

# EXPERIENCES ON MENTORING BEGINNING TEACHERS: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

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*This qualitative phenomenological study explored the lived experiences of school heads in mentoring beginning teachers in selected public elementary and secondary schools in Compostela, Davao de Oro. Guided by Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, particularly the concept of scaffolding, the research examined the challenges encountered, coping mechanisms adopted, strategies implemented, and insights gained by school heads in their mentoring roles. Six school heads with at least three years of active mentoring experience were purposively selected. Data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews, supplemented by observational notes and reflexive journaling, and analyzed using a six-phase thematic analysis. Findings revealed that mentoring is perceived as both essential and reciprocal, providing professional guidance to novice teachers while enriching the leadership skills of school heads. Key strategies included structured dialogues, classroom walk-throughs, modelling, feedback, and collaborative learning opportunities. Challenges were rooted in workload demands, policy constraints, personality differences, classroom management issues, and limited resources, particularly in rural settings. Coping mechanisms involved peer support, delegation, reflective practice, and maintaining empathetic relationships with mentees. Insights underscored mentoring as a transformative process that fosters teacher competence, resilience, and professional identity, while strengthening school leadership. The study recommends institutionalizing structured mentoring frameworks, providing protected time for mentoring, enhancing mentor training, and fostering community and stakeholder collaboration to sustain effective teacher induction. These findings have implications for improving mentorship programs, teacher retention, and educational quality in under-resourced rural contexts.*

**Keyword:** mentoring, beginning teachers, school leadership, instructional supervision, coping strategies challenges, coping strategies, and insights, phenomenology

## 1. THE PROBLEM AND ITS BACKGROUND

Mentorship is a cornerstone of teacher development, yet for many beginning teachers, access to effective and sustained mentoring remains inconsistent and inadequate. New educators often enter the profession with limited practical experience, facing immediate demands such as managing diverse classrooms, meeting curriculum standards, and addressing students' varied needs. Without structured guidance, these challenges can quickly lead to stress, diminished confidence, and even early departure from the profession. High attrition among novice teachers not only disrupts student learning continuity but also burdens schools with repeated recruitment and training costs. In many contexts, especially in under-resourced or rural areas, mentoring is either informal or absent, leaving beginning teachers to navigate their formative years largely on their own. This gap underscores the need for well-designed mentorship programs that can equip new teachers with the skills, resilience, and professional identity necessary to succeed and remain in the field.

Globally, the high turnover of novice teachers is a persistent concern. In the United States, for example, studies have estimated that roughly 40 to 50 percent of new teachers leave the profession within their first five years (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Research indicates that comprehensive induction programs with mentoring can significantly improve teacher retention. Structured mentorship not only reduces burnout but also

improves new teachers' professional confidence, which directly impacts their decision to stay in the profession. In short, effective mentoring fosters novice teachers' development of skills and professional identity, contributing to their long-term success and stability as educators.

In the Philippine setting, the need for structured mentoring systems is well recognized. The Department of Education has institutionalized a Teacher Induction Program to provide a systematic support system for beginning teachers. However, many mentoring practices in public schools remain informal, unstandardized, or under-resourced. Valdez and Dominado (2020) note that Filipino beginning teachers often struggle with instructional delivery, classroom management, and self-efficacy in their initial years. Their study of novice teachers at Gutad National High School found that a well-designed mentoring program can help mitigate these challenges by offering constructive feedback, emotional support, and continuous professional development opportunities for new teachers. Despite policy efforts like the Teacher Induction Program, there is still a gap in consistent implementation of mentoring at the school level, leaving many novices without the full benefits of guided professional support.

At the local level in Compostela, Davao de Oro, school heads frequently take on the role of mentors for beginning teachers amid challenging conditions. Schools in this area often face limited instructional resources, multi-grade teaching assignments, underserved student populations, and geographically isolated communities. Mentor-mentee relationships are especially vital in such contexts to help new teachers adapt and persist. While experienced teachers and principals in Compostela play a crucial part in shaping the practices and resilience of new educators, there is little documentation of their lived experiences as mentors. In particular, the specific challenges these mentor school heads encounter and the adaptive strategies they employ remain under-researched. This lack of localized research presents a critical gap in understanding how school-based mentorship unfolds in rural and under-resourced settings, and what support mentors themselves need.

Given the above context, this study is both important and timely. Most existing research in the Philippines has examined mentorship from the perspective of the mentees, with limited attention to the insights of the mentors, especially those in leadership roles such as school principals. Addressing this gap, the present study will investigate the lived experiences of school heads who mentor beginning teachers in Compostela, Davao de Oro. It will explore the challenges these mentor-principals face, the coping mechanisms they use, and the strategies they implement to support novice teachers effectively. The urgency of this research lies in the pressing need to improve new teacher support and retention in disadvantaged areas; strengthening mentorship can ultimately enhance teaching quality and student outcomes. Findings from this phenomenological inquiry will be disseminated to local and regional educational stakeholders through reports, seminars, and publications. By sharing the results, the study aims to inform policy and practice, contributing to the enhancement of mentorship programs and teacher induction efforts in Compostela and similar contexts.

## 1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study explored the lived experiences of school heads in mentoring beginning teachers, with a particular focus on the challenges they encounter, the coping mechanisms they adopt, the strategies they employ, and the insights they gain throughout the mentoring process. Understanding these experiences are essential to strengthening mentorship programs and enhancing teacher development in public elementary and secondary schools.

Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the lived experiences of school heads in mentoring beginning teachers?
2. What are the strategies used by school heads in mentoring beginning teachers?
3. What are the challenges encountered by school heads in mentoring beginning teachers?
4. What are the coping mechanisms of school heads in addressing the challenges of mentoring beginning teachers?
5. What insights do school heads gain from their experiences in mentoring beginning teachers?

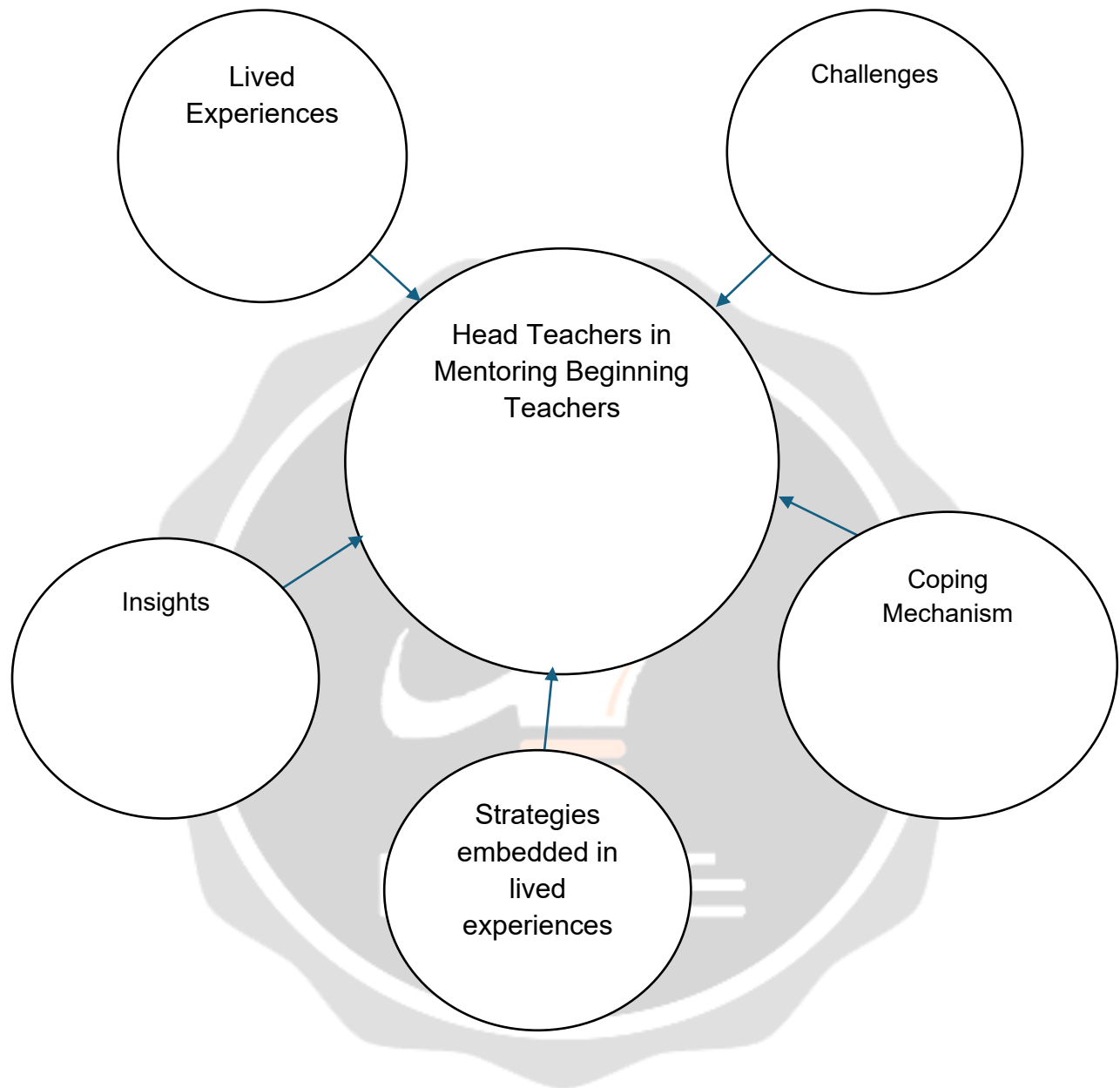
## 1.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is anchored on Lev Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, with particular emphasis on the concept of scaffolding. Vygotsky (1978) posited that learning is fundamentally a social process and that cognitive development occurs through meaningful interactions between more knowledgeable others (such as mentors or teachers) and learners. Scaffolding refers to the support provided by these more knowledgeable individuals to help learners accomplish tasks they cannot yet perform independently. As the learner gains mastery, the support is gradually withdrawn allowing for the development of autonomy and competence.

