

Husserlian Phenomenology of Cooperating Teachers in the Transformation of Teaching Interns in the Adventist Educational Institutions

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INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

In teacher education programs where practicum is one of its components, cooperating teachers hold a highly influential and central position in equipping interns for the complex demands and real-world challenges of the classroom (Rasheed, 2025). Cooperating teachers play a very significant and pivotal role in shaping, molding, training, and mentoring the teaching interns as they progress in their professional development within educational institutions (Baluyos, Clarin, Bazar, Enerio, 2024). Through mentorship, cooperating teachers offer direct support and guidance to teaching interns, helping them navigate the complexities of classroom teaching. This mentorship goes beyond simple instruction, it involves building a professional relationship where the intern can learn, ask questions, make mistakes, and grow within a safe and supportive environment. By modeling effective teaching practices, cooperating teachers demonstrate what high-quality instruction looks like in real time. Interns are able to observe classroom management techniques, lesson planning strategies, differentiated instruction, and the ways experienced teachers respond to student needs. This live modeling serves as a powerful learning tool, often more impactful than theoretical knowledge alone.

Reflective guidance is another key contribution. Cooperating teachers encourage interns to think critically about their own teaching, what went well, what didn't, and why. This reflective process deepens interns' self-awareness and helps them become intentional and adaptive educators. Together, these elements contribute to the personal and professional transformation of teaching interns. Personally, they gain confidence, resilience, and a sense of identity as teachers. Professionally, they acquire practical skills, pedagogical knowledge, and ethical values that are essential for effective and meaningful classroom practice.

In essence, cooperating teachers play a pivotal role in shaping the next generation of educator not just by teaching them how to teach, but by nurturing their growth into thoughtful, capable, and values-driven professionals. (Jita & Munje, 2022).

Beyond instructional coaching, cooperating teachers also foster a culture of trust, inquiry, and professional dialogue, creating a space where teaching interns can develop their pedagogical voice, critical thinking, and professional identity (Copley, 2020). They serve not only as evaluators but also as role models who embody the values, attitudes, and ethical responsibilities of the teaching profession (Longhurst et al., 2020). In many cases, especially within values-based institutions, their influence extends to supporting the emotional resilience and spiritual growth of interns (Qubati & Tamim, 2021). Recent studies indicate that a strong mentor-mentee relationship has a significant impact on teaching interns' motivation, classroom confidence, and long-term commitment to the profession (Gervasoni & Dockett, 2022). Therefore, the cooperating teacher's role is not only instrumental in improving interns' classroom competence, but also in nurturing holistic, reflective educators prepared to meet the diverse demands of contemporary classrooms (Zeichner, 2024).

Similarly, in Adventist educational institutions, seasoned teachers carry a responsibility far greater than daily instruction. Alongside their own students, they welcome teaching interns: aspiring educators who observe,

assist, and eventually step into the role of teacher themselves. In this shared space, something more profound than skill-building takes place; it includes nurturing ethical responsibility, spiritual maturity, and mission-oriented teaching, elements central to the goals of faith-based education.

While Adventist schools uphold high spiritual and moral standards in education, they frequently encounter difficulties such as limited formalized mentoring structures, inadequate training for cooperating teachers, and inconsistencies in how support is delivered to interns (Forbis & Coria-Navia, 2022).

These issues can hinder the transformational learning process that is central to faith-based teacher education. Additionally, Adventist cooperating teachers are expected not only to model effective instructional strategies but also to exemplify faith-integrated pedagogy, which adds layers of complexity to their mentoring role (Brantley et al., 2018). However, many Adventist schools operate with lean faculty numbers, meaning that cooperating teachers often juggle heavy teaching loads alongside mentoring responsibilities, leading to burnout and reduced mentoring quality.

Furthermore, the alignment between institutional mission and actual mentoring practices may not always be clear or effectively implemented. According to Coria-Navia et al. (2020), although Adventist schools promote holistic development, the mechanisms to support teaching interns' reflective and spiritual growth through structured mentoring remain underdeveloped in some settings. These concerns call for a more deliberate effort to empower cooperating teachers with appropriate training, institutional support, and time allocation to foster transformational learning in both professional and spiritual dimensions.

Although a few international studies have explored the role of cooperating teachers in the transformation of teaching interns in educational institutions, a closer examination of the literature reveals that this area remains under-researched globally. More significantly, there is a notable lack of studies specifically highlighting Adventist educational institutions, both globally and within the Philippine context.

While some international research has touched on the value of mentoring in shaping teaching interns within educational institutions, there remains a critical gap in understanding how cooperating teachers influence the professional growth of interns, particularly in Philippine Adventist educational institutions. Moreover, existing literature often overlooks the lived experiences of cooperating teachers themselves, how they perceive, internalize, and navigate their roles in mentoring within faith-based educational settings. This highlights the need for localized and experience-centered investigations to better inform practice and policy in this specific educational context.

Across the globe, research highlights how cooperating teachers support the transformation of interns, yet most studies emphasize outcomes or structures rather than lived experiences.

Several studies conducted in the global context have emphasized the vital role of cooperating teachers in the transformative journey of teaching interns.

In the United States, Roadrangka (2017) pointed out that cooperating teachers assume multiple responsibilities, acting as coordinators, supporters, advisers, observers, and feedback providers thus offering comprehensive support that facilitates the holistic development of teaching interns.

Chizhik et al. (2018) further underscored the significance of cooperating teachers through shared mentoring in learning environments, revealing that active engagement in collaborative mentoring practices not only benefits student teachers but also enhances the professional growth of the mentors themselves.

Along these lines, Reichienberg et al. (2024) emphasized the importance of structured mentor training, identifying it as a critical component in preparing cooperating teachers to effectively guide teacher candidates throughout their practicum experience. These studies collectively affirm the multifaceted and transformative impact of cooperating teachers in teacher education programs across the United States. Beyond instructional coaching, cooperating teachers also foster a culture of trust, inquiry, and professional dialogue, creating a space where teaching interns can develop their pedagogical voice, critical thinking, and professional identity (Copley, 2020). They serve not only as evaluators but also as role models who embody the values, attitudes,

and ethical responsibilities of the teaching profession (Longhurst et al., 2020). In many cases, especially within values-based institutions, their influence extends to supporting the emotional resilience and spiritual growth of interns (Qubati & Tamim, 2021).

Recent studies indicate that a strong mentor-mentee relationship has a significant impact on teaching interns' motivation, classroom confidence, and long-term commitment to the profession (Gervasoni & Dockett, 2022). Therefore, the cooperating teacher's role is not only instrumental in improving interns' classroom competence, but also in nurturing holistic, reflective educators prepared to meet the diverse demands of contemporary classrooms (Zeichner, 2024).

Studies in Germany highlight the significant influence of cooperating teachers on the development of teaching interns. Feldmann (2023) demonstrated that structured mentoring programs, such as Student Teacher Professional Learning Communities (ST-PLCs), facilitate collaborative learning and professional growth among teaching interns, reinforcing the pivotal role of cooperating teachers in their transformation. Kuhn et al. (2024) further revealed that cooperating teachers' intrinsic motivation and the value they place on mentoring are associated with more constructive mentoring styles and higher enthusiasm, positively influencing the mentoring relationship. Additionally, Dreer-Goethe (2025) reiterated that the crucial role of cooperating teacher support and broader social interactions within the school environment in enhancing student teachers' psychological safety and engagement during their practicum. Collectively, these studies affirm the multifaceted and transformative impact of cooperating teachers in teacher education programs across Germany.

In Canada, Salm and Mulholland (2017) emphasized the importance of a collaborative relationship between interns and cooperating teachers, especially in helping student teachers apply theoretical knowledge to real classroom contexts, including approaches to inclusive and socially just education. This is fortified by the Alberta Teachers' Association (2025), which considered that cooperating teachers have a unique opportunity in significantly influencing a student teacher's learning experience and make a lasting impact on their professional development. It further elaborated that these experienced educators play a crucial role in modeling effective teaching, fostering reflective practice, and creating a nurturing environment for growth. Together, these perspectives affirm the vital role of cooperating teachers in shaping competent, thoughtful, and responsive future educators in Canadian schools.

Likewise in Australia, Bonfiglio-Pavisich (2021) underscores the importance of high-quality relationships with cooperating teachers in supporting early career teachers' transition into the profession, noting that such guidance contributes to greater confidence, resilience, and competence. Hudson et al. (2023) complemented these thoughts by emphasizing that structured feedback, particularly through strategic questioning, is essential in fostering autonomous reflection and improving teaching practices among interns. These studies affirm the critical role of cooperating teachers in enhancing the quality and effectiveness of teacher education programs in Australia. Various countries in Asia likewise stressed the evolving and multifaceted role of cooperating teachers in preparing pre-service educators for the demands of modern classrooms.

A study in Indonesia, Nurhadi and Aryani (2021) highlighted that cooperating teachers function as both guides and partners during teaching practicum, helping bridge the gap between theoretical coursework and real classroom practice through coaching, modeling, and evaluation. Through coaching, modeling, and evaluation, they significantly enhance teaching interns' confidence, instructional competence, and readiness to manage real-world classroom dynamics.

Further in Singapore, Low (2023) discusses the shift from traditional supervision to proactive mentoring in response to global disruptions, urging cooperating teachers to become adaptable, technologically proficient, and deeply engaged. He added that this transformation empowers teaching interns to develop the flexibility, digital skills, and professional resilience needed to thrive in an ever-changing educational landscape.

The Cambodia 1st International Conference on Mentoring Educators (2020) further emphasized essential mentoring strategies and shared diverse experiences, reinforcing the importance of professional development in effective mentorship.

In Thailand, Boonphadung and Seubsang (2022) demonstrated how transformative learning approaches, guided by cooperating teachers, can enhance the acquisition of 21st-century skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity among pre-service teachers. Collectively, these perspectives illustrate the increasingly dynamic and essential role cooperating teachers play in teacher education throughout Asia.

In the local scene in the Philippines, numerous studies underscore the vital role of cooperating teachers in shaping the professional growth of pre-service teachers. Dela Cruz and Vasquez (2020) stressed that the open-mindedness and support of cooperating teachers contribute to a nurturing environment where teaching interns can build confidence and meet required professional competencies.

Along this line, Vecaldo (2021) underscored that cooperating teachers provide robust support, ranging from personal and career guidance to instructional modeling, making them instrumental in shaping competent, value-driven educators. Parallel to this, Manicio and Baetiong (2024) highlighted that teaching interns develop their teaching competencies during practicum through the facilitation and guidance of cooperating teachers.

Similarly, Borines and Marasigan (2024) emphasized that mentoring plays a crucial role in transforming the pedagogical beliefs of teaching interns, helping them bridge theory and practice while fostering professional growth.

However, Baluyos et al. (2024) found that there exists difficulty in balancing mentoring duties with regular classroom responsibilities often strains their time and energy, potentially diminishing the quality of guidance they provide and, in turn, impacting the effectiveness of the learning experience for teaching interns.

Moreover, during internship, cooperating teachers face many problems with interns such as, delay in completion of syllabus; many doubts are not clarified by student-teachers; student-teachers do not check students' homework copies; do not use TLMs regularly; and neglect exercises given in the textbooks cooperating teachers do not evaluate the performance of student-teachers properly (Misha & Paramanik, 2019).

In the Philippine educational context, both the Department of Education (DepEd) and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) underscore the indispensable role of cooperating teachers in enhancing the quality of teacher preparation. DepEd institutionalized this role through the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST), which serves as a framework for assessing teacher performance and guiding mentorship (Department of Education [DepEd], 2017). The PPST defines mentoring as a deliberate pairing of an experienced teacher with a pre-service teacher to support professional growth and mastery of the Beginning Teacher Indicators (BTIs). Complementing this, CHED, through Memorandum Order No. 104, Series of 2017, mandates higher education institutions (HEIs) to ensure that cooperating teachers are qualified, pedagogically competent, and actively engaged in the development of teaching interns. CHED's policy highlights that field study and practice teaching are vital components of the teacher education curriculum, as they provide teaching interns with opportunities to integrate theory with practice under the guidance of seasoned mentor teachers (Commission on Higher Education [CHED], 2017). These directives affirm the crucial function of cooperating teachers not only as facilitators of technical skills but also as catalysts for the transformative learning and professional identity formation of future educators.

In Adventist educational institutions, the role of cooperating teachers in mentoring pre-service teachers is essential but often challenged by contextual and organizational limitations. Grounded on the writings of Ellen G. White (1903), the educational philosophy of Adventist educational institutions centers on the harmonious development of the physical, mental, social, and spiritual faculties. The ultimate aim is to restore in humanity the image of its Maker and to prepare students for service in this world and for the higher joy of wider service in the world to come. Within this framework, the mentoring relationship between cooperating teachers and teaching interns plays a vital role in promoting not only academic and pedagogical excellence but also character formation and spiritual growth.

The transformation of teaching interns goes beyond acquiring basic instructional skills, it involves the holistic development of their professional identity, values, confidence, and classroom presence. Transformational learning theory, as conceptualized by Mezirow (2000), frames this process as a fundamental shift in worldview

that results from critical reflection and meaningful experiences. In this context, cooperating teachers act as catalysts for transformation, encouraging interns to examine their assumptions, reflect on their beliefs, and grow into empowered, adaptive educators (Kitchenham, 2022). Through consistent mentoring, modeling of Christ-centered teaching practices, and reflective dialogue, cooperating teachers guide interns from passive receivers of knowledge to active agents of change. This transformation is not only intellectual but also spiritual and emotional, fostering resilience, moral clarity, and a deeper commitment to service (Canli & Demirtas, 2024).

Understanding the role of cooperating teachers is essential because they bridge the gap between theory and practice in teacher education (Zeichner, 2010). More than supervisors, they act as mentors and role models who guide interns through real classroom experiences, helping them develop practical skills, professional confidence, and a clear teaching identity (Ambrosetti, 2014; Hudson, 2016).

In values-based contexts like Adventist schools, cooperating teachers also model how to integrate moral character, faith, and service into daily teaching (White, 1903; Knight, 2006). By demonstrating compassion, patience, and integrity, they help interns learn to educate students holistically, academically, morally, and spiritually (General Conference Department of Education, 2003).

This highlights mentorship not just as training but as a transformative process that shapes interns into educators with a sense of mission and purpose. When cooperating teachers embody this role, they help develop future teachers who can lead with knowledge, ethics, and service qualities much needed in today's classrooms.

To deeply understand and give voice to the lived experiences of cooperating teachers within Adventist educational institutions, this study employs the Husserlian phenomenological approach. Rooted in the philosophy of Edmund Husserl, this method seeks to explore how individuals make meaning of their experiences by setting aside preconceived notions and focusing on the essence of the phenomenon as it is lived (Neubauer et al., 2019).

By using this approach, the study aims to capture the authentic insights, reflections, and perceptions of cooperating teachers as they guide, mentor, and journey alongside teaching interns. This method aligns well with the study's goal to illuminate the spiritual, emotional, and professional dimensions of mentoring within the distinct context of Adventist education.

Building on these foundations, and informed by both literature and lived experience, I have found that my role as a coordinator for teaching internship who has a close and personal interaction with both cooperating teachers and interns in an Adventist educational institution in the Philippines offers a unique vantage point.

Given the absence of research that closely examines the nuanced dynamics of mentoring from the lens of cooperating teachers, I am motivated to explore and document these lived experiences. Without exploring these lived experiences, the mentoring relationship remains only partially understood. Thus, a phenomenological inquiry that centers the voices of cooperating teachers is not only timely but essential in uncovering the invisible, yet transformative dimensions of their role in shaping the next generation of teachers. Through this study, I aimed to contribute meaningful insights that can support more intentional mentoring approaches within the Adventist education system.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study in Husserlian descriptive phenomenology is anchored in a theoretical framework that synthesizes Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory and Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, with particular emphasis on the concept of the More Knowledgeable Other (MKO). Together, these theoretical lenses provide a comprehensive foundation for examining the complex, lived experiences of cooperating teachers as mentors and catalysts for transformation within the unique context of Adventist Educational Institutions.

Husserlian Descriptive Phenomenology (Husserl, 1982) provides the philosophical and methodological backbone of the study. It describes the lived experience of individuals as they are subjectively perceived. In

this study, it employed an approach aimed at thoroughly examining how cooperating teachers experienced and internalized the essence of their role in the transformative development of teaching interns. At the core of this approach lies the principle wherein mentoring is viewed as an intentional act that establishes a meaningful and reciprocal relationship between the cooperating teacher and the intern. Another key element of this approach is the application of epoché and phenomenological reduction, through which personal assumptions are consciously set aside, allowing for the distillation of essential structures in order to reveal the fundamental nature of the cooperating teachers' mentoring practices.

Supporting this phenomenology is Transformative Learning Theory, proposed by Jack Mezirow. In this theory, the focus is on how individuals make sense of their life experiences and undergo fundamental shifts in perception and meaning-making. Mezirow's concept of the theory states that critical reflection and teaching impact the transformation to what we should believe and understand now. Mezirow's theory has developed into a larger idea that our worldview is changed the more we learn, and that helps us grasp new concepts and ideas (What Is the Transformative Learning Theory, 2022). Mezirow's theory posits that learning is not a mere accumulation of facts; it's a profound shift in perception and meaning-making. Aspiring teachers, guided by cooperating mentors, embark on a transformative journey, the one that transcends textbooks and lesson plans. This theory relates to the study because it asserts that for cooperating teachers, this means going beyond imparting knowledge and technical skills to fostering deeper understanding, critical reflection, and growth in their mentees. By encouraging interns to question assumptions, explore new perspectives, and adapt their teaching practices, cooperating teachers can facilitate transformative learning experiences. These mentors, seasoned educators themselves, hold the torch of transformative learning. Their task extends beyond imparting pedagogical techniques; they are architects of mindset shifts. This theory emphasizes how mentorship can catalyze profound changes in interns' understanding, beliefs, and teaching practices.

