

## GUIDING THE GUIDES: THE POWER OF TEACHER MENTORSHIP

by:

**Rose Darren G. Buenaventura**

*Master Teacher I, Mariveles Senior High School – Sitio Mabuhay*

People often call teaching one of the toughest jobs you can do, yet it's also deeply rewarding—like watching a student's face light up when a lesson finally clicks. Passion and dedication drive many teachers, but shifting curricula, varied student needs, and constant accountability can pile up until the workload feels like a stack of ungraded papers teetering on the edge of the desk. In this setting, mentorship becomes a powerful force, guiding new teachers through their first shaky lessons and helping seasoned educators sharpen their skills. Mentorship goes beyond a simple professional bond—it's an ongoing exchange of guidance, trust, and hard-earned wisdom, like passing a well-worn book from one teacher's hands to another, that binds the teaching community together.

Research shows that mentoring can keep teachers in the classroom, boost their confidence, and sharpen how they teach—like giving them a steady hand to guide first-year lessons. Ingersoll and Strong (2011) found that mentorship programs help keep teachers from leaving and boost the quality of their lessons, especially during those first challenging years in the classroom. New teachers grow with the guidance and steady encouragement of seasoned colleagues, while those mentors sharpen their own leadership and learn to pause and reflect, like jotting quick notes after a lively class discussion. The Department of Education (DepEd) highlights mentoring and coaching in its Results-Based Performance Management System (RPMS), pointing to them as key drivers of professional growth, as outlined in DepEd Order No. 2, s. In 2015).

A good mentor can quietly shape the feel of a school, setting the tone like the warm buzz of conversation in a welcoming hallway. Jennings and Greenberg (2009) argue that when teachers feel supported and connected—like being greeted warmly in the hall—classrooms turn into more positive spaces where learning can thrive. When mentors trade strategies, give honest feedback, and offer a steady word of encouragement, they spark a sense of belonging and teamwork that spreads through the school like sunlight spilling into every corner. These relationships remind teachers they’re not facing their challenges alone, and show them that real growth often sparks when they share ideas over coffee with others who understand.

Mentorship doesn’t just build skills—it sparks confidence, like the steady hand of a guide showing you the way through unfamiliar streets. Shulman (2005) reminds us that good teaching means you never stop learning or thinking about your work—like jotting quick notes after class to catch what went well and what didn’t. Mentorship gives teachers the support and steady framework they need to try fresh approaches, test new ideas, and keep that spark of curiosity alive for a lifetime. That’s how mentorship keeps the heart of teaching alive—the steady commitment to students, like a light that never flickers out. When teachers learn to mentor others, they set a cycle in motion that keeps the profession alive—like passing a well-worn book from one eager hand to the next.

Just as teachers guide their students, mentors guide teachers—sparking a ripple that can turn a quiet classroom into a place buzzing with ideas and energy, and touching the wider community. John C. Crosby once said, “Mentoring means having a mind you can tap into, an ear that truly listens, and a gentle shove toward the right path.”

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