

Instructional Leadership Practices of School Administrators: The Case of El Salvador City Division, Philippines

AUTHOR(S): Ma. Leah B. Lincuna¹ & Manuel E. Caingcoy²

Abstract

School administrators are mandated to take the instructional leadership roles. On this premise, a study assessed the extent of instructional leadership practices of public elementary school administrators in El Salvador City Division, Philippines. Also, it explored their actual practices, challenges encountered, and the ways they overcome the challenges in practicing instructional leadership. It employed a mixed-method research design. It administered the adopted assessment tool on instructional leadership to 15 school administrators and 12 of them were involved in the individual interviews. This was conducted between the last quarter of 2019 and the first quarter of 2020. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the extent of instructional leadership practices. Also, it analyzed the actual practices, the challenges encountered, and the ways of overcoming these challenges using thematic narrative analysis. Results revealed that public school administrators have always practiced the four domains or strands of instructional leadership to a very high extent. Providing the technical assistance, conducting clinical supervision, and innovating teaching and learning emerged as themes of their actual practices. These administrators had encountered challenges in dealing with teachers' attitudes, conflicting schedules and activities, and teachers' resistance to changes. They overcome the challenges by trying to meet the competency standards, adapting and modifying the existing programs, contextualizing teaching and learning, and inculcating the value and benefits of class observation. Looking at the findings from the lens of deliberate practice theory, it

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was concluded that school administrators have indicated they have acquired knowledge and a high level of understanding of their instructional leadership roles. But despite of this, they still met challenges and have tried their best to manage them. This study presented some doable and practical recommendations to the Department of Education (DepEd) and concerned offices which may benefit both the internal and external stakeholders of the schools.

Keywords: Practices, challenges, instructional leadership, school-based management,

About Author

Author1, PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHER, MOLUGAN CENTRAL SCHOOL, DIVISION OF EL SALVADOR, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, NORTHERN MINDANAO, PHILIPPINES

E-mail: maleah.lincuna@deped.gov.ph

AND

Author2 FACULTY, COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, BUKIDNON STATE UNIVERSITY, MALAYBALAY CITY, PHILIPPINES;

E-mail: caingcoymanuel@gmail.com ; manuelcaingcoy@buksu.edu.ph



Introduction

Instructional leadership practices of school administrators are vital in fulfilling the primary responsibilities to ensure quality instruction and learning, growth of learners, and professional development of teachers. As instructional leaders, school administrators help teachers in identifying trends, discuss with them new teaching techniques and strategies that enhance their teaching skills that benefit learners. They have to maintain open communication with teachers as they provide support and feedback towards them, especially in instruction. School administrators need to use data and plan for needed changes in an instructional program to establish a clear focus on attaining learners' achievement goals. Administrators, as instructional leaders, are mandated in Republic Act. 9155 otherwise known as Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001 to take responsibility, authority, and accountability in:

creating an environment within the school that is conducive to teaching and learning; implementing the school curriculum and being accountable for higher learning outcomes; developing the school education program and school improvement plan; offering educational programs, projects, and services which provide equitable opportunities for all learners in the community; introducing new and innovative modes of instruction to achieve higher learning outcomes; encouraging staff development; establishing school and community networks. (Philippine Congress, 2001, Sec. 7)

Instructional leadership practices before are quite different from that of today. In the 21st century, teaching and learning processes need new strategies and a new mindset. With the ever-increasing needs of today's globalization, the transformation in the education system needs to put in place and ensure that education seeks to provide the best 21st-century education to future generations. However, planning of these various initiatives will not work if the school administrators fail to handle them effectively. Competent school administrators with instructional leadership skills are expected to help the government achieve the agenda of the country's education transformation, while the weak and troubled school administrators in leadership are expected to thwart this great agenda (Ibrahim, 2017).

Instructional leadership practices in the locale of the present study may not be quite different from that of other divisions in the region. There were reports that a few school administrators were not able to come up with what is expected of them. They did not function according to their job description but instead delegate their roles to teachers and coordinators. A few of them were being awarded as best achievers while others poor performers. In some occasions, some have visited classes for classroom observation and some seldom did it. They were often busy with the paper works that they sometimes neglect their most important job, which is the supervision of instruction. They were too focused on allocating resources to beautify their schools and set aside the major role to provide quality education to learners by constantly monitoring teachers, making sure that the competencies in all subject areas were covered and accomplished. Some teachers, especially the old ones, preferred traditional ways of teaching and they resisted change. Eventually, school administrators would have a hard time making them adopt to all DepEd programs.

Hallinger (2011) claimed that when the teachers consider the practice of instructional leadership, they will carry out changes and in fact will become more committed to performing. When the instructional leaders show a positive attitude toward changes, the school environment is the best place for a well thought out change (Busher, 2006). The readiness of school administrators to face changes should also be accompanied by an effort to improve their knowledge and skills to manage the coming changes. If school administrators



do not have the skills and deep knowledge of the change, then it would be impossible for them to implement the changes effectively (Malakolunthu & Hoon, 2010). In this regard, the school heads that practice instructional leadership should be a role model to teachers in implementing changes by increasing their knowledge and skills (Leithwood et al., 2006). In the Division of El Salvador City, there were reports on problems of efficiency and low-quality educational outputs in some schools. This may be due to poor instructional leadership practices of school administrators that affect the learners' academic performance as well as teachers' teaching performance. To determine how well the school heads exercised their instructional leadership roles, there is a need to assess them on related competencies of instructional leadership and provide concerned officials with information needed for the professional development of school administrators.

