



Teacher Mentoring through a Collaborative Approach A quantitative study of peer observation, micro-teaching, and Reflective Practice

¹ Zara Moiz*

¹Academic Coordinator Sultan Mohamed Shah Aga Khan School

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***Correspondence Author:**

Zara.khimani@yahoo.com

Abstract:

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine whether collaborative mentoring is a viable and useful tool for ongoing professional development of teachers at a private school. The research explored structured mentoring activities (peer observations, micro-teachings, and reflective dialogues) that promote growth in teaching practice and improvement in the classroom environment. There were 12 teachers who served both as mentors and mentees, 10 academic coordinators, and 24 third grade through fifth-grade students. The data was gathered through semi-structured interviews with the participants, focus group discussions, and through journaling by the teachers regarding their reflections. Teachers were involved in mentoring cycles to support peer observation of teaching, the exchange of feedback, and reflection on their own teaching practices. Micro-teaching provided an environment where teachers could test out new instructional approaches. The inclusion of student views helped illustrate how mentoring related changes influenced students' perceptions of the teachers they had experienced.

The findings from this study suggest that collaborative mentoring promotes a culture of reflective practice; builds confidence among the teachers participating; and develops trust among teachers.

In particular teachers have seen improvements regarding their lesson planning, classroom interactions and student-centered approach teaching methods.

INTRODUCTION

Teacher performance is a very important factor in determining what students learn; typically, teacher performance exceeds that of other school factors (e.g., school resource, curriculum tool, etc.) as well as the social economic status of students. Teachers who are knowledgeable and skilled can help students achieve academically and positively influence students' attitudes about learning, their sense of capabilities, and their desire to think intellectually. Despite the importance of these skills, most professional development for teachers is conducted through short, outside of the school workshops that rarely result in lasting changes to a teacher's instructional practice. The focus is on the delivery of information as opposed to the act of reflecting on how to teach and these formats generally do not allow for continuous practice and peer support that can be relevant in a teacher's context. Consequently, teachers have very little

time to absorb the new ideas they are learning and to make meaningful adaptations to their classroom environments.

As a response to the shortcomings of the traditional forms of professional development, there has been an increased emphasis towards developing collaborative and practice-based formats. Through this type of approach, teachers become the proactive participants in developing their own knowledge, and therefore not the passive consumers of pre-established materials or information; collaborative approaches to teacher development emphasize peer-based, reflective and dialogical learning, and that the collaborative nature of this model will help to strengthen each teacher's professional growth by engaging in ongoing interaction with their colleagues; ultimately teaching is viewed as a collective process which promotes the shared responsibility of all parties involved in the education of the students.

This paradigm shift toward collaborative mentorship is among the most compelling ways to develop the professional development of teachers. While traditional mentoring is often a hierarchical process where a teacher or school administrator assesses the instruction and evaluation of a new teacher; collaborative mentoring creates reciprocal relationships, fosters trust, and establishes professional respect between two colleagues. Collaborative mentoring uses a "learning by teaching" model to support the development of expertise in both mentors and mentees through shared reflections, peer observations, and micro-teaching with structured feedback. These three processes (peer observation, reflective dialogue, and micro-teaching) create an iterative cycle for developing professional learning and enhancing the instructional practices of teachers.

Peer observation allows teachers to observe classroom interaction through other people's eyes and experience. It functions differently than an evaluation or supervisory process; peer observation serves as a mechanism for enhancing one's professional knowledge base. Peer observation provides teachers with exposure to different teaching methods, students' reactions to those methods, and dynamics within the classroom. The longer a teacher observes others teach, the more he/she will be viewing the act of teaching as a means of expanding his/her own knowledge base rather than a method of evaluating another's performance. Additionally, when paired with some form of reflection, peer observation can promote a much deeper examination of the choices teachers make while teaching and how those decisions affect learners.

