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**THE IMPORTANCE OF MENTORSHIP:**

**EXPLORING THE EXPERIENCES OF NOVICE TEACHERS IN CHILE**

Tesis de pregrado para optar al título de Profesor de Inglés para la Enseñanza  
Básica y Media y al grado académico de Licenciado en Educación.

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Santiago de Chile, 2016

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

Firstly, we would like to express our sincere gratitude to our thesis supervisor, Patricia Sánchez for the support and comprehension throughout the process of researching and writing the present study. Also, we would like to emphasize her patience, knowledge, and her attitude to us which made this process an instance not only for learning but having fun with you, Miss.

Secondly, we would like to thank our families for their support throughout this process, it would not be possible without their comprehension and love.

On a personal note, I would like to thank some people who were present in this process and provided me with their support in different ways and without them it would have been hard to finish this work. Thank to Carmen Luz Contreras, Janis Arratia, Carol Moreno, Julio Arellano.

Thanks to my family who were always there to support me even in the hard times and most important to my son, Benjamin Bohle, because he is the main reason why I'm here and why I want to be the best for you and give you all. Also, I want to thank Mr. Magaña, because from the beginning you believed in me, no matter what. Thank you, Sir for everything.

## ABSTRACT

Mentorship is considered essential for providing novice teachers with a successful performance at the beginning of their careers since the first year of work as teachers has an important impact on the development of the future profession. The present study aims at exploring the experiences of novice teachers, who have been part of a mentorship program in Chile, in order to understand whether this program achieves the aim for which it was created or if it needs to be modified to make it a successful program. The subjects who participated in this research study belong to one public school called “Liceo Bicentenario de Niñas” located in Santiago, Chile. The design of this investigation follows the features of qualitative research which is best suited for this study since its main concern is to know a particular phenomenon. Furthermore, the tradition of this study is a phenomenological study since it describes the meaning for individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or phenomenon. These participants answered a semi-structured interview which provides with several questions for interviewers and can provide with reliable, comparable qualitative data. Finally, the results showed that the Mentorship Program has both, positive and negative impact on novice teachers. In fact, there were three main aspects that are worth mentioning. Those aspects are: its importance, the areas that need to be improved and the suggestions given by the novice teachers.

## RESUMEN

El programa de mentorías es considerado esencial para proporcionar a los profesores principiantes un desempeño exitoso al inicio de sus carreras desde el primer año de trabajo como profesores.

El presente estudio tiene como objetivo explorar las experiencias de profesores principiantes que han sido parte de un programa de mentores en Chile con el fin de lograr comprender si este programa logra el objetivo para el cual fue creado o si necesita ser modificado para que funcione con éxito. Los sujetos que participaron en este estudio pertenecen a una escuela pública llamada "Liceo Bicentenario de Niñas" ubicada en Santiago de Chile. El diseño de esta investigación sigue las características de una investigación cualitativa la cual es la más adecuada para este estudio, ya que su principal preocupación es conocer un fenómeno en particular. Además, la tradición de este estudio es un estudio fenomenológico ya que describe el significado de los individuos de sus experiencias vividas de un concepto o fenómeno. Estos participantes respondieron a una entrevista semi estructurada que proporciona diversas preguntas a los entrevistadores y puede ofrecer datos cualitativos confiables y comparables. Finalmente, los resultados mostraron que el Programa de Mentores tiene un impacto tanto positivo como negativo en los profesores principiantes. De hecho, hay tres aspectos principales que vale la pena mencionar. Esos aspectos son: su importancia, las áreas que necesitan ser mejoradas y las sugerencias dadas por los profesores principiantes.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 The scenario of mentorship in Chile

During the last decades, Chile has made significant efforts to improve its educational system as a way to cope with the demands of the globalized world. This study is concerned with the experiences of novice teachers during their first year at schools; thus, its main focus is on teachers. According to Emiliana Vegas who is the Head of the Education Division of the Inter-American Development Bank, she strongly stated that “Although Chile has succeeded in increasing the access to primary education for a large majority of their children, the quality of education remains very low”. (p.48) This situation has shown that Chile has a high demand for improving the quality of its educational system. As a result, the Ministry of Education through the Centro de Perfeccionamiento, Experimentación e Investigaciones Pedagógicas (CPEIP), has incorporated a formal induction program for novice teachers called Mentorship.

The Mentorship Program of CPEIP seeks to enhance the conditions for the successful start of novice teachers in the educational system. This formal induction program consists of experienced teachers accompanying novice teachers in their first year of work, guiding and helping them to overcome the obstacles that they could experience during their first year at work. Moreover, it facilitates the successful integration of novice teachers into the school system in schools in Santiago and other cities along the country. The main objective of the Mentorship program is to help novice teachers to develop their skills and, at the same time, to support the retainment of new teachers in the system. According to CPEIP, the Mentorship program pursues to "reinforce the professional identity to encourage the reflective capacities, improvement of professional skills in the classroom during the first year of exercise as a teacher, to develop networks of

collaborative work in the school community, to increase the commitment of teachers with their schools and project its future, and to support the process of the immersion in the teaching work” (CPEIP, 2016)

## **1.2 An overview of mentorship**

Mentorship is considered essential for providing novice teachers with a successful performance at the beginning of their careers since the first year of work as teachers has an important impact on the development of the future profession. He (2009) argued that “research into mentoring processes of pre-service teachers maintains that mentoring is one of the primary factors that determine the success of the novice teachers at the initial stages of their teaching experience” (Leshem, 2012, p. 261). Similarly, Thomas Farrell (2003) stated that, “the transition from teacher education institution to life in a real classroom has been characterized as a reality shock in which beginning teachers realize that the ideals they formed while training may not be appropriate for the realism they are faced with during the first year of teaching” ( p. 95). Additionally, Murshidi, Konting, Elias, and Fooi (2006) supported this idea of “reality shock” stating that “when beginning teachers enter the teaching force, they often encounter a reality shock as they confront the complexity of the teaching task. The reality of the actual teaching situation sometimes differs so much from what the beginners were expecting” (p.266). Moreover, Ludenn (2004) as cited in Panesar concluded that “novice teachers tend to set “unrealistic expectations” which provoke the abandonment of the profession.” ( p.2). According to Ingersoll (2001) and Kukla-Acevedo (2009) as quoted in Richter “beginning teachers tend to leave the profession at a higher rate” (p. 166).For example, Duffield (2006) as cited in Meristo & Eisenschmidt (2014)

stated that “nearly half of American novice teachers leave the teaching profession within the first five years” (p.1). Thus, awareness of the complexity of the profession has increased and it is thought that mentorship has a positive impact on novice teachers since it prepares them for this transition by providing them with techniques, strategies, and knowledge, among others. Then, the question that arises is what mentorship is. According to Fletcher (2000, 2012) as cited in Hairon Salleh & Charlene Tan (2013) “mentorship could be seen as a means of guiding and supporting practitioners to ease them through difficult transitions; teacher mentoring is essential for unblocking impediments to change by building self-confidence and self-esteem as well as directing, managing and instructing” (p. 152).

This thesis is focused on the importance of mentorship experiences in Chile because the transition from pre-service teacher to novice teacher is considered crucial and having the support of a mentorship could positively improve novice teachers’ motivation, efficiency, performance, self- confidence and classroom management. Also, it could help to reduce attrition of teachers.

Based on the information previously presented, the objectives of the present study are:

### **General objective**

- To determine the importance of mentorship experiences for novice teachers.

### **Specific objectives**

- To analyze novice teachers’ experiences while they being part of the Mentorship Program.
- To identify in which areas novice teachers need more support.

- To explore the factors that foster a positive mentorship experience between mentor and mentee.
- To know possible suggestions that mentees have regarding the mentorship program.

### **Research Questions**

- Is mentorship important for the development of novice teachers in-service experiences? If so, how?
- How do novice teachers describe their experience?
- In which areas do novice teachers need more support?
- What factors make the relationship between the mentor and mentee successful?
- Do mentees have some suggestions to improve mentorships?

Chile has implemented several measures to improve its educational system and the introduction of mentorship as a formal program in 2015 is one of them. Mentorship has an enormous importance because of two main reasons; on the one hand, mentorship can improve the quality of education through the improvements of novice teacher's performance; on the other hand, it can prevent novice teachers leaving the profession. Therefore, this study is of particular importance since its result will provide with evidence of current experiences to relevant actors: policy-makers, school directors, experienced teachers interested in becoming mentors, parents, among others; and it will also help to create awareness about the need of the mentorships programs in our reality.

