

**MENTORING LEARNING-TO-TEACH EXPERIENCES OF  
EARLY CHILDHOOD PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS  
IN DISADVANTAGED ENVIRONMENT**

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## INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

### DECLARATION OF ORIGINAL WORK

This declaration is made on the 13<sup>th</sup> day of August 2019

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I, JOSEPHINE M. CALAMLAM, P20161000117, National Child Development Research Center, hereby declare that the dissertation entitled MENTORING LEARNING-TO-TEACH EXPERIENCES OF PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS IN DISADVANTAGED ENVIRONMENT is my original work. I have not copied from any other students' work or from any other sources except where due reference or acknowledgement is made explicitly in the text, nor has any part been written for me by another person.

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I, PROF MADYA DR. SITI ESHAH MOKSHEIN, hereby certify that the work entitled MENTORING LEARNING-TO-TEACH EXPERIENCES OF PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS IN DISADVANTAGED ENVIRONMENT was prepared by the above named student, and was submitted to the Institute of Graduate Studies as a partial / full fulfillment for the conferment of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION, and the aforementioned work, to the best of my knowledge, is the said student's work.

April 30, 2019  
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Signature of the Supervisor



## DECLARATION OF DISSERTATION



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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore mentoring learning-to-teach experiences of early childhood pre-service teachers in disadvantaged environment. This case study was used to collect qualitative data from three early childhood pre-service teachers, three cooperating teachers, a university supervisor and a school principal who were involved in this study. Triangulation using multiple data sources for the themes and member participant checking were used to validate the case study. Data from interview transcripts, field notes of classroom observations, pre-service teachers' reflective journals, and focused group discussion were subjected to content and thematic analyses to answer the research questions. This study has yielded these findings: (1) learning-to-teach requires content knowledge, understanding of pupils and how they learn, strategies for managing behaviors and organizing learning environments, and the ability to respond to dynamic classroom situations; (2) the use of reflection, personal characteristics, forming conference groups and taking action enabled the participants to learn; (3) observation and unstructured conference were identified as mentoring strategies by cooperating teachers; (4) school visits conducted by the university supervisors was considered as mentoring, but ineffective due to limited supervision time and the big number of interns they have to supervise; and finally, (5) elements of mentoring such as building good relationship with the cooperating teachers, strong support from the school leadership, open communication, and adjustment in teaching-learning styles between interns and cooperating teachers have been experienced by the participants. The findings led to a conclusion that reflective mentoring strategies were used by cooperating teachers and university supervisors. Furthermore, multiple requirements in internship made learning-to-teach a vital and complex process that resulted in the transformation of the interns who adopted dependent, interested, involved, and self-directed modes as learning strategies that enabled them to be resilient and responsive. The study implicates that interlocking of learning-to-teach strategies and appropriate mentoring behaviors holds the potential for the development of new learning and a constructive action for developing a mentoring model for internship.





## **PEMENTORAN BELAJAR-UNTUK-MENGAJAR TERHADAP GURU PELATIH PENDIDIKAN AWAL KANAK-KANAK DALAM PERSEKITARAN KURANG BERUNTUNG**

### **ABSTRAK**

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk meneroka pementoran belajar-untuk-mengajar terhadap guru pelatih Pendidikan awal kanak-kanak dalam persekitaran kurang beruntung. Kaedah kajian kes telah digunakan untuk mengumpul data kualitatif daripada tiga orang guru pelatih, tiga orang guru pembimbing, seorang pensyarah university, dan seorang pentadbir sekolah yang terlibat dalam kajian ini. Triangulasi menggunakan pelbagai sumber data untuk tema-tema kajian kes ini. Data daripada transkrip temubual, nota lapangan pemerhatian, jurnal reflektif guru pelatih, dan perbincangan kumpulan berfokus telah dianalisis berdasarkan kandungan dan tema untuk menjawab soala-soalan kajian. Kajian ini telah mengasihkan beberapa dapatan berikut: 1) belajar-untuk-mengajar memerlukan pengetahuan tentang kandungan, kefahaman tentang murid dan bagaimana mereka belajar, strategi untuk mengurus tingkahlaku dan mengolah persekitaran pembelajaran, dan kemampuan untuk bertindak balas ke atas situasi bilik darkjah yang dinamik; 2) penggunaan refleksi, ciri-ciri peribadi, pembentukan kumpulan perbincangan, dan membuat tindakan membolehkan partisipan belajar; 3) pemerhatian dan perbincangan tak berstruktur dikenalpasti sebagai strategi pemantauan oleh guru pembimbing; 4) lawatan ke sekolah oleh penyelia daripada universiti dianggap sebagai pemantauan, tetapi kurang berkesan kerana masa penyeliaan yang terhad dan bilangan guru pelatih yang ramai perlu diselia; 5) elemen pemantauan seperti membina hubungan baik dengan guru pembimbing, sokongan yang kuat daripada kepimpinan sekolah, komunikasi terbuka, serta penyesuaian dalam gaya pengajaran-pembelajaran antara guru pelatih dan guru pembimbing dialami oleh partisipan. Dapatan-dapatan ini telah menjurus kepada kesimpulan bahawa strategi pementoran reflektif telah digunakan oleh guru pembimbing dan pensyarah penyelia. Tambahan lagi, pelbagai keperluan dalam praktikum menjadikan mengajar-untuk-belajar satu proses yang sangat perlu dan kompleks yang menghasilkan transformasi guru pelatih yang akan menggunakan mod bergantung, berminat, terlibat dan terarah-kendiri sebagai strategi belajar untuk membantu mereka berdaya tahan dan responsif. Implikasinya, saling-hubungan antara strategi belajar-untuk-mengajar dan tingkahlaku pemantauan, yang bersesuaian berpotensi untuk pembinaan pembelajaran baharu dan tindakan konstruktif bagi pembangunan satu model pementoran praktikum.



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**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

ACR	All Children Reading
ADB	Asian Development Bank
ALIVE	Arabic Language and Islamic Values Education
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nation
BECE	Bachelor in Early Childhood Education
CFLEX	College of Flexible Learning and e-PNU
CHED	Commission on Higher Education
COT	Classroom Observation Tool
CT	Cooperating Teacher
DLL	Daily Learning Log
EC	Early Childhood
ECCD	Early Childhood Care and Development
EFA	Education for All
ELLN	Early Language Learning and Numeracy
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
LAC	Learning Action Cells
MTB-MLE	Mother-Tongue Based Multilingual Education
NEDA	National Economic Development Authority
PSA	Philippine Statistics Authority
OBTEC	Outcomes-Based Teacher Education Curriculum
RCTQ	Research Center for Teacher Quality
TEIs	Teacher Education Institutions
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USAID	United States Agency of International Development



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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION



Now, more than ever is every teacher education institution's goal to ensure that future teacher professionals will have to succeed in a world characterized by volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity (Bennett & Lemoine, 2014). This eminent reality complicates an early childhood (EC) pre-service teacher's learning-to-teach experiences that are made more pronounced in schools serving children from disadvantaged communities. Juxtaposed in the study is the kind of mentoring provided by cooperating teachers and university supervisors that have been found to contribute to EC pre-service teachers' learning. Aware of these realities, this study sought to understand and explore the early childhood pre-service teachers' teaching and learning needs and experiences during their internship in a school where these challenges are present. This study made a case for three early childhood pre-service





teachers and these relevant factors: reflective practice (Schon,1987), experiential learning (Kolb, 1984) and structural ideology (Gorski, 2016) which are crucial for rethinking internship in disadvantaged contexts in the light of efforts to prepare them to become effective teachers.

