

Level of Practice of Master Teachers as Instructional Leaders

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Abstract— Master teachers are professionals known for their high level of proficiency in the education curriculum. They oftentimes serve as mentors to other teachers and assist the school heads in the area of instructional supervision. They are experts in practice in achieving quality student learning in the school setting. This study on the level of practice of master teachers as instructional leaders ventured into how the master teachers in Irosin II District discharge their instructional functions along with the key areas of curriculum and instruction. The descriptive qualitative research design was employed to unveil the practices of the informants in discharging roles as master teachers. It is revealed that the instructional competence of master teachers is the foundation of their effective instructional leadership in bringing out the best in students and empowering peers. Their understanding of curriculum content and pedagogy made them innovative and effective in instructional delivery. Having remarkable skills in planning, assessing, and reporting paved the way to arrive at evidence-based instructional decisions. The professional growth and development of master teachers affected their upskilling and retooling process for their continuous growth and development. Their instructional practices created an impact on learning outcomes, teachers' competence, and the promotion of best practices in schools. These cited findings provided a framework for proposing a professional learning community plan to continuously improve the instructional practice of master teachers.

Keywords— curriculum and instruction, instructional leaders, instructional leadership, instructional practices, master teachers.

I. INTRODUCTION

Quality education is significant to the transformation of every country as it facilitates the development of the human capacity to transform natural resources to advance the quality living standard of the people. Underscoring the primary significance of education to society, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) acknowledged education to be a critical element of national development and global transformation advocating equitable and quality education for all (Westheimer, 2020).

In the context of education, where schools commit to delivering quality education to the community, a hierarchy of positions is present. People in higher posts are expected to exhibit proper discharge of inherent managerial duties.

The Philippine government institutionalized mechanisms to “promote and improve the social and economic status of public school teachers, their living and working conditions, their terms of employment and career prospects so that they may compare favorably with existing opportunities in other walks of life, attract and retain in the teaching profession more people with

the proper qualifications” (Magna Carta for Public School Teachers).

To make a name for the institution, the overall growth and development of its members and the position of a leader are required; as a result, leadership in general, and at the basic education level in particular, is regarded as a significant field of study.

Leadership is expected to be multi-dimensional and a leader must have the necessary abilities and skills to meet the goals (Lopez & Ensari, 2014). Instructional leadership is described as a type of educational leadership that focuses solely on teaching and learning, the technical core of a school.

This is accomplished by instructional leaders concentrating on the work of teachers Tatla et al (2019) described instructional leadership as a combination of supervision, staff development, and curriculum development that facilitates educational improvement. Instructional leaders have to convey expected outcomes to teachers while maintaining a positive instructional environment in their organizations to expand teacher commitment and most importantly their performance

A master teacher is a term used freely to identify a model of the teacher who has excelled and proven effectiveness. The definition may be set by the state, the local school board, or a teacher education program; a master teacher's traits are perceived differently by educators than by the public at large.

A master teacher may be recognized by administrators and peers, and even receive compensation for his or her accomplishments, or may simply be a teacher who excels in the classroom consistently. Experienced education professionals, and students, will "know one when they see one, but a master teacher's impact is felt long after she executes her teaching responsibilities (Carandang, 2016).

Master teachers are independent learners who strive to improve their learning to deliver effective learning to the students and their peers. The core component of a master teacher is to deliver high-quality instructional competence to their students and also professional development to career teachers.

Professional growth is an expectation for the master teacher, not only providing it to others but also searching out opportunities for themselves (National Institute for Excellence in Teaching, 2013).

Moreover, the primary role of the master teacher is to visit classrooms and coach teachers using reflective practice to improve instruction. Specific responsibilities of the master teacher include curriculum and professional development and support such as providing individual support and planning small group meetings or trainings for teachers (UNESCO, 2014).

Department of Education Order establishes the department's Results-Based Performance Monitoring System and establishes specific guidelines for setting performance standards for all department employees.

Teachers' roles, particularly those of Master Teachers, are critical in establishing the school's overall performance, all the way up to the highest office. Master teachers are accountable for mentoring co-teachers who are struggling with content and skill acquisition.

