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Mentorship Challenges: Reflections from Mentor-Teachers in Pre-Service Teacher Programs

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ABSTRACT
Mentorship is crucial to pre-service teacher education, bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical classroom experience. However, while extensive research has explored the perspectives of pre-service teachers (PSTs), limited attention has been given to mentor-teachers' challenges. This study examines the mentorship challenges encountered by mentor-teachers, framed within the Self-Regulation Learning (SRL) theory, which consists of three phases: Forethought, Performance, and Self-Reflection. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with ten mentor-teachers from Buffalo City Metropolitan Education District schools using a qualitative phenomenological approach. Findings reveal three key challenges. First, in the forethought phase, PSTs lack structured preparation and clear expectations, leading to passive engagement and reliance on mentor-teachers. Second, in the performance phase, PSTs struggle with classroom execution and adaptability, failing to monitor and adjust their teaching strategies effectively. Third, in the self-reflection phase, many PSTs resist feedback and fail to engage in critical self-assessment, limiting their professional growth. This study recommends structured pre-placement training for PSTs, improved university-mentor communication, and the integration of reflection-based learning tools to enhance mentorship effectiveness. Strengthening mentorship programs through self-regulated learning strategies will better prepare PSTs for teaching challenges, promote autonomous learning, and reduce mentor-teacher burdens. This study contributes to teacher education literature by highlighting mentorship gaps and proposing a structured approach to improving mentorship in pre-service teacher training.

INTRODUCTION

Mentorship plays a crucial role in pre-service teacher training, bridging theoretical knowledge and practical classroom application (Dreer-Goethe, 2023; Merket, 2022). It facilitates professional development by enabling pre-service teachers (PSTs) to learn from experienced mentor teachers (Gunawardena, 2023; Hoben, 2021; Tiainen & Lutovac, 2022). However, while extensive research has

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explored the experiences of PSTs, there remains a gap in the literature regarding the challenges faced by mentor-teachers themselves. Understanding these challenges is critical to improving the mentorship process and ensuring better alignment between universities and host schools.

This study distinguishes itself from previous mentorship research by focusing specifically on the mentor-teachers' perspectives, an area that has received limited scholarly attention. While prior studies have examined the effectiveness of mentoring programs (Li et al., 2021; Phang et al., 2020; Tiainen & Lutovac, 2022), few have provided in-depth qualitative insights into the difficulties faced by mentor teachers in supporting PSTs. This study contributes new empirical evidence to inform teacher education policies and improve mentorship training programs by capturing their voices.

Mentorship in pre-service teacher education is not just about professional guidance but also about socializing PSTs into the teaching profession. Effective mentorship helps PSTs transition from being students to professional educators who can handle the complexities of real classrooms. Despite existing frameworks for mentorship, many challenges persist, including unclear university expectations, pre-service teachers' professionalism, and time constraints for effective mentoring (Hofsess & Hanawalt, 2020; Merket, 2022; Simmie, 2020). Studies suggest that mentor teachers are often left without adequate support or structured training to navigate their roles effectively (Hagenauer et al., 2023; Walters et al., 2020). As a result, the mentorship experience varies widely, leading to inconsistent outcomes for PSTs.

One of the major challenges mentor-teachers face is the lack of structured guidance and communication from universities regarding their roles. Research has shown that many mentor teachers are unprepared to handle their mentorship responsibilities (Hoben, 2021; Li et al., 2021; Wilson & Huynh, 2020). Without proper training, mentor-teachers struggle to balance their teaching responsibilities with the additional task of mentoring (Karathanos-Aguilar & Ervin-Kassab, 2022; Keiler et al., 2023). This study explores how mentor teachers navigate these challenges and the potential strategies to improve the mentorship process.

