Senior English Teachers' Understanding of and Practices in Mentoring [*]

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Abstract: The concept of mentoring was introduced in February, 2010 at a training conference for all SETs in the Batinah South Region. In the study, it was shown that SETs have a limited understanding of mentoring due to the lack of knowledge they have of the process. This has been inferred from the limited definitions of the process the participants presented and from the few examples given by the SETs on the requisite skills and the kinds of support needed for the teachers. None of the participants mentioned the concepts of professional and personal development or professional and personal support. Moreover, none of the participants mentioned professional and personal development as the main purpose of their mentoring work, but they did mention examples that lead to either development. Participant F mentioned professional development when she said, "as you know . . . peer observation is part of the professional development of the teacher." Furthermore, most of the participants' responses are attributed to either the experience they gained from working as SETs or from their knowledge of the duties they are expected to perform as SETs, especially in their descriptions of how to conduct PLDs, which was found to be the same with the both groups.

Keywords: English teachers, mentoring, Batinah South Region

There have been many studies and proposals related to how teachers can be developed professionally both for in-service and pre-service work (Moon, 1994). Learning how to teach is not an easy task as it engages the learner in "developing a practical knowledge base, changes in cognition, developing interpersonal skills and also incorporates an effective aspect" (Furlong & Maynard, 1995:10). Therefore, the process of mentoring is considered to have a crucial role in developing teachers professionally (Wang, Noe, Wang, & Greenberger, 2009; Gills &Wilson 2004; Moon 1994). The process of mentoring heightens the awareness of teachers of their teaching performance and leads to recognition of possible methods of improvement (Wilkin,1997).

In the Sultanate of Oman, senior English teachers are given the responsibility to develop the performance of teachers and to improve their reflective teaching as specified in the Ministry of Education guidelines (English Language Curriculum Department [ELCD], 2001). Therefore, knowing and understanding what mentoring really means by the senior English teachers (SETs) can heighten their awareness of how best teachers can be professionally developed. This study aims at investigating the senior English teachers' perceptions of the mentoring process.

This paper is divided into six main chapters. The first chapter describes the background to the study and justifies a rationale for the research. In the second chapter, I will review the literature relevant to mentoring, its definitions, importance and other issues related to mentoring. Then, in the third chapter, the research methods used in this study will be demonstrated including information about the research participants, and how the data collection instruments were designed and administered. The fourth chapter clarifies the findings of my study. In the fifth chapter, discussion and

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interpretation of the findings will be presented. The final chapter gives some limitations encountered while the study was conducted followed by some implications and suggestions of further research.

Aim of the Study

In the study, the understandings by SETs of what it means to be a mentor and the types of mentoring utilized by these teachers were explored. Understanding what teacher mentoring means ensures that senior teachers are aware of the main goal of their work as SETs and creates a more peaceful working atmosphere in which teachers believe their SET to be the one who can share their experience, knowledge, and feelings to promote professional development. Being a SET does not merely require understanding and implementing certain school rules, asking teachers to complete documents, attending lessons and writing reports, it also includes an understanding of what mentoring means for them, which should be defined and reflected in practices with colleagues. It is hoped that the study will enrich future induction programmes for senior teachers.

Rationale

Being a senior teacher for 9 years has enriched my experience and knowledge. It was not before I took the teacher education course as part of the Master in Teaching English for Speakers of Other Language (MA TESOL) programme that I became aware of what the term mentoring fully meant. Working as an SET involves mentoring in terms of functions and skills. I was attracted to the topic of, to why and how SET functions should be performed as a result of being aware of the processes. For example, I have been able to establish good relationships with the teachers based on trust and strengthened the idea that a SET is there to help them improve professionally. Also, developing teachers professionally has become a priority in my career. Therefore, I believe that being aware of the term *mentoring* is an important issue that leads to a meaningful and successful practice of mentoring. The study stemmed from my interest in learning if SETs are aware of what it means to be a mentor and if they really are mentoring, and if so, to what extent. Finally, I was also attracted to the subject because there has been no similar research conducted in Oman.

Literature Review

What is Mentoring?