They assist principals with instructional and classroom monitoring, curriculum development and enrichment, and professional ideas, problems, issues, and concerns. Additionally, master teachers initiate projects and

programs that enhance the curriculum and make necessary instructional materials accessible to teachers and students, to name a few of the majority of their responsibilities. Nonetheless, master teachers must master their duties and responsibilities to equip them with the expertise necessary to provide technical assistance in their jobs.

More so, one of the duties of a Master Teacher is assisting teachers who are new to the service. They are expected to help teachers through classroom observations that allow them to assess their classroom practices and strategies and provide technical assistance afterward to improve those practices.

This duty of Master Teachers was further realized through the implementation of the Results-Based Performance Management System Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (RPMS-PPST) through DepEd Order No. 42 series 2017. From commencement through distinguished practice, the PPST establishes clear expectations for teachers along well-defined career stages of professional growth, encourages teachers to make a concerted effort to improve their skills and assess teacher performance actively, identifies needs, and provides professional development support using a consistent metric.

Master Teachers are given six loads, of which four hours are classroom teaching, and the remaining two hours are intended for classroom observations and mentoring. Master Teachers are tasked to observe teachers and rate them according to how they deliver their lessons. This rating is reflected in their Performance Commitment and Review Form (IPCRF) in a specific school year.

Adherence to DepEd Order (DO) No. 2, s. 2015 prescribing the Guidelines on the Establishment and Implementation of the Results-Based Performance Management System (RPMS) in the Department of Education (DepEd) and under Section 5 of DO 42, s. 2017 on the National Adoption and Implementation of the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST), which mandates that all performance appraisals for teachers shall be based on this set of standards, - the PPST-based RPMS for teachers shall utilize all 37 indicators of PPST and shall be distributed across three school years (Sys): SY 2022-2023, SY 2023-2024, and SY 2024-2025.

Relative to the above-mentioned the consolidated Teachers Journal of Accomplishment and Development Plan revealed that there is a need for all teachers to acquire relevant skills and training.

Skills particularly on innovation in education to promote critical thinking, a sense of adventure, and an openness to adapt that will serve the learners in the classroom, and pedagogy in teaching, were among the cited training needs.

These will further enhance the instructional competence and leadership capacity of the master teacher who have duties and responsibilities to share her expertise to supervise the instructional performance of teachers. But first, master teachers have to critically reflect on their adeptness in performing their duties and responsibilities in the context of Philippine education curriculum.

Meanwhile, based on the consolidated National Competency Based Teaching Standard (NCBTS) – Teachers Strength Needs Assessment (TSNA) results for three consecutive years starting SY: 2013-2014, SY: 2014-2015, and SY: 2015-2016 of Human Resource Development (HRD), Schools Governance Operations Division (SGOD) revealed that there is a need for the master teachers in the Division of Sorsogon Province to acquire relevant skills and trainings.

Skills particularly in ICT aided instruction, research, pedagogy in teaching, instruction, supervision and monitoring, and training design were among the cited training needs for the master teachers. These will further enhance their instructional competence and leadership capacity as master teachers who have different duties and functions given to them in their respective schools.

Moreover, in recent times, education stakeholders have expressed their concern over the poor performance of learners in the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA).

Some blamed the school principals and teachers while some blamed the students themselves and the parents. Whoever is blamed, the fact remains, that the school and its organizational management correlate with the academic achievement of the learners.

Lapid (2021) stated that it is not only learning that must continue amid the different health and political crises globally, but the Instructional Supervision (IS) for

teachers as well. The instructional supervision serves as the mechanism to evaluate and validate teacher's performance of the expected professional competence, where the delivery of quality education must persist. It is timely to monitor how teachers deliver quality instruction, perform teaching and learning pedagogies, and provide innovations or intervention program in schools. This also provides feedback mechanism to improve teaching and learning performance. As stipulated in DepEd Order No. 42, s. 2017, teachers must be provided with continuous technical assistance to achieve proficiency levels in their practice.

Moreover, teachers are mandated to carry a huge responsibility for the delivery of the different learning skills. According to the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (2017), the quality of an educational system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers.

Evidence show unequivocally that good teachers are vital to raising student achievement, i.e., quality learning is contingent upon quality teaching. Hence, enhancing teacher quality becomes of utmost importance for long-term and sustainable nation building and being prepared of what is ahead of the new normal of education. As such, this study would like to contribute on the development of instructional practices of master teachers, thus, lead to improvement of academic performance of learners.