Another significant issue is the professionalism of PSTs during their teaching placements. While mentorship is meant to help PSTs develop teaching skills, some mentor-teachers report that PSTs enter the classroom with limited engagement, poor classroom management skills, and a lack of adaptability (Akcaoglu & Akcaoglu, 2022; Farias et al., 2023; Ntshangase & Nkosi, 2022). It makes mentorship more challenging, as mentor-teachers have to provide pedagogical guidance and address behavioral and attitudinal concerns among PSTs.

Time constraints further complicate the mentorship process. Mentor-teachers often have full teaching schedules, leaving them with little time to dedicate to PSTs. The limited duration of school placements adds pressure, as PSTs are expected to gain practical teaching experience within a short timeframe (Lopez & Jean-Marie, 2021; Michailidi & Stavrou, 2022; Walters et al., 2020). This constraint affects the depth of mentorship, as mentor-teachers must prioritize lesson observations and evaluations over holistic professional development.

The research gap this study addresses is the lack of focus on mentor teachers' lived experiences in the mentoring process. While many studies have centered on how PSTs experience mentorship (Hu et al., 2023; Ntshangase & Nkosi, 2022; Simon & Nissim, 2023), there is insufficient research on how mentor-teachers interpret and manage their roles, particularly in developing countries like South Africa. This study, therefore, aims to fill this void by examining the specific mentorship challenges mentor-teachers face and providing actionable recommendations for improvement.

This study incorporates recent scholarship from the last five years, ensuring relevance and contemporary insights to keep pace with current developments in mentorship research. The findings aim to support teacher education institutions in refining their mentorship programs and fostering stronger collaboration between universities and schools. Additionally, the study advocates for more structured mentor-training programs, improved university-school partnerships, and clearer guidelines to enhance the effectiveness of mentorship in pre-service teacher education.

METHODS

Research Design and Approach

This study employs a phenomenological qualitative research design (Paley, 2016) to explore the lived experiences of mentor-teachers in mentoring pre-service teachers (PSTs). A phenomenological approach was chosen because it allows an in-depth exploration of participants' experiences, perceptions, and interpretations of the mentoring process. Given the study's objective—to capture mentor-teachers' challenges—this approach ensures that participants' voices are central to the analysis. Additionally, phenomenology provides a framework for understanding how mentor-teachers make sense of their roles and interactions with PSTs, aligning with the study's focus on mentorship as both a practice and a socialization process.

Sample Selection and Participants

The study involved ten mentor teachers from Buffalo City Metropolitan Education District schools selected through purposive sampling (Campbell et al., 2020). The selection criteria included mentor teachers with at least five years of teaching experience, those who had hosted PSTs for at least one semester, and those willing to participate in semi-structured interviews. These mentor-teachers were chosen because of their direct involvement in the mentoring process, allowing the study to gain insights from those actively guiding PSTs. The age range of participants was 30 to 58 years, with an average of 25 years of teaching experience.

Data Collection

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, allowing participants the flexibility to elaborate on their experiences. The interviews were conducted in person at the participants' respective schools to ensure they were comfortable sharing their perspectives in a familiar environment. Each interview lasted approximately 30 to 45 minutes and comprised a series of open-ended questions focusing on mentor teachers' understanding of mentorship, their challenges, the level of support received from universities, and communication issues between universities and schools. Other key aspects explored included the professionalism of PSTs, time constraints in mentorship, strategies used to manage mentorship difficulties, and recommendations for improving the mentoring experience. All interviews were audio-recorded with participants' consent and later transcribed verbatim to ensure data consistency and accuracy.

Data Analysis

The study employed thematic analysis, following Braun and Clarke's six-step framework (Braun & Clarke, 2019). The process began with familiarization, where the researchers read and re-read the transcripts to understand the data. It was followed by generating initial codes, in which key phrases and recurring ideas were systematically identified and coded. Once the initial coding was completed, the researchers searched for themes by grouping related codes into broader categories based on common patterns.

