



Development of Handbook on Instructional Coaching and Mentoring for Master Teachers

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ABSTRACT

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This qualitative study identified the master teachers' coaching and mentoring practices to be able to develop and evaluate the effectiveness of the instructional coaching and mentoring handbook along with the preparation of the proposed adoption guidelines. Action research was used for this study, and ten master teachers were selected as informants. Data collection involved interviews, focused group discussions, and thematic analysis to identify the following key themes regarding instructional coaching and mentoring practices: building trust, understanding individual needs, targeted classroom observation and feedback, collaborative planning and curriculum enhancement, reflective practice and self-assessment, and comprehensive guidance and support. Findings indicated that the developed handbook effectively supported instructional coaching and mentoring through themes such as empowering change, navigating classroom observations, forging effective coaching, and mentoring relationships, and elevating teaching and learning. Recommendations included adopting and utilizing the handbook to invest in educators' professional growth and improve the education system. Guidelines were proposed to ensure successful implementation, continuous improvement, and sustainable positive impacts. The study concluded that the six identified themes reflected a comprehensive approach to instructional coaching and mentoring, addressing crucial aspects of professional development. It emphasized the effectiveness of the developed handbook in enhancing teaching practices and recommended tailoring coaching and mentoring to foster a culture of continuous learning. Adoption of the handbook by educational institutions, along with ongoing monitoring and evaluation, was suggested to ensure relevance and responsiveness to emerging trends. Additionally, evidence-based policies may be developed to improve coaching and mentoring practices, and further research may explore topics like enhancing classroom observation and utilizing e-tools in coaching and mentoring.

KEYWORDS:

development of handbook, instructional coaching, instructional mentoring, master teachers

I. INTRODUCTION

In the ever-evolving landscape of education, instructional leadership plays a pivotal role in shaping the quality of teaching and learning experiences within schools. Master teachers, recognized for their exemplary classroom expertise, are well-positioned to serve as leaders in this context, providing valuable guidance and support to other teachers.

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In the United States, instructional leadership has been a critical focus in education reform efforts. Master teachers play pivotal roles in instructional leadership within schools. Instructional leadership by master teachers is important for improving student outcomes (Robinson, 2023). Also, the United Kingdom has its own educational framework, with a strong emphasis on teacher professional development, focusing on coaching and mentoring.

Studies conducted by organizations like the National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL) have explored the role of teachers as leaders and the impact of coaching and mentoring in the British education system. Teachers' role as instructional leaders enhances teaching quality through coaching and mentoring (Hattie, 2020). Australia has also been actively promoting instructional leadership practices in

its education system. Likewise, the Canadian Education Association (CEA) (2023) explored instructional leadership models and the impact of coaching and mentoring on teacher development.

In the Philippines, master teachers are expected to provide support and mentoring to colleagues in their professional development, as stated in the DepEd Updated RPMS Manual (2017). Working collaboratively with them to enhance the potential for learning and teaching practices of their colleagues. However, for instructional leadership practices to truly thrive among master teachers, it is essential to enhance their instructional coaching and mentoring practices. MECS Order No. 10, s. 1979, also known as “Implementing Rules and Regulations for the System of Career Progression for Public School Teachers in the Philippines” established the framework for the career progression of public school teachers in the country. It provides guidelines for the ranking and appointment of master teachers. Specifically, it outlines the criteria and procedures for advancing in the teaching profession. Furthermore, DECS Order No. 57 s. 1997 serves as the appropriate guidelines for ranking and appointment of master teachers. It ensures consistency and fairness in the career progression system for educators. These orders play a crucial role in shaping the professional growth of teachers, fostering excellence, and maintaining standards within the education sector. Thus, master teachers should demonstrate excellence in teaching as well as improve the teaching performance of their colleagues through coaching and mentoring.

The current development of the Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads (PPSSH) and Philippine Professional Standards for Supervisors (PPSS) will further broaden the importance of a transformed National Educators Academy (NEAP) of the Philippines. These sets of professional standards assist NEAP in the design and delivery of in-service professional development and, through integrated monitoring and evaluation procedures, provide for accountability. Recently, the Department of Education (DepEd) recently issued DepEd Order No. 7, s. 2023, which sets forth specific guidelines, procedures, and criteria for various positions, encompassing both teacher roles and executive/managerial positions. This policy aims to ensure that proper individuals are assigned to the appropriate positions at the optimal time as well as the organization’s dedication to providing quality basic education.

The role of master teachers in educational institutions extends beyond their classroom responsibilities. They are often looked upon as mentors, facilitators of professional development, and catalysts for positive change. Their expertise can have a profound impact not only on the academic achievements of students but also on the professional growth of fellow teachers. Therefore, understanding how to empower master teachers to excel in coaching and mentoring, is crucial for fostering a culture of

continuous improvement within schools (Laudea, et. al, 2020).

