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MENTORING SKILLS AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE OF HIGHLY PROFICIENT TEACHERS IN SCHOOLS DIVISION OFFICE I PANGASINAN

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Abstract : This study aimed to determine the level of mentoring skills and technical assistance of highly proficient teachers in the Schools Division Office I Pangasinan of during school year 2023-2024. The descriptive-correlational method was employed, and questionnaire was used to gather the data. There were 85 highly proficient teachers. Majority of the mentors were females, 41-50 years old, married, 12-23 years in the service, 0-5 years as highly proficient teachers, with master's degree, with 333-376 minutes of actual teaching load, three to four preparations, and had ancillary services. The over-all mean 4.25 revealed that the level of the general skills of the master teachers was "high" while 4.20 "high" for their specific skills. On the other hand, the level of technical assistance provided by the highly proficient teachers to their mentees was high. The study revealed no significant relationship between the mentoring skills across sex, civil status, age, length of service and years in service as master teachers. Also, there is no significant relationship between the technical assistance across sex, civil status, ancillary services, age, years in service as highly proficient teachers, number of minutes of actual teaching load, and number of preparations. Work over load and lack of time were the problems often encountered by the master teachers. A training plan and mentoring program for mentors were highly recommended to DepEd as a standard tool to all highly proficient teachers in mentoring.

Keywords: highly proficient teacher, mentor, mentoring skills, technical assistance

INTRODUCTION

The Department of Education and the Civil Service Commission outline master teachers' duties and obligations. Some of these responsibilities include the following: mentor co-teachers in content and skills difficulties; guide co-teachers in the performance of duties and responsibilities; assist the co-teachers in designing capacity development programs for teachers; provide technical assistance to teachers to improve their competencies; lead the co teacher in the preparation of instructional materials to check; improve and prepare sample lesson plans for the assigned grade/subject area; help identify potential demonstration teachers; and give demonstration to new/striving teachers.

In terms of instructional materials, master teachers could help their mentees create teaching aides and validate them. As an instructional leader, master teachers look for ways to help/assist their co-teachers in carrying out their duties and responsibilities in facilitating student learning through functional lesson plans of activities and appropriate, sufficient, and up-to-date instructional materials. Positive mentoring relationships and a wellness model demonstrated indirect benefits such as the establishment of a safe space, the continuation of relationships between mentees and mentors, networking benefits, campus acculturation, and a better understanding of organizational politics and their potential to positively impact faculty well - being.

Master teachers are independent learners who work to advance their own knowledge in order to provide students and their colleagues with successful learning. A master teacher's primary responsibility is to provide career teachers with professional growth opportunities and high-quality instruction to their students. The master teacher is expected to pursue opportunities for professional development while also assisting others in doing so. Mentor as an instructional frontrunner finds means to support their co-teachers in carrying out their duties and responsibilities in aiding student's knowledge and understanding through efficient lesson plans of activities and suitable, sufficient, and modernized instructional materials.

Furthermore, coaching and mentoring are essential for experienced teachers and school leaders; mentoring can have unintended effects due to its dynamic nature and the fact that both mentor and mentee play critical roles in the mentoring process's success.

Thus, the principle of lifelong learning and the view of the teaching profession as one that requires teachers' expert knowledge and specialized skills, acquired and maintained through rigorous and continuing study. Author in stated further that 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 training for teachers.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

A descriptive survey design was utilized to investigate the coaching and mentoring practices of the highly proficient teachers, as it aimed to accurately and systematically describe a population, situation, or phenomenon (McCombes, 2020). The primary objective of this survey is to collect detailed factual information about existing occurrences; to identify and justify problems with current conditions and procedures; and make comparisons and evaluations; to ascertain what others are doing in similar situations or with similar problems, and to benefit from their experience when making plans and decisions.

Sources of Data

The respondents of this study were the highly proficient teachers of the Schools Division Office I Pangasinan.

