They understand that they are contributing to prepare the next generation of ESL teachers and are committed to doing so conscientiously. They aim to install in their mentees a sense of what it really means to work in the field of multilingual education and with MLs. At the heart of their practice both as teachers and as mentors lies the understanding that classrooms and schools are places where social change can take place; they work toward this by showing their mentees how to implement practices that promote linguistic diversity and foster inclusive classroom environments. Mentors, therefore, support PSTs in developing effective strategies to support MLs. In this section I describe the strategies mentors consider as foundational for PSTs to learn to effectively support MLs

Building Relationships: Student-Pre-Service Teacher Connection

As teachers of MLs, mentors recognize the significance of building strong relationships with their students. Mentors agree that effective ESL teachers begin with establishing personal connections with students. Supporting PSTs in getting to know students and developing meaningful connections with them, comes at the forefront of mentors' practices. However, mentors recognize that relationship building should be bidirectional since like Amy states: "we can't learn as well from someone we don't know." Therefore, mentors also support PSTs in making themselves "known" to their students. In discussing her learning-to-teach and learning-to-mentor journey, Kate explains that in her opinion "making yourself known" to your students is "one of the biggest things to instill for a mentee." Kate believes that this is particularly important and at the same time challenging for PSTs and teachers alike due to the prevalent individualistic culture in the U.S. and an education system that does necessarily prioritize personal connections. She describes how she reached this understanding:

> I feel like ESOL students have taught me that relationship really *is* the bedrock. I didn't start off that way, I did not grow up with teachers who are like here's my life *beyond,* I'm gonna share a picture of my kids today. I just wanted to teach my class the best way I could. So I realized oh this *is* different from what my education looked like.

Kate explains that it was through her interactions with MLs that she learned about the importance of building relationships with students and becoming available "as a human." She recounts her students telling her "give us more stories," encouraging her to share more about who she is and where she comes from.

Mentors thus emphasize the creation of a supportive community and strive to establish welcoming environments in which MLs and PSTs alike, feel genuinely accepted and valued. Mentors aim to provide PSTs with firsthand experience in developing and cultivating these relationships and with strategies that support them in learning how to get to know their students and amplify their voices. One of the strategies mentors describe implementing is creating opportunities for PSTs to be in contact and interact with students from the very beginning of their internship. For mentors it is important that PSTs learn to get to know their students and develop bonds with them. Mentors acknowledge that relationship building is a process that takes time and effort thus the urgency to support PSTs from day one on working on these relationships. For example, Britney explains that she prioritizes giving PSTs ample opportunities to engage directly with their students "from the get-go." She describes her approach of assigning specific tasks to PSTs, such as providing support to individual students or leading pair or small group activities. Rather than observing from a distance, Britney believes that this hands-on approach fosters the development of meaningful interactions between PSTs and MLs from the outset and paves the way for building solid relationships.

While integrating PSTs into classroom activities during regular class time provides structured opportunities for relationship-building, mentors also recognize the importance of informal interactions in nurturing connections with students. Therefore, some mentors deliberately create spaces outside the typical teaching schedule for PSTs to get to know students and begin developing relationships. According to mentors, these opportunities allow PSTs to initiate and nurture relationships with MLs in a more relaxed and informal setting. Ashley, for instance, creates such alternative spaces within her

classroom before the start of the school day. She gathers all the MLs in her school for breakfast and expects PSTs to join them as well. This approach enables PSTs to spend additional time with students and gain valuable insights into their backgrounds and interests which Ashley argues "it's critical for getting to know them [MLs]." To illustrate the positive impact of breakfast time in supporting the development of PSTs, Ashley shares an anecdote involving a former mentee. She recounts that her mentee learned about the students' excitement for the upcoming soccer World Cup and their desire "to see Messi [soccer player] with the ball." During a planning meeting, the mentee suggested tapping into the students' interests and using Messi as the interviewee for a lesson about celebrities. As this example illustrates, these spaces provide PSTs with opportunities to gain insights into their students' funds of knowledge and incorporate them in their instruction making learning more relevant and long-lasting.

Getting to know MLs, mentors argue, is not only about creating spaces to connect and interact with them, but it is also about gathering detailed information about their educational backgrounds and experiences. Mentors guide PSTs in identifying key questions they must pose when initiating work with new students, enabling them to develop a comprehensive understanding of their students and empower them to provide and/or advocate for the support they need. Courtney lists some of the questions she typically shares with her mentees when a new student arrives in the school: "Do they have experience with our writing system? Do they have first language literacy?" According to Courtney, these questions help PSTs "start figuring out what's best? What's the next step? And what's important?"

Mentors understand that building and sustaining relationships with MLs is key for their learning process and overall development. By taking the time to get to know their students, teachers gain access to their rich funds of knowledge, which can be leveraged to enhance the classroom learning experience. This emphasis on relationship-building extends beyond mere acquaintance; mentors actively guide PSTs in creating meaningful connections with their students. Through intentional relationship-building, teachers can not only foster a supportive learning environment but also empower their students to thrive academically and socially. Thus, mentors play a crucial role in equipping PSTs with the skills and strategies necessary to establish and nurture these connections. Moreover, mentors advocate for PSTs to make themselves known to their students, acknowledging the reciprocal nature of relationship development. Overall, the emphasis on student-PST connection underscores the foundational role mentors think relationships play in effective teaching and learning practices for MLs.

Building Relationships: Teacher-Teacher Connection

As outlined in chapter four, collaboration with general education teachers is key to supporting MLs. Therefore, mentors dedicate considerable time and effort in building relationships with them. Mentors believe that the education of MLs is a collective responsibility among teachers and the school community and are committed to instilling this philosophy in PSTs. However, oftentimes, mentors encounter challenges and their ability to effectively support MLs is compromised. Mentors are intentional in raising mentees' awareness about these potential barriers by working together to overcome them and by sharing their stories with their mentees. Some mentors attribute these challenges to the unwillingness of individual teachers to collaborate. For example, Jessica recounted

an experience with a general education teacher who did not want any disruptions in class. He refused to allow even whispered translations for a fifth-grade Spanish-speaking student who had recently immigrated to the United States. Other mentors attribute these challenges to structural deficiencies such as inadequate training to work with MLs for general education teachers and teacher burnt-out. Emma exemplifies this when she describes her school setting and explains that teachers already feel overwhelmed with school demands and do not have the pedagogical content knowledge to provide quality instruction to MLs. A subset of mentors identifies underlying ideological beliefs as a significant barrier to effective collaboration and support for MLs. McKenzie articulated this perspective by expressing concern that some teachers may struggle to respect and accommodate diverse perspectives and cultures, viewing the U.S.-centric perspective as the primary or only valid viewpoint. Despite these obstacles, mentors remain resilient and resourceful, finding alternative ways to provide support to their students to ensure equitable learning experiences. For instance, in the anecdote of Jessica and the general education teacher above, Jessica explains that she ended up asking the student to open his computer and she typed in Spanish what the teacher was explaining. In this way, Jessica ensured her student had access to the class content.