In-depth case study was employed to guide and achieve the purpose of this study. It was determined with a small sample of early childhood pre-service teachers, and how they are empowered to continuously learn to solve problems of teaching disadvantaged pupils and the communities they served. As at the time of this study, little is known about early childhood pre-service teachers' learning-to-teach experiences that could have informed systematic framework for mentoring and guiding them and their cooperating teachers during their internship. This gap has been made explicit by Mc Namara and Mc Nicholl (2016) who stressed that knowledge about the effective preparation of pre-service teachers to revolutionize educational disadvantage has remained scarce. Additionally, little attention appears to be given to early childhood pre-service teachers' learning-to-teach experiences in most teacher preparation programs. For these cited reasons, the researcher gained approval to proceed on her investigation. Hence, this case study had been designed to address the central question: What characterize early childhood pre-service teachers' learning-to-teach experiences and needs during internship serving children from disadvantaged communities that can be used as bases for a mentoring framework?

It was anticipated that the knowledge obtained from this inquiry would lead to development of a mentoring framework which will be useful to the early





childhood pre-service teachers, faculty in universities, supervisors, cooperating teachers and principals in conducting effective purposeful and systematic mentoring.

This study employed an in-depth, single case study methodology (Yin, 2014) to illustrate the phenomenon under examination. Participants of this study included purposefully selected group consisting of three early childhood pre-service teachers who were assigned in a university partner school for their internship. The interns' cooperating teachers and the principal contributed information-rich description of the learning-to-teach phenomenon. To understand the multiple realities in the lives of the EC pre-service teachers, the study relied on natural occurring data (Silverman, 2014) through the use of classroom observations, document analysis and focus group discussions.



## 1.2 Research Background

The passage of the Early Childhood Care and Development Act (ECCD Act, 2000) and the institutionalization of kindergarten in the basic education system have dramatically expanded the need for early childhood teachers across the Philippines. Since the introduction of these reforms, measures have been taken to improve the quality of training both of early childhood pre-service teachers and in-service teachers. Teacher education programs have been in constant struggle to prepare early childhood future teachers to deal with the complex realities and demands of teaching in today's schools. One of the opportunities offered by teacher education programs to address this concern is requiring pre-service teachers to undergo internship – a vital





component of teacher education program where they are expected to bridge theories and practice.

Conditions have been set in the Philippine Republic Act no. 10157 known as the “Kindergarten Act” declared in 2011 which sought for the institutionalization of kindergarten education into the basic education system. This law makes kindergarten education mandatory and compulsory which shall be understood as one year preparatory education for children at least five years old as a prerequisite for Grade 1. It is also the policy of the Philippine government to make early childhood education that covers Kindergarten to Grade 3 learner-oriented and responsive to the needs, cognitive and cultural capacity, the circumstances and diversity of learners, schools and communities through the appropriate languages of teaching and learning.

This additional level in the basic education system in the Philippines also means additional challenges to an already crowded public school system. Given these scenario, there is a pressing need to prepare and equip future early childhood teachers not only with knowledge and skills but a proper mindset to confront the many challenges posed by the environment of the disadvantaged communities and their educational needs as well as the challenges of the changing world, such as economics and technology, that is fast affecting the life and culture of the people.

Contrary to some perceptions that teaching early childhood learners appears to be fun and easy, Wall (2016) asserts that teaching young children requires a different set of pedagogical content knowledge and mindset for an intern to value his or her role as a teacher. The rigorous and complex demands attached to the role of pre-service teacher in the internship program is compounded when the venue of the





kindergarten school caters children from poor and disadvantaged communities. The recent study conducted by the Philippine Statistics Authority in the first quarter of 2015 reported that poverty incidence among Filipinos was registered at 26.3 percent. According to the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) 2015 report, this makes 38 per cent of the communities to be categorized as poor and disadvantaged. It is in this light that the study looked into the actual experiences of early childhood pre-service teachers with reference on their learning guided by university supervisors and cooperating teachers in disadvantaged communities. Recognizing these realities prompted the researcher to use the experiences of EC pre-service teachers in considering the transformative power of mentoring to support early childhood pre-service teacher learning during the internship program.



delivery of internship program as a requirement in the Early Childhood Education Program for graduation. As it is being done in one teacher education institution, it may be an on-campus and off-campus arrangements, or all in-campus, or straight on-campus. In some cases, student teachers who were evaluated to be needing more guidance were given extended on-campus time. On-campus is regarded as field study spent in the university under the supervision of teachers at the Institute of Teaching and Learning while off-campus is internship in partner schools where student teachers stay for one term or three months. Given these delivery options, it should be assured that competencies achieved through this course should match those of the National Competency Based Teacher Standards and the provisions in the Commission of Higher Education (CHED) Memorandum Order no. 30, s. 2004. The provision emphasizes the crucial role of teacher education institutions in ensuring





quality pre-service education and clearly stipulates that the highest standards are set in defining the objectives components, and the processes of the pre-service education curriculum. Although various teacher education curricula, practices and studies reflect the dichotomy of pre-service teacher learning, which occurs in the early years of teacher preparation provided by general and professional education courses and student teaching, referring to internship and training (AlAjmi, 2016), several studies show education and training are the most significant and necessary components of teacher education program (American Association of College for Teacher Education, 2010) and that these two components complement one another (AlAjmi, 2016).

Mentoring in the context of teacher preparation has been acknowledged as a valuable process and a cost-effective strategy in achieving educational reform, optimizing mentoring with the help of a cooperating teacher enables a pre-service teacher to link academic learning to school-work experiences (Hudson, 2013). As a teacher education initiative, mentoring is conducted with the primary aim of developing pre-service teachers' capacities to participate successfully in learning communities. Mastapha (2011) points out the essential components and benefits of the mentoring program to cooperating teachers and pre-service teachers, highlighting the importance of a mentor who is available to answer questions regarding school policies and procedures most helpful to new teachers. However, Russell and Russel (2011) stressed that many cooperating teachers feel they are not equipped with the necessary skills to mentor pre-service teachers. With the implementation of the Outcomes Based Teacher Education Curriculum (OBTEC) in the university, there is a clear and present demand that pre-service teachers must display content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and skills and the desired attitude during their internship.





However, Darling-Hammond and Baratz-Snowden (2005) assert that while specifying what teachers need to know and be able to do is not a simple task that is, to develop an evidence-based vision of professional teaching which connects teaching with student learning.

### 1.3 Problem Statement

The Policies, Standards and Guidelines (PSG) for the Bachelor of Early Childhood Education (BECED) is anchored on the salient features of K-12 Enhanced Curriculum (RA 10533), the Philippine Qualifications Framework (EO 83. S. 2012), the National Competency –Based Teacher Standards (NCBTS) now the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (D.). 42, s.2017). Pursuant to the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) Memorandum Order No. 76, series of 2017, this PSG implements the shift to *“learning competency-based standards/ outcomes-based education”* in response to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Framework. Students in this program are expected to demonstrate a solid foundation on developmentally appropriate practices in effective early childhood care and education. To achieve this, Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) are required to include Teaching Internship in their Teacher Education Programs.

