**Educational Needs of Classroom Teachers Regarding Mentoring**

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**Abstract**

Various authors describe mentor teacher as the prominent figure of teaching practices in teacher education program (TEP); therefore, it is crucial that their roles and responsibilities are carefully explained, professional standards are clearly identified, and in-service training is supplied to mentor teachers in relation to mentoring. Recently, much attention has been paid to mentoring teacher candidates in Turkey mostly as many challenges have been faced throughout teaching practices stemming from lack of mentoring skills. Since therefore, the following paper aimed to assess the educational needs of mentor teachers related to mentoring according to the views of mentor teachers, university supervisors, and teacher candidates. This research is expected to shed light on the clinical practices in teacher education programs in Turkey; besides, it is also significant in terms of contributing to the development of a future mentor teacher-training program in Turkey. First, the author frames the issue by outlining the educational needs of mentor teachers from the perspectives of three-study groups, followed by challenges encountered in practice, reasons of having these challenges and possible suggestions for overcoming them, and finally, recommendations for further research are offered.

Three state universities from Ankara and their practice schools were included as the case of this research. It is designed in the framework of concurrent mixed method that allows using qualitative and quantitative research techniques together to extensively deal with the research problem. Data was collected via two interview forms (Mentor Teacher Interview Form and University Supervisor Interview Form) and a scale (Mentor Teacher Competency Scale).

Findings were presented under the headings of “educational needs of mentor teachers” and “challenges encountered during teaching practices, reasons and possible solutions” prepared in accordance with the research questions. Results reveal that classroom teachers need in-service professional training on teaching skills before mentoring skills, for instance, a professional support is needed in teaching methods and strategies, classroom management, curriculum development, ICT (information and communication technologies) etc. As mentoring skills, it is concluded that roles and responsibilities of stakeholders, effective communication, observation and giving constructive feedback, instructional guidance etc. are the preliminary subjects to be covered in detail in a mentor education program. Challenges support the findings of existing literature, particularly lack of communication and interaction between parties, unwillingness to follow up teaching practices, excessive number of teacher candidates in a class etc. Although research results cannot be generalized to nation-wide because of its nature as a case-study, it is suggested that mentor education should be covered in two themes at least for this particular study group, first professional support related to teaching skills, second, mentoring skills.

**Key words:** mentor teacher; mentor teacher education; teaching practice; mentor teacher competency