

INFLUENCE OF THE SISC PLUS COACH
MENTORING ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF NOVICE ESL
TEACHERS' KNOWLEDGE

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FACULTY OF EDUCATION
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OF TEACHER KNOWLEDGE

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ABSTRACT

Issues on numerous measures taken by the Ministry of Education to improve on the English Language Teaching (ELT) methodology and quality to maintain the standard of the English language in Malaysia has led to the need of deep understanding in the influence of the School Specialist Improvement Coach Plus programme on novice teachers. This research study intends to understand novice teachers' knowledge development during mentoring by examining their development of knowledge in terms of their pedagogical content knowledge when they are being mentored by the SISC+ mentor. A qualitative descriptive study approach was adopted in this research to explore and understand the influence of the SISC+ mentor on the novice teachers' development of knowledge in rural schools. The researcher chose 3 novice ESL teachers who participated in the School Specialist Improvement Coach Plus programme to study the influences of the program on the pedagogical content knowledge of novice teachers and their roles in developing novice teachers' knowledge on students and the curriculum in the current study. The analysis of the findings in the study revealed that the influence of the SISC+ helped novice teachers to make connections between practise and pedagogical content knowledge, align novice teachers' knowledge of pedagogy with the content, tap on novice teachers' PCK knowledge and the mentoring sessions was a platform for novice teachers' engagement in reflective practise on their PCK. In addition, the SISC+ also played a crucial role in developing the knowledge base of novice teachers', as an enriching learning experience, in integrating knowledge bases of material adaptation according to students' characteristics and as a facilitator. Thus, it can be concluded that the mentoring of the SISC+ on the novice teachers pedagogical content knowledge

development and the roles of the SISC+ on the development of students' knowledge and the knowledge of curriculum are vital for novice teachers.

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PENGARUH PEMENTORAN PEMBIMBING PAKAR PENINGKATAN SEKOLAH TERHADAP PERKEMBANGAN PENGETAHUAN GURU ESL

ABSTRAK

Isu mengenai pelbagai langkah yang diambil oleh Kementerian Pendidikan untuk meningkatkan metodologi dan kualiti Pengajaran Bahasa Inggeris (ELT) untuk mengekalkan standard Bahasa Inggeris di Malaysia menyebabkan perlunya pemahaman yang mendalam mengenai pengaruh Jurulatih Peningkatan Pakar Sekolah Program Plus (SISC+) pada guru novis. Kajian penyelidikan ini bertujuan untuk memahami perkembangan pengetahuan guru novis semasa dibimbing dengan meneliti perkembangan pengetahuan mereka dari segi pengetahuan kandungan pedagogi mereka ketika mereka dibimbing oleh mentor SISC +. Pendekatan kajian deskriptif kualitatif digunakan dalam penyelidikan ini untuk meneroka dan memahami pengaruh mentor SISC + terhadap perkembangan pengetahuan guru novis di sekolah-sekolah luar bandar. Pengkaji memilih 4 guru novis yang mengambil bahagian dalam program School Specialist Improvement Coach Plus untuk mengkaji pengaruh program tersebut terhadap pengetahuan kandungan pedagogi guru novis dan peranan mereka dalam mengembangkan pengetahuan guru novis terhadap pelajar dan kurikulum di kajian semasa. Analisis penemuan dalam kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa pengaruh SISC + membantu guru novis membuat hubungan antara praktik dan pengetahuan kandungan pedagogi, menyelaraskan pengetahuan pedagogi guru novis dengan kandungannya, menambah pengetahuan PCK guru novis dan sesi bimbingan adalah platform untuk penglibatan guru novis dalam latihan reflektif pada PCK mereka. Di samping itu, SISC + juga memainkan peranan penting dalam mengembangkan pangkalan pengetahuan guru novis, sebagai pengalaman pembelajaran yang memperkaya, dalam mengintegrasikan pangkalan pengetahuan penyesuaian bahan

mengikut ciri-ciri pelajar dan sebagai fasilitator. Oleh itu, dapat disimpulkan bahawa bimbingan SISC + terhadap pengembangan pengetahuan kandungan pedagogi guru novis dan peranan SISC + terhadap pengembangan pengetahuan pelajar dan pengetahuan tentang kurikulum sangat penting bagi guru novis.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

An introduction in relation to the research study will be presented in this chapter. This chapter will begin with the background followed by the problem statement which includes the gaps in the literature which will be acknowledged in this study, the questions that this research study attempts to address, an introduction to the theoretical background, the purpose and the significance of the study. Lastly, this chapter will provide the definition of the terms used in this study.

1.1 Background

In order to understand and enhance practice, many perspectives were drawn from a range of theoretical ideas in recent years of research activities. In the English as a Second Language (ESL) context, teacher knowledge development is widely progressing at par with the various research that has been conducted which has opened different perspectives to understand and enhance teaching practice. In order for a teacher development programme to be effective, the understanding of how does teacher learning take place is vital. On the other hand, according to Delaney and Blömeke (2012), the assumption that as soon as a teacher has completed teacher training, they are well equipped to face every challenge has been proven to be damaging for both the schools and students. Thus, there is a need for research in understanding the development of knowledge in novice teachers after they have been sent to schools and to recognize their needs in confronting the real issues of the rural school.

To upgrade the continuous professional development of ESL in Malaysia, the Ministry of Education has presented the School Improvement Coach Plus (SISC+)

mentor who have significant knowledge and expertise in pedagogy in each education district office. In this programme, the SISC+ mentors ensured that they tailored to the requirements of the novice teachers to instill the present ideas and instructions including teaching and learning, providing instant feedbacks on teaching and learning through interactions and discussions, organising collaborative workshops and collaboratively work together with them in order to enhance their pedagogical content knowledge as ESL teachers from rural schools. This programme was implemented every year in schools where the need for mentoring arises especially when the school is chosen by the district office based on the key performance indicator of the school for each year. In this programme the partaking ESL teachers received at least 6 hours of continuous input through group mentoring twice in a semester.

With the mentoring of the SISC+ mentor, the ESL novice teachers were expected to develop their knowledge where their classroom instructions and learning is concern. Moreover, the participating novice teachers were expected to master the key pedagogical skills of the 21st century to inculcate Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) during instructions and learning, improvise instructions and learning in mixed ability classrooms and assess students effectively in the classroom. To coach these novice teachers' the SISC+ mentors were led by the band obtained by each school.

1.2 Statement Problem

There were numerous measures taken by the Ministry of Education to improve on the English Language Teaching (ELT) methodology and quality to maintain the standard of the English language in Malaysia. Among the initiatives taken was the programme of Upholding the Malay language, Strengthening Command of English Policy (MBMMBI) in order to improve the English language in schools in the year 2010. Through this policy the teaching instructions and learning of English in Malaysian

schools is to be further enhanced through a more diversified and advanced teaching methodology (Malaysian Education Blueprint, 2013-2025). In line with this, the ministry has also taken measures to ensure that there are enough English option teachers in a school, to increase the competency of the English teachers in school as well as to improve the schools' infrastructure and teaching aids for English teachers in school. On the other hand, in ensuring quality teachers, the Ministry of Education has proposed various measures of improvement including the SISC+ positions in order to upgrade and provide continuous professional development to teachers.

In spite of the fact that the SISC+ mentors generally aim to enhance teachers' pedagogical skills and knowledge in teaching English, it is crucial to focus on the influence of this programme on new in-service teachers and the roles of the SISC+ mentor on their insights where knowledge development is concern in the primary school. This is due to the issue where, these novice teachers, despite being very new are denied a transition period, not allowing for space or transition to take place from the teacher training programme into the new school environment that they are placed in. and are entrusted with equal responsibilities as the other teachers in school in the absence of a mentor to guide them through. Hence, this concern is not completely tended to in Malaysian schools. In Malaysia, there are no specific teacher induction programme or adequate support programmes which allows novice teachers transition (Goh & Blake, 2015). However, these novice teachers are still burdened with duties which they have to assume like a regular teacher, despite the transition that they go through in the beginning stage of teaching. The novice teachers only learn about their duties, roles and pedagogy through conversations and informal ways as they converse with other teachers and consecutively improve their pedagogical knowledge and skills through these methods.

Moreover, literature on novice teachers have been well documented in teacher education, however, it is found that most learning occurs about the profession during the transition period of a novice teacher through individualised and professional means (Desimone et al., 2013). Burton and Johnson (2010) stated that where teacher education is concerned, it overlooks the geographical isolated places such as the rural contexts. Similarly, in Malaysia most ESL novice teachers grow through their own means during the transition period after being posted to a rural school. Thus, it is valuable to understand the lack of support and the influence of continuous professional development programmes such as the SISC+ mentoring on novice teachers who are posted to rural schools. It is necessary to be studied on as there is inadequate attention given to the knowledge development of novice teachers and their transformation during the first year of teaching. This understanding will also be valuable to inform policy makers of relevant structure on future continuous professional development programmes for teachers.

Besides, mentoring is the key job of a SISC+ mentor. Mentoring scaffolds a platform for novice teachers' as they transform into their new environment from teacher training into the real world of teaching. However, in spite of the sufficient help given, there is good amount of struggle faced by novice teachers in their attempt to adapt to the professional culture and environment that they are placed in when they start fresh from teacher education programs (Farrell, 2012). Thus, this study will examine closely the novice teachers learning experience when support programs such as the SISC+ is present. In addition, this study will also particularly focus on novice teachers from the rural school context which is valuable to the Second Language Teacher Education (SLTE) as well. Subsequently, this research study will fill in the gaps in literature by understanding the areas concern in pedagogical content

knowledge development of novice teachers' and the roles of the SISC+ mentor in the development of novice teachers' knowledge concerning students in the rural areas and their characteristics as well as curriculum knowledge.

1.3 Research Questions

This study attempts to address the following research questions that guides this research study of the School Improvement Specialist Coach Plus (SISC+) mentoring on novice teachers' knowledge development in terms of their pedagogical content knowledge and other knowledge base in rural schools.

1. How does the SISC+ mentoring influence the pedagogical content knowledge of novice teachers'?
2. What roles do the SISC+ mentor play in the development of novice teachers' knowledge about the students and the curriculum?

1.4 Theoretical Background of the Study

Theoretical frameworks are assumed to replicate an understanding of concepts and theories in relation to a specific field or topic (Kivunja, 2018). The theoretical foundation of this research study is derived from a paradigm proposed by Lee S Shulman (1987) on the categories of Knowledge Base. Shulman (1987) proposed a Model of Pedagogical Reasoning and Action which explains the pedagogical reasoning and the use of a teachers knowledge base to teach skilfully in the classroom (Shulman, 1987, p. 13). Drawing from the constructivist theories in learning, particularly Shulman's model on novice teachers' pedagogical knowledge brings light to the theoretical gap that is linked in this research study between teachers and mentoring practices. Hence, the theoretical framework in this study will review the explicit statement of theoretical assumptions and research's that connects to existing knowledge in relation to the categories of knowledge bases in teachers and their

pedagogical reasoning and action during teaching and learning. Thus, before proceeding with the discussion on the influence of mentoring practices on the knowledge development of novice teachers, it is significant for us to comprehend the underlying ideas of teachers' knowledge base and the pedagogical reasoning and actions of teachers during teaching instructions and learning.

The Model of Pedagogical Reasoning and Action was constructed by Lee S Shulman (1987). This model posited that teacher knowledge included a seven minimal knowledge bases which is vital for teachers namely content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, curricular knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, knowledge of students, knowledge of context and knowledge of educational goals (Shulman, 1987). Teacher knowledge development or learning in this context refers to the underlying knowledge base a teacher has and the instructional reasoning and actions employed during teaching and learning. This links in the knowledge base of a teacher and the pedagogical reasoning and actions in the classroom can be explained through the model proposed by Shulman (1987) which elaborates five processes namely comprehension, transformation, instruction, evaluation, reflection and new comprehension to explain their reasoning in terms of pedagogical content and knowledge development that takes place in a teacher when they are being mentored by the SISC+ mentors. Similarly, the development of knowledge base in novice teachers' in the current study, can be understood from the perspective of a novice teacher who is confronted with many challenges in the rural classroom and how she uses her knowledge to make it ready for effective instructions. Shulman further argued that understanding of the seven knowledge bases is connected to judgement and pedagogical actions and wise pedagogical decisions. Thus, this model will be used in

the study as a foreground to explain the influence and roles of the SISC+ mentoring in the development of knowledge in novice teachers from rural schools.

Shulman (1987) posited that teacher knowledge included a minimal of seven knowledge bases which are vital for classroom instructions namely content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, curricular knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, knowledge of students, knowledge of context and knowledge of educational goals. The Model for Pedagogical Reasoning and Action replicates how novice teachers with existing prior knowledge gained during their teacher training use their pedagogical reasoning and actions with the SISC+ mentors to critically reflect and develop knowledge in their teaching and learning. Hence with the fusion of the existing knowledge base of novice teachers and their mentoring with the SISC+ mentors, the study proposes this model as a way of understanding ESL novice teachers' development of knowledge and learning experience with the SISC+ mentors in a rural school.

1.5 The Purpose of Study

This research study intends to understand novice teachers' knowledge development during mentoring by examining their development of knowledge in terms of their pedagogical content knowledge when they are being mentored by the SISC+ mentor. The study further seeks to comprehend the influence of the SISC+ mentoring in particular on the novice teachers' pedagogical reasoning and actions during teaching and learning in rural areas. Furthermore, the roles of the SISC+ mentor in enhancing the novice teachers' knowledge about the students and their characteristics in the rural areas as well as the use of the current curriculum to suit the needs of the rural students is also explored in this study. Furthermore, the present study also aims to inform policy makers, administrators and other vital stakeholders in education of the ESL novice

teachers' development of knowledge and experiences during the mentoring by the SISC+ mentor.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study is significant as it will be able to contribute to the body of knowledge and address the gaps in the existing literature in the area of Second Language Teacher Education. The teaching profession encompasses a “*special amalgam of content and pedagogy*” that is a distinctive domain of a teacher (Shulman, 1987, p. 8). Along these lines, in understanding the development of pedagogical content knowledge of novice teachers' resulting from their participation in the SISC+ mentoring sessions in this study will enhance teachers' knowledge development by filling in gaps in existing literatures particularly on the influences of a continuous development programme on teachers' knowledge in the areas of pedagogy and content and also the roles of a mentor in the development of knowledge. In terms of the theoretical contributions, the findings in this study will be able to confirm or disconfirm the model proposed by Lee S Shulman (1987). The present study will be able to explain the model through the perspectives of mentoring and development of knowledge in novice teachers after the mentoring by the SISC+ mentor. Thus, this study will provide a top down insight in understanding and examining the knowledge development of novice ESL teachers from rural schools.

Moreover, the findings of this study would be a platform to add practical contributions to the English Language Teaching (ELT) in Malaysia. This is because, in this study, the learning and knowledge development experiences of novice teachers from the rural areas will be included to inform policy makers, administrators and major stakeholders in the field of education. This will provide an in-depth understanding of the novice teachers' learning experience with their SISC+ mentor and how this

learning informs the development of their pedagogical content knowledge and the roles of the SISC+ mentor in developing their knowledge through mentoring. This understanding will be pertinent, as it may serve as a guideline to inform future continuous development programmes for novice teachers' in Malaysia.

Lastly, the study will create an impact in participating ESL novice teachers' as they will be able to reflect deeply on their own development of pedagogical content knowledge and the knowledge of students and their characteristics as well as curriculum through the mentoring sessions with the SISC+ mentor. These participants will be able to reflect on their weaknesses and strengths and work on their own development of knowledge and professional practice. This will in turn allow them to be better ESL teachers.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

Despite the fact that this study develops pedagogical content knowledge of novice teachers', knowledge of students and their characteristics as well as curriculum knowledge, it has some limitations.

Firstly, the researcher employed a purposeful sampling technique in this study to identify the three novice teacher participants in this study. Thus, the findings can't be generalised to other ESL contexts besides the rural context in Kuala Kangsar district.

Secondly, this study was conducted among novice teachers' from the primary schools in the rural areas of the Kuala Kangsar district. Hence the findings may be limited to the primary schools alone. A different finding could have been yield if the study was conducted in the town area primary school.

Furthermore, another limitation of this study is that the novice teachers were very conscious of the presence of the researcher during the mentoring sessions. The effect of the researcher's presence might have influenced the quality of data collected.

1.8 Definition of Terms

Novice teachers - Farrell (2012) defines novice teachers' who have completed teacher training program or teacher education and sometimes referred to as newly qualified teachers who are usually within three years after completing their teacher education.

School Improvement Specialist Coach (SISC+) - The School Improvement Specialist Coach (SISC+) is a programme initiated by the Ministry of Education in Malaysia as a form of guidance and support to teachers' to acquire better pedagogical skills in classroom teaching through coaching and monitoring the effectiveness of the implementation of new curricula (Ministry of Education, 2013).

Teacher knowledge – Teacher knowledge branches down knowledge base into several categories which are content knowledge, general pedagogical knowledge, curriculum knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, knowledge of learners, knowledge of educational contexts, and knowledge of educational ends, purposes, and values (Shulman, 1987, p. 17).

Pedagogical Content Knowledge – Pedagogical Content Knowledge is a special amalgam of content and pedagogy that is uniquely the province of teachers (Shulman, 1987, p. 17).

Curricular Knowledge –A comprehension of the syllabus, topics, and instructional materials designed for and expected in the teaching of a particular subject (Shulman, 1987, p. 17).

Knowledge of Students –An understanding of learners’ cognitive, psychological and affective characteristics, behaviors, interests and developmental stages (Shulman, 1987, p. 17).

Mentoring –Mentoring is a process which includes a mentor as an individual who provides assistance to another individual to endure a vital transition usually in a new circumstance involving personal growth or development in career (Desimone et al., 2013).

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CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a review of the literature related to the proposed research study. It begins with a review of literature on the SISC+ programme in Malaysia, novice teachers' and mentoring. This chapter reviews research studies conducted by previous researchers on ESL teachers' pedagogical content knowledge development which encompasses the sociocultural environment as a vital aspect for novice teachers' pedagogical content knowledge development, characteristics of effective mentors, criteria for successful mentoring, the relationship between theory and mentoring practices, mentoring in relation to novice teachers' practice and mentoring in relation to novice teachers' pedagogical content knowledge and research on perspectives of novice teachers' in rural schools on mentoring in relation to their knowledge development. Lastly, this chapter will review the theoretical framework of this study in terms of the relationship between the theory and the development of pedagogical content knowledge in novice teachers' in relation to mentoring practices of novice teachers' and the model of Pedagogical Reasoning and Action which informs this research study.

2.2 Novice Teachers

Farrell (2012) defines novice teachers' who have completed teacher training program or teacher education and sometimes referred to as newly qualified teachers' who are usually within three years after completing their teacher education and similarly, D. H. Nagatomo (2012) states that more often novice teachers' describe their adaptation process into the new environment as a "struggle for survival". Based on these two

definitions it is clearly established by Farrell (2012) and D. H. Nagatomo (2012) that, in the first three years of teaching, novice teachers' usually develop and learn how to apply what they have been taught in teacher training or during teaching practice through the process of adapting. The process of adapting usually involves socialising into the new environment and education setting that they are placed in and implementing what they have studied in teacher training and during their teaching practise. It clearly shows that these are the aspects that mediates novice teachers' experiences during their beginning years in teaching.

The present study highlights the knowledge development and learning experience of novice teachers from rural schools during the SISC+ mentoring. The rationale for focusing on novice teachers' who are posted to rural schools in this study, is due to the inadequate support that novice teachers' who are particularly placed in rural schools get in the beginning of their teaching and the lack of platform or programmes that are offered for these new teachers to be able to make a transition (Fatiha Senom & Juliana Othman, 2014). Without doubt, novice teachers' who are posted to rural schools would need programmes to support their development as beginning teachers due to the expectations in rural schools which may differ in schools which are located in the urban and sub-urban areas. Lane, Little, Menzies, Lambert, and Wehby (2010) identified the difference in needs and concerns of a school situated in a rural area. Although their research findings came from a suburban and rural school in Los Angeles, it denotes that "rural schools in particular have unique needs and concerns due to their locations in sparsely populated area" (Lane et al., 2010, p. 133), which is similar to the Malaysian context. Thus, it is hoped that by exploring this area of novice teachers' knowledge development experiences, this study will address the knowledge development of novice teachers' from rural schools through the mentoring

sessions of the SISC+ and that these understandings will inform future support programmes for beginning teachers.