Furthermore, knowing that the aim of instructional leadership is tied to the core work of instructional leaders, teaching, and learning, it is critical that we understand the practices of master teacher and its impact on teaching and learning.

This study may help new and current master teachers understand the magnitude of the position and their responsibilities in the school. Additionally, this study may assist DepEd officials in coaching master teachers in reaching their full potential in developing the teachers and students' academics.

In view of the multifarious tasks and instructional supervisory roles of master teachers, it is inherent upon them to acquire instructional practices to achieve an effective educational goal constant improvement of the total educational programs.

As such, the researcher is immensely motivated and enthused to conduct the study in order to determine the instructional leadership practices and identify the encountered challenges observed and experience by the Master teachers in the District of Irosin Hence, the output of this study was the basis for the proposed plan of action to further enhance their instructional competencies and leadership practices capacity and to address the challenges encountered by master teachers who have different duties and functions given to them in their respective schools.

II. OBJECTIVES

This study determined the level of practice of master teachers as instructional leaders in Irosin II District during the School Year 2023-2024. Specifically, it identified the instructional competence of master teachers influence their effectiveness as instructional leaders. The impact of master teachers' understanding of curriculum content and pedagogy on their instructional leadership.

The master teachers' skills in planning, assessing, and reporting affect their instructional leadership. The professional growth and development of master teachers influence their instructional leadership capacity. Instructional practices of master teachers affect teachers' performance and professional learning community plan may be proposed for a continuous effective level of practice of master teachers as instructional leaders.

III. METHODOLOGY

The study utilized a descriptive quantitative. It is the most appropriate to be employed for a researcher to assess and evaluate the extent of practices of master teachers relative to their responsibilities their role as instructional leaders.

The informants of the study were the nine (9) master teachers of elementary schools in the district of Irosin II. Six (6) of them are master teacher I whereas three (3) of them are master teacher II. Purposive sampling was utilized in this study to select a specific group of individuals or units for analysis.

Researcher-made interview with an open-ended question was the main instrument to be utilized in this study. Hence, no statistical treatment of data was used as it explored the experiences of teachers on their practices as instructional leaders.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following results were gathered, analyzed and interpreted by the researcher based from the objectives of the study using the procedures outlined in the one-on-one interview. Textual analysis and interpretation were used.

1. How Master Teachers' Instructional Competence Influences Their Effectiveness as Instructional Leaders.

Master teachers have been regarded as school authorities possessing deep knowledge about the curriculum and educational foundation. They have been acknowledged as teachers of teachers. This kind of recognition challenges them to be competent in the field of curriculum and instruction. Their instructional competence has to radiate in the education field to ensure that the quality of education is improving. When the informants were asked how their instructional competence influences the effectiveness of their role as instructional leaders, varied and significant responses were elicited. Their narratives were reflected in the following themes.

Teaching Competence as a Foundation of an Effective Leadership

The instructional competence of master teachers helps them achieve a meaningful teaching-learning process which nurtures them to become more effective as instructional leaders. These are vouched by the shared responses of the research participants as evidenced by the following:

"Having instructional competencies makes me an effective instructional leader.", such was stressed by P1, a master teacher 2 who has been in 15 years in the service with 5 years occupying the MT 2 position.

"Instructional competence influenced my effectiveness as an instructional leader through the knowledge of pedagogical contents that helped me to be effective.", shared by P4, a master teacher 1 for 8 years.

"Having been promoted to the MT position means passing through several stages of screening for qualification verification to be regarded as a highly proficient teacher, and I am proud to say that my instructional competence was recognized and that qualities possessed be my capital in my journey in the realm of instructional supervision." uttered by P9, a newly promoted MT 1.

The responses of master teachers imply that instructional competence is very vital on the part of instructional leaders. Having such skills and competencies leads to being effective instructional leaders in school, hence promoting a better learning outcome.

The responses shared by the participants are similar to the study conducted by Ojale (2022) that master teachers possessed the personal, social, instructional, and professional attributes of effective teachers which influence their instructional leadership practices. Findings indicated also that they manifested to a great extent the duties and responsibilities relative to instructional competence that led them to perform effectively their roles.

