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# Needs Assessment of a Mentoring Program for Promoting Young Teachers' Professional Development at Guangxi University of Foreign Languages

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## Abstract

**Background and Aims:** Mentorship is widely regarded as a core pathway for promoting young teachers' professional growth, yet its effectiveness in local private universities is often constrained by gaps between practical outcomes and ideal goals. This study aimed to 1) examine the current status and needs of young teachers' professional development and mentorship implementation, and 2) prioritize improvement areas using a needs-ranking approach.

**Methodology:** A quantitative survey was conducted at Guangxi University of Foreign Languages (GUFL) with 243 young teachers and 182 mentors selected via simple random sampling. A dual-response questionnaire (current vs. desirable) with a five-point scale was administered, and data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations) and the Modified Priority Needs Index ($PNI_{modified}$ = (I − D)/D).

**Results:** Overall ratings of the current status were moderate, while desirable expectations were high. For professional development, young teachers reported M = 3.60 (SD = 0.757) and mentors M = 3.74 (SD = 0.759); for mentorship implementation, young teachers reported M = 3.64 (SD = 0.907) and mentors M = 3.86 (SD = 0.783). Needs ranking indicated professional skills as the top priority within professional development (PNI modified: young teachers = 0.29; mentors = 0.17) and organizational support as the top priority within mentorship implementation (PNI modified: young teachers = 0.20; mentors = 0.15).

**Conclusion:** The findings provide empirical evidence that GUFL's mentorship program should prioritize strengthening organizational support and targeting young teachers' professional skills to close the current desirable gap and enhance mentorship effectiveness.

**Keywords:** Professional Development; Mentorship Program; Young Teachers; $PNI_{modified}$; Nanning, China



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## Introduction

In the past decades, we have witnessed a complex and fast-changing world, globally and in China, with policy agendas (UNESCO, 2021), highlighting the need for high-quality teaching and sustained professional development, which has renewed interest in mentorship as a key mechanism for supporting early-career faculty. High-quality teachers are central to this goal. Research consistently shows that strong professional development strengthens teachers' knowledge and skills and improves student learning outcomes (Sims et al., 2023; Ventista & Brown, 2023; Visscher et al., 2025). Mentorship is also widely seen as a core route to support young teachers' professional growth (National Academy of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2019). In China, teacher professional development has been continuously strengthened through national policies. Starting in 2024, the Ministry of Education issued the Implementation Plan for Supporting "Silver-Aged Teachers" in Private Education, encouraging private universities to establish mentorship systems in which experienced teachers guide young teachers (MOE, 2024; MOE, 2025).

From the perspective of faculty structure, mentorship in private universities is both urgent and feasible. Ministry of Education data show that in 2021, teachers aged 40 and below accounted for 49.53% of full-time higher education faculty, making young teachers the backbone of the workforce (MOE,2023). Gao (2023) further found a "two-end concentration" pattern in 12 private undergraduate institutions in Guangxi: many teachers are under 35, and many are over 50. This creates a natural base for "senior-to-junior" mentoring. This study focuses on Guangxi University of Foreign Languages (GUFL), a private university in Guangxi, China. According to data from the university's human resources department, by June 2024, GUFL had more than 800 full-time teachers under 40, accounting for 60% of all full-time faculty. This makes GUFL a typical and meaningful case. At the same time, capability gaps among young teachers strengthen the case for mentoring. New teachers often report limited understanding of epistemology and pedagogical knowledge. Scholars argue that this is largely due to limited practical experience in teaching, management, and research, which makes it hard to meet job demands quickly (Wang & Kim, 2023). In addition, many universities prioritize advanced disciplinary degrees in hiring rather than teaching methods and pedagogical expertise. This can push some teachers into teaching difficulties. Without systematic training in teaching skills, some teachers rely on one-way lecturing, which has been shown to fall short of students' learning needs (Lakhan et al., 2025). Against this backdrop, GUFL has implemented mentorship for seven years. The program targets three areas: improving young teachers' professional development, evaluating effectiveness and efficiency, and aligning the program with the university's overall strategy. However, expected goals have not been fully achieved. For example, few young teachers participate in teaching competitions. Award numbers and levels remain relatively low among comparable private universities in Guangxi. In



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some major evaluations, such as teaching achievement awards, the university has even experienced years with "zero awards."