Mentoring is the process in which the mentor guides, supports, coaches, counsels, evaluates, and professionally develops the mentee who has less experience than the mentor (Alleman, 1986; Ayalon, 2007; Bartz, 2008; Butcher, 2002; Fletcher, 2000, Klopf & Harrison, 1981). Klopf and Harrison (1981) stated for mentoring to occur, all functions mentioned in the definition of the practice need to be enacted. Mentoring should be an interactive process and a supportive relationship between the mentor and the mentee should be established through the support and guidance provided by the mentor (Carruthers, 1993; Stephenson, 1997). In the mentoring process, the mentor socializes the mentee who is new to the organization in terms of the organization's norms and ways of thinking (Daresh, 2001; Wilkin, 1997).

When discussing the concepts of mentoring, Anderson and Shannon (1995) demonstrated that definitions lack clarity as they do not show whether the mentoring process should involve all or just some of the functions for mentoring to be successful. According to Anderson and Shannon (1995), such definitions also do not define the relationship between the functions and roles set for mentoring and lack a clear rationale. However, according to Anderson, (as cited in Anderson & Shannon, 1995) the process of mentoring can be best clarified as:

A nurturing process in which a more skilled or more experienced person, serving as a role model, teaches, sponsors, encourages, counsels, and befriends a less experienced person for the purpose of promoting the latter's professional and or personal. Mentoring functions are carried out within the context of the ongoing, caring relationship between the mentor and mentee. (p. 29)

Anderson and Shannon (1995) believed that this definition covered the essential attributes of mentoring they explained as follows:

1. "The process of nurturing," which involves recognition of the mentee's abilities by the mentor who can then provide proper guidance and support.

2. "The act of serving as a role model," since mentors take great care of the growth and development of the mentees.

3. "The five mentoring functions (teaching, sponsoring, encouraging, counselling and befriending)," as they show a clear discrimination for who is really doing mentoring and who is not.

4. "The focus on professional and or personal development," for both the writers believe that the mentors are concerned with the "welfare of their mentees" and that mentoring differs according to its influence and the relationships within it.

5. "The ongoing caring relationship," the writers believe that the relationship between the mentor and the mentee is very essential in the process of mentoring. (p. 29)

Malderez and Bodo´czky (1999) defined mentoring as a "growth model of learning teaching (how to help the individual mentee become the best teacher they can possibly be)" (ibid: 16). Furthermore, mentoring can also be defined as *the one to one support* of a less experienced teacher (mentee) by a more experienced teacher (mentor) and this support is meant to help the development of the mentee's expertise and to facilitate the induction of the mentee into their profession(teaching) and into their organization [school] (Hobson, Ashby, Malderez, & Tomlinson, 2009).

Mentoring is a process performed by a mentor. Multiple definitions exist in the literature that are used to clarify exactly who is the mentor. For example, the mentor can be defined as a person who is responsible for providing his or her own experience, knowledge, and opportunities to the learner to develop their skills and abilities (Clutterbuck, 1991; Parsloe, 1992; Shea, 1992). A mentor is also a person who helps another person learn something that they would otherwise not have learned (Bell, 2002). Based on the literature review, most of the mentoring interpretations either are used to emphasize only the professional development of the mentee or to emphasize the professional and personal development of the mentees (Carruthers, 1993).

There are many terms used to describe mentors. Phillips-Johnes (1982) stated that if development includes the mentee's emotions, the mentor is called a primary mentor, as opposed to a secondary mentor, whose purpose is to impact the career of the mentee. Phillips-Johnes (1982) also explained that the mentee could have more than one secondary mentor. Alleman (1986) recommended a mentee have a secondary mentor called a partial mentor. Secondary mentors have been given other names in the literature. Clawson (1980) referred to mentors emphasizing professional development as quasi-mentors, and others have referred to mentors as major and minor (Darling, 1989). Darling (1989) defined a major mentor as one whose mentoring includes three essential components: (a) attraction (the mentee is attracted to the mentor), (b) action (the mentor takes an action on the mentee's behalf), and (c) effect (the mentor shows positive effect for the mentee). Darling (1989) stated that if the mentoring process includes fewer than three components, the mentor is considered to be minor. Dodgson (1986) titles for mentors included career and life mentors. Dodgson (1986) clarified that a

career mentor is the one whose interest is in developing the mentees' career, and the life mentor's interest is not only in the mentee's career, but also extends to include the mentee's life.

The following issues of functions and roles of mentoring merit discussions are used to enrich the study.