In view of this, it will be useful to know if mentorship positively affects novice teachers' transition from pre-service teacher education to the real classrooms. Furthermore, this study will review two different experiences of novice teachers going through the Mentorship Program.

In the following chapter, some definitions of Mentorship as well as previous studies related to the topic will be reviewed with the purpose of providing information that will be vital to understand the nature and aiming of this program.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Importance of mentorship

According to CPEIP, “Mentorship consists of an experienced teacher in charge of a novice teacher in order to facilitate their induction into the educational system where he or she is going to play the role of a teacher [..]. (As cited in Bitácoradel Docente Principiante, 2015, p.13). Moreover, Ashby, Malderez, and Tomlinson (2008) as cited in Hairon Salleh and Charlene Tan (2013) defined mentorship as “the one-to-one support of a novice or less experienced practitioner (mentee) by a more experienced practitioner (mentor), designed primarily to assist the development of the mentee’s expertise and to facilitate their induction into the culture of the profession.”(p. 152). Furthermore, Fideler & Haselkorn (1999) and Henke, Chen, Geis, & Knepper (2000) as cited in D. Roehrig (2008) defined mentorship as “the process that provides beginning teachers with access to more experienced teachers who act as sounding boards, guides, and counsellors” (p. 685). Likewise, Koki S. concluded that “mentorship is defined as a complex and multi-dimensional process of guiding, teaching, influencing and supporting a beginning or new teacher” (1997, p. 3). In the same way, Gay (1995) as quoted in Stan Koki (1997) pointed out “mentorship is the process of serving as a mentor, someone who facilitates and assists another’s development. The process includes modeling because the mentor must be able to model the messages and suggestions being taught to the beginning teacher” (p. 3).

Mentorship is considered as a fundamental tool for novice teachers to improve their performance and to identify areas and skills in themselves that need to be enhanced. It provides with support, assistance, encouragement, and facilitates professional development. According to Fletcher (2000, 2012) as cited in Hobson (2008) mentorship has been seen “as a means of guiding and supporting practitioners to ease them through difficult transitions, teacher mentoring is essential for unblocking impediments to change by building self-confidence and self-esteem as well as directing, managing and instructing” (p.152). In the same way, Francis (2001); Lindgren (2005); Cox (2001); Raimondi (2007) as cited in Richter (2013) stated that “studies have consistently shown that novices perceive their mentor teachers to be one of their most important sources of support during the first year of teaching” (p. 167). Consequently, Rhodes (2006) as quoted in Eddie Chi Wai Ng (2014) pointed out some of the benefits of having mentorship; for example, “one of the potential pathways of mentoring influence is the mentoring relationship which facilitates the socio-emotional, cognitive, and identity development.” (p. 268.) Therefore, it can be stated that Mentorship helps to overcome novice teacher’s problems regarding any particular aspect during their first year of professional practice. For example, some of them might feel stressed because they have to do a lot of paperwork and might not be able to do their job properly; however, with the help of a mentor teacher they will learn how to cope with this difficulty and feel more comfortable with what they do. In regard to the fact that mentorship can prevent novice teachers from leaving the profession, it is known that many novice teachers leave their professions due to factors such as lack of support, isolation problems, the feeling of being overstressed, among others. According to Valenzuela and Sevilla from del Centro de Investigación Avanzada en Educación de la Universidad de Chile (CIAE) in Chile, “the statistics have shown

that 23% of the novice teachers who entered the profession in 2004, had abandoned the profession at the second year, 30% at the third year, and 40% at the fifth year. Among those novice teachers who began working in 2007, one-third of them had already left the profession at the second year” (CIAE - Universidad de Chile, 2016). As a result, Valenzuela and Sevilla stated “the early abandonment of teachers is caused mainly because of the poor working conditions. Besides, they describe that these precarious conditions include the working environment and students, the attitude of colleagues, low community support and the limited time available” (CIAE - Universidad de Chile, 2016). Based on these statistics, this present study about the Mentorship Program emphasizes that teachers need more support in order to feel more confident with their performance as well as feel more motivated regarding the profession.

Similarly, isolation has become concern among novice teachers since it can affect their job satisfaction and, therefore, their ability to perform at their best. Consequently, new teachers feel frustrated and leave their profession. According to Ingersoll and Strong, (2011):

School reformers and researchers have long pointed out that this isolation can be especially difficult for new teachers, who, upon accepting a position in a school, are often left on their own to succeed or fail within the confines of their own classrooms (p.3).

## **2.2 Mentorship’s experiences in other countries**

Mentorship does not only bring benefits for mentees, but also for mentor teachers and educational institutions. To illustrate this, it is worth mentioning that



in a study of mentors' perceptions of their involvement in a school-university partnership program in Hong Kong some researchers such as Lopez-Real and Kwan (2005) as cited in Hobson, Ashby, Malderez, and Tomlinson (2008) reported that "70% of mentors claimed to have benefited professionally from mentoring. Some of the benefits to mentors are gaining "new ideas" and "new perspectives" " (p. 209). Additionally, Mentorship is beneficial for educational institutions since their pupils get benefits by being taught by novice teachers who are supported and able to create an appropriate learning environment.

In several countries, mentorship programs have been a successful initiative. For example, Lindgren (2007) stated that "in the United States, where mentoring programs have existed for about 40 years, belief in mentoring is strong because it is seen to provide new teachers with support during their transition from initial teacher education to actual classroom teaching" (p. 241). Another study which took place in Shanghai called Novice Teachers Learning From Others: mentorship in Shanghai Schools showed how successful mentorship has been in their educational system. Wu (2010) as cited in Salleh and Tan (2013) stated that mentorship was "implemented in China since the late 1950s, the objectives are to allow an exchange of ideas on teaching experiences and develop the teachers' thinking, professional standards and quality of teaching" (p.154).

In Scotland, the Initial Teacher Education Program (ITE) was created in order to have "well-managed and supported induction experiences that should enable new teachers to provide education of the highest standards for Scotland's children and young people" (Donaldson, 2008, p.1). There are two factors that show why mentorship was possible and effective in this context. The first one is the relationship developed among mentors and mentees and the

second factor is that the Scottish Government gives schools grants for having established a mentoring program (Donaldson, 2008).

### **2.3 Mentorship in Chile**

The Ministry of Education (MINEDUC), through the CPEIP, has proposed the initiative called “Sistema Nacional de Inducción para Docentes Principiantes” as an effort to tackle the need that some national studies have established about Chile in regard to its educational system and the fact that more and more novice teachers are leaving the profession within the first years at work. These studies have also demonstrated the importance of supporting novice teachers in their first years of work as teachers since they are considered as a crucial period for them to build their perception of job satisfaction and to avoid their early departure from the profession.

CPEIP stated that “mentorship consists on an experienced mentor teacher in charge of a novice teacher for a period of one year. The mentor teacher aims at facilitating the induction of novice teachers into the reality of public schools, and providing support to them through their first year at work” (Bitácora del Docente Principiante, 2015, p.6)

There are five key concepts provided by the CPEIP that should be mentioned in order to understand the process, factors, and participants of the Mentorship Program.

1. Induction: An organized system proposed by the MINEDUC, to provide with pedagogical support to novice teachers.

2. Novice mentees: Elementary and pre- school teachers who are in their first year of work at public schools after graduating themselves from their programs/ careers.
3. Mentor teachers: Experienced teachers who have been trained in special courses by universities in agreement with CPEIP. Also, mentor teachers who have been trained in different courses provided by the program called “Inglés Abre Puertas” (PIAP). These teachers must keep outstanding levels in their accreditation such as Teacher Evaluation System or be members of the network called Master Teachers.
4. Mentorship: The process in which a mentor teacher helps and guides a mentee during their first year of working in a public school. The Mentorship Program lasts between six months and one year.
5. Organization: The organization of the pairs, that is to say, mentor and mentee, is determined by the director of the educational establishment where the mentee is working in agreement with the CPEIP. Also, mentees must have a contract of at least 20 hours in a public schools, and both mentor and mentee must sign a contract with the CPEIP in which the payment terms are established.

