

MODERN TRENDS
IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING
AND APPLIED LINGUISTICS

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**MODERN TRENDS
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AND APPLIED LINGUISTICS**

*(Proceedings of the international conference
'Modern trends in foreign language teaching and applied linguistics in
the twenty-first century: Meeting the challenges',
11-12 April, 2014)*

Beregszász/Berehovo
2015

ББК: κ74.261.7(4Укр.)

УДК: 058 : 81

C - 96

The present volume publishes the proceedings of the international academic conference held on 11 April, 2014 at the Ferenc Rákóczi II Transcarpathian Hungarian Institute. During the event, the participants worked in two sections. In the first one, presentations on language pedagogy could be heard, while in the second one participants discussed applied linguistic issues. The internationally known and acknowledged plenary speakers and presenters spoke about the most modern trends of their research areas. The written-up version of the presentations has been collected and published in one volume so that they could reach a wider audience.

Jelen kötet a 2014. április 11-én a II. Rákóczi Ferenc Kárpátaljai Magyar Főiskolán megtartott nemzetközi tudományos konferencia írott anyagait tartalmazza. Az eseményen két szekcióban folyt a munka. Az egyikben nyelvpedagógiai, a másikban alkalmazott nyelvészeti kutatásokról hangzottak el előadások. A nemzetközileg ismert és elismert előadók kutatási területeik legmodernebb irányzatairól értekeztek. Az előadások szerkesztett változatát egy kötetbe gyűjtöttük össze, hogy minél szélesebb szakmai közönséghez jusson el.

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ISBN 978-966-2303-17-9

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Hungarian Institute / II. Rákóczi Ferenc
Kárpátaljai Magyar Főiskola, 2015

Contents

PREFACE	7
Medgyes, Péter WHY WON'T THE LITTLE BEASTS BEHAVE?	8
Orosz, Ildikó POSSIBILITIES OF HUNGARIAN LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN TRANSCARPATHIA IN THE LIGHT OF A DISRESPECTED LANGUAGE LAW	24
Ajtay-Horváth, Magda CONTEXTS CHALLENGED BY POETRY	29
Bárány, Erzsébet METHODOLOGICAL QUESTIONS OF THE ACQUISITION OF UKRAINIAN AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (USL) IN TRANSCARPATHIAN HUNGARIAN SCHOOLS: PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS	37
Csernicskó, István THE PROBLEMS OF TEACHING UKRAINIAN AS A STATE LANGUAGE IN TRANSCARPATHIA	45
Fábián, Márta IMPACT OF MONOLINGUAL AND BILINGUAL ENVIRONMENT ON THE RECEPTIVE SKILLS AND LEARNING STRATEGIES OF YOUNG LEARNERS OF EFL IN TRANSCARPATHIAN HUNGARIAN SCHOOLS	53
Fodor, Gyula LANGUAGE SITUATION IN UKRAINE AND POSSIBILITIES OF TEACHING THE TRANSCARPATHIAN GEOGRAPHICAL HERITAGE THROUGH ENGLISH	64
Frank, Jerrold WHAT IS A GOOD ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHER?	72
Henkel, Beatrix THE HOW AND WHY OF MINORITY LEARNERS' LANGUAGE MOTIVATION	76
Horváth, József "TWO WORLDS AND US" ORIGINALITY IN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' E-BOOKS IN	90
Husztí, Ilona DO MENTORS AND TRAINEES AGREE? INSIGHTS INTO THE PROCESSES OF BECOMING A TEACHER	101
Illés, Éva ENGLISH AS A LINGUA FRANCA IN LANGUAGE PEDAGOGY	119
Kovács, Júlia A CASE STUDY OF A JAPANESE-HUNGARIAN SECONDARY- SCHOOL EFL STUDENT: THE INTERACTION OF SOCIOCULTURAL IDENTITY, LANGUAGES AND WILLINGNESS TO COMMUNICATE	132
Lechner, Ilona IDIOMS BASED ON METAPHORS IN THE FLA PROCESS FROM A COGNITIVE LINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVE	148
Márku, Anita and Bartha, Csilla RESEARCHING THE INTERNET LANGUAGE USE AS A MODERN TREND IN APPLIED LINGUISTICS	156

