

Problems and Issues, Copings, and Insights of Master Teachers in Mentoring and Coaching Colleagues in Basic Education Schools: A Multiple Case Study

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ABSTRACT

The lack of effective mentoring and coaching calls for an urgent response from the Department of Education. This study identified problems and issues, coping mechanisms, and ways to enhance teacher development through interviews and focus group discussions with 11 master teachers selected through purposive sampling. Teaching overloads, limited time, coaching resistance, and implementation inconsistencies were coped with through flexible scheduling, micro mentoring, effective communication and openness, and others. Insights include setting clear objectives and communicating ideas effectively to ensure successful mentoring and coaching sessions. A dichotomized plan for mentoring and coaching focuses on guidance and professional growth and emphasizes skill application and classroom strategies, respectively.

Keywords: Problems and issues in mentoring and coaching colleagues, coping mechanisms on mentoring and coaching colleagues, insights in mentoring and coaching colleagues, basic education schools, multiple case study

INTRODUCTION

A significant challenge within the educational system is the lack of effective mentoring and coaching by master teachers (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). I have learned that the absence of structured mentoring programs contributes to inconsistent support for novice teachers (Ambrose et al., 2016), and many mentor-mentee relationships suffer from unclear goals, expectations, and accountability measures (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). The mentoring process often overlooks individual mentees' diverse needs and contexts (Aspfors & Fransson, 2015). Researchers emphasize the pivotal role of mentoring and coaching in fostering professional development and improving teacher performance (Ali et al., 2018).

Poor guidance and coaching are known to be big problems. Studies from many countries, like the US, Canada, and Australia, have shown how they affect how teachers work and how well their students do in school (Gallant, 2016; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Dinham & Scott, 2019). Moreover, the OECD (2019) reported that only a few countries have established comprehensive induction and mentoring programs for new teachers.

The Department of Education (DepEd) has created programs under the National Educators Academy of the Philippines (NEAP) to address these concerns, requiring master instructors to serve as instructional leaders and mentors (DepEd, 2017). I have found that novice teachers had significant fatigue and attrition rates due to inadequate mentoring (Ingersoll et al., 2018; Tonton, 2020; Quijano & Makano, 2021). The issue persists despite these efforts. Differentiated teaching environments and teacher shortages worsen this issue (Ravelingene, 2019; Macapagal & Primavera, 2022), emphasizing context-specific and comprehensive mentorship solutions.

The educational system and student outcomes suffer without effective mentorship for beginner educators. I have learned that insufficient support during the early years of teaching leads to higher burnout and attrition

rates, which worsens teacher shortages (Ingersoll et al., 2018; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019; Podolsky et al., 2019). Despite the recognized importance of mentoring, there is a research gap in developing comprehensive, context-specific strategies to address the challenges faced in mentor-mentee relationships (Aspfors & Fransson, 2020; Hobson & Malderez, 2018; Spooner-Lane, 2017; Hoffman et al., 2020).

This gap must be addressed urgently, as effective mentoring supports teacher retention and professional development and promotes a culture of continuous learning (Darling-Hammond, 2017; Feiman-Nemser, 2018; Kutsyuruba et al., 2019). My research aims to persuade policymakers and educational leaders to improve mentoring practices and the teaching-learning experience for educators and students (Goldhaber et al., 2020; Ronfeldt & McQueen, 2017; Redding & Nguyen, 2020). Failing to address the lack of effective mentoring may perpetuate achievement gaps and negatively impact student outcomes (Rockoff, 2008; Glazerman et al., 2010; Atteberry et al., 2017).

Significance of the Study

In line with SDG No. 4: Quality Education, this study analyses master teachers' mentoring and coaching practices and provides strategic insights for various players in the educational ecosystem. To improve teacher support systems, the Department of Education officials can use the study's thorough research to create policies and programs based on data. Similarly, school administrators can improve their leadership styles by receiving specific feedback. The research helps educators enhance their teaching methods and foster strong peer support networks by providing a forum for professional validation, development, and reflection. Learners are the ones who will gain the most from better mentoring and coaching practices because it leads to more interesting and exciting lessons for them. Last but not least, the study lays a solid groundwork for researchers, providing a comprehensive view of educational professional development and a jumping-off point for investigating new ways of supporting teachers that could improve basic education schools' academic quality.

Research Questions

The primary goal of this research study was to explore the problems and issues related to mentoring and coaching master teachers in basic education schools. Specifically, this study aimed to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the problems and issues of Master Teachers in large and mega schools in mentoring and coaching other teaching personnel?
2. What are the coping mechanisms of Master Teachers in large and mega schools in mentoring and coaching other teaching personnel?
3. What are the insights of the Master Teachers in large and mega schools in mentoring and coaching that can be shared with other master teachers?

Assumptions

This study posited that master teachers in large and mega schools encountered more intricate and multifaceted challenges in mentoring and coaching compared to those in smaller educational settings. These challenges were characterized by heightened administrative complexities, a broader range of teacher competencies, and increased barriers in institutional communication. These teachers must cultivate advanced coping strategies and produce nuanced insights that reflect exceptional resilience, innovative problem-solving abilities, and a profound comprehension of professional development dynamics. It allows them to effectively assist teaching staff and significantly enhance educational mentorship practices within a complex organizational environment.

Theoretical Lens

This study is anchored on Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977), which emphasizes the crucial roles of observation, imitation, and modeling in learning. According to this theory, people learn from interactions with others in a social context. Through observation, people carefully watch and take note of the

behaviors of others. They then imitate these behaviors, mainly when their observational experiences are positive or associated with rewards. Finally, modeling reinforces learning, where individuals internalize and refine the observed behaviors.