In the next stage, the themes were reviewed to ensure coherence and alignment with the research questions. Once the themes were finalized, they were clearly defined and named to reflect participants' experiences accurately. Finally, the findings were synthesized into a structured narrative that captured the key insights from the data. Member-checking was conducted, where participants were allowed to review and confirm their interview transcripts to ensure validity and reliability. Additionally, peer debriefing was used, allowing other researchers to review the coding and themes, ensuring objectivity and reducing potential bias in data interpretation.

RESULTS

This study's findings highlight mentor-teachers' challenges in guiding pre-service teachers (PSTs) framed within the Self-Regulation Learning (SRL) theory. The results indicate that mentor-teachers and PSTs navigate mentorship through the three phases of SRL: Forethought, Performance, and Self-Reflection. The challenges identified in this study correspond to difficulties in each phase, affecting the mentorship process's effectiveness.

Lack of Preparation and Misalignment of Expectations (Forethought Phase)

The forethought phase of SRL involves goal-setting and strategic planning, yet the findings show that PSTs often enter the school environment without adequate preparation or a clear understanding of mentorship expectations. Mentor-teachers expressed frustration with the lack of structured orientation for PSTs, making integrating into the teaching environment difficult. One mentor-teacher (MT3) noted:

> *"Student teachers arrive without a clear idea of what is expected of them. Some have never stepped into a real classroom, and we must guide them through the basics from day one."*

Another mentor-teacher (MT7) emphasized the gap between universities and schools, stating:

> *"We do not get proper guidance from universities on what to focus on when mentoring. It is up to us to figure it out."*

This lack of alignment between universities and mentor teachers results in inconsistent mentoring experiences and unclear expectations for PSTs. Without proper goal-setting and preparation, many PSTs struggle to take the initiative in their mentorship journey, which affects their ability to transition smoothly into professional teaching.

Struggles with Classroom Execution and Adaptability (Performance Phase)

The performance phase of SRL requires PSTs to apply teaching strategies, monitor their progress, and adjust based on feedback. However, the findings indicate that many PSTs lack adaptability and struggle with real-time classroom management. Mentor-teachers observed that PSTs often followed their lesson plans rigidly without responding to student needs or classroom dynamics. MT4 remarked:

> *"Many of them come in with pre-prepared lesson plans, but when students don't respond as expected, they freeze. They don't know how to adjust on the spot."*

Similarly, MT6 stated:

> *"Discipline is a big issue. Some PSTs don't take control of the class, and when students misbehave, they stand there, expecting me to step in."*

Additionally, some PSTs showed limited engagement with learners, focusing more on completing their assigned lesson plans than ensuring effective learning outcomes. MT9 shared:

> *"Some students just do the minimum required for their lesson observations and don't take any initiative beyond that. They see mentorship as a requirement, not an opportunity to develop their skills."*

These findings suggest that PSTs often struggle with self-regulation in real classroom settings, as they cannot monitor their performance effectively or adjust their approach based on situational demands. PSTs remain passive participants rather than proactive educators without stronger intervention and ongoing support.

Resistance to Feedback and Limited Reflection (Self-Reflection Phase)

The self-reflection phase of SRL involves evaluating performance and improving based on feedback. The findings reveal a wide gap in PSTs' ability to engage in reflective practice, with some demonstrating a willingness to learn while others resisted constructive criticism. MT5 highlighted the difficulty in providing feedback, stating:

> *"Some PSTs take feedback well, but others are defensive. They insist, 'This is how our lecturer taught us,' and refuse to adjust their methods, even when struggling."*

This sentiment was echoed by MT8, who noted:

"Many don't ask for feedback. Pre-service teachers want to complete their observation requirements and move on."

Conversely, PSTs who actively engaged in reflection and sought mentorship feedback showed noticeable progress. MT2 observed:

"The ones who ask questions after every lesson, take notes, and try different approaches are the ones who improve the most."

However, time constraints often limit opportunities for structured reflection. MT7 stated:

"We barely have time to sit and discuss their lessons in depth. Feedback is often rushed, so they don't get the detailed guidance they need."