In consonance with these realities, mentors actively work to raise awareness of some barriers among PSTs and provide strategies to successfully navigate these collaborations. These strategies typically involve mentors taking proactive steps and teaching PSTs how to interact with teachers when they go into their classrooms. Amy illustrates this when she explains how she equips PSTs to navigate varied classroom dynamics. She underscores the practice of ‘gifting’ which involves offering valuable

resources to the classroom teachers. By creating a well-prepared plan with relevant realia, such as puppets, games, or visual aids, PSTs can offer tangible assets that support classroom instruction and facilitate effective collaboration.

Other mentors like Becky, adopt a critical approach that entails as a first step, initiating dialogue with their mentees to analyze observations made in mainstream classrooms. Through this process, mentors encourage mentees to reflect without judgment while at the same time developing critical awareness of their teaching context and how this impacts the learning process for MLs (e.g., students not being exposed to comprehensible input, deficit student perspectives, absence of culturally responsive teaching practices). After engaging in this critical dialogue, the second step is taking action. Informed by their observations and reflective dialogues, mentors and their mentees take action and design materials to support general education teachers support MLs. For example, observing that the newcomer students were not getting comprehensible input in their history and science classes, Becky and Ian, created anchor charts for the teachers. By starting what they called “an anchor chart revolution,” they sought to ensure MLs received visual input to support content instruction and enhance their understanding of concepts. This collaborative effort supported content teachers by providing valuable instructional tools and fostering a culture of collaboration between mentors and mentees and general education teachers.

Among the participants, there is a small group of mentors who, in the absence of a common planning period, collaborate with general education teachers over lunch break. During this time, they require their mentees to be present and actively participate in the meetings with the teachers. Maddy provides an example of how she involves her mentees

during her lunch meetings with the government class teacher. She explains that the three of them would sit together and discuss what went well, what were some of the challenges, and where they were going with the content. During these conversations she would push the mentee to brainstorm ideas of how they would scaffold the material for the students. Maddy would first encourage the PST to think about different scaffolding strategies they had used with MLs in other classes or that they had learned in their university courses and draft a list of three to five strategies. As a second step, she would ask the mentee to choose one or two examples from that list and provide an explanation of why they thought these strategies would work in the context of the government class. Last, the three teachers would use the ideas outlined by the mentee and differentiate instruction to better support the MLs in the government class.

Besides raising awareness about the potential challenges of collaborating with general education teachers, mentors are also intentional in making mentees aware of the teachers who are open to such collaborations. These "breakout star teachers," as Becky calls them, are highly receptive to mentor and mentee input and actively engage in collaborative efforts to support MLs. Mentors express admiration for these teachers and emphasize the importance of recognizing and appreciating the teachers who demonstrate openness and receptiveness to collaboration. Mentors want PSTs to have a holistic understanding of collaboration, being exposed to both the challenges and the opportunities presented by different teachers.

Empowering Pre-Service Teachers: Mentors as Advocates

Mentors emphasize the importance of advocacy and being an advocate for their mentees. While mentors interpret advocacy in various ways, their conceptualizations

often overlap. Regardless of the interpretations of advocacy each mentor has, they all share a common goal that goes beyond a definition of advocacy that is merely advocating for their mentees and extends to empower PST with the necessary skills and tools to eventually undertake an advocate role on their own. In other words, mentors are not just advocating on behalf of their mentees; they are also equipping them with the skills and confidence to be able to advocate for themselves and their MLs.

For many mentors, advocacy entails the crucial task of ensuring the visibility of their mentees. Mentors perceive it as their duty to actively promote the presence and participation of PSTs within both the school community and the broader field of education. This involves not only integrating PSTs into the new work environment but also fostering their engagement with various aspects of the educational field. This type of advocacy takes different forms for different mentors. For some mentors it means introducing PSTs to the community of practice—other ESL teachers and/or the general education teachers they collaborate with and including them in their work with these stakeholders as active participants (e.g., designing lesson plans together, participating in team meetings). Kate, for instance, requires PSTs to join and actively participate during the planning sessions with her "collab teachers," as she calls them. Kate makes sure that as soon as PSTs start their placement, they meet her colleagues in a brief informal meeting (e.g., during lunchtime). This proactive approach, as she explains, not only establishes a foundation of mutual trust and respect between PSTs and her collab teachers, but also fosters a sense of belonging. By facilitating early introductions in an informal context as a first step, Kate prioritizes building relationships and creating a

supportive environment for PSTs to thrive and learn what it is like to collaborate with content teachers.

For other mentors, making PSTs visible takes on a distinct significance that centers around dispelling any sense of isolation or alienation experienced by PSTs. Rather than merely integrating PSTs into the school community, these mentors perceive their role as actively opposing any perception of their mentees as outsiders. To achieve this, mentors prioritize formally introducing PSTs not only to other teachers in the school, but also to power figures within the school hierarchy, such as principals and/or assistant principals. Mentors believe that such experiences empower PSTs to grasp organizational dynamics and develop confidence to engage with individuals in positions of power. According to mentors, this is crucial to support mentees to develop the confidence and skills necessary to advocate for their students. By facilitating these introductions, mentors aim to instill a sense of belonging in PSTs, laying the foundation for them to become active participants in the school community.

Last, for a few mentors, visibility entails expanding the borders of the school community and connecting PSTs to the broader educational community. In other words, it involves mentors using their spheres of influence to facilitate networking opportunities for PSTs and enable them to connect to the broader education field. For example, McKenzie explains that as the former president of a professional organization that brings together ESL practitioners and researchers, she shares her network in the state with her mentees. For her, it is important that PSTs expand their network to have access to a broader network of support and resources that they could later use to better support their MLs. Regardless of the emphasis mentors attribute to making their mentees visible,

ultimately, their goal is to make sure their mentees feel welcomed and part of a community of practice and facilitate access to a broader network of support and resources.

Another interpretation of advocacy is related to the idea of protection. Some mentors believe that it is their responsibility to protect PSTs from being taken advantage of in their schools. For mentors it is important that PSTs know what their role as ESL teachers is and consequently, what roles and tasks they are not supposed to undertake. According to mentors, PSTs need to be clear that they are teachers who specialize in multilingual education and are in the school to support MLs while fulfilling their requirements to obtain an ESL certification. Mentors stress the importance of PSTs understanding power dynamics within educational institutions, particularly noting the unequal distribution of knowledge and power. This emphasis stems from mentors' own experiences as ESL teachers.

