



A Blended TOT Model for Developing EFL Teacher Trainers' Coaching and Mentoring Performance and Students' Achievement

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ABSTRACT

This quasi-experimental mixed-method study employed both qualitative and quantitative methods to generate a case study of the effect of a tailored blended learning TOT model on improving EFL teachers' professional development. The model assesses teacher trainers' coaching and mentoring performance, as well as tracks the effect on students' achievement. The model is designed to align with the new educational reform "Curriculum 2.0" entailed in Egypt's Vision 2030. A sample of four senior in-service teachers from the foundation and primary stages came from a private Egyptian national language school located in Cairo, Egypt. Each teacher was assigned the same 10-Modules over a 10-week period using the flipped classroom strategy. Kirkpatrick's model of training evaluation was used in this study where the effect of the program was measured on four levels, namely: 1) Reaction, 2) Learning, 3) Attitude, and 4) Results. An additional fifth level was added to the evaluation model to measure the long-term impact of the training. Tools included a pre-post-administered Concept-check Questionnaire, a delayed Concept-check Questionnaire, students' mid-year EFL exam, semi-structured interviews, mentoring/coaching competency checklist, a videotaped reflection, and satisfaction questionnaires. Analysis of triangulated data showed that there was a significant improvement in 1) participants' coaching and mentoring knowledge and skills, 2) attitudes and perceptions of mentors/coaches and 3) students' academic achievement in EFL classes, 4) satisfaction of all stakeholders (i.e., mentors, mentees, parents and students).

نموذج تدريب مدرّبين باستخدام التعلّم المدمج لتنمية كل من الأداء التدريبي والتوجيهي لدى مدرّبي معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية و تحصيل الطلاب

المستخلص

هدفت هذه الدراسة شبه التجريبية الى دراسة فاعلية نموذج تدريب مدرّبين باستخدام التعلّم المدمج لتنمية كل من الأداء التدريبي والتوجيهي لدى مدرّبي معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية و تحصيل الطلاب. تم تصميم النموذج المقترح في الدراسة ليتماشى مع الإصلاح التعليمي المصري الجديد "المنهج ٢٠٠" المتضمن في رؤية مصر ٢٠٣٠. استخدم هذا البحث نهج دراسة الحالة حيث تكونت عينة البحث من أربعة مدرّسين لغة إنجليزية ذو خبرة و معايير محددة من رحلتى رياض الأطفال والابتدائية من مدرسة نفرتاري الدولية (قسم الناشونال) في القاهرة ، مصر. تم تحديد نفس الوحدات العشر لكل معلم خلال فترة ١٠ أسابيع باستخدام إستراتيجية الفصل الدراسي المعكوس. تم استخدام نموذج كيركباتريك لتقييم التدريب في هذه الدراسة حيث تم قياس تأثير البرنامج على أربعة مستويات ، وهي: (١) رد الفعل و نسبة رضاء المتدربين و أصحاب المصلحة ، (٢) زيادة التعلّم متمثل في المعرفة المكتسبة من البرنامج التدريبي ، (٣) التغيير في السلوك متمثل في تطبيق مهارات الإشراف و التوجيه المكتسبة من خلال البرنامج ، و (٤) النتائج الأخيرة من خلال قياس مدى تحسن مستوى الطلاب الأكاديمي في اللغة الإنجليزية. تم إضافة مستوى خامس مقترح عن طريق هذا البحث إلى نموذج التقييم لقياس الأثر طويل المدى للتدريب. تضمنت الأدوات استبياناً للتحقق من المفاهيم تم تطبيقه قبل البرنامج التدريبي و بعده، واستبياناً مماثلاً متأخراً بعد ثمانية أشهر من انتهاء البرنامج التدريبي للتحقق من تذكر العينة لمفاهيم الإشراف و التوجيه التي تدربوا عليها، بالإضافة الى اختبار اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية لمنتصف العام للطلاب في المرحلة الابتدائية، ومقابلات شبه منظمة مع الطلاب و المدرّبين و المدرّسين، وقائمة مرجعية لكفايات التوجيه / التدريب ، و تغذية راجعة للعينة عن التدريب مسجلة بالفيديو ، واستبيانات الرضا للمدرّسين و أولياء الأمور. أظهر تحليل البيانات المثلثة كيفياً و كمياً أن هناك تحسناً ملحوظاً في (١) أداء المدرّبين في استخدام مهارات و معارف الإشراف و التوجيه ، (٢) تصورات و انطباعات المدرّبين عن الأشراف و التوجيه بعد البرنامج التدريبي (٣) التحصيل الأكاديمي

للطلاب في فصول اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية ، ٤) رضا جميع أصحاب المصلحة (أي
المدرسين والمتدربين وأولياء الأمور والطلاب)
الكلمات المفتاحية: تدريب المدرسين ، التدريب والتوجيه ، التعلم المدمج ، دراسة حالة ،
الفصل المقلوب ، نموذج كيرباتريك لتقييم التدريب ، رؤية مصر ٢٠٣٠ ، المنهج المصري
الجديد ٢٠٠ ، إصلاح التعليم المصري

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Introduction

Advanced curricula, smart classes, and well-equipped school facilities, which are undeniably essential, will most likely fail to promote students' academic achievement if the teachers are incapable of using these assets to create an effective and stimulating learning environment for the students. A well-trained, competent teacher can single-handedly affect change and significantly improve students' performance even if he/she has minimal learning resources. Teachers are the pillars and main assets of the educational process; their professional development (PD) is a critical aspect of improving students' learning. Therefore, to build human capital and teachers' capacity, it is imperative to investigate the status quo of the teaching profession in order to make evidence-based decisions regarding teachers' training.

Status Quo of the Teaching Profession

Teaching is known to be a highly complex profession comprising a multitude of challenging situations (Mansfield et al., 2016). Compared to other professionals, teachers have been found to experience the highest levels of stress and dissatisfaction. As a result, many teachers leave the profession during their first five years. Studies that were conducted in different countries confirmed the high attrition rate among novice teachers (Caspersen & Raaen, 2014; Gu & Day, 2013; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Lam & Yan, 2011; Mansfield et al., 2016). Despite evidence suggesting that teacher effectiveness peaks after these few years, many teachers do not stay long enough to reach their peak expertise (Fantilli & McDougall, 2009).