Another theoretical framework that supports this study is Lev Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory. Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory underscores the essential role of social interaction, cultural context, and mediated learning in cognitive development. Learning, according to Vygotsky (1978), begins at the social level through interaction with others before becoming internalized at the individual level. A key construct in this theory is the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), the space between what a learner can do independently and what they can accomplish with the guidance of a More Knowledgeable Other (MKO) (Chaiklin, 2003).

In the context of teacher education, the cooperating teacher serves as the MKO, providing scaffold support that bridges gaps in understanding and practice (Shabani, Khatib, & Ebadi, 2010). This interaction is not only instructional but deeply cultural and linguistic, shaping how interns think, teach, and reflect (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996).

In this study, Vygotsky's framework is used to understand how cooperating teachers in Adventist educational institutions function as MKOs in supporting the professional and personal growth of teaching interns. Through mentoring, modeling, and spiritual engagement, cooperating teachers facilitate development within the ZPD, allowing interns to transition from dependent learners to independent, mission-oriented educators. The theory illuminates how learning is socially constructed through meaningful, value-driven dialogue, making it particularly relevant to the relational and faith-integrated mentoring practices found in Adventist schools.

The framework aligns with the goal of development education in the Adventist setting, which seeks to nurture holistic growth, intellectual, professional, moral, and spiritual through meaningful mentoring relationships. Ellen G. White states in Education (1903) that "the work of education and the work of redemption are one." This positions education as a transformative and restorative process, aiming to restore the image of God in humanity. Teaching interns are transformed not just through technical training, but through spiritual formation. They learn to teach with redemptive intentionality, every lesson, discipline, or encouragement becomes part of leading students toward a Christ-like character. The theoretical lens of the Philosophy of Adventist Education is a holistic redemptive education that provides a strong foundation for transforming teaching interns in Adventist institutions. This lens integrates: A divine purpose for education, a holistic view of human development, and a Christ-centered model for teaching. By internalizing this framework, interns are not only equipped for effective teaching but also transformed into purpose-driven, spiritually anchored educators who embody the values of Adventist education in every aspect of their profession.

Together, these frameworks offer to explore how cooperating teachers in Adventist Educational Institutions function not only as the source of academic knowledge and pedagogy but also as catalysts for transformation who shape and mold future educators.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Teacher education internship places the cooperating teacher at the core of pre-service teachers' professional development. It emphasizes a triadic partnership among the Teacher Education Institution, the cooperating school, and the intern. Through collaboration and consistent supervision, interns are socialized into the teaching profession, fostering competence, confidence, and ethical grounding. This process aims to ensure strong practicum performance, enhanced teaching skills, and effective classroom strategies, ultimately producing educators who meet the standards of the Philippine teacher education system.

Cooperating teacher's expertise and mentoring capacity. The cooperating teacher plays a vital role in the teacher internship by acting as both an instructional mentor and a professional role model. Their structured guidance, teaching expertise, and reflective support are key factors in shaping the intern's growth and success.

Structured Mentorship. Structured mentorship provides intentional and systematic support to interns through a planned sequence of observation, guided practice, independent teaching, and evaluation. As mandated by CHED CMO No. 104, s. 2017, this approach aligns the cooperating teacher's guidance with the Teacher Education Institution's goals, ensuring consistent mentoring and clear expectations. Such structured support helps build interns' confidence, strengthens their teaching decisions, and eases their transition into the profession.

Lesson Planning and Instructional Design. A key duty of the cooperating teacher is to help interns design and evaluate lesson plans that suit the learning context and standards. Through collaborative planning, interns learn to address learner diversity, use resources wisely, and apply formative assessment. As guided by the PPST, cooperating teachers model effective lesson planning and integrate pedagogical knowledge, offering interns valuable real-time learning experiences.

Co-Teaching and Gradual Release of Responsibility. Co-teaching allows the cooperating teacher and the intern to share classroom duties, moving step by step from observation to full independent teaching. Using the "I do, we do, you do" model, this gradual release approach supported by Philippine TEIs and CHED policies encourages professional dialogue, collaborative problem-solving, and flexible teaching. It helps interns build confidence and develop adaptable teaching skills.

Reflective Practice through Feedback. Constructive, ongoing feedback is vital to the cooperating teacher's mentoring role, as it helps interns reflect on their teaching, classroom management, and student engagement. Reflective conferencing and tools like journals align with PPST standards and build interns' self-awareness and adaptability. Through structured mentorship, collaborative lesson planning, co-teaching, and reflective practice, cooperating teachers shape competent, values-driven educators. Thus this conceptual framework is anchored and guided by the CHED Memorandum Order, No. 104, s. 2017.

In Adventist schools, this mentoring extends to holistic development: mental, physical, and spiritual, guiding interns not only as teachers but as Christ-like servant leaders, in line with the Adventist Philosophy of Education.

Modelling the Master Teacher. In this context, mentoring models Christ as the Master Teacher, emphasizing care, relationship-building, and leading by example. Cooperating teachers are expected to demonstrate humility, love, patience, and integrity, integrating faith with learning. This approach upholds the core goals of Adventist education: academic excellence and spiritual development. (General Conference Department of Education, 2003).

Mentoring as a Transformative Process. Mentoring is seen as a transformative process that helps interns view teaching as a ministry, aligning with the Adventist aim of restoring God's image in humanity. Through

guidance and reflection, cooperating teachers nurture a mission-driven identity in interns, encouraging them to teach with purpose, compassion, and faith. (White, 1903, p. 15)

Holistic Development. A key principle in Adventist mentorship is the intern's holistic development: intellectually, socially, spiritually, and emotionally (General Conference Department of Education, 2003). Teaching interns are mentored not only in classroom management and instructional strategies but also in values formation, emotional intelligence, and spiritual maturity. This aligns with the Adventist commitment to "harmonious development of the physical, mental, and spiritual powers" (White, 1903, p. 13).

Mission-oriented Mentoring. Moreover, mentorship is mission-oriented. In Adventist education, teaching is a sacred calling; one that prepares students not just for earthly success but for eternal life (Oliver & Oliver, 2019). Interns are mentored to view their profession as a form of Christian service and ministry, integrating faith and learning in meaningful and relevant ways (Adventist Education, n.d.)

Living Curriculum. Lastly, cooperating teachers function as living curriculum: their lives are the most powerful tools in shaping future educators. Through daily modeling of professional excellence, ethical conduct, and spiritual devotion, they teach interns how to lead classrooms that are both academically rigorous and spiritually nurturing (Dulan, 2004; Knight, 2006). Our conceptual framework is anchored in:

Together, these anchoring concepts offer a comprehensive, value-rich foundation for understanding and analyzing the role of cooperating teachers in the professional and spiritual formation of pre-service teachers in Adventist institutions.

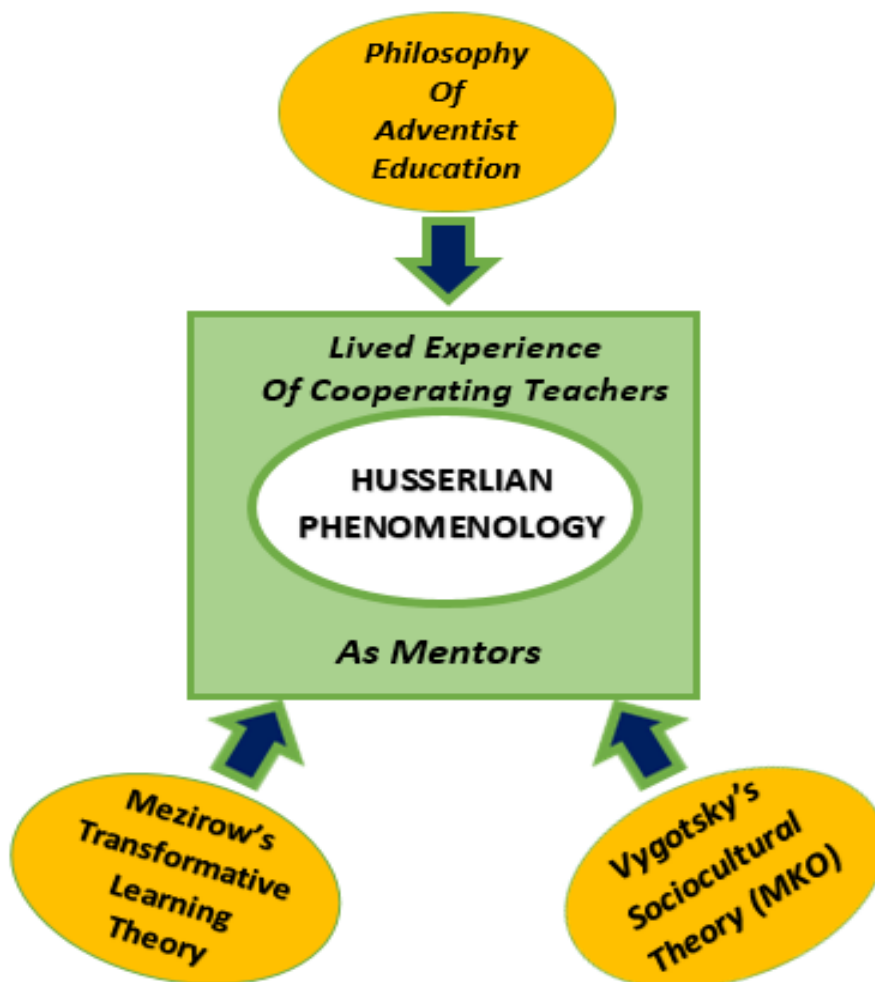


Figure 1. Paradigm of the Study

The paradigm of this study is guided by the Husserlian Phenomenology as the philosophical foundation to uncover the essence of the lived experiences of cooperating teachers as they transform teaching interns within the Adventist educational context.

The Lived Experiences of Cooperating Teachers as Mentors is the core phenomenon being explored that aims to understand how cooperating teachers experience their roles, what meaning they assign to mentoring and how they perceive transformation in their teaching interns.

The Transformative Learning Theory by Jack Mezirow will be the lens in order to understand how cooperating teachers mentor and guide the teaching interns leading to transformative experiences.

The Social Interaction Theory by Lev Vygotsky positions the cooperating teachers as MKO or More Knowledgeable Other, who guides the teaching interns in their social interaction journey in the classroom.

The philosophy of Adventist education plays a vital role in shaping and transforming teaching interns, preparing them not just to be competent educators, but also spiritually grounded, mission-oriented individuals. The Adventist educational philosophy equips teaching interns to become compassionate, reflective, and mission-driven educators, committed to nurturing students in truth, love, and service. This transformation shapes how they teach, how they lead, and how they view their role in the broader mission of Christian education.

These frameworks together provide philosophical (what is the lived experience), psychological (how transformation occurs), and sociocultural (how interaction supports learning) grounding for the study.

Statement of the Problem

I explored the lived experience of cooperating teachers in the transformation of teaching interns from educational institutions guided by the Adventist philosophy of education in the North Luzon region in the Philippines. Results of the study served to generate implications in understanding the transformational process of the teachers consistent with the pivotal role of the internship program towards a quality Adventist pre-service education.

Specifically, I pursued to answer the question, to wit:

What is the lived experience of the cooperating teachers in the transformation of teaching interns in the Adventist Educational Institutions?

Scope and Delimitation

I focused specifically on lived experience of cooperating teachers in Adventist Educational Institutions in North Luzon who have mentored teaching interns during the post-pandemic years. I investigated how the cooperating teachers perceive, reflect upon, and construct meaning from their mentoring experiences as they fulfill their duties and responsibilities. Utilizing in-depth interviews, I sought to uncover the deliberate and conscious mentoring practices, along with the relational dynamics, that facilitate the transformation of teaching interns within a spiritually anchored and academically rigorous environment.

I delimited this study to exploring the lived experiences of cooperating teachers as mentors within Adventist educational institutions. This means that the findings are framed within the unique context of faith-based, values-oriented schools that follow the Adventist Philosophy of Education, which emphasizes the harmonious development of the mental, physical, and spiritual aspects of learners (White, 1903).

I focused only on cooperating teachers who mentor teaching interns assigned by Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) accredited by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) in the Philippines. I did not include supervising instructors from the TEIs, student interns themselves, or school principals. Instead, I centered solely on the voices of cooperating teachers, capturing how they perceive and enact their role as instructional mentors and spiritual guides in shaping future teachers.

Geographically, I limited this study to Adventist schools in selected locations, which may not reflect the practices of cooperating teachers in public or other private non-sectarian schools. Thus, the cultural and organizational practices embedded in Adventist education such as faith integration, mission-oriented mentoring, and the modeling of Christian character are key contextual factors that bound the scope of this research.

Furthermore, I delimited this study to the internship period as defined by CHED Memorandum Order No. 104, s. 2017, which governs pre-service teacher training in the Philippines. It does not cover other forms of mentoring such as induction programs for newly hired teachers, peer mentoring among regular faculty, or informal mentoring relationships outside the official practicum.

At the same time, I limited this to the perspectives and recollections shared by the cooperating teachers at the time of the interviews. It does not aim to measure the long-term impact of their mentoring on the actual career outcomes or spiritual formation of the interns once they become professional teachers.

Lastly, I employed a Husserlian phenomenological approach. As such, its focus is on describing and understanding the essence of the cooperating teachers' mentoring experiences rather than making generalizable claims or testing causal relationships. The findings are intended to provide deep insights and meaningful descriptions that can inform teacher education programs, especially those rooted in faith-based and values-based philosophies.

By clearly defining these boundaries, the study maintains a manageable and coherent scope, ensuring that the voices of cooperating teachers in Adventist schools are honored and authentically represented within their unique educational and spiritual context.

Significance of the Study

By exploring the lived experience of the cooperating teachers through the lens of Husserlian phenomenology, I contributed to a deeper understanding of the vital role of the cooperating teachers in the transformation of the teaching interns within the context of Adventist Education.

Thus, I desired that the results of the study will be helpful to the following entities:

Adventist Educational Institutions Administrators and Policy Makers: This research will provide a deeper understanding of the multifaceted nature of mentorship in settings where academic pedagogy is closely intertwined with spiritual values. It emphasizes the need of crafting policies that recognize and support the multidimensional duties and contributions of cooperating teachers in the training of teaching interns. In the same way

School of Teacher Education Program Personnel: The findings of this study may guide the development and refinement of mentorship guidelines within internship programs. By showcasing effective mentoring approaches rooted in intentional practice, relational engagement, and spiritual exemplification, the research can assist institutions in strengthening the support systems provided to both teaching interns and their mentors.

Cooperating Teachers: The findings of this study will provide cooperating teachers with deeper insights into effective mentoring strategies that foster critical reflection, professional growth, and confidence among teaching interns.

Teaching Interns: The result of this study can give the interns insights into effective teaching practices, mentorship, and professional growth by understanding the role of the cooperating teachers that may result in enhanced learning experiences during an internship. It will also help the teaching interns transition from theoretical learning to practical application, equipping them with the necessary pedagogical skills, adaptability, and confidence in real classroom settings.

Future Researchers. This study contributed to the limited body of literature that centers on the voice of cooperating teachers, particularly within faith-integrated educational settings. Furthermore, it advances

theoretical discussions by illustrating the effective application of a triangulated framework that integrates Husserlian phenomenology, Transformative Learning Theory, and Sociocultural Theory within the domain of educational research.

Ultimately, the study aimed to enhance the practice of mentorship in teacher education by amplifying the voices of those who enact the transformative process of cultivating future educators through the integration of professional expertise and spiritual formation.

Definition of Terms

To provide a comprehensive understanding of the study, the following key terms are defined operationally based on how they are specifically applied within the context of this research. These definitions aim to clarify the conceptual boundaries and practical meanings of terms as they relate to the phenomenon under investigation, thereby ensuring consistency, precision, and alignment with the study's theoretical framework and methodological approach.

Husserlian Phenomenology of Cooperating Teachers in the Transformation of Teaching Interns in the Adventist Educational Institutions. It refers to a qualitative inquiry grounded in the Husserlian phenomenological tradition, which seeks to explore and describe the lived experiences of cooperating teachers as they mentor teaching interns within the unique context of Adventist education.

Husserlian Phenomenology. A qualitative research approach that seeks to explore and describe the essence of lived experiences as they are consciously perceived by individuals with a philosophical tradition of returning "to the things themselves" (zu den Sachen selbst), meaning that phenomena should be examined as they appear in consciousness, without presuppositions or external interpretations. Husserlian phenomenology involves the use of epoche, the suspension of the researcher's judgments and assumptions and eidetic reduction, a process that aims to uncover the essential structures of an experience through reflective analysis. This method emphasizes the intentionality of consciousness, wherein every experience is directed toward something and imbued with meaning by the person experiencing it.

Within the context of this study, Husserlian phenomenology serves as a foundational framework to investigate how cooperating teachers in Adventist educational institutions experience, interpret, and make meaning of their mentoring roles. By focusing on the first-person accounts of these educators, the approach seeks to reveal the core essence of their lived mentoring experiences, particularly in the intersection of professional practice and spiritual formation. Another key element of this approach is the application of epoché and phenomenological reduction, through which personal assumptions are consciously set aside (epoché), allowing for the distillation of essential structures (eidetic reduction) in order to reveal the fundamental nature of the cooperating teachers' mentoring practices.

Cooperating Teacher: A licensed professional teacher/educator employed in an Adventist Educational Institution for more than five years who mentored and supervised teaching interns during their teaching internship training during the post pandemic years.

Lived Experience of Cooperating Teachers: It refers to the personal, first-hand accounts and reflections of cooperating teachers as they engage in the day-to-day process of mentoring teaching interns within Adventist educational institutions. These experiences include their thoughts, feelings, challenges, insights, and meaning-making as they fulfill their mentoring roles.