In the context of this study, scaffolding serves as a lens to understand how school heads mentor beginning teachers by providing structured guidance, emotional support, and instructional feedback. School heads act as facilitators of professional growth, offering temporary yet crucial support systems that help novice teachers adapt to the demands of the classroom. These supports may include modeling teaching strategies, co-planning lessons, facilitating reflective conversations, and encouraging gradual independence in instructional decision-making.

This theory is especially relevant to the study's focus on the lived experiences of school heads in Compostela, Davao de Oro. In rural and resource-limited educational settings, scaffolding becomes essential not only for building teaching competence but also for nurturing confidence, resilience, and professional identity in beginning teachers. Through their mentoring roles, school heads create a socially mediated learning environment where support is tailored to the unique needs and developmental stages of novice educators.

By applying the lens of Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, this study aimed to examine how mentoring functions as a scaffolded learning experience. It provided a theoretical foundation for exploring the strategies, challenges, and insights of school heads as they support the growth of beginning teachers and enhance instructional quality in their schools.



**Figure 1.** The Conceptual Framework

## 2. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative phenomenological research design to explore the lived experiences, challenges, strategies, coping mechanisms, and insights of school heads mentoring beginning teachers in selected public elementary and secondary schools in Compostela, Davao de Oro. Guided by Creswell and Poth's definition of phenomenology, the approach focused on capturing the essence of a shared mentoring experience through in-depth, narrative accounts. Purposive sampling was used to select six school heads with at least three years of active mentoring experience, ensuring relevance and depth in responses.

The research was conducted in six diverse schools—Panansalan Integrated School, Bongkilaton Integrated School, Puting Bato Elementary School, Bango Elementary School, San Miguel National High School, and Corazon C. Aquino National High School—each led by a school head with distinct leadership contexts and mentoring experiences.

The researcher's role encompassed designing the study, conducting and validating interviews, transcribing, coding, analyzing themes, verifying findings for credibility, and compiling the report. Data collection involved individual in-depth interviews using semi-structured guides, with all sessions recorded (with consent) and transcribed verbatim. Additional observational notes and reflexive journaling enriched the dataset.

Data analysis followed a six-phase thematic analysis process: familiarization, code generation, theme development, theme review, theme definition, and report writing. Trustworthiness was ensured through credibility (member checking, prolonged engagement), transferability (thick descriptions), dependability (audit trail), and confirmability (neutrality measures and reflexive journaling).

Ethical considerations included securing ethics clearance, informed consent, respect for participant vulnerability, ensuring privacy and confidentiality in compliance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012, and full disclosure of the study's purpose and methods. Findings will be disseminated to educational stakeholders through reports, academic publications, and presentations to inform and strengthen mentorship practices in rural school settings.

## 3. RESULTS

### What are the lived experiences of School Heads in mentoring beginning teachers?

This section presents the results to the 1<sup>st</sup> major research question; 'What are the lived experiences of school heads in mentoring beginning teachers?' Three specific research questions were used to gather data and information for this major research question. The questions were designed to gather information on the participants' understanding of the pedagogical functions and responsibilities of the school head, as well as the expectations they held regarding the fulfillment of these functions and responsibilities.

### Significant Experience Highlighting Journey in Mentoring Beginning Teachers

This section presents the themes generated from the responses to the specific research question: 1.1 "Describe a significant experience that highlights your journey in mentoring beginning teachers." The responses of the participants revealed four major clustered themes: Mentoring as Essential Guidance for Novice Teachers, A Challenging yet Fulfilling Role, Two-Way Learning in Mentorship, and Addressing Specific Instructional and Classroom Management Gaps.

**Mentoring as Essential Guidance for Novice Teachers.** Participants emphasized that mentorship serves as an indispensable guide for beginning teachers as they navigate both professional and personal responsibilities in the school environment. Mentoring was described as a foundational support that enables novice teachers to meet workplace demands and adapt to their roles effectively. Informant 1 shared:

*Will we all understand that a mentoring is very important for a beginner because ahhh this will serve as a guide or support for them in compliance with their professional and personal task in the workplace.*

(We all understand that mentoring is very important for beginners because it serves as a guide or support for them in fulfilling their professional and personal tasks in the workplace.)

**A Challenging yet Fulfilling Role.** Some school heads described their mentoring journey as both demanding and rewarding. They noted that while many beginning teachers initially follow advice closely, over time they develop their own teaching approaches sometimes deviating from expected practices, which requires intervention through supervision. Informant 2 explained:

*When we say describe it is challenging fulfilling challenging because sometimes there are type of beginning teachers, although most of them are we call them as yes person along the way as they gain experience you will notice that there are some who are already their own way and that is the one that we are giving attention we give them clinical supervision.*

(It is challenging yet fulfilling because some beginning teachers are what we call "yes persons," following instructions as they are new to the work. But as they gain experience, some develop their own ways sometimes misaligned with expectations and that is when we give attention through clinical supervision.)

**Two-Way Learning in Mentorship.** Mentorship was also described as a reciprocal process where both mentor and mentee learn from each other. Informant 3 highlighted the excitement of guiding a new generation of teachers while gaining fresh insights into innovative pedagogies. They stated:

*For me mentoring new teachers is a very exciting part for me as a school head since I am leading new generations they learn from me and I also learn from them because they have new ideas of teaching.*

(For me, mentoring new teachers is an exciting part of being a school head since I am leading a new generation. They learn from me, and I also learn from them because they bring new teaching ideas.)

**Addressing Specific Instructional and Classroom Management Gaps.** Several participants recounted experiences of mentoring teachers with significant instructional challenges, such as classroom management issues, poorly crafted lesson plans, or lack of familiarity with multigrade settings. Informant 4 shared:

*The most significant experience that I had encountered was with teachers who had struggle in ahhh classroom management so I have to capacitate them on crafting of the lesson plan, tips on classroom management so that they will be able to transform themselves into a more ahhh confident educator in the long run.*

(The most significant experience I encountered was with teachers struggling in classroom management. I had to train them in lesson planning, give tips on classroom management, and guide them so they could eventually become more confident educators.)

Informant 5 noted:

*When I started ahmm observing classes only to find out that teacher do not know how to make a lesson and ahmm don't know how to unpack lesson objectives.*

(When I started observing classes, I found that some teachers didn't know how to make a lesson plan or unpack lesson objectives.)

Informant 6 added:

*Naay bag-ong maestra nga ni-report gikan sa laing lugar, walay kasinatian sa multi-grade setting kada adlaw akong gi-mento nakita nako nga ni-grow siya, confident na sa klase.*

(There was a new teacher who came from another place with no experience in a multigrade setting. I mentored her daily, and after several months, I saw her grow and become confident in class.)

### **Ways in which Mentoring Influenced One's Leadership Style and Responsibilities**

This section presents the themes generated from the responses to the specific research question: 1.2 "In what ways did mentoring influence your leadership style and daily responsibilities as a School Head?" The responses of the participants revealed five major clustered themes: Building a Mentor-Mentee Relationship, Creating Good Leaders, Treating Teachers as Co-equals, Leading with Empathy and Consideration, and Encouraging Teacher Autonomy and Compassionate Leadership.

**Building a Mentor-Mentee Relationship.** Participants emphasized that mentoring enhanced their leadership by fostering a collaborative relationship between mentor and mentee. This relationship was seen as mutually beneficial, allowing both parties to share ideas and work together toward workplace improvements. Informant 1 stated:

*You know mentoring helps me a lot in my leadership and management, because it is not only that my mentee is learning but also the mentor so there should be what we call mentee and mentor relationship that both of them are giving sharing time ideas in order to come out with what would be the best to do and implement in the workplace.*

(Mentoring helps me greatly in my leadership and management because not only the mentee learns, but also the mentor. There should be a mentor-mentee relationship where both share time and ideas to determine the best actions to implement in the workplace.)

