Exploring the 'Invisible' in GTAs: Reflections on Intuition and Post-Graduate Mentoring

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Abstract

Postgraduate researchers who teach (*G*raduate *T*eaching *A*ssistants) always navigate their academic spaces among several psychological factors in their routines from both inside and outside. They can often be observed attending to students, advising them on their problems and sometimes even relying on their seniors for various topics. In such situations, practitioner intuition remains a well-known and relied-upon source of GTA's decision-making skills but also an underexplored area of investigation, especially in mentoring and language teaching literature (Ushioda, 2023; Burns & Williams, 2023 & Kumar, 2024). Based on this premise, this reflective paper aims to simplify and understand the GTA's pedagogic intuition towards success and failures in PG thesis writing contexts from peer-mentoring perspectives. The initial sections of the paper, imagining GTA's as mentors and their learners as mentees, establish what GTA intuition can be thought of, how it is related to Vygotsky's ZPD (Zone of Proximal Development) and the potential operations based on an intuitive decision-making model.

The latter part of the paper offers detailed practical insights about these theoretical connections through my own workings of intuition while scaffolding the PG mentees to plan, execute and write their theses. Detailed reflections of both the GTA/mentor and the mentees elicited through think-aloud and discursive puzzling measures are reported extensively. Lastly, the paper advocates for more work towards exploring GTA's intuition in mentoring scenarios (and otherwise), getting more awareness from their cognitions and becoming more intuitive practitioners.

Keywords: GTAs, Practitioner intuition, Peer mentoring, Thesis writing, Zone of Proximal Development

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1. Introduction

GTAs, in their beginning teaching careers, often need help with issues like typical freshman teachers, i.e.- managing different tasks and responsibilities and relying on their training or existing knowledge(s). For example, when I started teaching post-doctoral work (and before that), I was working on my research commitments and heavily relying on my own school and college experiences while preparing for undergraduate and postgraduate classes. This reflux of being on your toes often results in those momentary decisions or suggestions we give to our students and sometimes think about them later. You may be hurrying for a class or are about to finish one and may suggest a student (in their doubt of difficulties regarding editing their essay) to divide their essays in alternate sections, edit one section at a time, and go on to another task of the day. It may help them or not, but as a reflective practitioner, you may think more about it, whether it was informed of you or what could have been done better, or just feel simply curious about whether it worked for them or not.

In such a situation, the momentary occurrences or feelings that drive these 'rushed suggestions' under time crunches can be considered GTA's intuition, which are tacit in nature. In language education contexts, researchers have subscribed to it being a 'gut feeling', 'moments of decision', 'spontaneous emergent feelings', 'funds of experience' or 'automated acts of cognitive processing' (Sampson & Pinner, 2023; Burns & Williams, 2023). In mentoring scenarios, which happens both inside and outside the classes, GTAs, being the mentors, often handle many mentees and make such decisions or give rushed suggestions. Based on this premise, this reflective paper intends to imagine a connection between GTA's intuition and Vygotsky's ZPD (Zone of Proximal Development) and investigate it from theory and praxis perspectives.
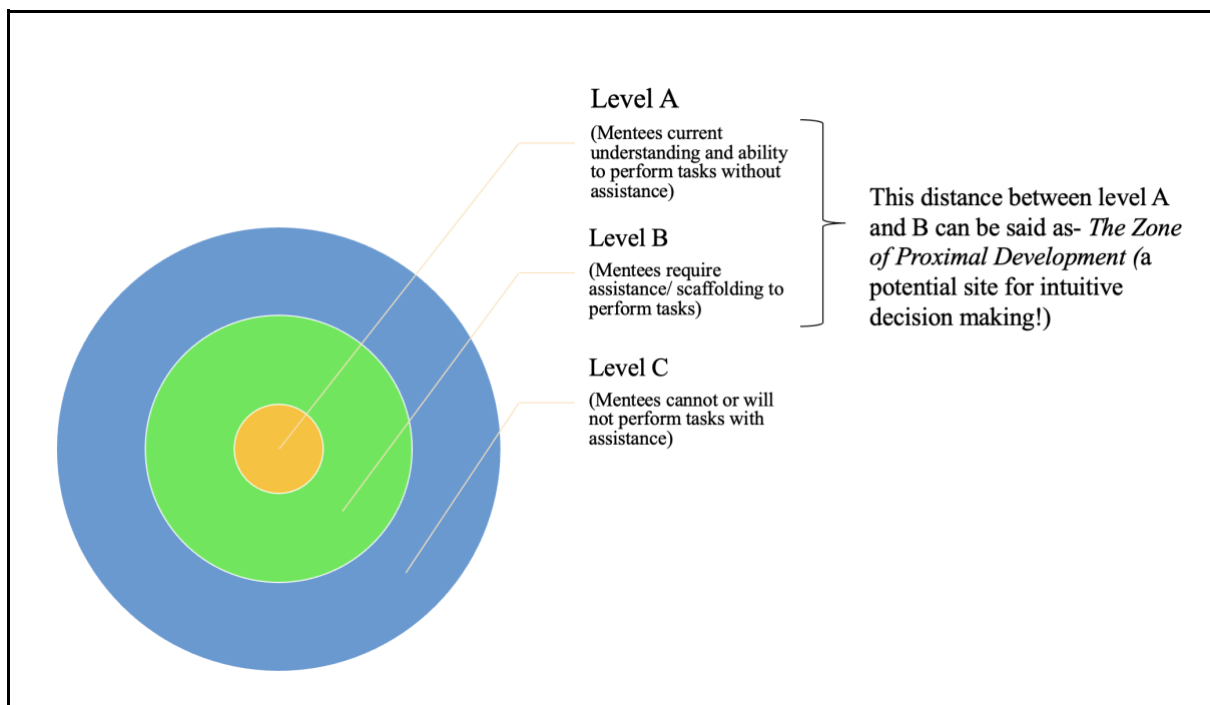
2. But... How are Intuition and ZPD Related?