Even before the implementation of the Outcomes Based Teacher Education Curriculum (OBTEC), internship has been a crucial component of teacher preparation. However, very little is known as to how early childhood pre-service teachers learn-to-teach during their internship specially on serving learners from disadvantaged communities. Moreover, the dearth of studies investigating the extent





of mentoring by cooperating teachers and university supervisors leaves mentoring practices unquestioned and neglected (Calamlam, 2016). Thomas and Packer (2013) lament that learning-to-teach elude many pre-service and novice teachers because it may take instruction and experience which may be difficult to achieve due to the limitations of a short and ineffective internship program leaving early-childhood pre-service teachers feel inadequately prepared for teaching. Indicative of these persistent concerns on teacher preparation Dinham (2013) points to the lack of basic model of university coursework and practice teaching have been found wanting that despite attempts to rectify this problem, beginning teachers rate themselves as not being ready when they start their full-time teaching jobs.

With regard to cooperating teachers' mentoring skills, it has been reported that many of them are unprepared to meet the needs of pre-service students which Ambrosetti (2015) corroborates in a study that cooperating teachers are unsupported in their mentoring role. The literature relating to the understanding of pre-service teacher learning during internship in the disadvantaged communities has been reported to remain scarce (Feiman-Nemser, 1983; Adelman, 1986; Feiman-Nemser, Parker, 1992; Schmidt, 2010; Hudson, 2014). In particular, Ellis, Thompson, McNicholl, and Thomson (2016) underscored that there has been surprisingly little research on the perceptions held by student teachers on the effects of poverty on pupils' learning and well-being. Parallel to this, literature shows that little work has been done to study the evolution of mentoring skills in professional teachers, specifically as they participate in ongoing support and training for their role as mentors. These current gaps create a need to conduct an in-depth study to understand early childhood pre-service teachers' learning-to-teach needs during internship. An





effective mentoring model linking pre-service learning to mentoring is needed to ensure graduates who are equipped to teach all learners and reduces turn-over rates (Hudson, 2007) as they confront the realities of teaching in disadvantaged communities.

Although research indicates that knowing how to do something is related to the knowledge and skills as outcomes of student teaching performance developed through training (AlAmij, 2016), developing future teacher professionals who should possess the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills may necessitate more than just teaching them to teach through apprenticeship of observation (Lortie, 1975) which is identified as a strategy most frequently emphasized by cooperating teachers (Calamlam, Montebon, Palmiery, Delos Santos, 2015). Thomas and Packer (2013) argue that reflection goes beyond the familiarity of doing the day-to-day practices and holding common beliefs about teaching and learning. Previous studies describe a reflective teacher as someone who takes responsibility for student's response to instruction and makes effective instructional decisions.

Mentoring being equated with coaching and supervision has been understood and used interchangeably by many teachers (Ambrosetti, 2014). This lack of understanding of teachers may be due to the complex nature of mentoring and their multiple roles that overlaps with that of other stakeholders has led the researcher to pursue this study. Koki (2014) enumerated major aspects that contribute to the complexity of mentoring which include the multiple needs of pre-service teachers, as well as their mentors, their developmental issues and concerns, their repertoire of teaching skills, the school culture that may impact positively or negatively on the





mentoring process and other numerous variables. Additionally, pre-service teachers perceived that the kind of mentoring they received from their cooperating teachers mostly gravitate to receiving and implementing instructions on what they would do (Calamlam, et al., 2015). This mentoring practice has been identified by cooperating teachers as the most frequently used strategy in mentoring their interns (Calamlam, et al., 2015). Given these aspects, cooperating teachers as mentors must be cognizant of the fact that using appropriate mentoring strategies attuned to the needs of pre-service teachers play a significant role in the early childhood pre-service learning.

At the background of this study are the disadvantaged communities chosen as the context because of the challenges they pose to early childhood pre-service teachers. In the Philippines, a community, which is be called *barangay* is created out of a contiguous territory which has a population of at least two thousand (2,000) inhabitants as certified by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA). As a basic political unit, the barangay serves as the primary planning and implementing unit of government policies, plans, programs, projects and activities in the community (Local Government Code, 1991). Hence, the barangay serves as a forum wherein collective views of the people may be expressed, crystallized and considered and where disputes may be amicably settled. In this context, the EC pre-service teachers found themselves engaging with the disadvantaged community during their teaching internship through the pupils they served.

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) Grant Assistance Report 2012 provided justification for the need to conduct this research in disadvantaged communities. The report says that while decades of investments in the ECCD programs and services in





the Philippines have improved day care and maternal and child health services in the barangays, challenges still remain affecting the development of young children. The issues include: creating sufficient access to quality learning environments for young children, particularly at preschool age; building teaching capacity in preschools; engaging parents and communities, and mobilizing support from broader civil society and the private sector. There is a pressing need to solve interlinked problems such as low enrolment in preschool due to lack of physical access, low quality, and low parental awareness of the importance of formative years through preschool and early grade schooling.

An account on the general situation of basic education (UNICEF, 2017; p.42) enumerated the causes of disadvantages. Findings reveal that i) children are unable to attend school because schools were not near their homes; ii) some children are not enrolled in school because their families cannot cover the additional costs of schooling, including the cost of lunch; iii) migration and relocation pose major hindrances to the completion of education; iv) parental attitude is not always conducive towards education; v) many schools have been associated with existing community outreach efforts focused towards parents who have not enrolled their children in school at the right age. vi) while early marriage and child labor are not particularly common, they have been identified by several respondents as reasons for children to drop out of school. In this study, the causes of disadvantages are also widespread in the communities served by the partner school.

In terms of quality of teaching, respondents reported that the increase in quality of teaching was linked to improvement in teaching practices over the years





(UNICEF, 2017; p.42) which can be a good indicator how teachers try to alleviate the condition of the children.

The researcher through this study aims to contribute to existing knowledge and practices in preparing future teacher professionals to confront and make a difference in the lives of learners coming from disadvantaged communities. These views point to the importance of a more systematic probing into early childhood pre-service teacher learning.

#### 1.4 Rationale of the Study

The qualitative nature of this study allowed the researcher and the educational community to understand early childhood pre-service teachers' learning needs and experiences during their internship. To heighten the grounds of pursuing this study on early childhood pre-service teachers' learning-to-teach was succinctly captured by Hillman (2006) in a challenge posed as a question: "Are the teachers' intellect and heart well prepared for this daunting challenge and awesome responsibility?" (p.3)

While studies on pre-service teacher learning in elementary and secondary levels are abundant, systematic studies exploring the over-all confidence and growth of early childhood pre-service teachers are few (Su-Jeong, Weber & Park, 2014). Figuring out how specific learning opportunities and teacher education practices can capitalize on these insights is in some ways the most complex kind of research (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005) because it requires tracking not only what and how teachers learn, but also how they use what they have learned and to what



effect this may have in developing EC pre-service teachers' professional vision. Furthermore, Donche, Endedijk, and van Daal (2015) recommend that there be more in-depth research on the characteristics of the teacher training internships to ascertain the key contextual factors that will enable student teachers to change their learning patterns. The inadequate training of EC pre-service teachers by teacher training institutions, the lack of training on mentoring as expressed by cooperating teachers and the lack of a mentoring framework are gaps the researcher explored to heighten the early childhood pre-service teachers' awareness for learning during internship in a partner school.