These findings indicate that PSTs' self-reflection abilities vary significantly, with some struggling to assess their progress critically. Many PSTs fail to develop the self-regulatory skills essential for professional growth without structured opportunities for mentor-guided reflection.

Summary of Key Challenges in the Mentorship Process

The findings of this study reveal three core mentorship challenges that align with deficiencies in the SRL phases. The first challenge is limited preparation and misaligned expectations. Many PSTs enter mentorship without clear goals or structured guidance, leading to confusion and inefficiencies. This issue is linked to the Forethought Phase of SRL, where goal-setting is crucial but often overlooked due to insufficient communication between universities and mentor teachers.

The second challenge relates to struggles with classroom performance and adaptability. PSTs often lack confidence in real-time teaching, fail to adjust their approaches and struggle with self-monitoring. It corresponds to the Performance Phase of SRL, where active engagement and situational adjustments are key to effective teaching. PSTs find it difficult to regulate their teaching practices without adequate classroom exposure and practical problem-solving skills.

The third challenge identified is limited engagement in reflective practice. Many PSTs resist feedback or lack structured reflection opportunities, which hinders their ability to self-regulate and improve. It aligns with the Self-Reflection Phase of SRL, where critical evaluation and learning from mistakes are essential for professional growth. Time constraints and rushed feedback sessions further contribute to this issue, preventing PSTs from engaging in meaningful self-assessments.

By framing these challenges within SRL theory, this study highlights the gaps in current mentorship structures and the need for stronger institutional support, improved PST preparation, and structured feedback mechanisms. Addressing these challenges will enhance the mentorship experience, ensuring PSTs develop self-regulation skills to transition effectively into the teaching profession.

DISCUSSION

Lack of Preparation and Misalignment of Expectations (Forethought Phase)

The forethought phase of Self-Regulation Learning (SRL) is essential in mentorship as it involves goal-setting, strategic planning, and motivation for learning. In this phase, pre-service teachers (PSTs) should actively define their learning objectives, plan their teaching strategies, and develop the motivation to succeed. However, the findings reveal that many PSTs struggle with a lack of structured preparation, which hinders their ability to engage effectively in this phase. Without clear expectations and prior goal-setting, PSTs enter mentorship passively rather than proactively, making it difficult to self-regulate their learning from the outset (Hu et al., 2023; Koehler & Meech, 2022).

One critical issue in this phase is the misalignment between universities and mentor-teachers. SRL theory emphasizes that learners should be able to plan and set specific learning goals (Greene et al., 2023), but PSTs often lack clear guidelines on what they should achieve during their mentorship. This absence of structured guidance results in an inconsistent learning experience, as PSTs rely heavily on mentor-teachers to define their responsibilities. The lack of predefined goals not only weakens PSTs'

ability to engage in self-directed learning but also places an added burden on mentor-teachers, who are expected to fill these gaps without institutional support (Hu et al., 2023; Jaipal-Jamani, 2023; Na & Staudt Willet, 2024).

Furthermore, motivation plays a crucial role in the forethought phase of SRL. PSTs who enter the mentorship program without a strong understanding of their professional development path may struggle to remain motivated and engaged (Alam & Mohanty, 2024; Bai & Guo, 2021; Simon & Nissim, 2023). Since motivation in SRL is closely linked to perceived competence and autonomy, PSTs who are unsure about their roles may feel less confident in their teaching abilities. This lack of self-efficacy can lead to a passive approach to mentorship, where PSTs hesitate to take initiative in their learning process (Hoben, 2021; Ngonda et al., 2020; Sims et al., 2021).

