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Enhancing Student-Teachers' Readiness through Structured Coaching and Mentoring

Jane Delano R. Estipona^{1*}

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ABSTRACT

The implementation of the Senior High School program in the Philippines has emphasized the importance of experiential learning in teacher education, particularly for student-teachers in the Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL) track. Given the increasing demands in lesson planning, classroom management, and student engagement, structured coaching and mentoring are vital in enhancing pre-service teachers' readiness for the teaching profession. This action research assessed the effectiveness of structured mentoring using Pre-Conference (PreCon) and Post-Conference (PostCon) sessions during the practicum phase. A qualitative-descriptive design was employed, drawing data from self-assessment forms, mentor evaluations, student feedback, peer observations, and mentoring logs. Findings revealed that structured coaching significantly improved student-teachers' competencies in classroom management ($M = 4.6$, $SD = 0.41$), subject mastery ($M = 4.5$, $SD = 0.38$), and lesson planning ($M = 4.2$, $SD = 0.35$). Common challenges included lesson transitions and time management, which were mitigated through consistent mentoring strategies. Among these, PreCon and PostCon sessions were rated as the most effective ($M = 4.7$, $SD = 0.40$), fostering improved instructional delivery and self-reflection. Student-teachers perceived the mentoring process as highly beneficial in refining teaching strategies, building confidence, and addressing classroom challenges. The results underscore the importance of institutionalizing structured mentoring frameworks, particularly PreCon and PostCon, within teacher education programs to ensure professional readiness and facilitate ongoing teacher development.

INTRODUCTION

The teaching practicum serves as a vital bridge between theoretical coursework and real-world classroom experience. It enables pre-service teachers to apply content knowledge and pedagogical strategies in authentic learning environments. However, student-teachers in the Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL) strand often face distinct challenges, such as lesson planning, managing student behavior, and integrating technical content with effective instructional delivery.

A persistent issue in many practicum settings is the lack of structured, consistent mentoring. Although cooperating teachers often provide general feedback, it is frequently informal and lacks the depth and intentionality necessary for sustained professional development. Without guided mentoring, student teachers may struggle to develop essential competencies and confidence, which can limit their readiness for classroom teaching.

To address this concern, the present study introduces a structured coaching and mentoring model through Pre-Conference (PreCon) and Post-Conference (PostCon) sessions. These sessions are designed to provide timely, focused feedback and reflection opportunities for student-teachers before and after classroom instruction. This approach aligns with global best practices in teacher education, which advocate for mentoring frameworks that emphasize feedback, reflection, and continuous

improvement (Darling-Hammond *et al.*, 2017; Kraft & Papay, 2014).

The primary objective of this action research is to examine the effectiveness of structured PreCon and PostCon mentoring sessions in enhancing student-teachers' instructional readiness, professional confidence, and reflective teaching practices. By addressing the prevailing gap in mentoring practices within the TVL context, the study aims to contribute to the refinement of teacher education strategies, particularly for technical and vocational strands in the Philippine education system.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The growing complexities of classroom instruction require that student-teachers receive structured support as part of their practicum experience. Numerous studies affirm the value of mentoring in enhancing teaching readiness. Hudson (2013) emphasized that mentoring fosters professional growth through consistent modeling, feedback, and reflection. Ingersoll and Strong (2011) further argued that structured induction programs improve classroom management and content delivery skills among novice teachers. While these foundational works remain relevant, more recent literature offers expanded perspectives on the topic.

Darling-Hammond *et al.* (2017) highlighted that effective mentoring frameworks combine pre-teaching guidance

¹ Antipolo City Senior High School, DepEd, Antipolo, Philippines

* Corresponding author's e-mail: janedelano.estipona@deped.gov.ph

and post-teaching feedback, helping student-teachers develop adaptive instructional strategies. Similarly, Ambrosetti (2020) emphasized that mentorship should be a dialogic process where mentors act as facilitators rather than evaluators, thus empowering mentees to reflect critically on their practice. Kraft and Papay (2014) found that teachers who received sustained, high-quality feedback as part of mentoring programs showed more significant improvement in instructional practice compared to those who did not.

Local studies have echoed these findings. Tinaytina (2022) reported that consistent mentoring boosts teacher confidence and student engagement in the Philippine setting. Baluyos (2024) noted that guided reflection and coaching logs significantly improved student-teachers' classroom discipline techniques and lesson clarity. These studies reveal that while feedback and observation are vital, the consistency and quality of mentoring interactions are the most influential factors in teacher growth.