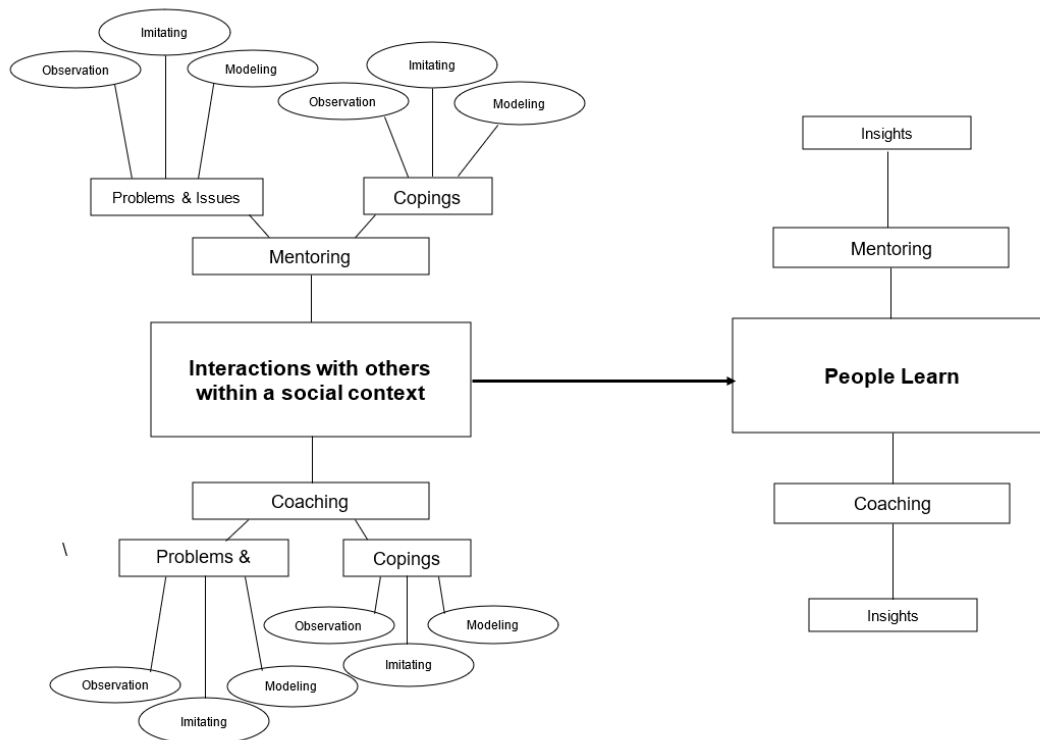


Figure 1. Research Paradigm

METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the research method and procedure employed in this study, including the research design, research environment, research respondents, research instruments, data gathering procedure, data analysis, and other sources of information and data treatment.

Research Design

A qualitative research design was employed, specifically adopting a multiple-case study approach. Qualitative research encompasses various methodologies, with the case study approach recognized for its comprehensive exploration of phenomena within natural settings (Creswell & Poth, 2016). As defined by Yin (2017), a multiple-case study involves the analysis of two or more cases, allowing for the examination of shared phenomena across varying contexts (DePoy & Gitlin, 2016). This methodology facilitates a deeper understanding of the complexities and contextual meanings attributed to the subject by the participants involved (Saldaña, 2021; Yin, 2018).

This study focused on the real-world settings of basic education schools to explore and interpret the mentoring and coaching practices of master teachers. Guided by the principles outlined by Creswell (2021), the researcher pursued an inquiry process to uncover the meanings attributed to these practices by the individuals involved. The research sought to capture authentic experiences and perspectives, emphasizing the unique challenges and insights of master teachers while avoiding preconceived notions.

The choice of a multiple-case study design, supported by Creswell (2021) and Leavy (2022), was particularly suited to educational topics. This methodology allowed the researcher to study several cases across time, utilizing various data collection methods, including in-depth interviews, document analysis, and field

observations. These methods facilitated a nuanced understanding of the experiences, strategies, and challenges encountered by master teachers in mentoring and coaching roles.

This study explored effective mentoring and coaching strategies by examining the experiences of master teachers in Davao City, showing the contextual factors shaping their practices and offering a comprehensive view of the educational landscape of the city.

Locale of the Study

The study was conducted in public elementary and secondary schools within Davao City. Located in southeastern Mindanao, Davao City is one of the Philippines' largest and most populous cities. The schools included in the study are part of the Division of Davao City, representing a range of educational settings and socio-economic backgrounds. This locale provided a comprehensive view of the educational system in the city and its operational dynamics.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The study involved eleven Master Teachers selected as key informants, divided based on the classification of their schools. In the context of this research, "large schools" were defined as those with 30-50 teachers for elementary and 26-100 teachers for secondary, according to the Department of Education Order No. 21, s. 2023. Three Master Teachers from these large schools were assigned to Case One. "Mega schools" were identified as having a teaching staff of 51 or more for elementary and 101 or more for secondary. The other three Master Teachers came from these mega schools and were assigned to Case Two. In-depth interviews were conducted with all five Master Teachers to gain comprehensive insights into their experiences. Additionally, focus group discussions involved five Master Teachers from the mega schools to explore their unique perspectives further. The key informants were chosen using purposive sampling based on their schedule availability and willingness to participate.

Conversely, qualitative researchers employed this sampling method to enlist participants capable of offering comprehensive and nuanced insights into the studied topic (Creswell, 2018). It was highly subjective and determined by the qualitative researcher, whom each participant's qualifying criteria participant met. Guided by this approach, the researcher identified potential participants using predefined inclusion criteria.

The inclusion criteria for master teachers were: 1) a Master teacher who had been in the education system for 3 years or more; 2) a Master teacher who had been handling one learning area or assigned to a mega school; and 3) a Master teacher who had been handling two or more learning areas or assigned in a large school.

Exclusion criteria encompassed: 1) busy Master Teacher unable to participate in IDIs; 2) appointed Master Teacher with less than 3 years in service; and 3) Master Teacher assigned as Teacher in charge.

Interview Guide Questions

The semi-structured interview guide was developed to explore the mentoring and coaching experiences of master teachers in basic education schools. It focused on understanding their problems and issues, their coping mechanisms, and the insights they gained in their roles, particularly in supporting colleagues and fostering professional growth. For the complete set of interview questions, please refer to Appendix G.

Data Gathering Technique

To gather the data for this study, the following steps served as a guide to the researcher:

Creswell (2016) cited that a researcher in a qualitative study utilized a set of thorough data collection procedures. It included essential steps such as selecting qualified participants, preparing and setting the available time and place for the interview, collecting various forms of data, and interviewing the participants

who experienced the same research phenomenon. This procedure was vital to achieving accurate information from the participants. In addition, Boyce & Neale (2006), as cited by Aspers (2016), stated that the researcher aimed for the voluntary participation of the participants by signifying consent forms. They were informed about the interview topics and research study based on the interviewees' availability and preferred time and date.

Before conducting the study, the Research Ethics Committee (REC) examined the ethical aspect of this paper. Thus, as a researcher, approval was sought from them before conducting the study. After attaining the protocol's ethical approval, the researcher ensured that the steps were followed correctly and held accountability for all the procedures and activities associated with the protocol.

Moreover, the researcher asked for permission from proper authorities before data gathering. The researcher secured an endorsement letter from the Dean of Graduate Education and forwarded the approval to the office of the Schools Division Superintendent, requesting permission to conduct the study at Davao City Division's public schools before conducting the study. The letters were given personally and sent through personal e-mail to inform them of the interview, time, and platform.

The researcher ensured that the identified participants had significant knowledge of the problem and were willing to participate and cooperate in completing the study. An Informed Consent Form (ICF) was given to each participant from the school in which they participated to inform them about the study's aim and key facts, including the nature of their participation. This informed consent was signed electronically, scanned, or alternatively. The participants were given informed consent before data gathering and asked to sign after the orientation. However, they had the right to withdraw from participating in the study. The selection of participants was done voluntarily and without coercion.