Coaching and mentoring are two key components of instructional leadership practice that hold the potential to transform educational practices. Effective coaching and mentoring relationships facilitate reflective teaching, professional growth, and the implementation of innovative strategies in the classroom. However, mastering the art of coaching and mentoring requires not only pedagogical expertise but also a deep understanding of adult learning, interpersonal skills, and leadership dynamics (Jenn, 2023). Master teachers play varied and vital roles in the classroom. They are entrusted with so many responsibilities that range from the very simple to the most complex and challenging jobs. And they are not exempt from the task of coaching and mentoring during classroom observation. As stated in DepEd Memorandum No. 10 s.2023, the classroom observation process for the purpose of the Result-Based Performance Management System-Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (RPMS-PPST) shall be guided by the instructions in this memorandum that, for school year 2023-2024, four classroom observations shall be done within the last four quarters. This shall be conducted by master teachers and school heads; wherein instructional coaching and mentoring is highly encouraged.

In the school calendar of the Department of Education, mid-year performance reviews are conducted to assess the performance of teachers in teaching and learning. Master teachers are given the authority to conduct class observation. Therefore, master teachers should be equipped also with the knowledge and skills necessary to provide instructional coaching and mentoring, and at the same time, come up with the interventions needed to attain success.

Recognizing their own limited knowledge about how to conduct coaching and mentoring, master teachers must develop environments conducive to student thriving and flourishing, as well as improve the teaching practices of their colleagues for their job satisfaction (David & Boudreau, 2018). Added to that, the role of coaching and mentoring in developing instructional leaders who care and foster well-being among those they serve and with whom they work plays a vital role in pursuing continuous improvement (Grady & Gilmour, 2022).

With this present situation, the researchers chose to study this problem, which embarks on a journey to explore instructional coaching and mentoring practices. By analyzing the ways in which master teachers discharge their coaching and mentoring, a handbook could be developed that will aid master teachers in giving support and mentoring to other teachers especially during the conduct of classroom observation. By doing so, a learning environment is created where every teacher, inspired by the guidance and mentorship of master teachers, can reach their full potential and, in turn, empower students to achieve academic excellence.

Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to develop a handbook on instructional coaching and mentoring for master teachers. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions: (1) How do master teachers discharge their instructional coaching and mentoring practices? (2) What instructional coaching and mentoring handbook may be developed? (3) How effective is the instructional coaching and mentoring handbook? (4) What guidelines could be proposed for the adoption of instructional coaching and mentoring handbook?

II. METHODOLOGY

This study used the qualitative method of research. It seeks to understand a phenomenon within a real-world context through interviews and focused group discussion. Likewise, action research was employed to allow for an iterative process, ensuring that the intervention is dynamic and responsive to the needs of master teachers. According to the Career Guide Team (2023), action research is designed to identify solutions to specific problems or find answers to questions. It provides knowledge that is both applicable and practical. Additionally, action research concentrates on tackling practical issues that arise in the field. Action research prioritizes the implementation of practical solutions to effect positive changes.

The Informants

The main sources of data for this study were the statements of the informants from the interview and the focused group discussion conducted. The informants of this study were the ten (10) master teachers selected purposefully from the elementary schools of Bulan District, comprising Bulan I, II, III, and IV Districts, Schools Division of Sorsogon. These informants were representatives of each of the four districts. Purposive sampling was used based on the researcher's rationale in terms of the length of service of master teachers, their present positions, and the school where they are assigned.

Out of ten informants, five have 0–3 years of experience, two have 4–5 years of experience, and three have 6 years and above of experience as master teachers. Also, four master teachers have the position of Master Teacher II, and six are in the Master Teacher I position. Most of them came from big schools where there are three or more master teachers designated. The master teachers selected for the study were actively engaged in coaching and mentoring roles. They have experienced using or being exposed to the coaching and mentoring handbook, manuals, and guides that will support instructional coaching and mentoring. It helped in selecting the most appropriate group that could provide accurate data and information applicable to the present undertaking (Penner & McClement, 2008).

The Instruments

The main instruments used in gathering data were researcher-made interview questions and focused group discussion guide questions, which were prepared by the researchers with the guidance of their adviser and the approval of the dissertation committee. These instruments were used during the conduct of interviews and focused group discussions with the selected informants of the study. Follow-up questions were added as needed based on the responses of the informants to encourage elaboration, clarify responses, and gain an understanding of the phenomena being studied.

Data Analysis Procedure

After the interview and focus group discussion were conducted, the recorded statements of the informants were transcribed verbatim since they use language they are comfortable in answering the interview and focus group discussion questions. When all verbal information were transcribed into text, the researcher proceeded to the analysis of the documents. Codes were assigned to each informant as an attempt to protect the identity of the participants and their institutions. The researchers ensured the confidentiality of the participants.

Coding and categorizing of the data to identify patterns and themes were made. Qualitative data analysis was used to analyze the open-ended responses to identify recurring themes, identify patterns and starting to come up with themes. After generating the themes, reviewing the codes created was done to have an accurate representation of the data. Researcher examined the data in this approach to determine the common topics, ideas, and patterns of meaning that come up repeatedly (Caulfield, 2022).

Lastly, synthesizing the themes to provide a coherent interpretation of the data was made. Then, it was followed with the discussion of the implications of the findings for addressing instructional coaching and mentoring of master teachers. Findings, conclusions, and recommendations were made.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Based on the data gathered, these were presented sequentially to answer the specific problem of the study that included the following: 1) master teachers' discharge of their instructional coaching and mentoring practices; 2) developed instructional coaching and mentoring handbook and 3) effectiveness of the handbook.