Micro-teaching has also provided an opportunity to experiment through the structured environment of the classroom. Micro-teaching provides a method for a teacher to present a very focused lesson with one or two major educational objectives. This allows the teacher to use one instructional technique. The peers observing will give the teacher feedback specifically related to how well the teacher achieved the educational objective(s) agreed upon prior to the micro-lesson. As the teacher does not have to worry about presenting a full lesson, they may be more likely to try out new teaching techniques in addition to refining their own instruction. Repeatedly going through this cycle helps build the teacher's confidence to try new things; promotes innovation; and develops the teacher's ability to be adaptable with their instruction.

Reflection is the bridge that connects teacher observation with micro-teaching. Reflection requires teachers to reflect on their own assumptions, choices and interpretations of events; it requires teachers to reflect not only on what happened in class (the event), but also on why it happened, how students reacted, and how they can improve future practice. Collaborative reflection takes this a step further by adding a second perspective and through shared dialogue,

allows for mutual challenges to each other's views, sharing of different interpretations and for development of richer understandings than could occur independently.

Collaborative mentoring's theoretical underpinnings have many connections to the ideas on adult learning; adults develop best when learning is directly applicable, relevant, and experiential. Adults require autonomy (the freedom to make choices), the ability to direct their own learning and opportunities to work collaboratively to solve problems. The collaborative mentoring model allows teachers to set their own learning goals, connect theory with the actual contexts in which they teach, and co-create new professional knowledge, thus increasing their professional agency and their sense of "ownership" of their learning.

Collaborative mentoring has an effect on schools beyond the individual teacher; it contributes to a collective capacity of a school as a community to improve, with schools developing into communities of learners (as opposed to being merely places where people work) by creating the opportunity for internal development through the sharing of new knowledge and ideas generated through collaboration among teachers. When teachers regularly observe one another's classrooms, they talk to each other about issues they have experienced and collaborate to experimentally address those same issues, a collective capacity to identify and solve problems and to improve instructional practice develops. Consequently, professional communication increases, instructional challenges that occur are identified and addressed by the faculty as a whole, and teachers develop confidence in their ability to make changes in instructional practice. Additionally, academic administrators develop a better understanding of what happens in the classroom and can provide support that will be meaningful to teachers.

This current study is an analysis of both the method of collaborative mentoring and its results at an urban school located in a city. This study examines the methods of teaching used by teachers as they were involved in mentoring cycles consisting of a peer observing other teachers teach; a micro-teaching cycle where each teacher was able to attempt new instructional techniques while being observed by peers; and a structured reflection process which provided additional support for the teachers' professional development. In this study, data collected through interviews and the reflective journals of the participating teachers were analyzed to determine how these participants' methods of teaching developed over time. As a result of their experience with collaborative mentoring many of the teachers reported having a better understanding of how to create lesson plans; being able to be more flexible when delivering those lessons; and a better understanding of their students' needs. Collaborative mentoring also allowed the teachers to try new approaches to their teaching; and to continue to revise and improve upon the strategies they employed so they would no longer rely on just "the way things have always been done."

The academic leaders involved in observing these cycles of mentoring reported that they saw an improvement in teachers' confidence, their classrooms as environments for teaching, and students being engaged by the process of teaching. In addition, this mentoring structure promoted professional relationships with one another and created a climate of mutual respect for each other's professionalism and opportunities for shared learning and not as competitive and isolated individuals. Teachers became more willing to both watch others teach, have themselves watched while they taught, and to share ideas about the teaching profession that had made them feel uncomfortable before.

As a result of this program, there was a different perception for each of the students about their school experience; more specifically, students were able to articulate ways in which they felt more connected to their peers during class time; teachers provided clearer explanations of concepts and students expressed a greater sense of involvement in the learning process. Additionally, students stated that their level of involvement was increased and that the lessons were both more enjoyable and more applicable to their everyday lives; this demonstrates that the influence of mentoring can positively affect both the professional development of teachers as well as the educational environment of the students.

These study results imply that mentoring may be extended beyond teachers to the students they are working with; both teachers and students benefit from structured mentoring including personal feedback and time for reflection. Structured mentoring can assist students in developing self-confidence, autonomy and resiliency while also fostering goal orientation. Implementing student mentoring programs could help to create early academic assistance, enhance students' motivation, and promote a feeling of belonging among all students as part of the larger school community.