The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), a concept originally given by Lev Vygotsky (1978), gets mostly talked about in peer mentoring/ coaching scenarios. It can be thought of as a distance between what a learner knows (without any assistance) and what they get to know (with assistance of a more knowledgeable other), as shown in Figure 1 below. It is recommended that the teachers (GTAs in this case) should aim to be within the ZPDs of their students (mentees in this case) to encourage cognitive growth (Sage, 2022). Hence, understanding ZPD as an important zone of teaching acts and their enaction in relation with intuition can be fruitful for better learning outcomes, as reflected in Figure 2 respectively.
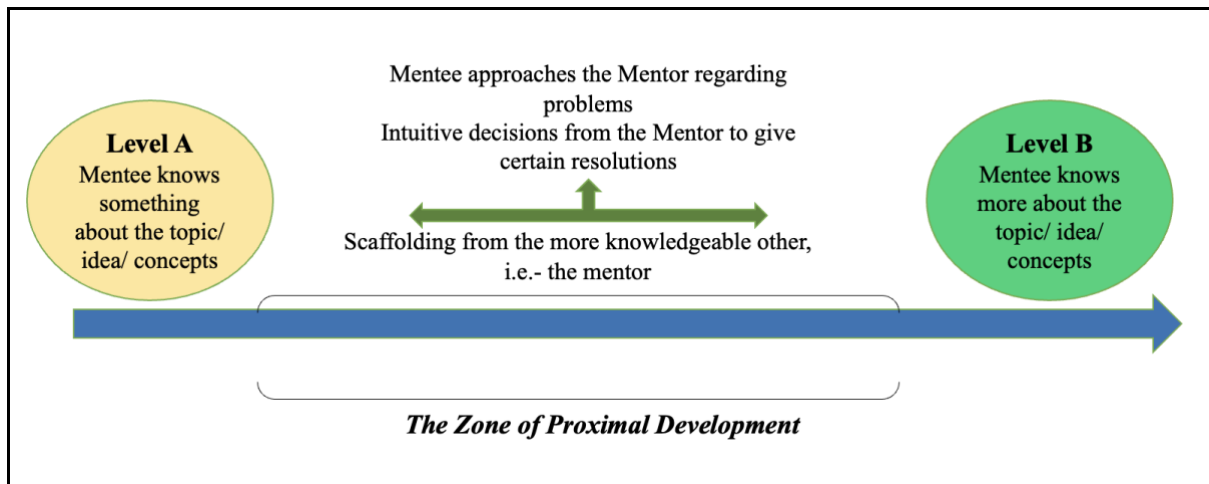
Figure 1 and Figure 2
A potential imagination between ZPD as a cite for intuitive decision making of GTAs/ Mentors

Figure 1

Level A
(Mentees current understanding and ability to perform tasks without assistance)

Level B
(Mentees require assistance/ scaffolding to perform tasks)

Level C
(Mentees cannot or will not perform tasks with assistance)

This distance between level A and B can be said as- *The Zone of Proximal Development (*a potential site for intuitive decision making!)