The dynamics of learning-to-teach which encompass practical knowledge, theoretical knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, skill and predispositions are more inclined to surface during internship hence, the right timing for exploration to see its impact in nurturing life-long learning which may be different in the context of teaching in disadvantaged communities. It is for this reason that this study was conceptualized: to identify early childhood pre-service teachers' learning-to-teach and practices that will shape the mentoring framework which will be used to support pre-service teachers, cooperating teachers and university supervisors for effective mentoring.

Although, teacher mentoring is a necessary process for all teachers preparing to enter into the teaching profession in order to ensure that their practice is firmly anchored on professional ethics and practice (Experiential Learning Courses Handbook 2009), recent studies show that many cooperating teachers are not well-prepared for mentoring, particularly when difficulties arise with the per-service



teacher (Valeni & Vogrinc 2007; Tang & Choi 2007; Russell & Russel, 2011). Research gathered that few teachers received training or preparation for mentoring as Soslau and Raths (2017) presented some problematic aspects of student teaching supervision such as giving feedback specifically on planning, assessment and building relationship with pupils. Ambrosetti (2014) justified this view that in many instances, it is assumed that if a teacher is considered to be an effective practitioner, they can pass their knowledge and skills to another as a mentor in which thinking along this line, cooperating teachers may just adopt the notion that mentoring is just requiring the pre-service teachers to replicate what the former are doing thus, diminishing their role as mentors who promote and sustain student teacher learning. Therefore, there is a need to develop a mentoring model to prevent variability in guiding and nurturing early childhood pre-service teachers and establish a mentoring practice drawn from the need to understand teacher learning during internship.

### 1.5 Research Objectives

The exploratory purpose of this study probed into the tacit learning-to-teach experiences of EC pre-service teachers which often draw less attention due to the many concerns that need to be addressed in partner schools. Understanding EC pre-service teacher learning through uncovering the spoken as well as the unspoken aspects of their internship experiences identified elements that yielded explanation and rich description of their learning would then be used to improve teacher education practices.



1. to identify the understanding and perceptions of early childhood pre-service teachers with regard to their learning-to-teach experiences and needs during internship in a partner school serving early childhood learners coming from disadvantaged communities;
2. to explore how EC pre-service teachers were mentored to learn-to-teach during internship in a disadvantaged environment;
3. to explore how cooperating teachers in partner schools use mentoring processes to help and support EC pre-service teachers that foster learning-to-teach during internship in a disadvantaged community;
4. to understand how university supervisors use mentoring to help EC pre-service teachers learn-to-teach during their internship; and
5. to identify components that can be drawn from this study which will comprise a mentoring model.

## 1.6 Research Questions

The stated problems and the objectives of the study led to these research questions:

1. What are the understandings and perceptions of early childhood pre-service teachers with regard to learning-to-teach during internship in disadvantaged communities?
2. How do EC pre-service teachers learn to draw upon insights from teaching experiences and use them to address concrete problems of practice during their internship in a disadvantaged environment?



3. How do cooperating teachers in the partner school guide and support pre-service teachers' learning-to-teach during internship in a disadvantaged environment?
4. How does the university supervisor use mentoring to help EC pre-service teachers learn to address problems of teaching practice during internship?
5. What components of mentoring can be drawn from the study that should comprise a mentoring model for early childhood internship program?

## 1.6 Conceptual Framework

Three concepts revolve around the understanding of EC pre-service teachers' learning-to-teach experiences during internship. The interaction of the three concepts – effective mentoring, reflective practice and structural ideology were used as lenses to understand the collected data and illuminate analysis that brought forth new understanding of issues surrounding mentoring practices of EC pre-service teachers and disadvantages in communities they served were linked. The elaboration of each category as to the definitions and descriptions are drawn from initial review of literature.

The conceptual framework illustrates how the study had been informed by the methodological design, shaped the research process and guide the formulation of data collection instrument. The review and critique of literature which includes the researcher's own experiences and insights, has contributed to the development of the conceptual framework. In the course of the study, the conceptual framework was used to give focus and form the research process. As a repository of the data that were





collected in the conduct of the study, the conceptual framework sets as an organizing structure for reporting the findings of the study and for the analysis, interpretation and synthesis of the findings.

### **EC Preservice Teacher's Learning-To-Teach**

At the core of this study is the understanding of early childhood pre-service teachers' learning-to-teach during internship. As shown in the conceptual framework, it is placed at center where all the other variables are seen to influence the process of EC pre-service teachers' learning-to-teach. The EC pre-service teachers' perceptions and insights gathered through interviews and reflective journals illuminate understanding of their learning-to-teach experiences as they confronted the problems of practice during their internship in a disadvantaged environment. Learning-to-teach as a hyphenated phenomenon (Silverman, 2014) draws attention from the researcher because the learning-to-teach in the context of teacher preparation has not been fully examined.

Since the 1980's the research landscape has seen significant changes in the way initial teacher education has been viewed, questioning the key paradigms and practices that relate to understanding learning-to-teach phenomenon. Caires, Almeida, & Vieira (2012) noted the gradual shift to the process of learning-to-teach, which focused on the way teachers think about what they do, their cognitive processes during teaching and the numerous factors that they have to deal with in their ongoing interaction in the classroom.





Going further to conceptualize learning-to-teach, review of a research conducted by Oosterheert and Vermunt (2001), using qualitative and quantitative research, established a number of consistent relationships between different learning-to-teach components which have been identified as different ‘patterns’ of learning-to-teach Teacher education degree programs has further revealed that the way in which students learn-to-teach can be examined in a multidimensional way by focusing not just on attitudinal aspects, but also on interrelated learning components such as learning-to-teach conceptions, cognitive and regulative strategies and aspects of emotion regulation.



Wenger’s (1998) term “communities of practice” contributes to the understanding of EC pre-service teachers’ learning-to-teach in this study. Central to Wenger’s social theory of learning (Wenger, 1998) is a perspective that teachers’ learning does not only rely on individuals’ cognitive actions but also from their participation within a larger social context. As they negotiate their relationships and position within these communities, they begin to shape their identities as teachers, and in turn they shape the profession. Wenger (1998) argues that viewing learning as an individual process assumes “that it has a beginning and an end, that it is best separated from the rest of our activities, and that it is the result of teaching” (p. 3). He proposes a social theory of learning which rests on the assumption that we are social beings; that learning results from our active participation in social communities; and that we construct our identities in relation to those communities. It can be assumed then that teachers learn from their individual activity, their active





engagement within their professional community and their engagement in the wider environmental context.

Wenger's proposition shaped the researcher's understanding of learning-to-teach as a construct being the core of this study. In Wenger's (1998) description, people's identities are demonstrated in the way they live their lives rather than in the way they describe themselves or the way others describe them. He describes identity as: a layering of events of participation and reification by which our experience and its social interpretations inform each other. This description guided the researcher in the careful use of interview protocols, classroom observations and documentary analysis as methods to understand EC pre-service teachers' learning-to-teach during their internship.