In several countries, the high attrition rate of novice teachers has resulted in a shortage of qualified teachers, with a noticeable impact on student achievement (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). According to international research, novice teachers may experience several challenges as they adapt to their new roles as professionals. Numerous studies have concluded that job satisfaction has positive consequences at the individual and the school levels (Corbell et al., 2010; Malinen & Savolainen, 2016). Several studies, therefore, examined the contextual

factors associated with teacher job satisfaction as a way to reduce, or perhaps prevent, the large numbers of new teachers leaving the profession (Lam & Yan, 2011).

Reasons for Novice Teachers' Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction

Teachers' job satisfaction is influenced by intrinsic factors of facilitating student achievement and self-growth, extrinsic factors of school leadership and climate, and societal factors of status and educational change. Novice teachers who have high levels of job satisfaction are more motivated, committed, and determined to remain in the profession despite job demands (Tait, 2008). They are able to focus their attention and energy on the growth of students and their own personal growth (Lam & Yan, 2011), leading to enhanced teacher productivity and improved educational outcomes. At the organizational level, job satisfaction leads to better interpersonal relationships among colleagues and enhanced cooperation with supervisors (Amorim Neto et al., 2017).

On the contrary, novice teachers at risk of leaving the profession express strong dissatisfaction with their work environment, frustration with interpersonal relationships, and discontentment with mentoring support (Gaikhorst et al., 2014). Dissatisfied teachers become demotivated, thus, losing the ability to motivate their own students and cater to their diverse needs. Further, dissatisfied teachers become prone to higher levels of stress and burnout (Klassen & Chiu, 2010), and lower levels of collective and self-efficacy beliefs (Malinen & Savolainen, 2016).

The literature reveals several factors manifested in different contextual settings with diverse levels of demands or resources (Mansfield et al., 2016). Demands refer to the physical, psychological, or organizational working challenges, whereas resources refer to aspects of the work that reduce demands, support goal attainment, and stimulate teacher learning.

These contextual factors can be classified into three categories depending on whether teachers encounter them at the organizational, interpersonal, or personal levels. At the organizational level, these factors include classroom management, student motivation, diversity among students, classroom resources, workload, time pressure, curriculum changes, autonomy, professional development, societal

recognition, and hiring practices (Corbell et al., 2010; Le Maistre & Pare, 2010).

At the interpersonal level, contextual factors may include administrative support, mentor guidance, co-worker collaboration, teacher-student interactions, and parental cooperation. In general, teachers report that job satisfaction is gained from a supportive school environment and positive social relations with administrators, co-workers, and parents, whereas time pressure, a heavy workload, and student discipline problems are associated with low levels of job satisfaction (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015).

Best Practices for Teachers' Professional Development

For many years, educators have been exploring best practices to develop in-service teachers' competencies. Teacher PD can be traced to the 1970s, and examples and case studies are provided from initial teacher education (ITE), the induction of newly qualified teachers (NQTs), and continuing professional development (CPD) in preparing teachers from the early stages for their career ahead and preparing and developing teachers for leadership roles. In today's highly complex and dynamic workplace, there is a need for life-long learning versus short-term training courses. Research suggests that teachers' CPD, through effective school-based coaching and mentoring in a well-structured professional learning community (PLC), is crucial to ensuring a successful student learning experience.

On the other hand, poor mentoring and coaching can result in an improper environment that will potentially lead to a high turnover rate in schools and poor student achievement. The literature emphasizes the importance of coaching and mentoring for the individual development of teachers and the importance of peer-supported learning via PLCs for teachers' collaborative learning and school development. It also highlights the benefits of these different, but complementary, forms of professional learning and shows that it is most effective and transformative when undertaken as part of a wider, sustained program.

Issues Hindering Novice Teachers' PD

Although CPD has been mandatory and commonplace for teachers for many years, it remains problematic regarding purpose, policy, and practice. Despite widespread recommendations for professional learning that is collaborative, research-informed, or located in practice, this is not what most teachers experience. Research findings demonstrate that there

is still much variability in professional learning experiences for early career teachers in particular and that there are tensions between effective professional learning and the need for teachers to meet statutory requirements.

Findings indicate that much professional learning is still passive, episodic, and centered around individual teacher development. There is also limited evaluation of professional learning and limited impact on student standards. Further, despite widespread acknowledgment of the importance of coaching and mentoring to enhance professional learning, many undertaking these roles are untrained and there is limited evidence of their impact. Findings stress that coaching, mentoring and PLCs need to be adequately resourced for real benefits and recognize the need to draw from this range of experiential pedagogies for effective PD.

Literature Review: Mentoring and Coaching in Education

In the teaching profession, mentoring and coaching have formed a key component in pre-service preparation, induction, and CPD programs. Recently, there has been an increased interest in examining the theoretical foundations and conceptual frameworks underpinning this practice, which has resulted in a plethora of research literature (Fletcher & Mullen, 2012; Lord et al., 2008).

The terms “coaching” and “mentoring” are often conflated. This can be problematic inside and outside the education sector, especially when the terms are used interchangeably, seeking the same outcomes through a similar process. Even the European Mentoring and Coaching Council, the most active body in bringing the worlds of coaching and mentoring together, cannot achieve a single definition acceptable to all (Clutterbuck, 2009, p. 1).

Although these two approaches to learner support can be perceived as independently occurring processes, each of which is driven by distinct aims and objectives, they can be understood as complementing one another. While mentoring is primarily concerned with “growing an individual”, both professionally and personally, and as such is of a more developmental nature, coaching tends to have a narrower remit relating to specific areas of performance and learning outcomes (LOs) (Lord et al., 2008; Whitmore, 2010).