**Creating Good Leaders.** Mentoring was described as an opportunity to model leadership qualities and prepare beginning teachers to become future leaders themselves. Informant 2 explained:

*Ahhh this remind us that when you are a good leader you create good leaders, also my style is ahmm I will see to it that those who are under me I make all them as my trainees should understand the reason why they are called teachers and I show them how to become a good teacher.*

(This reminds us that when you are a good leader, you create good leaders. My style is to treat those under me as trainees who should understand why they are called teachers, and I show them how to become good teachers.)  
This statement underscores the transformative role of mentoring in leadership, where guidance is intentionally geared toward cultivating excellence in others.

**Treating Teachers as Co-equals.** Some school heads shared that mentoring influenced them to adopt a more collegial leadership style, seeing teachers as equals rather than subordinates. Informant 3 shared:

*Ahhh, for me as a school head I take my co-teachers as a co-teacher not my ahhh anyone who under me, I look-up to them as my level co-teachers ahhh friends that why ahhh we are ahhh giving and getting ahhh give and take relationship ahhh my co-teachers.*

(As a school head, I treat my co-teachers as equals and friends, not as subordinates. This creates a give-and-take relationship with my co-teachers.)

**Leading with Empathy and Consideration.** Mentoring encouraged school heads to be more patient, understanding, and empathetic toward beginning teachers. Participant 4 stated:

*So as mentor and are being the school head, you have to ahhh to be more understanding to your ahhh to the beginning teachers, because we understand that nangangapa pa sila sa pagstart no I have to be more ahhh patient ahhh, emphatic or empathetic observe their classes and conduct the ahhh IPBT which is the mentoring and induction program.*

(As a mentor and school head, you must be more understanding of beginning teachers because they are still finding their way at the start. I have to be patient and empathetic, observe their classes, and conduct the IPBT mentoring and induction program.)

**Encouraging Teacher Autonomy and Compassionate Leadership.** Some participants expressed that mentoring helped them balance guidance with granting teachers the freedom to express their ideas, while maintaining honesty and accountability. Informant 5 said:

*I gave them the freedom to reason out and ahhh I empathize, even if I knew I was abused. But I tell them frankly and ahh honestly when they are wrong. Dili ko mangasaba ahhh naa sa kadaghanan.*

(I give them the freedom to reason out and I empathize, even if I know I am being taken advantage of. But I tell them frankly and honestly when they are wrong. I do not scold them in front of many people.)

Informant 6 added:

*Mentoring taught me to listen more and to lead with compassion. Dili lang kay boss ka, kundi usa kang guide nakita pud nako nga ang akong leadership style ni evolve into servant leadership.*

(Mentoring taught me to listen more and lead with compassion. You are not just a boss but also a guide. I also saw my leadership style evolve into servant leadership.)

### Mentoring Strategies Implemented when Supporting Beginning Teachers

This section presents the themes generated from the responses to the specific research question: 1.3 "What specific mentoring strategies did you usually implement when supporting beginning teachers?" The responses of the participants revealed five major clustered themes: Facilitating Mentor–Mentee Dialogues, Reinforcing the Principles of Teaching, Conducting Classroom Walk-throughs, Providing Structured Orientation and Collaborative Learning, and Offering Feedback, Modelling, and Coaching.

**Facilitating Mentor–Mentee Dialogues.** Participants shared that one of their key strategies was engaging in structured conversations with beginning teachers to identify challenges and offer tailored guidance. This process, referred to as a colloquium, allowed for the exchange of ideas and professional advice in a focused setting. Informant 1 explained:

*For me I usually use the what we call colloquium I call up the attention of the teacher then discuss to him the best way the best strategies probably if it is for curriculum and whatever the best way to practice when it comes to professionalism in work.*

(For me, I usually use what we call a colloquium. I call the attention of the teacher and discuss the best strategies, whether related to curriculum or the best professional practices at work.)

**Reinforcing the Principles of Teaching.** Some school heads emphasized guiding new teachers back to the foundational principles of teaching. Informant 2 shared:

*Ahhmm in teaching I always let them go back to the principles of teaching like child psychology ahhh practical work approach... learning by doing... these things are the strategies that will somehow influence the way teacher approaches the lesson.*

(In teaching, I always let them go back to the principles of teaching, such as child psychology, practical work approach, and learning by doing. These strategies influence how a teacher approaches the lesson.)

**Conducting Classroom Walk-throughs.** Observation was also identified as a critical mentoring strategy. Informant 3 described:

*Ahhmm most of all my technique is to first ahhh walk by the classroom my mind, my ears are listening and also my eyes are looking on what they are doing that's why during the time of schedule of mentoring or coaching ahhh I know already what to give to my co-teachers.*

(My main technique is to first walk by the classroom, listening and looking at what they are doing. This way, during mentoring or coaching sessions, I already know what feedback to provide.)

**Providing Structured Orientation and Collaborative Learning.** Several participants mentioned starting their mentoring process with orientation sessions to clarify roles, expectations, and responsibilities. Informant 4 shared:

*Of course, I started with orientation on their roles as teacher. I taught them also how to craft the lesson based on DepEd Order No. 42 series of 2004 I also asked them to ask the old teachers regarding their experience so that collaborative learning will be develop among new and the seasoned teachers.*

(Of course, I started with an orientation on their roles as teachers. I taught them how to craft lesson plans based on DepEd Order No. 42 series of 2004. I also encouraged them to consult experienced teachers so that collaborative learning would develop between new and seasoned teachers.)

**Offering Feedback, Modelling, and Coaching.** Other school heads focused on providing constructive feedback, demonstrating effective teaching, and conducting regular coaching sessions. Informant 5 said:

*I provide honest feedback when I see that their teaching can be improved I guide them by modeling effective teaching practices.*

(I provide honest feedback when I see areas for improvement. I guide them by modelling effective teaching practices.)

Informant 6 added:

*Nag-implement ko og coaching sessions every Friday... Gipasabot nako nga open ang akong office kung naa silay pangutana or concern. Support system ra gyud ang pinaka-importante.*

(I implement coaching sessions every Friday. I explained that my office is open if they have questions or concerns. Having a support system is really the most important.)

### **What are the challenges encountered by School Heads in mentoring beginning teachers?**

This section presents the results to the 2<sup>nd</sup> major research question; 'What are the challenges encountered by School Heads in mentoring beginning teachers?' Three specific research questions were used to gather data and information for this major research question. The questions were designed to gather information on the participants' understanding of the pedagogical functions and responsibilities of the school head, as well as the expectations they held regarding the fulfillment of these functions and responsibilities.

#### **Difficulties Usually Arising in Supporting New Teachers in their Adjustment to the Teaching Profession**

This section presents the themes generated from the responses to the specific research question: 2.1 "What difficulties often arose when you support new teachers in their adjustment to the teaching profession?" The responses of the participants revealed five major clustered themes: Difficulties in Adjusting to the New Environment, Unwillingness to Apply Expectations, Challenges in Personality Differences, Low Self-esteem and Self-doubt, and Struggles in Classroom Management and Parent Engagement.

**Difficulties in Adjusting to the New Environment.** Participants shared that many beginning teachers experience challenges when transitioning from theoretical learning in college to the realities of classroom teaching. Adjusting strategies to fit actual student needs and the school's expectations often proves difficult. Informant 3 stated:

*Ahhmm a matter of minimal situation like sometimes the teacher experience difficulties in adjusting his or her strategies in teaching and cannot adjust in time on the needs to be implemented in the classroom.*

(There are times when teachers have difficulty adjusting their teaching strategies and cannot keep up

with what needs to be implemented in the classroom.)

Informant 5 added:

*Ahhmm when teachers still adjusting on their new classroom environment, difficulties in disciplining learners, especially sa. key stage 1 and ahhh making on their lesson plan.*

(When teachers are still adjusting to their new classroom environment, they face challenges in disciplining learners, especially in Key Stage 1, and in preparing lesson plans.)

**Unwillingness to Apply Expectations.** Some participants observed that despite guidance and support, there are instances where new teachers resist applying suggested practices. Informant 1 noted:

*There are really situations that the teachers despite you are working hard for them to learn but they don't want to practice or to do what you want them to happen.*

(There are situations where, despite your hard work to teach them, some teachers still do not want to apply what you expect them to do.)

**Challenges in Personality Differences.** Personality traits of beginning teachers were also cited as factors that affect mentoring. Informant 2 explained:

*There those teachers are very intelligent so sometimes intelligent personalities could either be persons who are nice to deal with or hard to deal with it defense to their personality.*

(There are very intelligent teachers, but intelligence can come with personalities that are either easy or difficult to deal with, depending on the person.)