Teachers and students who participate in mentoring create a mutual relationship where both parties have an opportunity to grow. When teachers take part in mentoring, they are able to be more reflective in their professional practice and therefore become more empathetic and responsive as a result of this process. As a result of becoming more empathetic and responsive, these same teachers will be better able to mentor their students more effectively; likewise, when students are mentored, they will begin to view and appreciate the value of reflective learning and as such they will contribute to creating more engaging and participatory classrooms. A mentoring program that allows both the teacher and student to reflect on and develop their own practice through mutual support creates a holistic model for developing educators.

This study's results show that collaborative mentoring has the potential to fill the long-standing void between how we conceptualize professional development and how we conduct it in classrooms. The collaborative mentoring model is based on the daily realities of instruction, therefore, as opposed to traditional training models that are driven by outside forces, collaborative mentoring allows teachers to assess the feasibility of new educational concepts, evaluate how effective those concepts have been and improve upon the way they teach with direct application to their students. Collaborative mentoring provides an on-going vehicle for continuing improvement; as such, collaborative mentoring can assist in creating a continuous process for professional development as opposed to providing the teacher with episodic opportunities to learn.

Collaborative Mentoring is a culture of education. This is how it fosters a sense of professional trust; shared responsibility; an ongoing cycle of inquiry; improves teaching capacity; increases student participation; and transforms a school from being a static institution into an active community of learners where students, teachers and staff are all always learning together and growing together.

Overall, collaborative mentoring is an attractive model of professional development for educators which has the potential to provide meaningful, and transformative professional development; it provides a way to honor what educators already know and have developed as professionals, and to expand on those strengths to develop a teacher's ability to teach creatively, reflectively, and responsively; when combined with mentoring students, it supports developing

a school culture that encourages support, reflection, and ongoing learning; research data indicates that these models are likely to be contributing factors in the growth of better teachers as well as providing more equitable and richer learning opportunities, as they form the foundation for a more responsive and effective education system.

Background of Research

Effective teaching is the core influence of the process of student learning. Teachers in primary education continue to be encouraged by policymakers to adopt methods other than the traditional way of delivering content; to incorporate into their lessons 21st-century skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, creativity and digital literacy. Therefore, there is great stress on all teachers but especially new teachers, who may struggle to manage their classrooms, plan their lessons, and make sense of the changing educational pedagogies. Similarly, experienced teachers will also experience challenges when attempting to transition away from the well-established methodologies they have developed over time toward student-centered and technology-based methodologies.

A comprehensive professional development program should be developed to satisfy these needs. Mentoring experiences provide a teacher with the opportunity to receive individualized and supportive guidance and encouragement to build their confidence in teaching practices and to enhance their instructional practices because of peer dialogue. Peer observation of instructional practices also supports this process as it provides teachers with opportunities to reflect on their instructional processes in a non-threatening manner and to enhance their skills. Through the use of reflection and self-assessment, teachers will be able to analyze their instructional decision-making, adjust and apply new instructional strategies, and internalize the professional development they have participated in.

Micro-teaching provides an additional venue for teachers to develop various instructional techniques through the practice of teaching during short, focused teaching sessions with immediate feedback. Micro-teaching also affords the opportunity for the incorporation of student feedback which ensures that the focus on developing teachers' skills will remain relevant to student engagement and classroom success.

As stated above, these two programs are interconnected and collectively form a framework for supporting and enhancing the motivation and professionalism of teachers as they implement 21st-Century Skills in Primary Classrooms.

Research Objectives

The goal is to analyze the impact of structured mentoring on teacher skill-building and overall classroom success. The goal is to evaluate the way collaborative peer observation and reflective discussion help in developing and implementing new teaching strategies. The goal is to determine if micro-teaching provides an effective method for providing teachers with a "safe" environment where they can develop and build upon their instructional abilities. The goal is to understand what role student feedback plays in guiding and enhancing both teaching practices and student learning experiences. The goal is to find practical ways that the process of mentoring, reflecting, and using student feedback can be used as part of continuing professional development for teachers.