Transformational Learning: Transformational learning is a deep, meaningful change in how individuals think, perceive, and act based on critical reflection and experience. In the context of mentoring practice interns, transformational learning means guiding interns beyond just acquiring skills; they undergo a shift in mindset, confidence, and professional identity.

Transformation of Teaching Interns: It refers to the deep, holistic development that teaching interns undergo during their practicum experience, particularly under the guidance of cooperating teachers in Adventist educational institutions. This transformation involves more than just acquiring instructional skills; it includes

the growth of their professional competence, personal character, spiritual maturity, confidence, and teaching identity.

Teaching Interns: They are fourth-year education students enrolled in the teaching internship who work alongside certified teachers in a classroom setting to gain hands-on experience in teaching. They have the opportunity to observe and participate in classroom instruction, manage student behavior, and develop lesson plans.

Adventist Educational Institution: refers to the educational system by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. This Christian school-based system operates in over 7,500 schools across nearly 150 countries, serving approximately 1.5 million students that emphasizes holistic education, focusing on mental, physical, social, and spiritual health, as well as intellectual growth and service to humanity. In this study, the term refers to the Adventist schools in Northern Luzon where the key informants are teaching and currently employed.

METHODOLOGY

I utilized Husserlian descriptive phenomenology, a qualitative research approach grounded in the philosophy of Edmund Husserl (1931), the founder of phenomenology. Rooted in the phenomenological tradition of “going back to the things themselves,” this approach seeks to uncover the structures of consciousness and the meaning-making processes as experienced from the first-person perspective. In this study, Husserlian phenomenology provides the ideal lens through which to examine how cooperating teachers experience and enact their roles as mentors in shaping the professional identity and moral development of teaching interns within Adventist educational institutions.

As a key methodological feature of this design, I engaged in bracketing. I am deeply aware that my own assumptions, beliefs, and prior experiences can influence how I perceive and interpret the lived experiences of the cooperating teachers I am studying. To remain faithful to the principles of Husserlian phenomenology, I made a conscious effort to bracket, or set aside, my preconceptions throughout this research process.

I acknowledge that I personally hold high regard for cooperating teachers, as I have witnessed and experienced their vital role in shaping the development of pre-service teachers. I believe they are not only mentors but also role models whose commitment and dedication leave a lasting impact on interns. I am also an advocate for values-based education, which aligns closely with the Adventist educational philosophy that emphasizes holistic development, mental, physical, and spiritual.

To bracket these assumptions, I began this study by reflecting on my own experiences and writing down my beliefs about mentoring and cooperating teachers. I maintained a reflexive journal where I honestly noted my thoughts, biases, and emotional reactions throughout the process. After each interview, I wrote reflections to identify any judgments or interpretations that could color my understanding of the participants’ true voices.

During the interview, I allowed the cooperating teachers to share their stories freely in their own words. During data analysis, I read and reread my journal entries during the analysis of data to ensure that my own perspectives did not overshadow the genuine meaning conveyed by my participants.

Through this bracketing process, I continuously reminded myself to remain open to the essence of the phenomenon as lived and articulated by the cooperating teachers themselves. I commit to presenting their voices as faithfully as possible, striving to reveal the true essence of their experiences without distortion from my own viewpoints.

Locale of the Study

I conducted the research in selected Adventist educational institutions in Northern Luzon, Philippines, representing a unified but diverse sample of schools operating under the global Adventist education framework. Established in 1872, the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) school system is recognized as the world’s second-largest Christian denominational educational network, committed to holistic development encompassing academic excellence, spiritual formation, and character building (Adventist Education, 2020).

Two administrative headquarters of the SDA Church in Region 1 served as the primary institutional settings:

Northern Luzon Mission (NLM), located in Artacho, Sison, Pangasinan, oversees 19 elementary schools across Pangasinan, Tarlac, La Union, Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur, and Abra.

Mountain Provinces Mission (MPM), headquartered at 08 Navy Base Road, Baguio City, supervises three schools in the provinces of Benguet, Apayao, Kalinga, Ifugao, and Mountain Province.

In addition, I included Northern Luzon Adventist College (NLAC), also located in Sison, Pangasinan. Though not directly under either mission office, NLAC operates as a higher education institution within the Adventist system and plays a significant role in teacher training and intern deployment.

These educational institutions share a common commitment to the Adventist philosophy of holistic education, integrating faith, learning, and service. Their inclusion provides both contextual richness and thematic consistency, enabling the researcher to explore mentorship experiences across varying socio-cultural and geographic contexts within a unified educational framework.

The inclusion of both mission headquarters and NLAC enhances the validity, credibility, and scope of the research. By capturing a broad range of experiences from cooperating teachers situated in different localities but bound by shared denominational values, the study provides a comprehensive account of the lived realities of mentorship. Moreover, this geographic and institutional diversity strengthens the applicability of findings to other Adventist and values-based educational settings.

A visual map of the research locale, color-coded by mission headquarters, was developed to aid in spatial understanding and organizational clarity, further supporting the study's methodological rigor and accessibility for readers.



Figure 2. Map of the Study

Legend :

Schools under Northern Luzon Mission

Schools under Mountain Provinces Mission

Schools/Department under Northern Luzon Adventist College

My decision to carry out this research in Adventist educational institutions in Northern Luzon is based on both academic purpose and personal belief. As a Christian-based school system, the Adventist institution offers a special environment where learning, values, and spiritual growth go hand in hand. This well-rounded approach to education not only shapes students' learning but also strongly influences how cooperating teachers mentor teaching interns.

Northern Luzon, in particular, provides a rich and meaningful setting where these values are clearly practiced in both rural and urban school communities. It is home to many dedicated cooperating teachers who play an important role in training future educators. However, their real-life experiences and mentoring roles have not been widely studied or documented in research.

I also aimed to improve teacher training in Adventist schools by providing insights that reflect the institution's values. By doing so, it hopes to strengthen teacher education and guide future programs based on real mentoring experiences.

Studying this region ensures the research stays relevant to the Adventist context, highlights the voices of cooperating teachers, and recognizes their important role in educational transformation.

Participants of the Study

The participants in this study were ten cooperating teachers who have been actively employed within Seventh-day Adventist educational institutions for at least five years. These individuals were licensed professional teachers with direct mentoring experience, specifically during the post-pandemic educational period, a time marked by pedagogical transitions and increasing expectations for teacher leadership and adaptability.

Participants were purposefully selected from schools under the administrative supervision of the Northern Luzon Mission (NLM) and the Mountain Provinces Mission (MPM) of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Additionally, faculty members from the Northern Luzon Adventist College (NLAC) Academy and Elementary Departments were included. Their participation acknowledged NLAC's significant contribution to teacher education and added contextual diversity to the sample.

In a phenomenological research, establishing clear inclusion and exclusion criteria was essential to maintain methodological rigor and ensure alignment with the philosophical foundations of the approach. In this study, participants were selected based on their firsthand and deeply situated experiences relevant to the phenomenon under investigation namely, the lived experience of cooperating teachers serving as mentors in Adventist Educational Institutions.

The inclusion criteria required that participants had a minimum of five years of continuous teaching experience in Adventist educational institutions; holder of a valid professional teaching license; have mentored or supervised teaching interns, particularly during the post-pandemic context, and are currently affiliated with an institution under NLM, MPM, or NLAC. Individuals who did not meet these qualifications such as those without mentoring experience or not currently affiliated with the aforementioned institutions were excluded to ensure the credibility and relevance of the findings.

To recruit eligible participants, I employed purposive sampling, a non-probabilistic, judgment-based technique widely used in qualitative research (Nikolopoulou, 2022). This approach allowed the researcher to intentionally select individuals based on predetermined criteria aligned with the study's objectives. Unlike random sampling, purposive sampling ensured that only information-rich cases were included, capable of offering deep and meaningful insights into the core phenomenon. This sampling strategy was particularly suited for Husserlian phenomenological inquiry, where the objective was not statistical generalization, but rather the revelation of the essence and structure of lived experience as conveyed by those most intimately involved in the mentoring process.

The following section details the standards and procedures used in the selection and engagement of these key informants. On the next page is a table presenting the profile of the participants. Pseudonyms were assigned to them for privacy purposes.

Table 1. Profile of the Participants

Alias	Age	Gender	Adventist Institutional Headquarter	No. of years employed in an Adventist Institution
Zircon	63	Male	Mountain Provinces Mission	36
Garnet	32	Female	Mountain Provinces Mission	10
Opal	29	Male	Mountain Provinces Mission	7
Pearl	59	Female	Northern Luzon Mission	25
Topaz	47	Female	Northern Luzon Mission	22
Onyx	45	Male	Northern Luzon Mission	19
Amethyst	49	Female	Northern Luzon Adventist College	23
Beryl	42	Female	Northern Luzon Adventist College	7
Agate	36	Female	Northern Luzon Adventist College	10
Sapphire	28	Female	Northern Luzon Adventist College	6

All the participants are currently employed in the Adventist Institutions; three came from the three different schools under Mountain Provinces Mission, three came from the three different schools under the Northern Luzon Mission; two from the secondary department of Northern Luzon Adventist College; and two from the elementary department of Northern Luzon Adventist College. All of the key informants have mentored teaching interns during the post pandemic years. The decision to include ten participants aligns with qualitative research standards, particularly those guiding Husserlian phenomenology, which recommends a small, information-rich sample, typically between 6 and 10 participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This number was sufficient to reach data saturation, where recurring themes and meanings began to emerge, and no substantially new insights were being uncovered. This focused sample size allowed for in-depth interviews and detailed analysis, ensuring that each informant's voice was meaningfully heard and interpreted in the process of exploring the transformational mentoring experience.

Instrumentation

I was guided by a central research question that I used to explore and describe the lived experiences of cooperating teachers in relation to the transformation of teaching interns within Adventist educational institutions. Anchored in the Husserlian phenomenological tradition, I emphasized the intentional exploration of consciousness and the meanings individuals ascribed to their experiences and aimed to uncover the essence of mentoring as perceived and lived by cooperating teachers. This approach allowed for a rich, nuanced understanding of the phenomenon, free from theoretical presuppositions and firmly grounded in the participants' own descriptions. Through the systematic application of epoché (bracketing) and phenomenological reduction, I sought to reveal the core structures that defined the transformative mentoring process in the context of Adventist education.

Relative to this, the participants aim to answer the research question; to wit:

1. What is the lived experience of the cooperating teachers in the training of interns from the Adventist Educational Institutions?

This open-ended question invited deep reflection and authentic articulation of lived experience, consistent with the descriptive aims of Husserlian phenomenology.

Data Gathering Procedure

Before initiating the data collection, I obtained formal approval and an endorsement letter from the Graduate School of the University of Luzon by submitting a detailed research proposal outlining the study's objectives,

methodology, ethical safeguards, and anticipated contributions. After securing institutional clearance, I submitted formal letters of request to the two Adventist missions overseeing educational institutions in Northern Luzon namely, the Mountain Provinces Mission in Baguio City and the Northern Luzon Mission in Artacho, Sison, and Pangasinan as well as to the Research Director of Northern Luzon Adventist College (NLAC). Upon receiving permission, I sent letters to the principals of the selected schools. These administrators assisted in identifying and recommending potential participants based on the study's inclusion criteria. I contacted the recommended teachers through formal letter of invitations, sent through messenger, which explained the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of their participation, the ethical safeguards in place, confidentiality protocols, and their right to withdraw from the study at any time without consequence. After obtaining informed consent, I conducted in-depth interview via Messenger Video Call which was also audiorecorded and for those who are near, I conducted a face-to face interview. All sessions were audio-recorded with the participants' permission. I transcribed the interviews verbatim to ensure accuracy and preserve the integrity of the participants' narratives. Throughout the process, I strictly adhered to ethical research practices, including confidentiality, informed consent, and respectful participant engagement, consistent with accepted qualitative research standards.

For the analysis of the data collected, I utilized Colaizzi's (1978) descriptive phenomenological method, a systematic and rigorous approach designed to uncover the essential structure of lived experiences. This method aligned well with the philosophical foundations of Husserlian phenomenology, which emphasized remaining faithful to participants' subjective perspectives through descriptive rather than interpretive analysis. Colaizzi's method offered a structured analytical framework that allowed me to preserve the depth and authenticity of the participants' narratives while ensuring methodological rigor.

The first step involved familiarization with the data. I immersed myself in the interview transcripts by reading and re-reading all narratives multiple times. This repeated engagement enabled me to gain a deeper understanding of each participant's experience and helped me remain grounded in their lived realities. During this phase, I also verified the accuracy of each transcription by comparing it against the original audio recordings to ensure fidelity to the participants' exact words.

After achieving full immersion in the data, I proceeded to extract significant statements; direct quotations that were particularly relevant to the phenomenon under investigation: the lived experiences of cooperating teachers mentoring pre-service teaching interns in Adventist educational institutions. These statements became the core units for further analysis.

I then formulated meanings from the significant statements by reflecting on the underlying meanings conveyed by the participants, while maintaining adherence to their original context. This process involved setting aside personal assumptions through epoché, allowing the meanings to emerge naturally from the data. Once all meanings were formulated, I grouped them into theme clusters that represented recurring patterns and shared aspects of experience across participants' accounts.

From these thematic clusters, I constructed an exhaustive description of the phenomenon, which synthesized both individual and collective experiences into a rich, cohesive narrative. This description captured the complex realities of the mentoring process within the Adventist educational framework. I then distilled this narrative into a concise formulation that represented the essential structure of the phenomenon, identifying only those components that were indispensable to understanding the lived experience of mentoring.

In addition, I developed categorical themes, serving as conceptual labels that encapsulated the defining features of each theme cluster. Following the guidance of Tomura (2009), these categorical themes enhanced the analytical clarity and organization of the findings, enabling a more scholarly and accessible presentation of results.

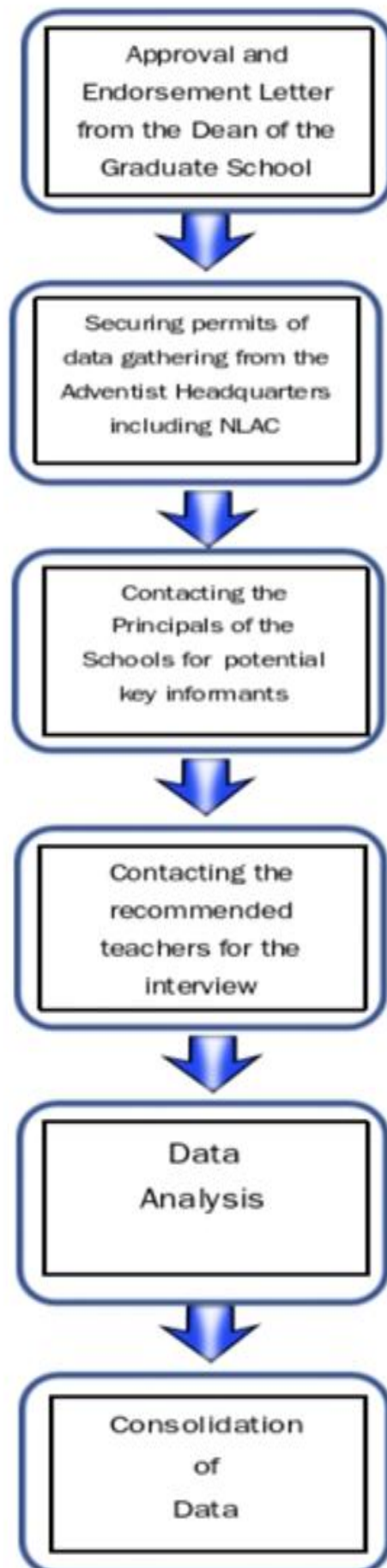


Figure 3: Diagrammatic Flow of the Gathering of Data

To strengthen the trustworthiness and credibility of the study, I conducted member checking by returning the preliminary interpretations and thematic findings to the participants. This allowed them to verify the accuracy of the representations of their experiences and to confirm that the distilled meanings authentically reflected their intended perspectives. This step played a crucial role in validating the results and ensuring the ethical integrity of the entire process.

Data Management and Analysis

I employed Colaizzi's method of thematic analysis of data. I approached data analysis with a commitment to stay as close as possible to the lived experiences and authentic voices of the cooperating teachers, especially in their unique role as mentors within Adventist educational institutions. After completing all interviews and transcriptions, I engaged in open coding as my initial step to uncover the deeper meanings embedded in their narratives.

I began by immersing myself fully in the transcripts, reading and re-reading them multiple times to grasp each participant's whole story before breaking it into parts, in line with Husserl's phenomenological approach. As I read, I highlighted significant statements, words, phrases, or sentences that captured the heart of what it means to be a cooperating teacher shaping pre-service interns in an Adventist context, where mentoring extends beyond instruction to spiritual nurturing and mission-focused guidance.

I made a conscious decision not to impose any pre-set categories or theoretical labels. Instead, I let the codes emerge directly from the participants' own words, respecting their language and perspectives as Adventist mentors. Whenever a statement reflected an idea, feeling, or action related to my central research question such as guiding interns in faith, modeling Christ-like values, or cultivating a caring, service-oriented mindset, I assigned a simple, descriptive code to capture its essence.

Throughout this process, I actively practiced bracketing, reminding myself not to interpret too soon or judge the statements through my own lens. To stay grounded, I kept a reflexive journal to record any personal assumptions or reactions that arose so I could consciously set them aside and return to the cooperating teachers' voices with fresh, open attention.

After coding all the transcripts, I grouped similar codes to form clusters of meanings that naturally reflected the shared experience of being an Adventist cooperating teacher and mentor. These clusters then guided the emergence of broader themes, revealing not just how these teachers perform their duties but how they integrate faith, service, and holistic formation into their mentoring work.