Figure 2

Source: Author

As Figure 2 demonstrates, this ZPD acts as a site for the mentors and the mentees to interact and make intuitive decisions regarding their learning and development. For example, imagine a scenario where a mentee approaches a mentor regarding problems with a literature review in thesis writing. There lies some established understanding that the mentee is bringing to the table being on Level A before asking for scaffolding or support from the mentor. Then, the mentor dealing with many tasks altogether, suggests a resolution to the mentee, which may or may not work for them. However, these decision- oriented moments of interactions force the learners to reach the Level B, where the mentees know more than earlier or possess an enhanced understanding of their problem.

3. Okay! But... How do these Intuitive Decisions work?

One may think, to begin with, whether these interactions/ suggestions and reactions happening between mentors and mentees are even intuitive or not. The answer to that curiosity can be that these reactions or suggestions are momentary, fast and automated, i.e.- done without much preparation, prolonged thinking and emerging from the experience of the mentor involved. It is like teachers just knowing about the mechanics of their students without too many tests based on the generalisations or patterns of years of teaching. Also, GTA, preparing for an undergraduate first class, already knows some things that will work based on previous semester's interactions with a different batch. To get a concrete picture of these cognitive operations in place, Figure 3 attempts to create an example through a situation below:

Figure 3

Operations of GTA's/ Mentors' intuitive decision making via RPD (Recognition Primed Decision Making) Model in ZPD
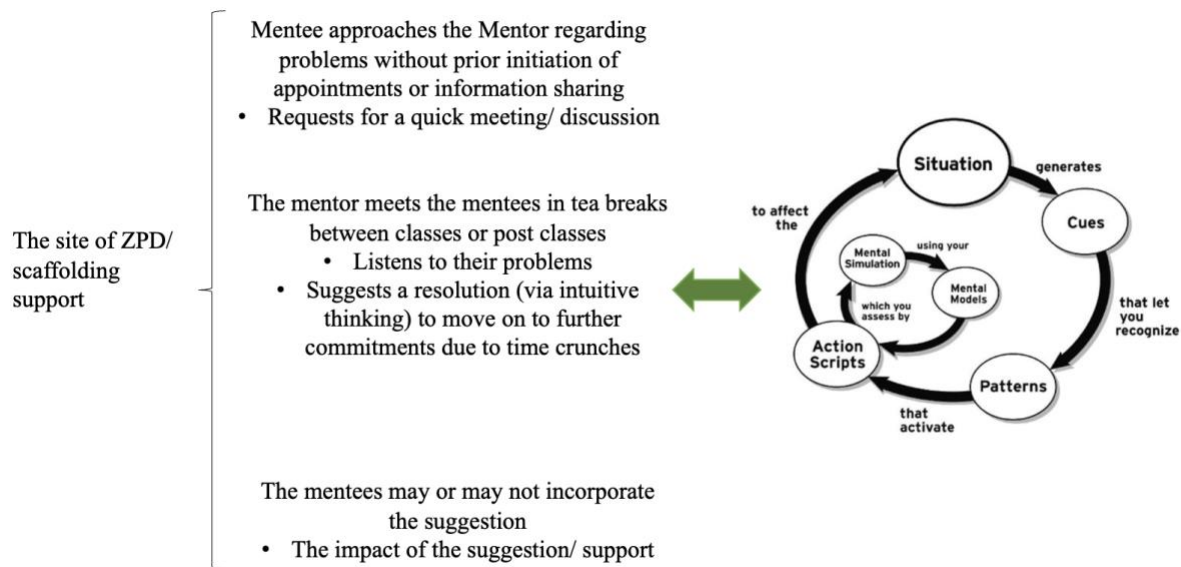
Note: The diagram of the Recognition Primed Decision-Making Model has been adapted from Klein (2003)

There have been several models throughout decades which have attempted to delve into untangling this thing called intuition. While we see an explicit literature of models in the fields of business studies, behavioural sciences, medical education contexts to name a few disciplines, ELT (English Language Teaching) as a discipline have not investigated it much. With fewer theoretical insights (borrowed from education studies) in the past, the discipline has much recently started to extend on them, dominantly relying on work(s) from business studies and organisational psychology. (Kumar, 2024). Drawing inspiration from this recent 'awakening', and with the intention of 'building on what's been explored', this study subscribed to Kelin's (2003) Recognition Primed Decision Model (RPD model). In my view, this model seems more facilitative to mark the impressions of decision-making components like action

scripts, initial thoughts etc., which is also often used in language teacher cognition research.