Moreover, the researcher ensured that another version of the informed consent was translated so the participants could understand it well. With this, it was ensured that the participants' signatures were attached to confirm their voluntary involvement, whether electronically, scanned, or in any other way. Then, after the informants signed the consent letter, the researcher conducted an orientation about the proper protocol for interviewing FB Messenger, as this was the online platform where participants had easy access.

However, those unable to attend the virtual meeting were informed by phone. Before the actual interview, the researcher ensured that the link was sent ahead of time and reminded them to be where they were most comfortable, especially where they were alone. Additionally, the researcher informed them to double-check the unit's hardware to avoid glitches. As the interviewer, the researcher also double-checked that the technology was working to have a smooth interview process flow.

Following this, the in-depth interview began, which should not exceed one hour. During the interview, to enrich the information, the researcher combined the interview guide questions with relevant probing inquiries, which experts validated before the interview. Furthermore, only the interviewer and interviewee could hear the discussion during the interview. The researcher and the participants were alone to ensure no one else would hear the conversation. Courtesy was observed for the entire duration of the interview.

Additionally, the recorded interviews were kept safely in the researcher's e-mail and other drives on the laptop to secure all the data taken throughout the study. The participants' answers were carefully transcribed verbatim to guarantee validity and precision during the data analysis. On the other hand, all the data was permanently destroyed by reformatting the external hard drive. At the same time, the paper records were shredded three years after the research study's conclusion.

However, the data could be kept and provided to other researchers, granted that it would only be used for reasonable academic purposes. These actions ensured the confidentiality, privacy, and security of the participants and all the data. The researcher utilized thematic analysis to analyze the answers of the participants. The researcher also consulted the adviser to ensure the analyses were correct and valid.

Data Analysis

The data analysis for this study was conducted using thematic analysis, which enabled the systematic identification, organization, and interpretation of patterns and themes within the data, offering a detailed understanding of participants' experiences. To address the research objectives, the responses from participants were analyzed and categorized based on whether they reflected mentoring or coaching practices in alignment with the duties and responsibilities described earlier.

The first step in the thematic analysis was data familiarization. Data familiarization includes the researcher thoroughly engaging with the transcripts and reviewing them multiple times to develop initial impressions and identify potential patterns. At this stage, the analyst distinguished whether the responses indicated mentoring or coaching based on each practice's specific duties and responsibilities. For example, statements referring to long-term, holistic guidance, career development, and personal growth were categorized under mentoring. In contrast, responses focused on goal-setting, performance improvement, and immediate feedback were categorized under coaching.

Following this, the data analyst generated initial codes, which served as descriptive labels for specific data segments, creating a framework for organizing responses according to the themes of mentoring and coaching. The next step involved identifying emerging themes by examining the relationships between codes and grouping them into broader patterns. For instance, responses that aligned with mentoring practices, such as offering career advice or supporting professional growth through observation and reflection, were grouped. In contrast, responses focused on specific skill improvement, lesson planning, and targeted feedback were categorized as coaching.

Once the analysis for individual cases was complete, a cross-case analysis was performed, comparing findings across different cases, identifying similarities, differences, and connections between mentoring and coaching experiences, and synthesizing the data to strengthen the overall conclusions. This step ensured that both mentoring and coaching practices were examined in context, highlighting how master teachers' methods contributed to novice teachers' development through both approaches.

The final stages of thematic analysis involved refining the themes, ensuring their relevance and accuracy, and assigning each a concise label and description. Data excerpts were integrated into the narrative to provide context and illustrate the identified themes. The analysis concluded with reporting findings, presenting the identified themes—mentoring and coaching—and their interpretations, supported by evidence from the data. Throughout the process, thematic analysis provided a flexible yet structured approach to gain in-depth insights into the qualitative data, ensuring that the findings were rooted in the participants' perspectives while aligning with the study's objectives (Braun & Clarke, 2019).

Trustworthiness of the Study

Trustworthiness. In my study, which explored the problems, issues, coping mechanisms, and insights of master teachers in mentoring and coaching their colleagues, trustworthiness played a significant role in ensuring the accuracy and credibility of the findings. The validity of this research depended on how well I captured and represented the lived experiences and perspectives of the master teachers, particularly the challenges and strategies they encountered in their mentoring roles.

I established trustworthiness through transparent data collection and analysis methods. I aimed to ensure that the findings reflected the genuine experiences of the participants without distortion from researcher bias. I relied on rigorous methodologies such as in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis to provide a detailed understanding of the challenges faced by the master teachers and the coping strategies they employed.

Furthermore, I employed triangulation to enhance credibility by cross-checking information from various sources. For instance, I compared insights gathered from interviews, observations, and relevant documents to

offer a more comprehensive and accurate view of the participants' experiences. Involving multiple researchers in the analysis also reduced the risk of misinterpretation, further strengthening the study's credibility. By following these rigorous approaches, I was able to present trustworthy insights into the mentoring and coaching practices of master teachers, ensuring that the conclusions drawn were both reliable and reflective of their authentic experiences.

Transferability. Using rigorous data collection, analysis, and interpretation techniques, I ensured the reliability and dependability of the study's findings. I conducted in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with master teachers to elicit rich, first-hand narratives about their mentoring and coaching experiences. This contributed to the credibility of the research.

I utilized multiple data sources—including individual interviews and group discussions—to facilitate triangulation and gain a more comprehensive understanding of the issues, coping strategies, and insights shared by the participants. Additionally, I employed member checking, allowing participants to review and validate the findings to ensure their perspectives were accurately represented. I carried out the data analysis systematically, identifying recurring themes and patterns and cross-checking them to minimize bias. These practices allowed the study's findings to remain trustworthy and genuinely reflective of the realities experienced by master teachers in large and mega schools.

Confirmability. Confirmability was essential in maintaining objectivity and neutrality in the study's findings (Guba & Lincoln, 2018). I aimed to minimize the influence of my personal biases, values, or perspectives on data collection and interpretation. To establish confirmability, I maintained thorough and transparent records of the entire research process, including data collection and analysis procedures.

I also used member checking, wherein I shared preliminary findings with participants for feedback and validation (Charmaz, 2018). This process ensured that the findings genuinely reflected the participants' experiences and were not shaped by my assumptions or biases. Moreover, I adopted a reflexive stance, acknowledging my position and potential biases while documenting my decisions and interpretations transparently. Through these practices, I ensured that the study's findings remained grounded in the participants' perspectives, thereby enhancing its confirmability.

Authenticity. Authenticity referred to the sincerity and genuineness of my research process and outcomes (Smith, 2018). I strived to faithfully represent the participants' perspectives and experiences, ensuring accuracy and avoiding misrepresentation. I did this by incorporating their language and stories into the presentation of findings and by openly acknowledging any limitations or challenges I faced during data collection (Chase, 2021).