2.2.1 The Sociocultural Environment as a Vital Factor for Novice Teachers' Knowledge Development

According to Farrell (2012), from the very beginning of their job, novice teachers' experience a gap between teacher training and in-service teacher development when they are assigned to similar challenges as the expert and more experienced teachers in school, often with no guidance in the new environment that they are placed in. Furthermore these gaps appear to be more overwhelming for novice teachers' who face challenges in schools which are situated in disadvantaged contexts such as low socioeconomic status (Escribano, Treviño, Nussbaum, Torres Iribarra, & Carrasco, 2020). As such, in most cases novice teachers may feel discouraged as the reality of the classroom, environment and culture that they are confronted with may differ from the idealised image of teaching that they had throughout their training which may result in the struggle for survival especially when they are posted to schools situated in the rural areas.

Voss and Kunter (2019) also terms in his research, the first three years of teaching as a "reality shock" and says that focusing extensively on this condition, could be the starting points for identifying the needs and providing support for beginning teachers. Yet the struggle of surviving this "reality shock" may be more overwhelming for novice teachers' who are sent to an environment which is in a disadvantaged context or situated in rural areas. To Kettler, Puryear, and Mullet (2016), rural schools differ in terms of their growth, rates of poverty, school, size of district, remoteness and enrolment count. Similarly, this definition can also be used in the rural areas in Malaysia where each rural setting varies in terms of socioeconomic differences,

enrolment of students, size and the remoteness of area. In a literature review conducted by Reagan et al. (2019) on novice teachers' in rural areas, in the United States, findings revealed that novice teachers' find schools in rural areas challenging including unfamiliar teaching and learning context, physical space and sparse teaching resources. An in-depth examination of similar findings also found that the rural community expectations and aspirations are factors which can influence the success of the school's improvements.

Novice teachers' who come from the non-rural areas and are sent to rural areas would have to transit themselves into a different environment adapt their teaching and learning to suit the students who come to school with the ideologies of the rural community which will also affect and influence their attitude towards learning in school. In another study on the *Portraits of Two Teachers in the Rural South* by Burton and Johnson (2010), the findings identified another factor that is unique to the rural community which novice teachers' would have to face during their transition. The interview data with the novice teacher, in this study discussed how the novice felt dejected as she was considered an outsider in that community (Burton & Johnson, 2010). She further described the important role that kinship and connections among the members of the community played in her classroom. People expected her to know family connections and histories of students which she did not know (Burton & Johnson, 2010, p. 382). However, the situation changed when the novice teacher attended community events and she felt much more accepted by the community there. In other words, there may exist a mismatch between the ideologies of the novice teacher's personal ideology and the ideologies and culture that is brought by the community in the rural area. Thus, the ideals of the rural may be different and it may take a lot of understanding and compromise on the part of the novice teacher to teach

there. In the same study, it was found that the novice teacher had idolised beginning a school year in an encouraging and supportive environment among colleagues, however, in reality her expectations were all negotiated. As such, this study takes the view that the socio-cultural environment of the school serves as a contributing factor in the knowledge development of novice teachers. Moreover, there are limited number of studies which have illustrated ESL novice teachers' first year teaching experiences in TESOL and a supportive environment being vital is considered to be an exception in the cases of many novice teachers' transition in less ideal conditions (Farrell, 2012). Correspondingly, the understanding that novice teachers' are often inadequately ready or accepted in the process of transition from a pre-service to an in-service environment by adapting themselves into a new context remains prominent.

In the recent years, there are not many studies that have placed importance to the social-cultural environment realities of the school in relation to novice teachers. However, Mukeredzi (2016) explains that conditions in rural schools globally experience similar obstacles such as poor funding, remoteness, limitations in resource, poverty stricken local environment and isolation. Thus, the socioeconomic conditions of schools situated in rural areas to a certain extent affects the transitioning, adaptation and knowledge development of novice teachers who are sent to rural schools. Mukeredzi (2016), further reiterates that in order to maintain their commitment, effectiveness of teaching and learning in a rural community, novice teachers should be resilient as the scenarios in rural schools may become complex and overwhelming for them. Nevertheless, the appreciative study of novice teachers and their development continues to permeate in this research context. The research suggests that the novice teachers who are sent to rural schools should foster a resilient nature when they are sent to rural schools.

Another study that examined the motivation and attitude of novice teachers' in a rural primary school in Malaysia is the study conducted by Melor Md Yunus and Nur Rashidah Khairunnisa Ranjeeta Bt Abdullah (2011). Although the data from the survey conducted with students from rural areas emphasised that a majority of the pupils 103 (64.4%) responded that they were required to be fluent and another 104 (87.4%) pupils responded that they did well in English, however in real fact, these students were shy in answering questions and demonstrated behaviours of prolonged hesitation, shyness, avoided by staring somewhere else and took a very long time in answering questions by their English teacher in the classroom during teaching and learning. These ideas point to the need of identifying the contextual aspect in relation to novice teachers' knowledge development. Furthermore, it is a vital evidence of another aspect that novice teachers' may have to look into when they are sent to rural schools. The implication of such critical ideas may foster novice teachers' to adapt themselves and find suitable methodologies, pedagogy and ways in engaging and enhancing student learning in rural areas.

Apart from that, the idea that professional support that novice teachers' are provided with in rural schools improves their traits as a teacher and promotes achievement in students. In a research study examining Inquiry-based instruction, students' attitudes and teachers' support towards science achievement in rural primary schools, Arsaytham Veloo, Selvan Perumal, and R. Vikneswary (2013) established that the results obtained from the study show a significant relationship between teachers' support and science achievement. In the study, 150 students agreed that their teachers were very supportive and encouraging which resulted in their achievement in science. Arsaytham Veloo et al. (2013), foregrounded that the ideal characteristics and personality trait of a teacher in rural settings will promote successful teaching and

learning. The research suggests that the personality trait in terms of their professional attributes would also need to be addressed by novice teachers' when they are sent to rural schools.

Although the literature corpus for novice teacher is expanding, little is researched about schools in the rural setting in Malaysia. Novice teachers' who are posted to rural areas might undergo difference in knowledge growth as they transit themselves into the school environment. The neglect over novice teachers' who are sent to rural areas may contribute to the increase number of teachers who leave the teaching job due to not having enough support and being unable to cope with the socio-cultural and socioeconomic difference. This argument is further established by a study on *Understanding Profiles of Preservice Teachers With Different Levels of Commitment to Teaching in Urban Schools* by Aragon, Culpepper, McKee, and Perkins (2014) which provides some general idea on the perception of novice teachers' on leaving schools which are located in rural and urban settings. This study revealed that teachers' attrition rates in rural schools are 50% higher than urban schools. Consequently, many novice teachers relate ideal teaching situations to urban schools and prefer to get jobs there and the vice versa is seen in the rural areas. Nevertheless, the examination of social environment factors of the school plays an integral role in the professional development of novice teachers' who are new to the rural setting and the job itself. Thus far, the review has outlined the context or the environment as a vital factor in light of novice teachers' knowledge development in the areas of content and pedagogy.

2.3 Mentoring

This section describes the need for support for novice teachers' to increase their pedagogical content knowledge, knowledge of students and their characteristics and

curriculum knowledge in primary schools located in the rural areas. According to Opengart and Bierema (2015), mentoring can be defined as a prolonged relationship which occurs in a form of commitment with mutual benefits and understanding of each other's role and is also a form of developmental relationships which serves as a form of guidance and support to mentees. Nagatomo and Diane Hawley (2012) on the other hand related the initial year of teaching as a "reality shock" and described it as an essential part of induction for novice teachers' to adapt into the community of practise they are placed in. Similarly, Blair (2008) argues the importance of supporting these novice teachers' as it would be more prolific to develop a mentoring programme or model where there will be collaborative groups which includes teachers and novices who would regularly come together and support each other's professional development in a nurturing and safe environment. Thus, it is fundamental that mentoring is essential to novice teachers' who are in need of support in the first year of teaching especially if they are confronted by a new environment, culture and society and struggle without much help or support from the school administration and environment that they are placed in. As established earlier in this paper, novice teachers' who are confronted with the new realities of the socio-cultural environment that they are sent to, would need a form of support to aid their transition process.

Based on the notion that mentoring can ease the transitioning of novice teachers' in the initial years of teaching, a number of studies have been conducted to examine the link between mentoring and its' influences on the development of pedagogical content knowledge of teachers. Mukeredzi (2017) proposed that learning occurs effectively through mentoring as mentoring involves modelling, discussions, observations, providing feedbacks, critical and constructive discussions between the mentor and the mentee. According to Delaney and Yuly (2012), research studies have

evidenced that mentoring relationships can have positive impacts on mentees early teaching experiences. Moreover, mentoring programs also benefit novice teachers' to maintain positive attitudes as well as gain a healthy emotional balance. Another key feature of mentoring that Delaney and Yuly (2012) identified is also the insights that mentors facilitate novice teachers' to implement standards by acculturating into the policies and standards which are set by the school and by identifying contextual factors that will hinder or help in the implementation of standards. Thus, mentoring is a form of support for novice teachers' who are posted to rural schools to effectively adapt themselves and improve their pedagogical content knowledge constantly.

These idea points towards the need to not only question the effects of mentoring and the advantages of mentoring over another but also in how mentoring has shaped and reshaped their knowledge development in terms of content and pedagogy in novice teachers'. This argument is further established by Mukeredzi (2017) as the findings in the research also points to the role of mentoring as a platform for learning as it involves reflection which acts as an catalyst for knowledge development in novice teachers' especially in a rural context. Novice teachers who are newly posted to the rural context learn better through mentoring through the reflection process as they reflect during the mentoring process about the hindrance during lessons in a rural socioeconomic context or in a situation where all things go wrong (Mukeredzi & Nyachowe, 2018). More generally, mentors played a vital role in the socialisation of novice teachers' by assisting them to conform to the norms, standards and expectations associated with teaching in general and specific to the school context (Lopez-Real & Kwan, 2005). Although the general idea of mentoring being able to foster and facilitate novice teachers' transitioning into a new environment is central, yet, this position does not entirely estrange from the fact that mentoring also helps

shape novice teachers' visions in teaching practise. Thus far, this review has outlined the need for support in terms of mentoring for novice teachers' to effectively transit and adapt themselves to the new realities that they are faced with.

2.3.1 Characteristics of Effective Mentors

This section, discusses the characteristics of effective mentors that will lead to a successful mentor-mentee relationship. Mentor characteristics is a crucial element in determining the effectiveness of mentoring as without a good personality trait the process of mentoring will be severely hampered. Four vital mentor characteristics mentees identified in a study on *Mentees' Perspective of the Informal Mentors' Characteristics Essential for Mentoring Success*" are sincerity, commitment, skill and knowledge development and organizational ascendancy and impact (Joshi & Sikdar, 2015, p. 977). This study also further defines these main characteristics into sub characteristics whereby the sincerity of the mentor is perceived to have qualities of honesty, high integrity and trustworthy (Joshi & Sikdar, 2015). On the other hand, in the similar article, a committed mentor is defined as a supportive person who is willing to spend time and displays empathy to his mentee (Joshi & Sikdar, 2015). In general, mentees belief that mentors who have positive characteristics will aid in understanding their position as novices which could be categorised as effective mentor characteristics. This argument is further established in another study on *Students-teacher Perspectives on the Qualities of Mentor-teachers* by Maria-Monica and Alina (2014), where findings revealed that, the favoured mentor's personal attributes that was vital to assist the mentees in the study to make transition included mentors knowing how to share experiences about their practice, confident and are able to facilitate collaborative discussions on teaching practice. Similar characteristics of

mentors have been identified by novice teachers' in various studies as effective mentoring trait.

Furthermore, according to Joshi and Sikdar (2015) mentees in the research study perceived the emotional and psychological support given by the mentor in the form of listening to their challenges and helping them to solve problems that revolves around the transition that occurs in their environment as ideal to their development. These characteristics listed can be related as ideal for novice teachers' in rural schools as, novice teachers' in rural schools needed someone who will listen to the challenges that they face in the process of adapting themselves in the new environment that they are placed in. In another study on, *Students-Teacher Perspectives on The Qualities of Mentor-Teachers* by Maria-Monica and Alina (2014), findings of the study revealed that mentors were perceived as a support in helping them by building emotional support, a person whom they can trust and confide their stressful situations in and one who will help them view things from a different perspective and lend a hand in achieving and realizing their best potentials. The personal attributes displayed by the mentors in the study were seen to facilitate their commitment and motivation towards teaching (Maria-Monica & Alina, 2014) Thus, it is evident that most mentees look forward to have mentors who are able to support them emotionally during their novice years. Furthermore, the reoccurrence of similar ideas in different research studies of ideal characteristics of an effective mentor foregrounds that the ideals of effective traits of mentors are the same in general. Mentors who are empathetic, helpful in nature and trustworthy may be more prone to be categorised as effective mentors.

There are a variety of ways in which the characteristics of an effective mentor can be conceptualised in this study. There exist a number of studies that has compared and contrasted results between good mentoring experiences and bad mentoring

experiences. These studies will enhance the rise of critical ideas and gaps in this research which concerns mentoring and novice teachers' in rural schools. Hence, this section will deal with the comparison and contrasting of both these ideals. In a study conducted by Eby, Butts, Durley, and Ragins (2010) titled, *Are bad experiences stronger than good ones in mentoring relationships? Evidence from the protégé and mentor perspective*, the findings revealed that positive mentoring experiences with proteges were highly related with good relationship quality, greater willingness in future mentoring and better intentions to stay in the relationship (Eby et al., 2010). Furthermore, good mentoring was not significantly related to burnout (Eby et al., 2010). Consistent with that, Eby et al. (2010) also revealed that negative mentoring experiences with proteges were highly related with low relationship quality, less willingness to mentor in future and no intentions to continue the relationship in future. The shifts between good mentoring and bad mentoring brings out a gap that may be addressed in this study, which is the impact of the mentoring on the novice teachers' in the rural schools of Malaysia. Compounded with this is the fact that there is a research gap, which is, that there has not been any research till date that has simultaneously studied on relationships of good and bad mentoring systematically by comparing their relative strengths. Among the most common negative experience reported by mentees are the mismatches that exists in terms of the differences in the principle values that they hold, their personalities and character, their work styles, the phenomenon of neglecting mentees and being uninterested in helping, lack of expertise and manipulative behaviours which will cause more harm than good to mentees.

The research effort has both theoretical and practical implications. An implication of this is the need for greater attention to research on effective mentor characteristics in rural schools. In rural areas, the characteristics of the mentor also

plays an important role as, the novice teachers may have difficulties or face a cultural shock, thus the empathy and understanding from the mentor is ideal to help novice teachers' to set into and to be able to confront the rural environment that they are in. Thus far, the review of this section has highlighted the need to address the idea of how the characteristics of effective and non-effective mentor would inform the professional development of novice teachers' in rural areas in this research study.

2.3.2 Criteria for Successful Mentoring

Although effective characteristics of mentors are central to the study of the development of pedagogical content knowledge in novice teachers' through mentoring, effective mentoring is the criteria for successful mentoring which is also vital that should be explored to ensure that the gaps in this study are addressed coherently. Joshi and Sikdar (2015) argues that skills and knowledge development are criteria for successful mentoring where the mentor is able to teach and coach the mentee. Furthermore, they also claim that the personal presence of the mentor also determines the success for effective mentoring especially when exposure and visibility is given to the mentee in the culture and work environment. In a more wider perspective, Joshi and Sikdar (2015) suggests, that in order to determine the success of mentoring, mentors should ask themselves if he has widen horizons for his mentee, has concern for effectiveness, has instilled the idea of teamwork, and has parted value based learning to his mentee.

The implication of successful mentoring as stated by this study will bring about changes in the mentee not only in terms of their pedagogical content knowledge development, knowledge of students and their characteristics as well as knowledge of the curriculum but it will contribute in terms of their holistic perspective of the community that they are in and their teaching and learning. These key features

mentioned by the research study may also be considered as the criteria that are prominent for successful mentoring during the mentoring sessions of the SISC+ mentor with the novice ESL teachers' in this research study. Concurrently, a number of studies have found that, effective mentoring occurs when the mentor acts as a guide to practical knowledge and offers advice and guidelines in directing a mentee towards developing their knowledge (Mukeredzi, 2017). Thus, if the purpose of the mentoring is addressed by the mentor, the mentoring will be a successful experience for both the mentor and the mentee. Opengart and Bierema (2015) also denotes that interactions that are of quality and meaningful relationships influences learning that occurs through mentoring relationships. This can be further related to the mentoring of novice teachers' in rural areas as these mentoring is considered to be successful if the novice teacher is able to develop her learning skills through the effective relationships established with the SISC+ mentor through mentoring. This idea points towards the need for mentors to make a difference in mentees in terms of their knowledge development as a success criterion for mentoring. Hence, this might denote the success of mentoring in the rural schools based on the criteria set out by other research studies in this section. At this point, it is recognised that mentoring does play a vital role to a certain extend in ensuring the transition of novice teachers' in rural areas.

2.3.3 Mentoring in Relation to Novice Teachers Teaching Practice

This section will attempt to discuss the connection of mentoring as a support to novice teachers' practise. Based on the assumption that mentoring improves novice teachers' teaching practices through their development of pedagogical content knowledge, there has been numerous studies that have been carried out to examine the connection between mentoring and novice teachers' classroom practices. The notion of mentoring has been explored in relation to novice teachers' practice by Halai (2006)

who conducted research in Pakistan. The findings of his study revealed that the mentors who were the senior teachers in school played a role of an expert by proposing innovative instructional strategies to mentees and encouraged their professional growth through reflections and initiations (p.707). To a certain extent, it can be denoted that mentors do play a subsequent role in enhancing novice teachers' teaching practice. Although some of the teachers were not trained by the local training program, the mentors were able to enhance teachers' competency in teaching. Thus, through mentoring, teachers may have developed their pedagogical content knowledge. Halai (2006) study also discovered that mentors played a "critical friend" role to the teachers through the mentoring session and this was able to encourage relationship building based on trust and understanding amongst the mentor and the teachers. In the same way, Mann and Tang (2012) study with Hong Kong teachers discovered that mentors spent a lot of time discussing ideas and giving support to the novice teachers'. Thus, these mentoring sessions evidently would have enhanced novice teachers' practice.

The examination of mentoring in relation to novice teachers' development of knowledge is necessary in scrutinizing the factors affecting novice teachers' in terms of their teaching practice. The influence of mentoring on novice teachers' practice is also seen in a study conducted by Lopez-Real and Kwan (2005), in the Faculty of Education at University of Hong Kong, who undertook a largescale evaluation of the school-university partnership scheme found that teachers' enhanced their experience through a collaborative and supportive relationship. They also claimed that discussions followed up by lesson observations allowed exchange of ideas and opinions on various learning styles and problems in order to improve knowledge and practice (Lopez-Real & Kwan, 2005). Consequently, the current research study addresses the gap in research related to the interconnection between mentoring practices and novice teachers'

teaching practices in rural schools. Thus, this study aims to explore mentoring and ESL novice teachers' implementation of practice in rural schools.

On the other hand, understanding the relation between mentoring and novice teachers' practices could provide an insight on the dilemmas faced by ESL novice teachers who are teaching in rural schools. Novice teachers' dilemma in rural areas should not be ignored especially where teaching and learning in the classroom is concern. According to Hobson, Ashby, Malderez, and Tomlinson (2009),

“In the last 15 years or so a vast amount of research, across many countries employing mentoring as a means of supporting the professional learning and development of beginning teachers, has uncovered the existence of variation in the nature and quality of mentoring support provided and documented evidence of poor mentoring practice, which have negative consequences for the learning of mentees, and (thus) for the schools and educational systems into which they are being inducted” (p.214).

Moreover, in a study conducted by Delaney and Yuly (2012), First Language teachers from the United States expressed the need for teacher development programmes that will involve mentor teachers' in order to plan and discuss classroom observations. This shows that the relation between mentoring and novice teachers' practice does not only comprise of the beneficial areas but can also be explored in light of the insights and dilemmas faced by these teachers'. Thus, far this review has outlined the needs for exploring the relation between mentoring and novice teachers' practices in the Malaysian context.