Moreover, the findings are related to the study conducted by Buban and Digo (2021) that instructional leadership has been highlighted by previous studies on its effectiveness in enhancing students' achievements which later improves the school's performance.

It is concluded that the management beliefs and practices of school heads on instructional leadership have a significant relationship in communicating the school goals to conflict management the as leadership process maintains high visibility to change process, meaning that school heads make use of leadership processes to perform well the instructional leadership function of an instructional leader.

As stated by Dolorosa (2020) there is a need to improve the instructional competencies of the school to support the four (4) key areas of the teaching-learning process, the Instructional Support Teaching Effectiveness and Efficiency of teachers' Capacity Building; Curricular Enhancement; and Assessment of Learning Outcomes. Likewise, instructional leaders support professional development processes through professional teacher empowerment relative to guiding teachers' content and reflective practices (Aldridge et al 2020).

Bringing Out the Best in Students Through Instructional Competence

Based on the responses of teachers, clearly show that instructional competencies have a great impact on students' learning. These are evident in their responses below:

My instructional competencies help students learn in all learning areas. (P8 and P9)

As a master teacher, the primary function is to deliver the best quality instruction. Performing such resulted in better learning among students. (P5)

The disclosed responses above show that master teachers' instructional competencies influence students' learning. This implies that the better skills that master teachers have along instructional leadership competencies, the higher learning occurs on the part of the learners, the fact that if the teacher has effective competencies, the teaching-learning process becomes more efficient leading to the development of learners academically.

Moreover, the informants' experiences are related to the ideas of Ismail et al. (2018) that instructional leaders' competencies directly impact student achievement when they support teachers' quality and effectiveness by enhancing positive and effective teaching and learning climate. Also, instructional leaders' competencies indirectly impact student achievement by supporting teaching instructions to align with researched-based curriculum and assessment protocols and supporting teachers with needed resources.

As revealed in the study conducted by Saleem (2020) the significant findings of the study ensured that high-quality teaching and learning are happening in all classes which provides constructive feedback to the concerned teacher at the proper time by the leaders. Significant recommendations for the study were that instructional leaders should have a clear vision about the teaching practice implementation process, clearly convey their vision and beliefs to their staff correctly, understand classroom issues, and have a global perspective on the teaching-learning process. Therefore, master teachers must be capacitated on the performance of their duties and responsibilities, on enhancing their instructional supervisory competencies, and on administrative functions that they are directly performing in school (Matias, 2023).

Empowering Peers Through Instructional Competence

Based on the responses shared by master teachers, instructional competencies have a relationship to the development of instructional skills of their mentees. These are revealed in the following responses:

These aspects impact the quality of instruction which in turn affects student outcomes (P3).

Instructional competence greatly influences my effectiveness as an instructional leader, motivating me to approach my work with enthusiasm and a sense of fulfillment (P1).

Instructional competence entices my co-workers to do the same and improve and develop the capacity to lead in improving the performance of teachers along with the mastery of subject matter skills, teaching strategy skills, classroom management, and evaluation skills (P2, P4)

The responses of informants imply that one of the great factors in effectively performing the roles of master teachers as instructional leaders is to influence their mentees to become better teachers in the teaching-learning process.

Having effective instructional competence is being capacitated to lead and improve teachers' performance in teaching-learning situations. As pointed out by Blase (2020) that instructional leader is responsible for overseeing all policies as well as the teaching-learning process, expertly managing resources, providing constructive input, establishing programs to train teachers professionally, implementing advanced

programs and technology, and efficiently operating them, as well as maintaining an effective and supportive environment in the institution. Hence, Master teachers need to be engaged in a professional learning community to enhance their competence as instructional leaders and discuss concerns related to their duties and responsibilities (Matias, 2023).

2. Impact of Masters Teachers' Understanding of Curriculum Contents and Pedagogies on Their Instructional Leadership.

Master teachers who possess a comprehensive functional understanding of curriculum contents and pedagogical practices become an inspiration in the arena of teaching and learning. They serve as beacons of instructional leadership.