Mentors explain that oftentimes, despite their qualifications, ESL teachers are perceived as having lower status compared to their general education colleagues. Kelly voices this concern, emphasizing the need to frequently having to clarify to assistant principals or colleagues that PSTs are not substitutes and/or should not be tasked with responsibilities beyond their scope. She concludes her concern with a summarizing thought: "So, we [mentors] have to make sure that they [PSTs] don't get pulled to sub or get pulled in a million different directions." Neuquén's concluding thought underscores the view that advocacy is not a choice, but rather an essential responsibility for mentors to ensure the well-being and professional development of their mentees. In addition, the

use of ‘we’ in Neuquén’s statement further emphasizes the collective responsibility of ESL mentors in this endeavor.

Advocacy is also providing vital information about policies. Mentors acknowledge that the learning-to-teach process and the whole field experience—that also involves taking courses at university—can at times be overwhelming for PSTs and feel like “too much [information] to take in” (Courtney). However, there is still critical information that mentors consider vital to the role of any ESL teacher. This information involves state policies that directly impact instruction of MLs and consequently ESL teachers’ practices (e.g., testing requirements). Even though mentors agree it is a teacher’s responsibility to intentionally and actively be on the lookout for potential changes in policies, they believe that during the early stages of PSTs’ development, it is the mentors’ responsibility to ensure that PSTs are aware of these critical policies and provide guidance on how to navigate them.

This view is illustrated by Maddy when she discusses the multiple layers the work of ESL teachers involve: “I think it’s the responsibility of the mentor to say, ‘hey listen this is new stuff,’ that’s on us because they cannot take all of that in.” This approach, according to Maddy, alleviates some of the pressure on PSTs and enables them to focus on their growth and development as future ESL teachers while at the same time models the importance of staying informed and proactive in addressing policy changes within the field. This approach may inadvertently lead to a reliance on mentors for policy updates, rather than empowering PSTs to develop these skills independently. However, mentors address this potential issue by actively guiding PSTs on where to find policy information and how to interpret it effectively. They provide concrete examples observed during

placements and direct PSTs to relevant resources. This approach highlights the value of mentorship as a supportive framework for initial learning, and also promotes the long-term goal of developing independent and proactive future ESL teachers.

Last, advocacy also involves intentionality in creating spaces for mentees to have their voice heard. Mentors encourage PSTs to express themselves and use their voice in various contexts, including the classroom, in their mentor-mentee reflective dialogues, in meetings alongside other teachers in the school, and the school community in general. The underlying belief driving this practice is mentors' recognition of the invaluable perspectives and insights that PSTs bring to the educational community. Recognizing she is "not the only person who brings wisdom to the table," Becky provides a rationale that clearly explains the reasoning behind this practice:

> seeing what the other person [mentee] brings and how that can be an asset to my classroom and how they can use that asset. So, it's like, *yes* I want to show the strategies I know to my mentees, *duh,* And also, what do *they* want to share with the students?

Becky emphasizes the significance of embracing students' personal experiences and passions in the learning-to-teach process. She recounts a concrete example with a former mentee who passionately shared his insights on the impact of the LA Riots on the Korean American community. Her mentee's personal connection to the topic not only provided valuable background information but also captivated the students' interest, enabling them to relate their own experiences to the characters in the book they were going to start reading in class. By creating an opportunity for her mentee to incorporate their funds of knowledge, Becky sought to foster a culture of collaboration and mutual respect.

Overall, advocacy in the context of PSTs mentoring, involves mentors intentionally raising mentees' awareness and modeling practical strategies for PSTs to gain the skills needed to advocate effectively for their MLs and for themselves as future ESL teachers. Many of the strategies that mentors employ are anticipatory. This means that mentors—informed by their own lived experiences—anticipate potential challenges and prepare PSTs to face and sort them. This proactive approach is particularly important in the field of multilingual education, where the rights of MLs are oftentimes infringed.

Developing Mentoring Supports: Creating Personal Strategies

All of the mentors in the sample reported not ever having received what they understand as "real training" (Britney) to be mentors of PSTs. Accordingly, they concluded that they learned to mentor by mentoring or as Courtney puts it: "...it was just a matter of jumping in." In the absence of training, some mentors develop their own and unique mentoring supports. Unlike the strategies previously mentioned that aim at supporting PSTs, these personal strategies, as mentors call them, serve a dual function: supporting PSTs while at the same time supporting mentors' work. This dual-purpose approach reflects the adaptive nature of mentoring, where mentors draw from their own experience and resources to address gaps resulting from a lack of formal training. Put differently, mentors bring their funds of knowledge and reinvent them to create effective supports for their mentees and for their own practice as mentors. Below I describe these strategies, how mentors describe employing them, and why they think they are important. Even though I hinted at some of these strategies in chapter four, in this section I provide a more nuanced description and analysis of how mentors employ these supports. Two of

these strategies are practical in nature while the third one is more of a disposition or mindset mentors intentionally apply.

Implementing Self-Developed Strategies

Two mentor participants, Maddy and Amy, articulate the development of personalized strategies that aim at enhancing the effectiveness of their mentorship. These strategies manifest in the creation of tangible resources that support both mentors and mentees. Mentors observe that these resources not only offer vital support but also bridge perceived gaps in the instruction provided by the TEP (e.g., a disconnect between theory and practice). Drawing upon their teaching and mentoring experiences, mentors actively leverage their funds of knowledge to create these support systems.

In discussing these strategies during our interview, Amy shows me a "mentoring binder" she has been compiling throughout all her years as a practicing mentor. Her mentoring binder showcases a deliberate collection of a diverse range of materials that she uses with her mentees—from national and international contexts. She explains that the binder is not only useful for her mentees but also for herself since frequently updating the folder allows her to constantly be in "...a passionate dialogue about best practices for multilingual learners…"

Drawing on her funds of knowledge, Amy curates resources that address specific aspects of classroom instruction (e.g., classroom management, language objectives, teaching reading). Her selection of materials is intentional and guided by 1) the specific needs of PSTs that she identified during her time working alongside them and 2) common questions posed by PSTs. If during her mentorship she identifies a unique need, for example a mentee with not "enough background in reading instruction" or a mentee who

asks a specific question about the effectiveness of their own teaching instruction, she would select one of the materials from the binder and share it with them. In this way, she gives time to her mentees to engage with the reading and later engage in dialogue about the main takeaways. Engaging in dialogue is, to her mind, the most important part of this work. Amy believes that merely sharing an article with a mentee is not effective since "they may not even read it." She believes that learning occurs through dialogue between herself and the mentee, where the mentee is afforded the opportunity to articulate their thoughts and draw connections between the readings, their classroom experiences, and the theories taught in the TEP.

While compiling this binder, Amy explains that she engages in critical reflection and carefully evaluates materials to ensure inclusion of resources that she deems most beneficial for PSTs' development. Using the WIDA standards (WIDA, 2020) as an example, she illustrates how she goes about her inclusion and/or exclusion criterion:

> I don't think the new WIDA standards are very good. I think they're much more complicated to read, and I don't think they help teachers as much. And so, I've kept the old ones. So that we can like this is what that used to look like [laughs] the language was better, clear.