Master Teachers' Discharge of their Instructional Coaching and Mentoring Practices

a. Building trust: The cornerstone of mentorship. This theme highlights establishing rapport, fostering a positive mentor-mentee relationship, and strategies for creating a safe and supportive learning environment. These are stressed in the statements of the informants. They are as follows:

"I believe that master teachers have expertise in coaching and mentoring. That is the reason why I trusted her that she can

give instructional support and technical assistance since I am newly promoted master teacher.” (Informant 3, 4, 7) “I always show willingness to help every time they need my technical assistance in effective conduct of teaching.” “I believe that having a positive attitude towards the teacher can create a good mentor-mentee relationship, especially during meetings. I see to it that I listen to their experiences in teaching and appreciate their effort to improve next time they teach the lesson. (Informant 1, 8) [“I always approach my principal every time I need instructional support and technical assistance. She is very accommodating.” (Informant 5, 6)

Building trust is a crucial aspect of effective mentorship, serving as a cornerstone that shapes the mentor-mentee relationship. Based on the statements of the informants, to establish rapport, mentors must demonstrate authenticity, empathy, and active listening skills. Authenticity involves being genuine and transparent in interactions, allowing mentees to connect with their mentors on a personal level. Empathy, on the other hand, involves understanding and sharing the feelings of mentees, creating a sense of mutual understanding. Active listening ensures that mentors are fully engaged in the mentees' concerns and perspectives, fostering a supportive environment where open communication can flourish (Creswell, 2012).

The implications of a strong mentor-mentee relationship extend beyond mere interpersonal dynamics. Research suggests that when teachers perceive their mentors as trustworthy and supportive, they are more likely to engage in reflective practices and implement new instructional strategies with confidence (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). A safe and positive learning environment, cultivated through trust-building, promotes risk-taking and experimentation in teaching methodologies. Teachers who feel supported are more inclined to seek guidance, share challenges, and actively participate in professional development opportunities, ultimately contributing to their professional growth (Bullough, 2011).

Creating a safe and supportive learning environment is essential for fostering the growth of both mentors and mentees. Such an environment encourages mentees to take risks, try new teaching approaches, and engage in reflective practices without fear of judgment. Mentors play a pivotal role in creating this atmosphere by modeling vulnerability and sharing their own experiences and challenges. The mentor-mentee relationship, when founded on trust, becomes a collaborative partnership where both parties contribute to a culture of continuous learning (Boreen et al., 2008).

In addition, the establishment of trust in mentorship involves authenticity, empathy, and active listening, creating a foundation for a positive mentor-mentee relationship. The literature supports the idea that trust is linked to teacher engagement in professional development and willingness to experiment with new instructional strategies. Moreover, a safe and supportive learning environment, nurtured through trust-building, enhances the effectiveness of mentorship by

fostering a culture of collaboration and continuous learning among educators.

b. Understanding individual needs. This theme underscores tailoring coaching approaches to the unique strengths and challenges of each teacher and identifying and addressing specific professional development goals. A personalized approach recognizes that teachers have diverse backgrounds, experiences, and skill sets. This is reflected in the following narratives of the informants: “During the conduct of classroom observation and evaluating teachers' performance, I ask teachers to talk and share their experiences; afterwards, I let them tell their own weaknesses in teaching. That is when I ask them for their suggestions to improve their teaching practice. It is better to use this approach than simply point out flaws or shortcomings. (Informant 3) “As a master teacher mentoring other teachers, I need to understand that they have different attitudes toward evaluating their performance and different needs in the conduct of teaching. Assessing their performance is based on their strengths and weaknesses in teaching.” (Informant 7)

Understanding individual needs in the context of instructional coaching involves tailoring coaching approaches to address the unique strengths and challenges of each teacher. Based on the narratives of the informants, a personalized approach recognizes that teachers have diverse backgrounds, experiences, and skill sets. To effectively cater to individual needs, coaches need to engage in ongoing assessments, conversations, and observations to gain insights into each teacher's strengths and areas for growth. By doing so, coaches can develop an understanding of the teacher's instructional style, preferences, and professional aspirations.

The implications of tailoring coaching approaches are far-reaching. Research suggests that personalized coaching contributes significantly to teacher satisfaction and professional development (Showers & Joyce, 1996). When coaching is aligned with individual needs, teachers are more likely to feel supported, valued, and motivated to invest in their professional growth. Moreover, a tailored approach enhances the relevance and applicability of coaching, making it more likely that teachers will successfully implement new strategies in their classrooms (Hawley & Valli, 2019).

Identifying and addressing specific professional development goals is a crucial component of understanding individual needs. This process involves collaboratively setting goals that are aligned with both the teacher's aspirations and the broader educational context. Coaches and teachers work together to establish clear, measurable objectives that reflect the teacher's desired areas of improvement. This goal-setting process not only provides a roadmap for professional development but also empowers teachers to take ownership of their learning journey.

Moreover, tailoring coaching approaches to the unique strengths and challenges of each teacher, along with identifying and addressing specific professional development

goals, is a holistic and effective way to support educators. This approach acknowledges the individuality of teachers and fosters a collaborative, goal-oriented relationship between coaches and teachers, ultimately contributing to enhanced teacher satisfaction and improved instructional practices.

c. Targeted classroom observation and feedback. This theme highlights the art of constructive feedback: balancing praise and areas for improvement and assessing classroom observation for reflective practice. As a coach and a mentor, giving feedback aimed to improve not to find out what is wrong and what went wrong. This is practiced by the informants saying:

"I make it a point that I always praise teachers, even though there are flaws in teaching, because I know how to give comments and provide good examples of practices inside the classroom." (Informant 5,8)

"I do not say that there is something wrong with your teaching. Instead, I suggested effective strategies that the student would learn. In your lesson" (Informant 9).