In 2004, a mentorship proposal called “Mentor Trainer Training Program” was implemented as the first attempt of a mentorship program itself, but for English teachers only. The “English Opens Door” program (PIAP) and the MINEDUC proposed the idea of creating a mentorship program for teachers of English and Alberto Hurtado University was selected to conduct this training program which resulted very fruitful. (CPEIP, Bitácoradel Docente Principiante,

2015, p.8). This attempt helped to encourage the mentorship program throughout the country. In 2005, MINEDUC through the CPEIP formed a committee to support the inclusion of mentees and develop the “Sistema Nacional de Inducción para Docentes Principiantes” which has the first piloted program at Universidad Católica in Temuco, in 2006. As this program had a positive impact and successful results, authorities started implementing it in other universities such as Catholic University in Valparaíso (2008), and Alberto Hurtado University (2009). Finally, the MINEDUC assigned to the CPEIP and the network of Master Teachers the responsibility of advancing in the program to support the inclusion of novice mentees and mentor training, in 2008. After years of developing this assistance program for new teachers, in 2015, mentorship was recognized as a formal program.

Novice teachers who want to be part of a mentorship program should fulfill the following requirements:

- To sign a contract for applying for the Mentorship Program.
- To elaborate a mentorship plan with the mentor teacher.
- To dedicate, at least, six hours each week for working on activities of the mentorship program.
- To do the activities, actions and tasks appropriately.
- To attend the different workshops for mentees and workshops for both mentee and mentor teacher which are organized by the schools and the CPEIP.
- To participate in different virtual communities for the interaction of both mentees and mentor teachers.
- To participate in the evaluation of the mentorship program.
- To issue semiannual reports.

Finally, the contract states that mentor teachers must attend three hours per week to the mentorship program while the mentees must attend, at least, six hours each week.

It is important to highlight that the Mentorship Program includes a plan for both mentor and mentee. This plan helps to organize and guide the work of the whole mentorship which lasts one year. Mentees must present two reports, the first report must be delivered at the middle of the program and the other at the end of it. The plan must be elaborated by both mentor teacher and mentee and it must include some of the following information:

The mentorship process is divided into the following parts:

- Registration: information of the mentor and mentee should be collected (name and surname, place where he/she lives, cell phone number, etc.)
- Diagnosis and strategies: A description of the reality of the public school in which the mentee is working must be made. Plus, self-assessments of both mentor teacher and mentee taking place at the beginning of the program.
- Work plan (schedule of the activities): The fulfillment of the activities must be registered in the calendar and must include the following information: Analysis of meetings and pedagogical reflection, visits to the classroom (mentee, mentor or other worker from the school), personal work (search of materials, readings, time for personal reflection), recordings (audio and / or video) of the classes and further analysis and finally, attendance and participation in local workshops and meetings with other learners, among others.

The table shown below is used to register the timetable for the planned activities. This schedule should be filled when the process of mentorship begins. It is very important to start the process with a work plan that will give evidence of the activities performed.

Calendar of planned activities:

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Schedule</b>	<b>N° hours</b>
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				

*Figure 1: Calendar of planned activities:*

- Final evaluation of the program: Mentees and mentor teachers do a self-assessment evaluation of the program. Besides, the mentor teacher assesses the mentee as well as the program itself.
- Personal reflection: It must be considered that the last hour of work of the week of mentees should be intended for personal reflection about the challenges and learning achieved during that week. It is an extremely important part of the process since the mentee must write a text of no more than 500 words in which he/she will describe the main learning's and reflections of the week.

It is important to highlight the existence of Marco para la Buena Enseñanza (MBE) and connect it to Mentorship Program. MBE is an instrument that was elaborated in 2008 by the MINEDUC in collaboration with the Asociación Chilena de Municipalidades and the Colegio de Profesores and which is currently being updated. Its main purpose is to establish and describe a set of criteria that present educators' responsibilities and performance inside and outside the classroom. Originally, the MBE was based on Charlotte Danielson's work called Framework for Teaching which was "designed to help districts promote a common definition and understanding of excellence in teaching, one that everyone—teachers, administrators, and the larger community—can easily comprehend." (Danielson, 2011, p. 1).

MBE promotes teacher professionalism in the following areas:

- First: The framework identifies what distinguishes teachers from other professional or non-professional actors.
- Second: Contributes to the strengthening of the teacher professionalism.
- Third: MBE strengthens the profession in the sense that a modern and social service profession, such as teaching, grows and matures by collectively exercise.

The MBE is focused on four domains or criteria which were created with the purpose of enriching the teaching process, giving teachers guidance regarding the procedures during the teaching learning process and a brief description of them is provided below:



*Figure 2: Domains MBE.*

1. **Planning and Preparation:** in this domain, teachers must evidence a deep understanding and knowledge about the discipline that they teach. Also, they need to have the required competencies and the pedagogical tools that facilitate an adequate coherence and connection among contents, students, and the context they are immersed in. However, neither the domain nor the pedagogical competences are sufficient to achieve learning. For that reason, teachers need to keep acquiring new knowledge or techniques from other sources. It is also said that as educators teach in specific contexts and to specific students their particularities proper characteristics must be considered at the moment when the teaching activities are planned. Consequently, teachers have to be familiarized with their students, for example, knowing their age, their cultural and social background, their abilities, and competencies.



2. Classroom Environment: this domain is about the learning environment that teachers generate in their classrooms. This domain is essential because it is known that students learning depend on the social components and variety of materials that they are provided with to develop the learning process. It also established that learning is encouraged when it occurs in a place where confidence, acceptance, equality, and respect take place and where behavioral norms are set. Furthermore, this area encourages teachers to invite students to investigate, to share and learn in the classroom.
3. Instruction: In this domain, teacher's abilities to organize are highlighted since how teachers manage their classes is essential. If teachers do not organize their time wisely, learning will not be effective. At the same time, it is important to take into consideration students' knowledge, interests and also to give adequate resources and support in the learning process. In addition, this domain determines that in order to make students participate in the classroom actively, share with their students the learning objectives and the procedures that will be used. Finally, it is crucial to highlight in this domain the importance of monitoring while the students are learning with the purpose of providing feedback.
4. Professional responsibilities: this domain states the importance of teachers' commitment, with students' learning. These two aspects help to evaluate the learning processes in order to understand students, to find students' weaknesses, to help them to overcome their difficulties, and to see how teacher's strategies work with them. Furthermore, this domain is involved in a learning environment in

which teachers share with their colleagues, share with students' families and share with other member of the school community

Having all this information about the MBE and its domains, the connection between this framework and the Mentorship Program can be made. According to the Mentor's Handbook (CPEIP, 2015), the mentorship process is divided into five components as it was already mentioned (p.18). The second component called Diagnosis and strategies imply that once they begin the program, mentees have to work on their self-evaluation in order to recognize their strengths and weaknesses. This self- assessment encourages reflection focusing on the four domains of the MBE. In other words, mentees have to go through these four domains and select their level of performance in each dimension and also, they have to recognize the critical points they need to improve and work with their mentor teachers. Below there is a figure representing the reflection mentees do around the four dimensions of MBE.

<b>Dimensions</b>	<b>Performance level (developing, acceptable, competent, innovation)</b>	<b>Critical points</b>
Planning and Preparation		
Classroom environment		
Instruction		
Professional responsibilities		

*Figure 3: Self- assessment form*

After completing this self-evaluation, mentees in collaboration with their mentors, have to establish the real challenges that they will probably encounter in the teaching process in a chart as the following:

<b>Challenges</b>	<b>Domain</b> <b>MBE</b>	<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Month(s)</b>

*Figure 4: Possible challenges*

The self-evaluation leads to define challenges associated to the four domains. The MBE works as a guide to improve teacher's performance and competences inside and outside the classroom and for this reason the Mentorship Program incorporates it as a tool to conduct the process.