Negre, Marianna THE INFLUENCE OF MULTILINGUALISM ON LEARNING THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE	168
Pecsora, Krisztina ‘COURSEBOOKS ARE NEEDED MUCH MORE BY THE PUPILS THAN TEACHERS’: THE ANALYSES OF ENGLISH TEXTBOOKS FOR FORMS 5 AND 6 USED IN TRANSCARPATHIAN HUNGARIAN SCHOOLS	180
Pillar, Granville W. VIDEO-TEXT VERSUS AUDIO-TEXT AS STIMULUS FOR L2 INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT.....	196
Szerencsi, Katalin A LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF TOP AMERICAN PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURATION ADDRESSES	210
Szócs, Krisztina LANGUAGE TEACHERS’ PERCEPTION REGARDING LANGUAGE LEARNING AUTONOMY AND SELF-ASSESSMENT IN A HUNGARIAN SECONDARY SCHOOL CONTEXT	223
Vraukó, Tamás “BREEDING” TEXTS FOR TRANSLATION PRACTICE.....	236
CONTRIBUTORS	244

DO MENTORS AND TRAINEES AGREE? INSIGHTS INTO THE PROCESSES OF BECOMING A TEACHER

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Abstract:

The paper focuses on the results of a piece of research carried out in Transcarpathia among school mentors and pre-service teachers on the process of becoming competent teachers. An attempt has been made to clash the various opinions and to clarify what type of help trainee teachers require from the mentors and what kind of support the mentors give to will-be teachers during their teaching practice at the school. The study also points out that mentors' support may positively influence the process in question. The participants of the present study were 45 graduate students of the Ferenc Rákóczi II. Transcarpathian Hungarian Institute majoring in various subjects (Year 4 and Year 5 students studying for their bachelor and specialist degrees). In addition, fourteen mentors were also surveyed about the main topic of this research, so that it could be analyzed from the mentors' point of view, as well. Two different questionnaires were applied in the survey: one for the trainees and another one for the mentors. One of the most crucial conclusions of the survey was that the mentors applied the so-called developmental model of mentoring, i.e. they pointed out the fundamental aspects, but they mainly allowed the trainees to unfold as individuals while unnoticeably directing them on the right track.

Keywords: mentor, trainee teacher / practising teacher, teaching practice

1 Mentoring in Transcarpathia

Hungarian pre-service teachers studying at universities or colleges in Transcarpathia can pass their compulsory teaching practice in 104 schools with Hungarian language of instruction in the region. This compulsory teaching practice is one of the most crucial elements in the process of becoming a competent teacher of any discipline. During the practice the trainees observe real pupils, teachers and syllabi in their natural context. Richards and Crookes (1988) point out that the teaching practice provides opportunities for trainees to gain classroom teaching experiences, as well as acquire skills of choosing, adapting and developing teaching materials.

During their practicum, trainees have to get familiarised with all the aspects of the teacher profession (both inside and outside the classroom), for which they need a great deal of assistance and guidance. The main sources of this help and support are the 'cooperating teachers' or 'mentors' (Farrell, 2008). They have or may have a great impact on trainee teachers during their practice because they are in the closest contact with them during the teaching practicum. Therefore it is of utmost importance that trainee teachers work together with competent mentors while doing their teaching practice.

In general, the 'cooperating teachers' in Transcarpathia are those teachers who have the longest in-service teaching practice and the most teaching

experiences. However, this does not automatically mean that they are the best mentors. In most cases these teachers are not trained to be mentors who know how to ‘deal’ with mentees: what professional support and assistance they need.

Johnson (1996) believes that the English teaching community does not know enough about how English-major pre-service students perceive their own teaching experiences at the starting phase, and what influences they have on the trainee teachers’ professional development and their processes of becoming competent teachers. This was the basic motivation to carry out the research detailed in this paper.

2 Brief review of the literature

Various authors explain the concept of ‘mentor’ in a number of ways. The accepted definition in this study is that of M. Nádasi’s (2010), according to which ‘the mentor who is leading the teaching practice is a teacher with appropriate pedagogical experience, who is able to provide practising teachers participating in teacher training programs with adequate professional support’ (p. 11). In Transcarpathia (the context of the present research), the mentor’s responsibilities also include tasks like familiarizing practising teachers with the design and conducting of lessons, introducing them to ways of self-reflection, while observing the will-be teachers’ growing independence. (M. Nádasi, 2010).

Major (2010) interprets the essence of mentoring activity in the following way: “it is an individual form of teaching activity provided by an experienced in-service teacher to a novice or a less experienced teacher, the primary aim of which is to support the professional development of the mentored teacher and make his or her adaptation to the teaching profession in general and the special local context (in our case the school) in particular, smoother...” (p. 33.) Falus (2004, p. 362.) believes that “in the process of becoming a teacher, it is necessary to develop the trainee teacher’s views, knowledge, abilities, practical skills, commitment, and attitudes in order for them to fulfil their functions as teachers”. The mentor plays an enormous role in all this development.

