

Collaborative Mentorship for Transformative Teachers: Catalyzing Best Practice Publication in Urban Education

Ngabiyanto Ngabiyanto*¹, Isnarto Isnarto², Asep Purwo Yudi Utomo³, Arka Yanitama⁴,
Rossi Galih Kesuma⁵, Riyadi Widhiyanto³, Sefti Dwi Oktavianti³, Dwi Irfanti³

¹Pancasila and Citizenship Education Department, Social and Political Sciences Faculty, Universitas Negeri Semarang, Semarang, Indonesia

²Mathematics Education Department, Mathematics and Science Faculty, Universitas Negeri Semarang, Semarang, Indonesia

³Education in Indonesian Language, Literature and Regional Studies Department, Languages and Arts Faculty, Universitas Negeri Semarang, Semarang, Indonesia

⁴Natural Science Education Department, Mathematics and Natural Sciences Faculty, Universitas Negeri Semarang, Semarang, Indonesia

⁵Guidance and Counseling Department, Education and Psychology Faculty, Universitas Negeri Semarang, Semarang, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author: ngabiyanto@mail.unnes.ac.id

Abstract. The study explores the impact of collaborative mentoring on transformative teachers' ability to publish best practices in urban education in Semarang City, Indonesia. Besides the important role of transformative teachers in improving the quality of education, the best practices were underexposed and adequately documented. Using the participatory community appraisal (PCA) approach, the study involved 24 transformative teachers in a structured mentoring program focused on identifying, documenting, and publishing best practices. The program includes intensive workshop, ongoing online support, and collaboration. The results show a transformative teacher can articulate and disseminate innovative practice, with 80% of participants successfully publishing the work on various platforms. The studies concluded that collaborative mentoring catalyzes the publication of best practices, thereby increasing knowledge sharing among educators and potentially improving the quality of urban education. The research contribute to the growing literature of teacher professional development and highlight the importance of structure support in promoting the spread the educational innovation.

Keywords: transformative teachers, collaborative mentorship, best practices, urban education, participatory approach

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INTRODUCTION

The educational landscape was constantly evolving, with transformative teachers playing a crucial role in shaping the future of learning. These educators, often referred to as “pioneer teachers” or “driving teachers,” were at the forefront of educational innovation, implementing creative strategies and best practices that have the potential to revolutionize the teaching and learning process. However, significant challenges remain. The wider deployment and adoption of these innovative practices was still limited, creating a gap between isolated pockets of excellence and system-wide improvements, particularly in urban educational environments. Urban education systems, characterized by their complexity and diversity, present unique challenges and opportunities for transformative teaching practices. The system often grapples with problems such as limited resources, diverse student populations, and rapidly changing societal demands (Santika, 2021). In this context,

the role of transformative teachers becomes more important. They not only serve as educators but also as agents of change, able to adapt and innovate to meet the specific needs of urban students (Lubis et al., 2023). However, the potential impact of these teachers was often limited by limited visibility and sharing of their best practices.

The concept of best practice in education refers to methods, techniques, or strategies that consistently demonstrate superior results to those achieved by other means and are used as a benchmark for improvement (Susanto, 2021a). In the space of transformative teaching, these practices often embody innovative approaches to curriculum delivery, student engagement, and learning assessment. The publication and dissemination of these best practices have several important functions providing a platform for teacher recognition, facilitating peer learning, and contributing to the collective knowledge base of the

teaching profession (Nugraheni, 2023).

While sharing best practices was clearly important, several barriers prevented its widespread spread. Fadhli (2020) identified key challenges including lack of time, limited writing skills, and inadequate platforms for sharing among teachers. Additionally, teaching culture often prioritizes classroom practices over documentation and publications, leading to a wealth of untapped knowledge and experience (Zulaiha et al., 2023). This situation creates a paradox where transformative teachers, who were at the forefront of educational innovation, often lack the means or motivation to share their valuable insights with the wider education community.