Limited mentorship outcomes are not unique to GUFL. Muhayimana (2021) reported that in a three-year school-based mentoring program (SBMP), only 45.2% of 341 participating teachers felt they received the expected support. Bezzina and Kutsyuruba (2025) summarized common constraints: a lack of comprehensive and sustainable planning, weak coordination between mentors and young teachers, incomplete support systems, and inadequate evaluation methods. These issues appear in GUFL as well, and they represent key bottlenecks for private universities. Although teacher professional development and mentorship have attracted sustained attention, many studies focus on macro discussions or public universities and emphasize theory or policy interpretation. Empirical work on local private universities such as GUFL remains limited, especially systematic comparisons between "actual outcomes" and "ideal goals." As a result, the real needs of young teachers in local private institutions are not fully addressed. Even when mentorship shows promise, its effects can be weakened by gaps in organizational management, low participant motivation, and incomplete evaluation and incentive mechanisms (Sarabipour et al., 2023; Nabi et al., 2025). These challenges are also visible in GUFL but have not been examined in depth. Meanwhile, higher education is changing quickly. Teaching models are evolving, and research output expectations are rising (UNESCO, 2023). Young teachers face higher professional demands, yet GUFL still lacks convenient and well-matched development opportunities. This mismatch can limit teachers' adaptation to new trends and constrain the university's overall quality. It is therefore necessary to explore how to optimize GUFL's mentorship system. Teacher professional development is widely viewed as a dynamic process of continuous adjustment and improvement (European Commission, 2025). Based on prior work, this study defines young teachers' professional development as four dimensions: professional knowledge (PK), professional philosophy (PP), professional skills (PS), and professional attitudes (PA). In assessing mentorship implementation, this study focuses on three dimensions: the mentor–mentee relationship, mentor support, and organizational support. McCosh and Clarke (2025) emphasize equal and cooperative relationships in mentoring. Sak and Ros (2025) suggest that mentoring provides professional support and promotes skill development. Park and Choi (2025) note that funding, accountability, and teaching conditions can shape mentoring outcomes. Bezzina & Kutsyuruba (2025) also show that investment in mentoring can improve new teacher retention. These researchers further stressed the need for clear institutional design and evaluation mechanisms. Together, these views highlight the critical role of organizational support.

However, empirical evidence from local private universities remains limited in three specific respects. First, few studies simultaneously capture both mentors' and mentees' perceptions to



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map where implementation breaks down. Second, existing work rarely quantifies the gap between expectations and outcomes via structured and multidimensional measures. To address these gaps, this study uses survey data from both mentors and young teachers at GUFL to profile current status, expectations, and improvement needs across clearly defined dimensions. This study examines the current status, expectations, and improvement needs of mentorship in supporting young teachers' professional development. It also proposes recommendations that fit the GUFL context. GUFL is selected as the research site. A quantitative approach is used. The total population of the GUFL mentorship program includes 619 young teachers and 332 mentors, from which a sample of 243 young teachers and 182 mentors was selected using simple random sampling.

## Objectives

To examine the current status, expectations, and improvement needs of the mentorship program in supporting young teachers' professional development, and to propose context-specific recommendations for improving the program from the perspectives of young teachers and mentors.

## Literature Review

The Resource-Based View (RBV) postulates that sustainable competitive advantage is secured through the possession of internal resources that are valuable, rare, difficult to imitate, and non-substitutable, especially intangible assets like human capital and organizational capabilities (Barney, 1991). In the domain of post-secondary education, the professional growth of inexperienced faculty members can be viewed as an investment in strategic human capital, while the mentoring process is an internal organizational capability that leverages senior expertise, facilitates the transfer of tacit pedagogical knowledge, and nurtures multidimensional professional competencies.