Mastery of Curriculum Contents and Pedagogy for Instructional Innovation

Understanding curriculum contents and knowledge pedagogies can better create lessons that engage and

challenge students while also helping them understand the material and build successful learning experiences. The importance of understanding curriculum content and pedagogy is highlighted by the participants of the study. These ideas are evident from their responses as shown below:

It is helpful to create lessons that are engaging. (P3)

It helps to build successful learning experiences. (P7)

My length of service and my position as well as my grade level assignment are possible factors why I have to be clever in the delivery of lessons. (P6)

Based on the responses of the informants, it implies that curriculum content and pedagogical knowledge of master teachers guided them on what to teach to their learners, and helped them better design lessons leading to meaningful experiences for their students. Such ideas can highlight its importance in everyday teaching situations to learn to realize the goal of educating students. The results were related to the study conducted by Landero (2023) that in general, the adeptness of a master teacher is very good in doing her duties and responsibilities, and good in conducting in-depth studies on teaching-learning innovation.

Meanwhile, the study is related to the investigation made by Malitic (2020) that senior high schoolmaster teachers in the Division of Laguna which showed expertise in subject matter, classroom management skills, evaluation skills, teaching strategy skills, and mentoring skills because of their instructional leadership capacity of the master teachers and knowledge curriculum content and pedagogy, and planning, assessing and reporting were found to be good. As such, master teachers must continue searching for opportunities to grow professionally and to share more knowledge with their co-workers, particularly on instructional competencies.

Curriculum Contents and Pedagogies Mastery Towards Effective Instruction

Understanding curriculum contents and pedagogies in their instructional leadership allows them to apply best practices, and techniques to teach their subjects effectively. Based on the statement of informants having an understanding of curriculum content and pedagogy improves their teaching practices This is evident in their responses below:

This understanding will not only guide my teaching practices to effectively teach my students. (P4, P8)

Understanding curriculum and pedagogy is a great help in making my lessons effective as instructional leaders by applying the best methods, strategies and practices in teaching. (P5)

A strong grasp of curriculum content and pedagogy is essential to effectively teach concepts and use effective practices in teaching. (P1, P3)

It fosters a good teaching-learning process for understanding content knowledge and pedagogy promotes effective teaching methods. (P2)

The experiences shared by the informants imply that to become an effective mentor one instructional leader must have a solid understanding of curriculum content and pedagogy. Having such knowledge can effectively teach students by applying the best innovations, techniques, and practices to help students learn better. The findings of the study are related to the study of Quisquino (2022) who determined the instructional leadership skills and competencies of Master teachers and its effect on the professional growth of teachers. The study found that in general, master teachers are highly competent in instructional skills and competencies in terms of instruction, research, coaching and mentoring, and observation and supervision. Also, in general, the teachers had a great extent on their professional growth in gaining new knowledge and information as regards teaching techniques and methodologies that they could apply in the teaching arena. Therefore, master teachers need to have a solid understanding of content and pedagogy to become highly competent and effective mentors to their colleagues and to teach effectively to their students.

The experiences shared by the informants imply that knowing content and pedagogy serve as channels for fostering effective learning in which students are actively engaged in the process. Such insights may allow the teacher to create lessons and choose effective practices and techniques. As opined by that to be able for the master teacher to perform their roles as instructional leaders, they must understand comprehensively content and pedagogy as their basis in providing constructive feedback and opportunities for revision are instructional practices, techniques that leads to teaching effectively. (Dekawati et al., 2020)

Bridging the Gaps in Teaching-Learning Through Adeptness with Curriculum Contents and Pedagogies.

A full grasp of content knowledge and pedagogies bridges the gaps in the teaching-learning delivery. Based on the statement of informants having an understanding of curriculum content and pedagogy bridges the gap in teaching-learning activity. This is evident in their responses below:

Understanding curriculum content and pedagogy allows teachers to resolve the gaps in terms of the learning outcomes of pupils. (P5)

Having such knowledge serves as a foundation to create lessons that would resolve problems and gaps in students' learning. (P6)

The experiences shared by the informants imply that knowing content and pedagogy address the learning gaps of students. For teachers, it allows them to develop teaching-learning delivery thereby promoting quality learning and resolving learning gaps among students in their academic areas. As highlighted in the DepEd Order No. 42 series 2017 the duties of a Master Teacher is assisting teachers who are new to the service. They are expected to help teachers through classroom observations that allow them to assess their classroom practices and strategies and provide technical assistance afterward to improve those practices. With these, several gaps can be addressed leading to a more effective and efficient teaching-learning delivery.