#### **2.4 Novice teacher's experiences in Chile**

Teachers are trained in universities but when they actually face the reality, regarding their classes, is when they put into practice what they have learnt. Therefore, to illustrate this, the experiences of some mentees who went through a mentorship program will be presented. The aim of doing this, is to portray the impact that mentorship had upon the professional development of these mentees and to discover the strengths and weaknesses of such experiences. Boer Romero in the book *Mentores y Noveles: Historias del Trayecto* (2011) wrote, "Carlos Pacheco Huaquifil was born 1982, in Santiago [...] his first working experience was in a school in 2007, then he graduated from Science

pedagogy and began working at Colegio Betania in Temuco [...] there he had to assume the leadership of a large elementary course [...] According to Pacheco, “at the beginning it was too hard to manage a large group of kids [...] as a novice mentee I often felt alone and anxious since in different situations I did not know to whom I can ask for my doubts [...]”. In spite of his situations at the school, he was invited to participate in an innovative project for novice mentees which was done by Universidad Católica (UCT), in Temuco. In that moment, he met Professor Amelia Duhart, an experienced faculty member of the teachers network who was trained for being a mentor teacher in the UCT [...] Amelia guided Carlos by using her knowledge, besides she supported him for a whole year in their daily work as an elementary teacher. Pacheco stated “Amelia facilitates my duties and I had her support in my critical moments” His mentorship experience [...] has motivated him to become better regarding the profession and to improve their teaching practices inside of the classroom. After the first two years of his working experience [...] The Ministry of Education introduced the program Acreditación para la Asignación de Excelencia Pedagógica (AEP) in 2009, and Carlos earned a recognition as an elementary teacher, in 2010.” (Mentores y Noveles: Historias del Trayecto, 2011, p. 54-55)

According to an anonymous teacher, inside of the classroom there are different problems regarding the classroom itself; for example, the lack of purpose and clear goals of the students; the planning of the class which sometimes is challenging due to the fact that it does not cope with the level of learning of them [...], waste of time in terms of giving instructions; poor relationship between teachers and students. Finally, novice teacher have a lack in terms of classroom management and how to use technology inside of the classroom as well as inadequate verbal and non-verbal communication skills, among others. This is a testimony from an elementary Chilean teacher, within his first years at work, who says that his mentor teacher “provides me with

techniques and pieces of advice which have been very useful when managing discipline [...]”(Aprendizaje de la Experiencia de la Enseñanza Chile, 2016, p. 8).

The experience of Brenda Puga Plaza described the purpose previously mentioned. She is a Kindergarten teacher who took a diploma course to become a mentor teacher. Thus, she obtained the certification from the training program conducted by Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso (PUCV). She assumed the role of mentor teacher and stated that:

“If I had to summarize my experience in this graduate mentor training course, I would say is one of the most significant, relevant, and rewarding experiences in my personal and professional development. During my training, I have built new insights and meanings of the education system as a whole. For example, I have known in depth the complex period of employment for beginning teachers [...] (P. 89). Brenda also stated that “the training process of mentorship deals with the virtual and active interaction with our teachers and partners in the training and management of the program which has motivated each of us [...]”(P. 89). To summarize, Brenda assured that “this experience also allowed me to meet young beginning teachers from their own reality, their challenges and personal problems, labor and professional issues that they faced when they were inserted into the educational communities” (Aprendizaje de la Experiencia de la Enseñanza Chile, 2016, P. 90).

In addition to the previous example, Elizabeth Fuentes Donoso, who obtained a diploma to become a mentor teacher as well as Brenda at the PUCV, shared her experience of being through mentorship training, and she pointed out that at the beginning of her program “when I started this course, I had high expectations of the program itself. I was a teacher who came from a province of this region in search of knowledge and exchange of experiences with other

teachers who shared the same desires to succeed (p. 94). Afterwards, Elizabeth complemented her experience by stating that “building this new role meant a great impact on my professional life and why not say a great responsibility, because guiding new teachers means to be assertive in seeking strategies which strengthen their professional identity and their vocation as well enabling them to discover their critical issues regarding the profession itself so that they can move with maximum safety in their work.” (Acompañar los Primeros Pasos de los Docentes, Ingrid Boer Romero, p. 95)

As it was previously addressed, mentorship has an important connotation in education since it can help to improve it in various ways, but the most significant one is to increase the confidence of beginning teachers. Beginning teachers are in charge of the future of new generations of students in each school along our country.

According to the OEI (Organización de Estados Iberoamericanos para la Educación, la Ciencia y la Cultura), “Teachers obtain their first job and look for ways to adapt themselves and demonstrate their best in order to make their superiors aware about the effort they have made. However, the insertion of them is not an easy issue and it can turn into a complicated situation due to the isolated aspect of their profession which is most of the time a single teacher in charge of a whole class.”(p. 13). In order to continue describing experiences, it is worth mentioning a case study presented by Farrel. This case study was conducted in a secondary school in Singapore, explores this process, challenges, feelings and thoughts, through weekly journals, of a novice teacher who initiates his career without having any support from neither his colleges nor his school’s superior authorities, they only imposed him rules which did not help the learning process of the students. According to Farrell’s study, this new teacher faced some complications in his first year of teaching alone. The major

issue that this language teacher had to deal with was the fact that in Singapore its citizens use English as a first, second and foreign language; therefore, there are different levels of the language in the country provoking a variety of English language skills making classes more challenging in which language teachers need to have more techniques that can help in the classroom for the different kinds of learning levels of the students.

Mentorship provides with knowledge that can be used for improving teaching aspects such as solving the previous complication. Another complication refers to the school's approach. The institution was used to working with a teacher-centered approach which as the subject argued was not the appropriate approach for his students, he preferred to a learner-centered approach that leads to the learning process in a correct manner. School guidance was inefficient and unsuccessful (Farrel, 2006).

### 3. METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Overall Design

In this chapter, the methodological procedures followed in the present study are explained in detail. Considering the research design selected, a description of the context and participants, the instruments used, the procedures that took place for the implementation of the study, and the data analysis steps will be presented.

**3.1.1 Research design & tradition.** The design of this investigation follows the features of qualitative design which according to Creswell (2003) “In this situation the researchers seek to establish the meaning of a phenomenon from the views of participants. This means identifying a culture-sharing group and studying how it developed shared patterns of behavior over time.”(p.20-21)The qualitative approach aims at knowing the experiences of the participants in depth which allows researchers to have a closer relationship with them; therefore, they are in advantage since they have more opportunities to collect data which will be analyzed later and will contribute to achieve a better understanding of the phenomenon. Moreover, Creswell (2007) defined a qualitative research as:

A qualitative research begins with assumptions, a world view, the possible use of theoretical lens, and the study of research problems inquiring into meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. To study this problems, qualitative researchers use an emerging qualitative approach to inquiry, the collection of data in a natural setting sensitive to the



people and places under study, and data analysis that is inductive and establishes patterns or themes [...]

Consequently, a qualitative design is best suited to this study since its main concern is to know a particular phenomenon which in the case of this study is the importance of mentorship in Chile by exploring the experiences of novice teachers. Indeed, there are others researchers such as Denzin & Lincoln (2005) as cited in Creswell (2007) who argued that a qualitative research:

Turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. (p. 36)

The tradition of this study is a phenomenological tradition since it describes the meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or phenomenon. Creswell (2007) pointed out that “the basic purpose of phenomenology is to reduce individual experiences with a phenomenon to a description of the universal essence.” (p. 58) Moreover, Moustakas (1994) as cited in Creswell (2007) defined phenomenology tradition as “the inquirer then collects data from persons who have experienced the phenomenon, and develops a composite description of the essence of the experience for all the individuals. This description consists of “what” they experienced and “how” they experienced it.” (p. 58)

### 3.2 Context and Participants

In this section, the context of the study and where the participants are currently working and being part of a mentorship program will be presented. The subjects who participated in this research study belong to one public school in Santiago, Chile. Indeed, the Mentorship Program in Chile is only offered to those teachers who work in public schools.

**3.2.1 Context.** The context of this study is a public school called “Liceo Bicentenario De Niñas” located in Maipú, Santiago, Chile. This program is only offered to those teachers who are in their first year of work in a public school. According to the CPEIP, the Mentorship Program is necessary for these teachers since it helps them to develop the following features:

1. Strengthen professional identity and reflective capabilities.
2. Encourage teacher’s professional skills inside the classroom during their first year of working as teachers.
3. Develop networks of collaborative work in the school community.
4. Increase the commitment with the school and their teaching work plans for the future.

**3.2.2 Participants.** The participants of this study were 2 Chilean novice teachers. One participant is an English teacher and the other one is a Language teacher. These two teachers belong to the public school sector in Maipú, Santiago, Chile. These teachers voluntarily accepted to participate in this study. For that purpose, they signed a consent letter.