It also gives concrete steps for a researcher, GTA and any practitioner to tap in their underlying cognitions behind intuition without any laboratory settings or neural tests. Impression marking also enables the researcher reflexivity to concretise intuition with already employed measures such as- discursive puzzling and think aloud tasks. Being one of the most studied and referred models, it is often praised for its emphasis on highlighting people at work as well as their reliance on past experiences to make current decisions. It is a model of both intuition (the intuitive pattern matching part of the process also referred to as System 1 processing) and analysis (the deliberative mental stimulation part of the process, also called as System 2 processing) (Epstein, 1994; Kahneman, 2003 & Sadler Smith, 2023).

It can help us with a concrete picture or at least a beginning understanding of how the GTAs (referring to mentors for this paper) are making these 'momentary decisions. Based on the example shown in Figure 3, the mentee fixes a quick meeting with the mentor without much prior intimation, who is expected to provide some support or resolve the issue. It reminded me of a short interaction with a mentee in one of my classes where they asked me about how they struggle with finding 'good' articles for their thesis surrounding tribal literature. After some talking and realising that they were researching too many aspects of a selected novel on tribal literature focusing on (e.g., the role of the women, poverty, governmental effects, the cultural significance of their art, etc.). It immediately reminded me of my experience while reading about peer mentoring during my postgraduate thesis' preparation. I asked them to pick up their two favourite aspects of the novel anyhow and then find specific articles reflective of the same. A few days later, they reported that the suggestion worked for them. In this interaction, the following components of the RPD model can be see working in relation to GTA's intuitive decision-making, as follows:

Table 1

An overview of different components of RPD model along with real-life examples

Components of RPD Model of Intuition	Inferences from the given Example
Cues let us recognize patterns:	Cue: the mentor struggling with choosing a few aspects of a topic among many Pattern: My memory tells me of having experienced the same and seeing many postgraduates having a similar issue
Patterns activate action scripts:	This aspect tells me what 'action' needs to be taken and reminds me of all the actions I may have taken or am aware of from different sources of learning in my experience.
Action scripts are accessed through mental models via mental stimulation:	Mental models can be thought of as engrained ways of 'how things work'. I correlate the actions with the taught or conventional ways of doing via mental imagination/ stimulation and suggest a resolution.

To reiterate, the table above represents a simpler understanding of these mechanisms in place, and it is this mechanism that the later section will utilise to build some real-life cases of GTA's intuitive decision-making.

4. Realisations from the Praxis…

As a GTA, I was amused by the work of my own intuition in several surroundings and the fact that I was not always aware of it. As an aspirational reflective practitioner, I often reflect on my day-to-day operations and practices. Still, it was only when I came across intuition related literature like the RPD model, and a book titled *The*

Intuitive Practitioner by Guy Claxton that I started to take it seriously and think more of it. Hence, being inspired by the minimal literature which tells us how intuition works, especially in language teaching contexts (see Kumar, 2024). I thought of mapping such intuitive decisions with my mentees by subscribing essentially to intuition being 'funds of experiences' and 'a process in which instructors efficiently code, sort and access experientially conceived mental models for use in making instructional decisions' (Bruke and Sadler Smith, 2006)**.** I adopted a think aloud measure (Gass and Mackey, 2024) with a discursive approach, inspired from Pinner and Hanks (2023). I sent a task prompt (attached in appendix 1) to about seven mentees (upon their gracious acceptance of my invitation) whom I have mentored informally (outside the classes, without being into a mentoring scheme) in the last one and a half years to reflect on their significant incidents of learning during our interactions. They were given a feasibility to submit their responses via writing or voice notes on WhatsApp. Further, we discussed their responses and my reactions in those situations, in online meetings, using a discursive approach (where participants question each other like puzzling and deriving insights from solving it). The table below highlights some of the significant incidents via their problems regarding thesis writing, involved issues and challenges as well as potential resolutions/ momentary advice they received along with their effects (on their cognitions) and affect (emotional regulation) on them.

Table 2

An overview of dominant problems of the mentees concerning thesis writing and GTA's/ mentors' resolutions of the same. (attached in appendix 2 as well)