Amy clearly prioritizes clarity and usability for PSTs. By retaining the older standards, she aims to provide her mentees with accessible resources that facilitate their understanding of language objectives and instructional practices. This quote also highlights Amy' dedication to supporting PSTs and her proactive stance in advocating for resources that align with effective pedagogy to prepare PSTs.

Similarly, Maddy provides her mentees with a tangible and practical resource. Her system involves the use of a shared notebook. The purpose of this notebook is to facilitate communication between her and her mentees. Maddy believes that due to the busy nature of the field placement, there are missed learning opportunities for both mentors and mentees. This means that oftentimes, questions or comments may arise in the midst of an activity, a meeting, an observation, or an interaction and are left unaddressed. The notebook then serves as a platform for both parties to jot down questions, concerns, or reflections that emerge during the field experience. By exchanging the notebook back and forth, Maddy attempts to ensure a continuous flow of communication and a practical solution to overcome the constraints of limited time during the field placement.

This approach appears to be flexible and adaptable and accommodates the informal nature of the moment-to-moment mentor-mentee interactions. In addition, this strategy encourages meaningful dialogue and reflection by allowing time for the teachers to process their experiences. Overall, this asynchronous communication method enables mentor and mentee to establish collaborative and supportive mentorship dynamic, wherein both Maddy and her mentees actively contribute to the learning and development process.

Weathering Challenging Moments

Mentoring PSTs, like teaching, is a relational activity and it entails navigating various interpersonal dynamics (e.g., mentor-mentee, mentor-MLs, mentor-colleagues, mentor-MLs' families). While mentors believe that these relationships are often fruitful, they also acknowledge that challenges may occur as Jessica asserts: "...there're going to

be frustrations, there's going to be disagreements, and that's a *given*." These tensions arise from diverse sources—interactions between mentors and mentees, colleagues, and/or students. While the foundational elements of mentoring from chapter four—patience, listening, and honesty—can certainly help mentors overcome challenges, mentor participants report using a specific mindset to support themselves and their mentees "...when days are tough…" (Kate).

Mentors emphasize the importance of maintaining a focus on the 'why' of mentoring/teaching to overcome difficult moments—whether these be rough days or specific occurrences. Remembering "...why you do it and why it's meaningful…" (Courtney) is mentors' anchor during turbulent times. These intentional reminders resonate deeply with mentors since they serve as a reinforcement of the profound significance of and love for their role—as both teachers and mentors—and its enduring impact on the teaching profession in general and on the field of multilingual education specifically.

In addition, mentors' dedication to fostering meaningful relationships, as articulated by Maddy, highlights the shared purpose and human connection between mentors and mentees: "we may be very different people, but we're obviously in the same role for a reason." This shared sense of purpose not only guides mentors in supporting their mentees but also provides them with strength in their own journey. Further, mentors adopt a resilient mindset, acknowledging that tough days are part of teaching, and it is about "how do you bounce back?" (Becky). Thus, emphasizing the importance of moving forward and learning from setbacks, but most importantly, of never giving up. Mentors recognize that this is of particular relevance in the field of ESL, where their students

often exemplify resilience, strength, and perseverance in the face of challenges. As ESL teachers, mentors understand the profound impact their perseverance has on their students. Mentors acknowledge the mismatch with their students' cultural and linguistic background and think that this is one way in which their students may see themselves reflected in their teachers. This mindset serves as a guiding light, reminding mentors and mentees alike of their purpose as educators. Through their guidance and support, mentors aim to instill confidence and resilience in their mentees, equipping them with the human skills to navigate the complexities of classrooms, schools, and the U.S. education system.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to analyze how English as a Second Language (ESL) mentor teachers think about their work as mentors and how these notions translate into their mentoring practices. Specifically, I sought to answer the following research questions: 1) How do ESL mentor teachers conceptualize their work as mentors of ESL PSTs? and 2) How do ESL mentor teachers enact their practices?. I collected data utilizing the following methods: 1) in-depth semi-structured interviews, 2) classroom observations, and 3) observations of planning/debriefing meetings between mentor teachers and their mentees. For the purposes of this dissertation, the analysis focused on data gathered from the in-depth semi- structured interviews. Participants in the study included 13 mentor teachers who were at the time of the study currently mentoring or had mentored PSTs for the University's TEP. The data were coded, analyzed, and organized first by research question and then by categories and subcategories that I identified in the second cycle of coding. My analysis suggests that ESL mentoring is a complex, holistic, and multifaceted process that takes time and aims at empowering and raising PSTs' awareness about the contexts of their practice and what it means to work toward more equitable and just educational systems. These conceptualizations closely mirror the practices mentors report implementing to support PSTs.

The previous chapters, four and five, presented the findings of this study by organizing data into themes under each distinct research question to produce a readable narrative. The purpose of this chapter is to provide interpretive insights into these findings. In navigating the intricacies of exploring the ESL mentors' conceptualizations

and practices, it becomes apparent that attempting to neatly separate the conceptualizations of their work from the enactment of their practice is a challenging task. Following one of the mentor participants' advice, I will "embrace the messy" and approach this analysis in a more integrated way navigating the complexity inherent in the process of ESL mentorship.

From the data on chapters four and five, I identified three main findings: 1) Acknowledging the role of time, 2) Raising awareness: Relationships matter, and 3) Empowerment: Amplifying mentees' voices. These findings have implications for developing a deeper understanding of ESL mentoring in the field of PST education and collaboration with general education teachers. Below I discuss these findings drawing connections to the existing research and in relation to broader implications for mentoring in teacher education. First, I start with a brief introduction about how this study enters into conversation with the literature. Then, I discuss each theme and their implications. Last, I provide insights into potential avenues for future research.

In previous research, mentors have been recognized as playing a vital role in the preparation of PSTs, with their classrooms regarded as one of the most important features of this preparation (Baco et al., 2023; Kaka, 2019; Parker et al., 2021). As such, mentors have a strong influence on how PSTs come to understand and engage in teaching (Ambrosetti, 2014; Clarke et al., 2014; Kang, 2021). The findings of this study align with existing literature, suggesting that mentors themselves share these conceptualizations. Mentors in this study perceive their role as indispensable in the development of PSTs with some mentors even asserting that "it's impossible to develop your teaching practice" (Britney) without a mentor teacher. Further resonating with the findings of some

researchers (Hodges, 1982; Kissau & King, 2015) who concluded that without a mentor PSTs were unable to successfully navigate classroom practices.

However, this study sheds light on an underexplored area of research; ESL mentoring. Therefore, it adds another perspective to the role and work of mentors—that of the unique expertise and perspective to the mentoring process backed by specialized training and experience in supporting MLs. By equipping PSTs with the pedagogical skills and knowledge to effectively teach MLs, ESL mentors contribute significantly to promoting equity and inclusion within the education system.