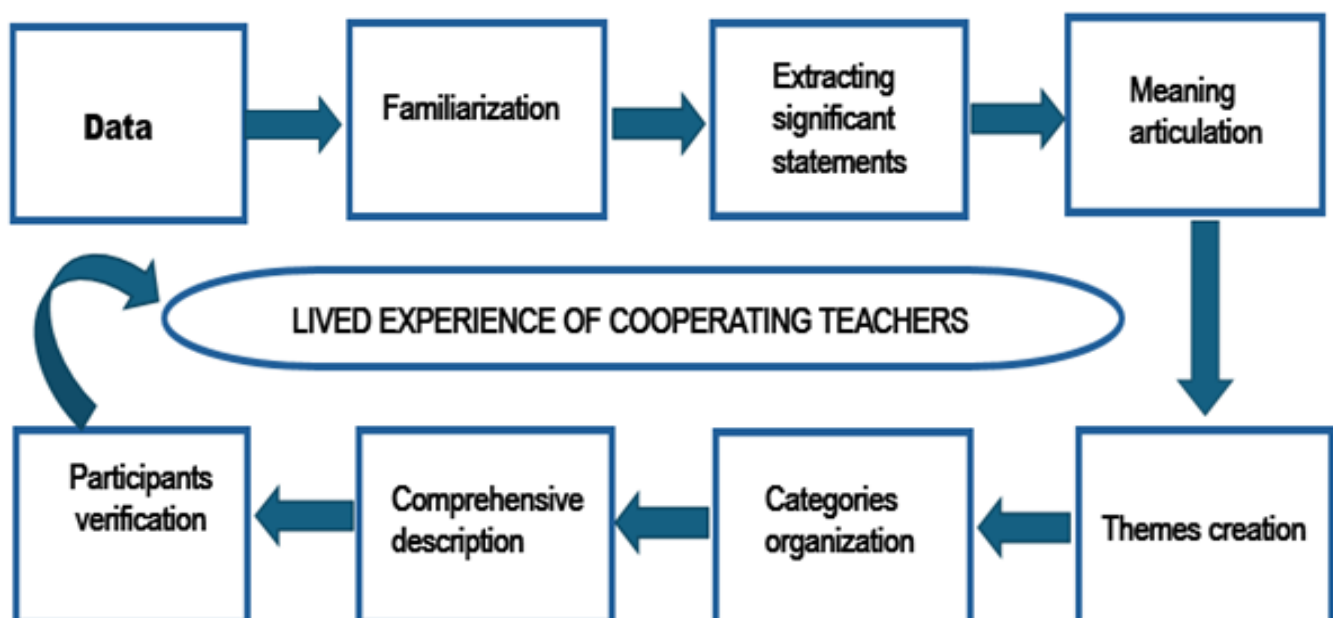


Figure 4: Colaizzi's Thematic Method of Analysis

By applying open coding in this descriptive, reflective way, I honored the Husserlian principle of staying close to the phenomenon itself, allowing the cooperating teachers' lived experiences and unique voices as spiritual guides, role models, and Christ-like mentors to emerge organically, without being forced into pre-existing frameworks.

Through this careful process, I aimed to faithfully capture and describe the essence of cooperating teachers' mentoring roles within Adventist education, giving voice to their stories in rich, authentic detail that reflects both their professional and spiritual commitment to forming future educators.

Trustworthiness of the Data

In doing this Husserlian phenomenological study, I knew it was very important to make sure my research was trustworthy and truly represented the real voices and lived experiences of the cooperating teachers who mentor interns in Adventist schools. To do this, I focused on four key things: credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability.

To keep my study credible, I spent plenty of time with the data. I made sure my interviews were open and respectful, so each cooperating teacher felt safe to share their honest thoughts and stories, not just as mentors but also as spiritual guides. After transcribing the interviews, I showed some parts back to my participants to check that I understood their meaning correctly. I also made sure I really stayed with the data. I read and re-read each transcript many times and let the patterns and important points appear naturally. This helped me understand the heart of what it means to be a cooperating teacher in the Adventist context.

To make my research dependable, I was careful of every step, from how I chose participants to how I did the interviews, bracketing, coding, and theme-making. I also kept a reflexive journal where I wrote down my thoughts, feelings, and possible biases so I could remind myself to stay focused on what my participants were really saying.

For confirmability, I made sure that what I wrote in my findings was always backed up by real quotes from the teachers themselves. I also asked my adviser for feedback to make sure I wasn't overlooking anything or letting my own views shape the data too much.

To help readers see if my study might apply to other settings (transferability), I described the context clearly, what kind of teachers I talked to, and what makes Adventist schools unique. I also included detailed quotes and examples so anyone reading can decide how my findings might relate to their own setting.

By doing all this, staying close to the data, checking my own biases, asking for feedback, and showing clear evidence, I aimed to keep this study trustworthy and true to the real voices of the cooperating teachers. My hope was to honor their stories honestly, showing how they mentor pre-service teachers not only as educators but also as spiritual guides living out the Adventist Philosophy of Education.

AUDIT TRAIL

RESEARCHER: Marites P. Salvador

PhD in Development Education

TITLE OF STUDY:

HUSSERLIAN PHENOMENOLOGY OF COOPERATING TEACHERS IN THE TRANSFORMATION OF TEACHING INTERNS IN ADVENTIST EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

1. Research Proposal and Ethical Approval

- a. Submitted a detailed research proposal to the Graduate School of the University of Luzon.
- b. Obtained formal approval and an endorsement letter.
- c. Secured permissions from the Mountain Provinces Mission, Northern Luzon Mission, and NLAC.
- d. Letters of request and consent forms filed.

2. Participant Selection

- a. Formal letters sent to school principals for participant recommendation.
- b. Selection based on clear inclusion criteria (e.g., years of mentoring experience, current teaching status in Adventist schools).
- c. Copies of invitation letters and inclusion criteria checklist attached.

3. Informed Consent

- a. Participants briefed on study purpose, process, confidentiality, and right to withdraw.
- b. Signed consent forms securely stored.
- c. Verbal consent reconfirmed before recording each interview.

4. Data Collection Procedures

- a. In-depth interviews conducted via Messenger Video Call and face-to-face where possible.
- b. All interviews audio-recorded with participant consent.
- c. Interview guide and probing questions documented.
- d. Raw audio files named and organized by participant code.

5. Data Management

- a. Interviews transcribed verbatim.
- b. Transcriptions checked twice against recordings for accuracy.
- c. Pseudonyms used to maintain anonymity.
- d. All digital files stored in a password-protected folder.

6. Data Analysis Process (Colaizzi's Method)

Step 1: Familiarization : Printed transcripts, read and re-read.

Step 2: Extracted significant statements, highlighted directly in transcripts.

Step 3: Formulated meanings noted in analytic memos.

Step 4: Grouped meanings into theme clusters.

Step 5: Created exhaustive description draft.

Step 6: Identified essential structure of the phenomenon.

Step 7: Conducted member checking , returned findings to participants for validation.

7. Reflexivity Notes

a.Maintained a reflexive journal documenting personal biases, decisions, and reflections throughout data collection and analysis.

b.Entries dated and summarized.

8. Member Checking Evidence

a.Shared preliminary themes and descriptions with participants.

b.Collected feedback and made clarifications where needed.

c.Records of email/Message exchanges kept.

9. Final Report

a.Drafts reviewed with adviser and committee.

b.Incorporated all approved revisions.

c.Retained all drafts to show progression.

d.Storage and Confidentiality:

e.All raw data and recordings deleted after final analysis.

f.Only anonymized transcripts and analysis notes retained for archive.

Figure 5. Audit Trail

In this study, I maintained an audit trail to ensure transparency and credibility throughout the research process. I carefully documented each phase, from proposal submission and participant selection to data collection, transcription, and analysis. I organized interviews, consent forms, analytic memos, reflexive journal entries, and communication records (emails and messages) systematically. I cross checked transcripts with audio recordings, and member checking feedback was recorded to validate findings. All data files, including drafts and coded transcripts, were stored in a password-protected folder, with only

anonymized information retained. This audit trail allows others to trace the development of the study and verify the trustworthiness and rigor of the findings.

Ethical considerations

In alignment with the ethical standards of qualitative research and grounded in the philosophical foundations of Husserlian phenomenology, I upheld a strong commitment to informed consent, participant autonomy, confidentiality, and transparency throughout the study. Central to Husserlian phenomenology is the respect for the subjective consciousness of individuals, which placed an ethical obligation on me to honor the lived experiences of the participants without distortion or coercion. Therefore, prior to data collection, I thoroughly briefed all key informants on the voluntary nature of their participation. I ensured that they were clearly informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any point, particularly if they experienced discomfort in responding to any of the interview questions, without fear of penalty or adverse consequences.

Each participant received a comprehensive explanation of the study's purpose, procedures, potential risks, and anticipated benefits. This process ensured that their consent was both informed and freely given, thereby safeguarding their dignity and autonomy, an imperative in phenomenological inquiry, which seeks to engage participants as co-constructors of meaning. In keeping with the Husserlian emphasis on intentionality and authenticity, I made certain that the voices of participants were preserved in their purest form. To maintain anonymity and confidentiality, I used pseudonyms in all transcripts and reports and removed any potentially identifying information.

All interviews were recorded only with the express consent of the participants. I maintained exclusive control over the handling of the recordings, which were stored securely and used solely for the purposes of transcription and phenomenological analysis. Upon completion of data extraction, analysis, and validation, I permanently deleted all recordings to uphold the privacy and trust granted by the participants. This practice reflected the phenomenological ethic of honoring the intentional acts of consciousness while avoiding the objectification of those who shared their lived realities.

Furthermore, consistent with the principles of reflexivity and transparency integral to Husserlian phenomenology, I engaged in a process of member checking by providing participants with a summary of the research findings. This step allowed them to review and confirm the accuracy of the interpretations derived from their narratives. It served not only to validate the authenticity of the findings but also to acknowledge the invaluable contributions of the participants as essential collaborators in the co-construction of meaning.

Through this transparent and respectful engagement, I sought to faithfully represent the essence of lived experience, consistent with phenomenology's fundamental aim: to return "to the things themselves" in their original, unaltered form.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the narratives of the participants, six themes have emerged as the lived experience of cooperating teachers. This chapter sought to deepen the understanding of how cooperating teachers perceive their roles in mentoring, how these roles foster professional and spiritual transformation among teaching interns, and what implications these lived experiences hold for teacher education, particularly within the context of Adventist educational institutions. Each theme was explored in sequence, weaving together the participants' direct narratives with theoretical and empirical perspectives to shed light on the meaning and importance of their mentoring experiences.

Table 2. Extracted Themes on the Lived Experience of Cooperating Teachers

THEMES	ESSENCE OF EXPERIENCE
1. Mentoring as a Crucial Role and Responsibility	Cooperating Teachers provide clear direction, structured supervision, feedback, and practical skills to bridge theory and practice and prepare interns for real classrooms.
2. Relationship-Building and Nurturing Support	Cooperating Teachers nurture trusting, warm, supportive bonds, often with a motherly or familial approach that makes interns feel safe, motivated, and empowered.
3.Spiritual and Values Integration as a Sacred Ministry and a Moral Calling	Cooperating Teachers see mentoring as sacred ministry, modeling Adventist faith, values, and moral integrity in daily practice to guide interns' character formation.
4.Transformation, Interns' Growth, and Legacy	Mentoring is viewed as transformative and holistic, shaping interns professionally, personally, and spiritually, creating a legacy for future generations.
5.Mentoring Difficulties and Challenges	Cooperating Teachers recognize mentoring as a weighty responsibility with real challenges, balancing boundaries, discipline, and adaptability to support interns effectively.
6.Role Modeling and Mutual Growth	Cooperating Teachers see themselves as living role models, demonstrating what they teach. They grow alongside interns through reciprocal learning and see it as a privilege.

Theme 1: Mentoring as a Crucial Role and Responsibility

Mentoring emerged as a central and indispensable aspect of the teacher internship experience. Cooperating teachers consistently described their role not merely as supervising interns, but as actively shaping their professional identity, instructional competence, and ethical foundation. They viewed mentoring as both a responsibility entrusted by the school and a personal commitment to support the growth of future educators.

This theme underscores that mentoring goes beyond technical guidance; it is a relational and moral obligation. Cooperating teachers reported investing modeling effective teaching practices, and providing structured feedback. Their guidance spanned across key domains: lesson planning, classroom management, reflective practice, and professional behavior, all aligned with the expectations of the CHED Memorandum Order No. 104, s. 2017, and the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST).

Within Adventist schools, mentoring also carried a spiritual dimension. They aimed not only to build competent teachers but also to nurture servant leaders who reflect the values of compassion, humility, and integrity. This aligns with the Adventist Philosophy of Education, which considers teaching a sacred ministry.

The cooperating teachers from Adventist educational institutions see themselves as mentors whose role is crucial in guiding, supervising, intervening, and ensuring interns develop as professionals.

Amethyst articulated, “

“I see my role as very vital to develop the capacity of these interns to prepare themselves become professionals. Teachers are role models. I see to it that they have to show first to me the lesson. I keep a close look. By way of helping them out, that will help them to follow easier. I must be around to supervise them to avoid any further misdevelopment. I need to go and intervene. They master their lesson, and eventually improved as days are passing by. The role of a cooperating teacher is vital.

She further added that the interns need proper guidance because they are the future of our profession.”

While Onyx emphasized,

“A cooperating teacher plays a vital role in mentoring student teachers by providing hands-on support, modeling instructional techniques, and fostering an Adventist learning environment. Mentoring teaching

interns is seen as a blessing and an opportunity to help them sharpen knowledge and skills for their future careers. Teaching experience is crucial to effectively share knowledge with student interns to aid their future careers. Mentoring is challenging but rewarding personally for the cooperating teacher. Mentoring is about fostering the intern's ability to inspire, lead, serve, and model Christ's love in teaching."

Agate's narratives provided a more understanding on the crucial role of cooperating teachers as intentional mentorship beginning with giving guidance and guiding the interns on the procedural learning.

"My role as a cooperating teacher is to facilitate and guide the intern teacher in whatever she will do inside the classes, coaching them on what they need to do inside the classroom."

She further added,

"Nagsisimula na ang role ko bago pa sila pumasok sa classroom. Nag-uusap kami one-on-one tapos sinasabi ko agad kung ano ang mga expectations ko sa kanila."

(My role begins even before they step inside the classroom. We sit down for one-on-one conversations, and I clearly explain my expectations to them.

"I guide them not only on instructional delivery but also emphasize the importance of maintaining good relationships with pupils and fellow teachers. Being a cooperating teacher is a privilege and a great opportunity to mentor future teachers."

Zircon captured the long-term implication of his mentoring work .

"I view my responsibility with seriousness because in the life of an intern, I am helping shape the path of the intern. I'm happy to share my knowledge and experiences in molding and inspiring interns, to guide them in manners of dealing with students especially in classroom management like dealing with misbehaviors, grade giving, lesson presentations, etc. I was the most senior science teacher then, that they gave me the role [as cooperating teacher. One time when the teaching intern made unintentional mistake in the lesson presentation, I noticed it right away though the students did not notice it. My reaction to her mistake was not demoralizing but encouraging. It made her more inspired to study her lesson well before facing her class. It's a privilege to mentor aspiring teachers. Helping discover and develop their talents and ability. They have been teachable and willing to learn. Gradually there's the unfolding of talents, innovations in their teaching strategy and style."

Pearl and Beryl mentioned ,

"Ang pagmementor sa mga interns ay hindi simple, hindi rin madali. Madaming kaakibat na responsibilidad upang masigurong ang mga interns ay matututo at may paglago."

(Mentoring interns is not a simple or easy role. It comes with many responsibilities to ensure that the interns truly learn and grow)

" Kasama din dito ay masigurado na ang mga interns sy natututo hindi lang sa academics kundi pati sa disiplina at kung paano i manage ang mga estujante."

(It involves ensuring interns learn not only academics but discipline and student management.)

"Yes, guiding. How it is, the real experience in the classroom, to guide them. Sometimes you have to tell them what a teacher really should be doing."

Sapphire acknowledged that in mentorship, the responsibility extends to moral obligation as well as professional guidance.

"Mahirap talaga maging cooperating teacher. Ikaw ang titingnan ng mga interns. Para kang model sa kanila. Bilang isang mentor, kelangan talaga na i ga guide sila at ituturo sa mga tamang methods. Ah , bilang mentor,

kinakailangan po na pagsabihan sila, i guide sila sa tamang mga pamamaraan, turuan sila ng mga bagong strategies at epektibong approach kung paano nila i mold at turuan yung mga bata. kasi minsan, okay yung strategies natin , pero , may mga bata na hindi nila makuha yung mga strategies na yun. Meron tayong ibat ibang stratehiya like audio, verbal, merong written lang. Kaya wag ka lang magfocus dun .

“Halimbawa sasabihin mo , “ Eto na , magandang strategy ito. Pero kelangan din tingnan mo kung ano ba talaga ang kailangan ng estujante . halimbawa, si student A, magaling sya sa pakikinig. E mas marami yung estujante na gusto nila yung may pinapanood so anong mas makabubuti sa kanila. O sige magpanood ka, pero the next daw magpasulat ka naman.”

(Being a cooperating teacher is difficult... you're the one the interns look up to a model. As a mentor, you really need to give them guidance, lead them toward the right methods. (As a mentor, you really need to give them guidance, lead them toward the right methods, and teach them new strategies and effective approaches on how to mold and teach children. Sometimes our strategies work, but there are children who just don't respond well to them. We have different strategies, some are auditory, some are verbal, some are written. So you shouldn't just focus on one. For example, you might say, 'This strategy is good.' But you still have to ask: what does the student really need? For instance, student A learns best through listening. But if most of the students prefer watching videos, then what is more effective for them? Okay, let them watch today, but the next day, let them write.)

She further added that

“bilang isang mentor ay mabigat, kasi isang pagkakamali mo lang ay pwedeng magdulot ng discouragement sa kanila.”

(Being a mentor is a heavy responsibility, a single mistake could discourage them).