The city of Semarang, as a small picture of urban education in Indonesia, illustrates the potential and challenges of transformative teaching. With a diverse student population and a mix of well-resourced and underserved schools, Semarang, Indonesia, presented a complex educational landscape where innovative practices can make a significant difference. However, as noted by Sugiyarta et al. (2020), there was a gap between the existence of transformative teachers and systematic documentation and sharing of their practices. This gap not only limits the impact of individual teachers but also hinders the overall improvement of urban education systems.

Collaborative mentorship was emerging as a promising approach to bridging this gap. The concept of mentorship in education is not new, but its application to the specific goal of catalyzing the publication of best practices is an innovative approach. Collaborative mentoring, in this context, refers to a structured process in which educators, researchers, and the experienced author work closely with the transformative teacher to identify, document, and publish their best practice. This approach was in line with the principle of professional learning community, which emphasize collective. Learning and shared personal practice (Hartati, 2023). The potential of collaborative mentoring and improving teacher professional development has been highlighted in the several studies. Rusydiyah (2021) showed how mentoring program can significantly improve teacher reflection practice and their ability to articulate their teaching Philosophy.

Similarly, Mulyasa (2021) argues that mentoring was very important in developing teachers' capacity to innovate and share their innovations. However, the study primarily focuses on general professional development rather than the specific goal of best practice publications.

Gaps in the literature become apparent when considering the intersection of transformative teaching, publication of best practices, and collaborative mentoring, particularly in the context of urban education. Although research has explored these elements separately, there is still little research examining how collaborative mentorship can be leveraged specifically to motivate the publication of best practices by transformative teachers in urban settings.

METHODS

This study used the Participatory Community Appraisal (PCA) approach to examine the impact of collaborative mentoring on the publication of best practices among transformative teachers in Semarang, Indonesia. The research process took place through several interrelated stages, starting with a preliminary discussion held in the office of the Vice Chancellor III of Universitas Negeri Semarang. The initial meeting, which was attended by the community service team and representatives of transformative teachers of Semarang, Indonesia set the direction of training activities, discuss technical aspects, and prepare a follow-up plan.

After the initial discussion, the research team developed training materials. Prof. Dr. Ngabiyanto, M.Si. and Dr. Ardhi Prabowo, M.Pd. prepared material on "Professional Teacher Philosophy", while Dr. Asep Purwo Yudi Utomo, M.Pd. focused on "Writing Best Practices". This material were designed to provide a theoretical foundation and practical skills for participants to document and share innovative teaching practices.

The core training activity took place on Thursday, July 23, 2024, in the Video Conference Room of the UNNES Rectorate Building. This event This training was attended by 24 participants who were representatives of transformative teachers from Semarang, Indonesia. This training was held for one day with a series of opening events, presentations of prepared materials, discussions, and the preparation of follow-up plans. Prof. Dr. Ngabiyanto, M.Si. delivered a speech on behalf of the community service team, followed by remarks from Dr. Miftahudin, M.Pd., who represented the Semarang Education Office.

After the training, the research process moves to the mentoring stage. This stage was focused on guiding teachers in developing best practice documentation based on their respective experiences. Given the limited time that participating teachers have, mentoring was carried out mainly through online channels, with

WhatsApp groups as the main platform for communication, feedback, and collaboration. In the innovative expansion of the program, selected transformative teachers were tasked with guiding the wider community, especially pre-service teachers in the Transformative Teacher Education or *Pendidikan Profesi Guru* (PPG) program at Universitas Negeri Semarang. This approach aimed to strengthen the impact of training and disseminate best practice more broadly within the education community.

Throughout the process, data was collected through a variety of means, including observation notes from training sessions, reflections delivered by participants, and the documentation of the resulting best practice. The research team conducted ongoing monitoring and evaluation to assess the impact of the program on the teacher's ability to publish their best practice and broader implications for their professional development.