### 3.3 Procedures and data analysis

The two participants of this study were interviewed following a semi-structured interview. The semi-structured interview provides a clear set of instructions for the interviewers and can contribute with reliable, comparable qualitative data. According to Denscombe, “with semi-structured interviews, the interviewer is prepared to be flexible in terms of the order in which the topic is considered and (...) to let the interviewee develop ideas and speak more widely on the issues raised by the researcher” (p.167). Despite of the semi-structured interviews, the interviewees used a stimulated recall for obtaining more information. Stimulated recall is used as a technique for investigating people’s interactions in different circumstances. Besides, the main purpose of stimulated recall is to obtain as much information as possible by asking questions about certain situations in the participants’ life regarding their experiences as novice teachers. Thus, semi-structured interviews and stimulated recall are best suited for this research since they allow the interviewers to go deeper and obtain more details which are useful for having a clear picture of the information obtained and how to code it.

During the interview, both participants were recorded and the data was transcribed and coded. Through the process of coding, the main themes and findings will be analyzed. Once having the findings, this study provides with vital information for knowing whether mentorship in novice teachers is indeed important for their development and in-service experiences.

## 4. RESULTS

In this chapter, the results obtained from the data collection process are analyzed and presented in order to provide a clear exposition of the subjects' perceptions about the importance of the Mentorship Program in Santiago, Chile.

The results were classified according to the research questions which contain the main themes of this research. The main purpose of using these questions was to discover the most remarkable aspects that the participants from "Liceo Bicentenario de Niñas" showed through their answers from the semi-structured interview. The following information which is presented throughout this chapter is going to provide specific data about the perceptions of the participants about the Mentorship Program during their first and second year working as teachers in a public school.

### 4.1 Mentorship importance

According to Participant A, mentorship is really important since it accomplishes its essential purpose which is to provide support to novice teachers especially in a practical and emotional level. That is, the pragmatic support can be seen through different pieces of advice that a mentor teacher gives to the novice teacher based on their previous experiences. Nonetheless, Participant B differs a little bit with this statement since she complains about the way Mentorship Program was implemented and how it works. To illustrate this, participant B stated that, "I believe that it might be important but if it done as it should be. Moreover, mentorship must be taken during the first year of novice teacher's work and with the appropriate amount of hours. Regarding the program itself, I think it is working inappropriately due to it did not begin when it should."

**4.1.2 Benefits of mentorship.** Participant A thinks that mentorship provides benefits since the mentor teacher- mentee dynamics, follows the logic of exchanging experiences and reflections that eventually enrich both, mentors and mentees. While, Participant B, thinks that mentorship has not brought any benefit so far but she stated “the good aspect of it is that it has made me reflect about my work.”

**4.1.3 Mentee’s experiences.** First of all, Participant A believes that mentorship has been a positive and fruitful experience, since the mentorship sessions work as a space for containment and dialogue between the mentor and mentee which most educational institutions do not have. Also, it is a space where mentor and mentee can come up with many reflections regarding the process of being under this program and she agreed with the fact that mentorship is fundamental for the enrichment of both, mentor and mentee. However, Participant B said that she has not had the best attitude towards the program due to the irregularities that she finds in terms of its implementation. For example, she stated that “the head of the school did not even ask me if I wanted to participate in the program. Instead, she just agreed with the CPEIP and appointed me without my agreement [...]”

**4.1.4 Relationship between mentor and mentee.** Participant A highlights the willingness of both to share experiences through dialogue. Plus, the fact of being able to be contacted through different ways such as through social networks helps to develop a good relationship. Whereas, Participant B thinks that one important aspect to build a healthful and positive relationship between mentor and mentee is the affinity in the area. That is, to have a mentor teacher who has studied the same career as the mentee.

Moreover, Participant B stressed the importance of this issue since the improvements made by novice teachers would significantly increase, if the program respects the idea of having a mentor that is from the same field.

**4.1.5 Areas that need to be improved.** Participant A stated that basically novice teachers need support in administrative and value formation areas. Regarding this matter, Participant A said that “I think that those areas are not really covered by undergraduate programs at universities; even though, they are part of their curricula. For example, during the first year of working, novice teachers have to deal with how to complete a class book, to propose work plans, apart from the fact that they have to create a relationship not only with students but parents as well.” Similarly, Participant B stated that “there are many things that people do not learn either in universities or in schools, especially in public schools. For example, national policies which regulate the functioning of educational establishments.” Additionally, Participant B appeals to the fact that these issues are currently not taken into consideration by many university curricula even though they are important to every teacher in this country.

**4.1.6 Suggestions.** Above all, Participant A says that a good idea is to have one mentor who has the same specialty. She said that “if my area is Language and Communication, the best option will be to have a mentor who is a teacher of this subject. This could improve the symbiosis of knowledge and experience for both, education and discipline.” Likewise, Participant B believes that “the organization of the Mentorship Program needs to be more regular and more transparent due to the fact that here in Chile people are used to saying “Okay, let’s try it, and they copy something wrongly”

## 5. DISCUSSION

In this chapter, we discuss the experiences of novice teachers who spent one year under the Mentorship Program taking into account the results presented in the previous chapter. In order to do this, we answered each research question and we compared them to the Literature Reviewed in Chapter 2.

### 5.1 Research Questions

**5.1.2 Is mentorship important for the development of novice teacher's in-service experiences? If so, how?.** According to the literature review presented in Chapter 2 and from all the information gathered throughout this research, the Mentorship Program is in fact a very important tool used by several countries to improve the performance of novice teachers and to reduce the attrition which is a current concern not only in foreign countries but in Chile as well. Additionally, it helps novice teachers to identify areas and skills in themselves that need to be enhanced. Likewise, Participant A and B think that the Mentorship Program is fundamental for improving novice teacher's performance during the first years working in their profession and for providing support especially at a practical and emotional level. Nonetheless, Participant B stressed the fact that the program should be done regularly. For instance, it should start at the beginning of the year and not in the middle.

**5.1.3 How do novice teachers describe their experience?.** Regardless all the experiences gathered in the present study, most of them arrived at the conclusion that the Mentorship Program has been very useful for making improvements in their professional development. In fact, many of them feel thankful for being part of this program since it allowed them to feel more

confident inside the classroom and to let them reflect about their work. According to a Chilean teacher, his mentor teacher “provides me with techniques and pieces of advice which have been very useful when managing discipline [...]” (Aprendizaje de la Experiencia de la Enseñanza Chile, 2016, p. 8). However, Participant B differs from this point of view since for her this program has not brought her any benefit so far.

#### **5.1.4 In which areas do novice teachers need more support?.**

Throughout the literature review, some of the most remarkable aspects and areas in which novice teachers need more support were mainly emotional support and guidance. According to Fletcher (2000, 2012) as cited in Hobson (2008) it has been seen mentorship “as a means of guiding and supporting practitioners to ease them through difficult transitions, teacher mentoring is essential for unblocking impediments to change by building self-confidence and self-esteem as well as directing, managing and instructing”(p.152). On the contrary, both participants A and B agreed with the fact that novice teachers need more help in administrative and value formation matters because those areas are not really covered by the undergraduate programs at the universities.

**5.1.5 What factors make the relationship between the mentor and mentee successful?.** According to the CPEIP “mentorship consists on an experienced mentor teacher in charge of a novice teacher for a period of one year. The mentor teacher aims at facilitating the induction of novice teachers into the reality of public schools, and providing support to them through their first year at work” (Bitácora del Docente Principiante, 2015, p.6) Furthermore, Fideler & Haselkorn (1999) and



Henke, Chen, Geis, & Knepper (2000) as cited in D. Roehrig (2008) defined mentorship as “the process that provides beginning teachers with access to more experienced teachers who act as sounding boards, guides, and counsellors” (p. 685). Thus, what makes the relationship between the mentor teacher and mentee successful is the willingness of both to cooperate and create an environment in which both can learn from each other and reflect about their performance because not only the mentee learn but the mentor teacher as well since they are creating an instance to share their concerns and find out possible solutions. Indeed, Participant A and B points out that the willingness of sharing experiences through dialogue is key to maintain a healthy relationship in this process.

