

Enhancing Classroom Teaching Through Strengthening School-Level Monitoring Practices

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Abstract : The study attempted to explore how school-based monitoring practices could be made more effective for better classroom teaching and learning. The study was conducted in response to an awareness that the monitoring practices currently used in Bhutanese schools are predominantly of a summative and compliance nature which has provided little developmental support for teachers. Applying an action research approach that utilizes mixed methods and is embedded in social constructivist theory, a total of 226 participants (teachers, n=20; HOD, n=2; Academic Head, n=1; students, n=203) participated in the study through questionnaires, classroom observations, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. The intervention was conducted over the course of sixteen weeks and comprised three phases: planning and capacity building; observed structured teaching; and feedback-and-reflective dialogue. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze quantitative data, and qualitative data were analyzed thematically. The study uncovered that structured and supportive supervision had positive effects on teaching quality, teacher motivation, and staff cooperation. Value-added scores for lesson clarity, student engagement and the use of assessment-for-learning strategies were all significantly higher. The shift from an inspection-style observation to a developmental based feedback approach was widely welcomed by teachers. The study found that lessons had become more interactive and engaging and students' performance significantly improved. The study concludes that school-level monitoring improves teaching and learning when it places a strong emphasis on professional development through peer collaboration and constructive criticism.

IndexTerms - classroom teaching, monitoring practices, instructional leadership, teacher development, Bhutan professional standards for teachers (BPST).

INTRODUCTION

Effective classroom instruction serves as the cornerstone of student academic achievement and overall school success. It is a dynamic process where the quality of teaching directly translates into meaningful learning experiences. Consequently, fostering continuous teacher growth through strategic instructional leadership is essential for maintaining high educational standards.

In the context of Bhutanese education, school-level monitoring is intended to guide teachers and identify instructional gaps. Ideally, these frameworks should align with the Bhutan Professional Standards for Teachers (BPST) (see Figure 1) to promote professional excellence. When monitoring is structured and supportive, it empowers school leaders to make evidence-based decisions and fosters a culture of collective ownership and collaboration among staff.

Despite its importance, current monitoring procedures at many schools including the current school where this study is conducted remain irregular, inconsistent, and predominantly summative. Existing systems are often perceived as compliance-focused "checkbox" exercises that offer minimal constructive feedback or useful insights for professional development. This lack of systematic supervision leads to several critical issues:

- i. **Instructional Inconsistency:** Students experience varying teaching standards, which can exacerbate educational inequities.
- ii. **Teacher Isolation:** Educators often work without the benefit of collaborative reflection or targeted support.
- iii. **Data Deficits:** School leaders lack reliable data to implement necessary interventions, hindering the school's ability to address underperformance effectively.
- iv. **Missing Perspectives:** Current frameworks fail to capture student feedback, overlooking a vital metric of instructional quality.

The primary goal of this action research is to investigate how strengthened school-level monitoring—through structured observation and reflective discussion—can enhance classroom teaching. The specific objectives include:

- i. Identifying existing gaps in current classroom monitoring practices.
- ii. Implementing a consistent, structured observation system.
- iii. Providing teachers with timely and constructive feedback to support their growth.
- iv. Assessing the resulting impact of these improved practices on student academic performance.



Figure 1: Seven Standards of BPST

Research Questions

How can improved school-level monitoring enhance the effectiveness of classroom teaching and learning in my school?

Sub questions

- i. What are the current strengths and weaknesses of classroom monitoring in my school?
- ii. What specific monitoring strategies or tools can be implemented to make school-level monitoring more consistent and supportive for teachers?
- iii. How does structured and supportive school-level monitoring influence teachers' instructional practices, classroom interactions, and professional growth?

Literature review

Effective classroom teaching is central to quality education, and school-level monitoring plays a critical role in maintaining and improving teaching standards. According to Alfiah et al (2023) monitoring and evaluation are essential for identifying gaps, ensuring accountability, and supporting teacher development. A robust classroom monitoring system goes beyond compliance; it supports teachers through timely feedback, reflection, and collaborative learning. In the Bhutanese context, school monitoring systems are often part of broader Quality Assurance initiatives led by the Department of School Education (DoSE) and the Bhutan Professional Standards for Teachers.