Primarily, this study is founded on the interrelated concepts of instructional leadership introduced by the Department of Education (2012) in collaboration with Educational Development Project Implementing Task Force. It is among the domains of the National Competency-Based Standards for School Heads. As a competency, instructional leadership is described in four competency strands such as the assessment for learning, developing programs, and or adapting existing programs, implementing programs for instructional improvement, and instructional supervision. *Assessment for learning* is limited to managing the processes and procedures in monitoring student achievement, ensuring the utilization of a range of assessment processes to assess student performance, assessing the effectiveness of curricular and co-curricular programs and or the instructional strategies used by teachers, and creating and managing school processes that ensure student progress. *Developing and adapting existing programs* is limited to using research and expertise, and/or other vehicles to assist in developing and implementing a coherent and responsive school wide curriculum, addressing the deficiencies and sustaining successes of current programs in collaboration with the teachers, learners, and stakeholders, and developing a culture of functional literacy. *Implementing programs for instructional improvement* is managing the introduction of curriculum initiatives in line with policies, working with teachers in curriculum review, enriching the curricular offerings based on local needs, managing the curriculum innovation and enrichment with the use of technology, and organizing teams to champion instructional innovation programs toward curricular responsiveness. *Instructional supervision* includes preparing an instructional supervisory plan, conducting instructional supervision using appropriate strategy, evaluating lesson plans as well as classroom and learning management, providing timely, accurate and specific feedback in a collegial manner to teachers regarding performance, and providing technical assistance/expertise and instructional support to teachers (DepEd, 2012).

This research is also anchored on the deliberate practice theory which was originally theorized by Ericsson and colleagues. For almost three decades, Ericsson and the company had been conducting studies that strengthen this theory and applied it to different contexts. From its original assertion, it claims that deliberate practice is a condition for optimal learning and improvement of performance. Recently, Ericsson and Harwell (2019) reargued that deliberate practice is simply an engagement in structured activities to improve performance. It is assumed that school administrators have been provided with structured training by their agency at the district, division, regional or national level. This research assumes that the higher the school administrators practiced the instructional leadership roles, the more deliberate their efforts are and the more improved these administrators have become. Thus, their optimal learning must be applied and eventually improved their



instructional leadership practices. The study used the lens of this theory in exploring their challenges of practicing instructional leadership and ways of overcoming these challenges.

Research Problem

This research assessed the instructional leadership practices of public elementary school administrators in the Division of El Salvador City. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the extent of instructional leadership practices of public elementary school administrators in the following competency strands: assessment for learning; developing programs & or adapting existing programs; implementing programs for instructional improvement; and instructional supervision?
2. What are the challenges encountered by public school administrators in practicing the instructional leadership?
3. How did the public school administrators overcome the challenges encountered in practicing instructional leadership?

Material and Methods

This study had employed a mixed-methods research design by integrating the qualitative data from the interviews and the quantitative data from the survey questionnaire. This was conducted in the smallest division of the Department of Education in Northern Mindanao, region 10, Philippines. The division has 23 public elementary schools with 23 public elementary school administrators. However, only 15 were involved in the survey and 12 were participated in the face-to-face interviews. This was due to the unavailability of the administrators. The data were collected between the last quarter of 2019 and the first quarter of 2020. It adopted an assessment tool on instructional leadership developed by the Department of Education in 2012 based on the National Competency-Based Standards for School Heads. The interviews questions by validated experts and were conducted during the agreed and available time of the participants at their respective schools. Before and during the data gathering, the study had observed protocols and principles of research ethics by securing approvals and by providing an informed consent form to participants. The data from the survey were retrieved, summarized, and interpreted using the guide in Table 1.

Table 1. Scoring and Interpretation Guide for the Data Analysis

Scale	Range	Qualitative Description	Extent of Practices
5	4.20 - 5.00	Always Practiced	Very High Extent
4	3.40 - 4.19	Often Practiced	High Extent
3	2.60 - 3.39	Occasionally Practiced	Moderate Extent
2	1.80 - 2.59	Seldom Practiced	Low Extent
1	1.00 - 1.79	Never Practiced	Very Low Extent

The quantitative data were analyzed using the Mean and Standard Deviation, while the interview responses were analyzed using the thematic narrative analysis of Riesman (2008).

The researchers have done transcript reading, grouping the apparent narratives and excerpts, and looking into the commonalities and similarities. The first step was done very closely and it allowed the researchers to detect apparent narratives that answer the problems, while the second step allowed the researchers to identify the themes. The researchers engaged in deep immersion into the narratives and transcripts. The last step allowed them to finalize the themes and the narratives were extracted for the discussion of results.

Results and Discussion

The extent of instructional leadership practices in assessment for learning is shown in Table 2. Generally, the results show that school administrators have responded *always practiced* in all indicators. This means that these administrators have practiced this instructional leadership competency to a *very high extent*. This indicates that they were able to demonstrate and assist teachers in their instruction, especially in ensuring high quality assessment for learning.