According to UNESCO (2020), coaching can be defined as supporting a teacher, learner, or client in achieving a specific personal or professional goal by providing training and guidance, while mentoring

can be defined as primarily listening with empathy, sharing experience (usually mutually), professional friendship, developing insight through reflection, being a sounding board, and encouraging. For the purpose of this study, mentoring and coaching can thus be understood as interrelated concepts, albeit with blurred boundaries in-between them (CUREE, 2005).

Pros of Mentoring and Coaching

There are several benefits of mentoring: teachers accelerate their education and skills while mentors develop their own leadership and mentoring abilities. Coaching benefits, on the other hand, are practical and goal-focused and may concentrate on further leveraging teachers' existing strengths, avoiding professional derailers, or working through school organizational or policy issues. Furthermore, coaching/mentoring is not only limited to early career stages but also instrumental for experienced teachers and school leaders (Campbell et al., 2017; Feiman-Nemser, 2012; Hobson et al., 2009).

Experienced teachers who no longer have formal support through induction can benefit from peer coaching and informal mentoring. School principals and leaders, likewise, value professional and institutional structures and support in the form of mentoring and coaching aimed at leadership development (Hobson & Sharp, 2005; Searby, 2014). Beyond the K-12 education system, university faculty members also appreciate supportive structures to help them with orientation, socialization, and acculturation to the new workplace (Ramaswami et al., 2014). Similarly, youth taught by educators at these various educational institutions increasingly find mentoring and coaching practices beneficial for their overall development and learning (e.g., Hamilton et al., 2019).

Mentoring and coaching in education often have the dual aims of personal support and professional learning. The primary intended beneficiaries of the mentorship and coaching may be students, recently qualified or more experienced teachers, and instructors in schools, colleges, and university settings. However, there is limited research on the role of mentoring and coaching in supporting holistic well-being and the ongoing development of educators at these various levels.

Mentoring and Coaching Implementation Pitfalls

Given the growing interest in coaching and mentoring as means to enhance professional development (PD) in schools, the challenges associated with the successful management of these mechanisms warrant further attention. This is particularly so in view of the potential benefits suggested with respect to raising teacher and organizational performance within a climate of collaboration, respect, and mutual trust.

The literature suggests that coaching and mentoring often focus on operational tasks, rather than on reflective practice, critical thinking, and engaging strategically with policy, which enable teachers to question the status quo and look for alternative and more effective school improvement strategies. The literature further recommends that a more sophisticated remit is needed for the coach/mentor to take professional learning to the next stage and, therefore, advocates the need for the coach/mentor to have the appropriate disposition, skills, and experience and, of course, training and adequate time allocated for the role.

Blended and Virtual Learning Models

Learners come in with varying levels and have multiple intelligences. Online platforms can allow more personalization to address specific gaps as well as afford opportunities for learners to practice outside of class. Blended learning, a mix of online and face-to-face learning activities, embraces and promotes the learner-centered model for learning. Blended learning provides flexibility and convenience to both trainers and trainees while delivering learning experiences that improve skills and self-directed learning post-course.

Employing virtual and blended learning models has great potential to increase learners' development; data gathered by a platform allows trainers to see where their students are succeeding and where they need extra help (or encouragement), allowing them to track students' learning growth and then adjust accordingly. Online platforms can also personalize students' learning by creating formative assessments that are based on identified learning gaps; teachers' awareness of these identified gaps can inform teacher instruction.

Researchers found "*positive effects on student's autonomy, attitudes, and motivation for learning*" when teachers use a blended approach. Students' choice of accessing multiple learning tools that fit their academic and pacing needs and promotes individual learning is an advantage to using blended learning methodologies. Blended learning

works best if the integration of the two models takes into account the learners' objectives and needs.

Accordingly, education systems around the world are investing in technology to help teachers be more effective. In some cases, the results are fruitful. In others, the impact of technology falls short of expectations or remains unevaluated. The closing of schools worldwide due to the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of understanding how to leverage technology well. This lays out four principles for investing in technology for effective teachers and six aspects of teaching where technology can boost teacher performance, together with examples of tested, promising, and cautionary experiences with teacher technologies. Technology has the potential to help teachers to be more effective in reaching every learner. Research highlights promising avenues for teacher-technology partnerships: 1) Coach and mentor teachers, 2) Complement teacher content knowledge and pedagogical skills, 3) Create virtual communities of practice for teachers 4) Manage teachers effectively, 5) Deploy the teacher workforce effectively, 6) Increase the attractiveness of the teaching profession (World Bank, 2021).

Context of the Problem

To investigate the preliminary contours of the poor mentoring/coaching problem in the Egyptian context, four sources were used to establish a foundational base for this study: 1) The Sustainable development strategy: Egypt's vision 2030 & Educational Reform (Curriculum 2.0), 2) personal observation, 3) Egyptian and regional studies' analysis, and finally 4) a pilot study.

Egypt's Vision 2030: Sustainable Development Strategy & Education Reform 2.0

Egypt's vision 2030 entails a sustainable development strategy indicating particular significance to education and training (Ministry of Planning, Monitoring and Administrative Reform, 2016). The newly-emergent national strategy for CPD in Egypt strongly advocates the use of coaching and mentoring mechanisms to enhance teacher PD and performance in schools. It suggests that mutual support for learning, the dissemination of good practices, the translation of teacher learning to student learning, and the embedding of desirable change are among the potential benefits to be realized from the adoption of such mechanisms.

This is all under the 7th pillar: Education and Training goals including human capital development for the teaching staff.

In light of this vision, improving the quality of teachers' performance and their access to professionalism quickly enrolled in Egyptian career development programs. Currently, teacher PD focuses on equipping teachers with information and skills needed to prepare students for life in the 21st century with an emphasis on life skills and citizenship. The new national strategy for CPD emphasizes the importance of teachers learning with and from other teachers, the importance of school support in improving teaching practices as a result of PD, and the encouragement of schools to become PLCs.