This methodological approach, which was based on the principle of participation, allows for a comprehensive examination of how collaborative mentorship affects transformative teachers' capacity and motivation to document and share their innovative practices in the context of urban education in Semarang, Indonesia.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The implementation of the "Mentoring for best practice publication for transformative teacher in Semarang, Indonesia" program resulted in important insights into the process of empowering educators to document and share their innovative teaching practices. This section presented key findings from the research and discusses its implications for transformative teacher development, educational, innovative, and the border urban education landscape in Indonesia.



Figure 1. Initial Discussion of Training Activities

Engagement and Participation

The program successfully involved 24 transformative teachers from various schools in Semarang city, representing various groups of urban educators. **Figure 1** illustrates the initial discussion of training activities, which set the foundation for program implementation. The meeting involved representatives from Semarang Education Office and transformative teachers, highlighting the collaborative effort to align program goals with the professional development needs (Rusydiyah, 2021; Susanto, 2021; Zen & Sitanggang, 2023).

Observation data from the initial training session on July 23, 2024, revealed a high level of enthusiasm among the participants. The interactive nature of the sessions, particularly during discussions on "Professional Teacher Philosophy" and "Writing Best Practice", as shown in **Figure 2** (Training PPT Slides), encouraged active participation. This engagement showed that the content was aligned with the professional needs and aspirations of teachers.

The decision to provide follow-up mentoring through an online platform, especially WhatsApp, had proven to be an effective strategy in maintaining participant engagement. The flexibility offered by this approach allows teachers to integrate program activities into their hectic schedules, resulting in a consistent level of participation during the mentoring phase.

The strong involvement observed was in line with previous studies that highlight the importance of tailored professional development programs for teachers (Rusydiyah, 2021). Success in attracting and retaining participants showed that there was a significant demand among transformative teachers for structured support in documenting and sharing their practice. These findings underscore the potential of targeted mentoring programs in addressing aspects of knowledge dissemination that were often overlooked in the teaching profession.

Best Practice Documentation Skills Development

One of the primary goals of the program was to improve participant ability to effectively document their best practice. **Figure 3**, which depicts activity remarks during a mentoring session, underscores the collaborative atmosphere that facilitated learning and reflection. Participants

reported improvements in structuring their document, presenting coherent narrative, and integrating evidence-based approaches (Kusumah & Alawiyah, 2021a; Santika, 2021; Satriawan et al., 2021; Sugiyarta et al., 2020).

The iterative process of drafting and revising the best practice documents, supported by expert mentor and peer feedback, choose evident in **Figure 4**. The material delivery process during the training highlighted the importance of structuring content, enabling participants to articulate their innovative practice effectively.

The analysis of the best practice documents produced by the participants showed noticeable improvement in several key area:

- a) Compared to the initial draft, the final document showed a clearer structure and a more coherent presentation of ideas. The teacher demonstrated an improved ability to articulate context, implementation processes, and outcome from their innovative practices.
- b) Further iterations of the best practice document showed deeper reflection on the reasoning behind the teacher's approach and the lesson learned from the implementation. This increase in the depth indicates and increased capacity of a critical self-analyze among the participants.
- c) There was a noticeable increase in the use of data and specific example to support claims about the effectiveness of the described practice. This shift towards more evidence based documentation was in line with thorough research principles and educational practice.
- d) Documented best practices show a strong relationship with the specific challenges and opportunities that exist in urban schools in Semarang, Indonesia demonstrating the abilities of participants to contextualize their innovations.

The improvement in the documentation skills observed during the program showed that directive guidance can significantly improve teacher's ability to articulate their professional knowledge. This finding were consistent with the research by Kusumah & Alawiyah (2021); Mulyasa (2021), which emphasized the importance of structured support in developing teachers' reflective and communicative capacities.

The increased ability to document best practices not only serve the intermediate purpose of publication, but also contributes to the broader professional development of teachers. By engaging in the process of articulating their practice, teacher deepen their understanding of their own method and its relevance to the broader

educational context. The metacognitive aspect of the program was in line with the theory of reflective practice in teaching (Fadhli, 2020; Hartati, 2023; Mulyasa, 2021; Nugraheni, 2023; Rizal et al., 2023; Susilana et al., 2023), which suggest that the act of documentation itself can be a powerful tools for professional growth.