Several local studies highlight limitations in current instructional leadership and monitoring practices. Gyeltshen (2025) Dorji in his study “Effectiveness of Principals’ Instructional Leadership Practices on Teaching and Learning in Punakha Dzongkhag Schools” found that insufficient time and resources allocated to instructional leadership, and inconsistent application of behavioural expectations were some of the areas that needed improvement. These issues are compounded by administrative burdens, limited training in instructional supervision, and unclear policy guidelines. Likewise, this issue leads to most monitoring practices being summative, checklist-based, and lacked follow-up. This limits the opportunity for professional growth and serves just as compliance checks rather than opportunities for professional growth.

Likewise in Africa, similar lessons are evident. For instance, Mathembele et al. (2025) in their study found that school inspections moderately influence teachers’ practice. This is because inspectors spend minimal time in schools, primarily observe subjects within their speciality, provide short notice before inspections and have limited teachers observed during the year. Based on these findings, the study recommends that school inspection authorities should increase observation frequency, evaluate teaching practices across multiple subjects, enhance feedback mechanisms and provide detailed actionable feedback supported by mentoring or follow-up sessions. Furthermore, the study suggests utilising a data-driven approach to inform current inspections and teacher development plans.

Ovando (2005) and Shanon (20026) emphasize that constructive, timely feedback enhances instructional quality and teacher morale. The study revealed that constructive, timely, and specific feedback improves instructional quality and teacher morale. However, they stressed the importance of principals being trained in giving constructive feedback to make classroom observation meaningful.

Sartain et al. (2011) conducted research in the United States showing that instructional coaching and regular classroom observation had long-term effects on teacher effectiveness. They also emphasized that feedback must be specific, timely, and non-evaluative to bring about lasting changes in teaching behaviour. Similarly, Hattie and Timperley (2007) emphasized that effective feedback, a core element of monitoring, significantly influences student achievement. This aligns with King and Newman (2001), who found that leadership practices such as regular teacher monitoring and feedback were positively associated with improved teaching quality and student outcomes. Likewise, Sunaryo (2020) also concurs that academic supervision conducted by the principal has a positive and significant effect on changes in teacher performance.

Bush (2007) argue that school leadership must move beyond administrative roles and become instructional leaders who engage in regular, evidence-based classroom observations. Feedback should align with school improvement goals and be part of a cyclical professional development model. Likewise, Fink and Resnick (2001), and Shanon (2026) emphasized the need for school leaders to continuously acquire new skills to fulfil their professional responsibilities effectively. Fink and Resnick (2001) discuss about how principal as an instructional leaders resulted in better students’ outcomes and remarkable professional spirit amongst teachers as well in Community School District Two, New York.

Similarly, Marshall (2013) in his book “*Rethinking teacher supervision and evaluation: How to work smart, build collaboration, and close the achievement gap*” emphasizes joint supervision over traditional appraisal. He also advocated for peer observation, co-planning, and reflective discussion as more effective ways to promote professional growth. Likewise, Ani et al (2025) also highlights that supervision carried out in a structured, collaborative, and professional development-based manner has an impact on positive motivation, engagement, and quality of teacher teaching. This aligns with the needs of Bhutanese teachers, who seek supportive assistance rather than checklist-based evaluations. Supporting this view, Harris (2020) found that schools that promoted professional discourse and distributed leadership experienced greater consistency in teaching and resilience during educational disruptions like the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, Fink and Resnick (2001) also found that school leaders who prioritized teaching and learning over administrative tasks had the greatest impact on student outcomes.

