



UPGRADING INSTRUCTIONAL COMPETENCE OF BEGINNING AND PROFICIENT TEACHERS IN LEMERY SUB-OFFICE: AN EVALUATION OF PROJECT PREACH

SUSANA D. REYES

Master Teacher I

Sinisian Elementary School

suaana.reyes001@deped.gov.ph

ABSTRACT

This action research evaluates Project PREACH (Professional Resiliency for Educator's Advancement towards Career Harness) and its effectiveness in upgrading the instructional competence of beginning and proficient teachers in **LEMERY SUB-OFFICE**. The study examines the current instructional practices of teachers and explores the role of mentorship, coaching, and peer collaboration in enhancing teaching performance. Using a mixed-methods approach, data were collected through surveys, classroom observations, and focus group discussions with teachers, mentors, and administrators. The results indicate that Project PREACH significantly improved teachers' instructional competence by providing targeted support tailored to their experience levels. Beginning teachers benefitted most from coaching and mentorship, while proficient teachers reported enhanced collaboration and confidence.

Despite the program's strengths, challenges such as time constraints and resource limitations were identified. Recommendations include continuous feedback mechanisms, extending coaching cycles, and offering advanced strategies for proficient teachers. This study highlights the value of structured professional development programs in fostering instructional growth and suggests ways to further enhance Project PREACH for sustainable educational improvement.

Keywords: *Instructional competence, Teacher professional development, Mentorship, Coaching*

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INTRODUCTION

The quality of teaching directly affects student learning outcomes. Therefore, improving teaching skills is important for educational success. Project PREACH, which was implemented in Sinisian Elementary School and throughout Lemery Sub-Office, aimed to boost teaching skills through mentorship, coaching, and peer collaboration.

The program is based on Shulman's (1986, 1987) theory of pedagogical content knowledge. This theory highlights the need to master both the subject matter and the methods of teaching that cater to different learners. Beginning teachers often face challenges with lesson planning, classroom management, and student engagement, which can hinder their teaching performance (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Structured professional development can help overcome these challenges.

Research shows that coaching and mentoring can improve teaching practices. Joyce & Showers (2002) found that professional development programs that include these components lead to notable improvements in teaching strategies. To evaluate such programs, it is essential to measure both changes in teacher practices and their effects on student learning (Guskey, 2000).

This study aims to assess the role of Project PREACH in improving teaching skills, identify its strengths and challenges, and suggest recommendations for ongoing improvement.

Research Questions

The study sought to answer the following:

1. What is the current instructional competence of beginning and proficient teachers in Lemery Sub-Office?
2. How has Project PREACH contributed to the improvement of teachers' instructional competence?
3. What are the challenges and strengths observed during the implementation of Project PREACH?

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4. Based on the findings of the study, what recommendations can be offered to enhance the instructional supervision, coaching, and mentoring processes in Lemery Sub-Office to further uplift teacher competence?

METHODS

A. Research Design

The study used a descriptive action research design with a mixed-methods approach. This allowed us to gather both quantitative and qualitative data on teachers' instructional skills and the effectiveness of Project PREACH.

B. Participants

The participants included all beginning and proficient teachers in the Lemery Sub-Office. We included the entire population to gain complete insights into the program's impact.

C. Data Collection

A researcher-made questionnaire was the main tool for data collection. Experts in instructional supervision and coaching validated it to ensure reliability and reduce bias. We collected additional data through interviews, classroom observations, and focus group discussions.

We strictly followed ethical standards, including confidentiality and informed consent.

D. Data Analysis

We analyzed quantitative data using percentage, weighted mean, and ranking to describe the levels of instructional skills and assess the program's impact. We

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thematically analyzed qualitative responses from interviews and focus groups to identify common strengths and challenges.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This part presents the summarized data gathered from the respondents of the study in tabular form, supported with corresponding interpretation, implications, and theoretical bases, and arranged in accordance with the sequence in the statement of the problem.