Walkington (2005) claims that when playing the role of a mentor, experienced teachers help trainee teachers in developing the functional teacher role in them. Mentors encourage practice teachers to reflect on the work done in the light of their newly obtained experiences. How the trainee teacher perceives their new experiences is usually influenced by the mentor’s professional identity (Galbraith & Cohan, 1995). Farrell (2008) believes that cooperating teachers are the main source of support needed by trainee teachers because they have the greatest professional impact on them during their teaching practice.

Several advantages and disadvantages were identified by Hobson et al. (2009) when examining the impacts the mentoring activity has on trainee

teachers. The authors point out that it is positive that trainee teachers' anxiety decreases with the help of mentors, while their self-confidence increases and they also develop professionally. As a negative factor, they mention that certain practice teachers may feel their mentors prevent them from trying out their own ideas in teaching. However, this can also be true vice versa when the mentor feels 'endangered' by the trainee teacher in the case when the latter applies a technique in the lesson that the mentor is not familiar with. (Hobson et al., 2009) Nevertheless, the most significant problem for trainee teachers is meant by improper mentoring, when they do not obtain sufficient support and independence from the mentors (*ibid.*). The findings of a study conducted in 2011 in Transcarpathia (Huszti, 2011) prove that trainee teachers would like to get more help and support from their mentors. The study also points out that mentors' support may positively influence the process of becoming competent teachers.

3 Methods of the research

3.1 Research participants

The participants of the present study were 45 graduate students of the II. Rákóczi Ferenc Transcarpathian Hungarian Institute majoring in various subjects (Year 4 and Year 5 students studying for their bachelor and specialist degrees). These students were selected because they had already done their compulsory six-week long teaching practice in a number of Transcarpathian schools with Hungarian language of instruction. They were believed to have clear views on problematic issues emerging in connection with the teaching practice, to have formed their own opinions about the issues in question, as well as to have taken their position about the quality and characteristics of the support they had obtained in the school during their practice. Table 1 presents the details about the student participants of the research.

Table 1
Major subjects and training programs of participants (n=45)

Major subject	Bachelor (Year IV.)	Specialist (Year V.)	Total
English	6	-	6
Biology	6	7	13
Geography	3	-	3
Hungarian	-	5	5
Mathematics	7	4	11
History	-	7	7
Total	22	23	45

In addition, fourteen mentors were also surveyed about the main topic of this research, so that it could be analyzed from the mentors' point of view, as well. All the mentors teach and do mentoring activities in the two base schools of the Rákóczi Institute in Beregszász. Mentor teachers of different disciplines were asked about their work, and about students doing their teaching practice (see Table 2). There were twelve female and two male mentors. Their average age was 40 years; the average length of their teaching practice was 18 years, while the average length of their mentoring activity was 10 years. Regarding their qualifications, five mentors had teacher training institute degrees, whereas nine mentors had university degrees. Five mentors have participated in mentor training courses so far, while one mentor also indicated that she had finished a Language Pedagogy Doctoral School.

Table 2
Subject teachers participating in the research

Subject	Number of mentors
English	4
Biology	2
Geography	1
Mathematics	1
Hungarian	3
History	3
Total	14

3.2 Research instruments

Two different questionnaires were applied in the survey (see Appendices 1 and 2). The student questionnaire consisted of four parts and contained eleven questions. With its help, insights into the will-be teachers' views on planning the teaching process were obtained. The data also revealed whether trainee teachers got help from their mentors during their teaching practice and of what kind and in what form. This instrument also asked the respondents to describe the type of professional relationship between them and their mentors. The second questionnaire was used among the selected mentors. It enquired about the processes going on between mentors and trainee teachers, what kind of support trainees need from their mentors, how mentors help them, etc.

4 Research findings

4.1 Trainee teachers' questionnaires

With the help of the questionnaire the trainee teachers' opinions were surveyed about what role the mentors played in the process of their becoming competent teachers. The questions were organized into four big categories:

- a) issues concerning the observation of the mentor's work;
- b) issues related to lesson planning;
- c) questions concerning the analysis and evaluation of the trainee teachers' teaching;
- d) professional and personal relationship between the mentor and the practising teacher.

Most of the times students designed their lessons on their own (32 respondents), though thirteen trainee teachers indicated that they had worked together with the mentors in the planning process. However, it might not be so negative because those who admitted having planned their lessons on their own also added that they had discussed the lessons in general with their mentors orally, then prepared the detailed lesson plans and outlined the procedures of the lessons for themselves.