"During classroom observation, I write observation notes, and at the same time, after teaching, I say congratulations for a job well done. I let the teacher speak of their experiences, pointing out their strengths and weaknesses. That is the time that I give praise and point out ways to improve teaching practice. (Informant 1,2)

Based on the statements of the informants, it is important to always strive for constructive criticism when giving feedback. This was supported by Brown's (2014) study, which emphasized the significance of individualized coaching and feedback. Constructive feedback entails offering insights and suggestions aimed at improvement rather than simply pointing out flaws or shortcomings. The essence of providing constructive feedback lies in its potential to inspire growth and development in the individual receiving it. Instead of focusing solely on what went wrong or what needs improvement, constructive feedback highlights areas of strength and offers actionable steps for enhancement.

As a mentor, it is crucial to remember that feedback should be delivered with empathy and respect. Recognizing the efforts and achievements of the mentee is just as important as addressing areas for improvement. Constructive feedback should be framed in a supportive manner, encouraging the mentee to reflect on their practice and consider alternative approaches.

Furthermore, constructive feedback fosters a culture of continuous learning and professional growth. Hattie and Timperley (2007) stated that effective professional development includes ongoing assessment and feedback tailored to the specific goals and needs of teachers. When delivered effectively, it empowers the mentee to take ownership of their development and actively seek opportunities for improvement. By providing specific and actionable feedback, mentors help mentees identify areas

where they can refine their skills and strategies, ultimately enhancing their effectiveness as educators.

Moreover, the essence of giving constructive feedback lies in its ability to inspire growth, promote reflection, and empower individuals to reach their full potential. As mentors, it is important to approach feedback as a collaborative process aimed at supporting the mentee's professional development journey. By offering constructive criticism with empathy and respect, mentors can help mentees thrive and excel in their roles as educators.

d. Collaborative Planning and Curriculum Enhancement.

This theme entails engaging teachers in collaborative lesson planning and curriculum design and integrating innovative teaching methods and technology into instructional practices. Collaborative planning and curriculum enhancement recognize the value of collaboration, as Informant 4 said, "Collaborative planning and curriculum development involve engaging teachers in joint efforts to design lessons and shape the curriculum. Based on the statement of the informant, this collaborative approach recognizes the value of collective expertise and diverse perspectives in creating well-rounded and effective instructional materials. Teachers working together can pool their insights, experiences, and creativity to develop engaging lessons that cater to the diverse needs of students.

Engaging teachers in collaborative lesson planning not only enhances the quality of instructional content but also fosters a sense of shared responsibility and professional community. This approach encourages the exchange of ideas and strategies, allowing educators to learn from each other and refine their teaching methods. Collaborative planning promotes a culture of teamwork and mutual support, ultimately benefiting both teachers and students in the learning environment.

Integrating innovative teaching methods and technology into instructional practices is a crucial aspect of modern education. This approach acknowledges the evolving needs of 21st-century learners and leverages technology to enhance the learning experience. By collaborating on the incorporation of innovative methods and technology, teachers can explore new pedagogical approaches that promote student engagement, critical thinking, and creativity. The implications of collaborative planning and technology integration are significant. Research suggests that collaborative curriculum development enhances teacher professional development, positively impacting student learning outcomes (Little, 1990). Furthermore, integrating technology into instructional practices has been associated with increased student motivation, participation, and achievement (Means et al., 1993). Furthermore, engaging teachers in collaborative lesson planning and curriculum development, coupled with the integration of innovative teaching methods and technology, contributes to a dynamic and effective learning environment. This collaborative

approach promotes professional growth among educators, enriches the curriculum, and aligns teaching practices with the evolving needs of students in a rapidly changing educational landscape.

e. Reflective Practice and Self-Assessment. This theme underscores encouraging teachers to reflect on their teaching methods and classroom dynamics and providing tools for self-assessment and goal-setting. Reflective practice involves contemplating the successes and challenges encountered in the classroom during teaching. This was evident in the statements of the informants:

“After the post-observation meeting, I read to the teacher my observation notes. I let her, for a few minutes, reflect on the teaching practices and methods they employ in teaching. Afterwards, we discussed and agreed that there should be further improvements in teaching. (Informant 1, and 9) “There were times that the teacher declined to be observed for some reasons. There were also instances where the teacher wanted to be observed but would tell you that she was not well prepared with the lessons and instructional materials, meaning the teacher would just conduct the lesson to meet the required classroom observations. In a case like this, I write this in the observation notes. During our post-observation meeting, I let her reflect and assess her practices.” (Informant 7)

Reflective practice and self-assessment are essential components of a teacher's professional development, involving a continuous and intentional process of examining one's teaching methods and classroom dynamics. Encouraging teachers to engage in reflective practices fosters a deeper understanding of their instructional approaches, interactions with students, and the overall learning environment.