Table 2. The Extent of Instructional Leadership Practices in Assessment for Learning

Indicators	Mean	SD	Qualitative Description
1. Utilize assessment results to improve learning.	4.67	.48	Always Practiced
2. Create and manage a school process to ensure student progress is conveyed to student and parents / guardians regularly	4.53	.64	Always Practiced
3. Manage the processes and procedures in monitoring student achievement	4.47	.51	Always Practiced
4. Assess the effectiveness of curricular/ co-curricular programs and/or instructional strategies	4.47	.64	Always Practiced
5. Ensure utilization of a range of assessments to assess student performance	4.40	.63	Always Practiced
<i>Overall Mean</i>	4.51	.58	Always Practiced

Instructional leadership requires an understanding of the role of sound assessment in efforts to improve teaching and learning. The well-prepared administrators are ready to ensure assessments that are of high quality and these are used effectively by teachers. Thus, school administrators create an effective teaching and learning environment with their teachers and learners. Internationally, scholars agree that instructional leadership is useful for creating effective teaching and learning settings (Pustejovsky et al., 2009; Hallinger et al., 2015). Moreover, school administrators spend a lot of time focusing on developing instruction and implementing the curriculum, as well as on assessment (Jita, 2010). The improvement in learning is more likely to be achieved when the school administrators are concerned with both teaching and learning. Instructional leaders have the most significant impact on capacity building among teachers. They also have the primary influence on the learners' achievement and in achieving desired school outcomes (Hallinger, 2011). School administrators should properly evaluate and assess teachers to ensure quality teaching and learning, create accountability for stakeholders, and improve instruction (Nolan & Hoover, 2008). Conversely, a study on managing to learn instructional leadership found out that

school administrators reportedly spend most of their time on administrative functions while they had limited time in overseeing teaching and learning or supervising teachers (Hoadley et al., 2007).

Table 3. The Extent of Instructional Leadership Practices in Developing Programs and or Adapting Existing Programs

Indicators	Mean	SD	Qualitative Description
1. Assist in implementing an existing a coherent responsive school wide curriculum	4.53	.51	Always Practiced
2. Address deficiencies and sustain successes responsive school wide curriculum.	4.53	.51	Always Practiced
3. Develop a culture of functional literacy.	4.47	.51	Always Practiced
4. Develop/adapt a research based school program	4.40	.84	Often Practiced
<i>Overall Mean</i>	4.38	.59	Always Practiced

Table 3 shows the extent of instructional leadership practices in adapting programs that are mandated by the Department of Education and or in developing programs at the school level. The overall results appeared that public school administrators have always practiced this instructional leadership competency to a very high extent. To name a few, some of the programs implemented at the national level are on lectures and seminars series. Participants are encouraged to re-echo the trainings to co-teachers. Some programs are in the form of scholarships and distance learning. There are programs in which teachers study the content and pedagogy together and plan the lessons collaboratively. Two examples of these are Small Learning Action Cell (SLAC) and the teaching circles. This is the reason why school administrators need to adapt or initiate programs that allow teachers to collaborate. Though teachers have the ability and responsibility to take charge of their learning, they can learn best through collaboration with peers and colleagues. These practices are encouraged in the Republic Act No. 10533, series of 2013, or the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 (Philippine Congress, 2013). The Department of Education issued an order no. 35, series of 2016. This is the policy on the Learning Action Cell (LAC) as the Kto12 Basic Education Program School-Based Strategy for improving teaching and learning.

Lobo (2016) noted that it is important that teachers in the various school systems need to consider the ultimate goal of their profession and the methods they can employ to be successful in their careers and in preparing learners for an uncertain and undetermined world. Sahlberg (2009) indicates that teachers around the world are taking a skills-based approach to education to prepare students to build careers and be active citizens after completing school. Desta et al. (2014) posited that the knowledge and skills obtained by teachers in their professional development trainings and seminars play a significant role in reducing problems encountered in daily life. Murchan et al. (2009) recommended that teaching is productive when the process, pedagogy, and approaches are prepared. This is the aspect in which school administrators cannot delegate responsibilities to senior teachers. Although some teachers are designated as coordinators for programs or school activities that provide them with opportunities, school administrators have to spend time teaching and coaching them, assisting and assessing them to collaborate well for them to be fully equipped



with strategies and pedagogies. Some school administrators supplemented this by conducting a school-based training program to develop the abilities and skills of teachers. This is reinforced in O'Connor (2013) who said that collaboration is beneficial for it provides opportunities and experiences to teachers that would enhance instruction.

Table 4. The Extent of Instructional Leadership Practices in Implementing Programs for Instructional Improvement

Indicators	Mean	SD	Qualitative Description
1. Work with teachers in curriculum review.	4.33	.38	Always Practiced
2. Manage curriculum innovation and enrichment with the use of technology	4.27	.46	Always Practiced
3. Enrich curricular offerings based on local needs.	4.27	.46	Always Practiced
4. Manage the introduction of curriculum initiatives In line with DepEd policies (e.g. BEC, Madrasah)	4.20	.68	Always Practiced
5. Organize teams to champion instructional innovation towards curricular responsiveness.	4.20	.77	Always Practiced
Overall Mean	4.25	.57	Always Practiced

