

**FILIPINO TEACHERS' PERCEPTION ON BUDDY SYSTEM: A BASIS FOR IMPROVED  
COACHING AND MENTORING PROGRAM**

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***Abstract***

This study aims to explore and describe teachers' perceptions of the buddy system as a foundation for enhancing mentoring and coaching programs. Utilizing a qualitative research design, the study employed thematic analysis to examine the collected data. The analysis involved two phases of coding—initial (topic) coding and focused coding—from which key categories and themes emerged. The findings indicate that teachers perceive the buddy system as beneficial in various aspects of professional development. Their insights highlighted themes such as assistance, improved performance, positive work attitude, personal and professional growth, strong working relationships, effective program management, and camaraderie. These elements were seen as essential in strengthening the implementation of mentoring and coaching initiatives. The study is limited to the personal views and experiences of Filipino teachers who have participated in the buddy system either as mentors or mentees. Nonetheless, it provides valuable insights that can inform improvements in current mentoring and coaching programs. The findings may also be adapted by other departments or educational institutions seeking to enhance their support systems for teachers.

***Keywords:*** *Buddy system, Improvement, Mentoring and Coaching, Perception*

**INTRODUCTION**

In a world of remote teaching, there is a need to support and enhance the distance teaching learning process to ensure that teachers are armed with the basic teaching standards so that quality education will be given to the learners. To further assist teachers in the new normal brought by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department of Education launched DepEd Teaches during the mid-year In-service Training (INSET)

Week. It integrates technical assistance in improving delivery of basic education services.

Another assistance shall commence in SY 2021-2022 based on Regional Order No.039 2021, the mentoring program implementation. Mentoring refers to a professional developmental relationship between a more experienced teacher (mentor) and a less experienced partner (mentee). This covers the teaching-learning

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development of the Elementary to Secondary education levels.

Mentoring helps a new teacher evaluate her own experiences and grapple with the emotional side of teaching. “The main goal of mentoring is to help employees understand the nitty-gritty parts of their jobs well on time in order to facilitate personal, career and professional growth necessary for high professional commitment (Ojeaga & Okolocha, 2019)”. Mentoring refers to someone taking on the guidance of a new teacher whereas, coaching is usually directed towards a specific area of development for a more established teacher (Sauntson, 2020). Coaching and mentoring can inspire and empower employees, build commitment, increase productivity, grow talent, and promote success. Both mentoring and coaching are means to support workers’ knowledge acquisition and organizational learning. Mentoring and coaching can promote changes in thinking about and doing one’s job and developing an innovative mindset.

Aldeman (2011) underscores the importance of coaching as the facilitation of learning wherein there is disengagement that promotes people to think for themselves and generate solutions to issues and challenges in the workplace. However, coaching can be envisaged as offering a ‘third space’ where

the accountability measures are minimized and the nurturing function is ring-fenced (McIntyre and Hobson, 2016, Burch and Jackson, 2013). Coaching may help to identify barriers and develop strategies for overcoming such obstacles (Gregory et al., 2011).

Teachers have always needed to be adaptable to the educational process. Thus, mentoring and coaching is one of the key solutions as we all have a vested interest in our own survival, as a mentor or a mentee. This action research will find out the Filipino teachers’ perception on buddy system as a basis for improving mentoring and coaching program. The researchers are intended to propose strategies to improve the mentoring and coaching program through buddy system for the benefits and enhancement of the performance of all Filipino teachers.

#### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

This study aimed to understand the Filipino teachers' perception on buddy system: a basis

for improved coaching and mentoring program. Specifically, it seeks to answer the following

questions:

1. How do teachers feel and think about the buddy system as part of mentoring and coaching

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program?

2. What are the teachers' views on how mentoring and coaching program will be improved?

### **METHODOLOGY**

This study employed the purposive sampling technique. A purposive sampling technique is a type of non-probability sampling technique which uses the researcher's judgement in selecting the participants of the study. Qualitative research plays a significant role in the development of special education and the various programs involved (Friedensen, McCrae & Kimball, 2017). This method is a systematic approach that enables understanding of qualities and relevant aspects within a certain context.