However, Contingency Theory maintains that organizational practices do not lead to the same results everywhere; rather, the effectiveness of a practice is dependent on its compatibility with the setting (Burns & Stalker, 1961). Hence, in this article, organizational support is considered a conditional factor that has an impact on how far mentoring activities can bring about professional development changes that are visible. Therefore, this study posits that the professional development of novice teachers encompasses four areas: professional knowledge (PK), professional philosophy (PP), professional skills (PS), and professional attitudes (PA). RBV, at the same time, provides an explanation for the efficacy of mentorship, because it is the creation of strategic human capital. Contingency Theory elucidates the timing and under what conditions



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the mentorship results in a stronger effect, because institutional fit determines whether mentoring routines can function effectively. These theoretical perspectives complement each other in the study to facilitate the development of constructs, the formulation of the relationships, and the analysis of the results.

Professional Knowledge (PK) refers to teachers' understanding of subject content, pedagogy, learners, and curriculum, which enables them to make informed instructional decisions in the classroom. This concept is grounded in research on teacher knowledge and professional learning, which emphasizes that effective teaching depends on the integration of content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and contextual understanding (Lin, 2013; Panthee, 2019).

Professional Philosophy (PP) refers to teachers' core beliefs, values, and educational views about teaching, learning, and the purpose of education, which guide their professional judgments and long-term instructional orientations. The notion of professional philosophy originates from studies on teacher beliefs and professionalism, highlighting how teachers' moral values, beliefs about learning, and views of professionalism shape their teaching practices (Al-Bakri & Troudi, 2020; Saydam, 2019).

Professional Skills (PS) refer to the practical and applied abilities teachers use to implement teaching effectively, including instructional strategies, classroom management, assessment, and communication skills. This dimension is commonly derived from professional development literature, which frames skills as competencies that can be developed through training, practice, and reflective professional learning (Panthee, 2019; Hanington & Pillai, 2016).

Professional Attitudes (PA) refer to teachers' professional dispositions, such as commitment, responsibility, enthusiasm, ethical awareness, and openness to continuous learning, which influence how they approach their work and professional growth. This concept is rooted in research on teacher attitudes and professionalism, emphasizing that positive professional attitudes support effective teaching, reflective practice, and sustained professional development (Tyagi & Jain, 2025; Densmaa & Enkhbat, 2025).

Rather than treating these dimensions as a parallel checklist, this review synthesizes them as a developmental chain in which cognition, belief, practice, and disposition jointly shape teachers' professional growth.

## Research Framework:

Guided by global/national higher-education quality policies and GUFL's local mentoring challenges, the study applies a dual-perspective + dual-response design. Two groups- young teachers and mentors rate both current status and ideal goals for (1) mentorship system implementation and (2) young teachers' professional development. Data analysis focuses on gap



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analysis between current and ideal, and cross-perspective comparison between teacher and mentor to identify priority needs and propose targeted improvements for GUFL, with implications for similar private universities.

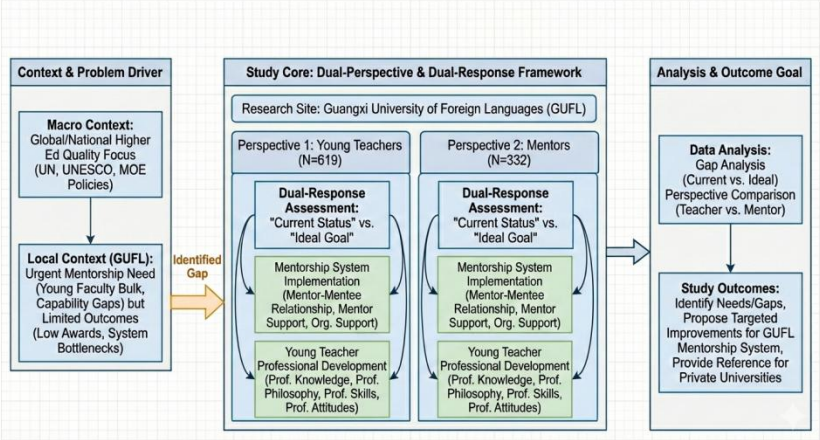



**Figure 1** Research Framework

**Source:** Author's compilation (2026)

## Methodology

### Research Design:

This study adopted a quantitative research method. The questionnaires were in a Dual-Response form, requiring respondents to answer each question twice, separately reporting their perceptions of the current status and ideal goals of young teachers' professional development and the mentorship program. Likert-type scaling varying from "1 = Least" to "5 = Most" was used.