3. How the Master Teachers' Skills in Planning, Assessing, and Reporting Affect Their Instructional Leadership

Assessment has been an integral process in any teaching-learning activity. The master teachers' experiences in planning, assessing, and reporting help to quantify pupils' learning. Skills along with these assessment tasks provide parameters in gauging how far the curriculum standard is achieved.

Benchmark of Learning Outcomes

The informants of the study shared their experiences on the importance of skills that master teachers should have along with planning, assessing, and reporting. This is evident in their statements below:

As a master teacher, I need to possess proficient skills in planning, assessing, and reporting to effectively model instructional practices. These abilities not only enhance

my teaching but also serve as a benchmark for others to follow (P1).

It allows the teacher to determine the degree to which learners have achieved specific learning outcomes. (P2, P3)

The responses of the informants imply that having proficient skills in planning, assessing, and reporting helps them to be able to measure students' learning outcomes. It does not only guide them to do their instructional practices but most especially allows them to determine how students learn concepts from teachers' teaching-learning process.

This study is related to the ideas of Lynch (2016) who mentioned that assessment is a key part of today's educational system. Assessment serves as an individual evaluation system, and as a way to compare performance across a spectrum and populations. The purpose of assessment is to gather relevant information about student performance or progress or to determine student interests to make judgments about their learning process. As such, master teachers must be skillful in assessing performance to effectively reflect on each student's and teacher's level of achievement, as well as on specific inclinations of the group, and efficiently customize their teaching plans.

Mechanism in Providing Feedback

The informants of the study shared their experiences on the importance of skills that master teachers should have along with planning, assessing, and reporting. It does not only help them measure students' performance but teachers' performance as well. This is evident in their statements below:

It provides timely and appropriate plans, reports, and assessments that determine the mastery level and performance of the teachers. (P5)

It guides what skills are needed to be developed among teachers. (P6)

As a master teacher, it is needed to have those skills, especially in planning, assessing and reporting be more efficient. (P7, P9)

The responses of the informants indicated that the skills of master teachers in planning, assessing, and reporting allow them to measure teachers' performance. It guided

them to determine what needs to be developed among their colleagues for better learning outcomes.

The findings are related to the study conducted by Conales (2023) which showed that Secondary Master Teachers display an advanced level of performance of mentoring skills and technical assistance as perceived by beginning teachers and school heads in terms of community linkages and professional engagement, and personal growth and professional development. Master Teachers were also perceived to perform their mentoring skills and technical assistance to a great extent in terms of content knowledge and pedagogy, curriculum and planning, assessment and reporting, and personal growth and professional development As stated by Denver (2019) master teachers are accountable for mentoring co-teachers who are struggling with content and skill acquisition. They assist principals with instructional and classroom monitoring, curriculum development and enrichment, and professional ideas, problems, issues, and concerns.

Evidence-Based Instructional Decisions.

The informants of the study shared their experiences on the importance of skills that master teachers should have along with planning, assessing, and reporting. It serves as evidence-based instructional decisions. This is evident in their statements below:

I must have such skills for they are all ingredients in creating lessons, teaching concepts, and making sure that students are learning. (P7, P9)

It serves as our guide in deciding what to teach, and how to teach it leading to success in the teaching-delivery process. (P1, P8)

The responses of the informants indicated that the skills of master teachers in planning, assessing, and reporting served as their guide on what to teach and how to teach leading to a better learning delivery system. Deciding the best ways to teach effectively and efficiently is vital for better learning outcomes. As pointed out by Sio and Ismail (2019) master teachers must be very well in instructional competencies such as assessing planning and even reporting because they are significant components of student academic achievement, and so become a vital component of the instructional leaders' function.

4. How the Professional Growth and Development of Master Teachers Influences Their Instructional Leadership Capacity.

In the realm of teaching-learning, these master teachers are considered seasoned professionals. These educators have been at this pinnacle of proficiency because of their attitude toward professional growth and development.