Member checking again played a crucial role in ensuring authenticity. By inviting participants to review and validate the findings, I ensured that their voices were accurately represented. While member checking significantly enhanced the credibility of the study, I also recognized that it might not always be feasible or appropriate in all contexts.

Finally, ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research was a continuous and reflective process. I engaged in ongoing self-evaluation of my methods, decisions, and interpretations to identify and address potential biases. By maintaining transparent and well-documented research practices and upholding ethical standards, I strengthened the trustworthiness of my study and reinforced confidence in the validity of its findings.

RESULTS

Case 1 - Large Schools

The analysis of the interview data identified a range of themes describing the experiences of master teachers in mentoring and coaching colleagues in large schools. These findings were organized into three major categories: problems and issues encountered, coping mechanisms employed, and insights gained from

mentoring and coaching experiences.

Regarding the problems and issues encountered, the themes that emerged under mentoring were Lack of Teachers and Teaching Load, Limited Time for Pre-Conference and Observations, Challenges in Using New Tools and Lack of Proper Orientation, and High Expectations. For coaching, the identified themes were Resistance from Teachers, Burden of Being Observed While Observing Others, and High Expectations.

With respect to the coping mechanisms employed by master teachers, the analysis revealed three themes under mentoring: Time Management Strategies, Self-Improvement and Professional Development, and Seeking Guidance and Technical Assistance from School Heads. Under coaching, the themes included Encouraging Peer Observation and Self-Reflection, Replicating Best Practices from School Heads, and Demonstrating Best Practices in Teaching.

The analysis likewise generated several themes reflecting the insights gained by master teachers from their mentoring and coaching experiences. Under mentoring, the identified themes were Being a Role Model, Providing Technical Assistance, Encouraging Continuous Learning, Time Constraints in Mentoring, and Building a Supportive Environment. Under coaching, the themes that emerged were Facilitating Teacher Growth, Overcoming Resistance to Feedback, Pre-conference Importance, Modeling Best Practices, and Time Constraints in Coaching.

Case 2 - Mega Schools

The analysis of the interview and focus group discussion data likewise revealed themes describing the experiences of master teachers in mentoring and coaching colleagues in mega schools. Similar to the findings for large schools, the results were organized into the categories of problems and issues encountered, coping mechanisms employed, and insights gained.

For the problems and issues encountered, the themes identified under mentoring were Overlapping Responsibilities and Role Strain, Resistance to Change and Curriculum Adaptation, Lack of Commitment and Sincerity in Learning, Approach and Teacher Receptiveness, Resistance to Feedback and Implementation, Importance of Feedback in Mentoring, Collaboration and Communication for Success, and Improvement in Teaching Strategies and Classroom Management. Under coaching, the themes that emerged were Time Constraints and Coaching Challenges, Hectic Schedule and Coaching Limitations, Workload and Implementation Challenges, Multitasking Across Departments, Limited Materials and Engagement Barriers, and Inconsistencies in Implementation.

Regarding the coping mechanisms employed by master teachers, the themes identified under mentoring included Effective Communication and Openness, Time Management and Limitations, Structured Planning and Time Management, Goal Setting and Prioritization, Adaptability to Change, and Building Trust and Supportive Mentorship. Under coaching, the themes that emerged were Understanding Individual Strengths and Weaknesses, Flexible Scheduling and Micro Mentoring, Empathy and Trust in Coaching, fostering a Supportive and Family-Like Environment, Leveraging Technology for Accessibility, and Adapting and Embracing New Techniques.

The findings also revealed themes representing the insights gained by master teachers through mentoring and coaching. Under mentoring, the identified themes were Clear Communication and Mentoring, Idea Sharing and Success Through Collaboration, Teamwork and Strong Relationships, and Open-Minded Leadership. Under coaching, the themes that emerged were Teacher Involvement and Responsibility, Timeliness and Compliance, Engagement Through Clear Objectives, and Classroom Discipline and Learning.

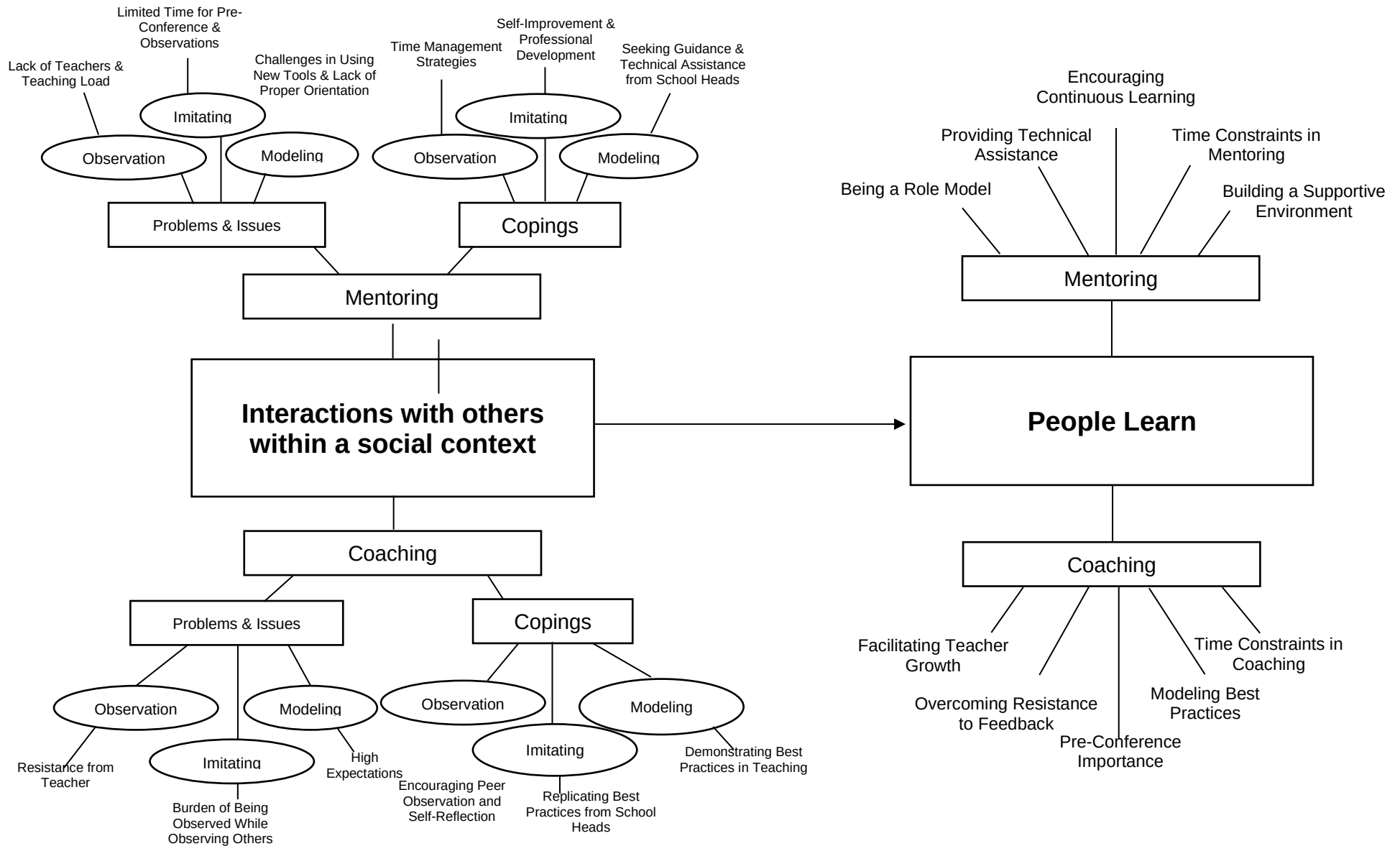


Figure 2. Large Schools Master Teachers Problems & Issues, Copings, and Issues in Mentoring and Coaching Colleagues