She understands that the role of mentoring comes with a pressure; that as cooperating teachers, they have to demonstrate their best in everything they do.

Opal, on the other hand, regards internship with uncertainty at first. But later on, has made his mark as his professional identity.

“At first it was difficult for me. But in the long run, I became more confident in mentoring. One of our goals as Adventist educators is to mentor our students and even the next generation of young educators by teaching and learning from our experiences.”

The narratives of the participants regarding the crucial role and responsibilities as a mentor underscore the internalized sense of duty not just as academic mentors but also to develop them into becoming professionals. They highlighted how mentoring is like shaping or building, with cooperating teachers helping to form and develop the interns.

The statements of the participants also resonate with Husserl's phenomenological emphasis on intentionality, where the act of mentoring is directed toward the future professional identity of the intern. In the same manner, their narratives highlighted the multifaceted role of cooperating teachers as emphasized by Reichienberg et al. (2024) the importance of structured mentor training to equip cooperating teachers in effectively guiding teaching interns. Further, they are supported by CHED Memorandum Order No. 104, Series of 2017, highlighting that interns must gain hands-on experiences facilitated by cooperating teachers. The Department of Education (DO 42, s. 2017) also supports these narratives positioning that cooperating teachers are mentors responsible for competency development aligned with the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST). Their responsibility extends beyond classroom supervision to modeling effective instructional strategies and ethical behavior (Hudson, 2023). They act as mentors, evaluators, and guides, ensuring that interns gain firsthand exposure to the realities of teaching (Ambrosetti, 2014). According to Izadinia (2015), cooperating teachers provide the critical scaffolding that supports interns' progression from theory to practice, thus becoming pivotal in their identity formation as educators. They understand that their role extends beyond

supervision to active facilitation of learning, guiding interns through progressive stages, offering more hands-on support in the beginning and promoting autonomy as interns develop (Gut et al., 2014).

The participants also embodied not just being a mentor with crucial roles but also a professional guide as reflected in their narratives.

A sequential and progressive approach was described by Garnet ,

“First, ‘I do, you watch.’ Then, ‘We do together’. Next, ‘You do, I watch’. And finally, feedback. Another is orientation, letting the interns know of the contextualized guidelines... expectations, the setting of goals and plans. I always find it a privilege to become a cooperating teacher. My perceived role is to provide them opportunities to learn practical and meaningful classroom experiences that open the door for their perception on teaching ministry. Not everyone has a chance to be a cooperating teacher. To witness such passion is a privilege. Being a mentor is really a rewarding experience. As a mentor, it is my responsibility to cover the gap in the learning and the actual teaching process. They get to experience real-life teaching encounters which, I believe, help them to thrive and to grow as an effective teacher.

This allows the interns to grow under a close and competent supervision of the cooperating teacher. Rather than acting solely as evaluators, cooperating teachers are encouraged to take on coaching roles that foster reflection and confidence among teaching interns (Melton, Miller, & Brobst, 2019; Nurhadi & Aryani, 2021).

In the same manner, Topaz did mention a step-by-step initiation in mentoring ,

"Sa una, nag oobserve lang ang mga interns ko . Kahit kokonti pa lang ang klase, natuto na agad sila na sumunod sa mga rules at gumawa ng mga paraan ."

(At first, interns only observed. Even with fewer classes, they learned to follow rules and take initiative.)

where observations turned into participation. Supervision and accountability were recurrent themes. Amethyst explained,

“I see to it that they have to show first to me the lessons... I keep a close look... I must be around to supervise them to avoid any further misdevelopment.” while Sapphire quips, "Before entering the classroom, they must master their lesson."

These statements show that monitoring is crucial in mentoring to ensure that the quality of the lesson will be achieved and the bad habits will be discarded as highlighted by Reyes (2023) that cooperating teachers are instrumental in developing assessment literacy among pre-service teachers. Several mentors highlighted the importance of professional guidance in the classroom preparation. Topaz said,

"Tinutulungan ko sila at inaassist ko sila. Gina guide ko sila kung ano ang mga gagawin sa loob ng classroom. Sinisigurado ko na ang kanilang klase ay talagang naka prepare."

(I help and assist them. I guide them on what to do inside the classroom. I make sure their class is well-prepared.)

"Tinuturuan namin sila kung paano gumawa ng lesson logs, class records, DTRs at TOS. Pati mga strategies tulad ng mag pray muna bago magsimula ang klase,"

(We taught them how to make lesson logs, class records, DTRs, and TOS. We shared strategies, including starting classes with prayer.)

Onyx further shared,

“Cooperating teachers help interns refine lesson planning, classroom management, and interactions .”

Topaz added,

“Tinuturuan ko ang mga interns na i manage at ipatupad ang mga classroom rules.”

(I taught the intern to manage and enforce classroom rules.)

This shows that mentors know good teaching needs a well-managed and respectful classroom. Beryl recalled that mentors provide practical help in times of need.

“Isa sa mga naranasan ko ay pag ang mentor ay tumulong sa intern sa paggawa ng instructional materials na hindi nya nai prepare.”

(One meaningful mentoring interaction was when the mentor helped an intern with instructional materials she failed to prepare.)

Topaz also shared that hands-on assistance is necessary.

“Ginagabayan ko sila kung ano ang gagawin sa loob ng classroom . Ibinibigay ko talaga ang best ko para malaman nila ang gagawin pag nasa field na sila.”

(I guide them on what to do inside the classroom. I gave my best so they would know what to do in the field.)

Sapphire also recognized the balance between encouragement and firmness:

“Narealize ko na kelangan ko maging istrikto paminsan minsan para hindi sila masanay sa behavior ko. Ineencourage ko din sila kasi kung kelangan maging lively kasi gusto ng mga bata ang lively. Kelangan din natin silang i guide, i support, I encourage ay itama kung may pagkakamali dahil ito ay parte upang sila ay maging mas mabuti.”

(I’ve realized I need to be firm sometimes so they won’t get used to that kind of behavior. I encourage them because students like teachers who are lively. Our guidance, support, encouragement, and correction of their mistakes play a part in helping them become better.)

As stated by the key informants, these narratives that talk about the mentoring approach and strategies are backed up by the study of Young and MacPhail (2016) which described that cooperating teachers are “knowledge keepers” who model teaching wisdom and techniques while Nesbitt and Barry (2022) stated that role modeling is done through classroom management, communication, and instructional strategy demonstration. Additionally, effective mentoring involves strategic guidance tailored to the intern’s developmental stage. These strategies include coaching, co-teaching, reflective dialogue, and providing constructive feedback (Valencia et al., 2009). Successful mentors understand the need to balance support with challenge, gradually giving interns more responsibility while offering opportunities for critical thinking and professional discourse (Clarke et al., 2014). A collaborative and reflective approach in mentoring enhances both pedagogical knowledge and instructional confidence.

In Husserlian phenomenology, these experiences show that cooperating teachers act with intentionality. Everything they do aims to help interns become skilled and values-based teachers.

Theme 2: Relationship Building and Nurturing Support

One of the most prominent aspects of effective mentoring identified in the study is the intentional building of trusting and nurturing relationships between cooperating teachers and their interns. Participants described their mentoring approach as deeply personal, often drawing parallels to a motherly or familial role. This relational dynamic fostered a sense of emotional safety, motivation, and empowerment in the interns, allowing them to grow not only as teachers but also as individuals.

Cooperating teachers emphasized that before meaningful instructional mentoring can take place, a foundation of trust and mutual respect must be established. They invested time in getting to know their interns personally, creating a welcoming and affirming environment where mistakes were seen as learning opportunities rather than failures. This emotional support reduced anxiety, built confidence, and encouraged openness key factors in helping interns navigate the challenges of the practicum.

The nurturing support provided by cooperating teachers was holistic. They offered encouragement, spiritual guidance, and personal counsel, reflecting the Adventist educational philosophy of caring for the whole person: mind, body, and spirit. In some cases, interns described their cooperating teachers as “second mothers” or “spiritual mentors,” highlighting the depth of emotional connection formed during the internship.

This theme aligns with the relational and pastoral dimensions of the Adventist Philosophy of Education, which emphasizes not only academic growth but also character development and emotional well-being. It also reflects a key component of effective mentoring as outlined in educational research: the importance of psychosocial support in professional development.

The success of the mentoring process was not only rooted in instructional guidance but also in the caring relationships that cooperating teachers cultivated. By creating an atmosphere of trust and compassion, they laid the groundwork for deeper professional learning and personal transformation in their interns.

The participants of this study attested that a good relationship and nurturing support in mentoring is needed and necessary. Often likened to a motherly or familial approach, these mentors create a safe and welcoming environment where interns feel valued, understood, and encouraged. By demonstrating empathy, patience, and consistent guidance, cooperating teachers help build the interns’ confidence and motivation. This supportive dynamic empowers the interns to explore their potential, take initiative in the classroom, and develop a strong sense of professional identity, ultimately fostering a deeper commitment to the teaching vocation. As Pearl highlighted,

“Ang unang step para sa akin ay makilala ko ang intern ng personal. Tulad ng dapat alamain ko kung ano ang language nila, ano ang cultural background nila, at syempre, i observe ko din ang personality. Kelangan na magkaroon ng positive at respectful na koneksyon bilang pundasyon upang makilala ang intern. Responsibilidad ko na ang intern ay maging komportable sa klase ko kaya ginagawa ko talaga ang unang hakbang ng pagkilala para mabuild ang aming rapport.”

(The first step for me is always to get to know each intern personally. For instance, I find out what language they speak, their cultural background, and naturally, I observe their personality. A positive and respectful connection between the cooperating teacher and the intern is foundational. I feel responsible for making the intern comfortable in my class so I take the first step to build rapport.)

Likewise, Onyx and Sapphire noted that trust, respect, and a good connection create the foundation for effective teaching. Sapphire compared the mentor-mentee bond to a parent-child relationship: warm and approachable, not too formal.

“Ang pagkakaroon ng positive at respectful na samahan ay kelangan bilang isang pundasyon. Kaya dapat ang relationship ng mentor at intern ay parang magulang at anak.”

(Building a positive and respectful relationship is foundational. The relationship should be like that of a parent and child.)

Agate and Amethyst elaborated the emotional and relational aspect of mentoring, describing it as a sharing and connection, not just instructional guidance.

“Mentoring is about connection, sitting down together, having conversations, and building rapport while maintaining clear boundaries and mutual respect.”

Agate emphasized honesty and open communication as pillars for building trust and safety, creating an environment where interns feel comfortable to open up.

"Ang pagiging tapat ay ang pundasyon ng mentoring relationship. Ako, kinakausap ko muna ang intern bago ko bigyan ng mga gawain para magkaroon ng magandang panimula at makapag build ng trust. Dahil ang mentoring ay isang koneksyon, yung uupo kayong dalawa, mag-uusap habang kinikilala nyo ang bawat isa upang magkaroon ng pagkakaintindihan at respeto sa isat isa. Mahalaga na magkaroon ng open communication at pagkakaunawaan upang maramdaman ng mga interns na sila ay safe, at mag oopen up na din sila."

(Honesty is the foundation of the mentoring relationship. I take time to talk first before giving assignments to set the tone and build trust. Mentoring is about connection, sitting down together, having conversations, and building rapport while maintaining clear boundaries and mutual respect. Open communication and understanding interns' world help them feel safe and open up.)

Topaz shared that they built a meaningful connection with the intern that went beyond the classroom, showing a real two-way relationship.

"Masaya ang mentoring. Nagbobonding din kami kahit sa labas ng classroom. Dinadalhan din nya ako ng mga gamit, pagkain, napakagenerous nya. Ah yung nag ano sa akin , sya ay napakabait na intern.Sya po ay magalang. Sya po ay lalong lalo na masipag ung kanyang pagsasalita po ay hindi mo makitaan ng mga bad words , maamo po ang kanyang pakikitungo sa mga bata .love na love cya ng bata. Pati ako nung umalis cya , ako ay napaluha kasi maganda po cyang kasama sa loob ng school."

(Mentoring was joyful; we bonded outside class. She brought me things, sharing food showing generosity. There was one intern who was very kind, respectful, and hardworking.I even cried when she left because she was so pleasant to work with.)

Zircon added,

"My responsibility is also to boost the morale of the interns and be one of the reasons why they would love teaching. My reaction to her mistake was not demoralizing but encouraging.It made her more inspired."

which shows that interpersonal relationship is vital to build a supportive relationship. By providing an encouraging response to the intern's mistake, it fosters growth and confidence rather than demoralization.

Beryl felt happy and appreciated when she could help interns in meaningful ways, while Garnet shared that her bond with the interns made her feel deeply committed to mentoring, showing how important and heartfelt these relationships are.The key informants consistently shared that building a positive and respectful relationship with their interns was the first and most important step in mentoring.

This shared experience aligns with existing research, which highlights the importance of strong relationships in effective mentorship. According to Gut et al. (2014), emotional support and trust throughout the internship are key to an intern's growth and success. Similarly, Liu (2013, as cited by Baluyos et al., 2024) described mentorship as having a structured hierarchy, but with relationships at its heart. Trust, empathy, and open communication play a vital role in helping pre-service teachers navigate the shift into their professional teaching roles. Additionally, Dreer-Goethe (2025) emphasized that while mentor support is essential, positive relationships with other school staff also contribute greatly to an intern's sense of psychological safety and active participation during the practicum. This indicates that the overall relational environment of the school influences mentoring success, not just the mentor-mentee connection. Kaka (2019) also highlighted the importance of developing strong relationships with both students and cooperating teachers, noting that such connections positively impact learning outcomes and should be intentionally integrated into teacher education programs due to their significant educational value. Bringing these insights together with the stories shared by key informants, it becomes clear that mentoring is more than a professional task; it's a relationship built on empathy, trust, and shared purpose. In Adventist education, where character building and spiritual growth matter deeply, this kind of heart-centered connection is essential for true, transformational mentorship.

Theme 3: Spiritual and Values Integration in Mentoring as a Sacred Ministry and Moral Calling

For cooperating teachers in Adventist institutions, mentoring is not merely a professional responsibility; it is viewed as a sacred ministry and a moral calling. Participants described their role as spiritual mentors and character guides, intentionally modeling the faith, values, and moral integrity embedded in the Adventist Philosophy of Education. This perspective deeply shaped the way they approached the mentoring relationship, as they sought not only to develop teaching skills but to nurture the intern's character, spiritual maturity, and sense of mission.

Mentoring was framed as an extension of the Christ-centered model of teaching, with cooperating teachers striving to reflect the qualities of Jesus as the Master Teacher: patience, humility, compassion, integrity, and servant leadership. They emphasized daily consistency in living out these values, recognizing that their example spoke louder than any formal instruction. Interns were encouraged to integrate faith and learning, to uphold ethical standards, and to view their future classrooms as environments for both academic excellence and spiritual influence.

This theme reinforces the concept of the cooperating teacher as a "living curriculum": a person whose life serves as a continuous lesson in spiritual conviction and moral responsibility (Knight, 2006). Mentorship in this sense transcends procedural training and becomes transformative, shaping the intern's identity as a teacher who is also a minister, mentor, and moral leader.

Such mentoring aligns with the Adventist educational mandate of the "harmonious development of the physical, mental, and spiritual powers" (White, 1903). It also affirms that teaching is a divine calling, not just a profession. Cooperating teachers expressed that their goal was to help interns see their vocation through a missional lens as a way to serve God, uplift students, and reflect Christ's character in every aspect of classroom life.

In essence, this theme reveals that mentoring in Adventist schools is holistic and deeply rooted in spiritual purpose. It emphasizes that forming a teacher is not only about pedagogy and performance but about values formation, spiritual discipleship, and moral modeling, all of which contribute to the intern's transformation into a Christ-like educator.

The participants view mentoring not merely as a professional duty, but as a sacred spiritual ministry. Rooted in the principles of the Seventh-day Adventist faith, they see their role as an opportunity to model Christ-like character, moral integrity, and gospel-centered values in their daily interactions with interns. Through their words, actions, and decisions, they exemplify humility, compassion, patience, and ethical behavior, qualities that go beyond technical teaching skills. By integrating faith into their mentoring practices, they not only guide interns in developing pedagogical competence but also inspire them to embrace their calling as educators who uphold Christian values and serve with purpose, integrity, and faithfulness. The spiritual foundation of mentoring reflects Adventist values, emphasizing moral character and faith as integral to teaching. They embrace their role as a spiritual and moral guide, considering it part of their mission as Adventist educators.

As Opal expressed,

"What drew me to mentor others is the commitment to be used and to be a channel of God's ministry. "Teach minds, Touch hearts, and transform lives through God's providence."

Similarly, Onyx described mentorship as a holistic process that shapes interns into educators who teach not only with knowledge but also with heart and faith, embodying core Adventist values:

"Mentorship shapes interns into educators who teach with knowledge, heart, and faith, reflecting Adventist values."

Onyx further highlighted that

"Mentoring is about fostering the intern's ability to inspire, lead, serve, and model Christ's love in teaching."

Topaz mentioned,

“Iniintegrate ko ang Adventist beliefs sa mga lesson at sa mga memory verses, devotionals, at pati sa panalangin”

(I integrate Adventist beliefs into lessons the memory verses, devotionals, and prayer)

while Opal recounted incorporating devotionals, prayer, and Bible verses into lessons, reinforcing that faith and values formation are critical components of the internship experience. Mentors encouraged faith practices like keeping the Sabbath, joining church events, and praying to help interns grow spiritually.

Beryl quipped,

“Ang mga mentors ay nakakapagpakita ng values sa pamamagitan ng pag encourage sa mga interns na umatend ng Sabbath services, mga activities ng church, at mag offer ng spiritual support.”

(The mentor models values by encouraging interns to attend Sabbath services, Bible studies, and church activities, and offers spiritual support.)