They further noted:

*"Another thing is those teachers who are very silent and you are not sure of what approach going to use them because they are very silent no."*

(Another challenge is dealing with teachers who are very quiet, as it's not always clear what approach will work best for them.)

**Low Self-esteem and Self-doubt.** Several participants pointed out that a lack of confidence among new teachers often hinders their performance and willingness to seek help. Informant 4 shared:

*Sometimes the teachers don't have that self-esteem they have self-doubt hesitant to approach me mahadlok sila then katong giingon na naay self-doubt do not be afraid to accept feedback and failures Because failures are just natural and that will be your opportunity to grow.*

(Sometimes, teachers lack self-esteem and have self-doubt. They are hesitant to approach me because they might think I'll be angry or lose respect for them. They should not be afraid to accept feedback and failures, because failures are natural and are opportunities to grow.)

**Struggles in Classroom Management and Parent Engagement.** Difficulties in maintaining classroom discipline and communicating with parents were also reported as common challenges. Informant 6 shared:

*Most of them struggle with classroom management and dealing with parents, especially nga kasagaran sa among mga ginikanan kay dili edukado. Some new teachers also doubt themselves, especially kung ang mga bata dili dayon mo respond.*

(Most new teachers struggle with classroom management and dealing with parents, especially since most of our parents are not educated and may not immediately understand expectations. Some new teachers also doubt themselves, especially when students do not respond right away.)

#### **Ways in which School-Based Policies, Workload, or Administrative Demands Interfered with Effective Mentoring**

The responses from school heads revealed five thematic ways in which school-based policies, workload, or administrative demands affected their ability to mentor beginning teachers effectively: Challenges in Policy Implementation and Compliance, Resistance to Administrative Directives, Collaborative Administrative Functions, Limited Mentoring Due to Teacher and School Head Workload, and Time Constraints from Reporting and Compliance Requirements.

**Challenges in Policy Implementation and Compliance.** Informant 4 emphasized the importance of following the proper chain of command in implementing school-based and DepEd policies. However, they noted that some teachers rely heavily on their own interpretation of directives, which can lead to premature or incorrect application:

Ok how do school-based policies, workload of course ahh the the school heads main duty is to implement a school-based policies then of course workload will be distributed according to being what stipulated in the DepEd order however there are teachers murag kahibalo na jud sila sa feeling nila mao na akong giingon nga kung bag-o pata dili sa ta mag bypass sa mga higher ups protocol ang tawag ana. Ang pinakalisod baya is implementation of the policies in the field kay naa may mga teachers usahay violate the policies kung employee ka you have to be obedient musunod lang jud ta sa balaod and we will never go wrong.

(Of course, the school head's main duty is to implement school-based policies, and workloads are distributed according to the DepEd order. However, there are teachers who feel they already know better. As I said, if we are new, we should not bypass our higher-ups because there is a protocol. The hardest part is implementing policies in the field because some teachers violate them. As employees, we have to be obedient and follow the rules to avoid problems.)

**Resistance to Administrative Directives.** Informant 5 described situations where teachers resisted specific requirements, such as preparing detailed daily lesson plans, opting instead to follow only what was stated in the DepEd memorandum:

Like, when you are going to implement making of daily lesson plan, and teachers insist that they will not use detailed daily lesson plan but instead they will stick on to DLL as what stated on DO memo diha na dayon masuko ang mga teachers which is I am not implementing it for my own satisfaction but for their own good.

(When implementing the preparation of daily lesson plans, some teachers insist on using the DLL as stated in the DepEd memo. This sometimes makes them upset, thinking I am too strict, but I am not doing this for my own benefit it is for their own good.)

**Collaborative Administrative Functions.** Informant 1 noted that some policies require collective planning and administrative work, which can be beneficial for collaboration but still demand significant time and effort from school leaders:

So in our case here we have a policy that the class program will be work on by the team of a grade level heads head teacher and master teacher after that there will be reconciling everything in a meeting if there is a need for changes then directly we could also implement the change.

(In our school, there is a policy the class program is created by a team composed of grade-level heads, head teachers, and master teachers. After reconciling everything in a meeting, any needed changes can be directly implemented.)

**Limited Mentoring Due to Teacher and School Head Workload.** Informant 2 highlighted that heavy administrative demands placed on both school heads and teachers often interrupt mentoring schedules:

It's very challenging because sometimes you have that effort that you want that ahhh your mentoring be very effective to the teacher but because of the kind of load that they have there are overloaded administrative demands you cannot continue with your schedule that is very difficult for us

(It is very challenging because sometimes you want your mentoring to be very effective, but teachers are overloaded with administrative demands. This prevents you from continuing your scheduled sessions, which is very difficult for us.)

**Time Constraints from Reporting and Compliance Requirements**

Informant 6 shared that frequent reporting requirements from the division reduce the time available for mentoring beginning teachers:

Usahay, tungod sa daghang reports ug compliance sa division, limitado ra ang time para sa mentoring. Muabot ang adlaw nga instead of helping teachers, focus ko sa papeles. Makatapol usahay, pero kinahanglan buhaton.

(Sometimes, due to numerous reports and compliance requirements from the division, time for mentoring becomes limited. There are days when, instead of helping teachers, I focus on paperwork. It can be tiring at times, but it has to be done.)

Interestingly, Informant 3 had a contrasting perspective, noting that policies do not always hinder mentoring but can instead serve as a guide:

Ahhh it's really does not interfere it gives ahhh guidance or help in ahhh giving or mentoring a teacher because the policy is already there and we just follow or implement it.

(It really does not interfere; in fact, it gives guidance in mentoring a teacher because the policy is already there and we simply follow and implement it.)

**External Factors Making the Mentoring Process Difficult to Sustain or Manage**

The responses from school heads revealed five thematic external factors that made it more difficult to sustain or manage mentoring for beginning teachers: Individual Differences of Teachers, Influence of Social Media, Insufficient Budget for Trainings, Unsupportive Administrators, and (5) Internet Connectivity and Resource Limitations.

**Individual Differences of Teachers.** Informant 1 noted that the diverse personalities, attitudes, and perspectives of teachers could affect the applicability and effectiveness of mentoring strategies:

External factors ahhh individual differences my preach to the point of resistance they have also their own characters their different ahhh point of views so it is not also easy to ahhh to mentor if it is not appropriate in time or appropriate in in the workplace.

(External factors include individual differences among teachers, which can reach the point of resistance. They have their own personalities, attitudes, and perspectives. It is not always easy to mentor if the approach is not appropriate to the timing or the workplace setting.)

Informant 2 added that the existing mindset and cultural background of teachers can be a challenge:

Especially the teachers having that culture the teacher bring upon entering in your school It is very hard to change the mindset when they already have been influenced by other factors from outside schools.

(Especially when teachers bring with them a certain culture upon entering the school. It is very hard to change their mindset when they have already been influenced by factors outside the school.)

**Influence of Social Media.** Informant 3 expressed concerns about how social media opinions and information could undermine the guidance of mentors:

Sometimes ahhh the the influence of ahhh social media can bother because sometime they do not believe the school head they believe on what the social media presentations are not unpack unlike in the classroom the school head mentors you above the objectives and the competencies.

(Sometimes the influence of social media can disrupt mentoring because teachers may believe what they see online more than the school head. Social media content is often not unpacked properly, unlike in the classroom where the school head mentors based on well-defined objectives and competencies gained from training.)

**Insufficient Budget for Trainings.** Informant 4 stressed that financial constraints limit the ability to send teachers to professional development opportunities:

Mentoring was further complicated by budget constraint we want our teachers capacitated through different trainings but we don't have enough allocation kung training lang hisgotan pila raman ka percentage sa training ang maka allocate so kana gyud ang budget jud ang isa sa atong problema.

(Mentoring is further complicated by budget constraints. We want our teachers to be capacitated through trainings, but there is not enough allocation. Only a small percentage of the budget is allotted for training, making it difficult to sustain. If there are trainings, teachers should cascade what they learned to their students, but this is limited by funding.)

**Unsupportive Administrators.** Informant 5 briefly pointed out that the lack of alignment or support from administrators and master teachers could also affect mentoring:

When Master Teachers and School Head will not give with their goals.

(When Master Teachers and the School Head do not align or support each other's goals.)

**Internet Connectivity and Resource Limitations.** Informant 6 described the challenges of working in geographically isolated areas:

Among location nga bukid ug kulang sa signal ug resources usa ka dako nga challenge. Difficult ang communication... walay immediate support. Transport ug access to training materials is limited.

(Our location is in the mountains with poor signal and limited resources, which is a big challenge. Communication is difficult. Sometimes teachers get sick or feel homesick, and it is hard because there is no immediate support. Transportation and access to training materials are also limited.)

#### **What practices helped you manage stress and stay resilient when mentoring becomes demanding?**

This section presents the results to the 3rd major research question; 'What practices helped you manage stress and stay resilient when mentoring becomes demanding?' Three specific research questions were used to gather data and information for this major research question. The

questions were intended to gather information on the understanding of the research participants regarding the pedagogical functions or responsibilities of school principal and the expectations they had in view of the functions and responsibilities.