Reflective practice involves contemplating the successes and challenges encountered in the classroom, considering the impact of teaching strategies on student learning, and exploring ways to enhance instructional effectiveness. By creating a space for introspection, teachers can refine their teaching methods, make informed adjustments, and align their practices with evolving educational goals and student needs.

Self-assessment complements reflective practice by providing teachers with structured tools to evaluate their own performance. These tools may include rubrics, checklists, or peer observation protocols that guide teachers in assessing specific aspects of their teaching, such as classroom management, lesson planning, or student engagement. Self-assessment empowers teachers to take ownership of their professional growth by identifying strengths and areas for improvement.

The interpretation of reflective practice and self-assessment emphasizes the transformative nature of these activities. Engaging in reflective practices enables teachers to evolve from traditional to more dynamic teaching methods, fostering

adaptability and responsiveness to the diverse needs of students (Brookfield, 1995). Self-assessment, when done systematically, promotes a proactive and intentional approach to professional development, contributing to a continuous cycle of improvement in teaching practices (Seldin & Associates, 1997).

The implications of promoting reflective practice and self-assessment are profound. Research indicates that teachers who actively engage in reflection and self-assessment demonstrate increased instructional effectiveness and job satisfaction (Farrell, 2007). Additionally, these practices contribute to a culture of lifelong learning, where teachers continuously seek opportunities for growth and refinement in their pedagogical approaches.

f. Comprehensive Guide and Support. This theme centers on using manuals, which contain guidelines for classroom observation and provide effective coaching and mentoring. This is related to the use of a tool or guide during classroom observation. Master teachers are given the responsibility to observe classes once every quarter, as reflected in the DepEd Updated RPMS Manual (2017). The statements of the informants below emphasize the need for a comprehensive guide for mentors conducting classroom observations, covering various assessment tools.

“I seldom use and consult the RPMS Guide during classroom observation. I already know some aspects of classroom observation, but I need to be guided by the manual.” (Informant 5,6)

These statements emphasize the need for a comprehensive guide for mentors conducting classroom observations, covering various assessment tools. This guide could include guidelines on effective observation techniques, specific assessment forms, and strategies for providing constructive feedback to teachers. As pointed out by Serrant (2015), coaching and mentoring can inspire and empower people, build commitment, increase productivity, grow talent, and promote success. They are essential elements of modern mentoring practices. And to attain success, master teachers established related schemes to improve instructional coaching and mentoring. One of the schemes that master teachers should have is to be guided by the process of coaching and mentoring. This process is written in this manual and will help master teachers improve their coaching and mentoring.

The study delves into various themes related to effective instructional coaching and mentoring practices, as perceived by master teachers. One prominent theme highlighted is the significance of building trust, which serves as the cornerstone of mentorship. Trust is established through authenticity, empathy, and active listening, creating a safe and supportive learning environment where open communication can thrive. Trust between mentors and mentees is essential for fostering teacher engagement in reflective practices and implementing new instructional strategies with confidence. Ultimately, building trust cultivates a collaborative partnership where

both mentors and mentees contribute to a culture of continuous learning.

Another crucial theme discussed is understanding individual needs, which involves tailoring coaching approaches to address the unique strengths and challenges of each teacher. By recognizing the diverse backgrounds, experiences, and skill sets of teachers, coaches can engage in ongoing assessments and conversations to gain insights into individual needs. This personalized approach enhances teacher satisfaction, professional development, and the relevance of coaching interventions, ultimately empowering teachers to take ownership of their learning journey.

Furthermore, targeted classroom observation and feedback are highlighted as essential components of effective coaching and mentoring practices. Constructive feedback, delivered with empathy and respect, inspires growth and development in teachers by focusing on areas for improvement while acknowledging strengths. This approach fosters a culture of continuous learning and professional growth, empowering teachers to refine their skills and strategies for enhanced effectiveness in the classroom.

Collaborative planning and curriculum enhancement are emphasized as collaborative efforts to design engaging lessons and integrate innovative teaching methods and technology into instructional practices. This approach acknowledges the value of collective expertise and diverse perspectives in creating a dynamic and effective learning environment. By engaging teachers in collaborative planning and technology integration, coaches promote professional growth, enrich the curriculum, and align teaching practices with the evolving needs of students.

Developed Instructional Coaching and Mentoring Handbook

The researchers developed an “Instructional Coaching and Mentoring Handbook for Master Teachers” designed to improve the instructional coaching and mentoring practices of master teachers. This handbook looks at coaching and mentoring models that you can use in your role as coach and mentor, supporting colleagues and other teachers to find solutions to challenges they are experiencing in their teaching practice. It also provides you with a range of assessment tools that reinforce and develop wider aspects of your teaching strategies and practices.

This handbook also serves as a guide for master teachers during classroom observations related to the coaching and mentoring process. The discussions in this handbook use the Target, Optimize, Capture, Navigate, and Apply (TOCNA) approach, which aims to equip them with the necessary knowledge to hone the skills that they already know and prepare them for their journey in instructional coaching and mentoring.