### **Effective Mentoring**

Effective mentoring means modelling practices to allow a mentee observational experiences that assist in pedagogical development (Hudson, 2011). Mentoring is essential to the development of EC pre-service teachers' learning-to-teach during internship; however, Hudson (2010) stressed that the quantity and quality varies significantly. Although the standards for teaching have been identified in the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST, 2016), there are no formal standards for mentoring, specifically mentoring the pre-service teachers. Theoretical models and mentoring capability programs have been proposed but few studies conduct investigations of practice within these models considering that teaching





internship is a vital component of teacher education programs in the Philippines (CMO No. 76).

A five-factor mentoring model has gathered evidence on effective mentoring practices through the literature and quantitative studies, but now requires qualitative understandings (Hudson, 2007). Each of the five factors and its associated attributes and practices (see Hudson, 2010) frame the understanding of effective mentoring in this study and were expected to be demonstrated by mentor in which is also understood as cooperating teachers and university supervisors in this study.

The five factors in Hudson's Mentoring Model (2010) are: i) Personal Attributes: an effective mentor develops a professional relationship with the mentee and is supportive of the mentee's classroom management (Feiman-Nemser, 1998). The cooperating teacher's personal attributes include being comfortable in talking about classroom management and listening attentively to the pre-service teacher, particularly in relation to managing student behavior, as the cooperating teacher will have more detailed information about students that can assist in devising appropriate management strategies. By demonstrating productive personal attributes, the mentor instills confidence and positive attitudes in the mentee and encourages the mentee's reflection on classroom management practices; ii) System Requirements: the cooperating teacher needs to be able to simply and clearly articulate the aims (e.g., achievement standards, outcomes), policies, and curricula required by an education system. However, pedagogical knowledge is required for implementing the system





requirements; iii) Pedagogical Knowledge: developing deep pedagogical knowledge provides a way for a student teacher to successfully manage the classroom. Effective mentors explain how to plan for teaching; they timetable or schedule lessons for the student teachers. Preparation for teaching needs to be discussed, particularly in relation to the location and use of teaching and learning resources. Experienced teachers develop a repertoire of teaching strategies for successful lesson delivery, and in their roles as mentors, they can present their perspectives on how these teaching strategies work in their specific classrooms. For example, mentors can check on their pre-service teachers' content knowledge in the subject area to ensure this knowledge is age appropriate and linked with the school and system requirements. Effective problem-solving practices can also be modelled during a lesson to further guide the pre-service teachers. Managing student behavior requires a range of techniques and preventative strategies, and here mentors can offer valuable insights into student behavioral traits and outline for the mentee strategies that work and those that do not work. Achieving high levels of student engagement also necessitates astute questioning skills involving higher and lower-order questions with questions distributed equitably around the classroom. A cooperating teacher or the university supervisor can guide the pre-service teachers' lesson implementation process by ensuring the system requirements are met and the lesson is structured to thread the key concept(s) into the introduction, body and conclusion of a lesson. Similarly, managing students' learning necessitates pedagogical knowledge about assessment, so the cooperating teacher can help to articulate the connection between curriculum activities and the embedding of assessment techniques; iv) Modelling: learning how to manage the class requires a mentor to model effective classroom management strategies and demonstrate desirable teaching traits. The teacher-student relationship





is central to teaching; by demonstrating a positive rapport with students, the cooperating teacher can show their mentees how a positive relationship can facilitate learning. The mentor also needs to model appropriate classroom language (age-appropriateness and curriculum discourse), effective teaching (of not what to do, what not to do), classroom management, and well-designed hands-on lessons; v) Feedback: effective mentors articulate expectations and provide advice to their mentees, they review lesson plans, observe the mentees teach, provide oral and written feedback.

Mentoring as previously discussed is built on positive relationship that will eventually help in the pre-service teachers' transformation. In this study, Beach's (2003) concept of transition was adopted to mean not only application or transfer of knowledge but referred to as "the reconstruction of new knowledge, skills, and artifacts, or transformation, across time and through multiple social contexts" (Beach, 2003, p. 9). This movement across contexts is seen as progress and is considered to be a developmental process which can result in change in the individual, the activity or both. When individuals consciously reflect on a transition and there are changes in the way they view themselves and their position within a community, the transition becomes consequential since it results in a change in identity. It is with this view that cooperating teachers are seen as mentors who will be agentive in the transition and transformation of the EC pre-service teachers.



In this study, the concept of mentoring encompasses individual professional development for the mentor but with it lies the growth of teacher education institution. Lofthouse (2018) pushes the idea of re-imagining mentoring as dynamic hub within a practice development-led model benefitting from the trend towards greater school-based professional experience. The demand for mentoring of pre-service teachers during often extended and multiple school-based placement is a relative constant. Over the years, mentoring practices have become more crucial as teacher educators are seen to contribute to bringing value to the transformation of pre-service teachers focusing on

### **Reflective Practice**

Reflective practice is seen as component of mentoring which has been used as one of the concepts explicated in this study. Tonna, Bjerknott and Holland (2017) favor the use of critical reflection based on a developmental approach toward mentoring over the judgmental one. Prompted by this development in teacher education, the researcher presents the development of understanding of reflective thinking as applied in understanding learning-to teach experiences of EC pre-service teachers. Studies show reflective practice improves teaching and learning competence however, there is a need for teachers to be trained on the use of reflective practice in mentoring pre-service teachers.



The conceptual framework of this study highlights and has been influenced by Donald Schön's (1987) reflective practice. He maintained that "competent practitioners usually know more than they can say" (p. viii). Aspfors and Franssen (2015) emphasized that cooperating teachers need to practice reflective approach in teaching so that they could better mentor the practice teacher on what teaching strategies work for a more interactive teaching-learning situation. Following this line of understanding reflective practice, Farrell (2016) defines it as a process of thinking where a teacher, accompanied by a set of attitudes, gathers data about their practice, and at the same time engage in dialogue with others. The process is undertaken with the intention of making informed decisions on their teaching both within and outside the classroom. Along this vein is an accepted fact that a teacher's pedagogical skill in the classroom is causally linked with how well and how much students learn (Marzano, 2012) wherein teachers' reflective practices improve their pedagogical skill. Research has shown that teachers who are reflective practitioners are more likely to develop good reasoning skills in wrestling ill-structured problems (Wlodarsky & Waters, 2018), integrate new practices in their teaching repertoire (Camburn & Hans, 2015) and will be more resilient from the initial jolts they encountered when they start teaching (Moradkhani, Raygan & Moein, 2017).