The instruments used in this study consisted of two questionnaires: one for teachers and one for mentors. Both questionnaires were adapted from existing scales. Both questionnaires contained three parts, as follows. The first part was a common module used to collect respondents' basic information, including demographic characteristics such as gender, age, years of teaching, educational background, and professional title. The second part was a differentiated assessment module: the mentor-version questionnaire, from the mentors' perspective, assessed the level of professional development needs of the young teachers they mentored; the young teacher-version questionnaire, from the individual perspective, assessed the current and ideal levels of their own professional development. The two versions shared the same assessment dimensions, including professional philosophy (PP), professional knowledge (PK), professional skills (PS), and professional attitudes (PA), with 20 items. The third part was a common assessment module focusing on the current and ideal levels of the university's mentorship implementation.



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The dimensions were unified as mentor–mentee relationship, mentor support, and organizational support, with 18 items.

**Population and Sampling:**

The participants were 619 young teachers and 332 mentors who participated in the GUFL mentorship program. Simple random sampling was used. Using the Yamane formula (1967), the initial total sample sizes for the two groups were calculated as 243 young teachers and 182 mentors.

$$n = N / [1 + N(e^2)]$$

where:

n = required sample size; N = population size; e = acceptable sampling error

**Data Collection and Analysis:**

Questionnaires were distributed to young teachers and mentors at GUFL via an online survey platform. Before analysis, the dataset was screened for completeness and response validity. A total of 182 mentor questionnaires and 243 young teacher questionnaires met the inclusion criteria and were retained for statistical analysis. Because the survey platform used forced-response settings for key items, the retained cases contained no missing values on the main scales; therefore, the completion rate reported in this study refers to the final valid sample after data screening rather than the initial number of invitations distributed.

The collected data were used to compare the current status and needs gaps in young teachers' professional development and mentorship implementation at GUFL. Data analyses were conducted using SPSS 27.0. First, descriptive statistics were used to summarize respondents' demographic characteristics (gender, age, educational background, years of teaching, and professional title) using frequencies and percentages. Means and standard deviations were computed for all scale items and dimensions. The mean scores were interpreted using the following criteria: 4.51–5.00 = Most; 3.51–4.50 = High; 2.51–3.50 = Medium; 1.51–2.50 = Low; 1.00–1.50 = Least.

**Statistical and Practical Significance:**

Group differences were examined using independent-samples t-tests or one-way ANOVA as appropriate, with statistical significance determined at $p < .05$; effect sizes (Cohen's d for t-tests and $\eta^2$ for ANOVA) were also reported and interpreted using conventional benchmarks to assess the practical magnitude and educational relevance of observed differences.

**$PNI_{Modified}$:**

The Modified Priority Needs Index (PNI) was then used to rank priority needs. Following the Wongwanich formula (Wongwanich, 2015), differences between the mean of expectations and the mean of the current state were calculated as:



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PNI Modified = (I - D)/D, where PNI = priority needs index, I = mean of expectations, and D = mean of current state.

The PNI levels (i.e., gaps between the current state and expectations) for the seven core areas and their sub-items were ranked from highest to lowest to determine the priority order for improving young teachers' professional development and mentorship implementation. Areas or sub-items with higher PNI levels were treated as priority targets.

**Validity and Reliability:**

The two questionnaires were administered separately to young teachers and mentors. Internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. The overall alpha coefficients were 0.953 (young teacher version) and 0.963 (mentor version), exceeding the commonly accepted threshold of 0.70 and indicating excellent reliability (Nunnally, 1978). All subscale alpha coefficients exceeded 0.80, supporting adequate internal consistency for each dimension. For construct validity, the KMO values were 0.898 and 0.887, respectively, and Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant ($p < 0.001$), indicating suitability for factor analysis.