Regionally, Shanon (2026) conducted a study in Bangladesh and highlighted how instructional leadership influences the teachers and students’ outcomes. He found that, teachers in schools with high instructional leadership reported significantly better classroom management, clarity of instruction, feedback, and assessment strategies, compared to those in schools with low instructional leadership. In another study, De Grauwe (2001) examined school supervision systems in four African countries and found that effective monitoring improved classroom practices, teacher motivation, and student outcomes. These findings are highly relevant to developing countries where systemic support can significantly impact teaching quality. It further validates the need for improved and consistent monitoring practices in schools to enhance instructional effectiveness.

However, a study by Horng and Loeb (2010) noted that time principals spend on classroom observations often negatively correlates with teacher and parent assessments of the school instructional climate. They propose that the growth in school outcomes results more from organizational management for instructional improvement than from principal’s time observing the lessons or directly coaching teachers.

Overall, both global and local literature emphasize the need for systematic, regular, and collaborative classroom monitoring practices. Key themes include timely and constructive feedback, peer observation, instructional leadership, and a positive school culture. These are consistent with this study’s objectives and sub-questions, which aim to identify weaknesses in current monitoring, promote supportive practices, and explore teacher perceptions of effective supervision.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a Mixed Methods Action Research design grounded in Social Constructivist Theory. Social constructivism emphasizes collaborative learning, reflection, and shared knowledge of which are key to improving teaching through school-level monitoring. The action research approach allows the researcher (school leader) to interact directly with teachers through planning, observation, feedback, and reflection to enhance classroom practice through lived experience.

By triangulating quantitative data (e.g., surveys, achievement test, structured observation checklists) with qualitative responses (e.g., interviews, focus group discussions, reflective journals), the study provided a comprehensive understanding of current monitoring strategies, their shortcomings, and potential improvements (see Figure 2).

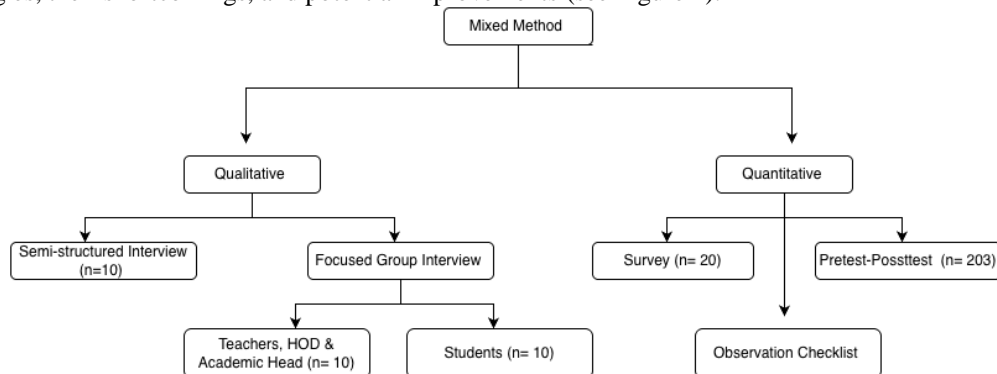


Figure 2: Summary of Methodology

1. Population and Sample

The study employed purposive sampling to select participants for both quantitative and qualitative data collection.

Quantitative Data: Twenty teachers were selected using purposive sampling to complete structured questionnaires. This approach was chosen because the study aimed to gather targeted information from teachers who are directly involved in classroom instruction and monitoring. Selecting participants with relevant experience ensured that the quantitative data accurately reflects current monitoring practices and teacher perceptions, providing reliable insights for analysis. Post-test is also administered to see how

effective the intervention (effective mentoring) process was. Standard observation checklist was also used to collect the quantitative data.

Qualitative Data: For semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions (2 group, one with teachers, academic head and other with selected students), a subset of ten teachers, along with academic head and school leader, were purposively selected. These participants were chosen based on their professional roles and experience with classroom observation and feedback processes. This strategy allowed the study to gather in-depth, context-rich information about the effectiveness of monitoring practices, teachers' experiences, and perceptions of professional growth.