Context of the problem	Issues and challenges	Potential resolution by the mentor	Effects and affects
Mentee 1			
Ms. A (interaction between their 2nd and 3rd semester of the degree)\n\nResearch Idea/ Topic: Attempting to look at bureaucratic elements in Bengali novels.	•Finding one's voice in writing\n•Lack of explanations for writing background of the paper\n•Lack of surety of one's own interpretations of a text.\n•Reporting data in literary studies research	•Free writing and creation of a mind map and then using relevant citations in a balanced way.\n•One cannot accommodate everything, focusing on salient works can help us in writing a better background.\n•Reading more and more and attending to your own interpretations and then choosing the one you like.\n•Experiment with ways of reporting via stylistics and use diagrams if possible.	· Felt motivated towards the suggestion and implied it in other works.\n· Felt satisfied with it and learnt more about it on her own.\n· Felt more confident and enjoyed further interpretations of literary works.\n· Felt dissatisfied and learnt literary conventions on her own.
Mentee 2			
Mr. T (During the 4th semester of the degree)\n\nResearch Idea/ Topic: trying to investigate around Maslow's need of actualisation in Hesse's works	•How to choose and apply relevant methodology\n•How to design a theoretical framework\n•Not feeling sure about the existing works' relevance.	•Thinking more about specific research questions and imagining yourself in their implementation may help.\n•Think of your research at different stages like a process and then report the theoretical investment involved in each case.\n•Read more theories aligning specifically with your research variables and then decide the best.	· Felt more curious about his topic and continued learning more about it.\n· Felt satisfied about the topic and motivating , did the work suggested.\n· Felt motivated and continued exploring more suitable works.
Mentee 3			
Ms. K (During the 4th semester of the degree)\n\nResearch Idea/ Topic: viewing different stakeholders' role in tribal literature	•Justification of the finalised topic\n•Interpreting information from novels\n•Reporting the findings	· Try making a table of literature review and look for trends in terms of contexts, participants, research questions and their findings, especially focusing on their suggestions.\n· Use the lens of a theory, assign different information to different aspects of it.\n· Have a play, utilise images and diagrams, report one questions' findings at a time.	· Felt motivated and still continue to follow the advice.\n· Felt confused and learnt more about it later for further clarity.\n· Felt more excited about data reporting and continued in her work.
Mentee 4			
Ms. S (Post their degree)\n\nResearch Idea/ Topic: learner washback effects and its dissonance with prescribed assessment pattern	•How do I summarise the studies for literature review effectively?\n•What research tools for data collection will be relevant for my research?\n•How do I write research questions better?	· Create a table of columns assigned to different aspects of a study and report the given information into them for better summarisation.\n· Imagine if you are finding your research questions and then think of the tools you'd like to choose or use for the same.\n· Break down your hypothesis in achievable objectives, each later being reflective of a research question.	· Felt heard and did a more detailed job of the table.\n· Felt more curious about her research questions and decided tools with more enjoyment.\n· Felt satisfied and still continue the practice.
Mentee 5			
Ms. J (During the last semester and post their degree)\n\nResearch Idea/ Topic: role of multilingual materials for classroom interaction	•Selecting a relevant topic for research proposal\n•The reporting of selected studies for literature review lacks connectedness\n•Not being able to recognise the implications of the study	· Firstly, note down five topics that you really like, now choose the best three and make connections between them. Try to pick the best connection and pursue it.\n· Break down your summaries in small readable paragraphs and add your personal take (in relevance of your study).\n· Begin by imagining what all will happen if you finish the proposed study. List down the stakeholders which may or may not get most benefits of it.	· Felt satisfied and ended up following the advice partially by choosing a broader topic.\n· Felt eased down and still continues to first report studies in the said way.\n· Felt satisfied and reports of boosting imagination and creativity.
Mentee 6			
Ms. N (Post their degree)\nResearch Idea/ Topic: something which is similar to teaching language through literature	•Finding a relevant topic for research\n•The relevant tools in sync with research questions\n•Designing of tools	· Writing down your top five topics and making connections among the top three and pursuing the best made connection.\n· Firstly, check the connectedness of the research questions. Further, imagine using at least one tool for one research question. Merely a few tools won't suffice for all research questions.\n· Learn how to design tasks and their basic elements of language, participant focus etc. may help with designing tools.	· Felt satisfied and feels more curious about her chosen topic.\n· Felt motivated and still practices it.\n· Felt challenged and audited a course on the same to learn more about task design.
Mentee 7			
Ms. M			
(During the 4th semester of their degree)\n\nResearch Idea/ Topic: role of military films and different stakeholders involved	•Bringing neutrality in stances\n•Reporting the chosen studies\n•Ensuring connectedness among different components of a thesis	· Note down both the favourable and unfavourable instances from the films and then talk about both of them critically, In relation to your topic.\n· Make a table for the studies, dedicating each column to the different aspects of the study.\n· Think of it as if you are telling a story, you decide the opening scene, then tell why it is important to listen to, and further what all it entails, highlighting its merits and demerits at the end.	· Felt eased down in the paralysis of information and now evaluates information before she chooses to utilise.\n· Felt satisfied and continued adopting this practice.\n· Felt motivated and started to personalise her academic work.