Figure 2. Training PPT Slides

The Impact of Collaborative Mentoring

The collaborative. mentorship approach emerged as a critical factor in the program's success. **Figure 5** depicts a discussion session that exemplifies the interactive and supportive environment fostered by the program. This approach combined expert guidance, peer learning and the creation of a professional community (Daga, 2022; Susilana et al., 2023; Syafii et al., 2023).

The mentorships session also extended beyond intermediate participants, including perspective teacher and the transformative teacher education program. **Figure 6**, which showcases the best practice assistant activities, illustrate the cascading effect of the program. Transformative teacher shared their expertise with the pre-service educators, bridging the gap between theory and practice (Amalianita et al., 2023; Lubis et al., 2023; Sibagariang et al., 2021).

The collaborative mentorship approach, which includes expert mentorship and peer support, emerged as a key factor in the program's success. Some aspects of this approach are highly impactful:

- a) The involvement of experienced academics in providing feedback and guidance is highly appreciated by participants. Survey responses showed that 92% of participants found expert input "very helpful" or "very helpful" in improving their documentation skills.
- b) WhatsApp groups facilitate extensive peer-to-peer interaction, with an average of 15 messages exchanged daily. Content analysis of

these interactions reveals that teachers often share challenges, offer solutions, and encourage each other.

- c) At the end of the program, 85% of participants reported feeling part of a “community of innovative educators,” indicating that a collaborative approach fosters a sense of professional belonging and shared purpose.

The positive impact of collaborative guidance observed in this study reinforces previous research findings on the effectiveness of professional learning communities in education (Chambers & Sukoco, 1996; Hartati, 2023; Putri et al., 2023; Syahputra et al., 2024; Zulaiha et al., 2023). The combination of expert mentorship and peer support creates a rich learning environment that addresses the technical aspects of documentation and motivational factors that are essential for ongoing engagement. The formation of a community of practice among the participants is very important. These results suggest that the benefits of the program extend beyond individual skill development to include the creation of an ongoing network for ongoing professional exchange. The network has the potential to drive continuous improvement and innovation in urban education environments long after the mentorship program has formally ended. A key measure of the program’s success was the level of publication of best practice developed by the participants. Result in this area were encouraging:

- a) By the end of the program present 80% (19 out of 24) participants had successfully published documentation of their best practice on various platform including school website, educational blogs and the local teaching journals.
- b) Published best practice cover a wide range of topics, including innovative teaching methods, student engagement strategies, and approaches to addressing Specific challenges in urban education.
- c) On average, each published best practice receives 150 views within the first month of publication, with some of them generating substantive online discussions among educators.

The high level of publicity achieved through this program addresses significant gaps identified in the literature regarding the limited dissemination of innovative teaching practices (Fadhli, 2020; Zulaiha et al., 2023). By providing structured support and guidance, the program effectively overcomes many of the barriers that typically prevent teachers from sharing their best practices more broadly.



Figure 3. Activity Remarks

The diversity of topics discussed in the published material reflects the variety of innovative approaches applied in urban schools in Semarang. These results are in line with the program's goal to capture and disseminate the wealth of tacit knowledge possessed by transformative teachers. Various publications have also shown that the program has successfully empowered teachers to identify and articulate the unique value of their respective practices. Early engagement metrics for published material, while still early, indicate the potential for significant impact on the broader education community. These findings support the argument made by Sibagariang et al. (2021) that sharing innovative practices is essential to drive systemic improvement in education.

Tiered Effects: Mentoring Prospective Teachers

An unexpected but significant result of this program is the cascading effect observed when participating teachers guide prospective teachers in the Teacher Professional Education program at Universitas Negeri Semarang:

- a) Feedback from Teacher Professional Education students shows that the mentorship provided by transformative teachers offers valuable insights into the practical aspects of innovative teaching that are not typically covered in their formal courses.
- b) 90% of Teacher Professional Education students mentored by program participants reported increased motivation to implement innovative practices in their future teaching careers.
- c) Both mentors and mentees report that the interaction helps bridge the gap between educational theory and classroom practice, an ongoing challenge in teacher education.