2. Data and Sources of Data

For this study primary data were collected through various tools as detailed below:

Questionnaires: To gather data on current monitoring practices, perceived strengths and weaknesses, and teacher attitudes toward feedback.

Pen and paper test: administered to randomly selected grades i.e. grade IX (n= 99) for English and grade X (n=104) for math to gather baseline data and post intervention data.

Semi-structured Interviews: With all the teachers, academic head, and administrators to explore their experiences with classroom observation.

Observation Checklists: Used during classroom observation to ensure structured and consistent monitoring.

Focus Group Discussions: To explore shared challenges and improvement ideas.

3 Data Analysis

Quantitative data was analyzed using open-source statistical tool, i.e. JAMOVI, both statistical software programs that allow researchers to organize, summarize, and identify trends, patterns, and correlations in numerical data. Qualitative data from interviews was analyzed using MAXQDA, a software tool designed for coding, organizing, and thematically analyzing textual data to identify recurring themes and insights. This mixed-methods approach provides both statistical evidence and rich, contextual understanding of participants' experiences.

4. Validity and Reliability

To ensure validity, this study used multiple data sources (questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, observation checklists, and focus group discussions) to triangulate findings and provide a comprehensive understanding of classroom monitoring practices. The data collection instruments were reviewed by experts and piloted with a small group of teachers to ensure they measure what they are intended to measure.

To ensure reliability, the study used standardized procedures for data collection. Observation checklists and questionnaires were administered consistently across all participants. Qualitative data coding in MAXQDA followed a clear thematic framework, and multiple researchers have cross-checked the coding to ensure consistency in interpretation. These measures enhanced the trustworthiness, accuracy, and consistency of the study's findings

5. Intervention

The intervention in this study is designed to enhance classroom teaching by introducing a structured, supportive, and continuous monitoring system at Gesarling Central School. Grounded in the principles of instructional leadership and professional growth, the intervention involved a three-phase cycle: planning, classroom observation, and feedback/reflection, which were carried out over a period of six months.

Phase 1: Planning and Capacity Building

A brief orientation session was conducted for all teacher participants to explain the purpose, process, and benefits of the intervention. School leaders and academic heads were trained in the use of structured observation tools aligned with the Bhutan Professional Standards for Teachers (BPST). Monitoring schedules and observation templates were co-developed to ensure consistency and reduce the compliance burden (see Figure 3).

Phase 2: Structured Classroom Observations

Each teacher was observed at least twice using a standardized observation checklist.

Observations were conducted by a combination of school leaders, academic heads, and peer teachers. Observers focused on key instructional practices such as lesson delivery, student engagement, use of assessment strategies, and classroom management.

Phase 3: Timely Feedback and Reflective Dialogue

After each observation, a feedback session was held between the observer and the teacher within 48 hours. Feedback was constructive, timely, and non-evaluative, emphasizing strengths and providing suggestions for improvement. Teachers were engaged in self-reflection using a guided template and participated in peer-sharing sessions to discuss effective strategies and challenges (see Figure 3).