Table 4 presents the extent of the practices in implementing programs for instructional improvement. As can be seen, school administrators have always practiced this competency strand to a very high extent. This shows that they implemented programs consistently for the improvement of instruction. The school administrators have collaborated with teachers in implementing the curriculum and solving the current problems more efficiently. By principles, they are the first persons responsible for the management of the curriculum. School administrators must also see to it that teachers should be informed with the updates on curriculum, especially in developing the 21st-century skills of learners. To ensure effectiveness, instructional materials need to be provided to teachers. They have to provide with opportunity to take part in the curriculum review and development. They may commission teachers to conduct studies that provide meaningful feedbacks and facilitate dialogue among teachers with administrators. For these, they need to encourage teachers and take seriously every LAC session, short meeting, or conference aside from class observations. School administrators need to enrich curricular offerings based on local needs. This leads them to support teachers to analyze the different abilities, learning needs, and learning styles of learners. These allow teachers to develop solutions and address learners' different needs. Previous research raised the stakes on the school administrator's ability to identify effective teachers and teaching practices. It was found that classroom-based measures of teaching effectiveness are related in substantial ways to learner's achievement growth (Kane et al., 2010).

As observed further, school administrators did great in managing curriculum innovation and they believed that by enriching the curriculum through innovation and use of technology. They always encouraged teachers to use the latest technology or ICT that enables them to meet the 21st-century skills of learners. Teachers should be equipped with advanced technology and latest methods to cater the needs of the current learners. School administrators need to coordinate with teachers and get ideas from them so that they can create immediate remediation and intervention, especially difficulties in using ICT. According



to Papa (2011), the school administrators have the utmost responsibility to become effective technology leaders who are influential for its integration, successful adoption and implementation. They have to assume the role as technology leaders who can lead technology-related activities in school including decisions and policies related to integration (Dexter, 2011).

It has been a call for both school administrators and teachers to catch up with the new technology and integrate it school. Also, innovation in education needs to observe the changing society and solve educational problems (Whattananarong, 2011). Quality innovation makes learners learn better in a shorter time and ensures learning proficiency. Studies over the past years have confirmed that there is a relatively connection between the work of the school administrator and the schools' instructional improvement to a sound result in learners' achievement. In working and in framing goals and expectations, school effectiveness can be achieved (Murphy & Torre, 2015) through technology that allows innovative and creative ideas among teachers and administrators.

Orr and Orphanos (2011) argued that instructional leadership practices of administrators are among the essential components of implementing a program for instructional improvement. Moreover, their experiences contributed significantly to what and how many of them learn the effective leadership. Subsequently, these experiences enable them to function effectively. Furthermore, changes in school system through shared leadership serves as a motivation and can have a positive effect on academic growth of learners (Hallinger & Heck, 2010). As a result, school administrators increase the extent of their influence over school improvement by sharing leadership with teachers, directly influencing them and instruction (Louis et al., 2010; Supovitz et al., 2010).

Louis et al. (2010) claimed that teachers do not only need support to feel successful and productive in their work but they need to be involved in school improvement initiatives. It was found that the school system can influence teaching and learning, in part, through the contributions they make to positive feelings of success. They possessed strong power beliefs to manage and persist in school improvements. The school improvement strategies and the actions of school administrators can help foster better learners' attainment (Sammons et al., 2014).

Table 5. The Extent of Instructional Leadership Practices in Instructional Supervision

Indicators	Mean	SD	Qualitative Description
1. Prepare and implement an instructional supervisory plan.	4.67	.48	Always Practiced
2. Evaluate lesson plans as well as classroom and learning management.	4.60	.51	Always Practiced
3. Conduct instructional supervision using appropriate	4.53	.64	Always Practiced
4. Provide in a collegial manner timely, accurate and specific feedback to teachers regarding their performance.	4.53	.52	Always Practiced
5. Provide expert technical assistance and instructional support to teachers.	4.53	.49	Always Practiced
<i>Overall Mean</i>	4.53	.52	Always Practiced

The extent of the practices in providing instructional supervision is presented in Table 5. Again, the overall results revealed that school administrators have always practiced the

instructional leadership in instructional supervision to a very high extent. These results suggest that they provided instructional supervision to teachers all the time or they performed the clinical supervision consistently to improve teaching and learning. They have always supervised curriculum through their instructional supervisory plan. Moreover, they scheduled class observations. School administrators may have provided learning materials to teachers. Eventually, these helped the latter become creatively and visually stimulating to learners. The former may have motivated master teachers to get involved in planning for instructional supervision. Collaboratively, they may have discussed with teachers the monitoring of learners' academic performance and take action to improve the same. Arong and Ogbadu (2010) shared that instructional supervision provides opportunities for schools to be successful in improving the professional development of teachers to productively manage teaching and learning processes. Tyagi (2010) emphasized direct supervision that creates a program for both teachers and school administrators. Through it, they combined expertise in the assessment of teachers, identify gaps in knowledge and competencies. This provides the significant support needed for teachers' professional development. They can frequently visit classrooms to observe teachers' lessons delivery and provide them with feedback after class observation. They may use feedback to teachers in improving their skills and the quality of classroom instruction. Congcong and Caingcoy (2020) recommended to use appropriately and effectively a range of feedback mechanism. They said, "School heads may maximize classroom observation and feedback by implementing both more frequently to provide teachers with more opportunities to learn and improve their functions, skills, and capabilities" (Congcong et al., 2020, p. 249).