Engagement in reflective practices is imperative as EC pre-service teachers hone their craft during internship. Most of EC pre-service teachers' reflection is prevalent in their written reflective journals by way of documenting their internship experiences as part of requirement of Practice Teaching 2 (PT2) or Internship and are also used for the purpose of assessment. Farrell (2016) posits that engaging in





reflective practice helps pre-service teachers to articulate and reflect on their beliefs with the hope that a new level of awareness could invite a potential re-examination of their teaching practices. Marzano (2012) expounds on the importance of reflective practice which is found useful in mentoring EC pre-service teachers:

- i) *Reflective practice is not a new idea.* Reflecting on one's experiences is a foundational idea of many ancient Eastern and Western philosophies. For example, Eastern culture emphasizes the central role of reflection in an individual's search for truth and enlightenment. In ancient Greece, Socrates admonished his students by saying, "the unexamined life is not worth living" (as quoted by Plato in the *Apology*). Early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, John Dewey (1910) defined reflective thought as "active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it, and the further conclusions to which it tends" (p.8). The idea on the importance of reflection in examining beliefs and theories that influence actions (Dewey, 1910) is still relevant especially in understanding EC pre-service teacher's learning-to-teach experiences.
- ii) *Reflective practice is widely recognized as important in the teaching profession (Ghaye, 2011).* Teaching requires on-the-spot decisions and adaptations despite the preparations done before setting out to implement the plan. Such endeavors can be difficult for pre-service teachers who lack the practical experience, and reflective practice,



especially if modelled by a mentor can help pre-service teachers build the experience they need in order to be successful.

iii) *Reflective practice is critical to expertise.* The research literature on expertise implicitly supports the importance of reflective practice (Marzano, 2012). Thus, the adage “*expert teachers are made*” is a constant reminder that expertise is achieved through deliberate effort to improve performance in a specific domain (Ericsson & Charness, 1994). In this study, learning-to-teach is viewed as the product of a student teachers’ deliberate effort to use reflection to optimize their teaching and learning experiences during their internship.

### **Structural Ideology**

The partner school where EC pre-service student teachers had their internship serves students from disadvantaged communities. To some extent teaching early childhood learners who experience different forms of disparities- poverty, economic injustice, displacement posed challenges that forms a greater part of their learning-to-teach experiences. These disadvantaged communities experience inequality, lack of quality education, lack of jobs, corruption, natural calamities and overpopulation (National Economic Development Authority, 2018) as being the causes of poverty in the Philippines. Poor people highlighted hopelessness in their plight and overcoming hardships are passed on to younger generation (Reyes, Rungduin, David, & Bayten



(2018). Barbarin and Aiken (2018) assert that children who suffer from this vicious cycle are handicapped by a mismatch between need and resources that should be provided by the government and addressed by the school. Learning-to-teach children from this disparate background required EC pre-service teachers to be reflective to be able to become equity literate (Gorski, 2016).

Gorski (2016) defines structural ideology as an ideological position through which educators understand educational outcome disparities in the context of structural injustice and unequal distribution of access and opportunities that underlies poverty. He argues that teacher education for equity and economic justice must equip pre- and in-service teachers with a structural ideology poverty and economic injustice. He asserts that deficit and grit ideology obscure structural inequalities and as a result reduce teacher educators ill-equipped to enact equitable and just teaching, leadership and advocacy. It is in this light that structural ideology was used to understand how EC pre-service teachers dealt with the challenges of teaching in a disadvantaged environment.

Structural ideology is a component of the conceptual framework because it relates to the other concepts previously mentioned in this section in a way that it is pervasive throughout EC pre-service teachers' learning-to-teach experiences. Having adversities as part of student teachers' daily grind taught them to be resilient and reflective in their teaching practices. And it is during this time where they needed to be mentored well.



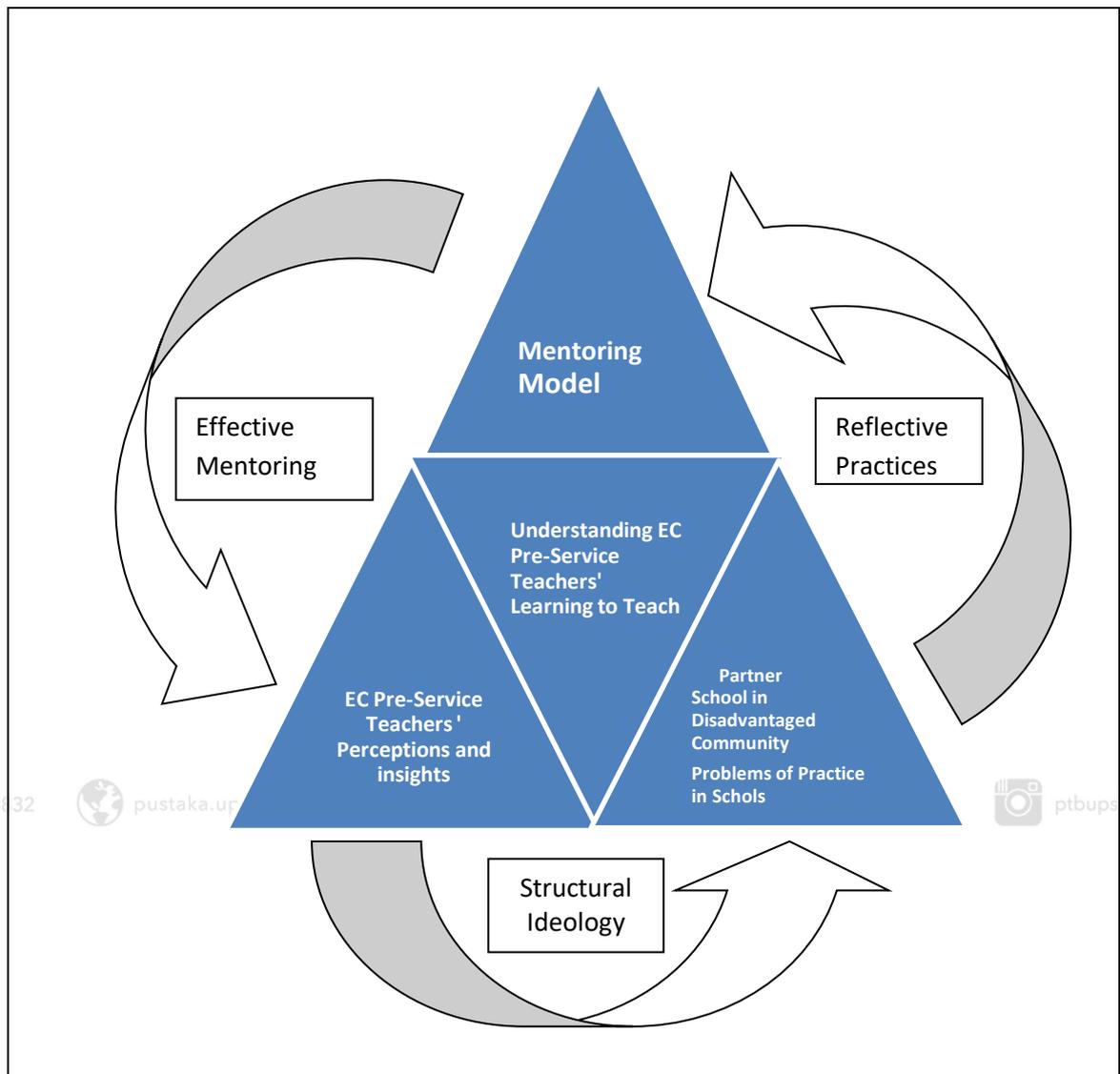


Figure 1.1 Conceptual Framework

## 1.7 Assumptions

Based on the researcher's experience and background as university supervisor, four primary assumptions were made transparent regarding this study. First, pre-service teachers need guidance to develop their capability to reflect on their own practices and if given the right kind of mentoring and opportunities they will flourish to become expert teachers. Second, EC pre-service teachers will develop the right kind of



attitudes, knowledge and skills to respond to the needs of vulnerable children in disadvantaged communities. This is based on the assumption that following the objectives set by the National Service Training Program (NSTP), the EC pre-service teachers had learned from the activities to reach out to disadvantaged communities. Third, the joint efforts of cooperating teachers and university supervisors in mentoring the pre-service teachers are essential in nurturing future teacher professionals. This assumption is based on the premise that collaboration between cooperating teachers and university supervisors is likely to be a predictor of the pre-service teacher's future success. Fourth and finally, a mentoring model is needed to raise the standards of educating the pre-service teachers during their internship that will sustain them to take on challenges posed by difficult situations in disadvantaged communities.