Target provides the objectives you are expected to develop through the lessons in this handbook. Optimize, allow students to recall prerequisite knowledge and skills, and make the best or most effective use of an opportunity to be a master

teacher. On the other hand, capture prepares you for the content you will learn; think of the things you have used and remember what you have experienced. It emphasizes, captivates, and holds the interest of the coaching and mentoring process, which helps address the specific needs of a teacher and achieve goals since a solution-focused model is applied. Furthermore, master teachers should discharge their instructional coaching and mentoring practices. Apply engages you in a task that will enable you to apply what you have learned to real-life situations.

The handbook contains various observation techniques, such as focused observations, walk-throughs, and formal evaluations. It can provide mentors with insights into how to adapt these techniques based on the specific needs and goals of the observation. The handbook also introduces mentors to a range of assessment instruments, including checklists, rubrics, and self-assessment tools. Each tool should be accompanied by guidance on when and how to use it effectively. Clear guidelines for the entire observation process are essential. This handbook explored techniques for framing feedback positively, linking it to observed evidence, and offering actionable suggestions for improvement. Recognizing the diversity of teaching styles, the handbook should guide mentors on how to approach observations in a way that respects and appreciates individual teaching approaches.

This “Instructional Coaching and Mentoring Handbook for Master Teachers aims to improve the instructional coaching and mentoring of master teachers. Specific objectives are as follows: (a) improve instructional practices by providing targeted support and feedback through instructional coaching and mentoring; (b) empower educators to engage in continuous professional development by offering personalized coaching sessions and resources. (c) cultivate a collaborative teaching environment by encouraging open communication and the exchange of ideas among educators. (d) Connect improved teaching practices to enhanced student learning outcomes by focusing on evidence-based instructional strategies. Provide targeted mentorship to newer educators to enhance job satisfaction. (f) Foster a mindset of continuous improvement by encouraging educators to engage in reflective practices and embrace opportunities for growth; and (g) Establish mechanisms for regular feedback, assessment, and adjustment of the program to ensure its effectiveness and relevance over time.

Effectiveness of Instructional Coaching and Mentoring Handbook

This section provides statements from master teachers on the effectiveness of the proposed handbook in improving the instructional coaching and mentoring practices of master teachers. They are classified into four themes, such as empowering change through guided collective knowledge, navigating classroom observations, forging effective and sustainable coaching and mentoring, elevating teaching, and transforming learning.

a. Empowering change through guided collective knowledge. This theme revolves around the transformative impact of guidance on master teachers and the pivotal role of collective knowledge in the coaching and mentoring process. It emphasizes the idea that the effectiveness of this handbook goes along with proper reference and guidance; significant positive changes can occur in the practices of master teachers. Coaching and mentoring could be a success with the support of other individuals and a guide that will lead to doing so. The effectiveness of the handbook is supported by what the informants narrated:

“Very effective. It will surely guide us master teachers on what is all about the coaching and mentoring process and what to do during coaching and mentoring, especially during class observation.” (Informant 1): “It would be a great help for me as my reference and guide for coaching and mentoring my colleagues. (Informant 2) “Effective in such a way, this is very helpful in coaching and mentoring, especially during classroom observation.” (Informant 5) “Guide us, and there is a significant change that happened to master teachers’ practices. It serves also as collective knowledge; an essential feature of coaching and mentoring is written in the handbook.” (Informant 7)

The statements of master teachers imply that coaching and mentoring practices would not be effective without the necessary support and direction for professional development. Grady and Gilmour (2022) explore in their study the role of coaching and mentoring in developing instructional leaders. It provides practical insights and strategies for using these approaches to improve instruction. Likewise, guided support empowers master teachers to take on instructional leadership roles within the educational context. It deals with how master teachers, with the right guidance, can become leaders who drive positive changes in teaching practices.

Exploring the essential features of coaching and mentoring contributes to the empowerment and transformation of master teachers. This includes a focus on communication, feedback, goal-setting, and other coaching elements that facilitate positive change. The theme suggests that professional growth is not an isolated journey but a collective endeavor. According to Hawkey (2016), guided collective knowledge contributes to the creation of a supportive learning community within the educational institution. It considers the role of mentorship in fostering collaboration, trust, and a culture of shared learning. It explores how the guidance provided through coaching enhances the overall professional development of teachers and contributes to a culture of continuous improvement.

b. Navigating classroom observations. This theme centers around the effectiveness of the handbook as a guiding compass for master teachers during classroom observations, providing them with direction, purpose, and valuable insights. It encompasses various aspects of the observation process that

contribute to its effectiveness as a guide for teacher preparation and professional growth. To elaborate further on its effectiveness, Informant 2 said, “It serves as my guide on the preparation, during, and after classroom observations.” Furthermore, Informants 3, 5 & 8 said that “this handbook will guide mentors on the proper ways or processes of coaching and mentoring that will be used during class observations.”

The statements above provide information on how teachers strategically use the handbook in preparation for classroom observations. It explores the importance of pre-observation planning, setting clear goals, and aligning instructional strategies with the observation focus. Highlighting the significance of having clear guidelines and objectives for classroom observations. This involves understanding the purpose of the observation, whether it is focused on pedagogical techniques, student engagement, or other specific aspects of teaching.

As mentioned in the 2017 DepEd Updated RPMS Manual, the use of coaching and mentoring approaches for deliberate, effective teaching involves both conversations and classroom observations. These approaches provide opportunities for school professional learning and support classroom walk-throughs. Thus, using this handbook during classroom observation is very important for examining how master teachers actively engage in self-reflection and gather insights during the observation process. It emphasizes the role of observations as a dynamic and reflective practice that informs instructional decisions.