Special education comes with a variety of needs and requirements that should be guaranteed if the desired educational objectives are to be realized. Qualitative design produces evidence based on science, which is then used to back up the decisions intended to transform the education of the people with special needs (Brantlinger et al., 2015) Purposive sampling is considered as a type of sampling that parallels the criteria of the intended participants who are Filipino teachers of Pag-asa National High School. Such

purposive sampling resulted in eight (8) participants.

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

How do teachers feel about the buddy system as part of mentoring and coaching program?

- A. Feeling about the buddy system as part of mentoring and coaching program.

#### **Category/Theme: Assistance**

##### **Datum a Support:**

##### **Participants A:**

I feel blessed to have someone to talk to whenever I need coaching and sharing ideas

##### **Participants C:**

Buddy System Program on mentoring and Coaching used to challenge and help individual change the way they work, identify and solve problems, overcome obstacles, make decisions and implement change. I feel blessed and thankful because there is such system in the department that I can rely on.

##### **Participants E:**

Buddy system programs seek to assist the individual with their development. A good buddy is willing to help each other. I feel blessed because it's an opportunity for me to learn something new, also to become productive and available.

### **Interpretative Summary**

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The initial codes for this theme are feel blessed, guidance, assistance, and change.

**Category/Theme: Good Performance**

**Datum a Support:**

**Participants F:**

It's very fulfilling because no matter how hard the work is, it is become easier with the help and support of the workplace buddy.

**Participants G:**

I feel that Buddy System Program is more effective for the teachers because it is the continuation of conversation to one another to improve the performance in specific area

**Participants H:**

As I had observed, the department buddy system provides effective support for colleagues to keep them motivated and be reminded of the tasks that need to be accomplished so the department can submit the reports on time.

**Interpretative Summary**

The initial codes for this theme are fulfillment, Assistance, acceptance of tasks, effectiveness, increase productivity, motivation, build commitment.

**Findings:**

Table 1.A explains the teachers' feel about the buddy system as part of mentoring and coaching program. Two categories/themes were established about the teachers' feelings such as the assistance given by the mentor and good performance derived from buddy

system. Participants A, C, and E were somehow revealed that they are grateful for the assistance being received through mentoring and coaching. They are feeling blessed for the assistance, developmental change, and support from the program. This is because most of the seasoned teachers are approachable, willing to guide and give support to the novice and non-major teachers.

On the other hand, Participants F, G, and H expressed that they have a good performance because of the motivation and reminders given by the mentors to the tasks to be accomplished.

Works became easier through the help and support of the work buddies. The fulfillment, assistance, motivation on acceptance of task, effectiveness and improvement in task accomplishment were the best outcomes of the program. The said data implies that the teachers are pleased and fascinated that they are involved in the program. Willingness of both mentor and mentee and cooperation of everyone are the key factors to achieve the success of mentoring and coaching program. These findings were supported by the study of Lauer, Christopher, Firpo-Triplett, & Buchting, 2014 that technical assistance is considered a component of professional development. Mentoring and coaching are seen as ways to keep employees engaged,

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retain key staff, manage performance, support change initiatives, and defining the organization's culture based on the Conference Board (2013).

It was also favored by the study of Gray, 2018 that mentoring coaching supports teachers with a meaningful experience to connect theories and practice in their professional work. B. Thought about the buddy system as part of mentoring and coaching program.

**Category/Theme:** *Attitude towards work  
Growth and Development*

**Datum as Support**

**Participants D:**

Buddy system is a life-long process for me because at first, I become a mentee of my experts' co-teachers and sooner, I will be able to become a mentor of learning passed to me.

**Participants E:**

Establishing a good relationship. I make sure someone is willing and competent to learn. To form a meaningful relationship, I must take the time to understand the needs of the mentee. It's my responsibility to learn as much as I can about the people I coach. Lastly, I will evaluate how well coaching and mentoring.

**Participants F:**

As a rookie in this field, I still have more to learn in all aspects of the academe. I engaged

in the program in supporting the goal, in sharing and helping what I know my co-worker and same as asking support and technical assistance from colleagues & superiors.