Instrumentation and Data Collection

The main data-gathering instrument was a questionnaire checklist. The questionnaire focused on the profile of highly proficient teachers in terms of age, sex, civil status, length of service, years in service as highly proficient teachers, highest educational attainment, advisory class, number of minutes of actual teaching load, and number of preparations. It was also delimited to the highly proficient teachers' level of general mentoring skills; the Highly Proficient Teachers' level of specific mentoring skills; the level of technical assistance of mentors and mentees; and the problems encountered by highly proficient teachers during the course of mentoring.

A formal permission to conduct the study and to float the questionnaire was secured from the Schools Division Superintendent. The researcher personally administered the questionnaire to each respondent to ensure 100% retrieval.

Tools for Data Analysis

To derive valid and accurate results, appropriate statistical tools were employed. To answer sub-problem 1 on the profile of the Highly Proficient teachers, frequency and percentage were used. To answer sub-problem 2 on the level of general mentoring skills of highly proficient teachers, the average weighted mean was used. To answer sub-problem 3 on the level of specific mentoring skills of highly proficient teachers, the average weighted mean was used. To answer sub-problem 4 on the level of technical assistance of mentors and mentees, the average weighted mean was used. To answer sub-problem 5 on the significant relationship between general mentoring skills across profiles, chi-square was used. To answer sub-problem 6 on the significant relationship between specific mentoring skills across profiles, chi-square was used.To answer sub-problem 7 on the significant relationship between the technical assistance provided by the highly proficient teachers across profiles, chi-square was used.To answer sub-problem 8 on the significant relationship between the technical assistance provided by the highly proficient teachers and mentoring skills of the highly proficient teachers, chi-square was used.To answer sub-problem 9 on the problems encountered by highly proficient teachers during the course of mentoring, the frequency was used.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter deals with the presentation, analysis and interpretation of the data gathered relative to sub-problems in the study.

The results presented include the profile of respondents, level of mentoring skills, level of technical assistance, the relationship between the technical assistance provided by the master teachers across the profiles, relationship between the technical assistance provided by the master teachers and the general and specific mentoring skills and problems encountered by the master teachers during mentoring.

Table 1a . Profile of Highly Proficient Teachers

Age	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
21-30 years old	2	2.4
31-40 years old	15	17.6
41-50 years old	38	44.7
51-60 years old	27	31.8
61 years old and above	3	3.5
Total	**85**	**100**
Sex	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Male	13	15.3
Female	72	84.7
Total	**85**	**100**
Civil Status	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Single	14	16.5
Married	69	81.2
Widow	2	2.4
Total	**85**	**100**

There are a total of 89 highly proficient teachers, but only 85 of them answered the questionnaire. Nearly 38, or 44.7 percent, of the responses are between the ages of 41 and 50. There are 69 or 81.2 percent married people, with 72 or 84.7 percent of them are females, and 13 or 15.3 percent of them being males.

Table 1b . Profile of Highly Proficient Teachers

Length of Service	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
5-11 years	6	7.1
12-17 years	23	27.1
18-23 years	23	27.1
24-29 years	21	24.7
30-35 years	12	14.1
Total	**85**	**100**
Years in Service as Master Teacher	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
0-5 years	31	36.5
6-10 years	29	34.1
11-15 years	17	20.0
16-20 years	6	7.0
21-25 years	2	2.4
Total	**85**	**100**
Highest Educational Attainment	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Master's graduate	83	97.6
Doctoral graduate	2	2.4
Total	**85**	**100**
Advisory Class		
Yes	78	91.8
No	7	8.2
Total	**85**	**100**

About 23 or 27.1 percent had between 12 and 23 years in the service. There were 31 or 36.5 percent, had 0–5 years of experience as highly proficient teachers. In terms of educational qualifications, 48 people, or 56.5 percent, have a college degree. 91.8 percent of the 78, or the majority, had advisory class.

Table 1c. Profile of Highly Proficient Teachers

Number of Minutes of Actual Teaching Load	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
200-244	1	1.2
245-288	13	15.3
289-332	22	25.9
333-376	46	54.1
377-420	3	3.5
Total	**85**	**100**
Number of Preparations	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
1-2	9	10.6
3-4	26	30.6
5-6	20	23.5
7	16	18.8
8	14	16.5
Total	**85**	**100**

Regarding the actual teaching load in minutes and the number of preparations, roughly 46 or 54.1 percent had 333–376 minutes and about 26 or 30.6 percent had three or more preparations per day.