**Ethical Consideration:**

This study was submitted for ethical review to the IRB (or equivalent ethics review office) at Payap University, Thailand. Permission to conduct the research was granted by Guangxi University of Foreign Languages (GUFL), China. All participants were provided with informed consent, and they were informed that the survey data would be used only for academic purposes.

## Results

The results are presented as current and desirable mean scores (with standard deviations) for each dimension, together with the Modified Priority Needs Index (PNI [$PNI_{modified}$]) to rank improvement priorities. Tables 1–2 report professional development needs from young teachers' and mentors' perspectives, while Tables 3–4 report needs related to mentorship implementation from both perspectives.

**Table 1** Professional Development Needs of Young Teachers (N = 243).

| Dimension | Current | | Desirable | | PNI | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mean | S.D. | Mean | S.D. | | |
| PP | 3.87 | 0.741 | 4.53 | 0.452 | 0.17 | 4 |
| PK | 3.65 | 0.754 | 4.36 | 0.528 | 0.19 | 3 |
| PS | 3.35 | 0.728 | 4.31 | 0.479 | 0.29 | 1 |



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| Dimension | Current | | Desirable | | PNI | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mean | S.D. | Mean | S.D. | | |
| PA | 3.52 | 0.804 | 4.30 | 0.558 | 0.22 | 2 |
| Overall | 3.60 | 0.757 | 4.38 | 0.504 | 0.22 | |

**Note:** Rank is based on $PNI_{modified}$ values (higher values indicate higher priority).

Table 1 presents young teachers' perceptions of their professional development across four dimensions (N = 243), reporting current and desirable mean scores together with $PNI_{modified}$ values and corresponding ranks. Overall, the current level of professional development (PD) was rated at a moderate level (M = 3.60, SD = 0.757), while the desirable level was rated high (M = 4.38, SD = 0.504), indicating a clear expectation gap. Among the four dimensions, professional skills (PS) showed the largest gap (PNI = 0.29), ranking first, followed by professional attitudes (PA; PNI = 0.22, rank 2) and professional knowledge (PK; PNI = 0.19, rank 3). Professional philosophy (PP) exhibited the smallest gap (PNI = 0.17), ranking fourth. These results suggest that young teachers perceive practical teaching skills as the most urgent area for improvement within their professional development.

**Table 2** Mentors' Assessment of Young Teachers' Professional Development Needs (N = 182).

| Dimension | Current | | Desirable | | PNI | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mean | S.D. | Mean | S.D. | | |
| PP | 3.93 | 0.796 | 4.43 | 0.521 | 0.13 | 4 |
| PK | 3.71 | 0.725 | 4.29 | 0.558 | 0.16 | 2 |
| PS | 3.63 | 0.725 | 4.23 | 0.540 | 0.17 | 1 |
| PA | 3.68 | 0.790 | 4.23 | 0.621 | 0.15 | 3 |
| Overall | 3.74 | 0.759 | 4.30 | 0.560 | 0.15 | |

**Note:** Rank is based on $PNI_{modified}$ values (higher values indicate higher priority).



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Table 2 presents mentors' assessments of young teachers' professional development needs (N = 182). Similar to young teachers' self-evaluations, mentors rated the current level of overall professional development as moderate (M = 3.74, SD = 0.759) and the desirable level as high (M = 4.30, SD = 0.560), indicating a noticeable expectation gap. Among the four dimensions, professional skills (PS) showed the highest priority (PNI = 0.17, rank 1), followed by professional knowledge (PK; PNI = 0.16, rank 2) and professional attitudes (PA; PNI = 0.15, rank 3). Professional philosophy (PP) exhibited the smallest gap (PNI = 0.13, rank 4). This pattern suggests that mentors also perceive skill development as the most urgent area for improvement.