Figure 2 illustrates the experiences of master teachers in large schools in mentoring and coaching colleagues through the lens of Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977). It shows that mentoring and coaching involve the processes of observation, imitation, and modeling, through which master teachers encounter various problems and issues, employ coping mechanisms, and gain valuable insights. These interconnected experiences occur through social interactions and contribute to learning within the mentoring and coaching process.

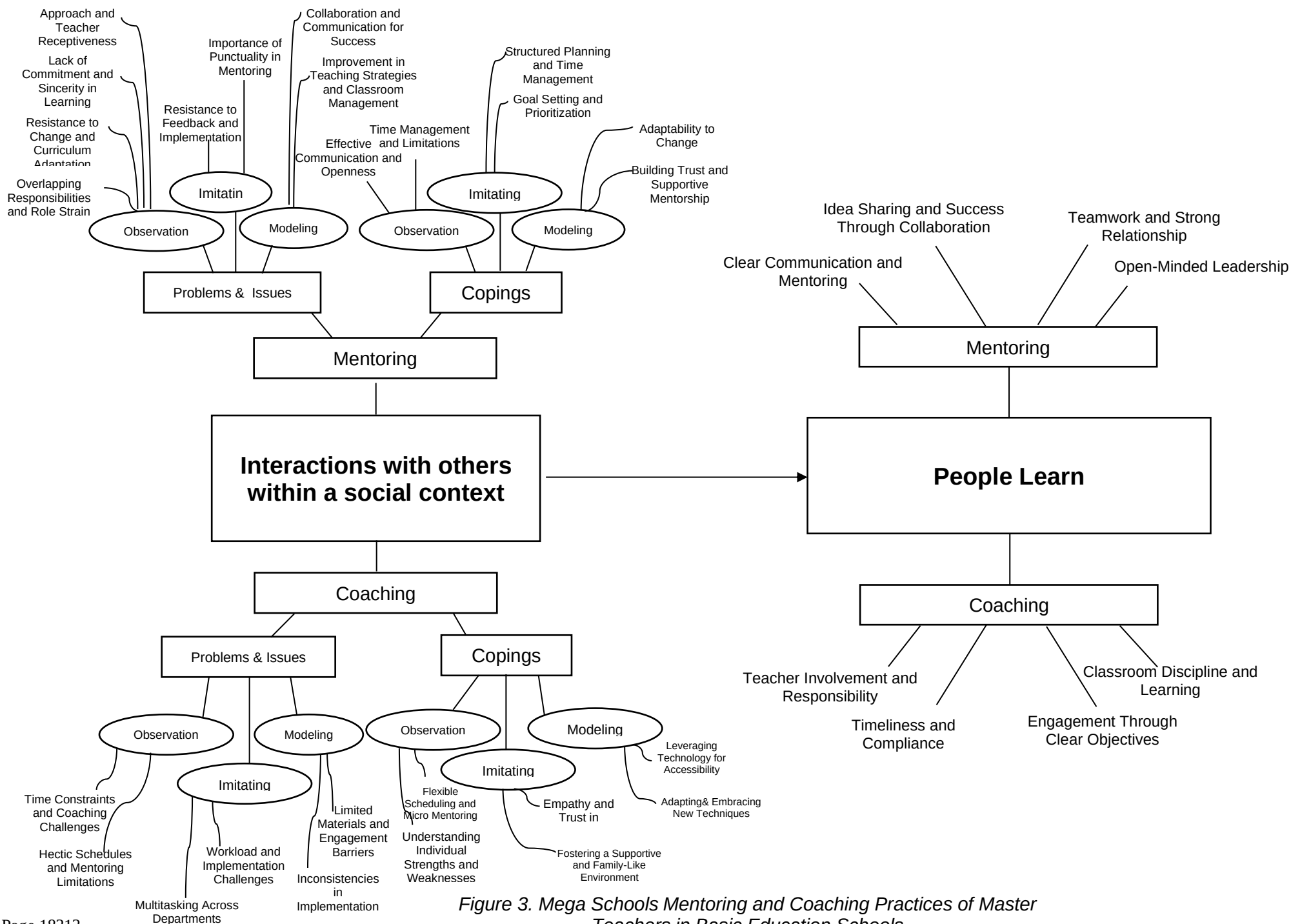


Figure 3. Mega Schools Mentoring and Coaching Practices of Master Teachers in Basic Education Schools

Figure 3 illustrates the mentoring and coaching practices of master teachers in mega schools through the lens of Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977). It shows that mentoring and coaching are grounded in the processes of observation, imitation, and modeling, through which master teachers encounter various problems and issues, employ coping mechanisms, and develop meaningful insights. These interconnected experiences occur through interactions with others within a social context and contribute to learning throughout the mentoring and coaching process.

DISCUSSION

Case 1 – Large Schools

Problems and Issues of Master Teachers on Mentoring in Large Schools

The findings revealed that master teachers in large schools encountered several challenges in fulfilling their mentoring responsibilities. These challenges were grouped into the themes ****Lack of Teachers and Teaching Load****, ****Limited Time for Pre-conference and Observations****, and ****Challenges in Using New Tools and Lack of Proper Orientation****. Overall, the results highlight how mentoring is embedded within the demanding realities of instructional leadership, where time, workload, and system readiness significantly shape mentoring effectiveness. This aligns with the view that professional development and instructional leadership are highly dependent on structural conditions within schools (Darling-Hammond et al., 2018; Opfer & Pedder, 2021).

Lack of Teachers and Teaching Load

One of the most prominent issues identified was the shortage of teachers, which resulted in excessive teaching loads for master teachers. Participants described how heavy classroom responsibilities reduced the time available for mentoring activities.

As one participant explained:

"Master teachers often have the burden of classroom teaching because of overload. We are given limited time for classroom observation because we also prioritize our own classes." (IDI L2)

("Master teachers often have burden like ahm classroom teaching because of the overloads, we are given limited time in classroom observation because we also prioritize our own classes.")