Research Methodology

Research Questions

In the study, the following research questions will be investigated:

1. How do senior English teachers (SET) understand what it means to be a mentor?

2. To what extent do SETs feel they fulfil one or more mentoring roles?

3. In practice, to what extent do SETs adopt a mentoring role in working with other teachers?

4. What challenges do SETs identify with being a mentor?

5. What support do SETs feel would allow them to be more effective mentors?

Participants

The participants of the study were 6 female Omani senior teachers from the Batinah South Region. Some of the participants worked in basic education schools and others in general education schools while others worked in schools that utilized both systems of education. All participants had years of experience ranging from 1 year to 10 years. As a result, it important to have two groups of participants; a group of experienced SETs who had more than 4 years of experience working as SETs, and a group of less experienced SETs. The researcher chose SETs according to the criteria of experience to investigate each group's understanding of and practices in mentoring. This selection process allowed the exploration of any differences in one group with different and interdependent thinking (Denscombe, 2003; Drever, 2003). Participants were chosen because they worked in schools in close proximity to the researcher and because they had close working relationships with the researcher. I called all of the participants before visiting them at their schools to explain the aims of the research. Each individual contacted agreed to participate. Table 1 shows how the participants ranged in terms of experience and qualifications.

Table 1
Study Participants

SETs	Years of Experience	Years of Experience as SETs	Qualification
A	*11*	*9*	BA from Sultan Qaboos University
B	*12*	*9*	BA from Sultan Qaboos University
C	*17*	*6*	BA from Sultan Qaboos University
D	*13*	*2*	BA from Sultan Qaboos University
E	*8*	*3*	BA from Sultan Qaboos University
F	*9*	*2*	Diploma plus BA from the University of Leeds

Interviews

Designing semi-structured interviews. I designed the interview schedule (see Appendix A) and prepared the questions to match the objectives of the study (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000).

The issues covered in the interview questions were informed by the literature review of the mentoring, its functions, and skills. The questions in the interview were organized according to different topics related to mentoring supporting teachers, including mentoring skills, the process of visiting teachers, post-lesson discussions, peer observations and relationships established with teachers. Drever (2003) and Bell (1999) suggested incorporating prompts into the interview which help to obtain broad coverage and in-depth answers. Moreover, it was recommended that the interview should end with a question such as "is there anything you would like to add that we have not mentioned?" Two sheets were created for the interview: one did not include any prompts and was given to the interviewee to look through before the interview. The second sheet included the prompts prepared for the interview. Furthermore, Drever (2003) stated that including a mixture of open and closed questions allows the interviewer to have control during the interview, and this creates a degree of freedom for the interviewee.

Pilot Study

The research questions were used in a pilot study with two senior teachers who were not involved in the study. Since the participants were from two groups; experienced and inexperienced, so were the piloted SETs. One of the pilot SETs was experienced and the other was in their second year as a SET. A pilot study was crucial to the success of the research as it helped identify weaknesses and limitations in the interview tool (Bell, 1999; Cohen et al., 2000; Gillham, 2000). As a result of the pilot process, the research questions were refined and redrafted. For example, asking the interviewee what professional activities they performed for teachers was repetition of another question that asked what work the teachers performed as SETs. As a result of the pilot study, the question was changed to explore how SETs supported their teachers so that the interviewer's response might include examples of professional activities. I also altered the order of the questions and added follow-up questions to meet the study's objectives (Bell, 1999).

Administering interviews. Interviews were held between May and June 2010, and with the exception of one participant who was interviewed at home, I met each SET according to their schedule. Each SET was interviewed once in a private place. When I requested permission to record the interview digitally, all participants agreed. A mobile phone was used to record the interviews, which were then transferred to a laptop using a Bluetooth® device. The interviews were then transcribed. The interviews lasted between 30 and 40 minutes. The interviews were conducted in English, although I did not express any bias for Arabic. Rossman and Rallis (2003) stated participants should be allowed to use the language they feel comfortable with.

Data Analysis

Qualitative research requires an analytical approach that, according to Miles and Huberman (1994), depends on data reduction. When working with qualitative data, it is necessary to highlight important themes and group them in a meaningful way according to certain categories (Boyce & Neale, 2006; Drever, 2003; Gillham, 2000). A phenomenological approach was utilized in this study (Hycner, 1985, as cited in Cohen & Manion, 1994, p. 292-296). A phenomenological approach is used to reduce and analyse interview data and includes four steps: (a) transcription, (b) phenomenological reduction, (c) delineating units of meaning relevant to the research question, and (d) identifying general and unique themes for all the interviews.