These foregoing assumptions were premised on the notion that mentoring must be structured in such way that interns would undergo stages of learning if the goal is to develop in the pre-service teachers the courage, resiliency and optimism to make a difference in the community they choose to serve.

## **1.9 Significance of the Study**

The findings of this study are important in educating future EC teacher professionals who will be primed to take on challenges posed by schools in disadvantaged communities. Determining EC pre-service teachers' perceptions, and practices in learning-to-teach in addressing disadvantages is seen to improve practices in mentoring them.



Specifically, understanding early childhood pre-service teacher learning and the development of mentoring model are significant to the following:

i) Early childhood pre-service teacher: Besides learning the concept and theories in their undergraduate courses, it is also essential for pre-service teachers to examine and articulate their perceptions that may contribute to a better understanding of themselves as learners and practitioners. The implementation of the mentoring model is seen to capacitate them to respond to the needs in disadvantaged communities. Moreover, the study is beneficial for them to address their diverse background of abilities, experiences and expectations, which influence their decisions and teaching behavior.

ii) Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs): The development of mentoring model is regarded as one of the priorities in the implementation of the Outcomes Based Teacher Education Curriculum (OBTEC) in TEIs. The mentoring model addresses the need to reduce the adverse effects of variability in implementing mentoring protocols in disadvantaged communities.

iii) University Supervisors and Cooperating Teachers (Teacher Mentors): University supervisors and cooperating teachers are a formidable team in developing quality teachers. Using a model in mentoring pre-service teachers provide information in terms of providing feedback on pre-service teachers' performance.

iv) Vulnerable children in disadvantaged communities: The early childhood learners coming from disadvantaged communities will benefit from the

mentoring model as it will improve instructional practices to address their particular learning needs.

v) Educational Researchers: The mentoring model can provide a wealth of information focusing on the growth of pre-service teachers in terms of how they are mentored, thereby informing the educational community of authentic data drawn from this study.

vi) Curriculum Developers: Using the information drawn from the study, curriculum developers may improve the teacher education curriculum. They might see the necessity of introducing innovative mentoring practices to all the components of teacher training.

vii) Employers: Final grades or general weighted average may not be sufficient performance indicators of a teacher applicant (Calamlam, 2013).

Insights culled from this study respond to employers' reportedly 'high need' of professionals who demonstrate the following skills: critical thinking, ethics and social responsibility, professional ethics and lifelong learning and self-direction.

### **1.10 Limitations of the Study**

The study is limited to the context in which it operated – one particular partner school serving early childhood learners coming from disadvantaged communities where three EC pre-service teachers spent their three-month internship. The researcher did not have control of the time since the schedule and duration of the Practice Teaching 2 or Internship could not be negotiated and it was fixed in the calendar of activities of the University.



The use of qualitative case study set the limit to the participants who were purposely identified and therefore the findings of which cannot be used in making generalization to include other settings outside the parameters of this study. Although the study may be limited in scope, it generated thick description (Denzin, 2001) of the participants' experiences during the three-month practice teaching internship. Although findings were not used to formulate generalizations, the in-depth case study generated lessons learned derived from analysis of findings.

Central to this study is understanding the early childhood pre-service teachers' learning-to-teach during internship conducted within a quarter of the school year which roughly last for three months or ten weeks, that is, from July to September of 2017. The limited period of time given to internship was maximized so that efforts were made to be able to collect as much data from the participants through interviews, focus group discussion, observation and document review.

The study resulted in the development of a mentoring framework drawn from the data during the conduct of the research. However, the validation of the mentoring framework could not be completed at the time of this writing because there was only one quarter of the school year devoted for internship for the fourth year students who were in the Bachelor in Early Childhood Education (BECE) program. For validation of the mentoring framework to be accomplished, it necessitated another time frame where another set of EC pre-service teachers is needed so that the framework can be used for mentoring. The next batch of EC pre-service teachers would be in July, 2018 which would be too late to be included in this study.





## 1.11 Definition of Terms

Various terminologies are used for this particular study. Some of the terms are defined operationally so that better appreciation of concepts may be achieved.

### 1.11.1 Mentoring

Mentoring is a teacher education initiative conducted with the primary aim of developing pre-service teachers' capabilities to participate successfully in learning communities. The definition of “mentoring” in this study is adopted from Bigelow (2002) i.e.the process of helping early childhood pre-service teachers develop teaching behaviors and strategies, involving a nurturing relationship between a less experienced person and a more experienced person where the mentor provides guidance by serving as a role model and advisor. In this study, mentoring is defined as a process of preparing early childhood pre-service teachers to acquire the necessary knowledge, skills and dispositions with the guidance and modelling of accomplished teachers. Their mentoring focuses on the individual needs of each aspiring teacher, coach them intensively in the areas where they need to grow and help them to integrate theory and practice in the classroom.

### 1.11.2 Internship

Internship is the initial phase of teacher preparation where pre-service teachers are assigned to partner schools for a given period of time. In the context of this study, internship was conducted in July to September of school year 2017. This is the phase



where pre-service teachers are expected to apply the principles and theories of teaching and learning to actual situations presented in partner schools. Internship, also known as practicum, is taken by education students on their fourth year in their bachelor's program. It is required that education students have finished their undergraduate courses before they are deployed to partner schools. As practiced in the university, internship has three phases: Phase one is the orientation of the pre-service teachers which lasts for a week. They attend an orientation program where they are briefed about the protocols, course requirements and announcement of school assignment. Endorsement of university supervisors to the partner schools marks the second phase of internship. During this phase, pre-service teachers observe the cooperating teachers where they learn the routines, deepening of content knowledge, methods and techniques of teaching the subject for two weeks. Gradually, from observing and participation in class activities, pre-service teachers are given the tasks to design their own lessons and implement their plans. The important role of the cooperating teachers as a mentor is expressed in ensuring that pre-service teachers learn to design high quality lessons and instructional materials; and providing feedback. A professional relationship grounded on mutual respect and trust is seen to be established as a result of mentoring.

The definition of internship as used in this study is a component of teacher education program where student teacher interns were deployed to partner schools for a period of 10 weeks with the purpose of gaining experiences that prepare interns for their future career. The terms Off-Campus and Practicum are also used to mean as internship by the participants in this study.



### 1.11.3 Early childhood pre-service teachers

Early childhood (EC) pre-service teachers are students who are in their fourth year of teacher preparation assigned to teach 5 to 8-year-old learners during their internship in partner schools which means early childhood in the partner schools are in Kindergarten, Grade 1 to 3. They are also called practice teachers, student teachers or interns in this study as how they, as research informants used these terms interchangeably.