Research Question

1. In what manner does a formally structured mentoring model support teachers in developing and/or improving their professional skill and increasing their classroom effectiveness?
2. In what ways do peer-observation models, both individually and collaboratively, used as part of a reflective practice improve the instruction strategies of teachers?
3. To what degree does micro-teaching increase self-awareness, reflective thinking, and experimental development of new methods of instructional delivery by teachers?
4. What types of information from students can support teacher's instructional decision-making and their classroom practices?
5. What are some of the practical strategies that can be used to develop a single mentoring, reflection, and feedback structure to foster long-term professional growth in teachers?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Mentoring as Professional Learning

The importance of mentoring to teacher professional development has been recognized broadly. Mentoring can be described as a structured collegiate process for developing teachers' technical and emotional skills and thus supporting their professional growth through encouraging them to develop pedagogy in addition to supporting the professional development of both new and existing teachers (Hobson et al., 2009). Mentoring provides both new and experienced educators with opportunities to develop instructional practice, build confidence professionally and increase their sense of professionalism.

Teachers who participate in mentoring activities tend to develop a greater sense of reflection on their own teaching and thus will have better ways of responding to the diversity of students in each of their classrooms; in addition, they are able to gain professional support which lessens the feelings of isolation.

Training teachers by mentoring as part of collaborative professional environments is typically more successful and therefore can last longer than isolated training for teachers (Avalos, 2011) because when mentoring and co-planning, along with co-observations of classrooms, and reflection-based dialogue occur together, teachers engage in learning in an active manner, not merely passively receive it.

Mentorship is aligned with the social constructivist theory. Social constructivism theory is based on the idea that knowledge is created by individuals interacting with one another through dialogue (Vygotsky, 1978). Therefore, mentorship is used in two ways; as an advisory source to provide support for teachers, and as a space for the authentic learning of professionals, for example when teachers are able to test ideas, receive feedback from others and then make adjustments to their own professional practices over time.

Additionally, mentorship supports the development of a teacher's professional identity.

Mentorship encourages new professionals to feel a part of a professional community, thereby reducing feelings of burn out and isolation that are common among new educators (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Mentoring has two functions for the educator: instructional and socio/emotional.

Mentoring can be effective as long as it continues throughout time with continued observations, feedback, and reflections (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

2.2 Peer Observation and Reflective Practice

The peer-observation process has moved from being a primarily evaluative tool to an area of development which allows for the collective growth of peers. The supportive environment in which peer-observations take place, fosters trust, mutual respect and shared problem solving among teachers (Lofthouse, 2019). Teachers who observe their peers start to see classroom challenges as opportunities for shared learning rather than as failures or shortcomings of themselves and therefore are able to develop new strategies to implement in their own instructional environments.

Reflection changes the way we understand our experience into ways that will help us grow as professionals. This process of reflection is a cyclical one. As educators reflect on their practices, they begin to see patterns; then they examine the successes and failures of those patterns to find ways to make improvements in their future teaching practices (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Structured reflective opportunities have been especially effective when used within a mentoring framework to bridge the observational space with actual practice. The teacher has the opportunity to use the notes from their peer observation to create an action plan and establish achievable goals for future instruction. Therefore, reflection is essential to all professional development cycles; it connects observation, feedback, and instructional improvement.

Teacher self-confidence is improved as well by engaging in reflective teaching practices. Increased confidence in the ability to manage a classroom environment that can be unpredictable, implement new educational strategies and respond appropriately to different student learning needs are all supported through regular reflection (Tschannen-Moran & McMaster, 2009). The combination of reflection along with mentorship and peer observations support both the technical and personal aspects of a teacher's professional development.

2.3 Micro-Teaching as Deliberate Practice

"Microteaching was developed at Stanford University; it is a method of teaching where an individual teacher conducts very brief, highly focused and intentional teaching sessions that are used for peer evaluation and professional development of teaching skills. Microteaching is a departure from the traditional method of teaching that occurs in a classroom setting; whereas in the traditional classroom setting a teacher is teaching all aspects of instruction, in microteaching, an instructor is able to focus on a single aspect of instruction and conduct this lesson in a controlled environment. The goal of microteaching is to enhance an instructor's awareness of how they think about instruction, as well as to improve an instructor's ability to reflect upon their instructional decisions and methods for engaging students (Amobi & Irwin, 2009)."