It also explores how classroom observations contribute to ongoing professional development. It considers how teachers use observation feedback to refine their teaching practices, enhance their instructional strategies, and address areas for improvement. Focusing on the collaborative nature of feedback during classroom observations. It explores how observations facilitate constructive conversations between teachers and observers, fostering a culture of shared learning and improvement.

Highlighting the idea that classroom observations serve as an empowering tool for teachers on their professional growth journey. It considers how observations, when approached with a growth mindset, become opportunities for skill development and enhancement. Buban and Digo (2021) state that instructional leadership plays a vital role in the teaching and learning process. Teaching and learning happen in the four corners of the classroom, where the school head’s role as instructional leader is observed and performed. School heads evaluate the effectiveness of their teachers in improving the academic culture of the school. This implies that they offer instructional supervision and technical assistance to promote good teaching (Montales & Digo, 2024). School heads and master teachers are tapped to extend instructional coaching and mentoring during classroom observation. Examining how the observation process contributes to creating a positive and supportive teaching environment. It considers the role of

constructive feedback, mutual respect, and a commitment to continuous improvement in fostering a positive culture (Danielson, 2013).

c. Forging effective and sustainable coaching and mentoring. This theme focuses on the results of intervention on master teachers assuming the role of a coach or mentor. It underscores the idea that being guided by this intervention enhances the effectiveness of instructional coaching and mentoring practices and contributes to the sustainability of positive outcomes. According to Killion, J., and Harrison (2016), being guided through a well-designed intervention significantly enhances one's effectiveness as a coach or mentor, fostering sustained positive outcomes and professional growth for both mentors and mentees.

This sub-theme also explores how guided interventions contribute to establishing practices that endure over time, creating a sustained positive impact on both mentors and mentees, and fostering trust and positive relationships between coaches and mentors and their mentees. It also includes the integration of best practices, ethical considerations, and adherence to recognized guidelines within the coaching and mentoring process. "Being guided by the intervention will make you an effective coach or mentor. Surely you will achieve sustainable results." (Informant 1) "There is a significant change among master teachers' coaching and mentoring practices, and we promote continuous improvement on our part." (Informant7)

These statements imply that master teachers, when guided through a well-structured intervention, undergo a transformative process in their instructional coaching and mentoring roles. It explores shifts in mindset, skill acquisition, and the adoption of effective strategies. Knight (2009) emphasizes the role of instructional coaching in improving the teaching practices of the mentee. Moreover, it explores how intervention equips master teachers with necessary skills, including effective communication, active listening, and goal-setting.

Emphasizing the importance of the intervention, this will provide a roadmap for coaching and mentoring success. Hall and Crichton (2016) discussed in their article that intervention includes elements such as goal clarification, action planning, and ongoing support mechanisms. These coaching and mentoring practices will be beneficial not only for the beginning teachers but also for the master teachers as experienced teachers. Furthermore, this will facilitate reflective practices among coaches and mentors. It considers the role of structured reflection in identifying strengths, areas for growth, and refining coaching and mentoring approaches for continuous improvement. Focusing on the sustainability of positive coaching and mentoring outcomes.

It explores how structured guidance contributes to creating a supportive and trusting mentorship environment. (Killion & Harrison, 2006). This theme encapsulates the idea that being guided through a well-designed intervention significantly

enhances one's effectiveness as a coach or mentor, fostering sustained positive outcomes and professional growth for both mentors and mentees. This theme focuses on the results of intervention on master teachers assuming the role of a coach or mentor. It underscores the idea that being guided by this intervention enhances the effectiveness of instructional coaching and mentoring practices and contributes to the sustainability of positive outcomes. According to Killion et al. (2016), being guided through a well-designed intervention significantly enhances one's effectiveness as a coach or mentor, fostering sustained positive outcomes and professional growth for both mentors and mentees.

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d. Elevating teaching and transforming learning. This theme underscores the reciprocal relationship between coaching and mentoring effectiveness and the enhancement of both teaching performance and learner outcomes. The narratives of the informants support its effectiveness and show that it can really improve the teaching practice and performance of the learners. Informant 6 said: “When it can help improve the teaching performance of the teachers and, more importantly, when the learner’s performance and participation are evident and enhanced.”

The statement above explores the interconnected dynamics that contribute to the success of teachers and, consequently, the enriched participation and performance of learners. Chai and Tsai (2022) state that coaching and mentoring promote reflective practice among educators in a Malaysian secondary school. It focuses on the potential of coaching and mentoring to impact both the instructional leadership practices of teachers and the performance of students. It also highlights the importance of individualized support provided through coaching and mentoring in addressing specific needs and challenges faced by teachers.

This sub-theme explores how coaching and mentoring lead to targeted improvements in teaching methods and professional practices. It also emphasizes the role of coaching and mentoring in fostering a collaborative learning community. According to Goldring et al. (2019), coaching and mentoring programs can be used as a lever for systematic improvement in educational settings. It explores how effective mentorship contributes to a culture of shared knowledge, mutual support, and continuous learning among educators as well as among learners.