A gap in the literature remains regarding targeted mentoring strategies for the Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL) track. Most research centers on general education, overlooking the specific challenges that TVL student-teachers face. This study contributes to the literature by examining the use of structured Pre-Conference (PreCon) and Post-Conference (PostCon) mentoring in addressing these unique challenges and enhancing overall teaching readiness.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study employed a qualitative-descriptive research design to explore the effectiveness of structured mentoring in enhancing student-teacher readiness. The participants were three (3) senior high school student-teachers under the Home Economics strand at Antipolo City Senior High School. They were all deployed during

their teaching practicum and mentored by the researcher, who also served as their supervising teacher.

Several data-gathering tools were used throughout the study. These included a validated Observation Tool provided by Marikina Polytechnic College, Coaching and Mentoring Logs maintained after each session, Student Feedback Forms, and documentation of Pre-Conference and Post-Conference sessions. These tools allowed the researcher to systematically document teaching performance, student-teacher reflections, and mentoring feedback.

The data collection process spanned the entire duration of the practicum, which lasted six weeks. Prior to each formal teaching session, PreCon mentoring sessions were conducted. These focused on reviewing lesson plans, anticipating classroom challenges, and rehearsing instructional strategies. After each teaching demonstration, PostCon mentoring sessions were held to reflect on performance, discuss areas for improvement, and reinforce best practices.

The collected qualitative data were subjected to thematic analysis, following the six-phase framework proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). Observation notes, mentoring logs, and student-teacher reflections were coded manually to identify patterns and recurring themes related to competencies, challenges, and the perceived impact of the structured mentoring model.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As shown in Figure 1, the student-teachers demonstrated high levels of competency across four teaching domains. Classroom management received the highest mean score ($M = 4.6$), followed by subject mastery ($M = 4.5$), instructional strategies ($M = 4.4$), and student engagement ($M = 4.3$). These scores indicate that structured mentoring has a positive influence on the student-teachers' teaching readiness.

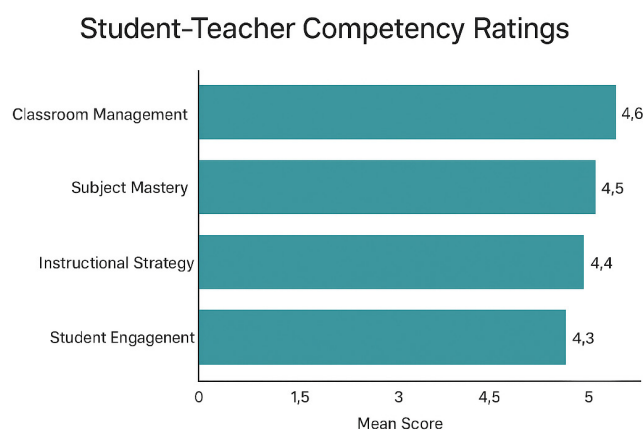


Figure 1. Student-teacher competency ratings based on observation tool ($n = 3$)

Figure 1: Student-teacher competency ratings based on observation tool ($n=3$)

Among the mentoring strategies used, the Pre-Conference (PreCon) and Post-Conference (PostCon) sessions were perceived as the most effective, with a mean rating of 4.7. These structured sessions provided opportunities to refine lesson objectives, anticipate classroom challenges, and reflect on teaching performance.

Despite the generally positive outcomes, common instructional challenges were identified, including voice projection, time management, and clarity of lesson objectives. These concerns were progressively addressed through personalized mentoring and real-time adjustments during the practicum.

Thematic analysis of feedback forms and mentoring logs revealed that student teachers described the mentoring experience as “structured,” “supportive,” and “transformative.” They noted that the sessions helped reduce teaching anxiety, provided direction, and strengthened their professional growth.

These findings are consistent with those of Hudson (2013), who emphasized the importance of mentorship in shaping instructional behavior, and Rockoff (2008), who found that structured mentoring enhances teaching effectiveness and supports teacher retention. Overall, the results affirm that structured coaching, particularly PreCon and PostCon strategies, can bridge the gap between pedagogical theory and classroom application, especially in the TVL context.

CONCLUSIONS

This study highlights the effectiveness of structured mentoring, mainly through Pre-Conference and Post-Conference sessions, in enhancing student-teacher readiness. These strategies provided clear guidance, timely feedback, and reflective opportunities that helped student-teachers build confidence and competence in classroom instruction. The mentoring process was not only instructional but also developmental, promoting personal growth and professionalism. Although the study involved a limited number of participants, its findings demonstrate the value of structured mentoring in bridging theory and practice, particularly in the context of technical and vocational education. This approach remains relevant for teacher education institutions seeking to enhance their

practicum experiences. It is recommended that structured coaching and mentoring frameworks be institutionalized to support the holistic preparation of future educators and ensure greater classroom effectiveness.

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