In an effort to achieve the deliverables of the reform plan 2.0, taking the sustainable development goals into account, the MOETE collaborated with several educational entities through international agreements. For instance, in 2019, the Regional English Language Office (RELO) at the American Embassy in Cairo announced the launching of a "Mentor Training Program" for Egyptian EFL in-service teachers. Further, the "Capacity Building for Egypt's 2030 Vision on Education" program, which was funded by the Institute of International Education (IIE) and sponsored by the U.S. Embassy in Cairo, aimed to equip in-service teachers with the necessary knowledge and competencies to sustain the development of their institutions. Additionally, the "National Teacher Training Program (NTTP)" implemented by the British Council and launched in 2017 was designed for primary stage teachers, teacher educators, and supervisors for improving their teaching and training practices as well as raising their English language proficiency and pedagogical competence. The MOETE has also launched the "Teachers First" initiative which is a framework that has been developed especially for Egypt by the Open University and is based on the UNESCO Competency Framework for Teachers.

Dr. Tarek Shawky, the current Egyptian Minister of Education and Technical Education, who initiated the educational reform Curriculum 2.0 in line with Egypt's vision 2030 strategies, confirmed that the MOETE is working day and night on multiple axes, with the great support of the Egyptian state and all its institutions, to contribute to building the Egyptian human being. This is by building a modern education system based on the latest international standards, as well as

developing learning and assessment strategies and techniques in order to ensure students' achievement of real learning outcomes.

A core aspect of the reform project is teacher PD as the minister asserts “teachers are the leaders of change as they are the cornerstone of the new educational system”. In addition, he stressed that the teacher is the basis for the success of the new education system and that there is a structured training plan for teachers on the new curricula, prepared by a group of the best professors at the National Curriculum Development Center (NCDC). He further confirmed that to effectively build an educational system capable of preparing young people for knowledge societies in the future, it is rather essential to provide extensive support to teachers and school leaders during their attempt to transform education.

Digital Transformation: Egypt’s Education Reform 2.0

In a rapidly changing technological world, digital literacy and ICT integration were the primary objectives in the Egyptian reform project 2.0. MOETE has recently shown a notable interest in the integration of technology and blended learning models in education due to its numerous recorded advantages. The ministry has worked to integrate modern technology into the educational process by providing tablets and smartboards to facilitate students' entry to the Egyptian Knowledge Bank (EKB) and the learning management system (LMS). The minister signed agreements with publishers from around the world to establish EKB, a nationwide project aimed at providing all Egyptian citizens with access to quality research and educational materials. The agreements grant anyone with an Egyptian IP address free access to publications, journals, audio/video/image libraries, software, and books from around the world. The minister also confirmed that the ministry has “ambitious plans” in the coming years to ensure that all students in Egypt are connected to digital learning facilities in a huge infrastructural overhaul of teaching methods.

In addition, the ministry is launching an “Ask Your Teacher” facility, which will allow students to ask teachers questions via an online platform, controlled by the ministry, and which will allow teachers to earn a controlled income through these means. Finally, the minister revealed in many statements the ministry’s intentions to transform all teacher PD training using virtual learning tools whether synchronous or asynchronous. This is to reduce the huge cost of teacher transport to

face-to-face venues, save time consumed in transport and other arrangements, offer convenience to teachers to learn wherever they are, allow them to practice and benefit from online platforms, and finally provide them with sustainable PD material that they can refer to whenever needed such as zoom recordings.

Personal Observation

Typically, in-service teachers in Egypt develop their pedagogical skills in one of four ways: either 1) teachers pursue a graduate study independently, 2) school leaders provide summer PD workshops by experts in the field, 3) schools make cooperative agreements with training institutes to provide certain courses, or 4) educational institutions provide context-based mentoring programs that are inclusive to their teachers. These programs can be formal where objectives, responsibilities of mentors and mentees, and evaluation methods are specified. In this case, the school/university administration pairs the mentors and mentees. Other programs can be informal or casual which might not be well-structured as they rely on peer mentoring by assigning experienced teachers to mentor novice colleagues. From my own experience, however, these four routes are likely to have some significant challenges, including cost, time consumption, and unsustainability.

Research confirms that all four routes have significant challenges and generally the outcomes do not meet expectations. These means can be rather costly, time-consuming, ineffective, and unsustainable. Further, as a former teacher who joined the teaching profession right after graduation, for three consecutive years, the researcher has personally experienced the four PD routes and has seen the pros and cons of each.

Recent Egyptian and Regional Studies (MENA)

Available literature from the Arab region primarily investigates the effect of mentoring and coaching in the business and sports fields. To the researcher's best knowledge, there is a paucity of research in Egypt and the MENA region regarding the development of coaching and mentoring skills in the education field, particularly regarding the use of the blended learning model.

Pilot Study

The researcher conducted a pilot study where thirty semi-structured interviews were conducted to verify the existence of the problem and establish a foundational base for this study. The interviews

addressed trainers at accredited educational training centers and units in Egypt, EFL supervisors at the Ministry of Education and Technical Education (MOETE), private school leaders, private school academic advisors, the ELT counselor at the MOETE, and senior as well as junior teachers at different private schools in Egypt.

The interviewees' responses revealed that there is a dire need to develop a training program for trainers and teachers to improve their coaching and mentoring skills which will accordingly affect the learning and educational process positively. Supervisors and trainers asserted that they lack sufficient training techniques for coaching and mentoring and expressed their desire in attending PD training to enhance their performance and skills. They further elaborated that they frequently find resistance from teachers to change their teaching approaches.

Participants also pointed out that teachers often find it difficult to accept the trainers' feedback; they explained that teachers usually react to critical feedback offensively and subjectively. Novice teachers confirmed that it is rather difficult for them to receive negative comments on their performance, and they usually do not get any solid suggestions for improvement. They also claimed that trainers and supervisors tend to fish for mistakes and highlight the flaws rather than support the teachers' PD and scaffold their learning.

Statement of the Problem

The teacher turnover rate has increased significantly in Egypt, and novice teachers experience poor mentoring and coaching from senior teachers, resulting in pressures to change their careers. Mentors/coaches, as well, lack sufficient appropriate mentoring and coaching skills and have negative perceptions toward mentoring/coaching, which in turn affect their performance in their designated roles.