Likewise, Opal noted the accessibility of God’s presence during mentoring:

“We let our interns know and feel that God is just a prayer away,”

while Agate shared how her mentoring approach was guided by faith:

“Ang aking pananampalataya ay meron talagang impluwensya sa mentoring. Kasama ang puso ko at pananampalataya sa pagmementor ko. Iba talaga kapag may spiritual contribution ka.”

(My faith influences my mentoring; I mentor with my heart and my faith.)

In the same way, Amethyst expressed,

“I usually tell them to integrate the IFVL. It makes us Christianly and before we start the class, we always have to start with a prayer. I hope that in the future, they will be servant leaders.”

Garnet is affirmative when she said,

“I always remind them that in everything, put God first, and everything will be fine.”

Opal is on the same page with Garnet when he said,

“What drew me to mentor others is the commitment to be used and to be a channel of God’s ministry. Teach minds, Touch hearts, and transform lives through God’s providence. The spiritual values I teach to the interns are daily prayer, reflection of Bible verses related to the lessons, and integrating the faith and values formation in learning. They appreciate the spiritual values that I share to them, they also tried to include Bible verses that will connect the lesson to the spiritual things. Aside from general knowledge, there are other important lessons that teachers must prepare; that is the integration of faith and values formation. We let our interns know and feel that God is just a prayer away.”

In the same manner, Sapphire’s thinking is in parralel with the rest,

“Here in our institution, we Adventists are known to be redemptive. Being humble, our interns see this. There’s always a prayer, a Bible verse, and a 5-minute sharing. After their internship, they say, they miss devotionals. That’s something they truly never forget.”

Additionally, Pearl quipped,

“The emphasis is always on good values and moral conduct. That is what the interns learn. Interns expect us Adventists to be kind I always practice a lot of patience. I also share my beliefs about God .I offer advice. I even pray for them.

Meanwhile, Topaz echoed in the same manner;

“First, we start with a devotional. And if you set a rule, you must follow through with it. You need to be strict with the rules. They also have adopted the practice of devotionals before classes. We shared strategies, including starting classes with prayer. I integrate Adventist beliefs into lessons, memory verses, devotionals, and prayer. I encouraged interns to attend midweek services, Vespers, and Sabbath School. We visited homes and churches together.”

Beryl has also her share of the experience.

“We always have prayer and religious songs. The interns adopt these practices.”

In agreement with Beryl is Onyx who stated:

“Mentorship shapes interns into educators who teach with knowledge, heart, and faith, reflecting Adventist values. Mentoring is about fostering the intern’s ability to inspire, lead, serve, and model Christ’s love in teaching. Interns develop a vision for their educational calling aligned with values of integrity, compassion, and lifelong service. Modeling best practices in teaching and faith-integrated instruction is a primary strategy in mentoring.”

These narratives from the participants resonate strongly with the established literature on Adventist education. Ellen G. White (1903) described teachers as spiritual mentors charged with guiding students toward Christ-like character and service, underscoring the moral responsibility inherent in teaching. This finding aligns with the observation of Andres et al. (2021) that mentoring highlights the importance of not only academic guidance but also personal and spiritual development. It extends beyond professional development to include nurturing interns' spiritual and moral growth just like in the context of Adventist educational institutions. Additionally, Roadranga (2017) also supports these narratives, showing that cooperating teachers often guide interns in making ethical decisions, serving as moral mentors. These studies together highlight that integrating faith and values is a key part of mentoring, aiming to develop educators who not only teach well but also lead with faith and strong character.

Theme 4: Transformation, Interns’ Growth, and Legacy

Mentoring in the context of Adventist teacher education is understood not just as a short-term training process, but as a transformative, lifelong influence. Cooperating teachers described their mentoring journey as one that shapes interns holistically: professionally, personally, and spiritually. This transformative process is marked by visible growth in the intern’s competence, confidence, character, and faith, which cooperating teachers see as part of a lasting legacy for future generations.

Participants in the study reflected on how they witnessed interns evolve from uncertain student-teachers into capable, reflective, and mission-driven educators. They emphasized that true mentoring does not end with technical skill acquisition, but continues into the intern’s identity formation developing not only what they do in the classroom, but who they are as educators and individuals. This growth was nurtured through consistent guidance, meaningful feedback, spiritual support, and real-life modeling.

This theme resonates strongly with the transformational view of education upheld in the Adventist philosophy, where teaching is seen as a divine calling that goes beyond content delivery. Mentoring becomes a ministry of influence, where the cooperating teacher invests in the intern’s future and, through them, impacts countless students to come. Several teachers viewed their work as leaving a “living legacy”, where each intern carries forward the values, faith, and professionalism instilled in them to future classrooms, schools, and communities.

Moreover, cooperating teachers noted that mentoring was also transformative for themselves. Through reflection and engagement with interns, they were reminded of their own purpose and passion for teaching. In this way, the mentoring relationship was mutually enriching, fostering a shared journey of learning and faith.

This theme also highlights that mentoring in Adventist education is not merely functional, but formative and generational. It leaves an imprint not only on the current intern but also on the lives they will touch as teachers. By shaping the whole person: mind, heart, and spirit, cooperating teachers participate in a legacy of educational ministry, echoing the Adventist aim of restoring the image of God in humanity through education (White, 1903).

Mentoring, as perceived by cooperating teachers can catalyze transformation, one that is both holistic and deeply impactful. They understand that their role extends far beyond supervising classroom activities; it involves shaping the interns not only as competent professionals but also as well-rounded individuals. Through intentional guidance, constructive feedback, and compassionate support, cooperating teachers help interns grow in confidence, refine their teaching practices, and develop a clear sense of purpose. This transformative process nurtures not only professional skills but also personal maturity and spiritual grounding. By modeling integrity, resilience, and faith-based living, cooperating teachers inspire interns to embrace teaching as a mission, one that touches lives, uplifts communities, and reflects the character of Christ in both word and action. They feel a sense of joy and fulfillment upon seeing the transformation of their interns from timid beginners to confident and capable educators. One of the most meaningful parts of mentoring, according to the cooperating teachers, is the holistic transformation, where they saw their interns grow in all areas; in their teaching skills, in spiritual, in personal, and in their professional lives. There were indications of changes in the lives of the interns. They became more confident, thoughtful, and they became more aware of their tasks during their time together. Interns undergo a gradual and holistic transformation encompassing spiritual, professional, and personal dimensions. This growth is not limited to instructional skills but extends to character building and preparing interns to nurture students' minds and hearts as evident in the experiences of the key informants in this study regarding the general and holistic transformation.

Onyx captured the impact of mentoring by saying,

“The most significant part of mentoring is witnessing the intern’s transformation in confidence, mindset, and heart for teaching.”

Opal’s observation also affirmed that transformation occurs “professionally, spiritually, and personally,” and that mentoring in an Adventist educational institutions extend beyond skill transmission. It is molding the person as a whole.

The concept of holistic transformation is central to the Adventist philosophy of education, which emphasizes the development of the spiritual, mental, and physical dimensions of the learner (White, 1903). In this study, the cooperating teachers reported concrete instances of such changes.

Garnet described this by saying,

“Transformation for interns encompasses their belief and perception about teaching which eventually create their philosophy as a teacher”

while Amethyst underscored that “acting professionally” is a visible indicator of inner change and growth. Some key informants stated that transformation was also seen in interns’ spiritual practices.

Topaz shared,

“Meron nga yung isang intern bumili ng Sabbath dress at ang active nya na nakiki join sa mga Sabbath activities.”

(One intern bought Sabbath clothes and actively joined Sabbath activities,)

while Beryl highlighted how some interns began.

“Nagsisimula ang klase sa prayer at pagdidiin sa mga moral lesson.”

(Starting class with prayer and emphasizing moral lessons.)

These spiritual shifts reflect what Palmer (2018) described as the formation of identity and integrity in teaching rooted in a deep sense of calling and purpose.

Illustrating a point, Onyx observed,

“Interns transform from task-focused to understanding the deeper purpose of teaching, showing improvement in skills and confidence. Interns begin to take initiative, voice ideas, and handle tasks independently, viewing feedback as opportunity rather than criticism.”

This indicates that mentoring led to independence and confidence among the interns. They also step up in taking initiatives and taking feedbacks as an opportunity to grow.

Agate supported when trust is established, interns began *“taking initiative”* and *“expressing themselves more openly.”* Zircon further illustrated that encouragement and moral support helped interns to overcome their nervousness, and be open to the given feedbacks to them.

Reflecting on this, Onyx remarked,

“Creating a safe environment where interns can assess themselves, ask questions, make mistakes, and receive guidance fosters transformational learning.”

This nurturing approach was supported by Mezirow’s theory of transformational learning. The cooperating teachers’ roles in cultivating such environments were crucial to the interns’ developmental process. This nurturing approach supports Mezirow’s (2000) theory of transformational learning, which suggests that learners experience significant changes in their perspectives when they reflect deeply in a safe and supportive setting.

Pearl reflected that her intern quickly adapted to both instructional and non-instructional duties, showing maturity in accepting the comprehensive nature of teaching,

“Mabilis syang matuto, ang pagiging teacher ay hindi lamang tungkol sa pagtuturo, ito din ay tungkol sa paglilinis, pagwawalis, at pangangalaga ng classroom.”

(She learned quickly, being a teacher isn’t just about teaching; it’s also about cleaning, sweeping, and taking care of the classroom.)

Topaz shared a particularly telling story of transformation:

“Meron akong intern na napakatahimik at napakamahiyain. Pero nung nagtagal, nakita ko sa kanya ung sobrang transformation at growth.”

(I had an intern who was very quiet and reserved. But over time, she showed remarkable transformation and growth.)

This indicates that providing opportunities and gradual exposure to the real classroom challenges provide is vital in mentoring.

In the words of Opal,

“The best part of being a cooperating partner teacher... is how they become an impact and influence to our learners.”

Zircon shared the same feeling, saying he was proud of interns who improved with his help. The other informants also felt proud and fulfilled watching their interns become confident and compassionate teachers.

These experiences match what research says about the power of mentorship in shaping future teachers. Hudson (2023) pointed out that good mentors help interns build their professional identity, while Clarke, Triggs, and Nielsen (2014) noted that mentoring supports both skill development and personal growth. In the Adventist education, mentoring also includes spiritual guidance, which helps shape interns for a life of service and Christ-centered teaching (Knight, 2016).

The experiences shared by cooperating teachers show that mentoring in Adventist institutions plays a big role in shaping interns in all areas: spiritually, personally, and professionally. By guiding, setting a good example, and building strong relationships, these mentors help interns grow not just as future teachers but as people with a mission to teach for both life and eternity.

Likewise, the cooperating teachers' responses clearly show that mentoring helps interns grow in both teaching skills and real classroom experience. Mentors noticed clear signs of growth, such as increased confidence, maturity, and initiative in handling classroom tasks.

As Garnet noted,

“Despite the nervousness, they are just happy that they have surpassed the very first teaching experience, their behavior and reactions actually indicate the growth they have had.”

While Agate emphasized,

“Sa akin, try to be also in the lower grade kasi duon, it will bring out the worst and the best in you. Sobrang challenging. Pero rewarding ang magturo sa lower grades. Maganda din maranasan yun ng mga interns natin.”

(The interns have to try also teaching in the lower grades because teaching there will bring out the best and worst in you. It's very challenging but rewarding as well. It would be nice if the interns will experience it also.)

In the words of Beryl,

“May mga interns na sa una ay tamad pero once na ma guide sila eh natututo naman lalo na tungkol sa mga duties beyond academics.”

(Some interns initially show laziness but can learn responsibility with proper guidance about teaching duties beyond academics.)

Onyx also explained that “Interns grow by embracing feedback,” suggesting that the willingness to take feedback signals that the intern is maturing in their role. Amethyst stressed that transformation requires “immediate feedback and in-person coaching... intentional and planned.”

The narratives show that growth is best achieved through concrete experiences and reflection. Cooperating teachers attested that a key part of helping interns grow was using strategies like giving immediate feedback, showing how things are done, and offering constant support.

This aligns with the findings of Hudson (2023), who identified feedback as one of the five key factors in effective mentoring.

Sapphire observed measurable improvement over time, noting how an intern *“nag iimprove sa paglipas ng mga araw, konti na lang mga pagkakamali at talagang malaki ang naging pagbabago.”* (Eventually improved as days went by, less corrections, she had changed so much.)

Topaz shared similar insights, describing how *interns became “matulungin, naging mas open at naging malapit sa mga bata,”* (helpful, personally more open and attached to the kids) while also mastering basic

teaching responsibilities like computing grades and checking exams. These practical, hands-on tasks helped interns transition from theory to practice, reinforcing what Matsko et al. (2018) attested that student teachers who felt “well-mentored” by their cooperating teachers reported greater readiness to teach independently. This readiness was tied not only to technical proficiency but also to the intern’s ability to respond to diverse learning needs and real-time classroom dynamics.

Further, cooperating teachers noticed the interns growth in classroom management and interpersonal skills.

Zircon noted that they learned to *“be firm yet understanding .. correct students but in a more compassionate way.”* These soft skills are essential to effective teaching and align Pilpa’s (2023) study which noted that authentic classroom experiences enhanced interns’ understanding of learner diversity. The cooperating teachers not only showed these behaviors but also guided their interns while they were teaching.

Amethyst recounted,

“I encourage students to speak English regularly,”

A small but strategic push toward professional language use. This shows the mentor's role as a guide who gives support at first, then slowly steps back as the intern becomes more confident and independent attributed to Vygotsky’s 1978 Social Learning Theory.

Interestingly, Agate reminded that despite receiving support, *“may mga interns na pinipili pa din nila na maggogrow,”* (the intern still has to choose to grow.) This insight echoes Mezirow’s (2000) perspective that transformational learning is ultimately a choice, a product of critical self-reflection and internal motivation.

But Onyx was firm in saying,

“Mentors realize they shape future educators, creating a legacy impacting generations of students.”

This statement shows a deep understanding that mentoring also passes on a legacy that will impact the future generation.

Zircon shared a heartfelt hope:

“I just wish that somehow I can leave some good footprints to the hearts of those interns whom I have mentored and will be mentoring in the future.”

Agate also stressed the importance of preparing interns for the real-life challenges of teaching, not just the technical skills by saying,

“Gusto kong ituro sa mga interns hindi lamang kung paano maghandle ng mga subjects kundi kung paano maging isang ganap na teacher sa mundo, ung aktwal na karanasan sa mundo.”

(I want to mentor interns not just on how to handle the subject, but how to be a real teacher in the real world, the actual setup.)

These views match what White (1903) and the Work-Study Framework (2018) said that mentoring isn’t just about academics, but also about shaping life purpose and worldview. Cooperating teachers are not just guides in teaching, but also help interns build strong character and a sense of mission.

In the same way, this view is further supported by CHED and DepEd guidelines, which imply that the scope of mentorship includes the formation of lifelong values and contributions to society. Mentoring, thus, is both a pedagogical and a moral undertaking. Benjamin Dreer-Goethe’s (2025) study also supports this, showing that mentors help interns feel safe and valued. This support builds both their confidence and personal growth, creating a lasting impact beyond the classroom. Moreover, the SMILE model by Chizhik et al. (2018) demonstrated that mentoring, when collaborative and reflective, promotes lifelong learning attitudes and

deeper engagement. Interns who experienced such mentoring described feeling inspired to become educators who create meaningful change in the lives of students. Finally, Kaka (2019) highlighted how crucial it is to build caring and respectful connections with students. Cooperating teachers demonstrate this approach, which interns then adopt. This focus on kindness and understanding helps shape interns' teaching style and influences how they will lead and create supportive classrooms in the future.

In short, cooperating teachers do much more than guide interns during their practicum. They help shape teachers who are skilled and also driven by purpose and values. These values especially in the context of Adventist education continue through the many students these interns will teach in the future. This shows that mentoring in the like of Adventist institutions make a lasting difference inside and outside the classroom.

Theme 5: Mentoring Difficulties and Challenges

While mentoring is deeply valued by cooperating teachers, it is also recognized as a demanding and often complex responsibility. Participants acknowledged that guiding interns is not always straightforward and comes with a set of real-world challenges that require patience, flexibility, and discernment.

A key difficulty expressed by cooperating teachers was the need to balance professional boundaries with personal support. Many described the emotional and relational investment required to mentor effectively, often walking a fine line between being approachable and maintaining authority. While they aimed to build trusting relationships with interns, they also had to set clear expectations, uphold discipline, and sometimes address issues related to performance, motivation, or professionalism, tasks that could be emotionally taxing.

Another recurring challenge involved the varying levels of preparedness and maturity among interns. Some needed more guidance than others, requiring cooperating teachers to adjust their mentoring strategies based on individual needs. This called for adaptability and constant reflection on how best to support each intern without compromising the overall learning environment or their own teaching responsibilities.

Cooperating teachers also noted that time constraints and workload presented practical challenges. Balancing full-time teaching duties with the additional responsibility of mentoring required extra effort and dedication. Preparing materials, providing regular feedback, and facilitating reflective conversations, all while managing their own classrooms, demanded strong time management and a deep sense of commitment.

In the Adventist context, teachers also bore the spiritual and moral weight of modeling Christ-like behavior consistently. This added another layer of accountability, as they aimed to be faithful examples not only in instruction but in faith, conduct, and character. At times, this meant mentoring interns who struggled spiritually or ethically, which required prayerful guidance, patience, and gentle correction.

Despite these difficulties, cooperating teachers viewed the challenges as part of their growth and calling. They expressed that the rewards, seeing interns grow, succeed, and carry forward the mission of Adventist education, far outweighed the struggles.

This theme highlights the real-world tensions of mentoring: the balance between support and discipline, empathy and accountability, instruction and example. It underscores the idea that effective mentoring is both a privilege and a challenge, requiring not just professional competence but emotional resilience, spiritual maturity, and a strong sense of purpose.