#### **Helpful Practices in Managing Stress and Staying Resilient as Mentoring Becomes Demanding**

The responses from school heads revealed six thematic practices that help them manage stress and remain resilient when mentoring becomes demanding: Working with a Question-and-Answer Approach, Taking Pride in Owning the Job, Strengthening Resilience in the Face of Noncompliance, Delegating Tasks and Tapping a Support Group, Roaming Around the School Campus, and Practicing Prayer and Reflection.

**Working with a Question-and-Answer Approach.** Informant 1 shared that engaging in a question-and-answer (Q&A) style of dialogue with colleagues, combined with focus group discussions, helps ease stress and improve mentoring effectiveness:

Manage stress will the work in school managing with ahhh as I said different characteristics, different characters, different behavior of teachers is not easy it would be very stressful no, but I think working it with the a Q and A approach in a form of a focus group discussion mentoring would be very effective when there is also focus group discussion other than what we call colloquium.

(Managing stress at work, given the different characteristics and behaviors of teachers, is not easy. I think working through it with a Q&A approach, and through focus group discussions in addition to colloquiums, makes mentoring more effective.)

**Taking Pride in Owning the Job.** Informant 2 described finding resilience by embracing their responsibilities fully and viewing challenges as part of their professional journey:

I tell myself this is my job, this is my life whatever difficulties I may experience is part of my job and part of my life I'll just do the best of every situation I believe things will be okay that makes me a little with resilient of these things.

(I tell myself that this is my job and my life. Whatever difficulties I face are part of it. I just do my best in every situation, believing that things will be okay. This mindset helps me stay resilient.)

**Strengthening Resilience in the Face of Noncompliance.** Informant 3 shared that resilience is tested when beginning teachers ignore mentoring guidance and pursue their own methods:

Ahhh there are times that the resiliency will be tested especially when this aggressive new teacher will not follow what their mentor guided them the new teacher is doing... what she or he believes is correct not following to what the mentor is guiding

(Resilience is tested when an assertive new teacher refuses to follow mentoring guidance and insists on doing what they believe is correct. This can be stressful for the mentor.)

**Delegating Tasks and Tapping a Support Group.** Informant 4 emphasized the importance of delegating responsibilities and sharing workloads with the planning team to avoid burnout:

Stress could not be avoided when you manage a certain group kung para dili ka kaayo stressful and to stay resilient, of course you have to tap your group dili nimo tanan angkonon ang trabaho always remember you need to put your heart in your job dali ra kaayo maka cope sa stress I talk to my colleagues.

(Stress cannot be avoided when managing a group. To reduce it and stay resilient, you have to tap your group and not take on all the work yourself. Always put your heart into your job. I cope with stress more easily when I talk to my colleagues.)

**Roaming Around the School Campus.** Informant 5 shared that leaving the office to interact with students provides a refreshing break from stress:

I will go out in my office, roaming around the school campus, chatting with kids I happen to meet By looking at them and having empathy on them... it made my day."

(I go out of my office, roam the campus, and chat with students I meet. Seeing them and empathizing with them brightens my day.)

**Practicing Prayer and Reflection.** Informant 6 described starting the day with prayer and finding support through conversations with colleagues:

Prayer and reflection. Kada buntag, mag-ampo gyud ko before mosugod. I also take time to talk with my co-teachers murag support group ba. Dili nako ginapad-on tanan akong kabug-aton.

(Prayer and reflection. Every morning, I pray before starting the day. I also talk with my co-teachers, like a support group. I do not carry all the burdens by myself.)

### Ways in Seeking Support or Collaboration when Facing Mentoring-related Difficulties

The responses from school heads revealed five thematic ways of seeking support or collaboration when facing mentoring-related difficulties: Talking to a Confidante, Talking with Colleagues, Seeking Help from Expert People, Talking to Seasoned Teachers, and Engaging the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) and Other Stakeholders.

**Talking to a Confidante.** Some school heads cope with mentoring challenges by confiding in a trusted person, either at work or at home. Informant 2 shared:

To my fellow workers or to my wife ahhh whenever there are things that are challenging in school I may talk with a confidante I can release them and it will not stay inside me. So, I will not be destroyed the following day I feel better.

(Whenever there are challenges at school, I talk to a confidante either a colleague or my wife so I can release my thoughts and not keep them inside. This helps me feel better by the next day.)

Informant 5 added:

Ahhmm I talk to one of my confidants here in school and ask assistance to our master teacher.

(I talk to one of my trusted colleagues at school and ask assistance from our master teacher.)

**Talking with Colleagues.** Several participants emphasized the importance of discussing problems with fellow school heads to share experiences and find solutions. Informant 4 explained:

In facing mentoring related difficulties, I usually talk with some of my co-school heads kay you cannot have it all maybe by talking to them you will come up with the same common problem so tabangan ta ni og solve.

(In facing mentoring-related difficulties, I usually talk with fellow school heads because you cannot know everything. Sometimes we realize we have the same problems and we can work together to solve them.)

Informant 6 shared:

Mupangayo ko og advice sa among PSDS or fellow School Heads. Naa mi GC sa mga heads and we exchange practices. Dako kaayo na og natabang kay makakuha ko og laing perspective. Sometimes, I also involve the PTA to support teachers, especially in classroom needs.

(I ask advice from our PSDS or fellow school heads. We have a group chat where we exchange practices, which helps me gain new perspectives. Sometimes, I involve the PTA to support teachers, especially with classroom needs.)

**Seeking Help from Expert People.** Informant 1 noted the value of involving experts within the school, such as grade-level heads and curriculum leaders:

Will seeking support to some people employees around whom I believe they can help like grade level heads asking their presence could better the mentoring process.

(When seeking support, I approach people in the school who I believe can help, such as grade-level heads. Their presence can improve the mentoring process.)

**Talking to Seasoned Teachers.** Informant 3 pointed out that veteran and master teachers play an important role in supporting the mentoring process:

Ahhh in the school they have so called veteran teacher. This teacher who are old in the service can help and support the school head in mentoring the new teachers especially the master teachers they are ahhh still fully complete in a guiding or mentoring

(In the school, veteran teachers can help and support the school head in mentoring new teachers. Master teachers, in particular, still take a lead role in guiding and mentoring, especially since the school head often has many other responsibilities.)

### Adjustments Made in One's Mentoring Approach when Challenges Persist

The responses from school heads revealed six thematic adjustments made when challenges in mentoring persisted: Adjusting to Mentee's Behavior, Tailoring Adjustments to the Person Being Mentored, Finding Peace Alone, Practicing Flexibility in Mentoring Models, Ensuring the Essence of Mentoring Prevails, and Conducting Informal Sessions.

**Adjusting to Mentee's Behavior.** Informant 1 shared that adapting to the mentee's behavior is a necessary part of sustaining the mentoring process, particularly when facing resistance:

Speaking of adjustment, it is easy to say to adjust but there is no other way than adjust with the different ahhh behaviors we confront every now and then especially on mentoring adjustment to their behavior is very important but with the help also of ahhh somebody else around you.

(Speaking of adjustment, it is easy to say, but in reality, there is no other way than to adapt to the different behaviors we encounter in mentoring. Adjusting to their behavior is very important, along with seeking help from others when needed.)

**Tailoring Adjustments to the Person Being Mentored.** Informant 2 explained that the adjustment strategy should depend on the specific individual, while the main purpose of mentoring should remain unchanged:

Adjustment are always present depending on the kind of person you are dealing with Adjust the style but the purpose should remain even if there is a challenge you adjust the way you deal with a person, but you should not sacrifice your purpose of helping or mentoring the teachers.

(Adjustments are always present depending on the kind of person you are dealing with. You adjust your style, but the purpose to help the teacher become better must remain. Challenges should not cause you to change your ultimate mentoring goal.)

**Finding Peace Alone.** Informant 3 mentioned taking time alone as a way to refresh and continue with their mentoring work:

For me I am not that nega sometimes I find peace alone just to exhaust the stress so that I can refresh myself and continue my work as the mentor.

(For me, I am not negative. Sometimes I find peace alone to release stress so I can refresh myself and continue my mentoring work.)

**Practicing Flexibility in Mentoring Models.** Informant 4 shared that flexibility in approach is necessary when a particular mentoring model does not work for a given mentee:

So, when challenging persisted I'll have to be flexible maybe this model will not fit with this kind of person so, I have tried another model give time mentoring is sustainable later he will respond to the kind of strategy that you are implementing it's taken time ok.

(When challenges persist, I have to be flexible. If one model does not work for a certain person, I try another. I also give them time to adapt because mentoring is a long-term process. Some respond quickly, while others take time.)