2.3.4 Mentoring in Relation to Novice Teachers Knowledge

This part will describe mentoring in relation to novice teachers' knowledge. As established earlier in the study, novice teachers' knowledge is an integral aspect of their professional development. One of the studies proposed in this section that has been of great influence in the field was made by Shulman (1987). He noted that a

teacher should have an in-depth content knowledge in order to relate the subject to learner. Most novice teachers' in Malaysia have a well-grounded content knowledge in teaching as they graduate from teacher training institutions. In addition to this, Shulman (1987) branches down knowledge base into several parts "content knowledge, general pedagogical knowledge, curriculum knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, knowledge of learners, knowledge of educational contexts, and knowledge of educational ends, purposes, and values" (p.17). The implication of these knowledge bases influences the success rate of teaching and learning in schools.

Although, novice teachers' have a good foundation of the different knowledge base in teaching, mentoring may help facilitate the novice teacher to reflect and implement these knowledge bases correctly using various strategies according to the context that they are teaching in. This is because having a vast knowledge in teaching is not sufficient to be a good implementer. Delaney and Yuly (2012), in her study found in a regular mentoring session, the language teacher promotes reflection on the Second language culture while the mentor enhances reflection on what being a teacher means in the particular instructional setting. Thus, it is crucial that novice teachers' apply the knowledge bases that they have effectively in the teaching and learning context of a rural school.

The factor that acts as a challenge for novice teachers' in rural schools are not the knowledge base that they have but the ability to implement the knowledge base wisely to enhance teaching and learning in the rural context. According to Delaney and Yuly (2012), schools serves as a day-to day functioning of the community in the outskirts. When novice ESL teachers' who are posted to these areas fail to understand this significant, there will be tensions created between the initiatives taken to reform a school and local school improvement efforts (Delaney & Yuly, 2012). These tensions

hinder the rural school context improvement regardless of how much high-quality rural education research exists. The knowledge bases for novice teachers' who are newly posted may be put to test in these kinds of instances where decisions have to be made by these teachers' on choosing wise strategies and techniques to present the knowledge that they already have to the students.

Moreover, novice ESL teachers' need to identify learners' problematic areas and address these issues accordingly by using the knowledge bases that they have. This is where the role of mentors will come into place. Aderibigbe (2013) contends that the collaboration between the mentor and mentee has been recognized as vital in developing professional knowledge and skills. Hence, the mentors will play the role of a facilitator for the novice ESL teachers' to implement the different knowledge base in the classroom context. Thus far, this section has outlined mentoring in relation the knowledge base of novice teachers' in rural schools.

2.4 Perspectives of Novice Teachers in Rural Schools on Mentoring in Relation to Their Knowledge Development.

This part will discuss the need to give voice to the perspectives of novice teachers' in rural schools on mentoring in relation to their knowledge development. There are complexities that exists in the process of mentoring. Rémi A. van Compernelle and Henery (2014) found in a study conducted on teacher development of L2 and pedagogical content knowledge that mentoring assisted in the internalization of pedagogical content knowledge in their mentees. The ideal situations in mentoring includes discussions between novice teachers' and the SISC+ that involve a symmetrical collaborative discussion which will lead to the development of pedagogical content knowledge as well as the enhancement of the teaching and learning in the rural context. However, in some situations the ideals of mentoring are

not met and the vice versa is prone to occur. Thus, this section will explore the gap on the perspectives of novice teachers' in rural schools on mentoring in relation to their professional development.

In a study on *Portraits of Two Teachers in the Rural South America* by Burton; and Johnson; (2010), when asked about their decision to become teachers' in a rural area, it was revealed that their personal experience of originating from a rural community had influenced their decision of choosing to teach in a rural school. The examination of their perspectives has informed us that it is out of their own will that these teachers' have decided to teach in a rural school. This scenario is unlikely in the Malaysia context as in most cases, teachers are being sent to the rural areas as a requirement. Undeniably, the gap that this study is trying to address in this section would cover the similar perspective of novice teachers' in Malaysia. Moreover, another participant from the research study also expressed that being born and bred in a rural community allowed her to understand the complexities and opportunities where teaching was concern compared to a person who was new to the environment (Burton; & Johnson;, 2010).

Another factor to be noted in another study on the *Mentors and Preservice Teachers' Experiences in a Rural South African School* by (Burton & Johnson, 2010) found that some of the mentees expressed unhappiness with the presence of their mentor. These mentees also were not happy about the introduction and lack of open communications (Burton & Johnson, 2010). This study points out a different perspective of novice teachers' in relation to mentoring. As established earlier in this study, most literature highlighted the positive and beneficial aspects of mentoring in relation to the novice teachers' in rural areas. However, this study addresses all the adverse perspectives of mentoring.

In the similar study, it was implied that some of the mentors found the environment uncondusive for revealing the vulnerabilities of the mentees during their collaborative discussions. This view contradicts the principles of mentoring, as without a suitable and condusive environment both mentors and mentees would not be able to collaboratively work together to bring about improvements to the teaching and learning context. In addition, in the study the three mentees were not able to experience proper collaboration with some of their mentors as those mentors did not make time for mentoring them. This is another gap that can be addressed in the Malaysian setting while exploring the perspectives of novice teachers' who are posted to rural schools in terms of their professional development. However, it could not be denied that both the mentor and the novice teacher may mutually benefit in terms of their professional development through the enactment of the collaborative mentoring relationships in the classroom (Aderibigbe, 2013). At present, there is a noticeable gap in research concerning the different perspectives of novice teachers' of the mentoring process in the Malaysian rural setting. Thus far, the review has outlined the need to address the gaps that have been mentioned in this section in order to contribute to the field of knowledge.

2.5 School Improvement Specialist Coach Plus (SISC+) Programme

The School Improvement Specialist Coach Plus (SISC+) is a programme introduced by the Ministry of Education of Malaysia in the year 2013 and has been implemented across the country in the year 2014. The SISC+ programme, as mentioned in the Malaysian Education Blueprint, aims to raise the teaching standards of teachers in Malaysia by enhancing the knowledge and skills of teachers through techniques inclusive of mentoring and coaching (Zubaidah Bibi Mobarak Ali, 2019). In order to achieve this goal, the Malaysian Education Blueprint 2013-2025 was designed by

introducing the District Transformation Programme (DTP) and through this program the SISC+ was introduced to support teachers in translating the latest reform in education, written curriculum, curriculum and assessment strategies and to provide on the ground continuous professional development. The SISC+ actively play their roles and responsibilities of initiating a new curricula and assessment to the classroom, coaching teachers' on pedagogical skills as well as monitoring the effectiveness of lesson implementations (Education, 2013). The mentoring and coaching sessions conducted by the SISC+ are in the forms of workshop where the Middle Leader Team (MLT) who are the Head of Panels for each subject and are mentored through a workshop. In the workshop, the MLT's are given a minimum of an hour input and participate in hands on teaching and learning activities and are given suggestions and recommendations by the SISC+ mentor. The schools that are identified to participate in the mentoring sessions are schools in a district who are not able to achieve the target key performance index of the year which is classified as under performing schools which falls in category Band 5, Band 6 and Band 7 (Education, 2013). This schools are selected based on the data given by the state education office each year. The mentoring is given at least twice in a year depending on the progress shown by the MLT's.

The introduction of this programme is to enhance and transfer new acquisition of knowledge and growth to teachers in order to improve teaching and learning practice in schools as well as to provide contextual training to teachers. The SISC+ coaches are to ensure that they tailor to the needs of the teachers and provide instant feedbacks on teaching and learning through interactions, classroom observations and continuous collaboration. This in turn will improve pupils' academic performance in schools as well. More than 60% of the SISC+'s time should be spent on coaching

teachers in school (Education, 2013). Hence, the SISC+ usually visit a school to coach the teachers on various subjects at least twice in a year. SISC+ are also required to ensure that the school syllabus is delivered by teachers in a manner that emphasises skills and competencies that are critical for the 21st (Education, 2013). Furthermore, the SISC+ coaching sessions are focused on the mastery of key pedagogical skills of the 21st century education in order to develop higher order thinking skills in teaching and learning in the classroom, improvise teaching and learning in mixed ability classrooms and assessing students effectively.

2.6 Theoretical Framework

2.6.1 Relationship between Theory and Mentoring Practices of Novice Teachers

In this section, the study will discuss the past and current application of the theory in relation to mentoring practices. The relationship between the mentor and the roles that they play in the teaching and learning context which is very vital to novice teachers'. According to See (2014), in Malaysia the idea of mentoring in the school level is not widely practised where novice teachers' are concern. A mentor scaffolds and facilitates novice teachers' knowledge development by engaging in critical reflections and collaborative interactions. The link between novice teachers' in the rural areas and mentoring practices of the SISC+ mentor can be understood in light of Shulman (1987) Model of Pedagogical Reasoning and Action under the constructivist approach to learning and knowledge acquisition. Constructivist approach to teaching engaged by teachers allows them to make sense of their actions in the classroom and use the understanding to develop ideas and beliefs about the constructivist approach to learning (Cansiz & Cansiz, 2019). Research in Second Language Education has acknowledged the relationship between mentoring practices through the constructivist

model of Shulman (1987). This model posits that pedagogical shifts occur when teachers are able to transform knowledge base and make meaning of their pedagogical actions in the teaching context. According to Shulman (1987, p. 15), *the key to distinguishing the knowledge base for teaching lies at the intersection of content and pedagogy, in the capacity of the teacher to transform the content knowledge he or she possesses into forms that are pedagogically powerful and yet adaptive to the variations in ability and background presented by the students.*

Gordon and Lowrey (2016) supports that the likelihood for novice teachers' to continue being in the profession is increased with mentoring in the early years of teaching. Furthermore, intellectual collaboration between novice teachers' and SISC+ mentors are beneficial for collaborations that enhance development and growth in terms of their knowledge bases. In doing so, both the SISC+ mentor and the novice teachers' gradually transforms existing knowledge schemes and develop new knowledge bases. This is supported by Karimi and Norouzi (2017) where they stated that mentoring is an effective supplement for novice teachers' and also the mentors. As such, in most cases, novice teachers' who are newly posted acquire practical knowledge while reflecting on their experiences in teaching, evaluating their reason for learning, and restructure their perceptions as they engage in collaborative critical discussions with a mentor. Thus, the SISC+ mentor plays a key role in enhancing the development of knowledge bases of novice teachers' in any learning context.

The framework of Shulman's theory underlies the current study. In his study, we can relate on the relationship between novice teachers' comprehension of pedagogical content knowledge and their ability to transform the comprehended knowledge into new comprehension through their instruction, evaluation and reflection when they are confronted in a particular environment such as the rural

schools that they are placed in. He further iterates that effective teachers not only have good grasp of subject and content knowledge but also have mastered “...*the most useful forms of representation of those ideas, the most powerful analogies, illustrations, examples, explanations, and demonstrations—in a word, the ways of representing and formulating the subject that make it comprehensible to others*”(Shulman, 1987, p. 9). In other words, he states that having a good pedagogical content knowledge is what distinguishes a novice teacher and an expert teacher. In order for novice teachers’ to acquire a good grasp of pedagogical content knowledge, the intervention of the SISC+ mentor is required especially in rural schools. The SISC+ mentors play a vital role in bridging the gap that novice teachers’ have in content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge by facilitating their pedagogical actions and reasoning in the rural environment where the concerns of the students are deemed to be more challenging. Reagan et al. (2019) supports that schools from rural areas faced challenging conditions which was a barrier for teachers and increased teacher retentions. Thus, through the presence of the SISC+ mentors, novice teachers’ are able to inculcate new categories of teacher knowledge base through the process of “...*the blending of content and pedagogy into an understanding of how particular topics, problems, or issues are organized, represented, and adapted to the diverse interests and abilities of learners, and presented for instruction*”(Shulman, 1987, p. 8).

Among the categories of knowledge proposed by Shulman (1987), pedagogical content knowledge maintains a prominent position because it identifies the distinctive bodies of knowledge for teaching (Karimi & Norouzi, 2017). The development of knowledge amongst novice teachers’ in their first few years of teaching requires mentorship that engages a process of collaborative thinking. Similarly, in a study conducted by Achinstein and Fogo (2015) they stated that novice teachers’

pedagogical content knowledge is important to be built by a mentor who provides guidance through various forms of modelling and representations. The rise of such critical ideas based on the extension of a theory provides an understanding of how the relationship between a mentor and a novice contribute in developing novice teachers' knowledge base in the teaching and learning context. Thus far, the review has outlined the need to address the gaps that have been mentioned in this section in order to contribute to the field of knowledge.

2.6.2 Model of Pedagogical Reasoning and Action informs the mentoring practices of novice teachers.

Shulman (1987) Model of Pedagogical Reasoning and Action informs the gap addressed in this section on the understanding of the relationship between mentoring practices and the development of knowledge base of novice teachers' in the rural contexts of teaching and learning. Pedagogical Reasoning and Action comprises not only the acquired knowledge base of teachers through significant prior experiences, but also with the marshalling of this knowledge base in the real classroom context as novice teachers' in a rural school. This can only be facilitated in novice teachers' through interactions or by a more expert teacher. According to See (2014), in Malaysia the idea of mentoring in the school level is not widely practised where novice teachers' are concern. Shulman (1987) Model of Pedagogical Reasoning and Action informs the research study as a way of pedagogical reasoning whereby a novice teacher transforms knowledge base into pedagogical forms which makes the content comprehensible for the students. Achinstein and Fogo (2015) in his research study found that a mentor was able to yield the different elements of the knowledge base of a teacher and incorporate it into various combinations through conversations, visual representations and instructional strategies to bring out the elements of pedagogical

content knowledge in a teacher. Furthermore, Shulman (1987) frames his transformation on pedagogical reasoning and action through five stages namely comprehension, instruction, evaluation, reflection and new comprehension. He states that, there are seven categories of the knowledge bases of a teacher, mainly content knowledge, general pedagogical knowledge, curriculum knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, knowledge of learners and their characteristic, knowledge of educational contexts and knowledge of educational ends (Shulman, 1987). However, teachers must learn how to use these knowledge base to provide the grounds for their pedagogical reasoning, choices and actions during teaching and learning in the classroom. This directly illustrates novice teachers' who come from various educational and family background with all the categories of knowledge bases that a teacher should acquire but faces glitches when pedagogical reasoning and actions are concern especially when they confront classrooms in the rural areas. Shulman (1987) further states that the usefulness of such knowledge lies in the value for judgement and action.

In order to understand the relationships between mentoring practices and its relationship to novice teachers', the study uses Shulman's (1987) Model of Pedagogical Reasoning and Action whereby the development of pedagogical content knowledge where novice teachers' are concern through the SISC+ mentors can be understood. This intricate process begins with the comprehension stage where, novice teachers' who are posted to rural schools come with a knowledge base or a critical set of ideas of the educational purposes of teaching a lesson. Each novice teacher is already presented with the knowledge of teaching and are content specialist of teaching when they are posted to schools. However, they lack in pedagogy content knowledge (PCK) which Shulman defines as "*...that special amalgam of content and pedagogy*

that is uniquely the province of teachers, their own special form of professional understanding” (Shulman, 1987, p. 8). Novice teachers’ acquire PCK when they undergo the “transformation” process mentioned in the model proposed by Shulman through the mentoring of the SISC+ mentors. The role of the SISC+ mentors in these rural schools were to enhance novice teachers’ comprehension of instructional skills, tap on the evaluation knowledge of teachers and allow them to reflect on their own teaching and learning in the classroom to enable new comprehensions through the mastery of the PCK. On the contrary, Deng (2018) stated that there were not many research done on the paradigm of teacher thinking and how a teacher transforms knowledge suited for teaching where teacher knowledge and teaching is concern in the 1970’s and 1980’s. He further states that empirically, it is little known what is entailed in a teachers’ knowledge of content when enacting and interpreting the written curriculum in the classroom (Deng, 2018). Therefore, this study seeks to understand the influence and the roles of the SISC+ mentor in Malaysia on the novice teachers’ who are from rural schools in acquiring PCK, knowledge of students and their characteristics as well as knowledge of the curriculum.

In the instruction stage, the SISC+ mentor intervenes and mentors novice teachers’ through various instructions such as workshops, hands on activities, group discussions, simulations and question and answer sessions which lead to active discovery learning of the novice teachers’. Through this the SISC+ mentor makes sure that novice teachers’ actively learns about effective instructions, have a firm grasp of the most important content in a subject and are also able to master *“the most useful forms of representation of those ideas, the most powerful analogies, illustrations, examples, explanations, and demonstrations or in other words are able to represent and formulate the subject that make it comprehensible to their learners and the context*

of learning” (Shulman, 1987, p. 9). During the mentoring sessions, novice teachers’ are facilitated by the SISC+ mentor to acquire PCK as they communicate and facilitate the development of knowledge through the various form of instructions and are actively involved in the development of knowledge base. Similarly Neumann, Kind, and Harms (2018), posits that in developing the knowledge of PCK, teachers use multiple knowledge bases to understand how a subject matter is organised, adapted for teaching and learning through effective instructions in the classroom. Thus, novice teachers’ develop not only PCK but other knowledge bases as well, such as knowledge of curriculum and knowledge of students and their characteristics through active participation and effective instructions of the SISC+ mentor.

In the evaluation stage, the SISC+ mentors facilitate novice teachers’ to use PCK to check for understanding in the students and of themselves. The novice teachers’ are facilitated to understand that in this stage, evaluation requires not only of the materials, lesson, students’ performance and is lesson related but it is also directed to one’s own self of the whole teaching process. This process directly leads to the reflection stage whereby the teacher “...looks back at his or her teaching and learning that occurs, reconstructs, re-enacts and recaptures events, the emotions and the accomplishments” (Shulman, 1987, p. 19). Although this critical stage in Shulman (1987) Model of Pedagogical Action can be done independently or through conversations with an expert, novice teachers’ who are posted to rural schools are only facilitated through this processes during the mentoring sessions of the SISC+ mentor. Shulman (1987) describes this stage as “...a set of processes through which professional learns from experience.” This stage involves the evaluation of beliefs that a novice teacher holds on teaching and learning, her attributes and strengths and weaknesses as a teacher. In a study done by De Souza, Backes, do Prado, Martini, and

Medina Moya (2019) where he conducted a structured reflection on teachers by using the Model of Pedagogical Reasoning and Action, he found that in the evaluation stage the thought processes that goes on a teacher's mind were related to her own performance, her beliefs and her positive and negative attributes in the classroom.

Although, there exists a thin line between the evaluation stage and reflection stage, however in the Model of Pedagogical Reasoning and Action one stage precedes the other. In the reflection stage the SISC+ mentors facilitate teachers to reflect in terms of pedagogical decisions that they make in the classroom which in turns affects the evaluation process. In the evaluation stage, the novice teacher pauses to evaluate her beliefs and her strengths as a teacher while evaluating these novice teachers reflect on the pedagogical decisions and instructions that she has taken in the classroom. In this stage a novice teacher “...looks back at the teaching and learning that has occurs, re-enacts, reconstructs or recaptures the experience” during teaching and learning. De Souza et al. (2019) in their research study learnt that teachers realised in the reflection stage that their pedagogical intentions were not successful as the content was not taught daily and did not help in the mastery of the content. However, in this research study, the novice teachers' are guided through this stage of reflection with the help of the SISC+ mentors during the mentoring sessions as they go through lesson plans and comment on the improvements that can be made based on the experiences faced by the novice teachers' in the rural schools.

Concurrently, the final stage in the Model of Pedagogical Reasoning an Action includes the new comprehension stage where it is reflected in this study when the SISC+ mentor has successfully facilitated the novice teachers' to be able to make their own pedagogical reasoning, instructions, evaluation, reflections and consequently conduct actions related to teaching and learning through their own reasoning. In this

stage, novice teachers' are able to reason and are reasonable enough to make their own decisions regarding their pedagogical reasoning and actions (Shulman, 1987). *“Although the processes in this model are presented in a sequence, they are not meant to represent a fix set of stages and can occur in a short shrift of time in any directions”* (Shulman, 1987). However, in this research study whichever direction it occurs in a novice teacher who is posted to a rural school, it only occurs through a mentor who coexists in each stage to facilitate the processes that lead the novice teachers' towards acquiring the knowledge and understanding of PCK.