**Interpretative Summary**

The initial codes for this theme are cooperation, achievement, development, good relationship, motivation, determination, responsible, willingness, assistance

**Category/Theme:** *Good working  
relationship*

**Datum as Support**

**Participants A:**

I used to communicate with my buddy

**Participants G:**

By asking someone who knows a lot more than I am, or sharing my thoughts, experience beyond.

**Participants H:**

I participated in the buddy system program as a mentee and a mentor. I admit that I am not that expert in so many things, so I asked the assistance of my colleagues, and a mentor, for a new teacher since I have been in a service for a long time, I have some ideas and expertise which I can share with them.

**Interpretative Summary**

The initial codes for this theme are communication, sharing ideas, participation, and assistance.

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**Findings:**

Table 1.B displays the teacher's thought in the buddy system as part of a mentoring and coaching program heightens good working relationship among colleagues, develops positive attitude towards work and enriches growth and development. Three categories/themes were established about the teachers' thought, the attitude towards work, growth and development and good working relationships. Participants D, E, and F responses indicated that they become more productive if they used to communicate with their buddy constantly to establish good working relationships as a mentor-mentee. Having an open communication, stand to be corrected, willingness to accept criticisms and the readiness to extend help with each other are some characteristics of the Filipino teachers to improve their performance.

On the other hand, Participants A, G, and H expressed good working relationships in mentoring and coaching programs. Their frequent communication, willingness to share ideas and assistance shows the desire of teachers to participate in the program and implies that the program will easily achieve their goals for the development of teachers.

This result supports the study of Jones, (2015) that buddy system as a part of mentoring and coaching program ensures

trustworthy relationship and upgrade professionalism, either for beginner teacher or experienced teachers.

This study was also strengthened by the idea of Cox, Bachkirova & Clutterbuck (2014), that coaching and mentoring share a central purpose of human development and can be powerful in developing leadership capacity within teachers as a mentor-mentee relationship. Over time, coaching and mentoring may become part of professional development for all teachers.

The responses of Filipino teachers as participants in the buddy system are somehow the same

of the ideas cited by Dewi, (2021) that it is essential to clearly define the mentor-mentee relationship. They seek to "support the initiation, development, and maintenance of a fruitful, learning-focused experience" for mentors and mentees. They address three mentors (providing support, creating cognitive challenges and facilitating professional vision); provide verbal tools to support reflection, planning, and problem solving.

2. What are the teachers' views on how mentoring and coaching programs will be improved?

**Category/Theme:** *Program Management*

**Datum as Support**

**Participants C:**

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Mentoring and Coaching will be improved if we use a mentoring and coaching plan to work through the steps and develop a bit of a timeline as to when the mentoring and coaching will begin and what is expected of both the mentor and mentee.

**Participants D:**

I think we need tools to assess our weaknesses and strengths as teachers. In this manner, we can evaluate what assistance is needed to be prioritized. Also, as we have values from this tool, we can determine SMART

goals for our program.

**Interpretative Summary**

The initial codes for this theme are planning, development, assessment/ evaluation, goals.

**Category/Theme:** *Camaraderie*

**Datum as Support**

**Participants B:**

*For me mentoring can improve if they have a good relationship between two people where they continue sharing their experience, knowledge, and connections, then can be able to pass along what they have learned*

**Participants F:**

*The purpose of mentoring is to gain new learnings and perspective, my views to improve mentoring and*

*coaching is breaking barriers between mentor and the mentee. The two are not the same, they have different styles and individuality. Respect each other's views.*

**Participants H:**

*It can be improved by identifying the needs of each teacher so the mentor can focus on what assistance could he/she extend to the mentee. Asking the mentee to be mentored is also important for me. Sometimes it's awkward to give assistance if they do not like to be mentored. It's better to ask them first if they really need our help.*

**Interpretative summary**

The initial codes for this theme are sharing of learning, improvement, identify cooperation, good relationship, and respect.