**Ensuring the Essence of Mentoring Prevails.** Informant 5 stressed the importance of keeping the core purpose of mentoring intact despite challenges:

I make it to the point that my mentoring will prevail, as a School head we need to be firm in every decision we have.

(I make sure my mentoring continues, and as a school head, I remain firm in my decisions.)

**Conducting Informal Sessions.** Informant 6 noted that they shifted to a less formal mentoring style to make the process more approachable:

Gi-reduce nako ang formal sessions, instead informal na lang coffee talk after klase. Gi-adjust pud nako ang schedule para flexible. I also simplified some of the monitoring tools para mas sayon sundan.

(I reduced formal sessions and instead made them informal like coffee talks after class. I also adjusted the schedule to be more flexible and simplified monitoring tools to make them easier to follow.)

#### **What realizations have emerged from your mentoring experiences that shaped your perspective as a leader?**

This section presents the results to the 4<sup>th</sup> major research question; 'What are the challenges encountered by School Heads in mentoring beginning teachers?' Three specific research questions were used to gather data and information for this major research question. The questions were designed to gather information on the participants' understanding of the pedagogical functions and responsibilities of the school head, as well as the expectations they held regarding the fulfillment of these functions and responsibilities.

**Realizations in Mentoring Experiences Shaping Perspective as a Leader.** The responses from school heads revealed six thematic realizations that emerged from their mentoring experiences: A Wonderful Experience to Help Teachers, Becoming a Better Leader Through

Mentoring, Recognizing Mentoring as a Necessity for New Teachers, Understanding Mentoring as Growing Together, The Need for Broad-mindedness, and Mentoring as Patience and Presence.

**A Wonderful Experience to Help Teachers.** Informant 1 described the fulfillment of guiding teachers to meet expectations and improve their work performance:

It is wonderful when you help person to comply and achieve the work through mentoring helps the teachers or the mentee generalize ideas that can be useful for an effective works and jobs to happen.

(It is wonderful to help someone comply with and achieve their work goals through mentoring. This process helps teachers or mentees generalize ideas that can be useful for effective work performance.)

**Becoming a Better Leader Through Mentoring.** Informant 2 shared that mentoring has improved their leadership by developing skills in understanding people and turning challenges into growth opportunities:

I become ahhh better leader with all those experience that I have I am not a psychology but my experiences as a school administrator somehow train me I realize that these persons may be seen by others as problems, but for me they could serve as opportunities for me to grow and become a better person.

(I have become a better leader through my experiences, especially with beginning teachers of different personalities. Though I am not a psychologist, my experiences as a school administrator have trained me to read behavior, adjust, and see challenges not as problems but as opportunities for growth.)

**Recognizing Mentoring as a Necessity for New Teachers.** Informant 3 stressed that mentoring bridges the gap between theoretical knowledge and the realities of classroom practice:

Ahhh for me I believe that mentoring is really a need for the new teachers. Here comes the actual life of teaching and they lack experience in giving strategies so that learners will understand.

(I believe mentoring is necessary for new teachers because what they have learned from school is mostly theoretical. When they start teaching, they lack experience in applying strategies that help learners understand, making mentoring essential.)

**Understanding Mentoring as Growing Together.** Informant 4 highlighted that mentoring benefits both mentor and mentee, fostering mutual growth and building trust:

Ok, so as a leader mentoring talk me that is not about guiding it is about growing together when you mentored you will also be empowering your teachers to grow it will build trust then when you listen actively to your mentee you invest [in a] professional relationship which will be the central focus of your leadership philosophy.

(As a leader, mentoring taught me that it is not only about guiding but also about growing together. By empowering teachers to grow, you build trust and invest in professional relationships, which become central to your leadership philosophy.)

**The Need for Broad-mindedness.** Informant 5 reflected that effective mentoring requires fairness and an open mind:

That we need to be broad minded, and just.

(We need to be broad-minded and fair.)

**Mentoring as Patience and Presence.** Informant 6 emphasized that successful mentoring focuses on being present and patient rather than striving for perfection:

Mentoring is not about perfection, it's about patience and presence. Nakita nako nga ang true success sa isa ka leader dili lang sa achievements, kundi kung unsa ka niya matabangan ang uban nga motubo.

(Mentoring is not about perfection; it is about patience and presence. I have seen that a leader's true success is not only in achievements but also in how much they help others grow.)

#### **Contribution of Interaction with Beginning Teachers to Professional Growth**

The responses from school heads revealed five thematic contributions of their interactions with beginning teachers to their professional growth: Interaction as a Learning Experience, Understanding the Situation of New Teachers, Developing Character and Value Formation, Remaining Adaptable to Current Realities, and Becoming a Better Person Through Generational Interaction.

**Interaction as a Learning Experience.** Participants shared that engaging with beginning teachers allowed them to reflect on their own experiences as novice educators. Informant 3 noted the contrast between their own early teaching years and those of the teachers they now mentor:

I compared their reactions to my experience because when I was a new teacher there was no mentoring I am the only one teacher in the school handling 5 grade I was alone for three years walang nagmentors sa akin.

(I compared their reactions to my own experience because when I was a new teacher, there was no mentoring or coaching. I was the only teacher in the school, handling five grade levels, and I was alone for three years without a mentor.)

Informant 4 added that working with beginning teachers has helped them recognize the changing realities of the classroom:

As I interact with beginning teachers I am also growing and I am also learning it made me realize that the current realities in the classroom life is different from our time it helps me think to stay current and improve my own practices.

(As I interact with beginning teachers, I grow and learn as well. It made me realize that classroom realities today are different from my time, which helps me stay current and improve my practices.)

**Understanding the Situation of New Teachers.** Informant 5 expressed empathy toward new teachers, drawing from their own experience of starting without guidance:

Ahhmm I did understand their situation because I was once a beginning teacher but no one mentored me trainings are different it's more on quantity not quality.

(I understand their situation because I was once a beginning teacher with no mentor. Trainings then were more about quantity than quality.)

**Developing Character and Value Formation.** Informant 1 highlighted that mentoring has strengthened their character and values in managing diverse personalities:

It's not easy to manage individual differences but it helps me develop my character, my value formation as to how I could handle persons in different situations great adjustment.

(It's not easy to manage individual differences, but it has helped me develop my character and values in handling people in various situations, requiring great adjustment.)

**Remaining Adaptable to Current Realities.** As noted by Informant 4, mentoring new teachers has reinforced the need for flexibility in teaching practices, recognizing that strategies from the past may not always apply today:

Their questions and struggles help me remain adaptable and effective my past practices may not be effective anymore, so their group opened a mirror to my time.

(Their questions and struggles help me remain adaptable and effective, making me realize that my past practices may no longer be suitable. Their experiences mirror my own past and help me grow.)

**Becoming a Better Person Through Generational Interaction.** Informant 2 shared that working with Gen Z teachers has expanded their understanding and made them a better leader:

They have contributed very much to my professional growth especially with gen-z considering that I belong to generation-x I have a different world but dealing with them I learn so much and this make me a better person.

(They have greatly contributed to my professional growth, especially Gen Z teachers. As someone from Generation X, I live in a different world, but working with them has taught me a lot and made me a better person.)

#### **Valuable Lessons for Other School Heads about Mentoring Beginning Teachers**

The responses from school heads revealed five thematic lessons they believe are essential for other school leaders to know about mentoring beginning teachers: Be Prepared to Do the Mentoring, Strive to Make Beginning Teachers the Best Versions of Themselves, Recognize Mentoring as Essential to School Success, Provide Consistent Technical Assistance, and Give Feedback with Empathy.

**Be Prepared to Do the Mentoring.** Participants stressed the importance of school heads equipping themselves to deliver meaningful mentoring that addresses both skills and professional growth. Informant 1 explained:

They should be prepared on the best thing they could offer to the teachers beginning teacher need to know curriculum implementation how to be effective by using what we call contextualize and indigenize approach of lesson to address the different styles and learning ability of the learners.

(School heads should be prepared to offer the best guidance to teachers, especially beginning ones. They need to be familiar with curriculum implementation and how to teach effectively using contextualized and localized approaches that address learners' diverse styles and abilities.)

Informant 3 added:

Most school heads know the importance of mentoring so that [teachers] will be guided how to start a lesson, how to finish the lesson the learners will know that's very important.

**Strive to Make Beginning Teachers the Best Versions of Themselves.** Informant 2 emphasized the responsibility of school heads to nurture new teachers as future leaders:

We should be very happy because every time we face these people there is a sense of purpose. Our work is to develop more leaders and we begin with these teachers we could make them the best version of themselves in the future.

**Recognize Mentoring as Essential to School Success.** Informant 4 pointed out that mentoring is not optional but central to building a strong and effective school:

Mentoring is a very hard task but it is essential to school success be intentional about creating time and space build trust foster a safe environment where mistakes are seen as steps towards mastery mentoring is the top of leadership that strengthens your entire school.