Table 2. Level of General Mentoring Skills of Highly Proficient Teachers

General Skills	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**Mean**	**Descriptive Equivalent**
Listening	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	3 (3.5)	34 (41.2)	47 (55.3)	4.52	**VH**
Interpersonal ease	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	9 (10.6)	46 (54.1)	30 (35.3)	4.25	**VH**
Knowledge of Educational Content	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	10 (11.8)	44 (51.8)	31 (36.5)	4.25	**VH**

Grain of Salt (Humor)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.2)	12 (14.1)	43 (50.6)	29 (34.1)	4.18	**H**
Group functioning	0 (0.0)	1 (1.2)	10 (11.8)	49 (57.6)	25 (29.4)	4.15	**H**
Talking	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	11 (12.9)	46 (54.1)	28 (32.9)	4.20	**H**
Training	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	8 (9.4)	48 (56.5)	29 (34.1)	4.25	**VH**
Administrative/ organizational	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	12 (14.1)	46 (54.1)	27 (31.8)	4.18	**H**
Overall Mean	**4.25 High**						

Legend: (1) Very Low-1.00-1.80; (2) Low-1.81-2.60; (3) Moderate-2.60-3.40; (4) High-3.41-4.20; (5) Very High-4.21-5.00

As gleaned in Table 2, the combined responses from the 85 highly proficient teachers found listening as the most effective general skill of mentors which garnered the highest mean of 4.52 (high) while it was observed that group functioning (4.15- high) was found to be the least effective skill used by the mentor. The result replicated on the findings of Huling -Austin (2010) who discovered that protégés thought that listening was the most helpful skill their mentors used with them. In general, the over-all mean of the general skills was 4.25. It only showed that mentors have a high level of general mentoring skills used.

Table 3. Highly Proficient Teachers' Level of Specific Mentoring Skills

Specific Skills	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**Mean**	**DE**
Initiative- taking	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	6 (7.1)	41 (48.2)	38 (44.7)	4.38	**VH**
Support	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	10 (11.8)	32 (37.6)	43 (50.6)	4.39	**VH**
Conflict Mediation	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	17 (20.0)	48 (56.5)	20 (23.5)	4.04	**H**
Confidence - building	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	10 (11.8)	35 (41.2)	40 (47.1)	4.35	**VH**
Managing/ controlling	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	10 (11.8)	44 (51.8)	31 (36.5)	4.25	**VH**
Resource- bringing	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	11 (12.9)	50 (58.8)	24 (28.2)	4.15	**H**
Trust rapport building	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	13 (15.3)	48 (56.5)	24 (28.2)	4.13	**H**
Confrontation	0 (0.0)	1 (1.2)	14 (16.5)	51 (60.6)	19 (22.4)	4.04	**H**
Collaboration	0 (0.0)	0 0.0)	9 (10.6)	50 (58.8)	26 (30.6)	4.20	**H**
Diagnosing individual needs	0 (0.0)	2 (2.4)	7 (8.2)	49 (57.6)	27 (31.8)	4.19	**H**
Diagnosing School Needs	0 (0.0)	2 (2.4)	11 (12.9)	48 (56.5)	24 (28.2)	4.11	**H**
Demonstration/ Modelling	0 (0.0)	2 (2.4)	6 (7.1)	48 (56.5)	29 (34.1)	4.18	**H**
Overall Mean	**4.20 High**						

Legend: (1) Very Low-1.00-1.80; (2) Low-1.81-2.60; (3) Moderate-2.60-3.40; (4) High-3.41-4.20; (5) Very High-4.21-5.00

Table 3 shows that the highly proficient teachers' specific abilities have a close outcome. According to mean 4.39, the most successful skill used by mentor is support. It demonstrates that mentors have a high degree of mentoring skill in terms of supporting their mentees. However, conflict resolution and confrontation were the least used skills by mentors, as evidenced by mean 4.04. The result was affirmed by the Chancellor's Doctoral Incentive Program (CDIP) California State University (CSU) which stated that mentors do not always have to provide support, and in a case where the mentee is exhibiting inappropriate or unprofessional behavior it is critical to step in and confront it. The overall mean of specific abilities was 4.20. (high). This demonstrates that certain skills are extremely beneficial and successful in mentoring. It also demonstrated that mentors possess a high degree of specific mentoring skills.