Mentoring teaching interns involves navigating a range of challenges influenced by both individual and contextual factors. Cooperating teachers face difficulties such as differences in intern preparedness, managing classroom behavior, and balancing limited time. External elements like the school environment, student diversity, and access to resources also shape the mentoring experience. Despite these hurdles, mentors stay dedicated to adjusting their strategies and offering meaningful guidance, understanding that overcoming these challenges contributes to the development of both the intern and the mentor. One key issue mentioned by the key informants was the insufficient training that interns received before starting their practice.

Garnet expressed concern about their lack of preparation, stating:

“They were not able to finish the learning plan because they said, they were not able to learn that from college. I realize then that some things are not learned in academic set up.”

This experience highlights the gap between what is taught in theory and what actually happens in the classroom. Likewise, Sapphire pointed out how poor planning affects teaching.

“Kung walang lesson plan, wala syang magagamit na guide..nagbasa lang ng Powerpoint nya.”

(Without a lesson plan, she had nothing to guide her. She was simply reading off the PowerPoint.)

These insights support Manicio and Baetiong’s (2023) findings that, although pre-service teachers learn theory, applying it in real classrooms is still difficult. They stressed that mentorship and role modeling are key to closing this gap. Without proper guidance, interns may find it hard to manage classes, follow lesson plans, or use different teaching methods. Echoing this thought, Sapphire pointed out,

“Kung hindi nya alam, dapat sabihin nya sa akin, hindi ung basahin lang nya , dapat maunawaan din nya.”

(If she doesn’t know something, she should tell me, not just to read it but to really understand it.)

This expectation of intellectual honesty and reflective thinking among interns is echoed in Wexler’s (2019) study, which highlights how ongoing mentor feedback fosters deeper professional insight and reflective practice. However, when interns resist such guidance, as Beryl observed, the mentoring relationship is strained that

“Yung iba ay masipag, yung iba ay kulang sa pagkukusa kahit sa basic skills lang tulad ng paghawak ng walis. Yung ibang interns ay ayaw makinig at mahirap makabup ng rapport na parang sinusubukan ang pasensya at kakayahan ng mentor nila.”

(Some are hardworking, others lack initiative or basic skills like holding a broom. Some interns resist guidance or have difficulty building rapport, testing the mentor’s patience and skill.)

Cooperating teachers also commonly cited issues of punctuality, irresponsibility, and lack of preparation. As Topaz noted,

“Sa kanilang tatlo, yung isa ay tamad, yung isa ay late , ung isa naman ay hindi naglilinis.”

(Among the three interns, one was lazy, another arrived late, and another didn't clean.)

Similarly, Pearl stated,

“Minsan yung mga interns ay hindi responsable, minsan absent o kaya naman ay late.”

(Sometimes the interns are not very responsible. They become absent or arrive late)

Beryl also shared the same sentiment,

“Yung ibang interns ay hindi masyado nakikinig. Minsan nagiging test ng pasensya at kakayahan ang pagmementor.”

(Some interns don’t listen well...mentoring becomes a test of patience and skill.)

These narratives support Baluyos et al. (2024), who stressed the need for ongoing support and training to help cooperating teachers handle student behavior. They recommended special training, teamwork among mentors, and school recognition to improve mentoring skills. Another concern raised was the lack of self-confidence and initiative among interns nearing graduation. Sapphire lamented:

“Minsan ang ating mga interns ay mahiyain...kahit mapalit na silang grumaduate, ang confidence nila ay dapat sana nasa highest level na.”

(Sometimes our interns are timid... even though they're about to graduate, their confidence should already be at the highest level.)

This aligns with the assertions of Boonphadung and Seubsang (2022) that teacher education programs must intentionally build critical 21st-century skills such as communication and confidence through transformative pedagogies.

Agate warned that too much familiarity can blur the professional boundaries, and also emerge as a challenge in relationship with the interns:

“Minsan yung sobrang familiar sa intern ay challenge din kasi nawawala ung respeto at yung principles sa mentoring, dapat firm tayo sa ating role.”

(Familiarity with an intern can be a challenge if it compromises respect or mentoring principles; mentors must stay firm in their role,)

Sapphire shared a personal moment of discouragement. She testifies,

“May mga times na nawawala ang aking self-esteem kasi hindi ako sineseryoso ng intern. Kapag ung intern ay hindi nya tinanggap, niyakap, at pinahalagahan ang itinuturo mo, walang saysay lahat yun.”

(There were times when I lost my self-esteem because she didn't take me seriously. If the intern does not accept, embrace, and value what you are teaching, it would all seem meaningless.)

These emotional dimensions of mentorship reflect Dangel and Tanguay's (2019) reflected these emotional dimensions of mentoring by emphasizing on ethical professionalism and the need for cooperating teachers to remain committed to both their personal development and mentoring responsibilities, even in the face of resistance. In addition, key informants pointed out the internal challenge of role modeling with authenticity as Sapphire observed:

“Kapag may mga bagong interns, yung ibang teachers eh saka lang magpeprepare... isang sign of weakness yun kasi saka lang tayo kikilos at gagawin ang ating best dahil may nanonood sa atin.”

(When there are new interns, some teachers...suddenly start preparing, that's a weakness that we only act or do our best because there's someone observing us.)

Reinforcing this, Amethyst added:

“So what makes it challenging is that we as teachers need to be ahead of what they are expecting us to be. The challenge is being a role model and must really start within us.”

Agate concluded with a profound insight, that

“Ang greatest challenge sa akin ay sana matuto sa akin ang interns na sana makita nila sa buhay ko ung sinasabi ko sa kanila, at hindi lang kung ano ang itinuturto ko. Sana makita sa buhay ko kesa sa sinasabi ko.”

(The greatest challenge is that interns learn from how I live, not just what I teach. My life must speak louder than my words.)

These reflections were supported by Knight (2016) and Trye (2017), who said that in Adventist schools, mentoring means showing Christian values and spiritual integrity. Cooperating teachers are expected to be genuine in both their work and personal lives.

Interestingly, amidst the many challenges reported, Topaz offered a contrasting experience:

“Wala naman masyadong challenge sa akin, napakaopen at honest naman ng mga interns ko, napakasaya ng experience ko sa kanila.”

(No major mentoring challenges; interns were open, honest, and it was a happy experience.)

This shows that not all mentoring is hard. Some experiences are rewarding for both teachers and interns, especially when interns are ready and open to learning. Liu (2020) supports this idea, saying that teacher preparation works best when it involves teamwork and community support. Cooperating teachers face many challenges that show how complex their role is in shaping new teachers. They help interns improve not just academically, but also in behavior, relationships, and emotions. The data shows a clear need for support from schools, better training before teaching, and ongoing development for mentors. Both research and real experiences agree that mentoring is more than just a skill, it's a personal, moral, and thoughtful process.

However, some difficulties in mentoring were beyond the control of the cooperating teachers. As Garnet emphasized the need to extend the internship period, stating,

“Internship must be lengthened to allow student interns to experience more for the bigger teaching ministry. More time for interns to experience practice teaching in a real classroom will equip them more.”

This view aligns with the literature, such as Manicio and Baetiong (2023), who noted that while theoretical coursework provides foundational knowledge, real classroom experience is essential to help interns bridge the gap between theory and practice. Extending the time interns spend in classrooms allows them to better assimilate practical teaching skills and develop confidence in managing diverse learning environments.

Theme 6: Role Modeling and Mutual Growth

Cooperating teachers in this study consistently emphasized the importance of role modeling as a central element of effective mentorship. They did not see themselves as merely transmitters of knowledge, but as living examples of what it means to be a Christ-like, values-driven educator. This theme highlights their conscious effort to embody the professional, ethical, and spiritual qualities they wished to instill in their interns.

Participants described mentoring as an ongoing demonstration of integrity, professionalism, humility, and faith both inside and outside the classroom. Whether through lesson planning, classroom management, interpersonal relationships, or personal conduct, cooperating teachers understood that interns were always observing. As such, they were intentional about modeling best practices, not only in teaching techniques but in attitude, decision-making, and spiritual devotion.

In Adventist education, this idea is often referred to as the “living curriculum,” the belief that the teacher's life is the most powerful lesson. Cooperating teachers embraced this identity, recognizing that who they are has a lasting impact on who their interns become. They saw role modeling not as an added responsibility, but as a sacred privilege and calling.

Moreover, many cooperating teachers shared that they themselves experienced growth and renewal through the mentoring process. Interns brought fresh perspectives, energy, and questions that prompted reflection, self-evaluation, and professional learning. This reciprocal nature of mentoring led to what participants described as mutual growth, a dynamic in which both mentor and intern are enriched.

Several teachers admitted that mentoring challenged them to be more intentional in their practice, more consistent in their values, and more reflective in their teaching. In this way, mentoring became a two-way journey of learning, where growth was shared and humility was required.

This theme also illustrates that effective mentoring is deeply relational, reflective, and transformational. Cooperating teachers serve not just as guides but as living role models, and in doing so, they themselves are

refined and enriched. Mentorship, therefore, is not only about preparing interns, it is about becoming better educators together, united in purpose and mission.

Cooperating teachers see themselves as living role models embodying the very principles, values, and skills they strive to impart to their interns. They understand that effective mentorship requires authenticity and consistency between what is taught and what is practiced. By modeling professionalism, ethical behavior, and Christ-like character, they provide interns with a tangible example of what it means to be an educator guided by both competence and compassion. Moreover, these teachers approach mentoring with humility, recognizing that it is not a one-way transfer of knowledge but a dynamic, reciprocal journey. They learn and grow alongside their interns, gaining fresh insights, renewing their passion for teaching, and deepening their own practice. For them, the mentoring relationship is not just a responsibility, but a meaningful privilege; an opportunity to shape future educators while being enriched themselves in the process.

As Opal articulated ,

“Mentoring is not only about teaching but about how they become an impact and influence even outside the school. I promised myself that I will always do my best in doing this role as a mentor because whatever I share with the interns will also be shared to their future students.”

Further, Pearl affirmed that value formation is a core part of what interns learn, stating,

“Dapat ang emphasis ay laging tungkol sa mabubuting values at kaugalian. Dahil yan ang natututuhan ng mga interns,”

(The emphasis is always on good values and moral conduct. That is what the interns learn,)

In the same manner, mentoring is a dynamic, two-way relationship where both mentor and intern benefit from shared learning and personal enrichment. It is a collaborative journey that fosters growth for both the mentor and the intern. While cooperating teachers provide guidance and support to help shape the intern’s professional path, they also experience their own personal and professional development. This mutual process of learning and reflection brings a sense of fulfillment, as mentors witness the interns’ transformation and, in turn, discover fresh perspectives, renewed enthusiasm, and a deeper commitment to their vocation as educators. They acknowledge that they also grow and learn new strategies, especially technological tools, from their interns. Opal shared that mentoring is a big opportunity for me also to grow as an educator with mission and purpose, highlighting that the mentorship experience benefits the cooperating teacher and the intern mutually. Similarly, Zircon noted,

“Every interaction with interns is meaningful because it allows me to learn as much from the interns as I imparts knowledge to them.”

In the same vien, Pearl emphasized,

“Ang transformational learning ay nangyayari kapag ang intern ay natututo sa iyo...naadapt nila yung mga bagay na itinuturo mo. Ako, andami ko ding natutuhan sa kanila, kaya ang mentoring talaga ay give and take process,”

(Transformational learning happens when the intern learns from you, they are adapting those things from you. I’ve also learned a lot from them, mentoring is really a give-and-take process,)

while Topaz echoed the same sentiment,

“Mahalaga magkaroon ng interns. Nakakatulong sila sa atin, at natututo tayo sa isat isa. Give and take relationship talaga yan.”

(Having interns is important. They help us, and we also learn from each other. It’s a give-and-take relationship.)

Beryl added that the process includes “*natututo sa isat isa ng mga bagong kaalaman lalo na tungkol sa technology,*” (learning new skills such as technology from each other,) while Agate stressed,

“*Sa akin, two-way relationship ang mentoring, natututo din tayo sa mga interns kasama na yung sa pagbibigay din natin ng feedback,*”

(Mentoring is a two-way relationship; we learn from interns as well, including through their feedback.)

Pearl attested that there’s a reciprocal growth “because of this mutual trust,” while Zircon also mentioned,

“Personally I learn from them and vice versa. Spiritually, they show up their best when given the chance to do so.”

These findings agree with previous studies that show mentoring benefits both mentors and interns. Wood (2019) found that mentors gain new teaching ideas and reflect on their own work. Hudson and Hudson (2023) said that mentors asking good questions helps both sides learn and improve. Roadrangka (2017) discovered that cooperating teachers appreciate talking with interns and supervisors because it improves their teaching and leadership. Bibi et al. (2025) pointed out that support from the institution and clear guidelines make these benefits even stronger. Amorim and Ribeiro-Silva (2024) added that student teachers bring new ideas that help mentors and interns learn together and grow professionally. In summary, mentoring within Adventist educational institutions fosters reciprocal growth, strengthening both the mentor’s and intern’s professional capacities. This mutual learning enriches teaching practices and supports ongoing development, ensuring that mentors remain engaged, reflective, and adaptive educators who can effectively guide the next generation of teachers.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Based on on the exploration of the lived experience of the cooperating teachers in the transformation of teaching interns in Adventist educational institutions, these six themes were identified.

The first theme, "Mentoring as a Crucial Role and Responsibility," underscores the profound sense of commitment that cooperating teachers have toward their role as mentors. They perceive mentoring not merely as a professional obligation, but as a moral and even spiritual responsibility, deeply tied to their identity as educators. It is a role they embrace with intentionality, structure, and compassion, recognizing that their influence extends beyond the transfer of knowledge to shaping the character and values of future teachers.

Mentoring, as described by cooperating teachers, begins even before the intern formally steps into the classroom. Early orientation sessions set the tone for the mentoring relationship, providing interns with an understanding of the school culture, expectations, and foundational principles. From the outset, mentors provide personalized guidance tailored to the unique needs, learning styles, and backgrounds of each intern. This individualized support is sustained throughout the practicum through continuous dialogue, constructive feedback, and reflective discussions.

Importantly, the mentoring process is viewed as more than just a means of developing technical teaching competencies. It includes the holistic formation of the intern intellectually, ethically, and spiritually. Cooperating teachers often act as moral exemplars, modeling integrity, patience, empathy, and resilience. This approach aligns with the Filipino perspective on education, where the teacher is not only a facilitator of learning but also a builder of values and character.

The mentoring journey follows a scaffolded structure that mirrors the developmental stages of teacher growth: starting with observation, progressing to guided co-teaching, and culminating in gradually increased independence. This phased progression ensures that interns are not overwhelmed but are supported as they build confidence and competence. Mentors are mindful of balancing support with discipline—offering encouragement while also holding interns accountable to high professional standards.

In the Philippine educational context, these practices are not only consistent with, but essential for meeting national standards for teacher preparation. The Department of Education (DepEd) and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) emphasize the importance of immersive, authentic teaching experiences in developing effective educators. Cooperating teachers play a vital role in operationalizing this vision by serving as the bridge between theoretical coursework and the realities of classroom teaching.

Ultimately, mentoring is framed as a partnership, an evolving relationship where mutual respect and shared goals drive growth. Cooperating teachers do not simply train interns; they invest in them, nurture their potential, and help them navigate the complexities of real-world teaching. In doing so, they uphold the legacy of the teaching profession, ensuring that the next generation of educators is well-equipped both in skill and in spirit.

The second theme is about “Relationship-building and Nurturing Support.” In the context of Adventist education, cooperating teachers conceptualize mentoring as an intrinsically relational and nurturing journey, one that transcends technical instruction and reaches into the realm of emotional, moral, and spiritual care. For these mentors, the mentoring process is not just about imparting teaching strategies or classroom management skills, but about building a human connection grounded in trust, respect, and emotional safety.

This relational dynamic is often described using familial language. Cooperating teachers frequently refer to their mentoring role as “motherly,” “parental,” or “familial,” emphasizing qualities such as warmth, empathy, patience, and unconditional support. They do not see interns merely as trainees, but as individuals to be cared for, guided, and gently shaped, much like one would nurture a child. This emotional tone creates a welcoming and safe environment where interns feel valued and seen, not just assessed.

Such an approach aligns closely with core Adventist values, which stress the integration of faith, learning, and character formation. In Adventist philosophy, education is a redemptive process meant to restore the image of God in the learner. Thus, mentoring becomes a heart-centered vocation. It involves intentional spiritual guidance, moral mentorship, and modeling of Christ-like behavior, qualities that are deeply embedded in the ethos of Adventist education. The goal is not only to develop competent educators but also spiritually grounded and ethically responsible individuals.

One of the hallmarks of this relational model is honest dialogue and active listening. Cooperating teachers create safe conversational spaces where interns feel comfortable sharing their challenges, doubts, and even failures. Instead of judgment, they are met with understanding and constructive feedback. This non-threatening communication style promotes personal reflection and encourages interns to take ownership of their growth.

Furthermore, this relational foundation supports a holistic view of development. Interns are not only growing professionally by learning how to manage classrooms, plan lessons, and assess student learning but also spiritually and emotionally. Mentors often take time to pray with interns, share devotional insights, and reflect on how faith influences teaching. This deepens the mentoring relationship and nurtures the intern’s inner life alongside their pedagogical skills.

In essence, mentoring in Adventist schools is characterized by intentional relational investment. It is a process of accompaniment, where the cooperating teacher walks alongside the intern—not ahead of them or above them. Through consistent encouragement, heartfelt guidance, and relational integrity, mentors help shape not just future teachers, but future role models, community leaders, and faith-centered professionals.

This approach affirms the idea that true mentoring is transformative. It is not limited to the transmission of skills, but involves the formation of the whole person. In the Adventist educational framework, this is not just ideal, it is essential.