The interviews were transcribed and the transcript of each interview was read carefully. A summary of what the interviewees said was created and unneeded utterances were omitted. Redundancies in the summary of each extracted part of the interview were eliminated through highlighting according to step three; delineating units of meaning relevant to the research question.

Only important statements were retained, and unnecessary repetition was eliminated. I verified that no relevant information had been omitted. Finally, I identified general and unique themes for each research question for all interviewees and grouped the statements according to categories.

Results

Summary (of the results)

The study findings based on the similarities and differences in the views of the experienced and inexperienced SETs are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2

Similarities and Differences in the Views of the Six SETs

Issues		Similarities	No. of SETs	Differences	SETs
SETs' Understanding of Mentoring:	Meaning of mentoring	-Observing teachers' work, improving their work, solving problems, giving skills in administrative work	3 SETs out of 6 (A,B&F)	-Supporting & guiding	C
				-Encouraging, supporting, working as a team	D
				- how to deal with teachers	E
	Effective skills of mentors	-Patient & friendly	All the 6	-Understanding, sharing, have knowledge, a good model	A
		-Experienced	4SETs(C D, E,F)	-Know how to choose the right questioning techniques in PLDs	B
		-Know how to solve problems	2 SETs (C&F)		
				- a good listener to teachers	F
SETs' Practices in Mentoring:	1-How SETs support their colleagues	-observing lessons, conducting meetings, improving teaching	3 SETs (A,C,F)	- Giving teachers some articles to read and websites	E
		-Help them solve problems	2 SETs (B& C)	-Praising teachers	F
				- Establishing good relationships	A
				- Encourage the teachers & help them improve students level.	D
	2- Examples of mentoring work	-Observing lessons	5 SETs (A,B,C,E&F)	- Help them be good Ts. And help them establish good relationship	A
			(B & C)	- doing the assessment	B
		-Solving teachers' problems		- Conduct workshops for teachers	C
				-Supporting, helping teachers to think creatively	D
				-Lets teachers discuss in PLDs and discuss educational issues.	F
	3- The process of the classroom visits	1- Pre-observation conference, 2-Observing lessons, 3- Conducting PLDs	All the 6 SETs		
	4-Conducting PLDs	1- The SET asks the teacher to reflect 2- The SET discusses strengths and weaknesses, using suitable questioning techniques to get the teacher expresses	All the 6 SETs		

		herself and think of reasons. 3- The SET and the teacher think of solutions and alternatives	
	5-Conducting Peer observations	- The SET designs the table and distributes the teachers according to their needs	4 SETs (A,B,F)
		-The SET allows the teachers to decide whom they like to visit	2 SETs (C, D & E)
The Challenges SETs Face:		- Dealing with uncooperative teachers	All 6 SETs
		-uncooperative school administration	2 SETs (A&B)
		-Work load	3 SETs (C,D&E)
What Support SETs Need:		-To alleviate the workload	(A,B &E)
		- Support from the school administration	(C,E)
		-Support from the directorate & supervisors	(B&F)
		- Read more on mentoring	(B&D)

This analysis includes some discrepancies in the related issues, especially in the issues related to how SETs support their colleagues and what mentoring work the SETs do. As to the other issues, some agreement was noted, especially in the issues of the SETs practices, the challenges they faced, and the support they needed.

Discussion

What Are Senior English Teachers' (SETs) Understandings of What It Means to Be a Mentor?

Two of the three experienced SETs (Participants A & B) and one inexperienced SET (Participant F) mentioned that mentoring means observing teachers' lessons, improving their work, solving their problems, and giving them skills in the administrative work. While the SETs did not mention professional or personal development as terms in their definitions, they seemed to consider examples for both professional and personal development of the teachers as the mentoring process should develop teachers both professionally and personally. According to Anderson, mentoring can be best defined as follows:

> A nurturing process in which a more skilled or more experienced person, serving as a role model, teaches, sponsors, encourages, counsels, and befriends a less experienced person for the purpose of promoting the latter's professional and or personal development. Mentoring functions are carried out within the context of the ongoing, caring relationship between the mentor and mentee. (Anderson, as cited in Anderson & Shannon, 1995, p. 29)

The participants mentioned improving work, solving problems and giving skills in administrative work as helping teachers become socialized in the organization they are working in (Daresh, 2001). Participant C, an experienced SET, defined mentoring as supporting and guiding. Participant D stated mentoring was encouraging, supporting and working as a team, while Participant E gave a very limited definition because she perceived mentoring as how to deal with teachers.