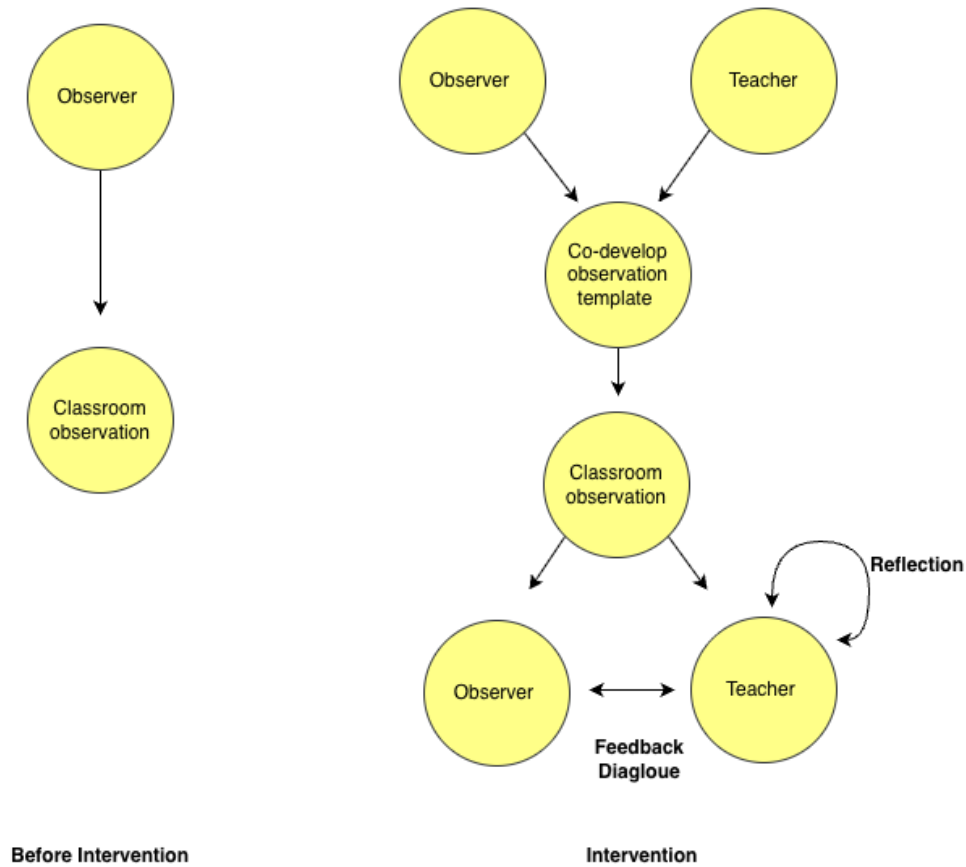


Figure 3: Intervention

RESULTS

Teacher Perceptions of Monitoring Practices

The questionnaire data revealed a notable shift in teachers' perceptions of school-level monitoring. As shown in figure 4, a large majority of the participants (85%) reported that the earlier system of classroom supervision was predominantly summative in nature and carried the feeling of an inspection rather than a developmental exercise. In contrast, 90% of the teachers indicated that the newly introduced structured monitoring framework provided them with a clearer direction and practical strategies for improving their lessons. Teachers especially appreciated the practice of receiving feedback within forty-eight hours of observation, with 80% acknowledging that the immediacy of feedback made it more useful for refining their teaching. Similarly, three-fourths of the respondents noted that peer observations reduced the anxiety normally associated with classroom supervision and instead created an environment of collaboration and professional growth.

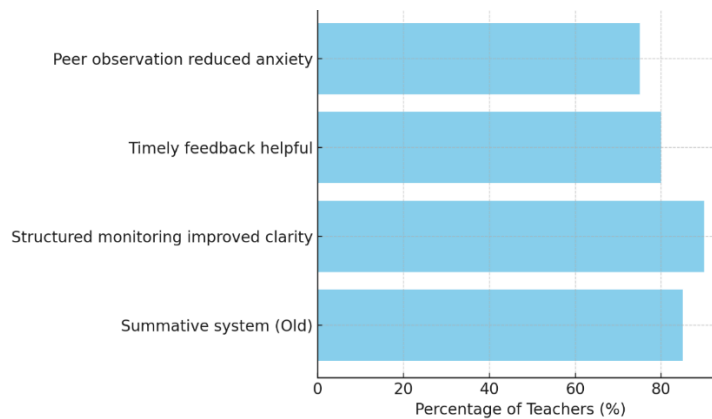


Figure 4. Teacher's perception of school-level monitoring practice

Improvement in teaching practices

The structured observation checklist administered during two cycles of classroom visits provided measurable evidence of improvement in teaching practices. The analysis of scores as shown in figure 5 revealed that lesson clarity and planning improved from a mean of 3.2 in the first round to 4.1 in the second, while student engagement rose from 3.0 to 3.9. Similarly, the effective use of assessment-for-learning strategies increased from 2.8 to 3.8, and classroom management, already a relatively strong area, improved from 3.5 to 4.2. These improvements indicate that when teachers were observed with a supportive framework and received constructive feedback, they were able to incorporate new strategies into their practice and raise the overall quality of instruction.