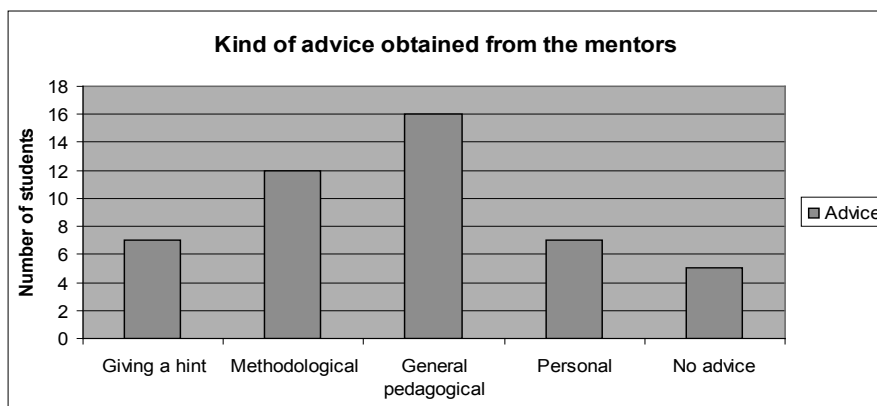
To help the trainee teacher during their teaching practice in all possible ways is one of the most crucial tasks of a mentor. However, one can see that the number of students declaring having not obtained any help from their mentors is rather high (thirteen respondents). Nevertheless, a great majority of the trainee teachers (32 respondents) emphasized that they had obtained useful pieces of advice and suggestions from their mentors that all helped them in preparing for their lessons successfully.

I mainly got useful information from my mentor about the level of knowledge of a class, about the behaviour of certain pupils, and about the habits that characterized a given community. (E1)*

The trainee teachers were asked to define what kind of advice they had obtained from their mentors during their teaching practice. The replies have been categorised and they are presented in Figure 1.

* The practising teachers were assigned codes containing a combination of a letter and a number. The letters refer to the major subjects of the trainee teachers: B – biology, E – English, G – geography, H – History, HUN – Hungarian, M – mathematics.

Figure 1



It is clear from Figure 1 that the mentors gave general pedagogical pieces of advice to the will-be teachers in most cases (16) (e.g. ‘My mentor emphasized the importance of constant revision of the material at the very beginning of every lesson’ (B16); ‘I should pay appropriate attention to every pupil.’ (M32)). The second most frequent kind of advice was of methodological character (e.g. ‘In the lower primary classes I should try to explain everything in a playful way.’ (E2), ‘My mentor helped me a lot in selecting the appropriate visual aids.’ (HUN25)). The respondents admitted that they got personal advice and some other hints about teaching in seven cases each. (E.g. personal: ‘Don’t worry.’ (B13), ‘Always speak clearly and understandably’. (M34); giving a hint: ‘What I should pay more attention to, that is, my mentor made me realize in an indirect way that I should prepare the pupils for the tasks of the Independent Testing**.’ (B14)) Five trainee teachers admitted that they had obtained no advice or help from their mentors.

Trainee teachers were asked to give responses to the question whether their mentors warned them about the various pitfalls of teaching, and whether the mentors called the practising teachers’ attention to their probable mistakes. Fourteen trainees replied that their mentors had not done anything mentioned above, while 31 will-be teachers reported on the fact that their mentors had not missed to do all those things referred to above. Certain trainees even added that their mentors provided extra information about the given class and the learners, concerning their activity and discipline, who were stronger and weaker learners, and who needed special attention from the teacher.

It becomes evident from previous research results (e.g. Numrich, 1996; Huszti, 2004) that the greatest and most difficult problem for trainee teachers, as well as novice teachers, is the defining of lesson objectives. This was also referred to by some mentors in the present study. For this reason, it was decided that the trainee

** This is the Ukrainian advanced level school-leaving examination.

teachers be asked about this problem, namely, whether they had obtained any help in identifying their lesson aims. Most of the trainees answered negatively to this question (e.g. 'No, my mentor didn't help me in defining the aims. She completely left this task to me. E1), while eighteen trainees gave positive answers (e.g. 'My mentor gave me examples, based on which I could define my own objectives.' B10).

The evaluation and assessment of the teaching practice of trainee teachers can greatly influence the process of becoming a competent teacher. Therefore, the practising teachers were asked to describe how the evaluation was carried out. Twenty-nine trainees mentioned that their mentors first indicated the positive features of the trainees' work and only later pointed out the deficiencies. Eleven trainees reported on the fact that their mentors started the evaluation with some criticism, i.e. negative features. Five practising teachers chose the 'other' option in the questionnaire, e.g. 'First, my mentor told me her impressions about my lesson, and then she analyzed it in detail.' (M35)

The impact of the mentor's evaluation on the trainee teacher became clear from the data. It can be stated that the mentors influenced the will-be teachers positively (39 cases), in one questionnaire there was missing data about this question. Only five trainee teachers believed that they had been negatively influenced by their mentors' evaluation (e.g. 'Though it was praising, it disappointed me. B7). The positive impact is illustrated by the following excerpts:

I became braver and more confident. (E5)

My mentor's evaluation encouraged me because when it was positive I tried to do everything in the same way next time. When it was negative I had to correct all my mistakes and deficiencies. (M36)

My mentor's evaluation had a motivating effect on me. (M30)

Mentors are also expected to advise students on how to improve the quality of the trainees' teaching practice by providing helpful suggestions. Most often the surveyed trainee teachers admitted that their mentors gave them advice on what to improve in the future. Mentors often recommended trainees to read methodology books and academic articles published on their major subjects in order to improve the quality of their teaching. However, three history major trainee teachers stated that their mentors had not provided any help of this kind.

Knowing the advantages of reflective teaching, the mentors drew the trainee teachers' attention to them (nineteen trainees mentioned it). However, eighteen will-be teachers pointed out that they were not informed about this technique by their mentors. Eight trainees did not provide any replies concerning reflective teaching, thus these are regarded as missing data.

Finally, trainee teachers were expected to characterize their relationship with their mentors during the teaching practice. The descriptions were grouped into two types: professional and personal. Table 3 shows what attributes trainee teachers used to characterize the relationship between themselves and their mentors.

Table 3
The relationship between the mentors and the trainee teachers

Professional	Number of students	Personal	Number of students
Supporting in all respects, helpful	6	Positive, good	8
Considered me a colleague, treated me as an equal	4	Friendly	3
Good, excellent	3	Based on mutual respect and esteem	2
Disparaging, biting teacher-student relationship	1	Understanding, could cooperate well	2
		Supported me constructively, not in a derisive way	1
		Informal, relaxed	1
		Indifferent	1

It is evident from Table 3 that students mentioned rather positive than negative features.

There was a good professional relationship between us; my mentor always helped me realize all my ideas. (B17)

There was mutual understanding between us and we are still in positive professional contact. (M34)

My former maths teacher became my mentor, and in this way the relationship between us was very good; she was ready to help me any time. (M28)

4.2 Mentor questionnaires

The questionnaire contained eighteen questions, half of which enquired about the mentors' personal data (gender, age, length of teaching experience, length of mentoring experience, qualifications, major subjects, etc.). These data were introduced in Section 3.1 of the present study in detail.

Questions 10, 11, 12 and 16 related to the kind of help provided by the mentor to the trainee teacher. A basic question is whether the mentor should interfere in the trainee's teaching process or should leave everything to be done by the trainee alone. Only one mentor indicated that she did not participate in the trainee's lesson planning process. All the other mentors described the planning

process. Most of them discuss the lesson topic, the techniques to be used, and the structure and procedures of the lesson together with the trainee teachers.

We discuss the main issues together, but it is always the trainee teacher's task to prepare a detailed lesson plan. It is important that the trainee get accustomed to how to structure a lesson logically, choose the appropriate techniques and time the lesson, develop their own creativity and bravely use their own ideas. Then we look through and analyse the prepared lesson plan and if there is need, we add or include things. Thus, I mainly play the role of a leader and evaluator. (English teacher, 45 years old)***

Mentors have been asked about how they provide feedback to trainee teachers. Most of them claimed that they gave feedback to trainees during the discussion sessions when they analysed the trainee's teaching. This was the time for the mentors to point out the strengths and deficiencies of the teaching process, to call the trainee's attention to the mistakes to be corrected, to provide trainees with good advice, to encourage and motivate them. A thirty-five-year-old biology teacher-mentor noted that she prepared a detailed written analysis of the trainee's lesson during the time she was observing it. She discussed this analysis with the trainee after the lesson, and then this written account was given to the trainee for further reference.

All the mentors indicate trainees' faults in this or that way (in private or in the presence of group mates; directly or indirectly). Except for one, the mentors all spoke about how they called the trainee teachers' attention to the mistakes committed during the lesson taught by the trainees. However, one mentor claimed that she did this already in the planning process:

If I see some deficiencies in the planning of a lesson, I point it out to the trainee teacher and also suggest ways for correcting it. For example, if the trainee teacher plans to ask two pupils for a longer period of time, I ask them: 'What are the other twenty-five children in the classroom going to do meanwhile?' Through this discourse the trainee teacher realises that the lesson must be planned in more detail: one cannot expect twenty-five children to be polite and quiet for a longer period of time. The trainee teacher must face the fact that each and every pupil must have a task to work on in every minute of a lesson. (Hungarian teacher, 41 years old)