Acknowledging the Role of Time

In the literature on teacher mentoring, time often arises as a contentious issue, though typically addressed in passing. Mentors frequently cite time constraints for undertaking training (Kissau et al., 2019), while mentees occasionally report a lack of time on the part of mentors to provide mentoring support (Patrick, 2013). Indeed, the findings in this study suggest that time also represents challenges in mentorship as mentors express feeling rushed and not having as much time as they would desire to to engage in reflective dialogue with their mentees. However, this study expands on the notion of time and the implications it has in the mentoring practice. Thus, time emerges as a fundamental element of the mentoring process, impregnating the whole mentorship experience and adding challenges as well as opportunities.

From the outset, time appears to be a condition *sine qua non* in the mentoring process. The sentiment expressed by some mentors—if you don't have time, don't mentor—underscores time as a prerequisite for successful mentoring. This notion suggests that the availability of time is not merely desirable but essential for engaging in

effective mentorship. Such a conceptualization of time seems to align with mentors' profound views of their roles as indispensable and "critical" (Courtney) in preparing PSTs. Mentors often perceive their roles as not only pivotal in shaping the future generation of educators but also as a commitment to the broader society. In this context, time is not simply a resource to be managed but a crucial element in fulfilling their overarching commitment to mentorship and societal betterment. Time seems to operate as a determining factor that delineates those who can effectively fulfill the role of mentor from those who cannot, acting as a criterion of inclusion or exclusion to mentorship. It is worth noting that in the context of this study, mentors choose to undertake the role of mentors. In contrast, in contexts where mentoring is required (Ambrosetti, 2014), time to perform the activity of mentoring will probably be conceptualized differently.

Time also appears to emerge as the supporting structure for the three core elements of mentoring: patience, listening, and honesty. These fundamental aspects of effective mentoring require time for cultivation, maturation, and meaningful application. Without sufficient time devoted to the mentoring process, mentors believed these crucial elements cannot fully develop or be effectively implemented. While prior research often refers to these elements as important qualities of effective mentors —being patient, a good listener, and honest— (Ellis et al., 2020), the findings in this study suggest that these three elements are not merely innate qualities possessed by mentors; rather, they appear to develop over time and can be cultivated through intentional practice. The insights shared from mentors about how they conceptualize these elements suggest that they can be learned. In other words, they are not static attributes but rather dynamic skills that can be honed and refined over time. This recognition challenges the notion that

effective mentoring relies solely on innate abilities, emphasizing instead the importance of continuous growth and development in these critical areas. As such, these findings contribute significantly to the existing literature by highlighting the malleability of these core mentoring qualities and the potential for intentional practice to enhance mentor effectiveness. Thus contributing significantly to the existing literature.

Further, the findings in this study suggest that mentors view mentoring and thus the development of PSTs as a process that requires time and akin to second language development. Participants seem to oppose views and practices that go contrary to this belief, advocating instead for a patient and gradual approach to learning-to-teach ESL (Johnson & Golombek, 2016). Mentors are specially cognizant about the multitude of tasks and responsibilities inherent in ESL teaching (e.g., interacting with general education teachers, caseload management, interacting with families, advocating for students). This suggests that mentoring ESL PSTs entails unique challenges compared to mentoring PSTs in other subjects (e.g., math, science) and thus may require more time for some PSTs to adjust. The participants' mentoring philosophies appear to challenge the prevailing emphasis on efficiency within the U.S. education system, where rapid progress often takes precedence. Some mentors even stand up against and resist such ideologies when they perceive them as hindering PSTs' development, as exemplified by Jessica's challenge to the TEP when she thought her mentee was being rushed and her final decision to do it "their way." Mentor participants seem to underscore the importance of laying robust groundwork for PSTs so that they acquire the solid foundations and confidence required to navigate the demands and challenges of the ESL teaching profession. This emphasis on creating opportunities to establish solid ground for PSTs

and not rushing them (e.g., grounding time, empowering feedback—focus on 'glows' first) seems to stand out as a central tenet of their mentoring philosophy. Mentors appear to recognize the need for strong teachers who possess unwavering commitment not only to undertake the multiple responsibilities of the work but also to remain strong and be a role model for their MLs. Becky reminds us that being an ESL teacher can sometimes be "demoralizing" when you see all the "scaffolding that is not happening." Thus, mentors underscore the importance of cultivating resilience in PSTs recognizing that the field requires individuals who will persevere in the face of challenges. However, to achieve this objective PSTs need time.

The time spent in the institution emerges as another key finding that shapes the work of mentors. For these mentors, tenure in the school building seems to be one of the most important factors to being an effective mentor. Research on mentoring frequently highlights that teachers would typically start mentoring after two, or more ideally, three years into the profession (Ambrosetti & Deckers, 2010). However, the findings in this study suggest that for ESL mentors it may be ideal to have spent at least five years in the institution before undertaking PST mentorship. Years of tenure within the institution seem to hold even greater significance than years of teaching experience for these mentors. An explanation for this discrepancy in the years, might be the nature of the work of ESL teachers that entails collaboration with general education teachers and more contact with the families of students. Further, time to develop these professional relationships may increase in the case of ESL teachers due to barriers to collaboration ESL teachers often encounter (e.g., the low status of ESL teachers within the school, resistance from other teachers to collaborate, prevalent deficit-oriented discourses about

MLs' cultural and education backgrounds), thus making it more difficult to establish relationships from the outset and needing more time to break through these teachers.

In essence, time—with its various facets—seems to act as a requisite to mentoring ESL PSTs and as the essential scaffolding upon which successful mentoring practices and relationships are built and sustained. Time for these mentors, seems to be synonymous with equity as it appears to represent the commitment required to ensure equitable access to education and support for PSTs and MLs (e.g., time to develop ESL teaching skills, time to develop relationships with teachers, time to commit to mentoring). Ultimately, these findings demonstrate that teacher education and policy makers cannot take for granted the role of time in the field of ESL PST preparation. Amidst the shortage of experienced mentors with at least five years in the profession, addressing barriers to collaboration with general education teachers becomes imperative. TEPs and policy makers can play a pivotal role in advocating for policies that foster collaboration and work toward creating more inclusive learning environments for MLs. For example, collaboration can be a requirement for field placements for general education PSTs (e.g., general education PSTs spending time with ESL mentors and/or ESL and general education mentors mentoring PSTs together). This will naturally necessitate collaboration among teacher educators themselves, to ensure effective preparation for all teachers, ultimately contributing to the advancement of the field and the provision of equitable education for MLs.