Similarly, another participant shared:

"The problem encountered is the lack of teachers, which is why I have a full teaching load." (IDI L1)

("Ang problem encountered kanang lack of teachers maong fully loaded ko.")

These accounts demonstrate how mentoring is often deprioritized when teachers are assigned full instructional loads. The situation reflects what Brown and Smith (2019) and Brown and Green (2019) describe as ****role strain****, where overlapping responsibilities reduce teachers' capacity to engage in developmental work such as coaching and mentoring. Likewise, Ingersoll and Strong (2019) emphasized that mentoring quality declines when mentors are overloaded with instructional duties.

From a broader perspective, excessive workload not only limits time but also reduces cognitive and emotional availability for reflective mentoring practice, which is essential for effective instructional leadership (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2019). This suggests that mentoring cannot be effectively sustained without structural workforce support.

Limited Time for Pre-conference and Classroom Observations

Limited time for mentoring activities emerged as another major concern. Participants described difficulties in scheduling pre-conferences and classroom observations due to overlapping teaching responsibilities.

One participant stated:

"There are many teaching loads, so there is no longer enough time to conduct pre-conferences with teachers who request classroom observations." (IDI L1)

("Daghang teaching loads... wala nakay enough time na maka pre-conference sa nagpaschedule og CO.")

This finding indicates that mentoring processes are often compressed or skipped due to competing demands. Pre-conferences, which are critical for aligning expectations and instructional goals, become secondary when time is constrained.

Research supports this concern. Chien et al. (2018) and Knight (2017) emphasized that pre-conference and structured observation cycles are essential components of effective coaching, yet they require protected time to function properly. Similarly, Penuel et al. (2017) found that time limitations significantly weaken the impact of coaching interventions in teacher development.

Without adequate time, mentoring risks becoming procedural rather than developmental, limiting opportunities for deep instructional dialogue and reflective practice (Boud, 2018).

Challenges in Using New Tools and Lack of Proper Orientation

Master teachers also experienced difficulties in mentoring due to the implementation of new instructional tools without adequate orientation. Participants noted that changes in observation instruments created uncertainty in mentoring practices.

One participant remarked:

"It is challenging because the indicators we used before have been suspended. We are using a new tool, yet we were not given proper orientation on how to maximize it." (IDI L1)

("Challenging pa gyud sya ron maam kay gisuspend atong naandan nga indicators. Naggamit ta og new tool in which wala man ta proper orientation how to maximize the tool.")

These findings suggest that innovation without capacity-building undermines mentoring effectiveness. When mentors are not properly trained on new tools, their ability to provide accurate instructional feedback is compromised.

This is consistent with Darling-Hammond et al. (2018) and Desimone and Pak (2021), who emphasized that professional development must accompany policy and tool implementation. Avalos (2019) further argues that teachers must first experience structured learning themselves before they can effectively mentor others. Without this, mentoring becomes uncertain and inconsistent.

Coping Mechanisms of Master Teachers on Mentoring in Large Schools

Despite these challenges, master teachers adopted various coping strategies to sustain mentoring practice. These include Time Management Strategies, Self-Improvement and Professional Development, Seeking Guidance from School Heads, Peer Observation and Self-Reflection, Replicating Best Practices, and Demonstrating Teaching Practices.

Time Management Strategies

Time management emerged as the primary coping mechanism for balancing teaching and mentoring responsibilities.

One participant shared:

"I simply manage my time." (IDI L1)

("Gina arrange lang jud namo ma'am. Time management lang jud ma'am.")

Another explained:

"Time management is really important. We have to prioritize what needs to be done first." (IDI L2)
("Time management gyud dapat ma'am. Unahon ang dapat unahon.")

These responses highlight how teachers rely on self-organization to manage competing demands. However, such strategies represent adaptive coping rather than systemic solutions.

Zimmerman and Schunk (2021) emphasize that self-regulated time management supports professional effectiveness, yet Brown and Green (2019) caution that excessive reliance on individual coping may mask institutional gaps in workload distribution. Thus, while time management helps sustain mentoring, it does not fully address structural workload issues.

Self-Improvement and Professional Development

Continuous learning emerged as another coping strategy, enabling master teachers to strengthen their mentoring capacity.

One participant stated:

"I simply pass on to them what I have received from my school head." (IDI L3)
("Kanang ako lang pud ginabalik sa ilaha unsa pud akong nadawat sa akong head.")

Another shared:

"I ask them what went well and what still needs improvement." (IDI L3)
("Asking what went well and what are the things need to be improved.")

These responses reflect reflective practice as a core element of mentoring. According to Boud (2018), self-reflection enhances professional judgment and instructional decision-making. Similarly, Neubert et al. (2020) found that reflective practices improve mentoring quality by deepening instructional awareness.

Avalos (2019) and Kennedy (2020) further emphasize that continuous professional development strengthens mentors' ability to guide others effectively in evolving educational contexts.

Seeking Guidance and Technical Assistance from School Heads

Participants also relied on instructional support from school leaders.

One participant remarked:

"The head teachers and school heads guide me in providing technical assistance to teachers." (IDI L3)
("Kanang mga HT ug school head ma'am moguide pud nako paghatag technical assistance sa teachers.")

Another added:

"If the school head is supportive, it becomes easier to mentor colleagues." (IDI L3)
("If supportive pud ang school head ma'am, mas gaan pud mo mentor og mga kaubanan.")

These findings highlight the importance of leadership support in sustaining mentoring practices. Harris (2019) and Leithwood et al. (2020) emphasize that school leadership significantly influences instructional quality through trust-building and shared vision. Similarly, Kutsyruba and Walker (2020) argue that mentoring cultures thrive in environments where leadership actively supports collaboration.

Encouraging Peer Observation and Self-Reflection

Participants emphasized peer observation and reflective dialogue as important learning strategies.

One participant explained:

"I ask them what went well and what still needs improvement. The teacher identifies these first, then we agree on what practices should be maintained." (IDI L3)

("Asking what went well and what are the things need to be improved. Si teacher mismo mo identify ana then mag agree mi to maintain good practices.")

Another shared:

"I invite them to observe my classes and my teaching methods." (IDI L2)

("I invited them to observe my classes and letting them observe my teaching methods.")

These findings align with Hattie (2019), who identified peer observation as one of the most powerful influences on teacher learning. Boud (2018) also highlights that structured reflection promotes deeper learning, while Neubert et al. (2020) found that collaborative observation strengthens professional growth and instructional improvement.

Replicating Best Practices from School Heads

Master teachers also learned by replicating effective leadership practices.

One participant stated:

"I simply apply what I learned from my school head in providing technical assistance." (IDI L3)

("Kanang ako lang pud ginabalik sa ilaha unsa pud akong nadawat sa akong head kung unsa siya mo-technical assistance mao pud ko.")