Upskilling and Retooling Oneself Through Learning and Development

Exposure of these master teachers to varied forms of learning and development upgrades their instructional knowledge and skills in becoming an effective mentor and classroom teachers.

Based on the informants, professional growth and development help them upgrade their skills and knowledge to become effective mentors and classroom teachers. These are evident in their responses below:

Through professional growth and development such as attending to the new trends of teaching strategies, as I integrate it into my teaching, it expands my knowledge in teaching effectively to my students. (P3)

I attended seminars on how to mentor teachers as one of the responsibilities of a master teacher. With that training, I learned to upgrade my ways in mentoring and them to become an effective classroom teacher. (P15, P6)

The experiences of master teachers imply that to be upgraded along the different new trends in education along instructional practices and skills and instructional management of learning, one must grow professionally by attending training, attending course programs, and even studying for master and doctorate degrees to become effective instructional leaders at all times.

As revealed in the study conducted by the Teachers Journal of Accomplishment and Development Plan (2022) there is a need for all teachers to acquire relevant skills and training.

Skills particularly on innovation in education to promote critical thinking, a sense of adventure, and an openness to adapt that will serve the learners in the classroom, and pedagogy in teaching, were among the cited training needs.

These will further enhance the instructional competence and leadership capacity of the master teacher who have duties and responsibilities to share her expertise to supervise the instructional performance of teachers.

As recommended in the study conducted by Mendoza and Bautista (2022) it is then beneficial for the master teachers to attend seminars, workshops, and enhancement trainings to improve and sustain their instructional leadership practices and competence skills.

Keeping Abreast of the Trends in Innovation and Technology

Realizing the goal of education is making sure that learning is taking place on the part of the learners, master teachers must grow professionally. This idea was shared by some of the informants as clearly stated below:

I learned about the newest trends in education especially on teaching, innovations, roles of master teachers in the 21st century, and the like. (P1, P2)

Updated by the latest trends in terms of teaching, especially in teaching with the newest ICT applications in teaching. (P4, P9)

The results revealed that continuous learning is important for a master teacher to influence his colleagues and impart more knowledge along with instruction. This can be done by being updated with the new trends in teaching to serve as an effective model to other educators.

This is relevant to the idea that professional growth is an expectation for the master teacher, not only providing it to others but also searching out opportunities for themselves (National Institute for Excellence in Teaching, 2013).

As such, it is the responsibility of master teachers to be updated along instructional leadership to keep abreast with the current trends and issues in education particularly along their instructional competencies.

Continuous Growth and Progress

Based on the informants, the professional growth and development help them develop their skills and competencies as instructional leaders. These are evident in their responses below:

Continuous growth and progress lead to quality learning. As such, it is important to develop teachers' professional skills (P8, P9).

As master teachers, one must do their duty by searching for more learning opportunities to share and help their colleagues for continuous growth and progress (P2, P3)

The results revealed that continuous learning is important for a master teacher to continuously help their skills as well as their colleagues.

Doing duty on searching for more knowledge and opportunities to grow and develop leads to continued growth and progress.

As stressed by UNESCO (2014) the primary role of the master teacher is not only to visit classrooms and coach teachers using reflective practice to improve instruction.

Specific responsibilities of the master teacher include curriculum and professional development and support such as providing individual support and planning small group meetings or training for teachers, and responsibility to continue searching for more innovative learnings for continued growth and development.

5. How the Instructional Practices of Master Teachers Affect Teachers' Performance

The roles associated with the position of being a master teacher are not only noticeable to the learners. These highly skilled and experienced educators have unique roles over their peers and to the teachers.

Enhancing Learning Outcomes

The informants clearly showed that the instructional practices of master teachers, largely affect students' outcomes, particularly in learning. This is clearly stated below:

Increased student engagement and improved learning outcomes. (P1, P3)

Instructional support impacts not only teachers' competence but also the quality of instruction and learners' academic performance. (P2, P6)

The responses of informants indicated that the instructional practices of master teachers influence the

quality of instruction and most especially the learners' academic performance.

Students become more engaged and motivated when teachers have efficient skills along an instructional dimension.

The results were related to the study conducted by Teresito (2022) who revealed that master teachers can lead the school, particularly in improving the academic performance of the students.