**Table 3** Mentorship Implementation Needs Reported by Young Teachers (N = 243).

| Dimension | Current | | Desirable | | PNI | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mean | S.D. | Mean | S.D. | | |
| Mentor–mentee relationship | 3.67 | 0.889 | 4.32 | 0.632 | 0.18 | 3 |
| Mentor support | 3.67 | 0.908 | 4.38 | 0.600 | 0.19 | 2 |
| Organizational support | 3.58 | 0.924 | 4.28 | 0.620 | 0.20 | 1 |
| Overall | 3.64 | 0.907 | 4.33 | 0.617 | 0.19 | |

**Note:** Rank is based on $PNI_{modified}$ values (higher values indicate higher priority).

Table 3 presents young teachers'evaluations of mentorship implementation across three dimensions, reporting current and desirable mean scores together with $PNI_{modified}$ values and corresponding ranks (N = 243). Overall, the current level of mentorship implementation was rated at a moderate level (M = 3.64, SD = 0.907), whereas the desirable level was rated high (M = 4.33, SD = 0.617), indicating a noticeable expectation gap. Among the three dimensions, organizational support exhibited the largest gap (PNI = 0.20), ranking first, followed by mentor support (PNI = 0.19, rank 2) and the mentor-mentee relationship (PNI = 0.18, rank 3). Although differences among $PNI_{modified}$ values were relatively close, the results suggest that young teachers perceive institutional-level support mechanisms, such as structured policies, resource allocation, and administrative coordination is the most urgent area for improvement within the mentorship program.



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**Table 4** Mentors' Assessment of Mentorship Implementation Needs (N = 182).

| Dimension | Current | | Desirable | | PNI | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mean | S.D. | Mean | S.D. | | |
| Mentor–mentee relationship | 3.93 | 0.768 | 4.32 | 0.594 | 0.10 | 3 |
| Mentor support | 3.99 | 0.774 | 4.42 | 0.539 | 0.11 | 2 |
| Organizational support | 3.66 | 0.807 | 4.20 | 0.663 | 0.15 | 1 |
| Overall | 3.86 | 0.783 | 4.31 | 0.599 | 0.12 | |

**Note:** Rank is based on $PNI_{modified}$ values (higher values indicate higher priority).

Table 4 presents mentors' evaluations of mentorship implementation across three dimensions, including current and desirable mean scores and corresponding $PNI_{modified}$ values (N = 182). Mentors rated the overall current level of mentorship implementation at a moderate level (M = 3.86, SD = 0.783), while the desirable level was rated high (M = 4.31, SD = 0.599), indicating a clear gap between existing practice and expectations. Among the three dimensions, organizational support showed the highest priority need (PNI = 0.15, rank 1), followed by mentor support (PNI = 0.11, rank 2) and the mentor-mentee relationship (PNI = 0.10, rank 3). Although the magnitude of gaps was smaller than those reported by young teachers, mentors likewise identified institutional support structures as the primary area requiring improvement, suggesting that system-level factors are perceived as more limiting than interpersonal mentoring processes.

## Conclusion and Discussion

Overall, both young teachers and mentors reported moderate current levels but high desirable expectations for professional development and mentorship implementation, indicating a consistent current-desirable gap across dimensions. These results should be interpreted as perception-based priorities rather than direct evidence of program failure, because uniformly high expectations can amplify perceived gaps in dual-response designs. Nevertheless, the convergence of priority rankings across two respondent groups suggests that the identified gaps likely reflect shared institutional challenges that merit targeted improvement. From the dual perspectives of young teachers and mentors at GUFL, the findings show a clear and consistent gap between the current state and desirable goals in both young teachers' professional development and mentorship implementation. This gap suggests strong growth motivation among young teachers



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and positive expectations from mentors, but it also signals that current support structures are not yet meeting these expectations.

For young teachers' professional development, both groups ranked professional skills (PS) as the top priority based on PNI ($PNI_{modified}$). This shared judgment indicates that practical teaching competence remains the most common weakness in early-career development. In other words, young teachers may know what quality teaching looks like, but they still need structured opportunities to translate knowledge into practice. This pattern is consistent with previous research emphasizing that novice teachers often need targeted support in classroom management, instructional strategy use, and applying theory to real teaching contexts (Luo & Yang, 2024; Yao, 2025). While mentors tended to view young teachers' current capability more positively than young teachers viewed themselves, both sides still agreed on where the greatest improvement is needed, which strengthens the credibility of the priority ranking.