To strengthen this mentorship phase, universities should implement structured orientation programs that clearly outline the expectations for PSTs and mentor teachers. These programs should focus on explicit goal-setting exercises, ensuring that PSTs enter the mentorship with a clear plan for their professional development. Additionally, universities should establish consistent communication channels with mentor-teachers to ensure alignment in mentoring objectives. Providing mentor-teachers with detailed guidelines on their roles and responsibilities would help create a more structured and effective mentorship process (Keiler et al., 2023; Li et al., 2021; Phang et al., 2020).

Incorporating goal-setting frameworks into mentorship programs would also encourage PSTs to take a more self-regulated approach to their learning. By requiring PSTs to identify specific teaching competencies they wish to develop before starting their school placements, they can enter mentorship with a stronger sense of purpose (Guethler, 2024; Gunawardena, 2023). Additionally, integrating pre-mentorship workshops on strategic planning and professional identity formation could help PSTs develop a proactive mindset, which is crucial for success in the forethought phase of SRL (Akhmedjanova & Moeyaert, 2022; Muljana & Luo, 2023).

By enhancing the goal-setting, preparation, and motivational aspects of the mentorship experience, PSTs can better engage in self-regulated learning from the outset. It would improve their classroom performance and adaptability and reduce the burden on mentor-teachers, ensuring that mentorship is a structured and collaborative process rather than an unstructured learning experience. Strengthening the forethought phase in mentorship will ultimately contribute to a more effective and sustainable teacher education model.

Struggles with Classroom Execution and Adaptability (Performance Phase)

The performance phase of Self-Regulation Learning (SRL) is where learners actively engage in tasks, monitor their progress, and adjust based on feedback. In the context of mentorship, this phase is critical for pre-service teachers (PSTs) as they transition from theoretical learning to practical classroom application. However, the findings highlight that many PSTs struggle with classroom execution and adaptability, revealing key weaknesses in their ability to self-regulate their teaching performance.

A significant issue in this phase is that PSTs cannot adjust their teaching strategies in real time. According to SRL theory, effective learners monitor their performance and modify their approach based on situational demands (Akcaoglu & Akcaoglu, 2022; Mejeh & Held, 2022). However, many PSTs enter the classroom relying strictly on pre-prepared lesson plans without the flexibility to adapt when faced with unexpected student responses, disciplinary challenges, or engagement issues. This rigid approach suggests that PSTs are not fully engaging in self-monitoring—a core aspect of the performance phase (Jaipal-Jamani, 2023; Tran et al., 2022). Instead of assessing classroom dynamics and adjusting accordingly, some PSTs remain fixed in their approach, resulting in ineffective lesson delivery and missed learning opportunities (Ay & Dağhan, 2023; Hoben, 2021).

Another key issue in the performance phase is classroom management, which requires PSTs to monitor student behavior and implement real-time interventions. In SRL, performance control involves adjusting actions based on observed outcomes, yet many PSTs hesitate to take control of their classrooms. Their lack of authority and confidence in managing students leads to disruptive classroom environments, affecting the quality of learning. The inability to regulate the classroom experience not only hinders effective teaching but also places additional strain on mentor-teachers, who often have to intervene (Lindqvist et al., 2024; Stevenson et al., 2020; Vaitzman Ben-David & Berkovich, 2021).

Furthermore, some PSTs exhibit minimal engagement with students, focusing more on completing their assigned tasks than ensuring effective learning. SRL emphasizes active participation and continuous self-assessment, yet some PSTs do not reflect on the effectiveness of their teaching during classroom interactions (Brandmo et al., 2020; Chen & Bonner, 2020). Instead, they approach mentorship as a checklist-based requirement rather than an opportunity to refine their skills. This lack of self-directed engagement prevents them from fully benefiting from the mentorship experience (Ballıdağ & Dikilitaş, 2021; Dos Santos, 2020; Walters et al., 2020).