Moreover, their instructional leadership capacity showed "Highly Proficient" especially in curriculum content and pedagogy, on planning, assessing, and reporting learners' outcomes and on personal growth and professional development, hence, improving the level of performance academically.

It is then beneficial for master teachers to be school leaders because they are already exposed to different responsibilities given to them.

As emphasized by Shaked and Benoliel (2019) having good practices such as monitoring teaching and learning materials, teachers, curriculum and assessments, and professional development increases teachers' efficacy beliefs and competency, which improves teachers' teaching instructional practices and increases student achievement.

Scaffolding Teachers' Competence

One of the positive effects of having good instructional practices is they support the instructional skills of teachers to achieve meaningful learning outcomes. These are evident in their responses below:

Instructional support by master teachers like mentoring skills fosters the development of the knowledge and skills by teachers to succeed in the classroom (P4, P9).

Assistance with lesson planning, advice on classroom management, instruction-related advice, and feedback help with assessing learner work and other activities that promote teachers' instructional knowledge and skills (P5).

Contributes greater significance to the instructional practices of teachers along with mastery of the subject matter and teaching strategies (P7, P8).

The shared experiences of informants indicate that being effective and efficient in practices as instructional leaders contributes largely to the development of colleagues who were supervised and managed by skillful master teachers.

Gaining insights from them and giving constructive feedback to teachers largely help them become an effective educator.

As such, instructional practices of master teachers must be improved and developed continuously for it affects greatly the performance of other teachers.

As recommended in the study conducted by Saleem et. al (2020) instructional leaders should have a clear vision of the teaching practice implementation process, clearly convey their vision and beliefs to their staff correctly, understand classroom issues, and have a global perspective on the teaching-learning process.

Modeling the Best Practices

The informants clearly showed that the instructional practices of master teachers can serve as models of their best practices to their colleagues. This is clearly stated below:

As a master teacher, one must be skillful in terms of instructional competence so you can serve as a model to your colleagues especially the best practices for better teaching-learning delivery. (P2, P4)

I modeled best practices that my colleagues can apply to enhance their skills and ways of teaching students as a means of providing quality education. (P1, P5)

The shared experiences of informants indicated that it is vital for master teachers to have instructional leadership competence for they serve as models to their colleagues. Having skillful different practices can help their co-teachers to effectively deliver lessons in the classroom.

As such, the instructional practices of master teachers must be improved and developed continuously to effectively share their best model and expertise with their colleagues.

As stressed by Sarpong and Kusi (2019) as a master teacher, one should have adequate knowledge and skills along with instructional competencies to be able to model effective pedagogies, and innovative

methodologies that would lead to the successful fulfillment of their job responsibility as a teacher, thereby affecting other members of educators.

Professional Learning Community Plan for Master Teachers is proposed and intended to improve the level of practice of master teachers as instructional leaders.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and interpretations presented, the researcher concludes that the instructional competence of master teachers serves as the foundation of their effective instructional leadership in bringing out the best in students and empowering peers.

The master teachers' understanding of curriculum content and pedagogy yields them toward instructional innovation and effective instruction that bridge gaps in teaching and learning.

The master teachers' skills in planning, assessing, and reporting enable them to benchmark the learning outcomes, provide quality feedback, and arrive at evidenced-based instructional decisions. The professional growth and development of master teachers greatly affect their upskilling and retooling process, innovativeness, and professional continuous growth and progress.

The instructional practices of master teachers greatly affect teachers' performance along with enhancing learning outcomes, scaffolding competence, and aiming for best practices. A professional learning community plan is proposed to continuously improve the instructional practices of master teachers.

From the conclusions, the following recommendations are formulated: (1) Master teachers' instructional competence being the foundation of effective instructional leadership be continuously improved through wholistic learning and development. (2) A portfolio consisting of instructional innovation and effective instruction models designed by master teachers be made for reference in the field and during LAC sessions. (3) Exemplar assessment tools crafted by master teachers be made available to serve as models in the classroom assessment. (4) A functional professional learning community or study group of teachers and master teachers be organized. (5) The school-based teacher induction program be continuously offered. (6)

The proposed professional learning community be adopted in the Irosin District to foster a culture of continuous improvement, especially in the instructional practices of master teachers for students' and teachers' development.

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