**Findings**

Table 2 represents the teachers' views on how mentoring and coaching programs will be improved. Two categories/themes were established about the teachers' views; these are program management and camaraderie. Based on the responses of Participants C and D, mentoring and coaching will be improved if the teachers use mentoring and coaching work plans showing the step-by-step process including timeline as to when and how mentoring and coaching will be conducted. An assessment tool will help to evaluate the most urgent need of assistance that will be given to the teachers. In this

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manner, SMART goals will be determined for the improvement of mentoring and coaching program as being part of program management. This may be because the teachers in this time of pandemic are engaged in their tasks virtually wherein simultaneous tasks are possible. They must be systematic and organized to become more productive since most of the time they are working from home as if based on their AWA (Alternative Work Arrangement).

Moreover, another theme that emerged based on the responses is camaraderie. In this theme, the respondents expressed their thoughts that mentoring and coaching can improve if the teachers have a good mentor-mentee relationship. This is because they can confidently share their experiences and knowledge in the field of teaching. Learning will continue as they acquaint each other along the way. Aside from gaining new learnings and perspectives, respect in each other's point of view is a must to break the barriers between mentor and the mentee.

The result of this study is agreed upon by Ojeaga & Okolocha, (2019) which states that "Mentoring helps a new teacher evaluate her own experiences and grapple with the emotional side of teaching. The main goal of mentoring is to help employees understand the nitty-gritty parts of their jobs well on

time in order to facilitate personal, career and professional growth necessary for high professional commitment.

This is also congruent with the results on the study of Nnabuike Ezimma, et.al. (2021) were found out that regardless of how well a mentor and mentee fit together, either in form or in a positive way, the relationship should be professionally structured as well as considered and respected by both parties. The study also concludes that most successful mentorship usually evolves into friendship with both partners learning and providing support for each other.

However, coaching is considered to have great possibilities as a professional career in the near future (Brock as cited in Krapu, 2016).

#### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

Based on the results of the study, it is concluded that the improvement of mentoring and coaching program through buddy system founded on the teachers' perception is mainly established based on the feelings, participation and views such as assistance, good performance, attitude towards work, growth and development, good working relationship, program management, and camaraderie.

According to the responses, Filipino teachers can see how mentoring and coaching



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through buddy system helped and supported them in accomplishing their tasks. But not only that, they adapt teaching in the new platform which creates a habit of resourcefulness and flexibility of knowledge and skill that they always work on by the willingness to accept new learnings being shared by the mentors. Thus, coaching and mentoring need to be a part of a longer, more detailed process of continuous professional development.

Another important thing is that mentoring relationships focuses on employees' professional progression. Pairing novice and non-major teachers with senior and seasoned teachers gives the younger teachers a source of support and career advice. To most effectively maintain this relationship, mentors should meet with their mentees on a regular basis, in both formal and informal settings.

**RECOMMENDATION**

A well-planned, thoughtful mentoring program will encourage people to connect with others

on a personal level and build strong, trusting relationships that motivate and guide toward future goals. Investing time in developing a well-organized mentoring and coaching program through buddy system does not only support novice and non-major teachers in the department but also strengthen the

skills of the senior and seasoned teachers in the management and collaborative goal-setting skills.

The following are the suggested strategies for improving coaching and mentoring programs:

1. Plan the program in a detailed manner by presenting a work plan.
2. Devise your goals. Make a survey or prepare a self-assessment tool to identify the assistance needs by the teacher. She/she should always know what is expected of him and how he should achieve it.
3. Employ time management. Always have a timeline for accomplishing a task. Many teachers *want* to learn new tasks but are often confused about how to structure their time to master them.
4. Model good behavior. Establish a good working relationship that guides the mentee and the mentor both personally and professionally.
5. Encourage a collaborative learning culture by the readiness of the mentor to impart his/her expertise and the willingness of the mentee to take the ideas being shared.
6. Frame feedback in a positive manner. Expect the employee to encounter hindrances but be ready to supply new strategies.

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7. Follow up on feedback. It's called accountability. Always track the contributions of both parties.

8. Evaluate the learning outcomes and re-diagnose learning needs— it has a sense of progress towards goals.

9. Give praise and encouragement. Approach issues with a positive attitude which is very important to a mentoring relationship.

10. Recognize the effort of everyone. Acknowledging effort usually inspires people to try harder.

11. Commend for the accomplishments. Every accomplishment represents a step ahead

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