Praise is a factor needed by everyone to develop self-confidence and to carry out the tasks with more enthusiasm, be it language learning or teaching. Trainee teachers during their teaching practice also need such praise from their mentors, who mentioned a wide variety of ways of praising trainee teachers. They mainly

*** The excerpts are taken from the filled in questionnaires and are translated into English by the author.

praise the trainees when they carry out a task successfully, or react creatively to an unexpected situation, or when they dare to take decisions bravely and flexibly, if their activity is beyond average. Mentors usually praise trainees while giving feedback on and analysing the practice teaching of the trainee. It is also common that mentors praise the trainees meta-communicatively with a smile or a nod during the lesson that the trainee teaches. In addition, a mentor mentioned that

I give my trainee a document prepared by me in which I praise them for a significant action during their practice. (History teacher, 41 years old)

The mentors' opinions were also asked about what causes the greatest problem to the trainee teachers during their teaching practice. Table 4 summarises these viewpoints.

Table 4
Mentors' views on what causes the most serious problem to trainee teachers during the teaching practice

Opinion	Number of mentors having this opinion
The level of the taught material is not in accordance with the level of the learners' knowledge	8
Engaging the learners' attention	5
"Inadequate familiarity" with the school curriculum and syllabus	4
Sensible timing in the lesson	3
Proportionate development of skills in the lesson	1
Logical structure of the explanation	1
Insufficient use of pair and group work	1
Keeping discipline	1

Most of the surveyed mentors believe that the trainees on their teaching practice are not aware of the level of the learners' knowledge; therefore, it is quite frequent that the trainees prepare task sheets that do not correspond to the learners' level of knowledge; i.e. they are either too difficult or too easy to solve. Will-be teachers are not familiar with the learners' needs in the school; therefore they cannot apply differentiated teaching appropriately in their lessons. Trainee teachers have to do classroom observations before starting their teaching practice with the purpose to familiarise themselves with the learners, their learning habits and needs.

Therefore I do everything possible so that the trainee teacher spend as much time as possible with the learners before starting the practice, get to know and love the learners, observe and note what the learners' needs are and in what they need development. (Hungarian teacher, 41 years old)

Certain mentors indicated that for some trainees to engage the learners' attention was a real trial, 'to hold the whole class captive for 45 minutes was really difficult' (Hungarian teacher, 61 years old). This kind of incapacity on the teacher's side then may lead to prolonged lesson procedures which in no way can be considered common or normal.

Some mentors believe that for a few trainees it is a big problem that they are not familiar in an adequate way with the school curriculum in their discipline. 'They do not know the sequence of topics: what we have already learnt and what comes next.' (Geography teacher, 35 years old) This can be improved by intensive lesson observation by trainees done before the teaching practice starts. An opinion relates here that trainees can only view a given lesson separately, not the teaching process as a whole. This might result from the trainee teachers' lack of practice and experience.

Only one mentor thought that keeping discipline in the classroom caused serious problems for trainees.

Further, mentors were asked about their beliefs concerning the kind of help trainee teachers needed during their practice. The answers were categorised into two groups: 1. factors related to lesson planning; 2. factors related to the teaching process. Table 5 summarises the data from which it is evident that trainee teachers need more help and support from the mentor connected to lesson planning than to the teaching process.

Table 5
The kind of help needed by the trainee teachers from their mentors

	The needed help	Number of mentors
Lesson planning	Choosing the methods and selecting the appropriate extra materials to be used in the lessons	6
	Preparing lesson plans, setting the aims	5
	Identifying the amount of material to be taught in a lesson	3
	Practising the proper timing of the lessons	2
	Evaluating learners' knowledge	2
	Making the lesson more interesting to get the learners' attention	1
The teaching process	Classroom management	2
	Issues concerning the learners' age peculiarities	2
	Keeping discipline	2
	Making contact with learners	1

The mentors were asked about how they enhanced the improvement of the quality of trainees' teaching. In general, they referred to the numerous pieces of advice that they had given the trainees concerning quality improvement. Five mentors emphasized that they underlined the importance of getting to know the academic literature on English language teaching. A few mentors also mentioned

that they tried their best to improve the teaching quality of the trainees through their own experience and personal examples. One of the mentors even added that:

I encourage my trainee to apply creatively all the knowledge that they acquired at the institute. (Hungarian teacher, 41 years old)

Quality improvement can also be realised with the help of the reflective method of teaching. To reflect on one's own ideas and experiences is an equally essential activity for both novice and experienced school teachers or university professors (Walkington, 2005). Mentors were asked if they had indicated the significance of reflective teaching to trainees. Twelve of them answered positively, which means that they found it crucial to indicate the usefulness of this method. Two mentors did not provide any data on this issue, while another one claimed:

Yes, I point out this technique, but after classroom observation sessions — when they themselves realize its advantages — there is little need for encouragement to apply it. (Hungarian teacher, 47 years old)

The mentors' opinions about their relationship with trainees were also surveyed with the help of the questionnaire. Bulloch (2005) concluded in connection with the issue that it is the most useful when the mentor plays the role of a 'mother', i.e. likes, defends and supports the trainee like a mother does with her child. Table 6 contains all the characteristic features that mentors used to describe their relationship with the trainee teachers. The numbers in the second column show how many mentors mentioned a given feature.