Research Questions

This study sought to answer the following main question:

To what extent will the suggested blended TOT program develop EFL teacher trainers' coaching and mentoring performance and students' academic achievement?

To answer the above main question, the following sub-questions were also answered:

1. What are the features of the TOT program for developing EFL teacher trainers' mentoring and coaching performance?
2. What is the effect of the TOT program on promoting EFL teacher trainers' knowledge of coaching/mentoring principles and roles?
3. What is the effect of the TOT program on improving EFL teacher trainers' mentoring/coaching skills?
4. What is the effect of the TOT program on the EFL teacher trainers' perception of the mentoring/coaching principles and roles?
5. What is the effect of the TOT program on mentored/coached teachers' performance in EFL classrooms?
6. What is the effect of the TOT program on promoting students' academic achievement in the English language summative assessments?
7. To what extent will stakeholders (i.e., trainers, teachers, parents, and students) be satisfied with the TOT program?
8. What is the impact of the TOT program on EFL teacher trainers' retention in the long run?

Hypotheses

Seven hypotheses were formulated and tested:

- 1- EFL teacher trainers will positively change their perception of the mentoring/coaching professional development training post the TOT program.
- 2- stakeholders (i.e., trainers, teachers, students, and parents) will be satisfied with the outcomes of the TOT program.
- 3- There will be a significant difference between the experimental group's mentoring and coaching pre-post concept-check questionnaire in favor of the post questionnaire
- 4- EFL teacher trainers' mentoring and coaching skills will be promoted post-training.
- 5- There will be a significant improvement in mentored/coached teachers' pedagogical skills post the TOT program.
- 6- There will be a significant improvement in students' academic achievement post the TOT program.
- 7- EFL teacher trainers' retention will be significantly high post the training

Aim of the Study

The primary aim of this study was to investigate the effect of the blended TOT program on promoting EFL teacher trainers' mentoring and coaching skills in order to plan and conduct effective school-based CPD. It sought to develop among EFL teacher trainers' the necessary orientation, awareness, and capabilities to perform a catalytic role as facilitators of change and modernization while maintaining satisfaction and perceptions of CPD post training. The study further aimed to find the extent to which these mentoring and coaching skills impacted their mentees' performance in English language teaching and learning practices in their classes. Finally, the study examines the effect of the TOT program on students' academic achievement in learning and acquiring English language skills.

Significance of the Study

With the intent to contribute to Egypt's education reform, the importance of this study is fourfold: 1) To contribute to the fulfillment of the Egyptian educational reform envisioned in the sustainable development strategy 2030 through qualifying teacher mentors and academic coaches for effectively conducting school-based CPD and establishing PLCs to equip teachers with skills needed to educate Generation Z (those born from 1995 to 2009) and Generation Alpha (2010 to 2024) in the 21st century. 2) To fill in a gap in the literature by developing an informed perspective on the impact of mentoring and coaching on professional practice and the beneficial effect that can be derived from these two learner support strategies. 3) To raise the awareness of mentors/coaches, mentees, and school administrators regarding the principles and roles of each in order to enhance the PD of in-service teachers. It may also assist the target school administrators to build their own pool of trainers who are expected to serve a dual purpose, namely individual growth; and institutional and organizational development. Finally, 4) To assist educators in designing context-specific programs to promote the skills of in-service teachers and prepare them to be effective teacher mentors and academic coaches. The developed TOT model serves as a useful guiding manual for professional trainers and training experts working in the field of professional training.

Delimitations of the Study

This study was delimited to:

- a) Four experienced. EFL female teachers working at Nefertari Language Schools (National Section) in Cairo, Egypt.
- b) The 2nd Semester of the Academic Year 2020/2021.
- c) The eight mentoring and coaching competencies for good practice in identified in the Global Competence Framework (EMCC, 2015).
- d) Principles, concepts, and skills identified in the UK National Framework for Mentoring and Coaching (CUREE, 2005).
- e) The program was conducted virtually synchronously and asynchronously with few F2F events on the school campus.

Methodology

Research Design

This quasi-experimental case study followed the mixed research method. The qualitative section of the study focused on the qualitative analysis of the responses to the semi-structured interview questions, verbal data from satisfaction as well as Mentoring/Coaching Concept-check questionnaires, in addition to the transcribed data from videotaped reflection. The quantitative part focused on the statistical analysis of participants' scores in the Mentoring/Coaching competency checklist, students' mean scores in the EFL mid-year exam, and the scale percentages in the questionnaires.

Participants

The main sample comprised 4 female experienced EFL in-service teachers. The sample of EFL trainers comprised senior teachers and supervisors from K-6. Two of the participating teachers were senior teachers for the foundation stage, one was the supervisor of the lower primary stage, and one was the supervisor of the upper primary stage. The sample's ages ranged between 35 and 45 with 10 to 20 years of teaching experience without prior higher degrees or teaching certificates. Their experience is mostly in the same educational establishment (Nefertari International Schools: National Section). The participating teachers were chosen purposively after discussion with the school's chairperson about the aim of the program and the selection criteria that were as follows:

- a) Competent in subject matter
- b) Competent in ICT skills
- c) Autonomous, life-long learners who believe in CPD
- d) Have training and leadership skills
- e) Committed, team players and punctual
- f) Have a minimum of 5 years teaching experience, and
- g) Preferably those who're currently mentoring/coaching junior/novice teachers.

A questionnaire has been administered to the participants, which was embedded in a registration form to confirm the sample's eligibility and need to attend the training program. The sample initially were 7 teachers; however, 3 were excluded from the analysis due to non-commitment to the program and failure to complete the minimum required tasks of the program. All subjects initially agreed to volunteer for attending the program and to take part in the intervention via the registration form which incorporated an orientation about the program as well as its objectives and expected outcomes. Additionally, all participants filled out a separate consent form as well as a demographic questionnaire.