To improve PSTs' self-regulation during the performance phase, universities should integrate structured classroom simulation exercises into teacher training programs. These exercises would allow PSTs to practice real-time adaptability in controlled settings, ensuring they develop confidence in adjusting their teaching methods (Bonner et al., 2020; Walters et al., 2020). Additionally, mentor-teachers should be encouraged to provide immediate, formative feedback during lessons, helping PSTs recognize ineffective strategies and adjust accordingly (Keiler et al., 2023; Wexler, 2020).

Encouraging PSTs to engage in active self-monitoring can also enhance their ability to adapt in real classrooms. By implementing reflective journaling or guided self-assessment tools, PSTs can track their classroom performance, note areas where they struggled, and identify strategies for improvement (Almutawa & Alfahid, 2024; Chung et al., 2021). Structured mentorship meetings should also include mid-lesson evaluations, where mentor-teachers help PSTs analyze their performance and discuss alternative teaching approaches in real time (Brunsdon et al., 2021; Ntshangase & Nkosi, 2022).

Developing self-regulation skills in the performance phase will enable PSTs to take greater ownership of their learning, respond effectively to classroom challenges, and engage in continuous professional growth. By focusing on real-time adaptability, active engagement, and self-monitoring, mentorship programs can better prepare PSTs for the complexities of teaching, ensuring that they evolve into competent and confident educators (Fauzia et al., 2024; Mullen & Klimaitis, 2021).

Resistance to Feedback and Limited Reflection (Self-Reflection Phase)

The self-reflection phase of Self-Regulation Learning (SRL) is crucial for professional growth, as it enables learners to evaluate their performance, identify areas for improvement, and make necessary adjustments. In the context of mentorship, this phase is particularly significant for pre-service teachers (PSTs), as reflective practice helps them develop their teaching strategies and refine their professional identity. However, the findings indicate that many PSTs struggle with reflective learning, often resisting mentor-teacher feedback or failing to engage in structured self-assessment. This lack of engagement in reflection weakens their ability to self-regulate their learning and professional development (Calderón et al., 2019; Kimm et al., 2020).

PSTs' reluctance to accept constructive feedback from mentor teachers is a primary issue in the self-reflection phase. According to SRL theory, effective learners critically analyze their experiences and adjust their behaviors accordingly. However, some PSTs respond defensively to feedback, interpreting it as criticism rather than an opportunity for growth. This resistance prevents them from making meaningful improvements in their teaching practices. When PSTs reject mentor guidance or fail to integrate suggested changes, they limit their progress and reduce the effectiveness of the mentorship process (Dreer-Goethe, 2023; Hoben, 2021; Merket, 2022).

Another challenge in this phase is that some PSTs do not engage in structured self-assessment. Reflection in SRL involves more than just receiving feedback—it requires actively analyzing one's teaching experiences, recognizing mistakes, and identifying solutions. The findings show that many PSTs lack the habit of documenting or discussing their performance critically, which results in repeated mistakes and slow progress. Without structured reflection, PSTs fail to internalize learning experiences, making it difficult to develop into adaptable and effective educators (Espinoza et al., 2021; Haghighi Irani et al., 2020; Marttinen et al., 2020).

Time constraints further complicate this phase, as mentor-teachers often struggle to provide detailed feedback sessions due to their teaching responsibilities. In an ideal mentorship model, PSTs would engage in regular reflection meetings with mentor-teachers to discuss their progress, challenges, and future improvements. However, when feedback is rushed or sporadic, PSTs do not receive the depth of analysis needed to engage in self-reflection fully. This lack of structured reflection opportunities

prevents them from developing a continuous improvement mindset, which is essential for long-term success in teaching (An, 2021; Baran & AlZoubi, 2024; Haukås & Mercer, 2022; Richards et al., 2020).

To enhance the self-reflection phase in mentorship, universities should implement structured reflection tools such as teaching journals, guided self-assessment reports, and video-based lesson reviews. These tools can help PSTs develop a habit of critical reflection, allowing them to analyze their strengths and areas for improvement independently. Additionally, mentor-teachers should be encouraged to incorporate reflection-based discussions into their mentoring sessions, ensuring that PSTs have the opportunity to process their teaching experiences in a supportive and constructive environment (Jita & Munje, 2021; Moosa & Rembach, 2020; Orland-Barak & Wang, 2020).