The third theme is “Spiritual and Values Integration in Mentoring as a Sacred Ministry and Moral Calling.” This theme reveals that cooperating teachers in Adventist schools approach mentoring not merely as a professional function, but as a sacred ministry, a calling that integrates faith, character, and pedagogy. For these mentors, the task of guiding a future teacher is a spiritual responsibility that transcends the boundaries of

academic supervision. It is a process imbued with purpose, reverence, and intentionality, where teaching becomes both a profession and a form of Christian service.

Cooperating teachers like Opal and Onyx exemplify this faith-based perspective. They see themselves not just as mentors, but as spiritual guides tasked with shaping interns into competent, Christ-like servant leaders. Their mentoring is deeply anchored in Adventist values, drawing from biblical principles and Ellen G. White's vision of education as a redemptive and transformational experience. In this view, education is more than the delivery of content, it is the formation of the heart, mind, and spirit.

This sacred approach is lived out through both formal and informal practices. Formally, mentors often begin or end their sessions with prayer or devotionals, using these moments to reflect on spiritual themes and foster a God-centered mindset. These devotionals are not peripheral rituals, they are central, grounding both mentor and intern in shared faith and a sense of divine purpose.

Informally, faith is modeled in daily interactions, through acts of kindness, patience, humility, and ethical consistency. Interns observe how their mentors respond to stress, manage conflict, treat students, and make decisions, thus learning to translate Christian values into professional behavior. Mentors do not merely tell interns to be compassionate or resilient; they show them what these virtues look like in action.

This kind of mentorship is transformative because it speaks to the whole person. It cultivates not only teaching skills like lesson planning, assessment, and classroom management but also moral integrity and spiritual maturity. Interns are prepared not just to succeed in schools, but to serve in them: to lead by example, to uplift others, and to reflect Christ's character in every aspect of their professional life.

By framing mentoring as sacred ministry, cooperating teachers also take on a pastoral role, nurturing interns' faith, encouraging their personal growth, and helping them discern their own calling in education. This process reflects Ellen White's assertion that "true education means more than the perusal of certain courses of study... it is the harmonious development of the physical, the mental, and the spiritual powers."

Ultimately, mentoring in Adventist schools is not transactional, it is transformational. It is an intentional and deeply meaningful process rooted in the belief that the role of a teacher is not only to instruct minds, but to shape lives. Through this sacred ministry, cooperating teachers help prepare future educators to lead with integrity, compassion, humility, and purpose, fulfilling their calling in both the classroom and the Kingdom.

The fourth theme is about "Transformation, Interns' Growth, and Legacy." This theme emphasizes that cooperating teachers in Adventist schools perceive mentoring as a profoundly transformative journey, one that goes beyond the mere acquisition of teaching skills to nurture interns on multiple levels: professional, personal, and spiritual. For these mentors, the process of mentoring is an evolving experience marked by growth, maturation, and deepening commitment, where interns gradually emerge from timid novices into confident, mission-driven educators who embody Christ-like character.

Mentors often describe the transformation they witness as remarkable and multi-faceted. Interns enter the program uncertain and hesitant, sometimes overwhelmed by the demands of the classroom and their new role. Yet, through consistent support, intentional feedback, and spiritual encouragement, interns gradually gain not only competence in instructional strategies but also a strong sense of identity as servant-leaders dedicated to a higher purpose. This development is visible in their increasing confidence, professionalism, and ability to inspire and lead students with empathy and integrity.

Central to this journey are spiritual practices integrated into the mentoring process. Regular devotionals, prayer, and reflective discussions create a nurturing environment where interns connect their faith to their vocation. This spiritual grounding reinforces their sense of mission and anchors their teaching practice in the values of the Adventist tradition. These spiritual disciplines are interwoven with professional growth activities, lesson planning, and classroom management, assessment techniques ensuring that development is holistic and integrated.

Mentors also place great importance on cultivating a safe and supportive learning environment where interns feel emotionally secure to take risks, make mistakes, and learn openly. This psychological safety fosters authentic dialogue and self-reflection, which are crucial for meaningful growth. Through honest feedback and encouragement, mentors help interns navigate challenges, celebrate progress, and maintain motivation.

More than just facilitating growth, cooperating teachers see their mentoring role as legacy-building. They understand that the interns they nurture today will become the educators who shape the minds and hearts of future generations. This awareness gives a sacred dimension to mentoring, it is a stewardship of the teaching profession and of the faith community's future. Mentors recognize that by investing in interns' holistic development, they are planting seeds that will bear fruit long after the mentoring relationship ends.

However, this transformative journey is not unilateral. It requires the willingness and openness of interns to embrace change, to be teachable, and to engage deeply with both the spiritual and professional dimensions of their training. The mentors' role, therefore, is one of both guide and companion walking alongside interns as they grow into educators who are not only skilled but also deeply committed to their calling.

In essence, mentoring in Adventist schools is a sacred task of holistic development. It integrates faith, competence, and purpose, producing educators who are prepared to make a lasting impact on their students, their communities, and the broader mission of the church. Through this transformational journey, mentoring transcends training, it becomes a ministry of shaping lives and legacies.

The fifth theme is about "Mentoring Difficulties and Challenges." This theme sheds light on the multifaceted challenges that Adventist cooperating teachers encounter as they fulfill the demanding role of mentoring interns. While many mentors find the experience deeply fulfilling and meaningful, it is also recognized as a complex, often strenuous responsibility that extends beyond routine supervision and instruction. Mentoring, in this context, is not simply a professional task, it is a relational and spiritual ministry that requires patience, resilience, and ongoing institutional support.

One of the primary challenges mentors face is addressing the significant gap between theory and practice among interns. Many interns enter the classroom equipped with theoretical knowledge but struggle to translate that into effective, real-world teaching strategies. This disconnect often leads to frustrations on both sides, as cooperating teachers must spend additional time guiding interns through practical applications, classroom management, and adaptive problem-solving.

In addition to skill gaps, mentors frequently contend with issues related to interns' initiative and work habits. Some interns display a lack of motivation or proactive engagement, which can hinder their professional growth and place greater demands on mentors. Others may exhibit low confidence, requiring mentors to balance encouragement with constructive critique carefully. These challenges are compounded by complicated relational dynamics, situations where boundaries between mentor and intern become blurred, or where mutual respect is not fully established. Such dynamics can strain the mentoring relationship and limit its effectiveness.

Maintaining authentic role modeling is another critical yet challenging aspect of mentoring. Cooperating teachers recognize that their actions, attitudes, and responses serve as powerful examples for interns. However, consistently embodying ideal professional and spiritual conduct requires emotional energy and self-awareness, especially when faced with the daily stresses of teaching and mentoring.

Despite these difficulties, many mentors also report experiencing positive, honest, and joyful mentoring relationships that reaffirm their commitment to this sacred ministry. These rewarding experiences provide motivation and highlight the profound impact mentoring can have, not only on interns but on mentors themselves.

Mentors also identify the need for systemic improvements to enhance the mentoring process. For instance, extending the duration of internships allows interns more time to adjust, learn, and internalize both professional skills and spiritual values. Such structural changes, coupled with increased institutional support through training, resources, and recognition can alleviate some pressures mentors face and improve outcomes.

Overall, this theme portrays mentoring in Adventist schools as a demanding yet deeply significant ministry that involves more than academic preparation. It requires navigating a web of practical challenges and relational complexities while nurturing interns' moral and spiritual growth. Through perseverance, empathy, and faith, cooperating teachers contribute to shaping a legacy of educators who are not only skilled but also faith-driven, resilient, and purpose-filled.

The sixth and final theme is "Role Modeling and Mutual Growth." This theme underscores the way cooperating teachers perceive themselves not merely as instructors, but as living role models, individuals who intentionally embody professionalism, ethical integrity, and Christ-like character in all areas of their lives. They see their role as mentors as a calling that goes beyond academic instruction, involving a deliberate alignment of words and actions to offer a consistent and credible example for their student interns. To them, authentic mentoring means living out the values they teach, ensuring that their behavior both inside and outside the classroom reinforces the lessons they aim to instill.

Mentoring is not viewed as a one-directional transfer of knowledge or authority; rather, it is recognized as a reciprocal relationship. Cooperating teachers describe the mentoring process as one in which both mentor and intern benefit, personally, professionally, and spiritually. Through their interactions with interns, mentors often gain new perspectives, are challenged to reexamine their own practices, and experience a renewed sense of purpose in their vocation. This mutual dynamic fosters a collaborative learning environment where both parties are seen as contributors and learners.

On a practical level, cooperating teachers note the tangible benefits of mentorship, such as acquiring fresh teaching strategies, becoming more adaptable in the classroom, and receiving constructive feedback that helps refine their own practices. These benefits are enhanced by open communication, intentional reflection, and strong institutional support that legitimizes and sustains the mentoring process.

Spiritually, mentoring is deeply rooted in a shared journey of faith. Cooperating teachers frame their role as part of their broader ministry, emphasizing that mentoring is a form of service grounded in humility, discipleship, and love. It is through this spiritual lens that they connect mentoring to lifelong learning and growth not just in knowledge or skills, but in character and vocation. By walking alongside their interns, they model what it means to integrate faith with professional life, and how to live out one's beliefs in everyday teaching.

In sum, cooperating teachers view mentoring as a holistic, humble, and mutual process. It is a means of modeling values, nurturing growth, and participating in a transformative journey for both the mentor and the intern not only as educators but as people of faith committed to learning and serving together.

In the light of the lived experience of the cooperating teachers in the transformation of teaching interns, the following implications are drawn:

In the Purview of Mentoring / Concept of Cooperating Teachers

This theme highlights how cooperating teachers see themselves as living examples for their interns. They believe that being a mentor means more than just giving advice, it means living out what they teach. They try to model professionalism, strong ethics, and Christ-like character in everything they do, both in and out of the classroom. For them, mentoring is about showing, not just telling.

They also see mentoring as a two-way relationship. While they guide and support their interns, they also learn and grow themselves. Interns bring fresh ideas, new skills, and different perspectives that help the mentors reflect on and improve their own teaching. This mutual learning keeps their passion for teaching alive and reminds them why they chose this profession.

There are also practical benefits to mentoring. Mentors pick up new teaching techniques, improve their communication, and get useful feedback from their interns. These benefits are made stronger when there's open and honest communication, and when schools or institutions provide support and encouragement for mentoring.

More than just a professional role, mentoring is also a spiritual journey. Cooperating teachers see it as part of their Christian mission, a way to serve others, grow in faith, and share that faith through their work. They don't just mentor to help interns become better teachers, they also want to help them become better people, grounded in faith and values.

In short, cooperating teachers view mentoring as a humble and meaningful process. It's about walking alongside someone, growing together, and setting an example through actions. For them, mentoring is a powerful way to blend teaching, faith, and lifelong learning, for the good of both the intern and the mentor.

In the Concept of Internship as Part of the Pre-service Education

The themes emerging from this study emphasize that the internship component of pre-service teacher education is a transformative phase where theoretical knowledge is applied, professional identity is shaped, and holistic development is nurtured. The internship experience, facilitated by cooperating teachers, is not only a requirement but a vital space for experiential learning and professional formation.

Internship is affirmed as a crucial stage in pre-service education where teaching interns receive structured guidance, hands-on experience, and timely feedback. It provides a bridge between coursework and actual classroom teaching, allowing interns to refine their instructional strategies and classroom management skills under the mentorship of experienced educators.

Furthermore, the internship setting fosters relationship-building and emotional support. The nurturing and often familial dynamic established by cooperating teachers enables interns to feel secure, valued, and confident as they face the challenges of real teaching. This supportive environment promotes risk-taking, reflection, and continuous improvement.

In faith-based institutions such as those in the Adventist system, the internship experience also becomes a platform for spiritual formation and values integration. Interns are exposed to role models who embody moral integrity, compassion, and faith in action. This exposure not only deepens their spiritual growth but also prepares them to become educators who teach with purpose and Christian commitment.

The internship further serves as a transformative journey, shaping interns not only in terms of skills and knowledge but also in character, resilience, and calling. It leaves a legacy by preparing educators who can influence future generations with excellence and integrity. The process is mutually beneficial, as cooperating teachers also grow through reciprocal learning, viewing the mentoring experience as a privilege that enhances their own professional practice.

Implications on How the Lived Experience of Cooperating Teachers may reinforce the Philosophy behind the Adventist Education

The lived experiences of cooperating teachers strongly support and reinforce the core philosophy of Adventist education, which focuses on holistic development, spiritual, mental, physical, and social, centered on Christ and service to others.

The theme of mentoring as a crucial role and responsibility shows how cooperating teachers help prepare future educators not only with practical skills but also with a clear sense of purpose rooted in Christian values. By guiding interns in connecting theory to practice, they support the Adventist goal of education as a tool for service and mission.

Through relationship-building and nurturing support, cooperating teachers reflect Christ's way of teaching by forming warm, caring, and personal connections. Their motherly or familial approach fosters a safe and supportive environment, which is central to the Adventist belief in treating each learner as a valued child of God.

The theme of spiritual and values integration further highlights that cooperating teachers see mentoring as a sacred calling. They model daily faith in action, helping interns develop not just professionally but also

morally and spiritually. This directly supports the Adventist aim of developing teachers who live and teach with strong Christian values.

Transformation, growth, and legacy emphasize that the internship experience, guided by the cooperating teacher, helps shape the intern's whole being: professionally, personally, and spiritually. This reflects the Adventist view of education as a tool for restoring the image of God in each individual and leaving a lasting influence for future generations.

Through role modeling and mutual growth, cooperating teachers demonstrate humility and a willingness to grow alongside their interns. This attitude supports the Adventist emphasis on lifelong learning and servant leadership.

Lastly, the theme of mentoring difficulties and challenges reveals the real-world demands of guiding and supporting interns. Cooperating teachers face challenges in balancing expectations, maintaining boundaries, and adapting to each intern's needs. These challenges highlight the need for ongoing institutional and spiritual support, which is consistent with the Adventist philosophy of community, prayer, and shared responsibility in education.

To sum, the experiences of cooperating teachers clearly align with and strengthen the Adventist philosophy of education. Their mentoring not only shapes future teachers but also upholds the mission of developing Christ-centered, service-driven educators.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and implications drawn from the lived experiences of cooperating teachers, this chapter presents key recommendations aimed at enhancing the mentoring process within pre-service teacher education, particularly in the context of Adventist institutions. These recommendations are grounded in the six major themes that emerged from the study, highlighting the vital roles cooperating teachers play in shaping interns professionally, personally, and spiritually. The suggestions provided are intended for the following entities, with the goal of strengthening mentoring practices, aligning them more closely with the philosophy of Adventist education, and ensuring the holistic development of future educators.

For Policy Makers and Administrators of Adventist Educational Institutions

Enhance Institutional Support: To support cooperating teachers well, schools should formally recognize their important role in shaping future educators. Beyond the required incentives from the Commission on Higher Education, this recognition can include certificates, awards, or public appreciation during school events. Offering other benefits like training, seminars, or small rewards can also motivate them and show that their efforts are valued.

Beyond recognition, schools should give cooperating teachers the resources they need to reduce their workload and prevent burnout. This includes providing teaching materials, mentoring guides, time during the day for mentoring duties, and consistent support from school leaders. Meeting these needs shows appreciation and helps build a positive and lasting environment where mentors feel supported and ready to guide future teachers.

Invest in comprehensive mentor training programs: Creating strong training programs for cooperating teachers is important to improve mentoring in Adventist schools. These programs should offer more than just a basic introduction. They should teach important skills like how to mentor well, handle emotions, manage a classroom, and include Adventist values in teaching.

For Teacher Education Programs

Extend Internship Duration: Extending the internship gives interns more time to practice teaching and build confidence. It also allows mentors to guide them better. With more time, both mentors and interns grow

professionally. Schools can go beyond the required 480 hours by adding extra programs to make the internship more helpful and realistic for future teaching.

Promote Reflective Practice: Encouraging future educators to have regular reflection and a chance to pause and think about their teaching, the challenges they face, what's going well, and how they feel about it all. For interns, reflecting helps them understand their strengths and where they can grow, giving them more control over their own learning.

In Adventist schools, reflection can also include spiritual insights, encouraging interns to think about how their faith and values shape their teaching and relationships. This helps keep the focus not just on skills, but also on character development.

For Cooperating Teachers

Cooperating teachers should embrace mentoring as a holistic and relational journey that supports not just the intern's professional skills but also their personal and spiritual growth. Having regular self-reflection and feedback sessions with interns will help deepen this relationship and improve mentoring practices. It is also recommended to continuously seek professional development in mentoring skills, classroom management, and emotional intelligence that strengthen the ability to guide effectively. By joining communities of practice, mentors can share experiences, learn from others, and tackle challenges together. Above all, the cooperating teacher is to model Christ-like character and servant leadership to inspire interns to grow both as educators and as individuals, aligned with the values and mission of Adventist education.

For Teaching Interns

Teaching interns should approach their internship with an open mind and a willingness to learn, seeing it as a chance to develop not only their teaching skills but also grow personally and spiritually. They should actively engage with their cooperating teachers by seeking feedback, asking questions, and reflecting on their experiences to make the most of their professional development. Practice patience, humility, and adaptability that will help them handle challenges along the way. Value the mentoring relationship as a source of guidance and spiritual growth supports the holistic approach of Adventist teacher education. Additionally, interns should take initiative to build positive relationships with students, mentors, and the school community, creating a collaborative and supportive learning environment.

For Future Research

While this study focused on cooperating teachers, future research may explore the lived experiences of teaching interns themselves. Their perspectives can offer a more complete understanding of the mentoring relationship, especially in terms of personal and spiritual growth, professional readiness, and the influence of values-based mentoring.

Future studies may examine how the guidance and modeling provided by cooperating teachers influence interns once they become in-service teachers. This can help evaluate the lasting effects of mentoring in terms of teaching style, classroom values, and commitment to the Adventist philosophy.

Lastly, to conduct a comparative studies between Adventist and non-Adventist institutions (or between public and private schools) that could offer valuable insights into how spiritual integration and moral values shape the mentoring process differently across contexts.

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