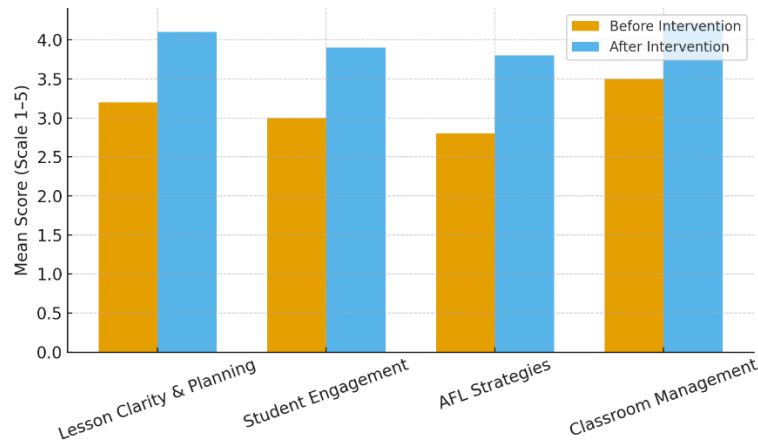


Figure 5. Improvement in teaching practices based on observation checklist

Teacher voices and reflection

Interviews and reflective journals provided deeper insight into how teachers experienced the intervention. Several teachers reported a change in their perception of classroom observation. Mr. TP1, a science teacher, explained that, “Earlier, observation felt like inspection. Now, with guided feedback, I feel motivated to improve my lessons rather than judged.” Similarly, Ms. TP2, an English teacher, stated that the timeliness and specificity of the feedback made it particularly helpful. She explained that she was encouraged to use more open-ended questioning, and when she applied this suggestion, she noticed a clear increase in student participation. Likewise, Mr. TP3, a mathematics teacher, highlighted the benefits of peer observation, noting that he adopted a group problem-solving strategy from Ms. TP4s lesson and found it to be highly effective in engaging his students. These findings show that the intervention not only enhanced teachers’ instructional practices but also fostered a culture of sharing and reflection.

Perspectives of school leaders

School leaders also acknowledged the positive shift brought about by the intervention. HoD1 reflected that the monitoring system had moved away from being punitive and compliance-oriented toward a developmental and supportive process. According to him, teachers were more open to dialogue and improvement because they recognized that the focus was on their professional growth rather than evaluation. Likewise, Academic Head AH1 explained that the use of structured observation tools aligned with the Bhutan Professional Standards for Teachers (BPST) provided a common language for discussing the quality of teaching. This, he observed, created consistency in feedback and gave both leaders and teachers a clearer understanding of what effective classroom practice should look like.

Insights from focus group discussions

The focus group discussions provided collective perspectives that reinforced the individual reflections. FGP1 agreed that the culture of feedback created during the intervention significantly reduced their fear of being observed. They valued the shift from an evaluative approach to one that emphasized professional growth. FGP3 expressed a desire to sustain peer-sharing sessions beyond the study period, noting that such discussions offered a safe space to exchange strategies, reflect on challenges, and collaboratively plan improvements. FGP2 further highlighted that the sense of collegiality built during the intervention had a lasting effect on their motivation and willingness to experiment with new instructional strategies. FGP4 also stated that the structured monitoring and instant discussion helped in enhancing teaching pedagogy, assessment, and academic process.

Impact on student learning outcomes

The results of student assessments also reflected the improvements in teaching practices (see Figure 6). In English, the average score of Grade IX students increased from 58% in the baseline test to 66% in the mid-term assessment, while in Mathematics, the Grade X class average rose from 52% to 63% over the same period. In addition to these measurable gains, focus group discussions with students revealed that they found lessons to be more interactive and easier to understand. Students reported that teachers were asking more thought-provoking questions and engaging them in collaborative tasks, which made classroom learning more enjoyable and meaningful.