#### **5.1.6 Do mentees have some suggestions to improve mentorships?.**

According with all the information gathered in Chapter 2, mentorship was created for two reasons. On the one hand, to improve the quality of education. On the other hand, to reduce attrition rates in teachers. To illustrate this, Ludenn (2004) as cited in Panesar concluded that “novice teachers tend to set “unrealistic expectations” which provoke the abandonment of the profession.” ( p.2) Hence, it is of great importance to know what teachers have to say regarding the program itself in order to make it better and work as it should be. Regarding Participants A and B, both have different suggestions to improve this program. Participant A suggests the idea of having a specialized mentor for each subject. While, Participant B suggests that the organization of the program must be regular and clear, otherwise it would not work properly. Furthermore, she also suggests that the program should be taken only by those teachers who are really interested in the Mentorship Program and not to be forced to be part of it.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

This research is based on the importance of the Mentorship Program by exploring the experiences of novice teachers in Chile. As the program is relatively new, the study was intended to investigate the relevance that it has in this country by exploring several aspects of it as a way to understand how it works in the Chilean reality. In order to provide a clear and deep understanding of this issue we decided to apply interviews of the study addressed.

The present study showed that the Mentorship Program has both, positive and negative impact on novice teachers. In fact, there were three main aspects that are worth mentioning. Those aspects are: its importance, the areas that need to be improved and the suggestions given by the novice teachers. Firstly, in terms of the importance of the program, it is important to highlight that it does provide with improvements since it aims at enhancing a better quality of education and reducing the attrition among teachers. However, to make this possible, the program must work regularly and with those teachers who are really willing to participate in it. Secondly, in relation to the areas that need to be improved, there is mainly one: administrative matters which teachers usually have to cope with at schools and which they are not familiar with. The participants of this study complained about the lack of knowledge regarding this area even though universities should provide future teachers with enough instruction on these matters. Finally, the most remarkable suggestion for improving the program itself was to have a specialized mentor teacher for each subject so as to improve the professional affinity between mentor teacher and mentee. Above all, the Mentorship program is definitely more positive than negative since its purpose is to help mentees to succeed in their first year working as teachers by providing them with tools and strategies. Therefore, it will positively influence teacher's future work.

## 6.1 Limitations and Suggestions

The limitations of the present study were few but they must be taken into consideration for further research. First of all, as the Mentorship Program was a new program in Chile, there were not many mentors and novice teachers available to be interviewed and gather information which makes difficult to have global view regarding this phenomena. Therefore, for future researches, it will be advisable to make a study with more mentor and novice teachers so there will be more evidence about this topic and how this program is working in Chile. Secondly, lack of time. Novice and mentor teachers are usually very busy at schools; hence, it is important to be well- organized and appoint any possible interview with either novice or mentor teacher with time.

Based on the results, it is recommended to have more than one instrument in this area since it is a social phenomenon and it is crucial to go in depth with the inquiry. For example, interviewing more participants and mentor teachers with the purpose of having an extensive range that can provide more reliable perspectives of this phenomenon and more impressions to explore. Taking into account all the limitations previously mentioned, it is important to consider the time available to evade future problems with the last steps of a research.

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## APPENDIX

### Appendix 1: Consentletter.

#### TÍTULO DEL PROYECTO DE INVESTIGACIÓN:

*The importance of Mentorship: Exploring the experiences of EFL Novice Teacher in Chile.*

Usted ha sido invitada a participar del estudio de investigación conducente al grado de Licenciado en Educación, de la carrera Pedagogía en Inglés de la Facultad de Educación de la Universidad Andrés Bello. La investigación es dirigida por la profesora Patricia Sánchez, de la mencionada Facultad, y realizada por las estudiantes Paula Benavente y NatalyBohle.

#### Tema del estudio:

El estudio propuesto se centra en explorar las experiencias de profesores principiantes en el programa de Mentorías.

Posee los siguientes objetivos:

##### Objetivo General

1. Determinar la importancia del proceso de Mentoría para profesores principiantes en servicio y sus respectivas experiencias.

##### Objetivos específicos

1. Analizar las experiencias de profesores principiantes.
2. Identificar en qué áreas los profesores principiantes necesitan mayor apoyo+.
3. Explorar los factores que ayudan a tener una experiencia de mentoría positiva entre mentor y principiante.
4. Conocer posibles sugerencias que los profesores principiantes puedan realizar al proceso de Mentoría.

Se espera que el estudio propuesto contribuya al conocimiento en el área de Educación de la siguiente manera:



- Entender cómo afecta el proceso de Mentoría profesores principiantes
- Conocer posibles contribuciones que los profesores principiantes puedan brindar respecto al tema de Mentoría.
- Conocer experiencias de Profesores principiantes respecto al proceso de Mentoría

**Su participación es voluntaria:** Formar parte del estudio es completamente voluntario. Si Usted decide no formar parte, omitir alguna de las preguntas, o retirar cualquier tipo de información que haya suministrado, es libre de hacerlo sin ningún perjuicio. Usted también es libre de retirarse del estudio en cualquier momento.

**Lo que le pediremos hacer:** La investigación requerirá de su participación en una entrevista que será grabada por los evaluadores para recopilar información sobre sus experiencias en el ámbito de la Mentoría dentro y afuera de la sala de clases.

**Sus respuestas serán confidenciales:** La información recolectada mediante entrevistas será mantenida en estricto secreto. En cualquier documento a publicar *no incluiremos* ningún tipo de información que haga posible su identificación como participante o la de la institución donde trabaja o estudia, por lo que durante todo el estudio se recurrirá al uso de seudónimos. Los registros de la investigación serán archivados bajo llave y solo los investigadores tendrán acceso al material. Si desea destruir los registros de la entrevista, lo haremos una vez transcritos. Si usted así lo desea, luego de concluida la investigación, le enviaremos una copia de los resultados y conclusiones. También es posible que los resultados sean publicados con fines académicos.

**Para más información.** Si tiene cualquier preocupación o duda sobre el estudio, puede comunicarse con Patricia Sánchez, profesor guía de esta investigación, al teléfono: 226618950, por correo electrónico a [patriciasanchez@unab.cl](mailto:patriciasanchez@unab.cl) o en la Facultad de Educación, Fernández Concha 700, Edificio C-2 Piso 3, Las Condes, Santiago. Asimismo, puede comunicarse directamente con la Presidenta del Comité de Ética de Facultad de Educación, Dra. Carmen Gloria Zúñiga G., al teléfono (2) 2661-3943, o por correo electrónico a [carmen.zuniga@unab.cl](mailto:carmen.zuniga@unab.cl)

A todos los participantes se les hará entrega de una copia del documento informativo para participantes y del formulario de consentimiento o asentimiento informado para su registro personal.

Saludos cordiales,

Patricia Sánchez

## Appendix 2: Novice teacher interview format



### INTERVIEW

**Mentee's name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Educational institution:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:** You will have to answer several questions regarding your experience of having a mentorship program. Justify your answers by giving examples and expand your ideas as much as you can.

#### **Getting to know you:**

1. Tells us about yourself
2. What is your educational background?
3. Why did you choose to become a teacher?
4. What kind of problems do you think teachers encounter in their first year working?

**Mentorship:**

1. Is mentorship important for the professional development of novice teacher's in-service experiences? Why?
2. How would you describe your experience as a mentee?
3. Do you think that mentorship provides benefits?
4. Has mentorship helped you to improve your performance? In what areas?
5. Do you think that mentorship should be implemented to high school as well? Why?
6. In which areas do novice teachers need more support?
7. What factors make the relationship between the mentor and mentee successful?
8. What do you think about the fact that about 40% of teachers in Chile are leaving the profession before the fifth year working as teachers?
9. What suggestions would you give to improve mentorships?
10. Would you recommend other novice teacher to be in this program?

### Appendix 3: Mentor teacher interview format



#### INTERVIEW

**Mentor teacher's name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Educational institution:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:** You will have to answer several questions regarding your experience of being a mentor teacher in a mentorship program. Justify your answers by giving examples and expand your ideas as much as you can.

#### **Mentorship:**

1. Tells us about yourself
2. What is your educational professional background?
3. Did you go through a special course in order to be a mentor teacher?  
How was it? Would you recommend it to other teachers?
4. Why did you choose to be a mentor teacher in a mentorship program?
5. In your opinion, what are the strengths and weaknesses of this program?