To concretely understand some of these experiences about the ZPD and the RPD model, let us discuss how they spanned out. We would have to keep the information

supplied in Figure 3 (*Operations of GTA's/ Mentors' intuitive decision making via RPD Model in ZPD)* and Table 1 (*An overview of different components of RPD model along with real-life examples) in* mind while going through these reflections.

4.1 Reflection 1

Mentee Ms. A. approached me over a tea break in distress over her previous assignment for an English literature course. With her first cup of tea, she asks- How do I find my voice in the assignments? The fact that she was reflective of whatever she had written, and the expected outcomes assured me that she was already at Level A of knowing how to frame arguments and cite relevant things. My reaction in the form of a suggestion reminded me of a typical 'pattern' of postgraduate students facing the same issue when I was pursuing my degree and asking the professors for support. It reminded me of a similar situation where I struggled with one of my reports, getting feedback of 'too many citations' and needing more individuality. The triggered action scripts were my own dealing with it through a mind map and a colleague's way of re-reading and editing your work till you find the balance. My mental models reminded me of academic conventions, which enabled me to give her the following advice- begin by writing whatever you have understood first. If needed, make a mind map of your proposed assignment. Then, reread and rewrite each section carefully by playing with it via proverbs you know or any other mechanics of giving a film's example, etc. Then decorate it with a few citations, wherever needed, to make it sound academic. It would ensure a good balance between you and the expected academic-ness. She later reported that the advice worked in her favour and gave her a better understanding of her own writing mechanisms as well as the voice of the other authors (taking her to Level B).

4.2 Reflection 2

In another incident, Mentee Ms. S approached me to post one of my classes, asking if I could find the relevant studies for my thesis proposal but failing to summarise them effectively. It all sounds so repetitive. Similarly, her being at Level A taught me about her ability to summarise and the need for scaffolding. The recognising pattern element in my cognition came to the rescue of one of our professors, telling me in an informal conversation that most of the thesis literature lacks connectivity and is a typical writing issue for students. The action script aspects triggered the memory of

my class struggling with it, and when an academic writing professor demonstrated how we could break down summaries and acknowledge them to connect them. The mental models in my mental stimulation told me- But she first has to organise these summaries well to be able to make connections then. Such an assessment led me to talk to her about a tabular summary technique I used during my thesis. I suggested she put all her information about different studies in a tabular manner, dedicating each column to different standard components of a study, i.e., the title of it, the context it's been done, research questions, concerned tools for collecting and analysing data, the findings and suggestions, and then summarise them. This ensures you do not miss crucial details in your reporting and then make your summaries dialogic by adding your take on them at the end of each one of them, so you see trends. The advice, too, worked for this mentee, enabling them to see summaries with much more intricacy (bringing them to Level B).

4.3 Reflection 3

Much recently, Mentee Ms J, during a brief meeting at a conference, reported how she is struggling with finding relevant studies around multilingual materials and classroom interaction for her tentative thesis work. She told me about a few works she had read (suggesting her Level A awareness). Again, the pattern recognition reminded me of this as a trend in thesis writing issues and challenges. Further, it triggered a memory of my supervisor advising me to notice the presence of concerned variables while finalising any study for my thesis work. The action scripts hinted at me being able to give the same advice. Still, the mental models enabled the pedagogic realisations of instead first suggesting she read more about classroom interaction and then picking up one aspect of it. Hence, I meant to her that many things can come under the term classroom interaction, such as teacher talk, learner participation, learner and teacher cognition, etc. More reading will help you define your variables better and make it easier to find work on them. Further, she conveyed how this advice worked with her in defining research variables better and their connection (bringing her to Level 2). However, she still chose to stick to the broader variable of classroom interaction for her work.

4.4 Reflection 4

Another incident worth sharing to continue these reflections is of Mentee Ms. K and Mentee Mr. T, where they asked me to enable them to find relevant research topics based on their preferred themes. They both reported how they have been seeing and reading about assessment and self-actualisation, but it seems endless. It suggests they should be on level A and know how to find and read research works. Another pattern is where we mostly dissociate our likings in topics for the sake of what may look good and expected as students. The action scripts called for more effort towards finding what they really liked, and my mental models suggested that I advise them to make a mind map of these things and write the top five things they like about them.

Further, I advised them to eliminate two, keep their top three choices, draw connections among them without worrying about the theoretical aspects, and choose one connection they liked most. It did not initially work very well with them since they thought their personal insights were not academic. However, sticking to them and finding work around them made this decision successful (enabling them to have level B awareness).