As an implication of this theory, the relationship between the novice and the SISC+ mentors may serve as a platform for novice teachers' to not only to get accustomed to the new environment but to get accustomed with the norms, standards and expectations related with the teaching and learning situation in general and in specific school context. This idea points out to a recent study conducted by Ahmad Syahiran Mohamad, Radzuwan Ab Rashid, Kamariah Yunus and Safawati Basirah Zaid (2016) on the School Improvement Specialist Coaches' Experience in Coaching English Language Teachers and the interview data pointed out that *“From SISC+ A's point of view, the coach needs to let teachers know that he/she understands their efforts and struggles.”* This is also consistent with the literature on coaching. Knight (2005) further iterates that essential traits of a coach is being positive, understanding and non-judgemental. This also points out to the idea that the key feature in mentoring novice teachers from the rural area is to understand the struggles and their efforts in confronting the teaching and learning environment that they are in. Moreover, those who are chosen to be the SISC+ mentors should be made sure to have credibility and are experts in the field. Research suggests that schools are responsible in selecting coaches who have a strong pedagogical knowledge, expert in content knowledge and

have good interpersonal skills (Knight, 2005; Steiner and Kowal, 2007). This feature points at the idea that the exploration of the relationship between a SISC+ mentor and a novice teacher in a teaching and learning context will address the gaps in this study which relates to the professional development of novice teachers' in rural areas. This is especially coherent where the idea of novice teachers' learning to adapt themselves in a rural school transacts to the idea of novice teachers' learning how to improve their professional knowledge as well. Compounded with the fact that there is very little research in SISC+ mentoring in Malaysia it is essential to explore on the professional development of novice English teachers' with regards to SISC+ mentoring in rural schools. Thus far, the review has outlined the need to address the gaps that have been mentioned in this section in order to contribute to the field of knowledge.

2.7 Summary

This review provides a discussion of existing literature on teacher knowledge development and teacher learning. Novice teachers', the SISC+ programme and mentoring are the three main domains chosen in this study, in accordance to Shulman (1987) Model of Pedagogical Reasoning and Action, to explore the role of mentoring on novice teachers' knowledge development in rural schools. The review also addresses literature in relation to the gaps identified in this study which includes characteristics of effective mentors, criteria for successful mentoring, the relationship between theory and mentoring practices, how the Model of Pedagogical Reasoning and Action informs the mentoring practices of novice teachers, mentoring in relation to novice teachers practice and mentoring in relation to novice teachers knowledge and the conceptions of novice teachers in rural schools on mentoring in relation to their professional practices. The next chapter will detail the methodology for the study,

including research design, sampling and explanation of the data collection and data analysis procedures.

Universiti Malaya

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This study aimed to explore novice teachers' learning by examining the influences of the School Improvement Specialist Coach Plus (SISC+) Mentors on ESL novice teachers' knowledge in the areas of content and pedagogy and the engaging aspects of mentoring on novice teachers' knowledge development. This chapter consists of eight sections which are the research design, context of the study, selection of participants, data collection methods as well as sources of data, the analysis of the data, issues of trustworthiness and conclusion.

3.2 The Research Design

This study used a qualitative descriptive study design within a qualitative interpretive research paradigm. A descriptive study provides insight into the phenomena being studied and exposes real life situations which were the novice teachers' knowledge in relation to mentoring. A qualitative descriptive study approach was adopted in this research to explore and understand the influence of the SISC+ mentor on the novice teachers' development of knowledge in rural schools. According to Doyle, McCabe, Keogh, Brady, and McCann (2019), the rationale for using this study design was to provide straightforward descriptions of experiences and perceptions. Thus, this research study strived to provide a description of the interacting relationships between mentoring of the SISC+ and novice teachers' knowledge development of knowledge in rural schools.

According to Creswell and Clark (2011) where qualitative study was concerned the literature might expose information on the phenomenon being studied however through exploration of the participants, more can be learned about the phenomenon being studied. Thus, a qualitative approach was suitable to be employed in this study because of the in-depth study of the phenomenon of knowledge development through mentoring being researched which involved the understanding of the rural context as well as the environment that was being studied which was to explore novice teacher's knowledge development during their participation in the The School Improvement Specialist Coach Plus (SISC+) mentoring in rural schools. By adapting a qualitative study, this research dwelled thoroughly into the "grey areas" which had not been studied by examining the roles and influence played by The School Improvement Specialist Coach Plus (SISC+) mentors to enhance knowledge construction in novice teachers' learning, the roles of the SISC+ mentor on the development of understanding of novice teachers' about the students in rural areas and the curriculum.

Furthermore, qualitative researchers strived to gain an understanding of the occurrence of a certain phenomenon and the meaning of a certain action to the participant. The process qualitative researchers are involved in is exploratory and inductive in nature which assumes the existence of multiple realities and is subjective to interpretations (Merriam & Mohamad, 2000). When conducting qualitative descriptive research, the researcher was completely concerned with the understanding of participants unique experience in the context being studied. It is established that the novice teachers' focused in this research have experience between three to five years of in teaching. Hence, when the researcher conducted this research study, she was indulged in understanding the needs of novice teachers' with an experience in teaching between three to five years and who taught in the rural school classrooms. The

mentoring workshops attended by these novice teachers' with the SISC+ acted as the site of the study in order to better understand the phenomenon. Therefore, this qualitative descriptive approach met the needs of the present study which also aimed to inform policy makers in the field of teacher education of the learning experiences of novice teachers' who have three to five years of teaching experience in rural area schools through the School Improvement Specialist Coach Plus (SISC+) mentor and engaging aspects of this mentoring on their knowledge development.

The qualitative descriptive design was used in this study to explore the influence of the SISC+ mentor on the novice teachers' learning experience in terms of their knowledge in rural schools. This study was conducted during the ongoing sessions of the SISC+ mentoring sessions with the participation of novice teachers' from rural schools. In line with the research questions in the present study, the qualitative descriptive study designed allowed the study to focus on a particular event which in this case were the novice teachers' development of knowledge that took place during the mentoring sessions provided by the SISC+ mentor for novice teachers' from primary schools in the rural areas. Qualitative studies involve an in-depth inquiry of the phenomenon being studied within its natural setting. Moreover, in a qualitative descriptive study, findings were reported in a straightforward language with clear descriptions of the phenomenon being studied (Colorafi & Evans, 2016). On the other hand, Colorafi and Evans (2016) also contended that in a qualitative descriptive research the researcher studied something in its natural state and does not attempt to change or manipulate the natural state of it. Thus, the present study explored three novice teachers from rural schools who were mentored by the SISC+ mentor and the engaging aspects as well as the influence of mentoring on their development of knowledge. Thus, the findings in this study will present the analysis of the three novice

teachers’, to provide a general insight of the learning experience of novice teachers’ with SISC+ in terms of their influence and roles on the knowledge development of novice teachers’.

3.3 Context of the Study

This study took place during the implementation of a continuous professional development programme conducted by the SISC+ mentor which aimed in enhancing and improving teaching pedagogy in schools as well as to provide contextual training to teachers in the rural primary schools which were situated in the Kuala Kangsar District. There were three different teachers who were selected from four different schools from the rural areas of Kuala Kangsar, namely SJKT Ladang Elphil, SK Jawang, and SK Kg Kenang. All these schools were situated in the estates of the rural areas in Kuala Kangsar district. Kettler, Puryear, and Mullet (2016) defined rural although being subjective in nature, as always associated with limited excess and resources, a countryside environment and a small community of people. They further stated that rural schools vary from one place to another in term of its remoteness, school size, district size, growth and poverty rates. The novice teachers’ in this study came from schools located almost 30 km away from the town centre of Kuala Kangsar.

3.4 Selection of Participants for the Study

The selection of participant in this study was done in ESL primary schools in the area of Kuala Kangsar district. As a primary school ESL teacher, the researcher had connection with the SISC+ mentor from the Kuala Kangsar District Office and was able to identify participants who took part in this study with the help of the SISC+ mentor. The researcher contacted at least 4 novice ESL teachers who had teaching experience between three to five years to participate in this programme via phone to take part in this study. Out of the 4 novice teachers, three of them who expressed

genuineness and willingness in taking part in the study was chosen. Magilvy and Thomas (2009) stated that sample size in a qualitative study was smaller in amount compared to other studies involving qualitative methods. They further add that, the typical sample size for participants in qualitative descriptive studies may range from three to five or up to twenty participants (Magilvy & Thomas, 2009). This study explored each participant's experience to yield an in-depth understanding of their learning experience to provide a broad and holistic view of the roles of the SISC+ as well as the influence of the SISC+ mentor in novice teachers' knowledge development. Therefore, the researcher aimed and selected at least 3 participants in this study in order to obtain the necessary information.

The selection of three primary novice teachers in this study was based on purposeful sampling. According to Flick (2018) purposeful sampling involved selecting instances that are information rich to answer the research questions. Participants were identified and selected based on the phenomenon being studied in this research. Therefore, the researcher chose participants who had three to five years of teaching experience and were undergoing mentoring practices with the SISC+ mentor to study the influences of the program on the pedagogical content knowledge of novice teachers' and their roles in developing novice teachers' knowledge on students and the curriculum in the current study. The criteria for selecting these novice teachers' were based on convenience sampling which was one of the types of purposeful sampling. Magilvy and Thomas (2009) also supported that the samples for qualitative descriptive study was always conveniently and purposively selected. Thus, accordingly the selection of participants was based on convenience in terms of time, money, location, the availability of the participants and their participation in the SISC+

mentoring as well as the years of teaching experience they had which was from between one to three years.

Magilvy and Thomas (2009) further supported that participants chosen in a qualitative descriptive study should qualify to a list of criteria such as being experienced in the phenomenon being studied, was able to convey and communicate with the researcher who was learning about the experience being studied. This current qualitative descriptive study was bounded by the fact that only ESL primary novice teachers' took part in the study and these teachers had participated as mentees under the SISC+ mentoring. Before beginning data collection, a consent form was given to the participants (Appendix A). The participants were also informed on their liberty to withdraw from participating in the research at any time when the research was on going. The participants were also briefed about the aim of the research, the procedures involved in the research, their expected level of commitment and the implications of the research study to the field of teacher education. For the purpose of writing the research findings, the names of the participants were substituted with pseudonyms and not revealed.

3.5 Data Collection Method and Sources of Data

The School Improvement Specialist Coach (SISC+) programme was initiated in the Malaysian Education Blueprint (2013-2025) by the Ministry of Education of Malaysia since the year 2013 and implemented in 2014 to date. The data collection for this study was done during the fifth year of implementation of the programme from June 2019 to September 2019. In order to generate information from this study, two data gathering techniques were employed: 1) in depth interview 2) observation fieldnotes. This section will provide a detailed description of the data gathering techniques and how it was used in the present study.

3.5.1 In-depth Interviews

This study aimed to explore the learning experience of novice teachers' from rural schools who were mentored by The School Improvement Specialist Coach (SISC+) mentor. Hence, the most appropriate primary research tool used in this study for collecting data were interviews. Nunkoosing (2005), emphasized that it was vital to use interviews as a data collection method to engage participants to think and talk about their experiences, judgements and understanding of a phenomenon. Thus, the interview data was able to give a rich source of data for the present study. The interview method in this study was able to provide a full description of the participants learning experience with the SISC+ mentor. Furthermore, participants were also able to describe their feelings, experiences and perception of the whole knowledge development process that they underwent through the SISC+ mentoring by using their own words and expressions. This data gathering technique helped to secure useful information regarding the current study.

In-this study, the in-depth data gathering technique was chosen as it served as a platform for the participants to provide a detailed view of their perspectives on the issue researched on. Furthermore, the types of questions asked had a weightage to the data collection. Based on the theoretical framework and literature review, an interview protocol (Appendix B) was developed to encourage participants to describe and voice out their perceptions freely on their learning experience from the SISC+ mentor and was modified accordingly with new insights from their responses. The interview protocol served as a guideline for the researcher during the interview to ensure that all domains of the two research questions in the study have been covered. The domains include:

- Demographic information questions (novice teachers' background information)
- Introduction questions (novice teachers' general information on their involvement with the SISC+ mentor)
- Novice teachers' learning experience on how the SISC+ mentor influenced the development of pedagogical content knowledge and their roles in enhancing their knowledge of students and curriculum

After receiving an approval from the Ministry of Education and the state education department, a series of interviews was conducted with each participant. The researcher collaborated with the SISC+ mentor, Puan Zalina, in order to identify suitable dates to visit the respective mentoring sessions. During each visit, after the mentoring sessions the researcher carried out the interviews. All the interviews were done face-to face and was audio taped for transcription purpose. Each interview was targeted to be conducted between thirty to forty minutes long and the frequency of the interviews was for two times with each participant. The interviews were conducted in the school, a place of the participants choice for them to feel comfortable to express their learning experiences freely after the mentoring sessions with the SISC+ mentor. This is supported by Berner-Rodoreda et al. (2020) who stated that interview in a qualitative research, at its origin focused on maintaining the relationship and neutral role of the interviewer while eliciting the experience and perspectives of the interviewee. The audio taped interviews were transcribed immediately after every interview session.

3.5.2 Observation Fieldnotes

Similar to the interview, participant observation fieldnotes was also a primary source of data gathering technique which was a very an important data collection

approach in qualitative research. In the present study, observations were used as a data gathering method as it enabled the researcher to understand the participants in their native everyday environment especially during the mentoring workshops by the SISC+ mentor, which in turn offered opportunities to understand the issue from the perspectives of the participants in the environment being studied. Bridges-Rhoads (2017) stated that fieldnotes includes the urgency of noting down something that is observed before its gone or occurs unexpectedly. Another reason for using observation fieldnotes as a data gathering method in this study was because, the observation fieldnotes was able to provide some background context as well as other information which was used as reference points for subsequent interviews. Bridges-Rhoads (2017) posited that fieldnotes were “*notes that create the field*”. Thus, observations also allowed the researcher to note down events that the participant was not willing to talk or share.

After receiving approval from the Ministry of Education and the state education department, a series of observations was conducted during the mentoring workshops with each participant participating with other fellow teachers from the school and fieldnotes were taken down. The researcher observed the participants’ learning activities and their interactions with the SISC+ mentor and their group members during the mentoring sessions. Each observation took about 45 minutes depending on the mentoring sessions and the workshop activities that took place in the presence of the School Improvement Specialist Coach (SISC+) mentor. The researcher took down field notes of events that occurred pertaining to the novice teachers’ learning activities. The field notes were reviewed with the audio tape recording and the field notes were revised based on the audio tape recordings. The observation field notes template can be seen in Appendix C.

3.6 Data Analysis

This section described how data that have been gathered from the two sources was analysed and synthesized by the researcher. Each of the interview and observation field notes was analysed and transcribed. Emerging themes and subthemes were identified from the transcription. These themes were used to answer the research questions that was being studied in the current research. Rossman and Rallis (2017) proposed eight phases of analytical stages to analyse and interpret qualitative data and five of these stages were adapted in this research to guide the analysis of this study organising the data, familiarising with the data, identifying categories and generating themes, coding the data and interpreting. Although these phases were systematically arranged, however when analysing the researcher moved back and forth between and across phases (Rossman & Rallis, 2017).

3.6.1 Organizing the Data

The process of organising data although preliminary, was crucial in a qualitative research. A researcher should systematically arrange and store the data collected carefully in order for easier retrieval. According to Mills, Durepos, and Wiebe (2010) the data was carefully collected and then retrieved for formal analysis. This was particularly important for the data analysis process because the organisation of the collected data enhanced the process of data analysis. In the current study, there were two sources from which data was collected, in-depth interviews and observation field notes. There were approximately 3-7 hours of interviews and observation field notes. Dated interview transcriptions and being sure of the interviewee encompassed the process of organising data (Rossman & Rallis, 2017). The researcher ensured that the data organisation involved arranging the data and also ensured that the dates and names of the interviewees were noted down and arranged accordingly from the first

mentoring session and the second mentoring session. The researcher stored the interview transcripts and the field notes in separate folders accordingly.

3.6.2 Familiarising with the Data

The process of transcribing the interview data was done right after the researcher organised the data. This was done for the researcher to interact with the data and to familiarise with the transcription and to be fully immersed in it. The interview transcripts were compared against the field notes and the audio tape repeatedly. Rossman and Rallis (2017) posited that the process of familiarising with the data enhanced analytical thinking, generated leads for further data gathering and encouraged insights in the researcher. The transcriptions were also sent to the participants to ensure the accuracy of the transcriptions and the necessary amendments were done based on the feedbacks given by the participants. This was to ensure that the researcher did not miss anything while transcribing.

3.6.3 Identifying Categories and Generating Themes

Rossman and Rallis (2017) stated that these stages of data analysis was considered to be the most ambiguous, meaningful and complex at the same time. In this stage, the researcher carefully focused attention on the data and how they might be connected. The researcher came up with categories and sub categories and vice versa. This phase of data analysing was very essential in the current research study. The themes were generated in the next phase of the study through the categories as the researcher saw patterns, begin to interpret meaning through the data and in turn constructed themes.

This study employed the inductive approach in generating categories, themes and patterns. Inductive approach allowed “*emergence*” of findings of research data from significant themes inherent in raw data without restraints imposed by structured

methodologies (Thomas, 2006). Thus, the researcher used the inductive approach to examine the interview transcripts and observation field notes repeatedly until the researcher was able to generate categories, themes and patterns that answered the research questions in this study. Furthermore, the researcher focused on the knowledge development that occurred through the novice teachers' interactions with the SISC+ mentor to answer the research questions in this study. Upon intensive examination of the data, the researcher came up with several tentative themes before beginning to code the data.

3.6.4 Coding the Data

In the data coding phase, the researcher focused on ways in which the mentoring by the School Improvement Specialist Coach (SISC+) mentor influenced novice teachers' development of knowledge. In order to find the answers for each research question, all the data from each interview transcript and observation field notes were scrutinised carefully. Moreover, coding was done on a two-level basis as the data gathered were rich and new insights were stimulated as the researcher coded it. Rossman and Rallis (2017) defined coding as the "*formal representation of analytical thinking.*" This accommodated an excellent descriptive analysis in this study which clearly focused on relevant aspects of the development of knowledge of novice teachers' through the mentoring of the SISC+ mentors.

3.6.5 Interpreting

In this phase, Rossman and Rallis (2017) brought in the idea of moving into a deeper level of synthesis and analysis which involved finding meaning beyond the specifications of a data. In this phase, the researcher made meaning, found suitable explanations and made conclusions of the data obtained to answer the research questions in this study. This connection was also made in line with the theory proposed

by Shulman (1987) on the Model of Pedagogical Reasoning. The influence and the roles of the SISC+ mentor on the novice teachers' from rural schools in developing their pedagogical content knowledge, knowledge of students and curriculum was described with rich descriptions in the interpreting phase to build the arguments in this research study.

3.7 Data Triangulation

The researcher also employed the data triangulation as one of the ways to ensure trustworthiness in this study. Interview transcripts were the main data in this study. The researcher repeatedly read the transcripts and constructed categories and themes and made notations of the responses, observations and field notes taken from the mentoring session observation. Flick (2018) posited that data triangulation involved using various sources and methods of data to enhance the validity of the findings in a research study.

The data triangulation in this study involved putting the various data collected; the interview data and the observation field notes together in order to reconstruct an integrative explanation of the study. This process involved the researcher collecting similar or different emerging themes from the various data to explain the learning experience that novice teachers' who undergo mentoring of the SISC+ mentor. Moreover, patterns in both data sources were compared and contrasted. Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell, and Walter (2016) added that triangulation involved the usage of multiple methods to enhance understanding of a phenomenon which lead to deeper interpretation of a study. Similarly, the researcher analysed the findings of this triangulation with previous research studies and came up with a broad conclusion of the knowledge development of novice teachers'. Furthermore, the validity of the research study was also further enhanced through this method.

3.8 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness in this research study was ensured through the data triangulation method. Elo et al. (2014) stated that trustworthiness is considered vital especially when using inductive content analysis. The study used data triangulation from different types of data mainly interviews and field notes. In using this strategy, the researcher was able to test an information against another and detect any inconsistency in the explanation of the findings. In this study, the learning experiences of the novice teachers' were measured against the interviews and the researchers' own observation during the mentoring sessions. Hence, this ensured the trustworthiness of the findings in this research study.