The definitions provided by three of the six SETs (Participants A, B, & F) focused on mentoring as a collaborative activity, compared with other participants, who implied there were implications of

professional and personal development. With the exception of Participant F, this can be attributed to experience working as SETs in mentoring other teachers. In contrast, Participants C, D, and E gave limited definitions. E in particular exhibited a limited perception of mentoring from what she learned in the mentoring course. From the results it can be inferred that being aware of what the SETs are doing while mentoring other teachers and why can broaden perceptions of the process. It is believed that teacher development happens only when teachers "consciously take advantage of such resources to forward their own professional learning" (Ur, 1999: 318).

Investigating SETs' views of what skills make mentors effective will shape their perception of what mentoring really means for them. In fact, since mentors should develop three kinds of skills: (a) personal, (b) interpersonal and (c) professional (Daresh, 2001), most of the examples given by the SETs showed some limitations in their views.

For example, all of the inexperienced SETs gave examples of personal skills, however, Participant F added another skill, being a good listener, and this is regarded as an interpersonal skill. The experienced SETs mentioned the same personal skills and provided few examples that were different to those offered by the inexperienced teachers. Participants A and B mentioned professional skills such as to have knowledge, by Participant A, and to choose the right questioning technique, by Participant B, whereas Participant C added experienced, which can be regarded as professional. This indicates that the SETs' perceptions of what skills an effective mentor should develop are limited. None of the SETs mentioned one of the three skills as a term during the interviews, which shows lack of knowledge in this area. To conclude, this finding shows some limitations in the SETs' understanding of what mentoring really means. While the SETs' definitions of the process have shown the influence of their experience, their definitions of the requisite skills showed a lack of knowledge of the process.

To What Extent Do SETs Feel They Fulfil One or More Mentoring Roles?

To get enough data to answer the research question, SETs were asked what kind of support they provide their colleagues and what mentoring work they think they are performing. Starting with support (see Table 1), some discrepancies were detected among the SETs. All of the experienced SETs, and one inexperienced SET provided at least one example of professional support and one example of personal support. However, the focus of the inexperienced SETs, as shown in the Chapter 4, was mainly on their students. This can be attributed to the experience factor, as the more SETs get experience, the more they become aware of the teachers they are mentoring and of what and why they are performing mentoring. Inexperienced SET, Participant E, seemed to be unaware of the concept of support as she confined herself to one example, which was giving teachers websites and articles to read and which was regarded as being a form of support. The SETs did not articulate personal and professional support, the two kinds of support that should be provided by the mentor (Hobson, 2002), as definitions, and this showed that they were not aware of them. Furthermore, the few examples participants mentioned (see Table 2) can be attributed to the duties the SETs learned from the SET course they attended before they assumed their role and could also be attributed to the experience gained throughout their work as SETs.

All SETs reported that observing lessons was one of the mentoring activities they perform. Other activity examples varied from the experienced and inexperienced SETs. The experienced SETs gave more specific examples of activities, as shown in Table 2, than the inexperienced SETs. For instance, the examples given by the inexperienced SETs included supporting, encouraging, helping teachers to think creatively, as stated by Participant D. Also, Participant F mentioned giving teachers the chance to discuss issues during PLDs and in meetings. The pre-observation conference was identified by

Participant E as the only example she could think of besides observing lessons. To conclude, the experienced SETs provided more examples of mentoring work than the inexperienced SETs. However, I do not believe this to be an indication of good knowledge of the mentoring process, rather it is an indication of the experience factor that has enabled them to be aware of their duties as senior teachers.

In Practice, To What Extent Do SETs Adopt a Mentoring Role in Working With Other Teachers?