Table 4. Level of Technical Assistance of Mentors and Mentees

Technical Assistance	Over-all Mean and Descriptive Equivalent (Mentor)	Over-all Mean and Descriptive Equivalent (Mentee)
Preparation of Daily Lesson Log	4.11 (High)	4.10 (High)
Assessment of Individual Performance Commitment and Review	4.08 (High)	4.04 (High)
Development of Instructional Materials	3.93 (High)	3.94 (High)
Conduct of in-service training and Learning Action Cell	4.08 (High)	3.94 (High)

Legend: (1) Very Low-1.00-1.80; (2) Low-1.81-2.60; (3) Moderate-2.60-3.40; (4) High-3.41-4.20; (5) Very High-4.21-5.00

As shown in Table 4, the mean outcome was closed. The overall mean and descriptive equivalent of technical help provided by mentors and mentees were found to be high. The findings revealed that mentors provide their mentees with a high degree of technical assistance. It is obvious that mentors provide technical assistance to teachers in order to better their competencies, as stated in their duties and responsibilities. This also adds to their familiarity with this function, which contributes to their demonstration of a high degree of technical assistance. Among the four technical assistance, the preparation of daily lesson logs for mentors and mentees received the best overall mean of 4.11 (mentor) and 4.10 (mentee).

Table 5a. Significant Relationship between Mentoring Skills across Profiles

Mentoring skills	Sex		Civil status		Advisory class		Ancillary services	
	Chi-square statistic	Sig	Chi-square statistic	Sig	Chi-square statistic	Sig	Chi-square statistic	Sig
General skills	.404	.416	.410	.985	.552 *	.002	.250	.991
Specific skills	.484	.302	.525	.936	.606 *	.001	.435	.648

*Significant at .05 level

Visual investigation of the table above indicates that the advisory class of master teachers along their general skills and specific skills is significant as shown by the p-value obtained which is less than .05. This finding implies that the profile variable advisory class is a factor in defining the level of mentoring skills of master teachers. Their relationship is moderately strong and positive. This only means that as they accept advisory class, their level of mentoring skills goes higher. It shows that mentors complied with their duties and responsibilities in meeting their mentees' on one-on-one mentoring and guiding on their duties and responsibilities with regard to formulating objectives. (DepEd's Duties and Responsibilities of Master Teachers).

Table 5b. Significant Relationship between Mentoring Skills across Profiles

Mentoring skills	Age		Length of Service		Years in service as Highly Proficient Teacher		Educational attainment		Number of minutes of actual teaching load		Number of preparations	
	p	sig	p	sig	p	sig	p	sig	p	sig	p	sig
General skills	.132	.230	.011	.919	087	430	.140	201	.105	339	.029	.791
Specific skills	.071	518	.011	.921	085	437	.105	340	.084	.447	.167	.126

According to Table 5b, using the Spearman's rho coefficient of correlation, the profile variables and the general and specialized skills of highly proficient teachers did not produce a statistically significant outcome. These findings imply that the profile variables age, length of service, years in service as highly proficient teacher, educational attainment, number of minutes of actual teaching load, and number of preparations are not factors in defining the level of general and specific mentoring skills of highly proficient teachers.