**Provide Consistent Technical Assistance.** Informant 5 stressed that mentoring should include regular technical support, not only for beginning teachers but also for experienced ones:

Not all teachers knew how to teach even those seasoned teachers are not systematic need *jud naay* technical assistance from time to time.

(Not all teachers, even experienced ones, follow systematic methods. Technical assistance should be provided regularly to maintain and improve teaching quality.)

**Give Feedback with Empathy.** Informant 6 reminded fellow school heads to approach mentoring with understanding and patience:

*Ayaw kalimti nga ang matag teacher lahi ug pinanggikan. Be patient. Be present. And always provide feedback with empathy invest in them early.*

(Remember that every teacher comes from a different background. Be patient, be present, and always give feedback with empathy. The teacher you mentor today will be your partner in the mission so invest in them early.)

#### 4. DISCUSSION

The structured themes and the emerging therein were made as bases in broadening the discussion of the findings in this study. As each theme was linked to related literature and studies, substantial discussion was made in order to find their alignment with the theme.

**Significant Experience Highlighting Journey in Mentoring Beginning Teachers.** School heads described various experiences that captured the essence of their mentoring journey, resulting in four clustered themes: Mentoring as Essential Guidance for Novice Teachers, A Challenging yet Fulfilling Role, Two-Way Learning in Mentorship, and Addressing Specific Instructional and Classroom Management Gaps. The findings revealed that mentoring served as an indispensable support system for beginning teachers, guiding them in curriculum implementation, lesson planning, and classroom management especially for those with little to no prior exposure to teaching realities. Participants also emphasized the reciprocal nature of mentoring, where they learned innovative strategies from younger teachers while imparting their own knowledge and experience.

These results reinforce Sak's (2024) assertion that effective mentoring centers on relationship-building, developmental guidance, and continuous training tailored to the realities of early-career teachers. The role being both challenging and fulfilling is consistent with Ampomah et al. (2024), who found that mentorship contributes not only to the growth of novice teachers but also to the mentor's own professional development. The two-way learning process observed here aligns with Steen (2022), who described interdependent mentoring as mutually beneficial, enhancing both mentor and mentee competencies. Furthermore, the need to address specific instructional and classroom management gaps supports Valdez and Dominado's (2020) findings that systematic mentoring mitigates these challenges by providing corrective feedback and sustained professional guidance.

**Ways in which Mentoring Influenced One's Leadership Style and Responsibilities.** Five clustered themes emerged: Building a Mentor-Mentee Relationship, Creating Good Leaders, Treating Teachers as Co-equals, Leading with Empathy and Consideration, and Encouraging Teacher Autonomy and Compassionate Leadership. Participants reported that mentoring shaped their leadership style into a more collaborative and empathetic form, fostering trust, shared responsibility, and empowerment of teachers. Some reflected that the process honed their ability to balance professional authority with collegial respect, encouraging mentees to grow into independent educators.

These findings support Dvir and Schatz-Oppenheimer's (2020) view that strong interpersonal connections built on trust and open communication are vital for effective mentoring. Treating teachers as co-equals and promoting autonomy echo the distributed leadership principles discussed by Abiola and James (2021), where leaders foster collegiality and shared ownership of school goals. The development of compassionate leadership aligns with Laforteza et al. (2023), who noted that empathy and active listening help build professional relationships that strengthen school culture.

**Mentoring Strategies Implemented when Supporting Beginning Teachers.** Participants identified five key strategies: Facilitating Mentor–Mentee Dialogues, Reinforcing the Principles of Teaching, Conducting Classroom Walk-throughs, Providing Structured Orientation and Collaborative Learning, and Offering Feedback, Modelling, and Coaching. These strategies blended formal observation and coaching with informal discussions, ensuring continuous support. Structured orientation programs set clear expectations, while classroom walk-throughs and post-observation dialogues allowed for targeted instructional improvement.

The use of reflective dialogues is consistent with Zanting et al. (2001) and Orland-Barak (2020), who highlight critical discussion and inquiry-based mentoring as tools for promoting self-awareness and problem-solving among novice teachers. Instructional modelling as mentioned by participants aligns with Hudson (2016), who emphasizes the importance of demonstrating effective practices that mentees can emulate. Collaborative learning between novice and veteran teachers is supported by Laforteza et al. (2023), who stress that professional learning communities encourage shared accountability and continuous professional growth.

**Difficulties Usually Arising in Supporting New Teachers in their Adjustment to the Teaching Profession.** Five clustered themes emerged: Difficulties in Adjusting to the New Environment, Unwillingness to Apply Expectations, Challenges in Personality Differences, Low Self-esteem and Self-doubt, and Struggles in Classroom Management and Parent Engagement. The findings reveal that beginning teachers often require extended support to adapt to institutional culture, pedagogical expectations, and diverse classroom situations. Resistance to guidance, personality clashes, and limited confidence were also common barriers.

These challenges confirm Mengistie's (2020) findings that novice teachers frequently experience difficulty adapting to their teaching environment and require strong mentorship to bridge the gap between pre-service preparation and classroom realities. Issues of self-doubt and reluctance to apply feedback reflect Dvir and Schatz-Oppenheimer's (2020) observations that building trust is essential before mentees will fully embrace guidance. Struggles in classroom management and community relations align with Valdez and Dominado's (2020) study, which identified these as critical areas where mentors can provide corrective supervision and emotional reassurance.

**Ways in which School-Based Policies, Workload, or Administrative Demands Interfered with Effective Mentoring.** Five thematic challenges were identified: Challenges in Policy Implementation and Compliance, Resistance to Administrative Directives, Collaborative Administrative Functions, Limited Mentoring Due to Teacher and School Head Workload, and Time Constraints from Reporting and Compliance Requirements. Participants noted that while policies provide structure, excessive administrative work often reduced their ability to focus on mentoring.

These findings are consistent with Beñalet et al. (2024), who reported that overlapping responsibilities and administrative overload frequently hinder school heads from providing sustained mentoring support. The need to balance compliance with mentoring responsibilities echoes Chinyama and Kalenga's (2023) recommendation that institutions must allocate dedicated time for mentoring to prevent it from being sidelined. Collaborative administrative functions align with Laforteza et al.'s (2023) findings that teamwork in school governance can indirectly benefit mentoring by fostering a supportive environment.

**External Factors Making the Mentoring Process Difficult to Sustain or Manage.** Five external barriers were identified: Individual Differences of Teachers, Influence of Social Media, Insufficient Budget for Trainings, Unsupportive Administrators, and Internet Connectivity and Resource Limitations. These reflect challenges that extend beyond the mentor's immediate control but significantly affect the sustainability of mentoring programs.

The influence of personal differences and pre-existing beliefs among mentees mirrors Ampomah et al.'s (2024) assertion that mentors must continuously recalibrate strategies to meet evolving needs. The disruptive role of social media aligns with Trust et al. (2016), who warned that conflicting online narratives can undermine in-school guidance. Resource limitations and inadequate budgets support Oliveira et al.'s (2021) findings that rural school contexts often lack the infrastructure and training funds necessary for comprehensive mentorship.

**Helpful Practices in Managing Stress and Staying Resilient as Mentoring Becomes Demanding.** Six practices were identified: Working with a Question-and-Answer Approach, Taking Pride in Owning the Job, Strengthening Resilience in the Face of Noncompliance, Delegating Tasks and Tapping a Support Group, Roaming Around the School Campus, and Practicing Prayer and Reflection. These reflect a blend of interpersonal, structural, and personal strategies to maintain well-being and effectiveness.

These coping mechanisms echo Abiola and James' (2021) emphasis on emotional self-regulation as a foundation for effective mentorship. The use of peer collaboration and delegation is aligned with Korucu-Kis and Demir's (2019) findings that shared problem-solving enhances resilience among mentors. Prayer and reflection mirror Sak's (2024) observation that mentors often draw on personal values and reflective practice to maintain composure under pressure.

**Ways in Seeking Support or Collaboration when Facing Mentoring-related Difficulties.** Five thematic approaches emerged: Talking to a Confidante, Talking with Colleagues, Seeking Help from Expert People, Talking to Seasoned Teachers, and Engaging the Parent–Teacher Association (PTA) and Other Stakeholders. These practices demonstrate that mentors often rely on both professional and personal networks to address mentoring challenges.

These findings correspond with Laforteza et al. (2023), who highlighted the value of professional learning communities for sharing expertise. Seeking support from expert teachers aligns with Hudson's (2016) emphasis on the role of experienced practitioners in modeling and reinforcing effective teaching practices. Involving the PTA reflects Chinyama and Kalenga's (2023) observation that community engagement strengthens school-based initiatives.

**Adjustments Made in One's Mentoring Approach when Challenges Persist.** Six thematic adjustments emerged: Adjusting to Mentee's Behavior, Tailoring Adjustments to the Person Being Mentored, Finding Peace Alone, Practicing Flexibility in Mentoring Models, Ensuring the Essence of Mentoring Prevails, and Conducting Informal Sessions. These reflect adaptability as a key attribute of effective mentorship.