The research question was approached in the investigation of three areas of practice that the SETs were requested to perform as the main part of their duties in school. Participants were asked about what process they followed in conducting: classroom visits, post-lesson discussions, and peer observations. Starting with the classroom visits, all SETs mentioned the same procedure of conducting classroom visits. As they reported, a pre-observation conference is performed during which they ask the teacher about the type of the lessons, what assessment they are going to have (objectives of the lesson) and what teaching techniques they are going to use. Pre-lesson discussions focusing mainly on objectives, can help teachers to reflect on their lesson later (Marriott, 2001). The second stage was the observation of the lesson where the focus was on warming up, teaching techniques and dealing with students and assessment. After that comes PLD. In the post-lesson discussion, both the experienced and inexperienced SETs described the same procedure in conducting PLDs and focused more on letting the teacher talk about their lesson and reflect on it. This was regarded as one of the mentor's duties that helped the mentee to reflect on their teaching performance during PLDs (Stoller, 1996). Moreover, providing an appropriate challenge by asking the teachers some questions helped involve the teachers in a reflective dialogue about their teaching (Arnold, 2006). Nevertheless, the study verified an existing study by Al-Abrawi (2009), which found that the SETs were doing their duty of giving the teachers opportunities to reflect on their teaching. Al-Abrawi (2009) also found that they were also judging the teachers' responses by asking probing questions, which is conducive to encouraging teachers to be more articulate about their practices.

Finally, all SETs showed awareness of getting teachers to visit other teachers according to their needs, which would help teachers learn from each other. However, only two SETs allowed teachers to visit other teachers due to the small number of teachers, as Participant E mentioned, she only had three teachers in her school. Participant D stated that she asked teachers to justify their choice of certain teachers with whom they liked to attend lessons to base the practice on a purpose.

In conclusion, all of the SETs adopted mentoring roles, especially in the way in which they observed teachers and the way they performed their observations. This is attributed to a belief in the same procedure. Furthermore, since none of the SETs mentioned the purpose of promoting teachers' reflective practice, this led to the conclusion that they are not aware of the purpose, even though they already perform the task.

What Challenges Do SETs Identify With Being a Mentor?

All of the SETs stated that dealing with uncooperative teachers was the most challenging part of their work. In fact, according to Hobson (2002) personality clashes are always possible. However, It is crucial for the mentor to gain the mentee's trust to succeed in mentoring and this is achieved by taking positive action (Fowle, 2000). Three of the SETs mentioned workload as another challenge and two SETs reported uncooperative school administration as another challenge they faced in their work. Schőn (1983) suggested alleviating teachers' workloads for the sake of facilitating critical reflection by providing space and time.

What Support Do SETs Feel Would Allow Them to Be More Effective Mentors?

In the study, it was shown that half of the SETs (3 out of 6) asked for their workload to be reduced. Researchers who have explored teachers' workloads have shown that there is a relationship between heavy workloads and teacher stress and morale (Johnstone, 1989). This can lead to job dissatisfaction, which is "a serious matter which may contribute to ineffectiveness, unproductivity, psychological distress and physical illness in employees" (Pennington, 1995, p. 6). The other SETs expressed a need for support from their school's administrations and from the English department in the directorate to provide them with workshops for their teachers.

Summary

The concept of mentoring was introduced in February, 2010 at a training conference for all SETs in the Batinah South Region. In the study, it was shown that SETs have a limited understanding of mentoring due to the lack of knowledge they have of the process. This has been inferred from the limited definitions of the process the participants presented and from the few examples given by the SETs on the requisite skills and the kinds of support needed for the teachers. None of the participants mentioned the concepts of professional and personal development or professional and personal support. Moreover, none of the participants mentioned professional and personal development as the main purpose of their mentoring work, but they did mention examples that lead to either development. Participant F mentioned professional development when she said, "as you know . . . peer observation is part of the professional development of the teacher." Furthermore, most of the participants' responses are attributed to either the experience they gained from working as SETs or from their knowledge of the duties they are expected to perform as SETs, especially in their descriptions of how to conduct PLDs, which was found to be the same with the both groups.

Conclusion and Suggestions for Further Research

The study can be considered the first of its kind because it is the first study in which a researcher explored senior English teachers' understandings of mentoring in the Omani context. Therefore, the insights provided in the study may be of interest to ministry officials and may be the starting point for a wider discussion of how SETs may be better supported. Since I did not investigate the effect of the SETs' qualifications, age, and gender in their perception of the mentoring process, future researchers could investigate these variables. Other suggestions include:

1. Researchers are advised to investigate comparisons among regions to see if there are regional differences in the SETs' perceptions of the mentoring process.

2. The teachers' attitudes towards the SETs' practices in mentoring could be investigated.

3. Further research is needed to investigate the SETs' practice of mentoring through observing them in practice.

4. Further research is also needed to investigate the emotional relationship between the senior English teachers and the teachers working with and the effect of this relationship on the teachers' professional development.

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