Table 6
The character of the relationship between mentors and trainee teachers

Characteristic feature	Number of mentors
Good	4
Friendly	3
Fraternal	3
Helpful	2
Sincere	1
Humane	1
Harmonious	1
Controlling	1
Developing creativity	1
Based on common confidence	1
Informal, relaxed	1

Some opinions from the mentors:

It depends on the trainee teacher. If they are open and interested, I help with pleasure in the solution of any problem. But if I see that the trainee's attitude is inappropriate and they only want to fulfil the requirements of the teaching practice, I do not force the good relationship, either. (English teacher, 33 years old)

My relationship with the trainees is usually harmonious. They also contact me for help later, when they are qualified teachers. (History teacher, 40 years old)

First of all, human personal relationship is formed between my trainee and me. I think this helps the formation of professional relationship between the mentor and the trainee teacher. If the trainees feel the proper trust on the mentor's part, then they will be more courageous in front of a class, they will sooner overcome their anxiety and stress. This will result in a successful lesson. (Hungarian teacher, 61 years old)

5 Summary

The survey revealed that one of the essential questions in the process of becoming a teacher is lesson planning, as well as the quality of teaching the lessons. The requirements of the teaching practice demand that mentors should help and support trainees in every possible way. The findings of the present survey prove that the mentors participated in planning the teaching process either directly or indirectly, though more than half of the trainee teachers claimed that they had done the planning on their own. There could well be a kind of contradiction at this point; however, from the comments provided by trainees it becomes clear that they mainly worked alone when preparing the written lesson plans. It implies that the planning process itself was fulfilled together with the mentors. As a conclusion, it can be stated that the mentors applied the so-called developmental model of mentoring, i.e. they pointed out the crucial aspects, but they mainly allowed the trainees to unfold as individuals while unnoticeably directing them on the right track.

Defining lesson objectives frequently causes serious problems for trainees. However, the findings suggested that the greatest problem in the mentors' view is the level of trainees' explanation in the lessons. Mentors consider that trainees use language structures that are too complicated for schoolchildren, i.e. mentors often had the feeling as if trainees had been presenting at a professional conference and not teaching in school.

It must be particularly emphasized that in order to improve the quality of the trainees' teaching process, the mentors provided them with useful suggestions and academic literature, and also shared their own examples with them. One of the excellent ways of quality improvement is reflecting teaching. Mentors drew trainees' attention to this technique. Moreover, they shared their own examples.

The positive professional and personal relationship is a precondition of successful cooperation between the mentor and the trainee. Concerning the professional aspect of this relationship, the mentor should be helpful and supportive and view the trainee as a colleague and treat him or her as an equal. At least, such is the ideal professional relationship between the mentor and the trainee teacher in the view of the will-be teachers who participated in this survey. What concerns the personal relationship, also the positive features prevail: good, friendly, positive, based on mutual respect and esteem, understanding, and relaxed. Mentors were on the same opinion adding some further features like helpful, honest, humane, harmonious and developing creativity.

6 Useful implications from the research

- 1) Only a few mentors out of the questioned ones participated in a mentor training course, therefore it is essential in the future to organize such courses within teacher training institutions, thus offering the possibility for mentors to better their skills.
- 2) It would be highly effective to follow the British practice and hold so-called mentoring days (Major, 2010). At these meetings mentors can exchange their views about professional questions. In addition, they can also discuss their own experiences and learn from each other. Such meetings could also be held at the training institutions.
- 3) Trainers in teacher training courses have to pay more attention to the trainees' academic language use. They have to make trainees aware of the fact that different language levels and styles must be used in various situations, e.g. teacher talk should be less complicated in a school lesson than in a presentation at an academic conference.
- 4) Teacher trainers should familiarize trainees with the benefits and possible deficiencies of reflective teaching. As it is a most useful technique, it is of utmost importance that trainees know about it and be able to utilize it in their teaching.
- 5) Trainers should pay special attention to the trainees' need in properly formulating lesson objectives. During the methodology practical classes more time should be devoted to practising the skill of formulating lesson objectives, because this causes serious problems for trainee teachers.