Too et al. (2012) claimed that there is a positive relationship between instructional supervisory activities of school administrators and learners' academic performance. Some of the instructional supervision included inspection of teachers' lesson plans. Based on the result, indeed, school administrators have always practiced clinical supervision. "Although there are many ways of observing, the clinical supervision model for conducting classroom observations with teachers is somewhat of standard and accepted" (Glickman et al., 2014, p. 246). In it, school administrators conduct observation and conference to fully understand and facilitate conversation with the teachers. Purposely, administrators listened to teachers during the pre-observation conference. The monitoring and supervision are administrators' responsibilities (Yunas et al., 2013; Philippine Congress, 2001).

During the individual interviews, school administrators were asked how they took the role of an instructional leader or on how they practice instructional leadership. Responses of this question may triangulate the extent of their instructional leadership practices in the survey. The common responses yielded the following themes.

Actual Practices in Instructional Leadership Roles

Providing technical assistance

Technical assistance is one of the key professional activities provided by the school administrators to teachers. It is geared toward giving them support and guidance in identifying problems and finding the right solutions for effective instruction. School administrators need to continuously offer to teachers the technical know-how in a form of advice or direction. Some of them advised teachers to observe other teacher's strength and learn from it. Thus, this kind of technical assistance is indirect. One shared:

As an instructional leader, it is a big role to play ... giving technical assistance to teachers on how to deal with their lessons and cope with their problems in their classrooms (Participant 1).

Providing technical assistance is deemed necessary to ensure effective program implementation and better educational outcomes. It should impact the performance of the teachers, and most of all, on the general welfare of the learners. A male participant shared that he practiced instructional leadership by conducting class observation. He added that he must be there, where the action is taking place or where the teachers are and that is their classrooms. He emphasized that only by observing the teachers' style and method of teaching he could evaluate or judge their capability, knowledge, and their limitations. Hence, he was able to encourage, assist, and support teachers in honing their teaching skills.

I always practice the giving of technical assistance to my teachers and close observation on how they implement instruction to their students (Participant 11).

To fulfill this role, one of them made it a habit to always check lesson plans and IMs used by teachers. Similarly, participant 10 also did the same things as with the other participants, however, this participant believed that she gave her teachers a sense of security and feeling that someone is watching and guiding them in their work. This also gives students the idea that their school administrator is interested and involved in their learning.

Checking the lesson plan and the IM's of the teachers, and giving TA's ... in the lesson plan (Participant 10); ... giving of technical assistance (Participant 5); By empowering teachers. And I need to empower them to provide meaningful learning experiences for students (Participant 3); Inculcate to the mind of the teacher that we need to upgrade teaching techniques, especially in dealing with the 21st-century learners (Participant 6).

It is very vital for school administrators to provide technical assistance to teachers to guarantee effective performance of their functions. Technical assistance should always be provided to help them solve problems, improve their teaching performance, and provide tools, strategies and teaching techniques. Successful teaching is a result of the standard use of significant strategies for delivering and evaluating the learning objectives targeted for each lesson (UNESCO, 2014). In line with this, the technical assistance can provide teachers with information on the latest trends of education and allow them to tell stories and share what they can do to sustain the positive results. Providing this assistance is part and parcel of administrators' works. In effect, this enables teacher to engage more fully in the instructional improvement and for them to pay attention on the importance of instructional issues and innovative strategies that must be explored (Kelly & Peterson, 2007). School administrators had resolve a crucial position in the management of education. They can be understood as specialists in providing technical assistance most importantly on improvement of the school system that surrounds learning and pupil growth (Alemayehu, 2008).

Conducting clinical supervision

School administrators had actually practiced clinical supervision. They did it by observing teachers in the classrooms. They believed it has a potential impact on improving instruction because it focuses in the classroom and it deals directly with the processes of teaching and learning. Participants conveyed that they carefully analyzed teachers' performance during and after the class observation. In doing it, it is easier for them to provide a meaningful feedback through an open communication and dialogue with teachers. The feedback guided and encouraged teachers to improve their teaching performance.

I made them [teachers] realized their possible solutions to their identified problems (Participant 9); Constantly guide and help [my] teachers deliver quality education to students (Participant 2); Whether the teacher should proceed to the next lesson or not ... it serves as the tool whether for us to know whether the competency is being achieved or not (Participant 10); I establish good and open communication with all of us to make it work and serve our clients well and directly addressed problems that may occur (Participant 4); and by getting into their classrooms and having a conversation with them (Participant 3).



The narratives indicated that clinical supervision enables teachers to make revisions or developments in their teaching practice to become better and more effective. The findings also show that the effect of clinical supervision had increased effectiveness of classroom management. Developmentally, clinical supervision helped teachers improved their use of teaching methods and teaching performance (Zepeda, 2007). This was also true with prior studies that stated clinical supervision increased teachers' teaching accomplishment (Thomas, 2008). The study affirmed that the majority of teachers have a positive perspective on clinical supervision. The finding of this study implies that supervision assists teachers to enhance themselves and their teaching. Teachers who are observed also admitted that supervision helped in increasing their teaching expertise level. The findings of this study are consistent with the statement by Radi (2007) who claimed that discussion session between school administrator and teacher has to be done to get the feedback of the class observation. Through the discussion, the strengths and weaknesses of the teachers concerning teaching technique, methodology, approach and instructional materials used can be addressed collegially.