Instruments

To measure the participants' coaching and mentoring skills and the effect of the program on students' academic achievement, and for the purpose of quantitative and qualitative analyses, using Kirkpatrick's model of training evaluation, and for triangulation of data, the following

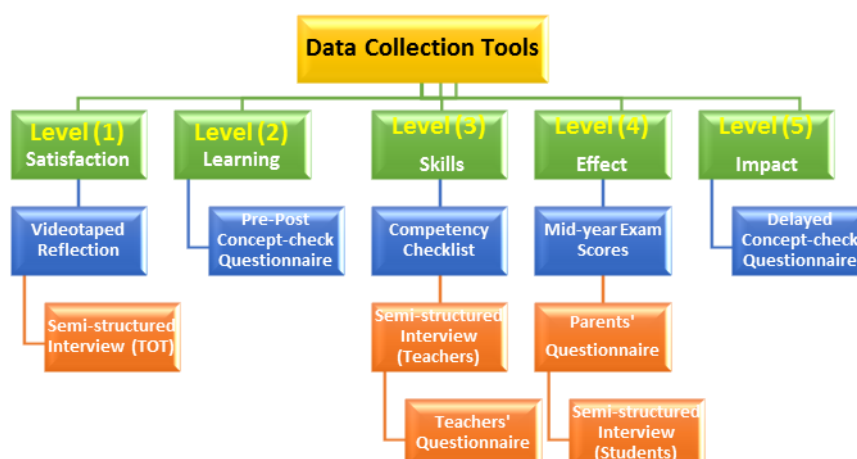


Fig. 1 Data Collection Tools

instruments were used in this experiment:

Trainers' Satisfaction (*corresponding to level 1*)

- 1- Videotaped Reflection (Mentors/Coaches)
- 2- Semi-structured Interviews (Mentors/Coaches)

Trainers' Understanding and Performance (*corresponding to level 2*)

- 1- Mentoring/Coaching Pre-post Concept-check Questionnaire (Mentors/Coaches)

Coached/Mentored Teachers' Performance (*corresponding to level 3*)

- 1- Mentoring/Coaching Competency Checklist (Mentors/Coaches)
- 2- Satisfaction Questionnaire (Mentees/Coachees)
- 3- Semi-structured Interviews (Mentees/Coachees)

Students' Academic Achievement (*corresponding to level 4*)

- 1- Summative Assessments (EFL Mid-Year Exams)
- 2- Satisfaction Questionnaire (Parents)
- 3- Semi-structured Interviews (Students)

Impact of Training (*Corresponding to Level 5 added by the researcher*)

- 1- Mentoring/Coaching Delayed Concept-check Questionnaire (Mentors/Coaches)

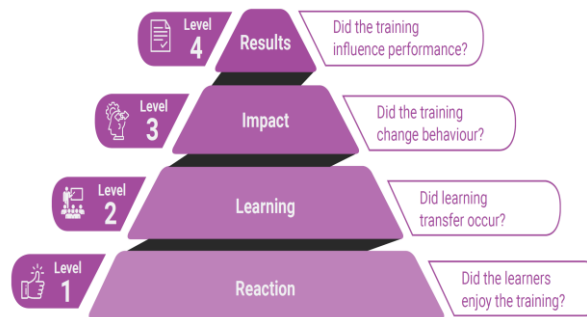


Fig. 2 Kirkpatrick's 4-Level Evaluation Model

Intervention

TOT Training Aims

The main aim of the training was to provide EFL teacher trainers with all general principles and essentials materials (*knowledge and skills*) of training and development to design and deliver effective mentoring and coaching training programs (*long term, short term, one to one ...*). A subsidiary aim of the training is building sustainable capacity through assisting the target school in building their own pool of trainers who are

expected to serve a dual purpose, namely individual growth; and institutional and organizational development.

TOT Training Learning Outcomes (LOs)

- 1- Develop skills for designing and delivering teacher mentoring and coaching training.
- 2- Plan and deliver training courses.
- 3- Use good practices in observing and giving feedback.
- 4- Identify strategies for further development as a teacher trainer, mentor, and coach.

Features of the TOT Training Program

In accordance with the literature, the researcher used the Engineering Backward Design (EBD) in developing this TOT training program.

Big Ideas Explored in this Training Program

Within the general framework of mentoring and coaching in teacher education, the following big ideas were discussed with the participants:

- 1- Perception of continuous professional development (CPD)
- 2- Attributes of an effective mentor/coach in education
- 3- Mastery of mentoring and coaching skills
- 4- Impact of mentoring and coaching on teachers' performance and students' achievement

Table 1. TOT Training Outline

TOT Training Objectives

Module 1: Introduction to Mentoring & Coaching

1. Define instructional coaching and mentoring.
2. Differentiate between coaching and mentoring strategies.
3. Recognize various coaching and mentoring techniques.
4. Determine attributes of effective instructional coaches and mentors.
5. Recognize the importance of mentoring and coaching in education

Module 2: Theoretical Background in Education

1. Recognize significant theories and key figures in education.
2. Compare and contrast various theories in education.
3. Analyze and critique different theories in education.
4. Apply educational theories' practices in mentoring and coaching.

Module 3: Child Psychology

1. Define developmental theory and explain how theories are used to understand child behavior and development.
2. Examine and discuss major theories of child development such as those of Piaget, Vygotsky, Freud, Erikson, and Bronfenbrenner.
3. Evaluate the effectiveness of theories in terms of their practical applications in parenting and teaching.
4. Demonstrate knowledge of the physical, social/emotional, cognitive and language development of children, both typical and atypical, in major developmental stages.
5. Examine and evaluate the role of family, teachers, and other professionals in facilitating children's development.

Module 4: Andragogy

1. Define key terms and theories related to adult learning.
2. Explain core principles of adult learning (Knowles).
3. Identify the benefits of applying adult learning theory.
4. Apply the Adult Learning Theory in mentoring and coaching.

Module 5: Pedagogical Competence

1. Employ various teaching and learning strategies.
2. Apply effective classroom management techniques.
3. Formulate SMART teaching objectives.
4. Use recent approaches and models in EFL learning.
5. Plan lessons to address students' differentiated levels.
6. Promote higher-order thinking skills in EFL classrooms.
7. Deliver EFL objectives in student-centered classes.