- 6) The relationship between the mentors and the trainees can be effective in case mentors view trainees as their colleagues and not as subordinated people, help them in everything, and they are friendly with each other.
- 7) It would be well worth repeating this study with different students and mentors in different schools in Transcarpathia whether these results are generalisable to the whole process.

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APPENDIX 1

**Mentor questionnaire
(English version)**

Dear Colleague,

With this questionnaire, I am collecting data for a study which aims to survey the role mentors play in teacher training college students' process of becoming competent teachers. The survey is anonymous; your data will be dealt with confidentially. Thank you for your help!

Husztí Ilona

1. Gender: Female Male
2. Age:
3. When did you obtain your degree?
4. What did you major in?
5. Your teaching experience: years
6. What subject(s) do you teach?
7. How many lesson do you teach a week in the school? lessons
8. Your qualifications (please indicate the appropriate answer(s))

Primary teacher's college degree
College degree
University degree
Mentor training course
PhD degree in the major subject
PhD degree in pedagogy
Other qualifications, please specify:

9. Your mentoring experience: years
 10. How do you provide feedback to the trainee teacher about their teaching?
 11. How do you call their attention to mistakes in their teaching?
 12. When do you praise the trainee teacher's work? In what way?
 13. Which part of the process of planning teaching do you think causes the greatest problem to the trainee teachers?
 14. What aspects does the trainee teacher need your help most of the times in?
 15. How do you try to achieve the improvement of teaching of the practising teacher?
 16. Do you participate in planning the trainee teacher's lesson? How? What role do you play?
 17. Do you encourage the trainee teacher to apply the reflective teaching method?
 18. What kind of human and personal relationship was formed between you and the trainee teacher? How? Why?

APPENDIX 2

**Questionnaire
about the role of mentors
(English version)**

Dear Trainee teacher,

I would like to survey with the help of this questionnaire what our college students think about their mentors during the teaching practice. By a mentor in this survey I mean the school teacher who is responsible for your teaching practice and whose lessons you observe in the school. The survey is anonymous; your data will be dealt with confidentially. Thank you for your help.

Husztí Ilona

Gender: male female

Age:

Year, major subject:

A. Observation of the mentor's work

1. Did you get enough guidance from your mentor as to what to observe in his or her lessons? How did it help you in the observation?

B. Lesson planning

2. How did you plan your lessons?

a) together with your mentor

b) you planned them on your own, later your mentor confirmed it

c) other, please specify:

3. What kind of advice did your mentor give you before planning the lessons?

4. Did your mentor call your attention to the possible pitfalls related to planning a certain sequence of exercises?

5. Did your mentor help you in formulating the objectives of a lesson?

C. Analysis and evaluation of the trainee teacher's teaching

6. How did your mentor analyse your teaching process?

a) first my mentor underlined the positive issues

b) my mentor started with criticising, pinpointing the negative features

c) other, please specify:

7. How did your mentor's feedback and analysis influence you in general?

8. How did your mentor make suggestions concerning the improvement of the quality of your teaching?

9. Did your mentor draw your attention to your strengths and weaknesses in teaching?

10. How was the mentor's feedback given to you?

- a) my mentor supported me in everything
- b) my mentor only criticized me
- c) my mentor only praised me
- d) my mentor was not critical enough
- e) other, please specify:.....

11. Did your mentor encourage you to use reflective teaching?

D. Relationship between the mentor and the practising teacher

12. How would you characterize the relationship between you and your mentor?

- a) professional.....
- b) personal.....

Сучасні напрямки в навчанні іноземних мов та в прикладній лінгвістиці. / За редакцією Ілона Густі та Ілона Лехнер - Ужгород: Вид-во "Графіка" - 248 с. (англійською мовою).

Збірник вміщує матеріали виступів учасників міжнародної наукової конференції 11 квітня 2014 року в Закарпатському угорському інституті ім. Ференца Ракоці II. Робота конференції проводилася у двох секціях. У першій представлено результати досліджень з методики викладання іноземних мов, у другій порушено проблеми прикладної лінгвістики. Серед учасників конференції були і всесвітньо відомі вчені, які доповіли про сучасні напрямки своїх досліджень.

Видання адресоване науковій спільноті.

ББК: к74.261.7(4Укр.)

УДК: 058 : 81

С - 96

РЕДАКЦІЯ: *Густі І., Лехнер І.*

ВЕРСТКА: *Товтін В.*

ОБКЛАДИНКА: *К&Р*

ВІДПОВІДАЛЬНІ ЗА ВИПУСК: *Орос І., Сікура Й.*

Здано до складання 06.05.2015. Підписано до друку 19.10.2015.

Папір офсетний. Формат 70x100/16.

Умовн. друк. арк. 19,95. Наклад 250.