This reflects the importance of modeling in leadership development. Harris (2019) emphasizes that instructional leadership is strengthened when behaviors are observable and replicable. Leithwood et al. (2020) further argue that school leaders shape teacher development by modeling effective mentoring strategies.

Demonstrating Best Practices in Teaching

Participants also addressed mentoring challenges by modeling instructional strategies.

One participant explained:

"I model my best teaching practices, especially in Mathematics, by inviting teachers to observe my classes." (IDI L2)

("I invited them to observe my classes and letting them observe my teaching methods.")

Another added:

"I look for systems and applications that can make my work easier." (IDI L3)

("Gina search ko saon nako pagpadali sa mga trabahoon. Unsa nindot nga system, apps or anything nga mogaan.")

These findings align with Hattie and Zierer (2019), who found that modeling effective teaching improves instructional quality. Darling-Hammond et al. (2018) also emphasize that demonstration teaching provides concrete learning experiences that enhance teacher development.

Insights of Master Teachers on Mentoring and Coaching in Large Schools

The findings revealed that mentoring and coaching served as platforms for professional growth, leadership development, and reflective practice. Participants consistently emphasized role modeling, technical assistance, continuous learning, and collaborative leadership as central elements of their practice.

One participant stated:

"You really have to be the model because you need to be the leader." (IDI L1)
("Kailangan ikaw jud ang model, kaylangan ikaw ang leader.")

Another added:

"I have to improve myself through professional development by staying updated with new technologies and teaching methods." (IDI L2)

These insights align with Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977), which explains that learning occurs through observation and modeling. Darling-Hammond et al. (2018) further emphasize that effective instructional leadership requires continuous learning and reflective practice.

Knight (2017) also highlights that coaching effectiveness depends on trust, collaboration, and reflective dialogue.

Time Constraints in Mentoring and Coaching

Despite its value, mentoring and coaching were consistently constrained by time.

One participant shared:

"Teaching loads are really heavy, especially because I also need to monitor my colleagues." (IDI L3)
("Teaching loads ma'am. Daghan gyud kayo siya especially nga need pa nako mo-monitor sa akong mga kaubanan.")

This reinforces findings by Hobson and Maxwell (2021) and Desimone and Pak (2021), who noted that insufficient time allocation significantly reduces mentoring effectiveness. Without institutional support for protected time, mentoring risks becoming fragmented and superficial rather than sustained and developmental.

Case 2 – Mega Schools

Problems and Issues of Master Teachers on Mentoring and Coaching in Mega Schools

The findings revealed that mentoring and coaching practices among master teachers in mega schools are shaped by structural, relational, and organizational constraints. For mentoring, eight themes emerged: overlapping responsibilities and role strain, resistance to change and curriculum adaptation, lack of commitment and sincerity in learning, approach and teacher receptiveness, resistance to feedback and implementation, importance of punctuality in mentoring, collaboration and communication for success, and improvement in teaching strategies and classroom management. For coaching, six themes were identified: time constraints and coaching challenges, hectic schedules and mentoring limitations, workload and implementation challenges, multitasking across departments, limited materials and engagement barriers, and inconsistencies in implementation.

Overall, the findings highlight that mentoring and coaching in mega schools are not isolated instructional functions but are deeply embedded within large-scale organizational systems that shape how instructional leadership is enacted in practice. This supports Hargreaves and Fullan (2019), who emphasize that professional capital and instructional leadership are strongly influenced by system conditions such as workload, trust, and organizational coherence.

Overlapping Responsibilities and Role Strain

One of the most prominent challenges identified was role strain due to overlapping responsibilities. Master teachers reported difficulty balancing instructional duties with mentoring functions.

A participant explained:

“We have to support teachers while also managing our own classes and responsibilities.” (IDI M4)
 (“Dapat mo support pud mi sa teachers pero naa pud mi kaugalingon nga klase ug responsibilities.”)

This reflects the tension between teaching and leadership roles, where mentoring is constrained by competing institutional demands. Such findings align with Brown and Green (2019), who describe role strain in teaching professions as a major barrier to sustained instructional leadership.

Similarly, Leithwood, Harris, and Hopkins (2020) emphasize that effective school leadership requires structural alignment of roles; without this, instructional support becomes fragmented. In mega schools, the scale of operations intensifies this strain, making mentoring dependent on residual time rather than intentional design.

Resistance to Change and Curriculum Adaptation

Participants also highlighted teacher resistance to curriculum reforms and instructional innovation.

“Some teachers are not ready to adopt the new curriculum.” (IDI M4)
 (“Ang uban teachers dili pa ready mo adopt sa bag-ong curriculum.”)

This reflects the broader challenge of change implementation in large institutions. Kennedy (2020) explains that resistance often emerges when teachers lack sufficient understanding, support, or confidence in new reforms. In mega schools, where reforms are implemented rapidly and at scale, mentoring becomes essential in bridging the gap between policy and practice.

Darling-Hammond et al. (2018) further argue that effective professional development requires sustained support rather than one-time implementation, reinforcing the need for continuous mentoring during curriculum transitions.

Lack of Commitment and Teacher Receptiveness

Another challenge identified was the gap between agreement and actual implementation of mentoring recommendations.

“Some teachers agree during mentoring but do not apply the suggestions.” (FGD 5)
 (“Mouyon sila pero dili nila i-apply ang suggestions.”)

This suggests that professional learning does not automatically translate into behavioral change. Opfer and Pedder (2021) emphasize that teacher learning is a process influenced by motivation, context, and sustained engagement rather than mere exposure to advice.

This finding also aligns with Hattie and Timperley (2017), who argue that feedback must be internalized and acted upon to influence instructional improvement. Without ownership, mentoring remains superficial.

Approach and Teacher Receptiveness

The effectiveness of mentoring was also found to depend heavily on interpersonal approach and communication style.

“Teachers are more receptive when communication is open and respectful.” (IDI M5)
 (“Mas receptive ang teachers kung open ug respectful ang communication.”)

This underscores the importance of relational trust in mentoring. Harris (2019) emphasizes that trust is foundational in educational leadership, as it directly influences teacher openness to feedback and collaboration.

Similarly, Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2018) highlight that trust-based communication reduces defensiveness and enhances receptivity, reinforcing the idea that mentoring is as much relational as it is instructional.

Time Constraints and Coaching Challenges

Time limitations emerged as a persistent barrier to effective coaching.

“Time constraint is the major problem I encounter in coaching.” (FGD 4)
 (“Time constraint gyud ang pinaka problema sa coaching.”)

This reflects systemic scheduling issues in large schools. Chien, McDonald, and Friesen (2018) emphasize that coaching effectiveness depends on consistent interaction cycles, which are often disrupted by time scarcity.

Similarly, Reinke et al. (2020) argue that without protected time for coaching, instructional support becomes inconsistent and loses developmental depth.