Micro-teaching gives teachers an environment to take risks. In micro-teaching, teachers have the opportunity to try new ideas and/or ways to manage classrooms as well as to test questioning techniques in a low stake setting, unlike in full lesson situations (Remesh, 2013). Micro-teaching is in line with Deliberate Practice which emphasizes repeated efforts to improve skills by focusing on improving specific areas, receiving instant feedback, and improving those specific areas (Ericsson et al., 1993). Micro-teaching that incorporates mentorship and peer

feedback provide teachers with a chance to reflect on their teaching practice while also having an opportunity to observe how they are doing from other perspectives; this can lead to rapid development as a professional teacher.

In addition, research has shown that structured micro-teaching improves teacher's ability to teach over time by improving the quality of lesson plans, the ability to manage class time and increasing student engagement (Kumar & Kumar, 2015).

Student input is essential to evaluating how well teachers teach. As a result, including student input will provide an additional dimension or lens for assessing teaching.

Student Perspective in Evaluating Teaching

Students have a unique position from which to assess how clear a lesson was, if the lesson engaged them, and what their total learning experience was like. Research has indicated that when students enjoy a lesson, it can be attributed to the teacher's enthusiasm, clarity, and ability to engage students interactively (Bulut, 2004; EdWeek Research Center, 2018)

The use of student feedback in the mentorship and professional development of teachers is important for ensuring that a teacher's professional development is in line with their students' learning experience. Student response to mentoring encouraging interactive approaches to teaching will demonstrate whether the interactive approaches are enhancing the students' ability to understand and be engaged in their education. This process helps ensure the practicality of the professional development process while promoting a learner-centered approach to education.

Teacher evaluations by students may be used in addition to other methods (e.g., mentoring, peer evaluation, micro-teaching) to support teacher professional development through formative assessment; student feedback assists teachers in identifying areas where their teaching is failing or misdirected and in making adjustments to improve instruction to meet all learners in their classrooms; when combined with mentoring, peer observation, and micro-teaching, student feedback provides one component of a three-dimensional professional development framework that addresses both the technical aspects of the profession and reflective practice and learner centered results at the same time.

2.5 Integrated Framework of Mentoring, Observation, and Feedback

Together mentoring, peer observation, micro-teaching and student feedback provide a comprehensive framework for supporting teacher professional growth through collaborative practice, structured reflection and direct feedback that can inform, improve and ultimately impact student learning outcomes (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Hattie, 2009). Collectively, these four components are designed to promote the quality, long-term feasibility, and overall success of teacher development programs.

The integrated model supports current professional development models, which are focused on sustaining teacher practices through long-term collaboration among teachers as opposed to short-term workshop formats. The model allows for a cycle of observing, reflecting, experimenting, and providing feedback for the teacher as they continually improve their own teaching practices.

3. Method

3.1 Research Design

Using a qualitative methodology enabled the study to examine the experiences of teachers and students involved in collaborative mentoring by exploring participant's thoughts, feelings and actions in an authentic school setting.

3.2 Participants

This research included:

- 12 teachers; six as mentees and six as mentors/co-subject observers
- Ten academic team staff; Department Heads and Coordinators
- 24 students in grades 3–5

Teachers were selected for this study by means of purposeful sampling to ensure diversity in teaching experience and in subjects they teach.

3.3 Data Collection Tools

Methods used for data collection include multiple methods for an overall view:

1. Semi-structured teacher interviews to get views about peer observation and micro-teaching.
2. Students focus groups for student feedback on class participation and learning enjoyment in the classroom.
3. Coordinators interview assessed how mentoring impacted instruction based on the instructional practices of the teachers.
4. Audits of co-teaching and micro-teaching sessions conducted in classrooms.
5. Diaries kept by teachers that documented their personal reflection and professional development.