5. Getting it all Together with Concluding Thoughts

This reflection paper has attempted to sail on a boat to find treasures of GTA's cognitions, i.e.- their intuitions in this case, through an example of one GTA mentoring seven mentees with their thesis writing problems. It did not only try to showcase a potential theoretical link with a beginning understanding between GTA's intuitive decision making and ZPD but also tried to reflect the same in mentoring experiences. The mentoring incidents may vary among different contexts, but it feels hopeful there would be some common patterns in the future studies on GTAs intuition. It is also to remind that the intuitions can be wrong or less relevant at times and the GTAs may feel that it always will help them to make quick and important decisions about a familiar situation (Epstein, 2010; Gilpin & Gibbon, 2000). While being useful in these ways, the GTAs may also feel cognitive biases in their decisions or think of their habitual reactions as their intuitive understanding. They may also be prone to only suggesting/ advising what worked for them and not being open to learning through reflection on situations and the knowledge surrounding

them. They may not simply be able to reflect as well based on the stressful work commitments, lack of motivation and support for themselves as well.

To deal with such scenarios and become intuitive practitioners the GTAs can: a) accept that their intuitions may not always work, b) appreciate their existing knowledge and experiences and feel more open to learning, c) can refer to writing reflective journals or even reflect on different parts of their lesson plans and delivery in their own capacities, d) have regular peer meets with their mentees to realise what is working and what is not, and, e) always seek out help through discussions with their peers, seniors and professors regarding their difficulties. These may seem to be some easy 'doable' steps, but these are what we struggle to keep up with amidst managing different social, psychological factors operating around us.

The implications of such investments will not only enable the GTA's to become reflective practitioners or ensure better learning outcomes but will also enable them to find enhanced motivation for what they do and build on it all. On the other hand, the mechanisms of students' writing and their apprehensions will also inform them the intricacies of classroom teaching, building a less hierarchical two-ways learning environment, where **T**ogether **E**veryone **A**chieves **M**ore. To realise this, the GTAs will also need to engage in reflexivity, being careful towards the ethical considerations of their situations by responding sensitively (Ushioda, 2023).

While many more incidents may provide us with more insights about GTA's intuition and its effects on the mentees/ students, I would like to advocate for more interest among such reflective means to grow. One may doubt the feasibility of think-aloud and the RPD model; the lack of work towards the same in language teaching contexts shall inspire us to begin from somewhere. The very site of a GTA operating with some psychological factors at their work (personal life, stress, own deadlines, student motivation and whatnot) indicates endless possibilities of worthwhile research into their intuitions. As a reminder, while these (models and techniques) have been utilised by education psychologists and business and medical experts, we shall take these experimentations further, being more aware of our own (intuitive) practices. I do not suggest that reflecting on intuitions and intuitive decisions will

always bring success stories, but I can ensure that failures are worth exploring- for more reasons than we are aware of.

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APPENDIX - 1

1. *Let's Delve into the Past!*

a) Let us do a fun task. Please attempt this task in your leisure time so that you can recall better. Think aloud around our interactions regarding your thesis writing work.

b) Please note down the crucial moments of major issues and challenges that you faced and write anything in detail about them in the space given below.

2. Let's Categorise our Experiences

c) Now let us try to fit this recalled information and more if you can think aloud further in the following table: (we can choose to mention 3-5 incidents)

Status of your semester	Major Problem with thesis writing	Issues and challenges you faced regarding the problem	Potential Resolution that I suggested	Did it work for you? Why or why not?	Do you still practise that resolution?
	1.				
	2.				

	3.				
	4.				
	5.				

Note:

1. Please do not write your full name or surname anywhere on the document. Just mention first letters of your name, surname or both (whichever is comfortable for you)
2. You can download your copy and increase the size of the table as per your comfort and write freely.
3. You may also choose to send voice notes of your responses to these tasks, if you are busy with your commitments and your routine is not allowing you to write much.