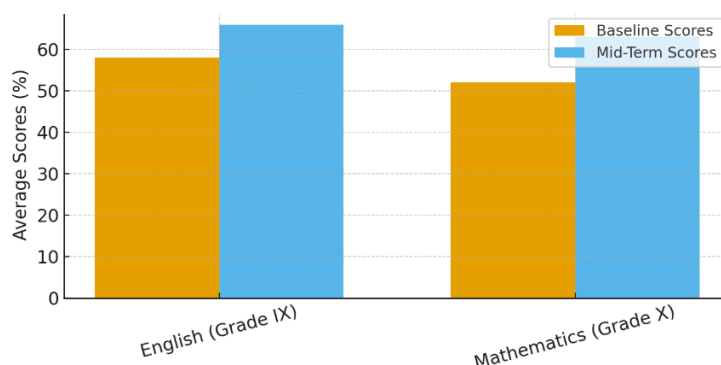


Figure 6. Impact of improved monitoring on student learning outcomes

DISCUSSION

Based on the research questions, the findings are discussed by situating it with the existing scholarly works as detailed below:

Current strengths and weaknesses of monitoring

The study's baseline data showed that existing monitoring practices were largely summative, compliance-based, and lacked meaningful follow-up. Teachers felt observations were parallel to inspections, offering little support for growth. This finding reflects the common practice of observation in Bhutanese schools where observations are often reduced to checklist-driven processes as echoed in the Gyeltshen's (2025) findings that leaders have limited time for instructional leadership which is further worsened by lack of proper and adequate training.

Effective monitoring strategies for teacher support

The results demonstrate that structured observation tools aligned with the Bhutan Professional Standards for Teachers (BPST), combined with timely feedback and peer observation, created a supportive culture of professional growth. Teachers appreciated that feedback was specific, constructive, and delivered within forty-eight hours, enabling them to apply new strategies. This finding aligns with Hattie and Timperley (2007) emphasis on the importance of timely and actionable feedback. Furthermore, the positive impact of peer observation resonates with Danielson's (2007) advocacy for joint supervision and professional dialogue as alternatives to traditional appraisal models.

Influence on instructional practices and professional growth

Teachers' testimonies indicated that they felt more motivated and confident in experimenting with new strategies after receiving constructive feedback. For instance, Mr. TP1's acknowledgment that observation now felt "motivating rather than judgmental" underscores the shift from a punitive to a developmental culture. These reflections align with Cox and Mullen (2023) findings that instructional coaching improves teacher confidence and classroom practices. Moreover, the collaborative dimension of the intervention fostered a professional learning community, echoing Mette et al. (2015) and Cox and Mullen (2023) conclusion that monitoring builds teachers' capacity for self-reflection about teaching enhancing classroom teaching.

Link to Student Learning Outcomes

One of the most significant findings of the study was the improvement in student achievement in both English and Mathematics. Average class scores rose notably, and students themselves reported that lessons had become more interactive and engaging. This outcome validates Hattie and Timperley's (2007) assertion that effective feedback significantly influences student achievement. It also supports Naguit (2024) who affirms that effective instructional leadership practices, characterized by thorough observation, strategic intervention, and supportive feedback, are instrumental in promoting educational excellence and ultimately improving student learning outcomes. The findings suggest that when monitoring practices are reoriented toward teacher development (Shaha et al., 2015), they indirectly but meaningfully enhance student learning experiences and performance. However, the current study only partially concurs with a study by Song et al. (2021) where they found that providing educators with performance feedback had positive impacts on teachers' classroom practice, principal leadership, and student achievement in mathematics but not in reading. But the current study is in full agreement with Shaha et al. (2015) where systemic observation or monitoring practices have improved performance of both math and reading.