In addition, these findings suggest that the process of learning-to-teach ESL may require additional time given the multiple responsibilities that ESL teachers have besides teaching their students. Mentors, as Jessica demonstrates, seem to be inclined to

challenge TEP directives if they perceive that insufficient time is allocated for the development of PSTs, (e.g., PSTs needing more time to plan a lesson, establish relationships with students) and they will challenge the TEP's directives. As a result, TEPs could benefit from revising their guidelines to better align them with the realities of ESL teachers, or advocating for state licensure requirements that reflect these challenges.

Raising Awareness: Relationships Matter

Previous research on mentoring, highlights the role of mentors' in raising PSTs' awareness about the realities of teaching (e.g., how a school works, how to manage a classroom, how to translate theory into practice; Nguyen & Park, 2018; Park et al., 2021). The findings in this study align with previous research in that mentor participants intentionally guide PSTs into these realities. However, the data in this research suggest that the realities of teaching for these mentors include an additional element: relationships—teacher-student, teacher-families, and teacher-teacher. This element though is not simply another add on to the list of realities of teaching, but it seems to be central to the practice of mentors. Thus, these findings extend the conceptualizations of realities of teaching in the literature of mentoring and incorporate relationships as a critical element of the work of mentors. As such, it warrants examination.

The findings in this study suggest that mentors' emphasis on raising mentee's awareness about the pivotal role of relationships is at the center of their mentoring practice and should be done from "the get go" (Britney) since establishing personal connections with MLs is key to their development. Amy reminds us of this when she states: "we can't learn as well from someone we don't know." The data suggest that mentors perceive establishing relationships with students as one of the most

challenging yet crucial tasks for PSTs. This difficulty seems to be rooted in mentors' acknowledgment of the predominant ideologies within the U.S. education system, which often prioritize efficiency over personal connections and the demographic differences between PSTs and their students.

Mentors seem to think that by creating spaces and opportunities for PSTs to have meaningful interactions with students, PSTs can reshape their perceptions of relationships, prompting a process of deconstruction and reconstruction of their understandings and beliefs as they endeavor to "make themselves known" (Kate) to their students. For instance, activities like Ashley's breakfast time serve as such spaces. Further, mentors seem to utilize these spaces for PSTs to learn about their students' funds of knowledge (e.g., Messi and the soccer world cup) organically and start developing an asset-based mindset. Mentors tend to prioritize providing firsthand experiences to PSTs, recognizing the unique value they hold in contrast to theoretical learning alone. As articulated by Amy, there is a sentiment that while theoretical knowledge is valuable, it may not fully prepare PSTs for the complexities of teaching in front of students. Mentors draw from their own transformative experiences working with MLs to support PSTs (e.g., "give us more stories" (Kate)). Thus, this research underscores the indispensable role of mentor-facilitated spaces fostering genuine connections between PSTs and MLs.

Raising awareness in mentees' about the importance of building relationships with general education teachers also seems to be central to mentors' mentoring practices. While mentors seem to be interested in familiarizing their mentees with the potential challenges of collaborating with general education teachers (e.g., Jessica's anecdote about the teacher who did not even allow her to whisper to the student to translate

English to Spanish; Arora et al., 2021), their primary focus appears to lie on showing mentees how to facilitate collaboration to ensure MLs have equitable access to content (Porras, 2019). Mentors appear to be interested in instilling in their mentees the belief that collaboration and equitable access to content are imperative and "need to happen" (Becky). Some of the strategies that they use seem to inspire PSTs to proactively create materials to better support teachers and in turn students. For example, Becky's initiative to create anchor charts with her mentee, Ian, and Amy' "gifting" practice, seem to encourage mentees and offer them opportunities to experience what it is like in real life to support content instruction and enhance students' understanding of concepts.

However, in practice, mentors do not seem to receive the mutual support inherent in collaborative work and collaboration instead oftentimes appears as either a unidirectional effort led by ESL mentors and their mentees—rather than a reciprocal engagement between general education and ESL teachers—or as something to be appreciated in "breakout star teachers" who listen and are receptive to ESL teachers' input. This discrepancy may inadvertently convey a message to PSTs that ensuring the right to education of MLs falls predominantly on ESL teachers and/or is contingent upon the kindness of individual teachers. In seeking possible explanations for the phenomenon, it may be important to consider the absence of guidelines regulating collaboration between general education and ESL teachers within many educational institutions. Without clear directives or structured frameworks for collaboration, ESL mentors/teachers may feel compelled to take on a more directive role, inadvertently reinforcing the notion that responsibility for ensuring the educational rights of MLs rests primarily with ESL teachers. Moreover, the prevailing culture within schools, which may

prioritize individual teacher autonomy over collaborative efforts, could further perpetuate this unidirectional approach to collaboration as well as the lack of built in time in teachers' schedules—both ESL and general education teachers. These factors underscore the need for systemic changes within educational institutions to promote bidirectional collaborative practices that are truly equitable and inclusive, with shared responsibility among all stakeholders for ensuring the right to education of MLs. They also highlight the need for targeted training programs to equip educators with the skills and strategies necessary to undertake such collaborations.

In view of these findings, TEPs could benefit from prioritizing the development of PSTs' relational skills, recognizing them as central to effective ESL teaching and general education—since all teachers, not only ESOL teachers, play a role in facilitating language development and equitable access to content for MLs. This could include coursework, or seminars that specifically address strategies for building rapport with MLs and collaboration across programs (e.g., collaborations between ESL and different content areas). Also, policymakers could allocate resources and support initiatives that promote collaboration among ESL teachers and general education teachers (e.g., professional development).

Empowerment: Amplifying Mentees' Voices

Prior research highlights the role of mentors in enhancing PSTs' confidence and giving them a voice (Giboney Wall, 2018; Izadinia, 2016). However, previous research has not explored how this voice comes into being. Mentor participants appear to leverage their own experiences teaching MLs to empower PSTs to amplify their voices.

The findings suggest that the spaces mentors create by putting into practice the three foundational elements of mentoring seem to encourage mentees to feel comfortable bringing in their funds of knowledge into the classroom. By encouraging mentees to incorporate part of their personal history into the lesson, mentors help them connect to something important and meaningful in their lives (e.g., the Korean community and the LA riots). These intimate connections not only seem to deepen the mentees' engagement with the subject matter but also resonate with students on a personal level. As mentees share their own stories and perspectives, they create opportunities for authentic dialogue and connection in the classroom. These experiences not only allow mentees to share their voice but also enhance their self-confidence and sense of self efficacy.

Mentors also seem to empower and provide opportunities for PSTs to amplify their voices outside the classroom. The data in this research suggest that when mentors have the space and time to engage in collaborative lesson planning with general education teachers, they utilize these opportunities to promote the visibility of their mentees by integrating them into the community of practice in meaningful and productive ways (e.g., Maddy planning in collaboration during lunchtime). By actively involving PSTs in discussions and decision-making processes during collaborative partnerships with general education mentors seem to achieve multiple objectives creating spaces for mentees to feel empowered and their voice to come into being. These include demonstrating effective collaboration with general education teachers, activating PSTs' prior knowledge by bridging theory with practical experiences, and guiding PSTs in developing their teacher reasoning and instructional decision-making. Importantly, this

approach not only gives PSTs a voice but also signals to general education teachers that PSTs are specialists who bring valuable expertise to the table.