Happy Writing or Speaking :)

APPENDIX- 2

Table 2

An overview of dominant problems of the mentees concerning thesis writing and GTA's/ mentors' resolutions of the same

Context of the problem	Issues and challenges	Potential resolution by the mentor	Effects and affects
Mentee 1			
Ms. A (interaction between their 2nd and 3rd semester of the degree) Research Idea/ Topic: Attempting to look at bureaucratic elements in Bengali novels.	● Finding one's voice in writing ● Lack of explanations for writing background of the paper ● Lack of surety of one's own interpretations of a text. ● Reporting data in literary studies research	● Free writing and creation of a mind map and then using relevant citations in a balanced way. ● One cannot accommodate everything, focusing on salient works can help us in writing a better background. ● Reading more and more and attending to your own interpretations and then choosing the one you like. ● Experiment with ways of reporting via stylistics and use diagrams if possible.	● Felt motivated towards the suggestion and implied it in other works. ● Felt satisfied with it and learnt more about it on her own. ● Felt more confident and enjoyed further interpretations of literary works. ● Felt dissatisfied and learnt

			literary conventions on her own.
Mentee 2			
Mr. T (During the 4th semester of the degree) Research Idea/ Topic: trying to investigate around Maslow's need of actualisation in Hesse's works	• How to choose and apply relevant methodology • How to design a theoretical framework • Not feeling sure about the existing works' relevance.	• Thinking more about specific research questions and imagining yourself in their implementation may help. • Think of your research at different stages like a process and then report the theoretical investment involved in each case. • Read more theories aligning specifically with your research variables and then decide the best.	• Felt more curious about his topic and continued learning more about it. • Felt satisfied about the topic and motivated , did the work suggested. • Felt motivated and continued exploring more suitable works.
Mentee 3			
Ms. K (During the 4th semester of the degree)	• Justification of the finalised topic • Interpreting information from novels	• Try making a table of literature review and look for trends in terms of contexts, participants, research questions and their findings, especially	• Felt motivated and still continue to follow the advice.

Research Idea/ Topic: viewing different stakeholders' role in tribal literature	● Reporting the findings	focusing on their suggestions. ● Use the lens of a theory, assign different information to different aspects of it. ● Have a play, utilise images and diagrams, report one questions' findings at a time.	● Felt confused and learnt more about it later for further clarity ● Felt more excited about data reporting and continued in her work.
Mentee 4			
Ms. S (Post their degree) Research Idea/ Topic: learner washback effects and its dissonance with prescribed assessment pattern	● How do I summarise the studies for literature review effectively? ● What research tools for data collection will be relevant for my research? ● How do I write research questions better?	● Create a table of columns assigned to different aspects of a study and report the given information into them for better summarisation. ● Imagine if you are finding your research questions and then think of the tools you'd like to choose or use for the same. ● Break down your hypothesis in achievable objectives, each later being reflective of a research question.	● Felt heard and did a more detailed job of the table. ● Felt more curious about her research questions and decided on tools with more enjoyment. ● Felt satisfied and still continued the practice.
Mentee 5			

Ms. J (During the last semester and post their degree) Research Idea/ Topic: role of multilingual materials for classroom interaction	● Selecting a relevant topic for research proposal ● The reporting of selected studies for literature review lacks connectedness ● Not being able to recognise the implications of the study	● Firstly, note down five topics that you really like, now choose the best three and make connections between them. Try to pick the best connection and pursue it. ● Break down your summaries in small readable paragraphs and add your personal take (in relevance of your study). ● Begin by imagining what all will happen if you finish the proposed study. List down the stakeholders which may or may not get most benefits of it.	● Felt satisfied and ended up following the advice partially by choosing a broader topic. ● Felt eased down and still continues to first report studies in the said way. ● Felt satisfied and reported boosting imagination and creativity.
Mentee 6			
Ms. N (Post their degree) Research Idea/ Topic: something which is like teaching language through literature	● Finding a relevant topic for research ● The relevant tools in sync with research questions ● Designing of tools	● Writing down your top five topics and making connections among the top three and pursuing the best made connection. ● Firstly, check the connectedness of the research questions. Further, imagine using at least one tool for one	● Felt satisfied and feels more curious about her chosen topic. ● Felt motivated and still practised. ● Felt challenged

		research question. Merely a few tools won't suffice for all research questions. ● Learn how to design tasks and their basic elements of language, participant focus etc. may help with designing tools.	and audited a course on the same to learn more about task design.
Mentee 7			
Ms. M			
(During the 4th semester of their degree) Research Idea/ Topic: role of military films and different stakeholders involved	● Bringing neutrality in stances ● Reporting the chosen studies ● Ensuring connectednes s among different components of a thesis	● Note down both the favourable and unfavourable instances from the films and then talk about both of them critically, In relation to your topic. ● Make a table for the studies, dedicating each column to the different aspects of the study. ● Think of it as if you are telling a story, you decide the opening scene, then tell why it is important to listen to, and further what all it entails, highlighting its merits and demerits at the end.	● Felt eased down in the paralysis of information and now evaluates information before she chooses to utilise it. ● Felt satisfied and continued adopting this practice. ● Felt motivated and started to

			personalise her academic work.