Innovating teaching and learning

It is interesting to note that many participants preferred differentiated instruction in dealing with learners. They want to maximize the learners' growth by meeting each of their needs by assisting the learning processes and by attending to class observation. Participant 2 shared that many teachers incorrectly assume that differentiating instruction means giving some students more work to do or the other way around. One of them introduced innovative concepts and strategies for teachers to better understand differentiated instruction.

Introducing innovative concepts in teaching and learning to help learners become better prepared for the real world (Participant 2).

Participant 6 conveyed that all the learners with different intelligences. She believed that teachers should find ways into what works for each learner and become a catalyst for crafting instruction that helps every learner make the most of his or her potentials. She added that teachers should use different strategies to accommodate and prepare learners succeed.

By giving them different strategies that suit their learning abilities by applying differentiated instruction activities (Participant 6).

In previous findings, school administrators assist teachers in giving them strategies and necessary information to modify their instruction that allow learners attain mastery (Guskey, 2007). Ponnusamy (2010) asserts that school administrators' instructional leadership influences teachers' achievement. It was emphasized that teachers who are well-guided by their administrators would have a personal influence on learners' achievement. School administrators can empower classroom teachers as they implement differentiate instruction. In Michalopoulos et al. (2012), it was acknowledged that children bring to school an array of valuable cultural and linguistic experiences, similar or dissimilar to those of the teacher or other learners. By this, every child learns differently. An effective instruction is designed to fit each learner's learning style and circumstances.

On Challenges in Practicing Instructional Leadership

Dealing with teachers' attitudes

Some participants admitted it was challenging to deal with teachers. They never denied that they face many challenges in implementing class supervision because some teachers were pessimistic with classroom observation. To move forward, school administrators must attend to day-to-day school supervisory plan. However, some teachers



resist class observation or supervision. They manifest negativity attitude towards it. These teachers can derail changes initiated by school administrators. They said:

The teachers are pessimistic towards instructional supervision (Participant 3); It's the teachers. I can feel it that teachers were negative if you have to schedule them for observation because they are not used to it (Participant 10); There are few, especially the old ones, who feel that they are better than you... because of their experiences (Participant 2); The teachers because they are the main actors or actresses that will cater to the learners' needs by giving them proper guidance that will lead to better development of the children (Participant 1); and of course, the ones with higher education are the ones harder to deal with. Of course, it is the teachers ... some have a doctorate ... so surely they have different sets of standards in terms of command responsibility (Principal 9).

They have noted that teachers are more challenging to deal with because they assumed they already knew everything. In reality, many of them spared their time in getting a degree and learning the subject matter. They feel they have already mastered all that is necessary to teach. The participants indicated that teachers need to value continuing learning through supervision. It cannot be denied as well that some teachers have limited experience and knowledge on educational theories and teaching techniques. Therefore, it is appropriate for the school administrators to assist them by providing guidance in using appropriate strategies for instruction. From the perspective of human resource management and development in education, the success of the education system relies heavily on teacher quality (Omebe, 2014). The primary role of Instructional leadership is to develop effective teaching staff that would result in learner's academic achievement. School administrators and teachers must understand that their roles should work collaboratively in educating the learners. School administrators who foster collaborative leadership appeared to influence learning by developing teachers who perform well though shaping academic structures with consistent impact on the learners' achievement (MacBeath & Cheng, 2008). The finding is consistent with the research of Tuytens et al. (2010) which concluded that the structure a principal provides, along with the trust teachers have in their school administrators, is of central importance to teachers' perceptions and influence. Empirical work has also exhibited that instructional leadership practices directly influence feedback's effectiveness. Thus, they directly influence teachers' professional learning (Tuytens & Devos, 2011). School administrators expressed the need to balance conflicting goals as they maintained a collaborative and positive school culture at the same time comply with a potentially contentious mandate in changing the process and content of teacher performance. One of the reasons for instructional leadership practice is to increase classroom instruction by giving positive influence towards teachers' knowledge and teachers' competency (Gu, 2014).

Conflicting schedules and activities

A female participant shared that with so many management tasks of being a school administrator and DepEd programs to be implemented, finding time is a struggle. Though training and seminars are being conducted to improve and develop the craft of school administrators and teachers in the school, sparing for time for related tasks such as supervising is quite difficult. Similarly, some participants considered time management as one of the challenges in their leadership. School administrators function in the school like supervising instruction, attending seminars and training, and many other things. Time, indeed, is a scarce resource. Participants had a difficulty on how to allocate their time among these competing demands.

Well, to be specific...time management. It's a real challenge because there are times that conflict of schedule arises due to seminars (Principal 2). Time constraint in the part of the Principal. Even if everything is planned, memos requesting immediate attendance (Participant 10); Challenge is time management because sometimes I have my class observation but there are different activities especially



from the national need immediate action/implementation (Participant 11); Since our department has many seminars. We have our instructional supervision plan. It's only a plan. Sometimes so we cannot implement it. So I used to have a video teaching with my teachers (Participant 2); The number one challenge is time. As an instructional leader... instructional leadership focuses on serving (Participant 12).

School administration entails a lot of responsibilities. Managing the school operations, overseeing instructional programs, and building relations among teachers need time (Horng et al., 2010). That's why, becoming more productive means looking for ways to carry out more given limited time and resources. Managing one's time more ably is one way to fulfill this goal. Although overlooking time management specifically, in educational administration has documented the importance of how school administrators organize and allocate their time. Studies of school administrators' time use using class observations and other supervisory works show that school administrators' time was spent on organizational management and school operations. All these predict learner's achievement and other school end result (Horng et al., 2010; May et al., 2012). Further, studies also find that principals' time was invested in some instruction-related tasks, including coaching and teacher professional development and were associated with more positive student outcomes (Grissom et al., 2012; May et al., 2012) but they contributed large portions of the days' planned and unplanned meetings and on finishing administrative duties (Horng et al., 2010).