1. Current Instructional Competence of Teachers

Table 1

Current Instructional Competence of Teachers

Indicators	WM	VI	R
1. I can develop effective lesson plans that align with curriculum standards.	5.00	Strongly Agree	1
2. I can maintain a positive and productive classroom environment.	4.93	Strongly Agree	2.5
3. I can adapt my teaching strategies to meet the diverse needs of students.	4.80	Strongly Agree	5.5
4. I can use a variety of assessment methods to evaluate student learning.	4.87	Strongly Agree	4
5. I can effectively engage students in the learning process.	4.93	Strongly Agree	2.5
6. I can integrate technology into my instructional practices effectively.	4.80	Strongly Agree	5.5
7. I can work collaboratively with other teachers to improve instructional practices.	4.73	Strongly Agree	7

Legend: WM- Weighted Mean

VI- Verbal Interpretation

R- Ranking

Table 1 evaluated how well teachers in the Lemery Sub-Office perform their instructional tasks using seven key indicators. Teachers rated themselves highest in creating effective lesson plans that meet curriculum standards (WM = 5.00). This shows the importance of Shulman's (1987) theory on pedagogical content knowledge, which emphasizes

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that strong content knowledge and curriculum alignment are vital for effective teaching. Teachers also rated themselves highly in maintaining a positive classroom environment and engaging students in learning (both WM = 4.93). This supports Emmer & Stough's (2001) findings on how important classroom management and student engagement are for successful teaching.

Adjusting teaching strategies to address diverse student needs and using technology in instruction received slightly lower scores (both WM = 4.80). This aligns with Tomlinson's (2001) research on the challenges of differentiated instruction and Ertmer et al. (2012) on the obstacles teachers face in using technology effectively, such as access to resources and training. Teachers' use of different assessment methods (WM = 4.87) matches Black and Wiliam's (1998) focus on formative assessment as a way to improve student learning outcomes.

Finally, the collaboration among teachers to enhance instructional practices received the lowest score (WM = 4.73). This highlights possible barriers to working together, which is important according to Hargreaves (1994), who points out the benefits of collaborative cultures in improving teaching. Despite these challenges, the overall findings suggest that Project PREACH has greatly improved instructional competence. However, a greater emphasis on differentiated instruction, technology integration, and peer collaboration might further enhance its impact.

Table 2

Contribution of Project PREACH to Instructional Competence

Indicators	WM	VI	R
Project PREACH:			
1. has helped me improve my lesson planning skills.	4.87	Strongly Agree	2.5
2. has equipped me with better classroom management strategies.	4.73	Strongly Agree	5.5
3. has enhanced my ability to differentiate instruction for diverse learners.	4.67	Strongly Agree	6

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4. has contributed to my understanding of effective assessment methods.	4.87	Strongly Agree	2.5
5. has provided me with strategies to engage students more effectively.	4.93	Strongly Agree	1
6. has helped me integrate technology into my teaching practices.	4.80	Strongly Agree	4
7. has encouraged collaboration with my colleagues to enhance teaching practices.	4.60	Strongly Agree	7
8. has significantly contributed to my professional growth as an educator.	4.73	Strongly Agree	5.5

Legend: WM- Weighted Mean

VI- Verbal Interpretation

R- Ranking

The evaluation of Project PREACH's contribution to instructional competence revealed that it has significantly impacted teachers' professional growth. The highest-rated indicator was the enhancement of student engagement strategies (WM = 4.93), reflecting research by Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris (2004), which emphasizes the importance of actively engaging students in learning. Lesson planning (WM = 4.87) and effective assessment methods (WM = 4.87) were also positively rated, aligning with Shulman's (1987) focus on pedagogical content knowledge and Black and Wiliam's (1998) research on formative assessment. Classroom management (WM = 4.73) and differentiated instruction (WM = 4.67) scored slightly lower, pointing to Tomlinson's (2001) findings on the challenges of addressing diverse learners' needs. Integration of technology (WM = 4.80) was supported by Ertmer et al. (2012), suggesting that while progress has been made, ongoing support is needed in this area. Collaboration among teachers (WM = 4.60), although rated lowest, still aligns with Hargreaves' (1994) assertion that peer collaboration enhances teaching effectiveness. Project PREACH has played a crucial role in improving instructional competence, with some areas requiring continued development.