It is expected for EC pre-service teachers to have completed all their academic courses so that they could give their full and undivided attention to their responsibilities as practice teachers in partner schools. To do this, they sought evaluation of their courses from the Office of the Registrar which then, was submitted to the Office of the Director of the Institute for Teaching and Learning (ITL). They secure endorsement letter from ITL and present the letter to the principal in partner schools so that they will be admitted as practice teachers in the partner schools for a period of ten weeks. EC Pre-service teachers were easily identified because they wore their student teaching uniform every day.

EC Pre-service teachers demonstrate intentionality and responsiveness in applying insights learned from teaching and learning experiences as they develop professionalism and dependability (Practice Teaching 2 Handbook, 2016). They are increasingly becoming engaged with the community to create more natural learning contexts. They demonstrate confidence in implementing a repertoire of strategies in managing student behavior to maximize learning. They use rich sources of data and



evidence to identify learners' needs and develop appropriate programs and plans to address the needs of their pupils.

#### **1.11.4 Early-childhood learners**

In the Philippine education context, early childhood learners are 5-8 year-old children who are enrolled in kindergarten to grade 3 classes. In this study, research participants used the terms students, children, learners to refer to the early-childhood learners. The early childhood learners in this study were the ones who live in disadvantaged communities at the vicinity of the partner school. The Principal said that 80% of the school population is Muslim citing that their school serves displaced children who have witnessed the atrocities of war in Mindanao, specifically, in Marawi.

#### **1.11.5 Cooperating teachers**

Cooperating teachers are members of the school staff where the principal designates early childhood pre-service teachers under their supervision. They were regarded as willing, capable, and compatible mentors who possess varied expertise and who can provide richer and more dynamic mentoring experiences. They are tasked to mentor the early childhood pre-service teachers during their stay in partner schools, however, they have not received any formal training in mentoring student teachers. In this study, EC preservice teachers refer to their cooperating teachers as CT.

Revisions were made in Practice Teaching Handbook (2017) that emphasized cooperating teachers are selected by the principal or department



head on the basis of the qualifications identified in the handbook to ensure that pre-service teachers will get the maximum experience during the practice teaching period. A cooperating teacher must have: at least 5 years of teaching experience; a performance rating of very satisfactory (VS) for the last three years; majored in the learning area that the practice teachers are taking (in the case of secondary level); willingness to take responsibility for mentoring the pre-service teacher; desirable qualities such as patience, kindness, understanding and fairness as attested by the principal; no record of irregularities and/or abusive practices in school or in the community; a regular and permanent teaching position; have a healthy physical and mental state.

The guidelines (Practice Teaching Handbook, 2017) highlight the major tasks of the cooperating teacher as follows:



1. Observes mentor/mentee relationship
2. Assists the student teachers in the following activities:
  - 2.1. Regular class observation
  - 2.2. Lesson planning
  - 2.3. Use of varied teaching strategies / approaches / techniques
  - 2.4. Classroom management
  - 2.5. Assessment of learning outcomes
  - 2.6. Questioning techniques
  - 2.7. Preparation of instructional materials
  - 2.8. Preparation of examination/various assessment modes
  - 2.9. Accomplishment of different forms and related work
3. Observes and evaluates the performance of the pre-service teacher
4. Conducts pre and post conferences with student teachers about the lesson demonstrated
5. Keeps a record of observations and post conferences made with the student teacher
6. Models effective teaching and management techniques
7. Provides pre-service teachers with opportunities to independently
8. Provides the student teacher participation in co-curricular and school/community activities
9. Completes a set of summative evaluation reports for each student teacher; and





10. Recommends a PASS or FAIL status for the student teacher's performance during the practice teaching program

### 1.11.6 University Supervisors

University Supervisors are faculty members of teacher education institutions whose task is to supervise pre-service teachers and monitor their performance in partner schools (Student Teaching Handbook, 2009). An average of forty EC pre-service teachers were assigned to university supervisors as part of their teaching load. These EC pre-service teachers were then deployed to partner schools in the different parts of the National Capital Region (NCR) namely: City of Manila, Quezon City, Paranaque, Las Pinas, Caloocan, Navotas, Malabon. With the big number of EC pre-service teachers scattered in the different parts of the NCR, the university supervisor could only visit them thrice during the term. The school year is divided into three terms within which PT2 or Internship could be had for three months. Requirements such as portfolio, professional readings and action based research were submitted to university supervisors that comprise the 40 percent of the EC pre-service teachers' grade for Practice Teaching 2 (PT2). Asplin and Marks (2013) underscore the influence of university supervisors during student teaching as one who bridges theory and practice.

### 1.11.7 Partner School

In this study, a partner school is an educational institution identified by the university that served as venue for practice teaching (Student Teaching Handbook, 2009). This school is under the Department of Education where EC pre-service were deployed





for their internship. To be considered a partner school, the principal and the head of the Student Teaching Department or the Institute of Teaching and Learning must have expressed their agreement on the stipulations in the memorandum of understanding.

The school where the researcher was allowed to conduct her study is located in the vicinity of disadvantaged communities in an urban setting. It was possible for the researcher to have prolonged engagement with the participants because the partner school is two kilometres away from the university where the researcher is based. This way, the researcher was able to frequent the research site and eventually established rapport with the research participants.

#### **1.11.8 Disadvantaged environment**



Disadvantaged environment as used in this study refers to the communities in the vicinity of the partner school where residents experience inequalities in relation to financial capability and limited resources. Students being served by the partner school come from this environment. According to UNICEF Evaluation Report (2017), poor families in these communities survive below poverty line which suggests that it has an effect on education. The identified causes of disadvantages reported by Reyes et al (2018) are: inequality in terms of access to government poverty alleviation programs, lack of quality education, lack of jobs, corruption, natural calamities and overpopulation.





### 1.11.9 Principal

The principal is the highest official of the school. Republic Act (RA) 9155, also known as the Basic Education Act of 2001, provides the over-all framework for principal empowerment by strengthening principal and principal leadership goals; and local school based management within the context of transparency and local accountability. He is regarded as an instructional leader who spearheads and assures the proper implementation of the K-12 Curriculum. He also has several programs in school where the EC pre-service teachers were very much engaged. The principal, in this study has been exposed to mentoring experiences in which mentoring is also one of his responsibilities. However, the kind of mentoring done to in-service teachers may not be effectively applied to EC pre-service teachers because of its different nature.

### 1.11.10 Reflective Journals

As used in this study, reflective journals are documents that contain the reflections of the EC pre-service teachers about their day to day learning-to-teach experiences. The researcher gained access to these documents which were willingly shared by the interns. Writing reflective journals, the process within which student teachers make sense of their everyday teaching and learning experiences, is one of the activities teachers and student teachers alike are engaged in to promote reflective practice (Marzano, 2012). EC pre-service teachers' reflective journals are important entries in



their portfolio. Most of the data used in the study were culled from the reflective journals.

### **1.12 Summary**

This chapter presented and explained the context, significance as well as the limitations of the study within which it is grounded. The research questions, objectives and rationale are aligned giving structure to the conceptual framework. Thus, effective mentoring, reflective practices and structural ideology are theories and concepts surrounding EC pre-service teachers' learning-to-teach during internship in disadvantaged environment and were explicated which were instrumental in understanding intrinsically the phenomenon being explored. The terms used in this study were defined operationally and the researcher's assumptions were presented to help readers gain contextual understanding of the phenomenon.