Module 6: Assessment & Feedback

1. Determine and use appropriate feedback language.
2. Apply different feedback techniques and types.
3. Identify intelligence in the MI Theory.
4. Use Bloom's taxonomy appropriate verbs for assessment.
5. Design assessment tools for students and teachers.
6. Analyze and interpret data collected through assessment tools.

Module 7: Reflective Learning & Teaching

1. Define reflective teaching and learning.
2. Adopt reflective teaching and learning strategies.
3. Create reflective teaching and learning tools.
4. Use reflective practices in mentoring and coaching.

Module 8: 21st Century Skills

1. Identify 21st-century skills.
2. Utilize 21st-century skills in coaching and mentoring.

Module 9: Action Research

1. Plan and design professional development training/workshops.
2. Develop various training materials.
3. Conduct training needs assessment to address certain needs.

Module 10: Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)

1. Define Professional learning communities and communities of practice.
2. Establish a professional learning community in the school.
3. Recognize life-long learning, continuous professional development, and autonomous learning concepts.
4. Build capacity for sustainability in school-based training.

TOT Training Approaches

This training was based on the blended learning approach where synchronous and asynchronous learning activities were planned and conducted. The training also adopted the experiential learning approach where participants apply the acquired knowledge to new experiences resulting in new skills. Finally, the training adopted the participatory method where participants were constantly in active learning roles throughout all phases of the training.

TOT Training Duration

The intervention took place over the course of a semester as follows:

- 1- Pre-training meeting (2 hours)
- 2- Opening Webinar (2 hours)
- 3- 10 online modules (weekly 2-hour zoom session and 5-7 hours independent study)
- 4- Final Webinar (2 hours)

TOT Training Platform

The Google Classroom was the main platform that was used in this training for the asynchronous learning activities. For synchronous activities, the ZOOM was used as a medium.

Training Strategies

The training adopted the integration of information and communication technology (ICT), active learning, autonomous learning, reflective learning, and flipped classroom strategies.

Materials and Resources

The resources used in the current program were developed using authentic materials/texts which were selected from different sources. The program mainly depended on the flipped classroom strategy where participants viewed the Module's material available on the Google Classroom and posted at the beginning of the week, then a reflection zoom session would take place at the end of the week to discuss objectives, assignments, and concerns. Selected materials were catered for the participants' appeals and interests to attract their attention and challenge their cognitive domains and thinking skills.

Each module had the same structure on the Google Classroom platform. Instructional videos were posted at the beginning of the module related to the theme and outcomes. Participants were offered a variety of videos in order to autonomously select the convenient one according to their interests and learning needs. Reflective guiding questions were offered to help participants reflect on their own learning as they are watching. Participants were encouraged to reflect all throughout the week as they are learning in their logs. Other weekly assignments included weekly success criteria through a Google Form, discussion questions, readings, presentations, and other relevant assignments as needed.

Procedures of the Intervention

The study was conducted during the 2nd semester of the academic year 2020/2021 and employed a pre-posttest design to investigate whether there was any change in performance after carrying out the treatment on the sample. The pre-test was given to all participants pre training to determine their current level prior to the intervention. An immediate posttest was administered in week 11 to test the participants' competence and gained knowledge in mentoring and coaching after the treatment had just been completed.

Prior to the beginning of the training, a meeting was held with participants to break the ice and be acquainted with one another. During the meeting, the researcher and participants introduced themselves and the program's overall aims were stated. The training strategies and approaches were then introduced. Participants also filled out the registration form and signed the consent of their approval to voluntarily participate in this study. The meeting ended with expressing their

expectations and expected challenges in the training program. Dates and times of training sessions were agreed upon during the meeting.

The program started with an opening webinar recapping in detail the training aims, rationale, procedures, outcomes, objectives, strategies, assessment tools, and roles and responsibilities. Module one started later at the beginning of the following week. Participants were informed of the flipped classroom strategy used where they were asked to review the posted material on the google classroom and do the required tasks as per the stated instructions, they then were encouraged to prepare their questions and reflections to be discussed in the zoom session at the end of the week.

During the 10-week intervention, the same sequence and procedures were taken. Participants were given feedback in a timely manner both orally and written on all given assignments. Throughout the intervention, the researcher and the participants communicated regularly to reflect on the training goals and outcomes. Participants got individual feedback on assignments and advice on mentoring and coaching situations as the program was being conducted.

Data Analysis Procedures

In the first level of Kirkpatrick's training evaluation model "*Reaction*", the satisfaction of the research sample was measured through 1) a videotaped reflection and 2) individual semi-structured interviews. In the second level "*Learning*", a pre-post Concept-check Questionnaire was used to assess the knowledge acquired by the sample during the TOT program. The third level "*attitude*", was measured by 1) a mentoring and coaching competency checklist, 2) semi-structured interviews with mentored/coached teachers, and 3) a questionnaire addressing mentored/coached teachers. The fourth level "*results*" was measured by: 1) students' academic achievement in EFL mid-year exams, 2) Semi-structured interviews with students and 3) a questionnaire addressing parents. Finally, the fifth level "*impact*" of the training was measured through a delayed "Concept-check Questionnaire" that was administered after eight months of the intervention to measure the sample's retention of acquired knowledge and skills.

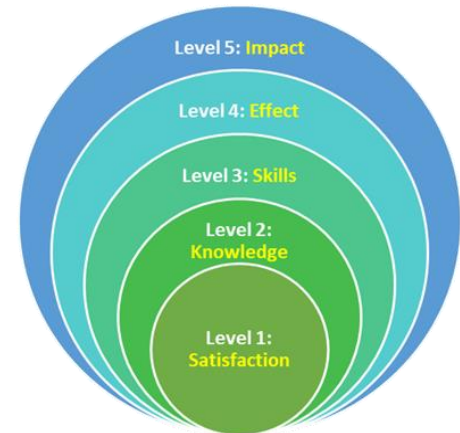


Fig.3 Teacher Training Evaluation Model

In analyzing the data, both descriptive and inferential statistical procedures were applied using SPSS V-20 for Windows. The students' test scores and the responses of the participants to the scale questions in the questionnaires were statistically analyzed. First, descriptive statistical analysis was conducted; then, the mean values and standard deviations for each parameter were calculated. Additionally, paired-samples Wilcoxon Test was used to compare the ranks of the participants' scale before and after the administration of the mentoring/coaching competency checklist.

