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## BRIDGING THEORY AND PRACTICE OF MASTER TEACHERS IN ENHANCING INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP AND CLASSROOM INNOVATION

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### ABSTRACT

In the Philippines, the role of master teachers is gaining attention. However, factors such as overcrowded classrooms, limited resources, and inadequate teacher training continue to impede progress. Master teachers can contribute to overcoming these challenges by serving as instructional leaders and mentors to their peers. For instance, in rural areas where teacher shortages are common, master teachers can provide guidance and support to less experienced colleagues (Aragón, 2015). Additionally, initiatives like the National Teachers' Month celebration aim to recognize the contributions of master teachers and inspire others to follow their lead (DepEd Philippines, n.d.). Nonetheless, systemic issues such as bureaucratic red tape and uneven distribution of resources remain barriers to meaningful change.

This study explored the contributions of master teachers in bridging the gap between educational theory and classroom practice, focusing on their role in promoting instructional leadership and fostering innovation in teaching and learning environments. The research was conducted in nine (9) EMBO Elementary Schools with twenty-five (25) Master Teachers and fifty (50) Teachers. The respondents of this research are the randomly selected 25 Master Teachers and 50 Teachers. To explore the contributions of master teachers in bridging the gap between educational theory and classroom practice, the following research instruments were used: To describe teacher's translation of educational theories into practical teaching strategies that enhance classroom innovation, literature review was utilized. The presentation

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of findings is by qualitative method. To describe the influence of master teachers to the instructional leadership practices of their peers, survey questionnaire was used.

To identify the challenges faced by master teachers in integrating theory with practice, an interview method was used. The result of the study are the following:

The master teachers play a vital role in translating educational theories into practical teaching strategies that enhance classroom innovation. By leveraging principles from constructivism, behaviorism, and social learning theory, master teachers create dynamic learning environments that promote active engagement, collaboration, and critical thinking among students. Through their expertise and creativity, master teachers empower students to become lifelong learners, innovators, and contributors to a rapidly changing world.

Master teachers wield significant influence over the instructional leadership practices of their peers, as evidenced by their expertise, demonstrated success, promotion of a collaborative culture, and effective communication skills.

Navigating the complexities of translating educational theories into practical teaching strategies requires master teachers to adeptly address implementation, pedagogical, and environmental challenges to create dynamic and inclusive learning environments conducive to student engagement and growth.

The proposed instructional leadership framework offers a holistic approach to address the challenges of translating educational theories into practice, fostering continuous professional development, promoting inclusive learning environments, and cultivating a supportive school culture to empower master teachers in enhancing instructional effectiveness and fostering innovative learning environments.

**Keywords:** *bridging theory, instructional leadership, classroom innovation*

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