Focusing on how coaching and mentoring effectiveness translate into the adoption of student-centered approaches in teaching, this sub-theme explores the shift towards pedagogical strategies that prioritize the needs, engagement, and learning outcomes of students. It underscores the transformation of teachers into learner-centric guides under the influence of effective coaching and mentoring. The impact of peer coaching and mentoring programs can be seen both on teacher development and student outcomes, according to Moffett and Milligan (2016). It explores how teachers, empowered by mentorship, facilitate active participation, and foster a positive learning environment for students.

Examining how coaching and mentoring effectiveness fosters a culture of continuous improvement in teaching practices can also establish tangible gains in learner participation resulting from effective coaching and mentoring. This sub-theme explores the correlation between enhanced teaching practices and increased engagement, involvement, and enthusiasm among students (Knight, 2009). This theme summarizes the symbiotic relationship between coaching and mentoring effectiveness, showcasing how investing in teacher development not only elevates teaching practices but also

brings about significant transformations in learner participation and performance.

The study presented delves into the effectiveness of instructional coaching and mentoring, as outlined in a proposed handbook, through the perspectives and testimonies of master teachers. It categorizes their feedback into four main themes: empowering change through guided collective knowledge, navigating classroom observations, forging effective and sustainable coaching and mentoring, and elevating teaching and transforming learning.

Empowering change through guided collective knowledge underscores the transformative impact of guidance on master teachers and the importance of collective knowledge in coaching and mentoring. The master teachers emphasize the necessity of having a reference and guide during coaching and mentoring processes, particularly during classroom observations. This theme aligns with existing literature, such as Grady and Gilmour's (2022) study, which explored the role of coaching and mentoring in developing instructional leaders. It highlights how guided support empowers master teachers to drive positive changes in teaching practices, emphasizing communication, feedback, goal-setting, and other coaching elements essential for professional growth.

Navigating classroom observations highlights the handbook's effectiveness as a guiding compass for master teachers during observation processes. The statements from master teachers underscore the significance of pre-observation planning, goal-setting, and aligning instructional strategies with observation focus areas. This aligns with DEPED's updated RPMS manual, emphasizing the importance of coaching and mentoring approaches for effective teaching. Classroom observations are portrayed as dynamic and reflective practices that inform instructional decisions and contribute to ongoing professional development, fostering a culture of shared learning and improvement.

Forging effective and sustainable coaching and mentoring focuses on the results of interventions on master teachers assuming coaching or mentoring roles. The feedback suggests that structured interventions enhance instructional coaching and mentoring practices, may require strategic leadership to promote sustainable positive outcomes, and fostering trust and positive relationships between mentors and mentees (Barola & Digo, 2022). This theme aligns with Killion and Harrison's findings, emphasizing the importance of well-designed interventions in enhancing coaching and mentoring effectiveness, promoting professional growth, and facilitating reflective practices among coaches and mentors.

Elevating teaching and transforming learning explores the reciprocal relationship between coaching and mentoring effectiveness and the enhancement of teaching performance and learner outcomes. The feedback indicates that coaching and mentoring contribute to targeted improvements in teaching methods, foster collaborative learning communities, and prioritize student-centered approaches in teaching. This aligns with existing research suggesting that effective

mentorship programs can lead to systematic improvements in educational settings, as well as increased student engagement, involvement, and enthusiasm.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the researchers arrived at the following conclusions: The delineation of six themes in instructional coaching and mentoring for master teachers reflects a comprehensive and strategic approach. From building trust to comprehensive guidance and support, each theme addresses vital aspects of professional development, providing a holistic framework for cultivating effective teaching practices and continuous improvement. The Instructional Coaching and Mentoring Handbook for Master Teachers is developed to effectively discharge the instructional coaching and mentoring of master teachers. The effectiveness of the developed handbook to effectively discharge the instructional coaching and mentoring of masters is emphasized on the following themes: empowering change through guided collective knowledge, navigating classroom observations, forging effective and sustainable coaching and mentoring, and changing learning and elevating performance. A guideline was developed to adopt and utilize the instructional coaching and mentoring handbook for master teachers and improve their instructional coaching and mentoring.

Considering the findings and conclusions drawn, the following recommendations are proposed: Educational institutions may tailor their coaching and mentoring to foster a culture of continuous learning and professional development for master teachers. This may provide mentors with practical skills in delivering positive feedback, engaging in reflective dialogue, and creating a supportive environment conducive to the professional growth of educators. DepEd should adopt and utilize an instructional coaching and mentoring handbook that integrates coaching and mentoring principles and the essentials of classroom observation. Facilitating collaboration among educators, master teachers, and curriculum developers' enhancement of the handbook can be done based on the needs of master teachers. To enhance the effectiveness of the handbook, ongoing efforts may focus on continuous monitoring and evaluation. A feedback mechanism may also be implemented to gather insights from master teachers, school heads, and other observers to ensure that the handbook remains relevant and responsive to emerging educational trends. The developed guidelines should be utilized to create an evidence-based policy that can improve the instructional coaching and mentoring practices of master teachers. Furthermore, research may be conducted, like the present undertaking, to highlight the instructional coaching and mentoring of master teachers. Future researchers may conduct studies such as enhancing classroom observation and supervision and the utilization of e-tools in coaching and mentoring.

VI. DISCLOSURE

We declare that we have no financial or material interests related to the research in this paper that could create a conflict of interest.

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