Table 6a. Significant Relationship between the Technical Assistance provided by the Highly Proficient Teachers across Profiles

Technical assistance	Sex		Civil status		Advisory class		Ancillary services	
	Chi-square statistic	Sig	Chi-square statistic	Sig	Chi-square statistic	Sig	Chi-square statistic	Sig
Preparation and checking of daily lesson log	.379	.218	.459	.420	.413	.095	.298	.685
Assessment of Individual Commitment and Review Form	.379	.284	.650 *	.000	.240	.951	.311	.694
Development of instructional materials	.345	.489	.421	.789	.221	.976	.240	.951
Conduct of in-service training for teachers	.296	.832	.324	.998	.227	.983	.281	.886

Visual investigation of Table 6a indicates that the level of technical assistance provided by highly proficient teachers to their mentees yielded a not significant result using the chi-square test. These findings imply that the profile variables sex, civil status, ancillary services and advisory class are not factors in defining the level of technical assistance provided by the highly proficient teachers. Highly Proficient teacher's level of technical assistance remains invariably different regardless of their sex, civil status, ancillary services and advisory class.

Table 6b. Significant Relationship between the Technical Assistance provided by the Highly Proficient Teachers across Profiles

Technical assistance	Age		Length of Service		Years in service as Master Teacher		Education al attainment		Number of minutes of actual teaching load		Number of preparations	
	p	sig	p	sig	p	sig	p	sig	p	sig	p	sig
Preparation and checking of daily lesson log	.039	.726	.113	.304	.012	910	-.083	.451	.089	.419	.696	382
Assessment of Individual Commitment and Review Form	.006	.995	.129	.239	.028	.801	.101	.358	.078	.480	.089	.417
Development of instructional materials	.233 *	.032	.07 7	.483	.179	.102	.062	.574	.090	.414	.075	.497
Conduct of in-service trainings for teachers	.060	.588	.029	.795	.042	.703	.163	.135	.126	.252	.134	.220

The table above shows that the age of highly proficient teachers and their level of technical help is significant, as evidenced by the p-value of less than.05. This finding implies that the profile variable age plays a role in determining the degree of technical assistance given by master teachers. Their connection is very small and negative. This simply means that as they age, their level of technical help tends to decline.

Table 7. Significant Relationship between the Technical Assistance provided by the Highly Proficient Teachers and their Mentoring Skills

Mentoring skills	p	Sig
General skills	.389**	.000
Specific skills	.538**	.000

** Significant at .01 level

Table 7 shows that the general and particular skills of highly proficient teachers, as well as the technical help given by highly proficient teachers, are significant, as indicated by the p-value obtained, which is less than.05. This finding suggests that general and specific skills play a role in determining the degree of technical assistance provided by highly proficient teachers. Their connection is moderate to extremely strong and positive. This implies that as they get older, their level of technical assistance increases. The finding above is supported by the study of Bolye and Boice (2018) that when highly proficient teachers intentionally created mentoring relationships that paired more senior faculty with newer faculty and paired graduate assistants with faculty or more senior graduate assistants is successful and important factor in making the one-one-one mentoring successful. According to Shank (2005), one-on-one mentoring and collaborative mentoring tools are highly successful tools over the half of U.S. Huling-Austin (2018) claimed that confidence-building, trust/rapport, resource building, expression of affirmation, encouragement and support are essential in establishing a positive working relationship between a mentor and mentee.

Table 8. Problems Encountered by Highly Proficient Teachers during the Course of Mentoring

Problems Encountered by Master Teachers during Mentoring	Frequency	Rank
1. Work overload	62	1
2. Lack of time	61	2
3. Other responsibilities interfering with mentoring such as Journalism, Coaching in sports, BSP/GSP and among others	38	3
4. Negative attitudes of other teachers or administrators toward mentoring	33	4
5. Unclear mentoring goals and purposes	20	5.5
6. Vague structure of mentoring program/session	20	5.5
7. Lack of incentives or rewards for master teacher	14	7
8. Mismatch between the mentees and mentors with respect to teaching assignment	13	8
9. Personality conflicts between mentee and mentor	12	9
10. Low level of commitment from mentor	11	10
11. Inadequate administrative support	10	11
12. Mismatch between the mentees and mentors with respect to teaching ideology	6	12
13. Low level of commitment from mentee	4	13.5
14. Lack of physical proximity	4	13.5