By empowering mentees to actively participate in collaborative partnerships and decision-making alongside general education teachers, mentors strive to cultivate a culture of collaboration and shared expertise from the outset. As mentees engage in collaborative planning and decision-making alongside experienced teachers, they contribute their unique perspectives and ideas while also benefiting from the diverse insights and expertise of their colleagues. This enriches the mentee's experience by exposing them to different viewpoints and approaches, ultimately enhancing their professional growth and development. Furthermore, by modeling collaborative practices from the start, mentors set a positive example for mentees, reinforcing and normalizing collaboration as an integral part of the work of teachers—both ESL and general education.

Conclusion

This study has explored how ESL mentor teachers conceptualize their work as mentors and the practices they use and value to support the development of future ESL teachers. The findings in this study suggest that ESL mentoring is a complex process that requires time and aims at empowering and raising mentee's awareness about the context of their practices and what it means to work toward more equitable and just education systems.

Hearing mentors' voices is vital to understand their process of knowledge construction and how they make meaning of the practice. If there is an understanding of how mentors think about their work, what matters to them, and what they value in the

support they provide PSTs, teacher education programs and school districts will be better equipped to implement policies and design training that align with mentors' values, practices, contexts, and teaching philosophies. Such understanding will result in better prepared teachers who are equipped with the skills, dispositions, and pedagogical content knowledge necessary for effective classroom practice.

Avenues for Future Research

Given that mentors draw from their experiences teaching MLs to mentor, future research could investigate the stories mentors share with their mentees during the mentoring process and their impact on mentee development. This research could delve into the types of stories mentors share, such as anecdotes from their classroom experiences or personal narratives related to teaching MLs. Furthermore, examining how these stories shape mentees' understanding of effective teaching practices could provide valuable insights into the role of storytelling in mentorship.

Another potential area for future research could investigate the conceptualizations of ESL mentoring from various perspectives, including those of mentors, TEPs' methods instructors, and mentees. Such an investigation would offer valuable insights into the diverse viewpoints and experiences shaping the mentorship process. Key questions for exploration may include how stakeholders perceive effective mentoring and their roles and responsibilities within mentorship relationships. This type of research has the potential to inform recommendations for enhancing ESL mentorship programs and teacher education policies to better support stakeholders' diverse needs.

An important research path to pursue could also be to examine how mentoring is socially constructed in interactions between mentor teachers, their mentees, and de facto

general education mentors. Using a critical discourse analytic approach, researchers could analyze videos of collaborative planning lessons and specifically look at the discursive resources ESL mentors and their mentees use to advocate for more inclusive and equitable teaching practices and assessments in general education classrooms. This type of work has the potential to expand the field's understanding of mentoring to a practice that involves collaboration across content areas and foundational work toward more inclusive and equitable spaces for students who have been historically marginalized.

Last, future research could examine the impact of mentor-mentee pairs with similar or contrasting cultural and linguistic backgrounds. This research could explore how similar or contrasting backgrounds between mentors and mentees influence the mentoring process. By conducting a comparative study between matched pairs with congruent backgrounds and those with diverse backgrounds, researchers could gain valuable insights into the dynamics of mentorship. Qualitative methods such as interviews, observations, and stimulated recalls, could be employed to examine the experiences, perceptions, and interactions of mentors and mentees in each group, shedding light on the potential benefits or challenges associated with cultural and linguistic congruence or diversity in mentorship relationships.

Teacher education programs and school districts may benefit from increasing the pool of teacher educators, PSTs, and mentor teachers who come from transnational backgrounds. Individuals who have lived experiences of navigating multiple cultural and linguistic contexts, may bring invaluable insights and perspectives to the mentorship process. Transnational teachers usually possess a deep understanding of the experiences and challenges faced by MLLs and their families, as they have likely experienced similar

challenges themselves. Their firsthand knowledge of language acquisition, cultural adaptation, and identity negotiation can inform their mentoring practices and provide meaningful support to ESL PSTs. Furthermore, transnational teachers often have unique insights into the intersection of language, culture, and education, which are essential for fostering culturally responsive teaching practices. Their experiences navigating diverse educational systems and pedagogical approaches equip them with a diverse toolkit of strategies for supporting ESL PSTs in diverse contexts.

In conclusion, exploring the avenues for future research outlined above holds significant promise for advancing our understanding of ESL mentoring and its impact on teacher development and student outcomes. By investigating the stories shared by mentors, understanding diverse perspectives on ESL mentoring, analyzing mentoring interactions, and examining the influence of cultural and linguistic backgrounds on mentor-mentee dynamics, researchers can uncover new insights, address existing gaps in the literature, and ultimately advance the field. These future research directions hold promise for informing the design of more effective mentorship programs, teacher education policies, and classroom practices, ultimately enhancing educational outcomes for MLs and promoting greater equity and inclusivity in education.

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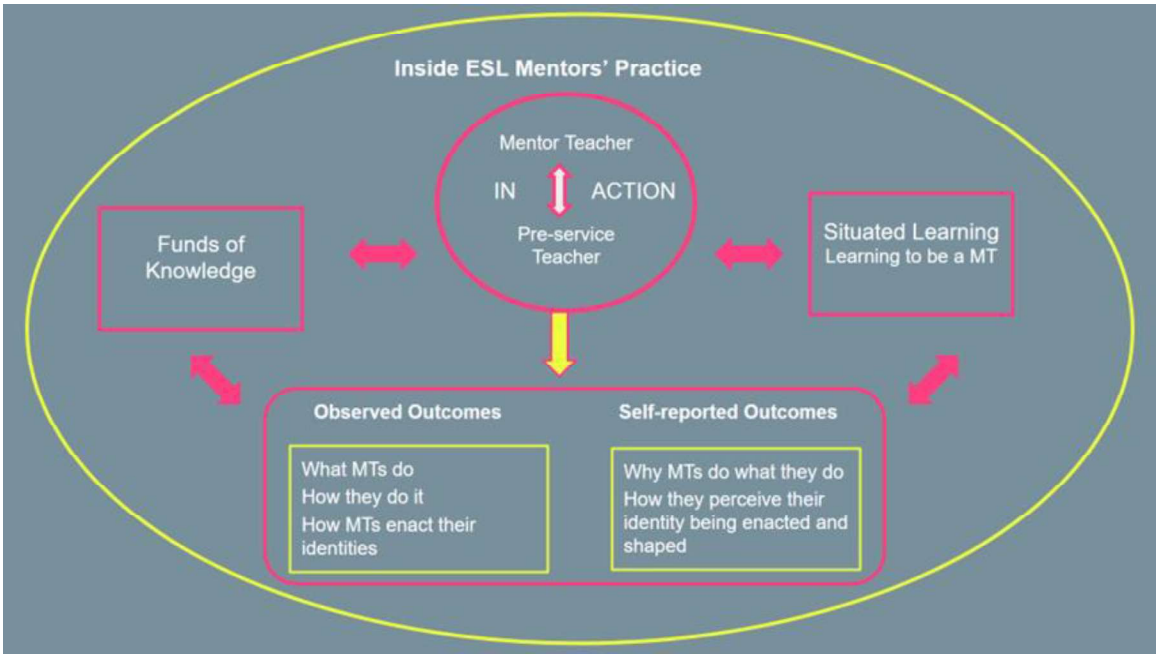
APPENDICES