Would you change, add, eliminate any aspect of it? Why?

6. What are the benefits that mentees can obtain through this program?  
Would you suggest it to other novice teachers? Why?
7. Do you think that mentorship should be implemented in high school as well? Why?
8. In which areas do novice teachers need more support?
9. What factors make the relationship between the mentor and mentee successful?
10. What do you think about the fact that about 40% of teachers in Chile are leaving the profession before the fifth year of working as teachers?

## Appendix 4: Novice teacher interview A



### INTERVIEW

**Mentee's name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Educational institution:** Liceo Bicentenario de Niñas

**Date:** 15/05/2016

**Instructions:** You will have to answer several questions regarding your experience of having a mentorship program. Justified your answers by giving examples and expand your ideas as much as you can.

#### Getting to know you:

##### 1. Tells us about yourself

My current interests fluctuate between reading and social organization work since I work in a popular pre-university which is self-managed in La Victoria. For the same reason, I believe that through work and territorial awareness it can, in some way, mitigates the cultural and economic differences that has our system.

**2. What is your professional educational background?**

I studied the whole elementary and high school education in private and subsidized educational establishments. Later, I studied Spanish Language and Communication at Alberto Hurtado University. This career involves a training which is, at least at Alberto Hurtado University, deeply committed with the construction of critical thinking. Moreover, it possess a training in Universal and Latin American Literature that is very complete. At the same time, the stamp of the university is the humanity bachelor program which has cross curriculum, most of the careers have it that involves different humanity areas such as Art, History, Literature, and Philosophy. This curriculum goes through different historical periods of time; therefore, I feel that it makes me a very competent professional in the humanist area.

**3. Why did you choose to become a teacher?**

As a good representative of the middle class family, I've always being taught that through education I could find an alternative to overcome social differences, and a door to the intellectual world. The classroom is a complex and symbolic space where the teacher is capable of transforming the minds and souls of their students. Thus, I believe that being a teacher is an opportunity to me to contribute to social transformations. At the same time, I think that the link between teachers and students is absolutely necessary to create and develop instances where the curiosity of both emerges by asking questions and finding answers. Therefore, that instance is quite useful for teachers for being aware of their reality.

**4. What kind of problems do you think that teachers face in their first year working as teachers? Describe and give your opinion.**

I believe that the main problem that we are facing is the lack of psychological and emotional support since teacher's reality is quite different from the educational ideals proposed by Universities while they were still there. For the same reason, one has to deal with multiple situations of frustration and emotional tension, especially when they are directly dealing with their students. I believe that universities, in general, should produce a comprehensive teacher training.

During my first year working as a teacher, one of the most difficult problems that I had to address has been dealing with my head. It has been difficult to me to deal with it since it involves the development of skills beyond my training and experience; for instance, developing emotional support, taking care of problems of coexistence between students, organizing parents interviews, etc.

**Mentorship:**

**1. Is mentorship important for the development of novice teacher in-service experiences? Why?**

I think it covers with the essential function which is to provide support to novice teachers especially in a practical and emotional level. That is, the pragmatic support can be seen through different pieces of advice that a mentor teacher gives to the novice teacher based on their previous experiences. Those suggestions are mainly about administration and routines inside of the classroom. Moreover, the emotional support that a mentor teacher provides is basically for becoming novice teachers aware of



the school system which is far from the educational ideas posed by the university. Therefore, novice teachers are exposed to stressful situations, stress, and frustration.

**2. How would you describe your experience as a mentee?**

On the one hand, I think it has been a positive and fruitful experience since the mentorship sessions work as a space for containment and dialogue between the mentor and mentee which most educational institutions do not have. On the other hand, it must agree that schools focus their attention mainly with academics and numerical results through the intervention of their teachers.

**3. Do you think that mentorship provides benefits? Explain.**

Clearly it provides benefits since the mentor-teacher dynamic follow the logic of exchanging experiences and reflections that eventually enrich both, mentors and mentees.

**4. Has mentorship helped you to improve your performance? Explain and provide examples.**

Indeed, it does. Mentorship has allowed mentors and mentees to carry out a process of constant reflection and outsourcing situations and conflicts within the teaching practice. As a result, mentorship leads to the development of a metacognitive thinking in which novice teacher becomes aware of their actions and decisions inside of the classroom. Consequently, there is a conscious learning process in which mentees learn from their mistakes and it makes to them improve their performance.

**5. Do you think that mentorship should be applied to high school as well? Explain.**

Definitely, it does. I believe that each group of students, no matter their age, has their own needs, qualities, and demands; therefore, specialized teachers are quite useful for students in each cycle since they are able to solve and respond to different situations and conflicts.

**6. In which areas do novice teachers need more support?**

Mainly in administrative and value formation matters because I think that those areas are not really covered by universities; even though, they are part of the current curriculum of teachers. For example, during the first year of working, novice teachers have to deal with how to complete a class book, to propose work planes, apart from the fact that they have to create a relationship not only with students but parents as well.

**7. What factors make the relationship between the mentor and mentee successful?**

I think that the willingness of sharing experiences through dialogue. Also, the fact of being able to be contacted through different ways such as through social networks.

**8. What do you think about the fact that about 40% of teachers in Chile are leaving the profession before the fifth year working as teachers?**

This situation is the result of the differences between the educational ideals that universities are offering in their teacher training plans such as assessments, tools, material supply, and school reality, among others. Regarding the real conditions of the majority of the educational establishments of this country, the gap between the ideal and the reality is

too big which resulted in a remarkable emotional impact towards novice teachers.

**9. What suggestions would you give to improve mentorships?**

Perhaps a good idea would be to have specialized mentors for each subject. For example, if my area is Language and Communication, the best option will be to have a mentor who is a professor of this area. This could improve the symbiosis of knowledge and experience for both, education and discipline.

**Appendix 5: Novice teacher interview B**



## INTERVIEW

**Mentee's name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Educational institution:** Liceo Bicentenario de Niñas

**Date:** 08/09/2016

**Instructions:** You will have to answer several questions regarding your experience of having a mentorship program. Justified your answers by giving examples and expand your ideas as much as you can.

### Getting to know you:

**1. Tells us about yourself**

I'm twenty- six years old.

**2. What is your professional educational background?**

I studied at Universidad de Santiago and graduated myself in 2015.

**3. Why did you choose to become a teacher?**

To be honest, I was not sure whether to become a teacher but I realized about that through time. I began to study English pedagogy because I was good at English. Nonetheless, I began to study it because I was not sure if I'll like it but if I realize that that career was not for me, I'll change it, perhaps I'll study to become a journalist. Fortunately, I did like it through time since I realized that I was motivating to teach, I like students because they were respectful with me, I have fun teaching here but I don't know if I'll like teaching in another school. Therefore, I'm motivated just with the fact of learn and positively influence on other people.

**4. What kind of problems do you think that teachers face in their first year working as teachers? Describe and give your opinion.**

They were mainly administrative problems due to Universities do not teach you that kind of things. Practicums are not enough in the sense that sometimes it is difficult to take contents into practice when you try to teach them or perhaps to find the appropriate activities to teach them.

**Mentorship:**

**1. Is mentorship important for the development of novice teacher in-service experiences? Why?**

I believe that it might be important but if it done as it should. Moreover, mentorship must be taken during the first year of novice teacher's work and with the appropriate amount of hours. Regarding the program itself, I think it is working inappropriately due to it did not began when it should.

**2. How would you describe your experience as a mentee?**

I have not had the best attitude towards the program but I have done all my duties regarding it; however, I don't think I have done as I should. In fact, I have participated in different external situations related to the Mentorship program such as to belong to the red of teachers. Regarding the red of teachers, it was the first time that I have participated on it and it was a gratifying experience. Nonetheless, I have not had the best experience due to the irregularity of the program. For example, the head of the school did not even ask me if I wanted to be part of this program. Instead, she just agreed with that without my agreement. In fact, I had quit the program but Gilda insisted on it and invited me to a breakfast in which different mentees and mentor teachers would be there. However, I kept my decision. Afterwards, some people who worked in the CPEIP went to the school to talk with us and try to persuade us to continue with the program. They told us that they will pay us; although, they have not either sent any money or approach to us to talk about that issue yet. In this issue, they have us as a guinea pig, that's the mentorship program. I believe that the program is a useful and good initiate only if works as it is supposed and it means to establish a certain amount of money for doing the program and let the mentees know about it before it begins. Moreover, it should be taken during the first year of working as teacher and not in the second semester of it. Finally, the people in charge of this program should be more careful at the time to offer this program. They should select the mentees who really need the help of it and not to select them randomly.