3.9 Summary

In summary, this chapter deals with the research methodology and tools used in this current study to understand and explore the influence and roles of the SISC+ mentor which contributed to the novice teachers' learning experience through the development of their knowledge.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The section presents the analysis of the study. The purpose of the study is to understand novice teachers' development of knowledge through mentoring by examining their development of knowledge in terms of their content and pedagogy when they are being mentored by the School Improvement Specialist Coach Plus (SISC+) mentors. The analysis study attempts to provide answers to the research questions;

1. How does the SISC+ mentoring influence the pedagogical content knowledge of novice teachers'?
2. What roles do the SISC+ mentor play in the development of novice teachers' knowledge about the students and the curriculum?

The first part of this section provides the description of the three participants in this research study. Each part discusses the background of the novice teachers' that participated in this research study.

4.1 Profile of the three participants in this study.

4.1.1 Sherene

Sherene was a 29 years old teacher in a rural primary school in one of the states in the southern region of Malaysia. She received her bachelor's degree in education in education (TESL) from a public university in Malaysia. Her first language is Malay and she had four years of teaching experience in teaching English to primary school students. She was first posted to a primary school in the rural area of Kuala Kangsar district. Most of the children studying in this school came from families where both parents were uneducated and worked odd jobs. She taught English to Year 1 to Year 6 students. As the Head of the English Panel of the school she was selected to be under

the coaching of the SISC+ of the district. She was required to participate as a mentee under the coaching of the SISC+ mentor as the school that she worked in was undergoing the implementation of the Transformation 25, TN25 program and was selected to be particularly coached by the SICS+ mentor to enhance the implementation of the TN25 program. As a mentee in the coaching program, she was selected to work with her SISC+ mentor Pn. Zalina.

4.1.2 Farah

Farah was a teacher in her late 20's, teaching in a rural primary school in the Kuala Kangsar district. Her first language is Malays and she had a bachelor's degree in education TESL from a teacher training college in Malaysia. Farah had been a teacher for four years in a primary school since her first posting. Most of the students studying in this school come from a mix ability background whereby some parents are only laborer's and plantation workers while some of them have very little education background. Farah taught English for the upper primary students and she also taught tuition for the upper primary students as well. As the Head of the English Panel and being the Middle Leader Team, she was selected to be mentored under the SISC+ of the Kuala Kangsar District. Her school was implementing the TN25 transformation program and in order to ensure that the program was implemented well, the SISC+ mentors were sent to the schools to coach the Head of Panels. As a mentee for the program Farah was coached under Puan Zalina the district SISC+ mentor.

4.1.3 Valar

Valar was a teacher who was 37 years old. She obtained a Diploma in Education after doing her KPLI studies at a teacher training institute in Malaysia. Her first language is Tamil and she had 3 years of teaching experience in a rural primary school. Most of the students studying in the school came from very poor socioeconomic background

as they lived in an estate in the rural area of the Kuala Kangsar district. Valar taught English to Year 1 to Year 6 students. As the Head of Panel of the school and the Highly Immersive Program coordinator, Valar was selected to be under the SISC+ mentoring programme as her school was undergoing the implementation of the TS25 programme. Valar worked together with the district SISC+ mentor, Puan Zalina who was assigned to mentor the teachers in her school.

Table 4.1: Novice ESL Teachers Demographic Information

Name	Years of Teaching Experience	Qualifications	Location of School
Sherene	4 years	Degree in TESL	Rural
Farah	4 years	Degree in TESL	Rural
Valar	3 years	Diploma in Education	Rural

In order to answer the first research questions, the chapter is thematically organized around the following themes; the influence of mentoring on the pedagogical content knowledge of novice teachers and the role of the SISC+ mentor play in the development of novice teachers' knowledge about the students and the curriculum.

4.2 The Influence of Mentoring on the Pedagogical Content Knowledge of Novice Teachers

Three recurrent themes were identified for this category: making connections between practise and pedagogical content knowledge, aligning novice teachers' knowledge of pedagogy with the content, tapping on novice teachers' PCK knowledge and mentoring sessions as a platform for novice teachers' engagement in reflective practise on their PCK.

4.2.1 Theme 1: Making Connections between Practise and Pedagogical Content Knowledge

All the teachers stated that the mentoring sessions by the SISC+ was able to strengthen and enhance their pedagogical content knowledge to their current situations in school. The teachers believed that the SISC+ has played an important role in making them understand the connections between the lessons that they conduct in the rural areas and their existing pedagogical content knowledge. Similar to putting a jigsaw piece together, they were able to make links and strengthen their existing knowledge by making connections to the whole lesson plan up to the evaluation tasks. The three participants stated that through the mentoring sessions of the SISC+ they were able to relate and bridge the gaps that they had between the theory in teaching to the practicality of it. Being confronted by a new environment and new in service were the major complications that they had when planning an English lesson. Various expressions were used by the teachers to express these goals.

Sherene posited that the mentoring sessions were able to strengthen her understanding of her existing knowledge in pedagogy and make connections to new ones. Sherene was also noted to be asking pertinent questions about the objectives writing and taking notes about it during the mentoring session.

“If I have a variety of tasks in one lesson. Which one should I write in my objectives?”

“You must include the task which will be your evaluation for the lesson.

“So, this is how I merge my lesson planning with my teaching in class and engage my pupils and measure their learning outcomes as well.

Yes teacher, when lesson planning and objectives writing is concern, we are already combining some aspects of the pedagogy that we are about to carry out in class with

the syllabus or the textbook content that we are going to teach. That is why each time we prepare a lesson, the objectives stated must be clear.

Let me give you another activity. Look at page 84 of the textbook. Try writing an objective for this content and I will see if I can explain what your pedagogical aspects are going to be for that lesson teacher.”

(SCF1-30-40)

Sherene believed that the SISC+ has played a crucial role in making her understand the connections between objective writing and her students. Both the observation by the researcher of the discussions that took place between Sherene and the SISC+ mentor during the workshop and Sherene’s answers and understanding of the explanations given by the SISC+ during the interview reflected on how the SISC+ facilitated her development of pedagogical content knowledge in Sherene with regards to her existing teaching practise in school. She stated:

Excerpt 4.2.1.1

The mentoring session just now has helped me in gaining an understanding of how I can reflect on my students’ performance by evaluating their understanding through the learning objectives that the SISC+ has taught me how to do. If before this, my objectives were a little vague, as I followed the method of objective writing taught to me during my training days, as compared to what I have learned today and through this I will be able to write better objectives and indirectly have a better reflection on my students understanding during an English lesson considering the rural context that they come from. I am able to relate to my students, and make match my existing knowledge and this new knowledge that I have learned to their level.

(SIT1-65-73)

Sherene disclosed that the SISC+ mentoring sessions did not only aid to develop her existing knowledge of pedagogy and content but she was able to learn how to make connections between the knowledge that she learnt during the mentoring

sessions and how to apply it in her own classroom context which she struggled in as a novice teacher prior to the mentoring session. As a novice teacher, it is evident during the interview that before participating in the SISC+ mentoring sessions, she found it difficult to relate to the students of the rural context that she was teaching in. However, by participating in the mentoring sessions with the SISC+ she has understood her roles as a teacher better and was able to identify strategies to enhance her students' knowledge by better identifying their strengths and weaknesses in the classroom. During the group discussion session, the SISC+ and Sherene discussed about giving a group to evaluate students' understanding which enabled Sherene to improve on her assessment and evaluation in classroom. Excerpts of the conversations were noted down. It was also seen that during the training sessions Sherene discussed with her group members and the SISC+ mentor intently, listed out the needs of her students as the SISC+ mentor talked to them on how to approach a group of students with mixed ability. They discussed;

“Why are you giving a group work at the beginning of the lesson?”

“I want them to identify the different colours in the picture.”

“Is this task easy or medium or hard for your students?”

“They can identify colours easily.”

“So, should it be a group work or can we give it in pairs.”

“It can be a pair work as well. Maybe I should give a more difficult task in groups Maam.”

“Yes, that's exactly my point.”

“Which activity in your lesson you think is suitable for a group work?”

“The colour puzzles?”

“Good teacher, I think you got my point now.”

(SCF1-21-30)

In support to the observation that was done by the researcher on the discussions that Sherene had gone through during the mentoring workshop, Sherene also suggested in the interview that the SISC+ mentoring sessions which reflected her believe that the SISC+ mentoring sessions served as a platform where she could reflect on her own pedagogy and decisions in the classroom and relate to her teaching and learning in a rural school context. Sherene stated:

Excerpt 4.2.1.2

The session just now also included hands on activity of making our own objectives according to subjects and identifying the mistakes in the sample objectives given by our mentor. This made it very clear and I could understand well now on how to improve my objective writing according to the needs of my students in the rural setting. I usually have difficulties to adapt and teach students from the rural setting.

(SIT1-52-56)

Similarly, another participant Farah also stated in the interview session that the mentoring was very useful in bridging the gap that she had between her knowledge of teaching, the syllabus and the practicality of teaching that she faced in the rural setting. In the interview, Farah revealed that she faced a lot of challenges when she was placed in the rural context. She had difficulties adjusting her teaching and learning activities to the needs of her students who were from a rural setting. During the interview session, Farah believed that the SISC+ mentor played an important role in assisting her to make connections between what was taught to her during her teacher training years in terms of her knowledge in pedagogy and content to the reality she faced in her rural school context. Farah expressed her view as follows:

Excerpt 4.2.1.3

This is because, I have been in service for four years and I only have knowledge of teaching from my teacher training. However, when we come into rural schools, its different altogether due to the different learning needs that we face. Hence with this kind of short course and mentoring that is given, I am able to bridge the gaps on my teaching and improve on them from time to time. I have also improved my knowledge as a teacher in terms of planning my lesson and improving my methods of teaching in the classroom through the ideas given by the SISC+ coach. For example, she also gave us input on how to reflect on our students' performance, how to manage a classroom with different abilities.

(FIT1-147-154)

Evidently, besides bridging the gaps that Farah had, the SISC+ mentoring sessions was seen to help her to make connections to the practicality of teaching with the theories and the pedagogical knowledge that she had prior to being a teacher in a rural school. Nevertheless, Farah also used the mentoring sessions with the SISC+ as a platform to find solutions to her problems as a novice teacher who was assigned the role of a Head of Panel for the school although she was still very new in service. During the mentoring sessions, Farah was observed to be sharing her story to the other mentees and the SISC+ mentor about being a new Head of Panel and it reflected the effectiveness and her opinion on how the mentoring sessions benefited her as a novice teacher.

“Puan I have a question. This is my lesson plan; however, I have a group of slow learners in my classroom. How can I accommodate this lesson for them?”

“Let me have a look at your lesson,”

“Your objectives are for pupils to be able to fill in at least 6 out of 8 blanks with adjectives, individually right?”

“Does this mean that all the students have to work individually?”

“Yes, puan.”

“If we are to change these objectives to cater to that group of students you are talking about, how do you think can we change the objectives without changing the task or material?”

“Can I change the Social aspect?”

“That is exactly what you should do teacher.”

“Thank you Puan for the guidance. I am the new Head of Panel for the school and I am glad that this session is very helpful for me.”

“You are always welcome to ask questions teacher.”

(FCF1-62-75)

During the interview session, Farah revealed that the SISC+ mentoring sessions not only to teach her to face her practical situation but she was able to make connections to the knowledge of teaching with the reality of the rural school where she taught in. Thus, the mentoring sessions helped Farah to develop her pedagogical content knowledge suitable for a rural classroom that she was teaching in. She discussed;

Excerpt 4.2.1.4

Hence with this kind of short course and mentoring that is given, I am able to reflect on my teaching and improve on them from time to time and bridge the gap between teaching and the practicality of it. I think it is a good approach that the SISC+ uses now to meet us the middle leader teams as it helps us to bridge the gaps that we have regarding teaching and learning and to help fellow English teachers in school. We can be considered as novice teachers but due to being in a rural area, we are appointed to be Head of Panels and we need these kinds of coaching to help us out with the roles that we play.

(FIT1-155-160)

Valar expressed a similar view during the interview. The data revealed that she gained new knowledge that she could use to make connections in her teaching during the mentoring sessions. She believed that the SISC+ has influenced her by helping her

“to make better connections” of the flow of a lesson. Evidently, Valar developed her content knowledge through the mentoring sessions with the SISC+ mentor. Nevertheless, the mentoring sessions served as a platform to understand the reality of her classroom and for her to make better connections with her lesson. Hence, the mentoring sessions enhanced her knowledge of the classroom as well as her own instructional knowledge. Valar also expressed a similar view:

Excerpt 4.2.1.5

She has added on to my previous knowledge and helped me to make better connections between my lesson objectives and instructions. I learned a new knowledge whereby I am able to create the link between the objectives I write to the whole flow of the lesson. I learned that the objectives are the core to a lesson and its implementation in the classroom.

(VIT1-318-321)

Valar also emphasised that the SISC+ mentoring has not only taught her a new knowledge of connecting the lesson objectives to the implementation but she realised that the SISC+ mentor had even shown her in detail on how to bridge the gaps in lesson planning by giving her examples on how to have a coherent flow of lesson in her teaching. Valar was observed discussing with the SISC+ and asked a few questions on adapting a lesson to accommodate to her fast learners and was seen jotting down notes as the SISC+ mentor answers her;

“Puan I have doubt. I have tried applying these activities in my classroom before, however, the fast learners in my classroom are able to do it and gets bored very fast.”

“Let me have a look at your lesson dear.”

“The activities I have listed in the slide are just samples. I can suggest that you can try giving the same activity but adapt it to be a little challenging for the fast ones.”

“Do you know how to adapt it?”

“Yes, puan.”

(VCF1-113-119)

According to Valar, before participating in the mentoring session, she realised that what she learned in the teacher training institute was merely insufficient because when it came to teaching in the real life a teacher should be able to have a certain flow of reasoning for her pedagogical actions in the classroom. The mentoring sessions allowed Valar to enhance of PCK with the current situation that she was faced with. Moreover, by participating in the mentoring sessions she was able to understand that the SISC+ mentor facilitated her to “bridge the gaps” that she faced in her teaching. It is evident from the interview that the SISC+ mentoring sessions served as a platform where Valar gained additional knowledge that complemented her existing knowledge and she was able to relate better to the teaching and learning in a rural school context. She discussed;

Excerpt 4.2.1.6

She has added on to my previous knowledge and helped me to make better connections between my lesson objectives and instructions. I learned a new knowledge whereby I am able to create the link between the objectives I write to the whole flow of the lesson. I learned that the objective is the core to a lesson and its implementation in the classroom. I also learned that as a teacher the knowledge of teaching alone is not important but I should be able to coherently plan the lesson well.

(SIT1-318-323)

It is clear that all participants believed that the mentoring sessions by the SISC+ had helped them not only to add on their PCK knowledge by being able to make connections in their lesson planning and to bridge the gaps they had between the theory of teaching to the practicality that they faced in the rural setting that they have been placed in. Thus, the teachers stated that the SISC+ coach has influenced their PCK by

facilitating them to make connections and by bridging the gaps they had between theory and the practicality in teaching practise between their existing knowledge with the realities of teaching in a rural setting. All the teacher's statements about their enriching learning experiences during the SISC+ mentoring sessions was paramount in their minds when they talked about how the SISC+ coach influenced their knowledge in pedagogy and content.

4.2.2 Theme 2: Aligning Novice Teachers' Pedagogical Content Knowledge

All the three teachers who participated in the study stated that the SISC+ are the experts who taught them how to align their pedagogical content knowledge during the mentoring sessions. During the mentoring sessions, the SISC+ mentor played a vital role as an expert in instructional methods and facilitated all the three novice teachers' development of pedagogical content knowledge through selecting appropriate instructional materials and structure their lesson accordingly with the materials chosen for the students are from the rural area to get a maximum outcome where teaching and learning was concern.

During the interview, it was observed that the SISC+ mentor played a vital role as an expert in facilitating Sherene to develop her pedagogical content knowledge by ensuring that she choose appropriate educational materials and structure her lessons appropriately. The mentoring sessions enabled her to choose the right type of educational materials, activities and to have a proper structure in her lesson planning accordingly for her students from the rural areas. All these actions required Sherene to be able to engage herself in developing her instructional knowledge as well as her PCK. According to Sherene, this was the key detail that her mentor emphasised on during the first mentoring session. It is evident that Sherene also learned from her

mentor on how to make decisions on the structure of her lesson and align the content of the syllabus taught and pedagogical accordingly. During the mentoring sessions, Sherene continuously learned how to align her pedagogical actions and instructions with the syllabus. The SISC+ mentor actively assisted her to place emphasis on the “social aspect” of the objective writing which facilitated her in aligning the content and structure of a task and accommodate proper instructions to be delivered to the target students. She explained;

Excerpt 4.2.2.1

Puan Zalina, took her time to explain how I need to align my objectives to the task and to my students as well. Each task that we give need to be aligned according to a group of students or an individual or pair of students. The type of material also can affect the strategies that we use in choosing materials and the structure of our lesson. I only realised these details of lesson planning when Puan Zalina coached me through each step of lesson planning. Although, I have some form of knowledge in this, but the details of it, I only learned here through the SISC+ program.

(SIT2-24-30)

In addition, Sherene was able to develop her ability in pedagogical content knowledge each time during the mentoring session, as the SISC+ mentor stated the importance of providing the appropriate tasks aligned with appropriate instructions which aids students understanding of the lesson to ensure that they are able to comprehend what is taught to them better. The SISC+ mentor also enhanced the development of knowledge by emphasising that task sheets and materials used in the classroom must be able to further validate learning and not deviate students understanding from the subject matter being taught. Similarly, during the mentoring session, it was observed how the SISC+ and Sherene discussed about giving a group work to evaluate students’ understanding.

“Which activity in your lesson you think is suitable for a group work?”

“The colour puzzle?”

“Good teacher, I think you got my point now.”

“Teacher when planning for a group work, you should consider the challenge of the required task that you will be imposing on students. Most of the group tasks we inculcate in lesson planning will be to promote their social skills and interactive skills as well as healthy competition amongst pupils.”

“So, Puan when I allocate a group work I should consider all these suggestions and not only focus on the type of content given in the group work?”

“Yes, teacher, only when we consider the aspects that I told you just now, we may be able to focus on the pedagogical content knowledge and consider the setting of the lesson.”

“Noted Puan.”

(SCF2-28-39)

She also explained this in the first interview session;

Puan Zalina, took her time to explain how I need to align my objectives to the task and to my students as well. Each task that we give need to be aligned according to a group of students or an individual or pair of students. The type of material also can affect the strategies that we use in choosing materials and the structure of our lesson. I only realised these details of lesson planning when Puan Zalina coached me through each step of lesson planning. Although, I have some form of knowledge in this, but the details of it, I only learned here through the SISC+ program. If not for these sessions, I would have been conducting lessons which were not 100% effective and I would not have been able to reach out for my kids.

(SIT2-24-32)

On a similar basis, Valar also stated in the interview that being a novice in teaching, she faced many difficulties especially when she was given many responsibilities where English lesson was concerned. She had to face many difficulties

in her teaching life as she had to juggle with in the rural setting, her low proficiency students and also with teaching the new CEFR syllabus. However, the SISC+ mentor assisted her to align her pedagogical content knowledge by facilitating her during the mentoring sessions. The SISC+ mentoring session provided a plethora for her to overcome her difficulties in facing the new CEFR syllabus of teaching English in terms of choosing appropriate content, instructions and aligning it with her students' needs. Evidently, the SISC+ mentor played an important role as an expert in helping her to overcome her concerns related to teaching and instructions for her students from the rural setting.

Excerpt 4.2.2.2

I am comfortable with having a mentor and a session to go to as I am very novice to teaching. However, the day I stepped into this school, I had to assume responsibilities of teaching four English lessons of different levels. Hence, I faced with many difficulties concerning my teaching and learning in the classrooms such as the new CEFR curriculum, the rural context of the school and my students who have very low proficiency and exposure in the English language. This mentoring session is very useful to me as a novice teacher who have assumed the heavy responsibilities as the sole English teacher and the Head of Panel. I am able to learn new things from the SISC+ especially concerning my lesson instructions and choosing materials for the CEFR curriculum. The concerns that I used to have regarding materials related to the CEFR has reduced, as in the new syllabus, the ministry only provides us with the textbook and teachers have to prepare activities or tasks in the classroom accordingly on their own. Although there are many resources in the internet and workbooks, however finding the suitable one is a headache for me considering my lack of experience in teaching.