Teachers are resisting change

Teachers refusing to adapt change were mentioned by some participants. Because resistance is a major thing in reform failure, school administrators must discover why teachers do resist change. The participants noticed that some teachers ignore, misinterpret the feedback information from the class observation by the school administrators for the development of their classroom teaching. They even described that traditional teachers were skeptical about the new trends of education. The many of them in fact simply want to hear nothing of reform, innovation, new forms of teaching, and so on. Quite frequently, they feel forced to take part in reform and development processes.

Specifically, some teachers are not willing to adapt to the new trends of the teaching and learning process and they don't understand the behavior of the millennial generations of learners (Participant 4); Teachers refuse to adopt a facilitative teaching approach in which few of them practice the old style of teaching (Participant 5); and Some challenges I mentioned a while ago that some teachers also if you give some technical assistance to the many teachers sometimes ... resist changing their teaching strategies and they say that additional burden for them which is true because we know that teachers' works are overloaded (Participant 6).

This result ties well with the study of Al-Ateeqi (2009) which indicated that not all teachers accept using "interactive teaching methodologies that promote creativity and innovation in teaching. Some of them still believe in traditional methods and old-fashioned teaching styles. For significant change to happen in schools, teachers need to take risks and experiment with how they design different learning tasks and classroom interactions. Through this process of exploration, they begin to figure out which digital technologies can support the learning they want to see in their learners. Yet, teachers must be able to navigate, examine, and understand the difficulty and changing of digital technologies. Still teachers tend to use a lot of digital technologies, but they mostly engage in social networking and simple internet searches (Thompson, 2013). Another promising finding of Fullan (2010), that school administrators as instructional leaders should always emphasize the idea to teachers that being part of the school system, they should adopt reforms. By this, school systems go. Opfer et al. (2011) suggested that changes made in practice by the teacher, therefore, impact a change in learners. Teachers' experiences in the change of practice and the changes



observed in learners influence a change in belief. Opfer et al. (2011) recommends that this sequence is constantly happening and frequently influences teacher belief to continue the change in practice.

Ways of Overcoming Instructional Leadership Challenges

Meeting competency standards

Responses of participants show that school administrators were interested in the substance or the content of teaching. For them, it is important that teachers cover all the competency. But with all the class disruptions lately like attending seminars, teachers have been challenged to do the responsibility. It is also important that they would be updated with the current trends and practices. One of them emphasized she aided teachers in buying materials for their visual aids so that teachers can focus on the academics and classroom instruction instead of worrying where to get money for instructional materials.

I make sure also that the competency in every subject area is covered and accomplished (Participant 4); In every grading period after the exam there is a need to have a Table of Specifications so that we can determine what competencies not mastered by learners (Participant 12); The assessment result will be used to evaluate whether the teacher would continue to direct her competency or not it depends on the result of the assessment (Participant 10); Checking their DLL regularly is one because their assessment of learning is detailed in their DLL (Participant 7); They need to study more about these competencies and to get in-depth knowledge about these things (Participant 1); and Dedicate to coming up with evaluation strategies (Participant 3).

The results imply that school administrators were so particular about teachers' focus in the curriculum particularly in covering the performance and content standards. The challenge then is to ensure that all class disruptions may not hamper in meeting the competencies. Teachers need to ensure that learners are able to absorb the knowledge and enabled to practice the skills at the end of the school year. They have to ensure that assessment tests do not continue to distort the curriculum in ways that deprive students of meaningful learning (Hamilton et al., 2007). It was claimed that while most schools have made progress toward implementing curriculum that is aligned with the standards, school administrators are working hard to make sure that all teachers appreciate, understand and embrace a view of curriculum that is focused on outcomes rather than the content (Bickford, 2017; The Marzano Center, 2017).

Adopting and modifying existing programs

A male participant shared that as a school administrator, he strictly followed and implement all the DepEd programs and encouraged his teachers to also do the same. He fervently believed that the programs were designed for the entire educational system. Yet a few of them expressed the need for adopting and modifying DepEd programs.

I strictly follow and implement it at our level. I encourage my teachers and students ... because I believe every program in the department was designed for the good of all of us (Participant 4); ... regular observation and giving technical assistance. I allow my teachers to attend seminars inside and outside the division (Participant 4); Similarly, to successfully adopt all the DepEd programs, a participant revealed that they provide a copy to their teachers for them to fully understand the said program before adopting it in their classroom instruction... provide them copy... on the existing programs... (Participant 5).



Contextualizing teaching and learning

A few have mentioned that by adopting DepEd programs, their teachers should also know how to relate their application to learners in an explicit manner possible. They revealed that they reinforced their teachers to make their instruction engaging for the learners by encouraging them to locally produced instructional materials. And also relating the curriculum to a particular setting and situation to make the competencies relevant and meaningful. The role of school administrators has the most significant impact to build capacity among teachers and that they also have the primary influence on the learners' achievement and in achieving desired school outcomes (Hallinger, 2011). Traditional strategies and approaches in education should be replaced with the latest trends that enables critical thinking, problem solving and the transfer of skills and knowledge in new situations with the new generations (Hammond, 2008).