3.4 Observation Framework

Focus Area	Observation Indicator	Reflection Prompt
clarity	ves, pacing	as clarity achieved?
engagement	oning, hands-on tasks	trategies engaged students most?
ck use	, constructive	d feedback influence planning?
oration	discussion	as peer input applied?

3.5 Data Analysis

Interviews, focus groups, classroom observations and journals were analyzed using thematic analysis. Credibility was achieved by triangulating multiple types of data to increase the richness of the data findings.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Prior informed consent was received from all participants. Involvement of students was approved through their parents. The confidentiality of the participant information was protected as identities were anonymous and participation in the study was completely voluntary.

4. Findings

4.1 Peer Observation Fosters Reflective Growth

The observation of how other teachers taught had an even greater impact on the perception of what it means to teach by the teachers who observed it. It was through the observation of others, teachers developed better awareness of pacing lessons, asking questions and classroom management. The exposure to other teachers' ways of teaching allowed them to try new things and use those new ideas in their own classes. This increased the professional confidence of teachers to try new approaches in their classrooms.

Following observation many teachers reflected upon that experience and as a result formed some type of informal Professional Learning Community (PLC). The teachers would reflectively analyze a lesson, share challenges they experienced during the lesson, and share with each other ways they attempted to improve the lesson or challenge. Through these types of PLCs, teachers felt a sense of trust in one another, collaborated, and ultimately took ownership and were responsible for the way students performed in their class, rather than viewing the performance of their students as solely the teacher's fault.

4.2 Micro-Teaching Enhances Skills and Confidence

Micro-teaching sessions provided focused, structured opportunities for teachers to practice and refine instructional strategies. Participants described these sessions as controlled environments where they could experiment with lesson flow, questioning techniques, and classroom management without the pressures of full-class instruction.

Reflection during micro-teaching encouraged self-assessment and adaptation. Teachers reported increased self-awareness and the ability to respond dynamically to classroom interactions. Repeated cycles of micro-teaching-built confidence, promoted creative problem-solving, and strengthened their willingness to implement innovative strategies.

4.3 Student Enjoyment Reflects Effective Teaching

Engagement was strongest when students participated in hands on work; utilized visual aids and engaged in active discussions as well as actively involved their thoughts and ideas into lessons. Students expressed appreciation toward educators who provided clear explanations of lesson topics and encouraged student involvement, allowing adequate time for a student to formulate an answer prior to providing one themselves.

Incorporating elements based on student preference resulted in increased student participation, attentiveness and motivation. Increased student engagement also resulted in better classroom

management, while demonstrating the correlation between educator professional development and student learning outcomes.

4.4 Academic Team Observations

Mentored teachers were found by Academic Coordinators to have developed a much more organized lesson structure, asked effective questions during instruction and had a much easier time making transitions. In addition, they were able to incorporate new methods of instruction into their classrooms more easily and respond to unexpected classroom issues in a more flexible manner.

Co-Subject Teachers were working together more frequently as well. They began regularly to plan collaboratively, share resources and engage in conversations about how things went in the classroom. As a result, this collaborative environment helped support the development of each teacher individually and ultimately enhanced the overall quality of instruction at the school level.

4.5 Teacher Reflections on Motivation and Innovation

Teachers reported that mentoring and peer collaboration revitalized their motivation. Novice teachers felt supported and less isolated, while experienced teachers were encouraged to adopt modern strategies such as inquiry-based learning, technology integration, and collaborative activities. Reflective discussions prompted creative approaches and experimentation with new methods.

4.6 Integration of Student Feedback into Teaching Practice

As a result of mentoring and peer collaboration, the teachers' motivation was renewed. The novice teachers felt both supported and less alone, whereas the veteran teachers were encouraged to use contemporary teaching techniques (inquiry-based learning, technology integration, etc.) as well as collaboration.