(VIT2-166-179)

Similarly, it was observed in Farah's interview that the SISC+ mentor played a vital role as an expert in facilitating her to develop her pedagogical content knowledge of aligning appropriate instructional activities for her students from the

rural area. For example, during the mentoring sessions they were given tasks to choose the right type of pedagogical instructions for the content during teaching and learning in the classroom. As an ESL teacher, Farah always believed that the instructional activities chosen will help in partially evaluating her students understanding of the lesson. However, during the interview the researcher noticed her opinion changed through the SISC+ mentoring sessions, she learned that the instructional activities exist to further help in the comprehension of students of the subject matter that is taught. It was observed that Farah was able to develop her PCK. Farah also used the mentoring sessions as a platform for her to discuss her instructional methods in her group and also with the SISC+ mentor.

“I have a question Puan Zal?”

“Yes, dear ask me.”

“Can you explain to me how to conduct the poison box game?”

“This is the simplest task that you can do to evaluate your pupils understanding in the classroom. First, you send around a box and make pupils to sit in a big circle. Play the song and the pupils passes around the box. Each time the music stops you get to ask a question to the pupil with the box. To make it interesting you can reward or punish the pupils based on their answers.”

“So, I can evaluate and at the same time check on my pupils understanding. Is that considered as an evaluation?”

“Can I use the same idea and conduct a different way by asking students to pass a plush toy around and check for students understanding at the end of the lesson Puan?”

“Yes, dear.”

“Got it Puan Zal.”

(FCF2-124-137)

Farah, further assured in the interview that based on the received feedbacks and the exchange of ideas gained from the discussion with the group and SISC+ mentors, she was able to align her own teaching. Therefore, the role of the SISC+ was vital in helping Farah align her knowledge of pedagogy with content by promoting and facilitating ideas of suitable instructions, activities, methods in teaching and learning in a rural setting.

Excerpt 4.2.2.3

I am able to handle my teaching with ease, improve on my personal teaching skills, gain many ideas regarding teaching activities in the classroom, discuss with the SISC+ mentors plus also have discussions in groups with other teachers and work cooperatively together. Before this, I thought instructional activities were there for the purpose of evaluating students understanding, however with the discussion with the SISC+ mentor helped to facilitate my understanding that instructional activities are there to further consolidate students' comprehension of the topic taught.

(FIT2-134-141)

4.2.3 Theme 3: Tapping on Novice Teachers' Pedagogical Content Knowledge

All the three participants stated that their mentor was an expert in tapping on their pedagogical content knowledge during the mentoring session. They believed that their participation in the SISC+ program enabled them to better master the existing knowledge embedding pedagogy and content and apply it to the current classrooms that they were teaching in. This was evident during the mentoring sessions where the participants practiced writing SMARTC objectives to match suitable 21st century activities in the classroom.

Valar gained additional understanding on the essence of pedagogical content knowledge especially in conducting 21st century learning activities through her

interactions with the SISC+ mentor who served as an expert in integrating this knowledge. She also stated in the interview:

Excerpt 4.2.3.1

The sessions that were conducted by Puan Zalina so far, has been full of hands on activity and discussions. All her hands-on activities were sample activities which included the 21st century skills which the Ministry of Education has been placing emphasis in every now and then. Furthermore, Puan Zalina also makes sure that she refers to the content and learning standards from the KSSR syllabus and gives us activities that are in line to the CEFR textbook. This makes the sessions easily comprehensible and applicable in our own classroom context. She does not only help in suggesting activities which are current and relatable to my classrooms but I gained an understanding of the overall structure, decisions and rationale that I should take at each phase of my lesson. I learn how to make on the spot decisions when I attend her mentoring sessions.

(VIT2-224-233)

Through the mentoring sessions, the SISC+ mentor was able to assist Valar to realise that it was not only important for her to master the knowledge of integrating the SMARTC objectives with the 21st century skills but to also make sure that these activities which are conducted is in line with the new CEFR syllabus. During the mentoring session, Valar asked many questions to the SISC+ mentor during the gallery walk session regarding the 21st century skills and CEFR. This detailed interaction between the SISC+ mentor and Valar during the workshop lead to the development of Pedagogical Content Knowledge. This was observed by the researcher and noted in the following conversation.

“Yes puan, I was wondering how to do the gallery walk in my rural classroom when you suggested gallery walk.”

“I understand dear. Based on the example I gave you, could you think of another way in which you can conduct the gallery walk session considering the classroom and the characteristics of the students that are your audience?”

“Can I give them smiley stickers instead of writing comments Puan? Considering that these kids come from a low proficiency group.”

“Yes dear, that is a good way to begin a gallery walk activity with low proficient kids. Then you can move on by asking them to tick or put a symbol for a good presentation and a not so good presentation.”

“Now, I get it Puan. Thank you.”

(VCF2-92-102)

Farah found the role of her mentor as an expert vital in tapping on her pedagogical content knowledge, especially when the SISC+ mentor facilitated her knowledge of pedagogical content through conducting the 21st century learning activities. Farah initially, found the word 21st century as a “big jargon”, however through the mentoring sessions with the SISC+ mentor, she found it easy to apply the SMARTC objectives and was able to match the 21st century learning with it. It was observed that as a novice teacher with limited experience Farah appreciated the role of the SISC+ as a facilitator as she made it easy for her to tap on her previous knowledge of teaching by giving various ideas and examples during the mentoring sessions which in turned helped in tapping into her own pedagogical content knowledge as a teacher. She discussed this in the interview;

Excerpt 4.2.3.2

She also gave us techniques of writing SMARTC objectives and taught us how to match these objectives with 21st century learning activities in the classroom. The word 21st century seemed to me as a big jargon initially, but through the mentoring sessions with Puan Zalina, she made it very easy and gave us many ideas on how we can apply it in our daily lesson. All these examples were easy to connect with and it actually changed my whole perception on how I perceived the content that I was teaching all this while and the pedagogical methods that I used in my classroom.

(FIT1-185-191)

Similarly, Sherene believed that the SISC+ mentor played an important role as an expert in tapping on her pedagogical content knowledge by assimilating appropriate educational materials and structure. The SISC+ mentor was able to tap into Sherene's pedagogical content knowledge by facilitating her in integrating the SMARTC objectives and the 21st century skills in her lessons. Sherene being a new teacher had little knowledge as to how to integrate the 21st century-based lesson and how to integrate this knowledge into her SMARTC objectives. However, through the guidance and examples of hands on activities during the mentoring sessions she learned how to integrate all this knowledge during her lesson. She described this experience during the interview;

Excerpt 4.2.3.3

As what I told you just now, Puan Zalina gave me a clear picture on writing an objective under the TN25 program. Before this I wrote objectives with ABCD but now I know that I must add the social aspect to it. The session just now also included hands on activity of making our own objectives according to subjects and identifying the appropriate 21st century activities that can be integrated to match the objectives. This made it very clear and I could understand well now on how to improve my objective writing and rationale it according to my existing pedagogical content knowledge. I usually have difficulties to adapt and teach students from the rural setting but through the mentoring session with Puan Zalina, I am able to make classroom decisions by taking into consideration the aim of my content and pedagogy.

(SIT1-50-59)

4.2.4 Theme 4: Mentoring Sessions as a Platform for Novice Teachers' Engagement in Reflective Practise on Their Pedagogical Content Knowledge

All the three teachers who participated in the study stated that the SISC+ mentoring sessions served as a platform for their reflection and evaluation of their teaching and learning outcomes with reference to their pedagogical content knowledge. During the mentoring sessions, they sat down and reflected on their own teaching and learning with their group members and discussed on how to make it more effective. With the help of the SISC+ mentor, the discussions were able to bring about many ideas and techniques concerning reflection and evaluation in a lesson.

Sherene's decisions in the classroom concerning evaluation and the way she reflected on her lesson was due to the mentoring sessions which she had with the SISC+ mentor. The development of PCK in Sherene especially in the aspects of evaluation and reflection seen during the interview. It was observed that, the SISC+ mentor always asked pertinent questions during the sessions which made her reflect on her own teaching and learning in the classroom. This developed her PCK in a subtle manner and encouraged Sherene to put in effort in reflecting on her own practice. This was observed by the researcher during the second mentoring session where she upon her own initiative brought her lessons that she has planned and referred to the mentor while reflecting on its outcome in the classroom.

“Puan, this is a lesson which I have planned on for Monday. Could you please check to see if my objectives are aligned properly in my lesson planning?”

“Looking at your objectives, they are clear and accurate. Your objectives match your activities and the task that you have given in this lesson. I can see the improvement in your lesson planning skills. Well done teacher.”

“Thank you Puan.”

(SCF2-40-45)

In line with the observation of the conversation between Sherene and the SISC+ mentor during the mentoring session, Sherene also explained in the interview session;

Excerpt 4.2.4.1

I feel that I will be able to achieve my lesson objectives better and reflect on my students understanding. Puan Zalina always asks us questions that lead to reflecting our students and their understanding and also our teaching. The questions she asks makes me reflect on my teaching and made me into a reflective teacher.

(SIT2-42-45)

Similarly, SISC+ mentor was able to engage Farah in reflecting on her teaching and learning during the mentoring session. Farah’s development of PCK was evident during the mentoring session where she enhanced her knowledge in handling assessment tasks. This was developed during her interactions with the SISC+ mentor and other teachers. According to Farah, many of her students had trouble scoring well during the test that she gave at the end of a lesson but answered well during discussions in the classroom. Farah was seen to develop her knowledge through the discussion of the problem with the SISC+ mentor and the SISC+ mentor was able to give suggestions on how to overcome this problem. During the mentoring session, it was observed that Farah was able to come to a stand that assessment did not only consists of test but she could actually assess her students using various methods in the classroom. The SISC+ mentor had also suggested some interesting and non-threatening methods to be carried out during assessment at the end of a lesson. This Farah stated in the interview;

Excerpt 4.2.4.2

Yes, the methods taught by the SISC+ mentor just now will be able to create a non-threatening environment for my students to work in. I will also be able to reflect on their performance better. I am very used to giving students a test at the end of every lesson and most of the time I could sense the fear in them. Sometimes I would also get a low score from my students at the end of a test and sometimes that same student would answer better when I have Q&A sessions in class. I usually face this kind of difficulties in assessing my students. However, when I brought this issue to Puan Zalina just now, she was able to give me a better suggestion of having assessments in the classroom using a variety of method besides a test at the end of every lesson. She suggested puzzles, poison box games, round robin games and activities like that which would be non-threatening to my students.

(FIT2-114-123)

Farah asked questions upon reflecting on her lesson and the SISC+ facilitated Farah's understanding on how to carry out assessments with her students when she presented her sample activity during the mentoring session.

“The activity that I would suggest given the Content and Learning Standard given would be the Trick or Treat activity where pupils will be asked to spell the names of food and receive a batch for each food spelled correctly. Through the batches received the teacher will be able to assess if the pupils have mastered the spelling of each of the word taught at the end of the week.”

“I taught assessment should only be tests or through exercises in the classroom. I didn't know we can conduct a poison box game to assess or evaluate students in the classroom.”

“Yes teacher, when it comes to assessment, you have to consider your students characteristics and level of proficiency. You can also have songs and games to assess your students just like the activity that you just presented to me.”

(FCF2-141-145)

The mentoring sessions with the SISC+ mentor served as a platform for Valar to reflect on her own teaching and learning in the classroom. According to Valar in the interview, she stated that the discussions that they had in groups during the mentoring workshop allowed exchange of ideas while being able to reflect on their teaching practice. However, Valar realised that most of the times the SISC+ mentor dealt with questions by allowing them to indulge in reflection of their own lessons and guided them further with questions that were stepping stones in developing their existing pedagogical content knowledge as teachers. This development was observed during the mentoring sessions;

“I understand dear. Based on the example I gave you, could you think of another way in which you can conduct the gallery walk session considering the classroom and the characteristics of the students that are your audience?”

“Can I give them smiley stickers instead of writing comments Puan? Considering that these kids come from a low proficiency group.”

“Yes dear, that is a good way to begin a gallery walk activity with low proficient kids. Then you can move on by asking them to tick or put a symbol for a good presentation and a not so good presentation.”

“Now, I get it Puan. Thank you.”

(VCF2-93-101)

The above analysis revealed that the SISC+ played a crucial role in providing support and in encouraging novice teachers to engage in reflective practise where teaching and learning in the classroom was concern. Novice teachers felt less threatened and participated freely without being anxious or shy and exercised a lot of reflections during the mentoring sessions. This analysis can be can be understood in

the light of Shulman's (1987) Model of Pedagogical Reasoning and Action. This model posits that a teacher should always be involved in the process of evaluation and reflection in pedagogical reasoning which can lead to new comprehension which can encourage teachers to develop a new repertoire of activities for teaching (Shulman, 1987). Furthermore, the positive relationship between the mentor and the novice teachers further enhanced novice teachers' engagement in reflecting ideas related to teaching and learning during the mentoring sessions. Findings of this study revealed that the novice teachers were involved in discussions, hands on activities and had a positive relationship with the SISC+ mentor.

4.3 Roles of SISC+ in the Development of Novice Teachers' Knowledge about the Students and the Curriculum

In order to answer the second research question, the chapter is thematically organized around the following themes; SISC+ mentoring develops the knowledge base of novice teachers', SISC+ mentoring as an enriching learning experience, SISC+ in integrating knowledge bases of material adaptation according to students' characteristics and the role of SISC+ mentor as a facilitator.

4.3.1 Theme 1: SISC+ Mentoring Develops the Knowledge Base of Novice Teachers'

The theme that emerged from the data is the novice teachers increase in knowledge base during mentoring sessions. All the teachers believed that their knowledge bases increased such as knowledge of students, knowledge of educational needs, knowledge of evaluation, knowledge of educational ends and purpose increased during the mentoring sessions with the SISC+.

Sherene believed that, the SISC+ mentoring sessions facilitated her knowledge base in understanding students. Although the knowledge of students is not altogether

new to her, however, she was aware of the expansion of knowledge base that she experienced as she began to understand the characteristics and needs of her students during the mentoring sessions. For example, Sherene developed the ability to identify her students better when the SISC+ mentor facilitated her understanding of objective writing. Sherene also realized that she developed the ability to identify the needs of her students through writing the objectives of a lesson. Sherene acknowledged that through the coaching sessions, that she had gone through with the SISC+ mentors served as a platform for her to increase her knowledge and understanding of her students. Ball, Thames, and Phelps (2005) describe knowledge of content and students to include the ability to anticipate student errors and misconceptions, to interpret incomplete student thinking, to predict how students will handle specific tasks, and what students will find interesting and challenging.

During the mentoring sessions, Sherene believed that through the discussions with her group members and the SISC+ mentor she was able to listed out the needs of her students as the SISC+ mentor talked to them on how to approach a group of students with mixed ability. The guidance of the SISC+ mentor was able to facilitate the development of PCK in her especially through the various questioning and reflection technique adhered during their discussions.

“Teacher, do you think the task that you have presented is aligned to the objectives of the lesson?”

“Yes, Puan. The objective is to listen and circle the correct pictures of the animals taught.”

“True, but what do you think are the needs of your pupils? Do you want them to identify the pictures or to be able to read the words?”

“I want them to be able to read the words Puan. That means I should change the activity to read and label the pictures correctly, instead of listening and circling the correct picture.”

“Excellent teacher, now you have got the ability to see things in the right direction already.”

(SCF2-46-53)

On a similar note, Sherene only gained this knowledge during the mentoring sessions and had trouble to align with her students’ needs appropriately before the mentoring session. The mentoring sessions with the SISC+ has assisted her to reflect better on her students’ performance as well. This in turn developed her existing knowledge base as a teacher and she was able to understand her students better and concurrently, plan activities and use suitable teaching methods and techniques during her English lessons. Sherene shared her experience during the interview on how she expanded her knowledge during the session;

Excerpt 4.3.1.1

Yes, for sure I will be able to reflect on the students’ performance in class as I said just now. The mentoring session just now has helped me in gaining an understanding of how I can reflect on my students’ performance by evaluating their understanding through the learning objectives that the SISC+ has taught me how to do.

(SIT1-69-72)

Farah also shared a similar view during the interview. The mentoring sessions assisted her in increasing her knowledge of educational needs and evaluation. Although the knowledge of educational needs and evaluation is not new to Farah, she gained knowledge through the mentoring sessions about understanding students’ performance through classroom evaluation during teaching and learning. The coaching sessions that she had gone through with the SISC+ mentors served as a platform to tap

on Farah's knowledge of educational needs and evaluation. Although Farah had prior knowledge on teaching methods and strategies in the classroom but she realised that she learned something new about educational needs and evaluation during the mentoring sessions. In the observation, Farah was seen asking pertinent questions to the SISC+ mentor on how to evaluate the educational needs of her students who are of the rural background and seen to be thoroughly jotting down notes as the SISC+ mentor spoke.

"Let me have a look at your lesson,"

"Your objectives are for pupils to be able to fill in at least 6 out of 8 blanks with adjectives, individually right?"

"Does this mean that all the students have to work individually?"

"Yes, puan."

"If we are to change these objectives to cater to that group of students you are talking about, how do you think can we change the objectives without changing the task or material?"

"Can I change the Social aspect?"

(FCF2-64-71)

From the observation, it was clearly seen that one of the knowledges that Farah gained through the mentoring session with the SISC+ coach was the knowledge of knowing the educational needs of her students and to come up with differentiation strategies for the slow learners in her classroom. During the interview, Farah reported a similar experience on how she expanded her knowledge during the session;

Excerpt 4.3.1.2

I will be able to understand my students' performance in class and evaluate if there should be any reinforcement activities or follow up tasks that should be given in order to make him or her understand the lesson taught better. I was also able to learn different methods of

adapting one task for a variety of students from various proficiency level. This skill was facilitated by Puan Zalina during and after the presentations that we did during the coaching sessions.

(FIT1-207-211)

Farah also posited that through the SISC+ mentoring sessions and discussions with her group members, she gathered that evaluation can be done through reinforcement activities and follow up tasks after a lesson. She also particularly stated that the mentoring sessions with the SISC+ mentor has taught her to manage a classroom with mixed ability students. This in turn increased her knowledge base as a teacher and she enabled her to understand the educational needs of her students better. During the observation, Farah was seen asking a question on creating a lesson for slow learners and jotted down the techniques suggested by the SISC+.

“Puan, how do I accommodate my activities for those who are slow learners in my class? From the presentation just now, I understood that we can vary the task but can you explain to me specifically how do we do that?”

“Okay teacher, let us take the presentation by your group member as an example just now. The teacher told us that they will be giving an essay to the group of pupils. In a similar class with slow learners, tell me how you can differentiate the same task?”

“Hrmmmm, maybe I can adapt the task?”

“Yes, you are right, but how will you adapt an essay task when it requires writing? Think of what kind of assistance that can be given for the slow learners to complete the writing task.”

“Maybe I can give them fill in the blanks with phrases instead of writing the whole essay by themselves.”

(FCF1-77-87)

Similarly, Valar stated in the interview that through the mentoring sessions she gained an increase in her knowledge of educational ends and purpose. Valar was able to expand her knowledge base through the discussions and interactions during the mentoring sessions which helped her to gain understanding in terms of the educational ends pertaining to a lesson. Valar was able to determine the objectives of a lesson whereby she admitted that she learned new aspects which was never known to her before. The mentoring sessions that she had gone through served as a platform for her to gain knowledge in terms of writing accurate objectives which aided her in accurately determining the educational ends and purpose of a lesson. She discussed her concerns in the interview;

Excerpt 4.3.1.3

Although I am well aware of the three-part lesson even before this, but the activities suggested by the SISC+ was interesting and easy. She suggested some 21st century related activities which was very easy to be carried out during a lesson and which I was not aware of before this. I took down some notes to imply it in my lesson as well.