Workload and Multitasking Across Departments

Participants also described difficulties managing coaching responsibilities while handling multiple instructional and administrative tasks.

This aligns with Desimone and Pak (2021), who emphasize that excessive workload reduces the quality of teacher engagement in professional development processes. In mega schools, multitasking across departments weakens instructional coherence and reduces the depth of coaching interactions.

Brown and Green (2019) further explain that overlapping responsibilities lead to diminished effectiveness in instructional leadership roles, particularly when time allocation is not clearly defined.

Limited Materials and Inconsistencies in Implementation

Another significant issue was the lack of instructional resources and inconsistent implementation of coaching strategies.

“Sometimes materials are not available to support coaching recommendations.” (IDI M6)
 (“Usahay kulang ang materials para ma implement ang recommendations.”)

This finding highlights the importance of structural support in sustaining instructional improvement. Darling-Hammond et al. (2020) emphasize that professional learning and coaching require adequate resources to translate knowledge into practice.

In addition, Moolenaar, Slegers, and Daly (2020) note that inconsistent implementation across departments weakens the overall impact of professional development initiatives, particularly in large and complex school systems.

Insights of Master Teachers on Coaching in Mega Schools

The insights revealed that effective coaching in mega schools is anchored on teacher responsibility, structured engagement, and instructional clarity. Across themes, coaching was viewed as both a developmental process and a system of accountability.

Teacher Involvement and Responsibility

Participants emphasized that coaching is more effective when teachers actively participate in their professional development.

This aligns with Desimone and Pak (2021), who found that teacher ownership increases engagement in professional learning. Likewise, Knight (2017) emphasizes that coaching effectiveness depends on teacher agency and collaborative engagement rather than top-down instruction.

Timeliness and Compliance

Timely feedback and structured coaching cycles were identified as essential.

Hattie (2019) highlights that timely feedback significantly enhances teacher learning and instructional adjustment. Without timely intervention, coaching loses relevance, particularly in fast-paced educational environments.

Engagement Through Clear Objectives

Clear objectives were found to strengthen teacher engagement in coaching processes.

Kennedy (2020) emphasizes that clarity of purpose enhances teacher motivation and alignment with instructional goals. Similarly, Van der Klink et al. (2020) argue that structured learning objectives improve the effectiveness of professional development interventions.

Classroom Discipline and Learning

Coaching was also seen as essential in improving classroom management and instructional effectiveness.

Hattie and Zierer (2019) emphasize that effective instructional strategies directly influence classroom behavior and student engagement. Likewise, Zepeda (2019) highlights that coaching strengthens teachers' ability to manage classroom dynamics through reflective practice.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that mentoring and coaching in mega schools are shaped by systemic workload pressures, organizational complexity, and relational dynamics. While structural constraints such as time, workload, and resource limitations persist, master teachers respond through adaptive strategies grounded in communication, collaboration, structured engagement, and instructional modeling.

As Hargreaves and Fullan (2019) argue, sustainable instructional improvement requires both system-level support and strong professional relationships. In mega schools, strengthening mentoring and coaching requires institutional reforms that address workload distribution, provide protected time, and ensure adequate resources for instructional leadership to function effectively.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Implications for Theory. The findings of this study reinforce Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) by highlighting the critical role of observation, imitation, and modeling in mentoring and coaching within basic education schools. However, challenges such as limited time, excessive workloads, and resistance to feedback underscore the need to refine the practical application of SCT in structured mentorship programs. To address these challenges, master teachers can implement time-efficient observation strategies, such as peer mentoring, digital lesson-sharing, and video-based feedback, allowing mentees to learn effectively despite time constraints. Furthermore, fostering a supportive and collaborative mentoring environment enhances the modeling process, ensuring that mentees observe best practices and engage in co-teaching, role-playing, and structured feedback cycles. Aligning mentorship with intrinsic and extrinsic motivators, including professional recognition and personal growth opportunities, can improve mentees' engagement and retention of learned strategies. These refinements strengthen SCT's applicability by addressing real-world mentoring challenges and enhancing teacher development and professional collaboration in educational settings.

Implications for Practice. To improve mentoring and coaching practices in basic education schools, it is essential

to establish structured, formalized systems that promote sustained professional growth. Schools should implement clear mentorship frameworks that integrate reflective practice, collaborative learning, and systematic feedback mechanisms to enhance mentees' ability to apply learned strategies in actual classroom settings. Given time constraints, schools could adopt flexible mentorship models, such as scheduled coaching sessions, digital mentoring platforms, or inter-school collaborations, to provide continuous support. Recognizing and incentivizing mentorship roles can also encourage more significant commitment from mentors while motivating mentees to actively participate in professional learning communities.

Additionally, schools should prioritize professional development programs for mentors, equipping them with the necessary skills to effectively guide and inspire their colleagues. Finally, future research should examine the long-term impact of structured mentorship programs on teaching effectiveness, teacher retention, and student learning outcomes. These insights will help refine best practices for teacher development, ensuring that mentoring and coaching remain adaptive, responsive, and impactful in meeting the evolving needs of educators in basic education schools.

CHALLENGES

An actionable and comprehensive plan must be implemented to address the challenges identified in the study related to mentoring and coaching practices. The priority is to tackle the issue of time constraints. To do so, the Department of Education (DepEd) can consider reducing the teaching load for master teachers or providing dedicated time for mentoring and coaching activities. It would ensure that mentors have sufficient time to observe, provide feedback, and guide their mentees effectively without the added stress of balancing an overwhelming number of teaching hours. Moreover, introducing more structured and consistent opportunities for mentees to apply observed behaviors and skills through practice sessions would support long-term growth.

Mentors and mentees should be trained in giving and receiving constructive feedback to address resistance to feedback. This training would foster a culture of trust and openness, crucial for improving feedback's impact in mentoring and coaching. Furthermore, establishing clear expectations from the outset of the mentoring and coaching relationships will reduce confusion and create a foundation for stronger, more effective collaboration. Mentors can also be equipped with adaptive coaching strategies to tailor their approach to the unique needs of each mentee, taking into account diverse levels of experience and expertise.

As part of the action plan, the Department of Education should revise current policies to provide more substantial support and incentives for mentors and coaches. It could include professional development opportunities for master teachers in mentoring and coaching methodologies, access to resources for observation, and fostering peer collaboration. Establishing mentorship networks where teachers can share experiences and best practices will promote growth and development.

Aligned with SDG No. 4 (Quality Education), implementing these strategies will support the creation of an inclusive, equitable, and high-quality education system. By prioritizing efficient time management, proactive communication, and adaptive approaches, this action plan aims to foster professional growth for teachers, enhance the quality of teaching, and promote lifelong learning for all. The Department of Education's commitment to these changes is crucial for creating an environment where mentorship and coaching can thrive, benefiting educators and students.

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