**3. Do you think that mentorship provides benefits? Explain.**

In my case, it has not brought me any benefit yet. The good aspect of it is that it had let me to reflect about my work. I have a good disposition to do it since I consider myself as a self-criticism and perfectionist person and I'll continue doing it due to that's the way I'm.

**4. Has mentorship helped you to improve your performance? Explain and provide examples.**

I do not think so, because I have not learnt anything meaningful so far. Gilda have lent a book about classroom management which was the only fruitful thing regarding the program.

**5. Do you think that mentorship should be applied to high school as well? Explain.**

I consider myself as a high school teacher since the only basic level I have is eight grades and it is almost part of high school. it should be applied.

**6. In which areas do novice teachers need more support?**

There are many things that people do not learn either in universities or in schools, especially in public schools. For example, national policies which regulate the functioning of educational establishments. On the other hand, the holiday's issue or pedagogy careers as well. They are not things that are discussed. I'm too deficient in that aspect since none explains you about that or what involve working in a public school or in a private one. I want to add that the benefits that both public and private schools have are not the same. Therefore, I want to say that there are too much information missing regarding this topic, and I would like to have support in these matters since I was educated to teach not only about

ethics or different methodologies, but administrative issues and policies as well. Things that are apparently not that important but they are. It should be a change in a national level regarding this topic.

**7. What factors make the relationship between the mentor and mentee successful?**

I think that the main thing is affinity in the area. For example with Gilda we shared things related to the language. Yet, I don't have a relationship with her, instead with the program itself. Sure of course, all under an environment of respect.

**8. What do you think about the fact that about 40% of teachers in Chile are leaving the profession before the fifth year working as teachers?**

It is very disappointing because if you get involved in educational matters is because you want to change things, but unfortunately is the system that discourages you. I think that people who have a say in this topic should begin at this point. That is, they should regulate other things of the system in order to be less disappointment regarding this issue.

**9. What would you suggest to avoid this?**

To compare teaching in Chile with other countries; for example, in Finland, teachers are the most sought ones and here we are the most devalued ones. I believe that people who want to become a teacher need to go through these two test: a psychological and ability test because anyone can be a teacher, nowadays. In my opinion these two tests are strongly necessary; however, it is a delicate issue since it could be seen as a discriminatory act towards people. Finally, I think that teachers need to be



valued and to reduce elective hours, because we have no time for anything.

**10. What suggestions would you give to improve mentorships?**

The organization of it needs to be more regular and more transparent due to here in Chile people are used to say “Okay, let’s try it, and they copy something wrongly. Therefore, I think that if we do something, we should do it right at once. Besides, the program should be applied to those teachers who are really interested on it and not the other way around.



## INTERVIEW

**Mentor teacher's name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Educational institution:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:** You will have to answer several questions regarding your experience of being a mentor teacher in a mentorship program. Justify your answers by giving examples and expand your ideas as much as you can.

### **Mentorship:**

#### **1. Tells us about yourself**

I'm an English teacher. I have been working in the educational field since the year 1985. First working at schools and now I work at university and also I'm the mentor of two novel teachers.

#### **2. What is your educational professional background?**

According to my educational and professional background, I studied English pedagogy at the University "La Serena" since there I have been attending some courses in order to learn more about new methods, strategies, and approaches. In the year 2004, I became coordinator of network teachers of English which was a very great and good experience for me. Also, in the year 2009, I developed two projects related to

mentorship. I had the opportunity to travel abroad to England and Australia and I could realize how mentorship worked in those countries. Finally, in the year 2014, I got a master degree in English as a foreign language.

**3. Did you go through a special course in order to be a mentor teacher? How was it? Would you recommend it to other teachers?**

I went through two special courses in order to be a mentor teacher. One of them was designed by Media UC which consisted on guiding novel teachers from public school or subsidized ones. The second one was called “inserción al ejercicio profesional” or OEI in Universidad de Valparaíso and it was very interesting to attend this course and design this project because it has to be only with guiding a novel teacher but through technology so we couldn’t meet the novel teachers face to face, only with Skype, or cell phone or email. And this year I attended another course that was directed by Dina, an experienced teacher and it was called “The role and abilities of a mentor”. All these courses have been very interesting for me and I have learned a lot in order to manage or to be participant in this mentorship program. Of course, I could recommend another teacher to have the experience in this new induction system for novice teachers.

**4. Why did you choose to be a mentor teacher in a mentorship program?**

I choose to be a mentor a mentor teacher in a mentorship program because I think that it is necessary to have, to share our experience, expertise and knowledge with others, especially with those teachers who are less experienced than me, but being a mentor goes beyond. It is to

guide novel teachers, during their first paths in their educational field. But this guiding should be through a good relationship which invites to be honest, confident but the most important is the self-reflection by the new teacher.

**5. In your opinion, what are the strengths and weaknesses of this program?**

**Would you change, add, eliminate any aspect of it? Why?**

One of the most important strengths of this program is that the novel teacher has the opportunity to be supported by an experienced one, who could help them to solve some conflicts that they could face in their jobs related to pedagogical practices or meeting parents or even how to complete the class book. For sure that mentor will be there to provide a shoulder when they want to cry and related to weaknesses well; this mentorship program is new, so it is a pilot one for this year, maybe officially the next one. I think that the most important weakness of this program that I could experience this year is the time. The time hasn't been enough for both, mentors and mentees, because mentors have to move to the school where the mentees are and mentees don't have a lot of time in order to complete some questionnaires that they have to write and express their reflections of the meeting that they have with the mentor. Another weaknesses that I could observe was that sometimes mentees are forced to be participants of this program by the principal of the school and sometimes they don't like to be or they feel that they don't need that induction. So, in this program something must be done related to this, because mentors can't work appropriately with people who don't feel like working on that.

**6. What are the benefits that mentees can obtain through this program? Would you suggest it to other novice teachers? Why?**

Yes, for sure I would suggest it to another novice teachers because sometimes novel teachers don't know how to reflect related to their pedagogical practices in the classroom and is very important when they have these reflections in a guided way because maybe when teachers leave the room and start walking in the school they can reflect about it and say "oh that class was very interesting, I could repeated again to other class or you could say, this class was terrible, the worst class that I have done, so I'm not going to make the same error again" However, this reflection you must forget it, the other day you continue doing the same. But when you are with a mentor or a teacher that is with you reflecting on that is different. You take conscious and you can analyze and reflect deeply according to the strengths and weaknesses.

**7. Do you think that mentorship should be implemented in high school as well? Why?**

Yes, I do. I think that this is a very good initiative and obviously it would help novice teacher from high as it has already helped novice teachers in elementary schools.

**8. In which areas do novice teachers need more support?**

In my opinion, novice teachers report a high levels of need for professional development around students discipline and behavior problems. New teachers spend less time on teaching and learning and more time on classroom management.

**9. What factors make the relationship between the mentor and mentee successful?**

The two enjoy working together sharing ideas, analyzing, and making decisions together. The mentor helps with prioritizing but differs to the mentees judgment when every possible. The mentees in the period of rejuvenation. So the factor that makes the relationship between mentor and mentee successful is the building of a good partnership.

**10. What do you think about the fact that about 40% of teachers in Chile are leaving the profession before the fifth year of working as teachers?**

As I observed, teachers as soon as they enter to the educational field they realize that teaching is not they dream job as they expected. Teaching is hard. Many factors contribute to their decisions of leaving their job, such as: the low salaries, they spend a lot of time working, preparing materials for their classes, checking test, etc. The most important aspect of why they leave school is the lack of respect from their students, classroom management. Then they decide to move to another job which can give them better economical and professional expectations, that's why the educational system begins to realize that this problem exist. Teachers need assistance and guidance especially during their earlier years in the profession and mentorship can play an important role in this issue. It is not going to solve the problem of low salaries, however it can give them company and guidance and can help them to solve those difficult early years because mentorship can help them to develop as professionals.