(VIT2-182-185)

Through the training sessions and the discussions Valar also agreed that she also gained additional knowledge of the “21st century learning”. Valar also realised of how easy it was to conduct these activities in the classroom. She discussed this;

Excerpt 4.3.1.4

An example would be the gallery walk activity. It was part of the evaluation topic that the SISC+ wanted to show us. Usually the gallery walk is done as a post lesson but this time around she taught us how to turn it into an evaluative activity through the sticky notes and feedback session. She also went into the precession of showing us how to help students who are less proficient to give feedbacks on the sticky notes. This is where she taught me how to bridge the gaps that has been on my mind before this.

(VIT2-199-204)

The teachers revealed in the interview session that they gained additional knowledge and were able to expand their knowledge base as a novice teacher in terms of the students, knowledge of educational needs and knowledge of evaluation and knowledge of educational ends and purpose during the mentoring session. All three novice teachers had shared similar experiences and agreed that they were able to increase their knowledge base in different areas in which they lacked in. They also disclosed that although these knowledge bases were not altogether new to them but due to the rural setting that they were teaching in, the mentoring sessions acted as a support and they were comfortable with the mentoring from the SISC+ mentors.

4.3.2 Theme 2: SISC+ Mentoring as an Enriching Learning Experience

All the three teachers stated that the mentoring of the SISC+ provided them with an enriching learning experience. This was especially due to the positive relationship with the SISC+, the effective mentoring techniques used by the SISC+ to deliver knowledge and the interactive sessions during the mentoring. All the three teachers stated that their engagement in the mentoring sessions promoted an enriching learning experience for them.

The SISC+ mentoring assisted Sherene's pedagogical content knowledge construction through effective learning activities which provided an enriching learning experience for Sherene. As a novice teacher who was placed in a rural school, Sherene did not have much experience in conducting effective learning activities which are suited to her students' ability. Sherene was not able to maximize her students learning activities as she was placed in a rural school where her students were of low proficiency. However, the mentoring sessions provided opportunity for her to learn how to conduct effective learning activities even in the rural schools. Sherene was seen

to be actively engaged during the sharing of 21st century teaching and learning and the observed discussion with her group members were taken note;

“Why are you giving a group work at the beginning of the lesson?”

“I want them to identify the different colours in the picture.”

“Is this task easy or medium or hard for your students?”

“They can identify colours easily.”

“So should it be a group work or can we give it in pairs.”

“It can be a pair work as well. Maybe I should give a more difficult task in groups Maam.”

(SCF2-21-26)

Sherene was also encouraged to apply effective learning activities as the SISC+ mentor was able to give simple ideas of the 21st century learning activities which could actually work in the rural classroom context. Sherene stated in the interview:

Excerpt 4.3.2.1

Before this I would usually give my students puzzles or show a video to them but today, I have realised that I can actually inculcate a speaking activity or a small task based on the video and get my students to do something while watching the video. I think it was a good suggestion and exposure for me. I was able to relate to my own classroom and discussed with Puan Zalina about my own students.

(SIT2-16-20)

Farah expressed a similar view whereby she realized that the SISC+ mentoring assisted Farah’s development of content pedagogical knowledge construction through interactive sessions which provided an enriching learning experience for her. As a novice teacher, Farah did not have the opportunity to interactively engage in discussions with a fellow English teacher or a more experienced English teacher in

school as she was the sole English option teacher in her school. However, the mentoring session provided an opportunity for Farah to participate in interactive activities as it included discussion with the SISC+ mentor and also with the other mentees in the group as well as sharing of many ideas regarding teaching and learning in the classroom. In the post lesson mentees was seen to be asking the SISC+ ways on how to conduct assessments using different methods from the usual ones in the classroom.

“Puan, what kind of assessment do I conduct for the objective that is in task 2?”

“Teacher the task says that all the pupils should be able to list down ways on how to save the environment right? So, you may want to give an interesting activity to allow them to enjoy the post lesson and also test their knowledge on the lesson.”

“Can I give them a gallery walk or a poison box game. Wait maybe a poison box game where they get to discuss what they have learnt in the while lesson will be good.”

“You have got a point teacher.”

(FCF1-89-95)

Furthermore, during the discussions with the SISC+ Farah was assisted and encouraged to learn various methods in which activities can be conducted in the classroom. In addition, the interactive sessions enhanced Farah’s learning as she was able to realise her role in the classroom as a facilitator to the students rather than being a teacher. The interactive mentoring sessions with the SISC+ coach served as example for her to apply in her own lesson with mixed ability students. Farah posited:

Excerpt 4.3.2.2

It was an interactive session that we went through just now. Puan Zalina has given us an input on how to produce a three-part lesson. She taught us how we should do an interesting pre-lesson in a simple way but it should impact our pupils such that we are able to engage

them throughout the whole lesson. Next, she also taught us how to do a while lesson which will actually introduce something new in terms of an input. In the post lesson she showed us ways on how to conduct assessments using different methods from the usual ones that we do in the classroom. She encouraged us to use more 21st learning century activities like the hot seat and gallery walk in order to conduct out three-part lesson.

(FIT2-84-91)

The same submission was given by Valar during the interview session. The SISC+ mentoring assisted Valar's pedagogical content knowledge construction through her communication and active participation in the hands-on learning activities during the mentoring session served as an enriching learning experience for her. As a novice teacher who was placed in a rural school, Valar did not have much experience communicating with other fellow teachers who were facing similar situations. However, the mentoring sessions provided an opportunity for her to learn from the SISC+ mentor from various hands-on activities which can suit the rural context. The examples given by the SISC+ mentor was aligned with the KSSR syllabus and was suitable for her group of students who come from the mixed ability group. This she explained in the interview session:

Excerpt 4.3.2.3

After the first session, I began applying what she has taught me and it has been effective. The sessions that were conducted by Puan Zalina so far, has been full of hands on activity and discussions. All her hands-on activities were sample activities which included the 21st learning century skills which the Ministry of Education has been placing emphasis in every now and then. Furthermore, Puan Zalina also makes sure that she refers to the content and learning standards from the KSSR syllabus and gives us activities that are in line to the CEFR textbook. This makes the sessions easily comprehensible and applicable in our own classroom context.

(VIT2-223-230)

Sherene stated that as a novice teacher who was posted to a rural school, she did not have much experience in conducting effective learning activities. Evidently, Sherene was not able to conduct effective learning activities as she was placed in a rural school where her students were of low proficiency. However, she had an opportunity to learn how to conduct effective learning activities which are suitable for students who are from the rural areas through the mentoring sessions. Sherene was also encouraged by the SISC+ mentor to apply effective learning activities during teaching and learning. The SISC+ mentor was able to give simple ideas which was at par with the 21st century learning which could actually work in the rural classroom context. Sherene discussed this in the interview;

Excerpt 4.3.2.4

Yes. Puan Zalina actually gave us many interesting ideas on how to begin our pre lesson. Before this I would usually give my students puzzles or show a video to them but today, I have realised that I can actually inculcate a speaking activity or a small task based on the video and get my students to do something while watching the video. I think it was a good suggestion and exposure for me. I was able to relate to my own classroom and discussed with Puan Zalina about my own students.

(SIT2-15-20)

Similarly, Farah also stated in the interview that the SISC+ mentoring sessions involved interactive sessions which provided an enriching learning experience for Farah. As a novice teacher, Farah did not have much experience in participating in mentoring sessions. Farah did not have the opportunity to interactively engage in collaborative discussions as she was the sole English option teacher in her school. However, the mentoring session provided an opportunity for Farah to participate in interactive activities as it included discussion with the SISC+ mentor and also with the other mentees in the group as well as sharing of many useful ideas regarding teaching

and learning in the classroom. Farah was encouraged to acquire various methods in which teaching and learning activities can be conducted in the classroom. In addition, the interactive sessions also enhanced Farah's knowledge as she was able to identify her role as a facilitator in the classroom. The interactive mentoring sessions with the SISC+ mentor served as example for her to apply in her own lesson in the classroom.

Excerpt 4.3.2.5

It was an interactive session that we went through just now. Puan Zalina has given us an input on how to produce a three-part lesson. She taught us how we should do an interesting pre-lesson in a simple way but it should impact our pupils such that we are able to engage them throughout the whole lesson. Next, she also taught us how to do a while lesson which will actually introduce something new in terms of an input. In the post lesson she showed us ways on how to conduct assessments using different methods from the usual ones that we do in the classroom. She encouraged us to use more 21st learning century activities like the hot seat and gallery walk in order to conduct out three-part lesson.

(FIT2-84-91)

On a similar note, Valar described, her communication with the SISC+ and other mentees and active participation in hands-on learning activities enriched her learning experience. As a novice teacher who was placed in a rural school, Valar did not have much experience communicating with other fellow teachers who are familiar to the rural setting. However, the mentoring session provided an opportunity for her to learn through the discussions and hands-on activities. She learned the types of communications that should be integrated in a lesson which can suit the rural context. Valar was observed to ask a few questions to the SISC+ mentor on adapting a lesson to accommodate her fast learners.

“Puan I have doubt. I have tried applying these activities in my classroom before, however, the fast learners in my classroom are able to do it and gets bored very fast.”

“Let me have a look at your lesson dear.”

“The activities I have listed in the slide are just samples. I can suggest that you can try giving the same activity but adapt it to be a little challenging for the fast ones.”

(VCF1-112-116)

Valar was also encouraged to learn as the examples given by the mentor was aligned with the KSSR syllabus and was suitable to her group of students who come from the mixed ability group. This she explained;

Excerpt 4.3.2.6

After the first session, I began applying what she has taught me and it has been effective. The sessions that were conducted by Puan Zalina so far, has been full of hands on activity and discussions. All her hands-on activities were sample activities which included the 21st learning century skills which the Ministry of Education has been placing emphasis in every now and then. Furthermore, Puan Zalina also makes sure that she refers to the content and learning standards from the KSSR syllabus and gives us activities that are in line to the CEFR textbook. This makes the sessions easily comprehensible and applicable in our own classroom context.

(VIT2-223-230)

The above analysis revealed that the SISC+ mentoring had played an integral role in creating an enriching learning experience for the teachers to make connections and relate the theories that they have learnt in the past to their present school context and to further enhance their pedagogical reasoning and actions during teaching and learning. They expressed during the interview that the provision of detailed mentoring by the SISC+ about relating content and pedagogy in the classroom helped to strengthen their understanding and reasoning of their own pedagogical actions when it came to teaching and learning in the classroom. It appears in the analysis that the mentoring sessions with the SISC+ coach has enriched the novice teachers' knowledge in pedagogical content. This can be can be understood in the light of Shulman's (1987)

Model of Pedagogical Reasoning and Action. This model posits that pedagogical shifts are characterized by a teacher's transformation of content knowledge into forms that are pedagogically powerful and adapted to fit the students (Pella, 2015). He argues that mentorship that engages a process of collaborative thinking and doing is required in order for this transformation to occur. Intellectual collaboration between teachers and SISC+ mentors are beneficial for collaborations that enhance the development and growth for both novice teachers and mentors. In doing so, the SISC+ and the novice teachers gradually undergo a transformation from the existing knowledge schemes that they have and develop their knowledge in terms of pedagogical reasoning and actions.

4.3.3 Theme 3: SISC+ in Integrating Knowledge of Material Adaptation According to Students' Characteristics

All the three teachers who participated in the study stated that the SISC+ was the expert in facilitating them to adapt the teaching materials used in their lessons for the rural context. Nonetheless, through the guidance received from the expert who is the SISC+ mentor all the three novice teachers were able to receive assistance and develop their knowledge in material adaptation techniques.

The SISC+ mentor taught Sherene how to adapt materials because although her materials had the similar topic, but there were ways in which she could simplify those materials for some of her students and consider her mixed ability classroom when adapting a material. She explained

Excerpt 4.3.3.1

“She also provides a variety of examples on the techniques of teaching instructions and material adaptations which actually gives me more ideas on how to make my lessons in class interesting. Material adaptation especially is something very new to me. Having a mixed ability classroom, I think it was an important skill which Puan Zalina had taught me to do. Before the mentoring sessions, I used to use the materials directly from the website of Teacher Fiera,

however now I am able to adapt some parts in a material to suit them to my mixed ability group of students.”

(SIT1-98-104)

Similarly, the SISC+ mentor assisted Farah’s knowledge development in adaptation of materials during the mentoring sessions by enhancing her knowledge of the curriculum. Farah viewed the SISC+ mentor as her source of initiation as the SISC+ started off by enhancing her knowledge of her mixed ability students and then moved on to give them examples of how to adapt a task for students from three mixed ability group in line with the curriculum. Farah believed that the SISC+ mentor assisted her to develop her knowledge in adapting a task and said that she could not have learnt if not for the mentoring sessions and mentor who played role as an expert in facilitating her about adaptations of task.

“Hrmmmm, maybe I can adapt the task?”

“Yes, you are right, but how will you adapt an essay task when it requires writing? Think of what kind of assistance that can be given for the slow learners to complete the writing task.”

“Maybe I can give them fill in the blanks with phrases instead of writing the whole essay by themselves.”

(FCF1-83-87)

In addition, Farah also believed that the use of task adaptation techniques in her future lesson in the rural area will help her mixed ability students to comprehend the lesson well. This is because her students come from a mixed ability background and besides the tasks in the classroom, she has to provide them with reinforcement activities or follow up tasks which should be adapted according to the ability of the students. Nonetheless, through the guidance received from the expert who is the SISC+

mentor Farah was able to evaluate her students' performance more accurately through material adaptation techniques. She explained;

Excerpt 4.3.3.2

For example, she also gave us input on how to reflect on our students' performance, how to manage a classroom with different abilities. The SISC+ mentor said it was easy to manage a group of mixed ability students if we are able to know how to adapt the tasks that we give. Through tasks adaptation also we will be able to evaluate the outcomes of our student accurately during or at the end of a lesson. Puan Zalina also gave me examples of how to adapt tasks that were in line with the CEFR syllabus. I would say that through the coaching sessions I was able to master this knowledge.

(FIT1-189-195)

Similarly, Valar also stated in the interview that her students were from the rural areas and she faced difficulties choosing appropriate materials for them during her lessons. Valars' participation in the SISC+ mentoring sessions influenced the way she adapted her tasks to suit her students' needs in the classroom. Valar stated to her group members and the SISC+ mentor during the discussion that before attending the mentoring sessions with the SISC+, she solely relied on using the internet tasks or the textbook tasks from its source such as the internet or workbooks. Since, the mentoring sessions required Valar to come up with tasks by only using the textbook, Valar found herself developing her material adaptation skills without relying on the internet.

“You can provide the comments on the board simple ones and explain to them before they go on the gallery walk or you can merely give them smiley signs to evaluate their friends work.”

“Ok puan. I will try it out in my class. Before this, I solely relied on the activities given in the textbook and sometimes I look into workbooks. But now I see where I have gone wrong in my lessons.”

(VCF2-82-86)

Hence, her participation in the SISC+ mentoring has enabled her to employ strategies involving tasks adaptation as encouraged by her mentor. This was reflected in Valars' interview;

Excerpt 4.3.3.3

Definitely. I have learned how to adapt the tasks given to me to suit my students and their needs. I have a class of mixed ability students and another class of low proficiency students'. The discussions and exchange of notes that we do during the session with other mentees who usually face similar problems allow us to discuss tasks related problems especially on how to adapt tasks that we find on the internet to suit our students who are from either mixed ability group or who belong to the low proficiency group. We also share materials among each other as we have a group on social media. This has indirectly affected the way I plan my lesson and improved it.

(VIT1-236-243)

4.3.4 Theme 4: The Role of SISC+ Mentor as a Facilitator.

All the three teachers who participated in the study stated that the SISC+ was a facilitator whom they always fell back to during, throughout and after the mentoring sessions. The mentoring sessions with the SISC+ mentor assisted the novice teachers to build positive relationships with the mentor and other mentees which enabled them to maximize their learning during the sessions. According to all three novice teachers in the interview, the SISC+ mentor's personality who was approachable and pleasant in many ways consolidated their learning throughout the mentoring sessions. Their learning was facilitated through their relationship with the SISC+ mentor who was friendly and easy going as they could ask various questions and felt comfortable during the mentoring sessions. This was also a form of emotional support given to them as they described the SISC+ mentor "as someone who can guide them from time to time". Emotional support can boost confidence of beginning teachers, increase their morale

and job satisfaction, and reduce their feelings of isolation (De Wert, Babinski, & Jones, 2003).

As a novice teacher with only four years of teaching experience, Sherene the SISC+ mentor provided her with a non-threatening learning atmosphere especially with the way her SISC+ mentor helped her in solving her classroom problems. She constantly mentioned that her relationship with her mentor is “an integral part” to her teaching and learning which she found to be useful and helpful. The way the SISC+ handled Sherene’s problems in a non- threatening and comfortable way created a healthy relationship which provided support, became a platform for the exchange of ideas and assisted Sherene to develop her pedagogical content knowledge. She posited:

Excerpt 4.3.4.1

I feel easy to approach and talk to her about my classroom problems. She is very down to earth. It doesn’t feel like I am being mentored at all when I am attending her sessions. She is as a point of reference when it comes to problem solving related to teaching.

(SIT1-112-115)

Similarly, Valar admitted that she was comfortable with the way the mentoring sessions became a form of support to her. She constantly mentioned that she would jot down notes of tasks or difficulties she faced in her classroom in terms of instructions, reflecting on her students’ performance or even in her lesson planning and use the mentoring sessions as a platform to discuss with her fellow mentees and the SISC+ mentor on how to go about solving it. The way the SISC+ mentor explained and the mentees shared their views and also success stories in their classrooms created a platform for the exchange of ideas and assisted Valar to improve her pedagogical content knowledge. The similarities between all the mentees were that they all belong to the same rural context and it was easier to discuss all the pertinent problems which

they face in their classroom and find solution to it as a team. In fact, when asked the question, “What can you say about the SISC+ coaching sessions?” Valar answered;

Excerpt 4.3.4.2

It is good and very helpful I would say. I really look forward to come over for her sessions although it means spending my extra working hours in this session. But I am still happy to come. In this mentoring session, we the mentees actually share out the problems that we face in our classroom and discuss on how to overcome it. It can be our lesson planning, activities, or students’ performance. Puan Zalina is also often there to help us and to give us appropriate suggestions. I would usually take down notes on of any instance in which I face difficulty in my classroom and bring it over to this session and discuss it with Puan Zalina or my fellow mentees.

(VIT2-246-252)

Farah similarly believed that the mentoring sessions with the SISC+ mentor facilitated her to maximize her learning during the sessions. The SISC+ mentor’s personality who was a facilitator and warm was able to consolidate Farah’s learning throughout the mentoring sessions. Farah’s learning was facilitated through her relationship with the SISC+ mentor who was a person whom she could easily confide in and very approachable. Farah even described that she didn’t feel like she was being coached during her mentoring sessions with the SISC+. This was also a form of emotional support given to her as she described the SISC+ mentor “as a very knowledgeable person and someone who is up to date with the current methodologies in teaching”. Furthermore, Farah was comfortable with the way her SISC+ mentor facilitated her thinking towards classroom teaching techniques. She constantly mentioned that her relationship with her mentor as “someone who we can fall back to” when she is having troubles of faced with difficulties in her teaching and learning.

Excerpt 4.3.4.3

She is a mentor and she helps to facilitate my thinking towards the latest techniques and knowledge regarding with teaching. In her

presence I am able to improve and learn many new things regarding teaching instructions, assessments, and also in understanding my students and their capability in the classroom.