For mentorship implementation, both groups identified organizational support as the main bottleneck. This points to a system issue rather than an individual issue. Even strong mentor–mentee relationships and committed mentors may not be enough if the program lacks stable structures, clear procedures, time allocation, incentives, and evaluation mechanisms. This aligns with the view that incomplete support systems and weak planning can significantly reduce the effectiveness of mentoring programs (Fatima et al., 2023; Park & Choi, 2025).

At the same time, the two groups differed in their desirable expectations (see Tables 3 and 4). Young teachers expected both organizational support and mentor support at similarly high levels, reflecting a need for both institutional guarantees and personalized guidance. Mentors, however, placed relatively more emphasis on improving the mentoring role itself. This mismatch suggests that program improvement should not only strengthen resources and mechanisms but also clarify responsibilities and align expectations between mentors and young teachers. As noted in related work, early-career support needs are multidimensional and require both formal institutional support and informal relational support, while mentors may naturally focus more on support within their own role boundaries (Hellebaut et al., 2026).

## Recommendation

The strategies focus on three areas: organizational safeguards, mentoring implementation, and collaborative alignment, to strengthen how the mentorship program empowers young teachers' professional development.

1. Given that both groups identified organizational support as the main weakness, GUFL leadership and the program office should build a clear and consistent policy framework for mentoring. The university should issue detailed implementation rules that specify mentoring



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frequency, core content boundaries, and evaluation criteria. Professional skills development should be written into the program's required mentoring tasks so that mentoring does not become symbolic or irregular. The university should also provide practical resources, such as a dedicated mentoring budget, a skills-training platform for young teachers, taking teaching practice labs as an example, and a formal coordination mechanism between mentors and young teachers to reduce resource shortages and communication breakdowns. In addition, the university should run a continuous evaluation and feedback cycle by collecting input from both groups on a regular schedule and adjusting support priorities based on the feedback to keep organizational services effective.

2. Considering that both young teachers and mentors ranked professional skills as the top improvement priority, mentors should shift mentoring from "general coverage" to "targeted skill-building." Mentors should diagnose each young teacher's skill gaps and create individualized mentoring plans. The plans should concentrate on high-impact teaching competencies, such as classroom management, instructional strategy use, and translating theory into practice. Mentors should use hands-on methods with strong practice value, including demonstration lessons, lesson rehearsal and coaching sessions, and structured teaching reflection with peer feedback, to close skills gaps. At the same time, the university should support mentors by organizing skill-focused workshops co-delivered with mentors and by inviting master teachers and discipline leaders to join the training, expanding mentoring resources and improving mentoring professionalism—while also responding to mentors' need to strengthen their own support capacity.

3. Because young teachers expect both institutional safeguards and personalized guidance, while mentors tend to focus more on their mentoring role, the university should create structured two-way communication. At the start of each mentor–mentee pairing, the program office should hold a needs-alignment meeting where both sides clarify: (a) young teachers' dual expectations for organizational support and individualized mentoring, and (b) mentors' goals, responsibilities, and role boundaries. Mentors should be encouraged to respond to young teachers' broader needs by offering career development suggestions and appropriate emotional support, while keeping professional skills mentoring as the central task to strengthen relationship quality and engagement. Meanwhile, the university should communicate the combined value of "organizational support + mentor support," and invite mentors to report what institutional support they need during implementation, so that organizational policies and mentoring practice reinforce each other. Finally, the university should establish a mutual evaluation system by incorporating young teachers' feedback into mentor appraisal, which encourages mentors to adjust support to mentees' needs and improves mentoring relevance and satisfaction.



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## Limitations and Future Research

Currently, the study focuses on a single university; in the future, its scope can be increased by expanding the sample size and including universities from different regions and tiers. Comparative analyses of mentorship implementation across contexts can be conducted to improve the generalizability of the conclusions.

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