To analyze the verbal data from the videotaped reflection, semi-structured interviews, and open-ended questions in the questionnaires, the scripts, and transcribed data were coded. Qualitative data in this study were analyzed using the Grounded Theory approach and Thematic Analysis. In light of the critical review of responses, data were categorized into themes and a framework including a comprehensive set of mentoring/coaching competencies was produced. Software for qualitative analysis was not used as the data were relatively small and could be manually analyzed and coded following Creswell's coding process.

The transcripts and data collected were first individually perused by the researcher to identify the main themes after which a discussion amongst the two raters led to the identification of the final list of main themes and subthemes. With regard to marking the transcripts and data with the codes, inter-rater reliability was 96% as differences were resolved through discussions. The identified themes were then mapped into broad categories which helped build a coherent framework against which the researcher could evaluate the changes in the behavior of participants, and the challenges they encountered and arrive at suggestions to improve the implementation of coaching/mentoring in this context.

Results Based on the qualitative analysis of data, four main themes emerged from the first tier of evaluation (*participants' reaction/satisfaction*): 1) Perceptions prior to, during and post-training, 2) Gains from the TOT program, 3) Challenges faced during the training, and 4) Instructor's Performance. In the four other tiers, five main themes emerged relating to the impact of the TOT program on enhancing EFL teacher trainers' mentoring/coaching performance and students' achievement. The themes are: 1) Pedagogical Competence, 2) Theoretical Foundation, 3) Andragogy, 4) Professional Learning Communities, and 5) Action Planning. The main themes were also categorized into sub-themes as presented in turn below.



Fig. 4 Main Themes

The results of the study showed that there was a significant difference in the participants' responses to the pre-post concept-check questionnaire, in favor of the post questionnaire. This difference indicated a notable increase in participants' knowledge of mentoring/coaching principles and roles. In the delayed concept-check questionnaire, which was administered eight months after the intervention, participants' responses were concurrent with their answers in the immediate questionnaire indicating a high level of knowledge retention with regard to mentoring/coaching principles and roles.

All stakeholders (i.e., trainers, teachers, students, and parents) were overall satisfied with the outcomes of the TOT program. Participants' responses to the semi-structured interview as well as their videotaped course reflection indicated a high level of training satisfaction. Results from both tools also showed that EFL teacher trainers positively changed their perception of the mentoring/coaching professional development training post the TOT program. Additionally, data collected from the mentored/coached teachers, either from the questionnaire or the semi-structured interviews, revealed a remarkable level of satisfaction regarding the mentors/coaches' performance in the current year in comparison to previous years, which in turn indicates a positive significant effect of the TOT program. Students' responses to the semi-structured interview also revealed that they were satisfied with the English sessions' learning environment this year in comparison to the previous years; this shows the effect that the TOT program had on

teachers' performance post the mentoring/coaching practices. Finally, parents' responses to the questionnaire showed a notable satisfaction level with their children's progress and academic achievement in the current year. Their responses also revealed a high level of satisfaction with teachers' performance and pedagogical skills this year in comparison to the previous years.

Results from the mentoring/coaching competency checklist, semi-structured interviews with mentored/coached teachers, and mentees/coachees' responses to the questionnaire showed that there was a significant improvement in participants' mentoring and coaching skills. Finally, mid-year tests scores revealed that there was a significant improvement in students' academic achievement post the TOT program.

Limitations of the Study

The qualitative method of this research was designed to provide descriptions of the participants' experiences. These experiences are unique and therefore not representative of a general population of educational leaders. Further, it should be noted that the researcher have an interest in encouraging the use of coaching within the educational sector. While efforts have been taken to minimize the possibility of unintentional bias, this should be taken into account when considering the findings of this study.

Pedagogical Implications

Research on mentoring and coaching teachers has shown that it promotes better educational conditions and provides a motivating environment for EFL learners. Consequently, a number of pedagogical implications are suggested at two levels: The institutional level and the mentor/coach's level are pertinent. The following recommendations emerged from the findings of the study:

At the institutional level, educational institutes, particularly curriculum designers and policy-makers at the MOETE should strive to incorporate and integrate a discrete mentoring/coaching program. This would promote PD and enhance teacher performance.

Recommendations for Further Research

- For further research, it is recommended that a similar study be carried out on a larger sample to be able to generalize the results.
- It is also recommended that future researchers extend the time of the program to more than ten weeks in order to give the participants sufficient time to practice their newly acquired skills and master them.

- It is suggested that researchers investigate the effectiveness of the program on other samples of teachers at different language schools in Egypt.
- Another suggestion would be to explore whether the program would have the same effect on experienced teachers from different disciplines and/or experienced teachers in international school systems, *i.e., British, American Diploma, International Baccalaureate, French, German ...etc.*
- It is further recommended to develop a reference manual for teacher mentors/coaches.
- Research findings indicate the need for further research to identify what factors are most salient in strong mentoring relationships and what steps can be taken to support and strengthen the mentoring between novice teachers and their mentor teachers.
- Future research should test the proposed integrated framework by incorporating elements of developmental, learning, and social theories in the management of critical mentoring processes, the establishment of program goals and objectives, and assessment of individual and organizational outcomes.
- Other studies can investigate the impact of these theories on the development of evidence-based best practices, competencies, and standards throughout the different phases of mentoring relationships;
- Examining the effectiveness of using multiple theoretical frameworks in the design, development, and implementation of training curricula and educational initiatives for mentors and mentees.
- Comparing and contrasting the subtle and overt ways that participation in multiple communities of practice and developmental networks can contribute to the evolution of the mentoring field, including definitions, functions and purposes, benefits and outcomes, models, types, and forms of mentoring
- Expanding the research on theoretical frameworks to understand technologically mediated mentoring relationships in cross-cultural and globalized contexts.

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