(FIT2-126-129)

4.4 Summary

This chapter presents the analysis and findings of the study data. The analysis of the findings in the study revealed that the development of novice teachers' pedagogical knowledge took place during the mentoring sessions when the novice teachers were able to make connections between the theory that they have learned to the reality of practise with the SISC+ mentor. The novice teachers were also able to further develop their knowledge of students, knowledge of educational needs, knowledge of evaluation and knowledge of educational ends and purpose as the SISC+ mentor facilitated their pedagogical reasoning and actions in a rural classroom through the mentoring sessions. The analysis of the findings in the study also revealed that the mentoring sessions enriched the novice teachers learning experience. The mentoring sessions had also influenced the three novice teachers' knowledge base in terms of aligning their instructional methods with the curriculum and material adaptation techniques according to students' characteristics. Furthermore, the analysis of the findings also revealed that the novice teachers developed the ability in integrating the knowledge bases. In addition, the SISC+ also played a crucial role in facilitating the novice teachers' pedagogical reasoning and actions during teaching and learning while the mentoring sessions provided a platform in which they engaged in reflective practise of their own teaching and learning.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

5.1 Findings

This chapter details the summary of the study, followed by limitations, implications and recommendations for future studies. The aim of this study was to understand novice teachers' development of knowledge through mentoring by examining their development of knowledge in terms of their content and pedagogy when they are being mentored by the SISC+ mentor. The ingrained assumption of the study was that the mentoring by the SISC+ mentor contribute in the development of knowledge and learning experience of novice teachers' from rural schools. This study employed a qualitative descriptive study design to understand the interacting relationships between mentoring and novice teachers' development of knowledge in rural schools. The data for the study were collected from three ESL teachers in three different primary schools situated in the rural areas through interviews and field notes. The data collected were transcribed and the translated verbatim were analysed to understand the development of pedagogical content knowledge in novice teachers through the mentoring of the SISC+ mentors. Major themes that emerged in this study data were; the development of novice teachers pedagogical content knowledge during mentoring, the influence of mentoring on the development of novice teachers' knowledge base and the role of mentoring in novice teachers' knowledge development. The role of mentoring that emerged from this study were: the role of SISC+ mentor as a facilitator and mentoring sessions as a platform for novice teachers' engagement in reflective practise.

5.2 Discussion of Findings

The study revealed that the mentoring of the SISC+ held a certain influence and role on the development of pedagogical content knowledge in novice teachers. The influences and role that the SISC+ mentor had on the pedagogical content development of novice teachers were shaped by the novice teachers' experiences during the mentoring sessions with the SISC+ mentor. The answers to the first research question are briefly provided below.

Firstly, the findings revealed that the mentoring sessions were able to enhance the development of pedagogical content knowledge in the novice teachers through practical application of the learning theories that they have been exposed in their teacher training. They explained that although they were well equipped with the knowledge of pedagogy, they were able to better put it to practise and make sense of it during the mentoring sessions and accordingly apply this knowledge in the rural setting that they were teaching in. The findings of the study showed that the SISC+ mentors played a huge influence in bridging this gap between theory and practise during each mentoring sessions. This can be also viewed in relation to the Model of Pedagogical Reasoning and Action by Shulman (1987) whereby the SISC+ mentors assist in the transformation phase of the novice teachers which encompasses interpretations and applications of theory into practise. Furthermore, Dyches and Boyd (2017) articulates that, "The core problem with PCK is that the knowledge is treated by novice teachers as information without sufficient regard for how it manifests itself as action" (p. 9). However, through the mentoring sessions with the SISC+ the novice teachers were able to develop the manifestation of this pedagogical content knowledge into the realities of their teaching. Although the bridging was done gradually through discussions, hands on activities, group work and workshops, it made a difference to

the novice teachers as they were able to finally make sense of the objectives and goals and plan lessons which can yield maximum outcomes in a rural classroom. Deng (2018) also further explains that the development of pedagogical content knowledge includes representation of students' prior knowledge, learning difficulties, misconceptions, and instructional strategies that would tap into these issues and address it. The mentoring sessions provided a space for the novice teachers to articulate their thoughts freely which assisted in the development of pedagogical content knowledge. Karimi and Norouzi (2017) stated that the opportunities gained to articulate ones thought will help in making the tacit explicit. Thus, the mentoring sessions aided the novice teachers to share and discuss their underlying pedagogical content knowledge and expanded their knowledge of different pedagogical content knowledge practises through a shared professional discourse with the SISC+ mentor.

Secondly, the findings revealed that the SISC+ mentors were able to tap on novice teachers' pedagogical content knowledge during the mentoring sessions. The novice teachers stated in the interviews that, the SISC+ mentor tapped on their pedagogical content knowledge by unpacking and engaging their understanding of the SMARTC objectives during the mentoring sessions. This can be also viewed in relation to the Model of Pedagogical Reasoning and Action by Shulman (1987) whereby the SISC+ assist the novice teachers in the instruction phase of this model where novice teachers are facilitated to make use their own judgement to make informed instructional choices. The findings of the study showed that the SISC+ mentor tapped on the novice teachers' pedagogical content knowledge through the lesson planning and objective writing sessions where the novice teachers were taught how to develop their understanding of students of the rural setting, their characteristics and their educational needs and align their lesson planning accordingly with teaching

and learning activities and evaluation strategies in order to yield maximum learning outcomes in their pupils. Furthermore, Kavanagh, Conrad, and Dagogo-Jack (2020) supports that breaking down of the teaching and learning into substantial elements such as lesson planning, objective writing, instruction and evaluation enables novice teachers to gain a better understanding on what to look for and how to describe and interpret what they see in teaching and learning.

Thirdly, the findings revealed that the mentoring sessions were able to align novice teachers' knowledge of pedagogy with the content by aligning the instructional methods and curriculum with the current syllabus. Achinstein and Fogo (2015) defined the development of pedagogical content knowledge as the transformation of the understanding of a subject matter into content which is accessible to students. A comparison of the present study with other studies which are in line with this inquiry reveals interesting insights. In a study conducted by Achinstein and Fogo (2015) on opportunities for pedagogical content knowledge development through facilitated mentoring, it was found that to develop pedagogical content knowledge of novice teachers', mentors were found to guide novice teachers' instructional strategies through giving guidance with practical representations and modelling. Similarly, in this study, the novice teachers' firmly affirmed that the mentoring sessions provided a platform in which they could discuss doubts related to the current CEFR syllabus that they faced difficulties with. They felt that it is crucial for them to align their knowledge of instructional method with the current curriculum that they are teaching to the students in the rural areas. The findings of the studies also concurrently showed that, the SISC+ mentor had influence over the type of educational materials and activities and the structure of the lesson which the novice teachers used in their lesson planning. The novice teachers' admitted that before the mentoring sessions, the relevance of the

instructional methods to the curriculum taught was not considered and after the mentoring sessions they were able to see its relevance and appropriately align the instructional method to the CEFR syllabus.

Fourthly, the findings revealed that the mentoring sessions acted as a platform for novice teachers' engagement in reflective practise on their pedagogical content knowledge. The novice teachers' stated that the SISC+ mentor asked many questions throughout the mentoring sessions and discussions to facilitate the novice teachers' to reflect on their pedagogical decisions in the classroom. Mukeredzi (2017) stated that collaborative partnership with the mentors will allow teachers to engage in collaborative reflections and continuously engage in evaluation and challenge existing practices. Similarly, the findings in the study showed that the role of the SISC+ mentor as a reflective practitioner during the mentoring sessions, allowed the novice teachers' to engage in reflective practices about their lesson planning and decisions related to their teaching and learning. They explained that at each juncture, the SISC+ mentor would ask a question which allowed them to think on the spot and not rely on her for solutions as they develop their pedagogical content knowledge. According to Lutz, Pankoke, Goldblatt, Hofmann, and Zupanic (2017), reflecting on action can be trained repeatedly through mentoring practise. Moreover, this can be also viewed in relation to Model of Pedagogical Reasoning and Action proposed by (Shulman, 1987) where reflection is essential in the process of developing pedagogical content knowledge. De Souza, Backes, do Prado, Martini, and Medina Moya (2019) stated that in this stage novice teachers looks back, re-enacts, reconstructs and recaptures their experience. This encouraged them to become reflective practitioners and allowed them to make decisions independently during teaching and learning in the classroom. They felt that

the SISC+ mentor played a crucial in encouraging them to become in reflective practitioners in the classroom.

Furthermore, the study also revealed that the SISC+ played a certain role on the development of novice teachers' knowledge about the students and their characteristics as well as curriculum knowledge. The role played by the SISC+ mentor shaped the novice teachers' experience during the mentoring sessions. The answers to the second research question are briefly provided below.

Firstly, the findings revealed that the SISC+ mentor assisted the development of knowledge base in the novice teachers' to acquire maximum learning outcomes in the rural classroom. During the mentoring sessions, the SISC+ played the role of an expert who assisted the novice teachers' in developing their knowledge base through objectives, CEFR syllabus and 21st century learning activities into their lesson planning. The role of the SISC+ mentor in developing the novice teachers' knowledge base in this research can also be understood in light of the Model of Pedagogical Reasoning and Action whereby Mohamad, Yee, Tee, Ibrahim Mukhtar, and Ahmad (2019) supported that the pedagogical reasoning model describes the actions taken by a teacher during the teaching process which comprises of comprehension of subject knowledge, transformation of subject knowledge, reflection and evaluation which requires the integration of the various knowledge base of a teacher. Furthermore, all the three-novice teachers' revealed in the study that their school was under the TN25 programme and they had to make sure a certain aspect are adhered in their lesson planning. Thus, the findings revealed that the SISC+ mentor assisted the novice teachers' to achieve the transformation of their knowledge base into pedagogical representations and actions through the mentoring sessions. Neumann, Kind, and Harms (2018) in his study on the relationship between science teacher's pedagogy,

content, knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge stated that it is implied that pedagogical content knowledge is formed from knowledge bases presented at a higher structure. Concurrently the findings in the study also revealed that the SISC+ used the mentoring session to influence the development of knowledge bases in the novice teachers' during the mentoring sessions. This is also supported by Mena, Hennissen, and Loughran (2017) who stated that mentoring has been promoted as a meaningful way for neophytes to begin to learn.

Secondly, the findings revealed that the SISC+ mentor played their roles in providing an enriching learning experience during the mentoring sessions. They revealed that the enriching learning experience made the mentoring sessions more effective as the novice teachers' were involved in collaborative discussions and engaged in hands on activities involving teaching and learning. This can be related to the Theory of Pedagogical Reasoning and Action by Shulman (1987) whereby the new comprehension phase occurs within the novice teachers' during the enriching mentoring sessions as they consolidate the new understandings and learnings from the mentoring sessions. The approach that novice teachers' had towards teaching and learning was influenced by their prior learning experience, however the enriching learning experience during the mentoring sessions was an exposure that gave them ideas on conducting simple but effective teaching and learning activities to maximise students learning outcomes in the rural classroom. According to Achinstein and Fogo (2015) mentors know how to engage novice teachers' in developing the understanding of the subject matter and connect it to students in different contexts in a meaningful and enriching context. Furthermore, the findings also revealed that, the novice teachers' realised that the rural setting was not an obstacle for them to creatively carry out 21st century activities or hands on learning activities in the classroom.

Thirdly, the findings revealed that the SISC+ mentor played her role as a facilitator throughout the mentoring sessions. The SISC+ mentor facilitated the discussions throughout the mentoring session to develop the novice teachers' knowledge about their students, characteristics and the curriculum. The result of the present study was consistent with some previous research findings. Shwartz and Dori (2016) in a study on mentoring practices found that the mentors expressed positive feeling towards the mentoring process. Similarly, the findings in this study showed that there was a connection between the role of the SISC+ mentor as a facilitator with the development of the novice teachers' knowledge of their students and the characteristics as well as the curriculum knowledge of the novice teachers'. A study on teacher mentor in disadvantaged schools by Naidoo and Wagner (2020) revealed that the mentors provide novice teachers with supportive but challenging opportunities so that they can develop themselves. Mena et al. (2017) also supported that the perspective of mentoring is aligned to the idea of educative mentoring which is to assist novice teacher's concerns and questions without losing sight of the goals of teaching and learning. Concurrently, both the mentoring sessions that were participated by the novice teachers' deeply developed their knowledge in terms of students and their characteristics as well as the curriculum through the facilitative roles played by the SISC+ mentor. The findings further revealed that the development of knowledge in terms of the students and their characteristics as well as the curriculum matched their responses during the interview after each mentoring session.

Fourthly, the findings revealed that the mentors played their roles as the expert in integrating knowledge bases of material adaptation by exposing the novice teachers' to a variety of teaching materials adaptation techniques during the mentoring session. Prior to the mentoring sessions, the novice teachers', being novice used

downloaded materials from the internet or used existing workbooks in the classroom of mixed ability students. Ellis, Alonzo, and Nguyen (2020) that quality mentors give constructive feedbacks and develop mentees knowledge by engaging them in co-planning, suggesting ideas and strategies, guiding and instructing them. Similarly, this study revealed that the SISC+ mentor enhanced the novice teachers' knowledge of rural students during the sessions and gradually developed their knowledge in material adaptation to be used among mixed ability students. Furthermore, all the teachers revealed that the SISC+ mentor encouraged them to adapt learning materials in groups for mixed ability students during the mentoring sessions to allow them to develop their knowledge in material adaptation which will also help them in their own classroom. Bressman, Winter, and Efron (2018) mentoring encourages novice teachers' to think deeply about their own teaching, develop their knowledge in teaching and promotes continuous instructional improvement. Concurrently, the findings also revealed that the SISC+ mentor played a huge influence of the novice teachers' knowledge of material adaptation.

5.3 Theoretical Implications

This study draws from the Shulman (1987) Model of Pedagogical Reasoning and Action as the theoretical framework of the present study. The findings from this study provides an in-depth understanding about between mentoring practices and the development of knowledge base of novice teachers' in the rural contexts of teaching and learning. Thus, the present study holds a significant role in terms of its theoretical implication for second language teacher education. This is because, the present study provides a positive implication on the role of the SISC+ mentoring which allows deeper insights in understanding novice teachers' knowledge development in teacher training context.

Shulman (1987) Model of Pedagogical Reasoning and Action informs the research study as a way of pedagogical reasoning whereby a novice teacher transforms knowledge base into pedagogical forms which makes the content comprehensible for the students. In the present study, the use of Shulman (1987) Model of Pedagogical Reasoning and Action as the theoretical model informs the study by providing an in-depth insight on novice teachers' knowledge development during the mentoring of the SISC+ mentors. By examining the pedagogical content knowledge development through the interactions and observations of the novice teachers' during the mentoring sessions, Shulman (1987) Model of Pedagogical Reasoning and Action theory facilitated the study to understand the development that occurred in the novice teachers' during their participation in the mentoring sessions.

On the other hand, the present study also informs the stages involved in the development of pedagogical content knowledge in novice teachers' during the development of knowledge. The first and second stage of the theory which is the comprehension and instruction stage is explored through the first research question- how does the SISC+ mentoring influence the pedagogical content knowledge of novice teachers'? The findings of the study discovered that the SISC+ mentoring contributed to the novice teachers' knowledge development through four ways; by allowing novice teachers to make connections between their practise and pedagogical content knowledge, aligning novice teachers' pedagogical content knowledge, tapping on novice teachers' pedagogical content knowledge and using mentoring sessions as a platform for novice teachers' engagement in reflective practise on their pedagogical content knowledge. Besides, it is also found that the SISC+ mentoring also influenced the development of novice teachers' pedagogical content knowledge through the various instructions such as workshops, hands on activities, group discussions,

simulations and question and answer sessions which lead to active discovery learning of the novice teachers', particularly on their knowledge about pedagogy, content, students, curriculum, educational ends and purpose. Through this the SISC+ mentoring allowed the novice teachers' to actively learn about effective instructions, have a firm grasp of the most important content in a subject and also master "*the most useful forms of representation of those ideas, the most powerful analogies, illustrations, examples, explanations, and demonstrations or in other words are able to represent and formulate the subject that make it comprehensible to their learners and the context of learning*" (Shulman, 1987, p. 9). In addition, the findings of this study suggested that the SISC+ mentor contributed not only PCK but other knowledge bases but also contributed to other knowledge such as knowledge of curriculum and knowledge of students and their characteristics through active participation and effective interactions during the sessions.

The second, third and the fourth stage of the theory which is the evaluation, reflection and the new comprehension stage is explored through the second research question- what roles do the SISC+ mentor play in the development of novice teachers' knowledge about the students and the curriculum? The findings of the study discovered that the SISC+ mentoring contributed to the novice teachers' knowledge development through four ways; mentoring develops the knowledge base of novice teachers', SISC+ mentoring as an enriching learning experience, SISC+ in integrating knowledge of material adaptation according to students' characteristics and the role of SISC+ mentor as a facilitator. Furthermore, the findings of the study discovered that the roles played by the SISC+ facilitated novice teachers' knowledge development about students and the curriculum in the rural context particularly on material adaptation, ways to engage in reflective practice and evaluating students on their learning during

teaching and learning. Moreover, the findings proposed that the SISC+ mentoring plays an important role in the development of knowledge in evaluation whereby the thought processes that goes on the novice teacher's mind were related to their own performance, their beliefs and their positive and negative attributes in the classroom. The study also found that the SISC+ mentoring facilitated teachers to reflect in terms of pedagogical decisions that they make in the classroom which in turns affects the evaluation process. As a result, while some novice teachers' were able to grasp and develop their knowledge, some had to move back and forth with the help of the SISC+ mentors during the mentoring sessions as they go through lesson plans and comment on the improvements that can be made based on the experiences faced by the novice teachers in the rural schools. Thus far, compounded with the fact that there is very little research in SISC+ mentoring in Malaysia the implication of this theory contributes to the understanding of the relationship between novice teachers' and the SISC+ mentors which may serve as a platform for novice teachers' to not only to get accustomed to the new environment but to get accustomed with the norms, standards and expectations related with the teaching and learning situation in general and in specific school context in Malaysia.

5.4 Pedagogical Implications

The study contributes to the existing literature existing literature in the field of Second Language Teacher Education. The understanding of teacher learning resulting from participation with the School Improvement Specialist Coach Plus (SISC+) mentors in this study is very crucial in understanding how these novice teachers' develop their knowledge bases through the mentoring sessions given by the SISC+ mentors. These findings may also assist SISC+ mentors to reflect on and modify the approaches to mentoring to yield better outcomes in the future.

A proper understanding particularly on the influences of a professional development programme on teachers' professional knowledge in the areas of pedagogy and content and also their conceptions of mentoring on their professional practice is important to facilitate the development of knowledge in novice teachers'. The findings of this study revealed that all the three novice teachers' enjoyed the mentoring sessions and the discussions and perceived the mentoring a very useful learning tool. Therefore, education policy makers need to organise mentoring sessions by the SISC+ mentors during their first year of teaching to smoothen ESL novice teachers' transition from teacher training into the teaching context that they are being placed in the first year. In other words, the SISC+ mentoring sessions are deemed useful and beneficial in helping ESL novice teachers' transition and develop their pedagogical content knowledge and other knowledge bases accordingly, particularly those who are placed in the rural schools.

Moreover, the findings of this study could also be a platform to add practical contribution to the English Language Teaching (ELT) in Malaysia. This is because, in this study, it was revealed that there was a conflict in the learning experiences of novice teachers' from the rural areas. Novice teachers' who were posted to rural schools, were heavily burdened with responsibilities and did not have another English teacher in school that could help them out. Besides adapting themselves in the new rural environment, they had to juggle with the new CEFR syllabus and was the sole reference where ESL was concern in school. Therefore, policy makers, administrators and major stakeholders in education need to ensure that this area of concern is addressed as it may serve as a guideline to inform future development programmes for novice teachers'.

Finally, the findings will create an impact in the novice ESL teachers' who participated as they will be able to reflect deeply on the development of their knowledge in the areas of content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge and the development of their practice through the mentoring of the SISC+. These participants will be able to reflect on their weaknesses and strengths and work on their own development of knowledge and professional practice. This will in turn allow them to be better ESL teachers.

5.5 Recommendation for Future Studies

Based on the reflection done after the study was conducted, there were a few suggestions for further improvements in future researches. It was mentioned in the previous chapter that the findings of this present study cannot be transferred to another context due to the sampling method and sample size. Therefore, it is proposed that future studies should use a larger sample of participants to produce results that could be generalised to another context. Furthermore, this study could be replicated in other rural areas in a different state to see if similar findings were obtained. A study on different aspects of mentoring of novice teachers' such as their perceptions and beliefs of mentoring in the rural area could be replicated.

5.6 Conclusion

This study contributes to the field of research by investigating areas that have not been adequately explored in the Malaysian rural context. It has initiated the way for future research in mentoring programmes and teacher development programmes in Malaysia. This study provides answers to questions regarding the influence of the mentoring of the School Improvement Specialist Coach Plus (SISC+) on the novice teachers pedagogical content knowledge development and the roles of the SISC+ on the development of students' knowledge and the knowledge of curriculum in novice ESL

teachers. On a personal level, this study has increased the researcher's knowledge of how the mentoring of the SISC+ is beneficial to novice teacher development of knowledge in a rural context.

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