Appendix A

Figure 3: Visual of Revisited Conceptual Framework



Appendix B

Table 2: Research Question Chart

Research Question	Data Sources	Analysis
1.How do ESL mentor teachers conceptualize their work as mentors?	**Participants:** ESL mentor teachers who work in public schools in *Oak Hill* and *Maple Park school districts* and who are currently working or have worked with the university's secondary teacher preparation program - ESL endorsement- (n= 13). **Interview:** I interviewed mentors once throughout the semester (Approx. 60 mins. semi-structured interview).	**Interviews** were analyzed inductively

2. How do ESL mentor teachers mentor *in action*?		
2a. What strategies do they employ in supporting PSTs? 2b. How do they implement these strategies?	**Participants:** ESL mentor teachers who work in public schools in *Oak Hill County* and who are currently serving as mentor teachers with the university's secondary teacher preparation program - ESL endorsement- (n= 2-4). **Fieldnotes:** I did "school day shadowing" 3 times throughout the semester. I spent the day with the mentor teachers to see their daily routine with their mentees, and I observed three classes. I collected field notes of my observations. **Debriefing/Planning meetings:** I audio/video recorded the meetings of mentors and PSTs 3 times throughout the semester. **Interview:** I may do a second semi-structured interview when I finish doing the 3 observations and collecting data from the debriefing/planning meetings and document analysis.	**Fieldnotes, debriefing/planning meetings, document analysis, and interviews** were analyzed inductively
2c. Why do they report using/use those strategies?	**Interview:** I may do a second semi-structured interview when I finish doing the 3 observations and collecting data from the debriefing/planning meetings and document analysis. **Debriefing/Planning meetings:** I audio/video recorded the meetings of mentors and PSTs 3 times throughout the semester.	**Interviews and debriefing/planning meetings** were analyzed inductively.

Appendix C

Table 3: Demographic Information Table

Pseudonym	Demographics	Teaching experience (Other than ESL)	ESL Teaching Experience	Mentoring experience (Other than ESL)	ESL Mentoring Experience	Grade Level	Linguistic Background
Harper	Female, white	12	2	6	2	Elementary	English
McKenzie	Female, white	25-30	15	N/A	6	Middle school	English, French, Spanish, & some Mandarin
Jessica	Female, white	35	20	1	N/A	High School	English, Spanish, some Portuguese, a little bit of French, and a tiny bit of Swahili
Britney	Female, white	9	8	N/A	5	Elementary	English & Spanish
Emma	Female, white	20	4	16	1	High School	English & Spanish
Kate	Female, white	23	23	N/A	15	High School	English and Spanish
Becky	Female, white	8	8	N/A	4	Elementary	Russian, English, Spanish & a little bit of Ukrainian
Ashley	Female, white	N/A	15	N/A	2	Elementary	English, very little French & Spanish
Emily	Female, white	15	15	N/A	1	Middle School	English, German, & a little Spanish
Courtney	Female, white	30-35	25	N/A	10-15	High School	German, English, French, Spanish, & a little vit of Vietnamese & Russian

Appendix D

Interview Protocol

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. The focus of this study is to explore how ESL mentor teachers view their work and how they experience the mentoring process (what they do, how, and why). If at any point you want to skip a question or stop the interview, please let me know. Your responses will be kept confidential. Do you have any questions for me before we start?

1. What inspired you to become an ESL teacher?
2. What is mentoring for you? How do you define mentoring?
3. What makes a good mentor?
4. Why do you think you are important? [you=mentor teachers]
5. Could you describe what a typical day mentoring a pre-service teacher is like from the beginning of the school day to the end?
6. What do you think is different about being an ESL mentor teacher compared to other types of mentors (e.g., a math/language arts mentor)?
7. How do other teachers in the school support your work of mentor?
8. How did you learn to be a mentor?
9. If you were to design a mentoring program for ESL mentors, how would you do it? What would you include/emphasize? What would you leave out? and why?
10. What advice would you give to a new ESL mentor? [Imagine they are here, what would you say to them?]

Is there anything that we did not talk about that you would like to share?

Demographic Information

Age:

Gender:

Education level:

Ethnicity:

Background

1. How long have you been a teacher?

2. How long have you been an ESL teacher?

3. How long have you been an ESL mentor?

4. How long have you been a mentor for the UVA program?

5. Have you ever received any training to be a mentor? If so, could you please describe it?

    a. Who delivered it?

    b. How long was the training?

    c. What did it consist of (e.g., information, practice, theory)? Please provide specific details

6. Would you be interested in receiving training? Why/Why not?

7. What languages do you speak?

8. What universities have you partnered with as a mentor?

9. How many pre-service teachers have you mentored?

10. Do you hold an endorsement in another area besides ESL?

Appendix E

Observational Code Sheet: Class and Planning/Debriefing Meetings

Date:

Time:

Course:

Mentor teacher:

Pre-service teacher:

To Look for During Observations

How mentors unpack their ESL teacher knowledge and make it visible to PSTs: Examples might include key aspects of ESL practice such as: Asset framing (e.g. regarding students, their families, their cultures, languages), collaboration with other teachers before or during class (e.g., pointing out how policies and ideologies impact students' opportunities, how to advocate for students), application of specialized language knowledge (e.g., language acquisition theories) in practice.

Appendix F

Observation Codes for Write-Ups

OC: Observer comment. Low level inferences like what you think about the function of an exchange, the emotional tone, like stage directions in a play script.

ON: Observer note. Summarizing events and activities that might not be directly pertinent to research interests. Keeps the flow of observation clear without trying to get great detail on everything. Summarizes things said and done with minimal inferences. What wasn’t said.

MN: Methodological note. Notes about how the methodology is affecting data collection. Deals with problems experienced with methods.

TN: Theoretical note. Notes about how observed activities relate to the conceptual framework of the study. Includes abstract ideas that might relate to the passage, questions from theory or the conceptual framework. Category descriptions.