Implications for School Leadership

The findings underscore the critical role of school leadership in shaping the culture of classroom monitoring. Leaders at Gesarling Central School acknowledged that the intervention shifted monitoring away from a compliance focus toward professional development. Principal P1's observation that teachers were more open to dialogue reflects Cox and Mullen (2023) argument that effective leadership must move beyond administration to engage directly with teaching and learning. By using structured observation tools and facilitating reflective discussions, school leaders positioned themselves as instructional leaders rather than inspectors. This has important implications for leadership training in Bhutan, where principals often lack preparation in instructional coaching.

Contribution to Professional Development

The intervention also demonstrated the value of embedding professional development within daily school practices. Teachers valued the peer-sharing sessions, and many requested their continuation beyond the research period. This resonates with Fullan and Quinn's (2016) argument that continuous professional development, when linked with monitoring, creates coherence and drives improvement in teaching practices. Unlike one-off workshops, the intervention provided a sustained cycle of planning, observation, feedback, and reflection, which proved more effective in changing classroom behaviors.

CONCLUSION

The main purpose of this research was to explore how structured and supportive monitoring practices could enhance teaching quality and student outcomes. Data were collected through teacher questionnaires, classroom observations, interviews, and focus group discussions. The study involved twenty teachers and five school leaders, and it focused on transforming monitoring from a compliance-based process into a developmental and collaborative one.

The findings revealed that the previous monitoring system was largely summative and inspection-oriented, offering little scope for teacher growth. The introduction of structured observation tools, timely feedback, and peer observation brought about a significant positive shift. Teachers reported greater clarity, motivation, and collaboration, while school leaders became more engaged in instructional support rather than administrative supervision.

Some of the key findings are:

- *Shift in Perception*: Teachers began viewing classroom observation as a supportive and developmental process rather than an evaluative one.
- *Improved Teaching Practices*: Lesson planning, classroom management, student engagement, and use of formative assessment strategies all improved after the intervention.
- *Enhanced Professional Collaboration*: Peer observation and reflective sessions encouraged teamwork, reduced anxiety, and built a culture of shared learning.
- *Stronger Instructional Leadership*: School leaders reported that structured tools and reflective dialogue helped them provide more meaningful feedback aligned with the Bhutan Professional Standards for Teachers (BPST).
- *Better Student Learning Outcomes*: Student performance in both English and Mathematics improved, and learners expressed that lessons became more interactive and engaging.

In conclusion, this study confirms that when monitoring is structured, supportive, and collaborative, it can transform teaching and learning. Teachers at Gesarling Central School became more reflective, confident, and innovative, while school leaders evolved into facilitators of professional growth. Most importantly, students benefited from more engaging and effective classroom experiences. Strengthening school-level monitoring is therefore not merely a management task but a powerful strategy for improving instructional quality and student achievement.

Limitations of the Study

While the findings are encouraging, it is important to acknowledge certain limitations. The study was conducted in a single school with a relatively small sample size, which limits the generalizability of the results. Additionally, the duration of the intervention was six weeks, which, while sufficient to demonstrate short-term gains, may not fully capture the long-term impact on teaching and learning. Finally, although improvements in student performance were noted, other external factors may also have influenced outcomes, and further longitudinal data would be required to confirm sustained effects.

Recommendation

The study recommends that Gesarling Central School continue using a structured monitoring cycle that includes planning, observation, and feedback. Regular implementation of this cycle will help maintain consistency in improving teaching and learning practices. School leaders should strengthen their skills in instructional coaching so that monitoring remains developmental rather than evaluative. Providing constructive feedback and guidance based on the Bhutan Professional Standards for Teachers (BPST) will further enhance teaching quality. Teachers are encouraged to continue peer observation and reflective discussions as part of their professional culture. This collaborative approach promotes shared learning, trust, and continuous improvement. Monitoring should also be integrated into the school's ongoing professional development and linked with improvement plans. Using simple digital tools for recording observations and feedback can make the process more efficient and sustainable. Future research across other schools and over a longer period is recommended to assess the long-term impact and scalability of such supportive monitoring systems.

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