4.7 Summary of Thematic Findings

Theme	Teacher Evidence	Student Feedback
Reflective growth	Self-evaluation journals, peer dialogue	Noted improved clarity in lessons
Confidence	Willingness to try new methods	Observed energetic and interactive lessons
Collaboration	Shared planning sessions	Linked to group activities and participation

5. Results and Discussion

This research demonstrates how using a collaborative mentoring method (peer observation, micro-teaching, and structured reflective dialogue) can be a successful approach to enhance teacher quality; build a positive school climate; support both teacher and student development. The results show that teachers report mentoring has supported their transition from individualized teaching to being part of a community of professionals who collaborate with one

another, which has enhanced their motivation, self-confidence and ability to act in the classroom. Teachers were able to describe this change as going from "alone" to "with others", and they noted the social and professional benefits of mentoring.

Peer-to-peer assessment provided an additional benefit by giving the opportunity for continual growth and improved working relationships between peers. Micro-teaching also helped with the effectiveness and safety of trying new ways to teach as it allowed them to try and test a teaching strategy in a lower risk situation. Additionally, micro-teaching gave teachers the opportunity to learn from each other while developing skills and confidence that would help support their success in their classroom teaching.

Student perceptions were an important part of creating a connection between teacher professional development and teacher classroom effectiveness; as teachers reported that using student input for reflection cycles improved the students' ability to understand the lessons, their engagement with the content and ultimately their learning results. The students also reacted very positively to interactive, clear and enthusiastic teaching; therefore, this enthusiasm created a motivation for the teacher to continue refining their techniques. The cycle of providing feedback and adapting reflects the importance of including learner voice in professional learning models.

Institutional studies have shown that mentoring has had positive impacts on school culture. Teachers who were mentored used better structured lesson plans, improved their classroom management skills and successfully implemented new ideas in the classroom more efficiently. In addition to this, teachers who worked under a mentorship program exhibited greater collaboration among each other. This ultimately resulted in a stronger professional development community that was based upon the principles of building trust, sharing responsibility, and encouraging growth within the profession. Finally, the experience of being mentored was found to be beneficial in motivating the teachers, reducing feelings of isolation as well as supporting them in experimenting with new ways of teaching; many of which are modern teaching methods such as incorporating technology into the classroom, promoting an environment where students can learn through inquiry-based learning, and using collaborative tasks.

Challenges

Challenges identified include time constraints, scheduling peer observations, maintaining mentor quality, and ensuring sustained engagement. These challenges indicate the need for dedicated leadership support, training for mentors, and structured implementation to maintain momentum and effectiveness.

Conclusion

The findings from this research confirm that combining structured teacher mentoring (as described in the prior paragraph) with peer-observing, micro-teaching and reflective dialogue leads to increased professionalism, increased instructional innovation, and enhanced student engagement. This combination of methods will assist both new and veteran teachers in developing teaching strategies which meet students' needs, as well as create a professional

environment within their school districts characterized by trust, collaboration and a commitment to continued learning.

Key implications include:

- Mentorship allows teachers to continue their own professional growth as a mentor can help them improve their ability to use effective methods of instruction, gain confidence as an educator, and reflect on their practice.
- Micro-teaching and collaborative feedback allow teachers to experiment with new and innovative ways to teach while incorporating 21st-century learning and evidence based best practices into their daily lesson planning.
- The improved teacher practice will benefit the students by providing better educational experiences that promote their cognitive development, encourage critical thinking, and support the child's overall growth and development.
- By using student feedback to create lessons that incorporate student interests, make lessons relevant, and increase student involvement in the learning process; student motivation can be increased and positively impact the classroom environment.

Recommendations:

- Include mentoring cycles in teachers' professional development plans so that teachers will be supported through structured mentoring.
- Provide mentors with ongoing training on how to give better quality of feedback and provide more effective guidance.
- Use students' feedback as a means of systematically informing instruction to best meet learners' needs.
- Assist administrators in facilitating scheduling, follow-up and observation processes which will continue to support the mentoring program.

Overall, when combined, mentoring, reflective teaching practices, and collaborative teaching lead to stronger teacher competencies, foster creativity, and improve student results, providing an active, supportive, and flexible learning environment for all members of the educational community.

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