The majority of respondents, as shown in Table 8, discovered that work overload and a lack of time were the main issues they faced during mentoring, as demonstrated by the frequencies of 62 and 61, ranked first and second, respectively. The issues, however, are "low mentee commitment levels and a dearth of proximity with 4 and tied at ranked 13.5. The outcome is in line vertically with Kim and Choi's (2013) research on the impact of work overload on mentoring. The findings showed that formal mentors' feelings of work overload have a negative impact on their protégés' satisfaction with mentoring and psychosocial functions, but that work overload as perceived by the protégés had no bearing on the efficacy of the mentoring relationship. This was also true when Ackley and Gall (2012) discovered that the biggest obstacle facing mentors was a shortage of time. Even though research plainly showed that a regularly scheduled contact time during the school day allows mentors to work effectively with their protégés, he discovered that none of the mentors or protégés had any additional free time allotted to them for maintaining their mentoring responsibilities.

CONCLUSIONS

Based from the findings revealed in the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

The respondents of the study were select 85 highly proficient teachers. Majority of them were females, aged 41-50, married, with 12-23 years in the service, 0-5 years as highly proficient teachers, with 333-376 minutes of actual teaching load, and three to four preparations. The overall mean of 4.25 showed that the highly proficient teachers' general skills were "high," while their specific skills were "high" with an overall mean of 4.20. On the other hand, the highly proficient teachers provided their mentees with a high degree of technical assistance.

The study revealed that there is no significant relationship between highly proficient teachers' mentoring skills and their sex, civil status, age, length of service, or years of service. Also, there is no significant relationship between the technical assistance across sex, civil status, age, years in service as highly proficient teachers, number of minutes of actual teaching load, and number of preparations. Overload and a lack of time were the problems often encountered by the highly proficient teachers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the conclusions drawn, the following recommendations were offered:

1. It was highly recommended that continuing professional development, passion for teaching, and acceptance of other related works can be an avenue for a teacher being mentored to be promoted to a higher position.
2. Persistence in providing appropriate technical assistance and the use of general and specific mentoring skills were recommended.
3. Work prioritization, positive acceptance, and the correct attitude toward duties and responsibilities may reduce the problems experienced by mentors in mentoring.
4. Workload problems can be avoided by planning ahead of time, creating a schedule, setting a time limit, and making both the mentor and the mentee available.
5. School principals may send their highly skilled teachers to seminars/training to keep up with the newest developments in education and to participate in any professional activities that will improve their instructional competence and instructional leadership capacity.
6. Highly proficient teachers should continue to achieve the highest educational attainment by enrolling in graduate school studies that are aligned to their field of specialization in order to enhance their teaching competence and instructional leadership and be promoted.
7. All possible strategies should be taken into account by the school through the initiatives of the School Head by mobilizing all available resources to avail the state-of- the-art equipment, Instructional Materials and many others to facilitate and effect learning in every classroom;
8. Highly proficient teachers should design training programs for their colleagues, such as INSETs and other formal face-to-face seminars/ training, to provide technical assistance in improving their teaching competence.

9. A Development Plan should be made in order to enhance the instructional competence and instructional leadership capacity among highly proficient teachers;
10. Intensive and focused monitoring and evaluation activities should be properly conducted in all the schools as to the implementation of the Individual Performance Commitment and Review Form (IPCRF) for highly proficient teachers; and
11. A follow-up research focusing on the instructional competence and instructional leadership capacity of highly proficient teachers to determine the effectiveness of the inputs herein recommended for implementation
12. Future research could further investigate the association between coaching and mentoring practices of Highly Proficient Teachers and teachers' workload. Excessive work demands and intensive workloads could result in potentially adverse effects (such as stress, burnout, and absence) on teachers' health and well - being.
13. As a whole, it is also highly recommended to have a Highly Proficient Teachers' regular forum or focus group discussions on addressing their concurrent development needs, share problems and issues and best practices for better coaching and mentoring of teachers wherein the ultimate goal is to enhance teaching process and improve learners' achievement and performance.

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