Furthermore, PSTs need to be trained in accepting and applying feedback effectively. Universities should integrate feedback literacy training into teacher education programs, helping PSTs understand the purpose of constructive criticism and how to utilize it for professional growth. By fostering an environment where feedback is seen as a learning tool rather than a judgment, PSTs can develop a growth-oriented mindset, allowing them to engage more actively in self-regulation (Hagenauer et al., 2023; Jaipal-Jamani, 2023). By strengthening the self-reflection phase of SRL, PSTs can become more autonomous learners, capable of critically assessing their teaching performance and continuously refining their skills (Teresa Fuertes-Camacho et al., 2021; Tran et al., 2022; Yigletu et al., 2023). Encouraging a culture of reflection and feedback acceptance within mentorship programs will lead to more resilient, adaptable, and self-regulated educators, ultimately enhancing the quality of teacher training and classroom instruction (Hagenauer et al., 2023; Mullen & Klimaitis, 2021; Yigletu et al., 2023).

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the critical challenges mentor-teachers face in pre-service teacher mentorship, framed within the Self-Regulation Learning (SRL) theory. The findings reveal that PSTs struggle with goal-setting and preparation (Forethought Phase), classroom execution and adaptability (Performance Phase), and reflective learning and feedback acceptance (Self-Reflection Phase). These gaps in self-regulation significantly impact their ability to transition smoothly into professional teaching roles. One of the primary challenges identified is the lack of structured preparation and misaligned expectations, which hinders PSTs' ability to engage proactively in mentorship. Without guidance from universities, PSTs enter their placements unprepared, relying heavily on mentor-teachers for direction. This undermines their capacity for independent goal-setting and strategic planning, key aspects of self-regulated learning. Addressing this issue requires stronger collaboration between universities and mentor-teachers to establish clear mentorship expectations and structured pre-placement training programs.

The study also highlights difficulties in classroom performance and adaptability, as many PSTs struggle with real-time teaching adjustments, classroom management, and self-monitoring. Instead of actively engaging in performance control, some PSTs remain passive, failing to adjust their methods based on classroom dynamics. Mentorship programs should incorporate structured classroom simulations, immediate formative feedback, and reflective practice techniques, allowing PSTs to develop the self-regulatory skills necessary for effective teaching. Furthermore, resistance to feedback and limited engagement in reflective learning present major barriers to PSTs' professional growth. Reflection is a core component of SRL, yet many PSTs fail to analyze their teaching experiences critically or incorporate mentor feedback constructively. This issue is exacerbated by time constraints, which prevent mentor-teachers from providing detailed guidance. Universities should implement structured reflection tools, such as guided self-assessments and video-based lesson reviews, to encourage PSTs to engage actively in continuous self-improvement. Training PSTs in feedback literacy can also help them develop a more open and growth-oriented mindset, which is essential for lifelong learning.

Institutions should strengthen mentorship structures by improving goal-setting mechanisms, fostering adaptability in real classroom situations, and integrating reflective learning practices to enhance the effectiveness of mentorship in pre-service teacher training. Establishing a more structured and collaborative mentorship framework will improve PSTs' self-regulation abilities and reduce the burden on mentor-teachers, creating a more sustainable and effective teacher preparation model. Developing self-regulated learners is essential for preparing competent, confident, and adaptable

educators. By addressing the forethought, performance, and self-reflection challenges in mentorship, this study provides valuable insights for refining mentorship practices, strengthening university-school partnerships, and ensuring that PSTs receive the guidance and support necessary to excel in their teaching careers. Future research should explore institutional strategies for better mentor-teacher training, long-term mentorship models, and the impact of structured self-regulated learning interventions in teacher education.

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