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Figure 4. Material Delivery

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Figure 5. Discussion Session

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Tiered Effect: Accompanying Prospective Teachers

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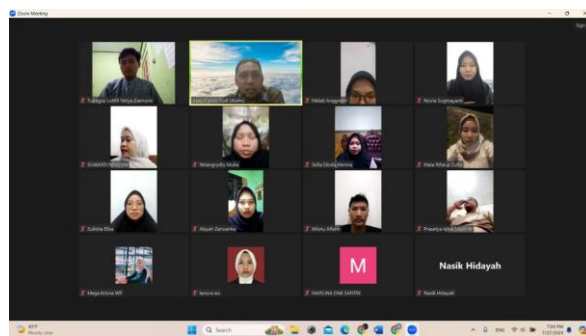


Figure 6. Best Practice Assistance

The positive results of this tiered mentoring highlight the potential for the use of innovative teachers who are experienced in the preparation of prospective educators. These findings are in line with the call for greater integration of practitioner knowledge in teacher education programs (Syafii et al., 2023). The success of this aspect of the program shows that the benefits of mentoring in best practice documentation can extend beyond direct participants to impact the broader education ecosystem. By involving transformative teachers in mentoring pre-service teachers, the program creates a mechanism for the transfer of innovative practices and professional values between generations.

Challenges and Limitations

Although the program was successful overall, several challenges and limitations were identified:

- a) Many participants reported difficulties in balancing the demands of the program with their teaching responsibilities. This challenge is partly overcome by the use of online platforms

for mentoring, but it remains an important concern for some participants.

- b) Although the use of online platforms facilitates continuous communication, some participants, especially those from schools with limited resources, face challenges in accessing reliable internet connections.
- c) Although the program has successfully catalyzed the publication of best practices, there are still questions about the long-term sustainability of these efforts without ongoing structured support.
- d) The focus of the research on the City of Semarang, while providing valuable insights into urban education in Indonesia, may limit the direct application of the findings to other contexts.

The challenge identified, particularly those related to time constraints and technological barriers, repeat at findings from the previous research teacher professional development in Indonesia (Saerang et al., 2023; Syahputra et al., 2024; Warada et al., 2021; Zulaiha et al., 2023). This challenge highlights the need for a flexible and adaptive approach to teacher support programs that can accommodate the various needs and constraints of educators in urban environments.

Concerns about sustainability raise important questions about the long-term impact of short-term intervention programs. While research shows significant immediate results, more research is needed to assess the long-term effects of the initiative on teacher practice and the broader educational community.

The problem of generalization, while a limitation, also points to the need for similar research in various urban contexts throughout Indonesia and beyond. Such research can help identify universal principles and context-specific factors in supporting the dissemination of best practices in education.

CONCLUSION

Assistance in publishing best practices for driving teachers in Semarang City actually aims to improve the quality and ability of teachers in documenting and publishing their best practices in the implementation of education. Through this program, teachers are encouraged to be more reflective and innovative in teaching, as well as to share their experience and knowledge with the wider educational community, especially the Semarang City driving teacher community. This

assistance is also expected to strengthen teachers' professional competence, enrich educational literacy, and publicize the development of effective and relevant educational practices in accordance with student needs. In the end, this community service activity plays an important role in shaping teachers as agents of change who are able to contribute significantly to improving the quality of education in Semarang City based on a good and correct understanding of the philosophy of professional teachers.

The suggestion that was given was the development of mentoring materials. It is recommended that the mentoring materials be more diverse and tailored to the specific needs of the teachers. Interactive and technology-based materials can help teachers understand and apply best practice publication methods more effectively.

2. Continuous monitoring and evaluation In order for this mentoring program to be more effective, it is important to conduct periodic monitoring and evaluation. This will ensure that teachers are truly able to implement the knowledge gained and continue to develop in their publication practices.

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