These align with Ampomah et al.'s (2024) findings that mentors must recalibrate their approaches in response to mentees' evolving needs, ensuring sustained engagement. Practicing flexibility is also supported by Feiman-Nemser (2012), who stressed the need for context-sensitive mentoring that responds to individual and situational differences.

**Realizations in Mentoring Experiences Shaping Perspective as a Leader.** Six realizations emerged: A Wonderful Experience to Help Teachers, Becoming a Better Leader Through Mentoring, Recognizing Mentoring as

a Necessity for New Teachers, Understanding Mentoring as Growing Together, The Need for Broad-mindedness, and Mentoring as Patience and Presence. These findings show that mentoring fosters both professional and personal growth in school heads.

These are consistent with Steen's (2022) observation that intergenerational mentoring promotes mutual growth and continuous renewal in leadership practice. The emphasis on broad-mindedness and patience supports Sak's (2024) view that emotional scaffolding is critical in sustaining teacher confidence and performance.

**Contribution of Interaction with Beginning Teachers to Professional Growth.** Five contributions were identified: Interaction as a Learning Experience, Understanding the Situation of New Teachers, Developing Character and Value Formation, Remaining Adaptable to Current Realities, and Becoming a Better Person Through Generational Interaction.

These contributions mirror Steen's (2022) findings on the reciprocal nature of mentoring and align with Jiang et al. (2022), who emphasized reflective practice as a tool for professional and personal development. The adaptability theme supports Lomi et al. (2020), who stressed the importance of responsiveness to changing educational contexts.

**Valuable Lessons for Other School Heads about Mentoring Beginning Teachers.** Five lessons emerged: Be Prepared to Do the Mentoring, Strive to Make Beginning Teachers the Best Versions of Themselves, Recognize Mentoring as Essential to School Success, Provide Consistent Technical Assistance, and Give Feedback with Empathy. These highlight the intentionality and relational skills required for effective mentoring.

These align with Hudson's (2016) advocacy for structured mentoring that blends technical guidance with relational support. Providing feedback with empathy supports Dvir and Schatz-Oppenheimer's (2020) assertion that trust-based relationships are essential for mentee growth. Recognizing mentoring as key to school success reflects Laforteza et al.'s (2023) findings that schools with strong mentoring cultures experience better teacher retention and performance.

### Implications for Practice

Based on the findings, the following implications for practice are offered.

*On Significant Experiences in Mentoring Beginning Teachers.* The findings revealed that school heads view mentoring as essential guidance for novice teachers, a challenging yet fulfilling responsibility, and a two-way learning process that often involves addressing specific instructional and classroom management gaps. This implies that school heads should be provided with sustained mentorship training that not only covers pedagogical coaching but also fosters adaptive leadership skills. Programs should recognize mentoring as both a technical and relational role, equipping leaders to balance instructional supervision with emotional support.

*On Mentoring's Influence on Leadership Style and Responsibilities.* Mentoring was shown to reshape leadership into a more collaborative, empathetic, and trust-based practice, encouraging shared responsibility and teacher empowerment. This implies that leadership development programs for school heads must integrate modules on relational leadership, emotional intelligence, and distributed leadership models. By institutionalizing these practices, school heads can cultivate professional cultures where mentoring contributes directly to school improvement.

*On Strategies Used to Support Beginning Teachers.* The study found that effective mentoring strategies included structured dialogue, reinforcement of teaching principles, classroom walk-throughs, orientation programs, collaborative learning, and feedback with modelling. This highlights the need for capacity-building initiatives that equip school heads with diverse mentoring techniques and observation tools. Training should include how to customize mentoring approaches based on teacher needs and local contexts, especially in resource-constrained environments.

*On Difficulties in Supporting New Teachers' Adjustment.* Participants reported challenges such as difficulty adjusting to the school environment, unwillingness to apply feedback, personality clashes, low self-confidence, and classroom management struggles. These findings imply the need for targeted support systems, including onboarding programs, peer mentoring, and professional learning communities (PLCs) that address both the instructional and socio-emotional needs of beginning teachers.

*On the Impact of School-Based Policies, Workload, and Administrative Demands.* The study revealed that excessive workload, compliance requirements, and resistance to directives reduced the time and focus available for mentoring. This suggests that DepEd and school divisions should streamline administrative processes and allocate protected time for mentoring activities. Additionally, mentoring should be formally recognized as part of a school head's workload to ensure it is prioritized.

*On External Factors Affecting the Mentoring Process.* Barriers such as individual teacher differences, social media influence, limited training budgets, unsupportive administrators, and poor connectivity challenge the sustainability of mentoring. This implies that school systems must invest in infrastructure, allocate funds for regular capacity-building, and implement policies to strengthen professional ethics and critical thinking in the age of social media.

*On Coping Mechanisms for Stress and Resilience in Mentoring.* School heads employed practices such as Q&A sessions, pride in work ownership, delegation, peer support, campus engagement, and prayer/reflection to sustain resilience. These findings suggest that professional development should also address mentor well-being, including stress management, mindfulness, and peer coaching, to maintain high-quality mentorship over time.

*On Seeking Support and Collaboration.* Mentors relied on confidantes, fellow school heads, expert staff, seasoned teachers, and PTA involvement to address mentoring difficulties. This implies the need to formalize collaborative support networks, including mentor forums, inter-school learning exchanges, and community-based support systems to expand the resources available for mentorship.

*On Adjustments Made When Challenges Persist.* The study showed that school heads adapted by tailoring their approaches, practicing flexibility, conducting informal sessions, and maintaining the essence of mentoring despite obstacles. This underscores the importance of embedding adaptability and problem-solving modules into leadership training, ensuring school heads can sustain mentoring in changing conditions.

*On Insights Gained and Their Influence on Leadership Perspectives.* Mentoring experiences helped shape school heads into more patient, broad-minded, and learner-centered leaders. This implies that mentoring should be positioned not only as a support for beginning teachers but also as a developmental pathway for school heads themselves. Reflection and self-assessment should be institutionalized in mentoring programs to reinforce leadership growth.

*On the Contribution of Mentoring to Professional Growth.* Interactions with beginning teachers were found to deepen adaptability, enhance reflective practice, and promote personal growth in school heads. These findings suggest that mentoring programs should integrate reciprocal learning opportunities, recognizing that both mentor and mentee benefit professionally.

*On Lessons for Other School Heads.* Participants emphasized preparedness, empathy, technical assistance, and feedback as essential elements in mentoring. This implies that mentorship frameworks should standardize these core practices while allowing flexibility for contextual adaptation. DepEd should embed mentoring competencies into leadership standards and performance appraisal systems to ensure consistent quality across schools.

## 5. CONCLUSION

With mentoring beginning teachers as the central focus of this inquiry, the lived experiences of school heads in guiding novice educators provided a deeper understanding of the instructional, relational, and adaptive dimensions of school leadership. The narratives shared by participants highlighted the dual nature of mentoring as both a challenging and fulfilling responsibility, the importance of balancing guidance with professional autonomy, and the critical role of empathy, flexibility, and trust in shaping effective mentorship. These lived experiences contribute to a grounded and practical understanding of how mentoring unfolds within the real context of public elementary education, particularly in rural, resource-constrained, and geographically isolated schools.

School heads are not only administrators but also instructional coaches, professional role models, and stewards of teacher growth. Their experiences offer critical insights that can guide improvements in mentoring systems, professional development initiatives, and institutional support structures. As noted by Sak (2024) and Ampomah et al. (2024), effective mentoring requires a deliberate blend of technical guidance, emotional scaffolding, and responsiveness to the evolving needs of beginning teachers.

In light of these findings, it is imperative that future mentoring initiatives include structured training for mentors, the institutionalization of protected time for mentoring, and the establishment of professional learning communities to sustain collaboration and peer support. Moreover, a deeper understanding of school heads' mentoring realities can serve as the basis for developing localized mentoring frameworks, enhancing the Teacher Induction Program, and strengthening partnerships among the Department of Education, local government units, and community stakeholders.

Ultimately, improving mentorship is not only about transferring instructional skills, it is about empowering beginning teachers to thrive, fostering leadership growth among school heads, and ensuring that teacher development meaningfully contributes to quality education for all learners.

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## BIOGRAPHIES



Mary Ann Ortiz is a licensed professional teacher with a deep commitment to personal and professional growth in the field of education. Although she has not yet formally entered the teaching profession, her dedication to continuous learning is evident in her pursuit of a master's degree in education. As part of her graduate journey, she conducted a meaningful study entitled "Experiences on Mentoring Beginning Teachers," reflecting her strong interest in supporting teacher development and fostering a nurturing learning environment. With a passion for educational leadership and a heart for mentoring, the author aspires to make a lasting impact in the academic community as both a reflective learner and a future educator.



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