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Table 3.1

Strengths of Project PREACH

Indicators	WM	VI	R
1. Project PREACH had clear objectives that guided its implementation.	4.80	Strongly Agree	2
2. The training and resources provided through Project PREACH were effective in supporting my professional development.	4.67	Strongly Agree	4
3. Project PREACH fostered collaboration and support among teachers.has enhanced my ability to differentiate instruction for diverse learners.	4.73	Strongly Agree	3
4. The implementation of Project PREACH positively impacted my instructional practices.	4.60	Strongly Agree	5
5. The mentorship and coaching provided through Project PREACH were beneficial to my growth as a teacher.	5.00	Strongly Agree	1

Legend: WM- Weighted Mean VI- Verbal Interpretation R- Ranking

The evaluation of Project PREACH's implementation showed that its mentorship and coaching component had the most significant impact on teacher growth (WM = 5.00), highlighting the importance of personalized support in professional development, as noted by Showers and Joyce (1996). The clear objectives of Project PREACH (WM = 4.80) ranked second, reflecting effective goal-setting as a key to successful program implementation, in line with Locke and Latham's (1990) goal-setting theory. Collaboration fostered among teachers (WM = 4.73) also supported Hargreaves' (1994) emphasis on the value of peer learning. While all areas were rated strongly, instructional practices (WM = 4.60) had a slightly lower score, suggesting that ongoing refinement may be needed for full impact. The

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structured guidance, resources, and collaborative environment of Project PREACH effectively supported teachers' professional development.

Table 3.2
Challenges of Project PREACH

Indicators	WM	VI	R
1. I faced challenges in finding time to engage with Project PREACH activities.	1.93	Disagree	2
2. There were limitations in resources that affected the implementation of Project PREACH.	2.07	Disagree	1
3. Some teachers were resistant to the changes proposed by Project PREACH.	1.00	Strongly Disagree	3
4. There was insufficient follow-up support after initial training sessions.	1.00	Strongly Disagree	3
5. Communication regarding Project PREACH was not effective, leading to confusion among participants.	1.00	Strongly Disagree	3

Legend: WM- Weighted Mean VI- Verbal Interpretation R- Ranking

The challenges faced during the implementation of Project PREACH were minimal, as indicated by the low ratings across the indicators. The most notable challenge was the limitation of resources (WM = 2.07), which reflects findings from Desimone (2009), who emphasizes the importance of adequate resources for successful professional development. Time constraints (WM = 1.93) were also a concern, though less significant. Resistance to change, lack of follow-up support, and communication issues were rated very low (WM = 1.00), indicating that these factors did not pose significant challenges. This suggests that, overall, Project PREACH was well-implemented, with only minor logistical issues that could be addressed for future improvements.

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CONCLUSIONS

After the tabulation and treatment of the data, the following conclusions were drawn.

1. Project PREACH has significantly improved the instructional competence of teachers, particularly in lesson planning, classroom management, and student engagement strategies.
2. The mentorship and coaching provided through the project played a crucial role in supporting teachers' professional growth, highlighting the effectiveness of personalized support in professional development.
3. Teachers expressed strong agreement with the project's objectives and the effectiveness of the training and resources provided, indicating a positive reception of the program.
4. Challenges related to resource availability and time constraints were present but rated as relatively low, suggesting that these factors did not substantially impede the program's overall success.
5. The project successfully fostered a collaborative environment among teachers, enhancing peer learning and support, which is essential for professional growth.
6. While the program was effective, there is a need for continued focus on addressing resource limitations and enhancing support for differentiated instruction and technology integration.
7. The findings underscore the importance of structured professional development initiatives, like Project PREACH, in uplifting teaching practices and ultimately improving student learning outcomes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the findings, the researcher recommends the following:

1. Provide continuous mentorship and coaching to sustain professional growth among teachers.

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2. Ensure adequate resources are available to support the implementation of instructional strategies.
3. Create schedules that allow dedicated time for teachers to engage in Project PREACH activities.
4. Offer additional training on differentiated instruction and technology integration to enhance teaching practices.
5. Foster a culture of collaboration among teachers through regular meetings and peer support initiatives.
6. Implement a feedback system to gather insights from teachers for improving the program's effectiveness.
7. Regularly assess the impact of Project PREACH on instructional practices to identify areas for improvement.

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