They have to make more strategies and programs that would fit the learner's ability and capacity ... (Participant 6); ... explicitly check the given task so when you are in Grade 1 ...explicitly meaning soon feeding because they are new (Participant 7); and... contextualization ... as much as possible localized because the learner could share a lot if it is within his or her experience (Participant 10).

Monitoring implemented programs

A female participant highlighted that she introduced every program to the teachers and specifically if it's about instruction during their LAC sessions before her school starts to implement them. She believed that only during these sessions that her teachers will learn to collaborate and encourage healthy conversations in finding solutions to problems that may arise during the implantation of a said program.

School head has an important role in directing towards the achievement of each educational goals. School-based seminars, Learning Action Cell sessions are very important in implementing programs for instructional improvement (Participant 2). It is my duty as a school head to monitor the effectiveness of the assigned coordinators (Participant 5); I need to monitor religiously such interventions towards the program (Participant 3); and the program is well-implemented because of visibility (Participant 7).

Some participants shared the importance of administrators' visibility in their school and monitor their teachers as they implement DepEd programs. They said that monitoring the programs may be effective and relevant. It is helpful in figuring out whether or not the implementation has delivered the desired results. Monitoring helped them identify the areas that succeed or failed. It is through monitoring that teachers may align their teaching that contribute better performance of learners and achievement of the programs. Louis et al. (2010) concurred that the instructional leadership is a key to increasing learners' achievement and that every school that showed growth in learners' outcomes also had an effective school administrator. They also recognized that the school administrators' knowledge, involvement of teachers, and teacher empowerment led to increased learners' achievement.

Inculcating the value and benefits of class observation

They said observing classes is the most important tool to improve the quality of instruction by helping teachers meet those expectations through high-quality feedback and support. They also shared that they allow teachers to receive meaningful and direct feedback about their teaching. One stressed out that he sees to it that teachers were provided with instructional materials and resources to help them improve learners' knowledge, abilities, and skills. This was their way of dealing teachers' attitudes toward classroom observation as among their challenges.



It is one of the major roles of the school head to let teachers know why I should do it. I explain the importance of observation and the benefit of every teacher in the teaching and learning process (Participant 4); develop a positive attitude towards class observation by so doing such friendly activity... developing a positive attitude towards leading them to be a very good teacher ... (Participant 7); and we should manage well so that teachers would be encouraged to teach their children well also depends on the kind of leader they have (Participant 6).

Congcong and Caingcoy (2020) published some feedback mechanisms that every school administrator can learn and effectively provide feedback to teachers. These mechanisms may allow teachers to recognize the value of classroom observation. To do it, school administrators can choose one or a combination of those mechanisms in the framework. If school administrators are unable to carry out their roles effectively, like observing class observation and checking teachers' lesson plans then they will not be able to motivate the teachers or take advantage of their knowledge and experience, and this may affect their ability to motivate students to excel in their education (Sidhu & Fook, 2009). It becomes the school administrators' responsibility to work with teachers to supervise the instructional programs. Instructional leaders should know what transpire in the classrooms by having class observation and develop the capacities of their teachers by building on their strengths and reducing their weaknesses (Spillane & Zuberi, 2009). If these are the aims of classroom observation, teachers may recognize its value and benefits.

Conclusion

Looking at the findings from the lens of deliberate practice theory, it is concluded that school administrators have indicated they have acquired knowledge and high level of understanding on their instructional leadership roles in four areas namely the assessment for learning, developing programs and or adapting existing ones, implementing programs for instructional improvement, and instructional supervision. Despite the fact these administrators can perform exceedingly their instructional leadership roles by practicing them day-by-day, they also recognized they are challenged by teachers' negative attitudes, resistance to changes, and conflicting schedules of their respective schools, division, region, and even with the national activities. The continuing professional development provided by the Department of Education allowed them to apply the acquired knowledge and skills in conducting clinical supervision, providing technical assistance to teachers, and innovating teaching and learning. These administrators have tried their best to meet content and performance standards of the basic education curriculum, modify and adapt the programs of the agency. Based on the foregoing conclusions, the following were recommended: (1) The Department of Education at national, regional, division, and district levels may sustain the existing programs and initiatives that best prepare school administrators for their instructional roles in school-based management. This is to maintain progress and even surpass the current performance of school administrators in practicing instructional leadership roles; (2) The school administrators may collaborate with their district supervisors as their direct mentors and with co-school administrators, especially in addressing challenges in performing instructional leadership roles to ensure optimal school performance among teachers and learners; (3) The Department of Education may develop and implement a continuing professional development program on how to handle negative attitudes of teachers, especially those who are resistant to changes and innovation in teaching and learning processes; (4) The Department of Education at different levels may design programs intended for teachers with problems on attitudes and are resistant to changes and innovation in teaching. This is to help school administrators in addressing these challenges;



and (5) The Department of Education at the national, regional, division and district levels may provide school administrators in advance the calendar of their activities so that school-based activities and schedules may not be hampered, especially their clinical and supervisory functions to teachers. The study acknowledged the limited participants of the study, especially the quantitative data. It is recommended to future researchers to conduct a similar study with a bigger sample and more sophisticated design that ensure more external validity and generalizable results.

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