

# **Challenges Experienced by the Student Teachers of Philippine College Foundation During Their Practice Teaching**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Student teaching practice is known to expose student teachers to the actual practice of teaching. The main objective of this study was to determine the challenges experienced by the student teacher of Philippine College Foundation during their practice teaching.

The participants were the five BEED, who graduated on March 2017 at Philippine College Foundation and the selected three cooperating teachers of Philippine College Foundation Elementary Department. A self-made lead Questions were used in the individual and key informant Interview was conducted with their cooperating teacher. The researchers transcribed and interpreted the interview results; themes were extracted to get the information on the challenges they experienced as a student teacher during their practice teaching. Findings revealed that all the participants have multiple challenges that need to be managed before going into student teaching to make student teaching a pleasant experience. It was recommended that there should be a seminar and workshop before sending the student teachers to the field and proper orientation must be done so that they would know what they are doing inside the classroom. Lastly, the student teachers should follow the cooperating teacher's advice as well as the critiques of the modules to have at peace with the teacher and serves as their guide.

### KEYWORDS

Education, Challenges, Student Teachers, Philippine College Foundation, Practice Teaching, Qualitative design, Valencia City, Bukidnon, Philippines

### INTRODUCTION

Student Teaching refers to a college-supervised instructional experienced usually taken up by higher-year students and it is the culminating course in a university or a college undergraduate education or graduate school program leading to teacher education and certification (Al-Awidi & Alghazo, 2012).

Bhattacharyya, Volk, & Lumpe (2009) stated that student teaching practice is known to expose student teachers to the actual practice of teaching. During this period, student teachers are given the opportunity to try teaching before actually getting into the real world of the teaching profession. Student teachers are given a chance to express their personal, educational philosophies, theories, and understandings. They create an opportunity to experiment and test their knowledge and skills in the profession of teaching with an understanding of their ideals. Student teaching is not easy for the student teachers because they experience challenges, which in a way can hinder their ability to derive maximum benefit from the exercise (Loughran, 2013).

The above wraps up the role of student teachers, aside from the duration of the performance evaluation they may undergo at the end of their stay. This allows them to look at what they have thought went well, and what they wished to improve in their practice. It's building up this level of experience that allows substantial progress to be made in the long run, hopefully leading to a role as a part or full time qualified teacher (Cohen, Manion, Morrison, & Wyse, 2010).

Many factors contribute to the overall quality of the student teaching experience.

Thus this study is conceived to determine the challenges experienced by the student teachers of PCF (Philippine College Foundation) during practice teaching in three participating elementary schools at Valencia City Bukidnon.

## FRAMEWORK

Research on teaching practice has focused broadly on the challenges student teachers encountered and how they affect multiple aspects of teacher education. Thomas (2006) emphasized cultural (diversity) and environmental barriers experienced by four American student teachers in Central Asia on how they coped and triumphantly managed in gaining valuable experience throughout their practice teaching

According to Marais & Meier (2004), resources are vital to facilitate effective teaching and learning in schools. In the absence of resources, or lack thereof, students get frustrated, and this makes their teaching practice a difficult task. Some learners still share textbooks in class. This is challenging for student teachers as it draws on issues of classroom management and control as well as learner discipline. Some schools still experience challenges with photocopiers and this poses problems when the student teachers prepare lessons and additional support material for learners for assessments and homework.

Kiggundu & Nayimuli (2009) stated that during practice teaching, a student teacher is given the opportunity to try the art of teaching before actually getting into the real world of the teaching profession. Student teachers also know the value of teaching practice. In view of this, Menter (1989) notes that student teachers feel it as “the crux of their preparation for the teaching profession” since it provides for the “real interface” between their lives as students and as a member of the teaching profession. As an outcome, teaching practice creates a combination of expectation, nervousness, excitement, and apprehension in the student teachers as they commence their teaching practice.

In addition, Chung (2002) examined the challenges of developing effective teaching strategies of student teachers through quality feedback from supervisors. She concluded that the dialogues that they have facilitated knowledge building and encouraged collaborative reflection on individual teaching practice to improve the understanding of teaching. By using such dialogues, Chung (2002) insisted that supervisors are able to assist the newbie teachers in identifying and evaluating “the context of the problem or deficiency and establish developmental goals or standards” and “the personal strengths and resources of the student-teacher may be used to improve plans for teaching.”

Ganal, Andaya, & Guiab (2015) said that teaching is a multi-faceted human activity. It involves a wide range of planning, strategies, interactions, organizational arrangement and material resources that take place in the teaching-learning process. They concluded that student teaching does not impart not only theoretical knowledge but also practical knowledge and skills on pedagogy. At the end of all the sessions on the campus, the

prospective teachers carry out their theoretical understandings and appreciations to the field through practice teaching. Moreover, the practice teaching program is designed to prepare student teachers for the leadership role they are to perform as regular teachers. It enables them to have a genuine task on the nature of teaching experiences. It provides the link between practice teaching on campus and actual work they will do in the future. Practice teaching is intended for student teachers to continue their introduction to the field of teaching with the goal of helping to educate the youth of today. Student teaching leads the future teacher to understand student teaching experiences as well as teaching itself, which involves many challenging tasks and requires hard work. However, such difficult tasks are regarded as having rendered invaluable services in helping young children. As the last field study course, the practice teacher should be given all the opportunities to bring out the best in him/her.

## **OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

This study aims to determine the challenges experienced by the student teacher of Philippine College Foundation during their practice teaching.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research design**

This study used the Qualitative methods of research to determine the challenges faced by the student teacher during their practice teaching.

### **Research Participants**

The participants were the purposively selected five (5) BEED (Bachelor of Elementary Education) students, one (1) men and four (4) women, who graduated on March 2017 at PCF (Philippine College Foundation) P-6 Hagkol Valencia City Bukidnon and the selected three cooperating teachers of Philippine College Foundation Elementary Department.

### **Research Locale**

This study was conducted with the participation of the five (5) student teachers enrolled at PCF (Philippine College Foundation) Located at P-6 Hagkol Valencia City Bukidnon. Motorela is the primary transportation to get there. It is quite far from the commercial establishments that provide a comfortable environment conducive to learning.

### **Research Instruments**

In collecting data, a self- made lead Questions were used in the individual and key \informant Interview.

## Data Gathering Procedure

The individual interview was conducted with the Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEED) participants who have undergone student teaching to gather information on what challenges they experienced during their practice teaching. Key Informant Interview was conducted with their cooperating teacher was done as well.

In gathering the data, the researchers asked permission from the school administrator through a letter of request signed by the thesis adviser. After the approval, the researchers proceeded to the gathering of data through one on one interview with the student teachers. The participants were interviewed through a phone call, recorder, or Facebook call recorder. Until the interview reaches its saturation point. The key informant interview was done with their Cooperating teacher and Student Teaching Adviser personally.

## Data Analysis

The researchers transcribed and interpreted the interview results, themes were extracted to get the information on the challenges they experienced as a student teacher during their practice teaching.

# RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The participants were given an individual interview using self-made lead questions to five BEED newly graduated who have gone under student teaching on how they manage the challenges during their pre-service teaching. The key informant interview with their student teaching adviser and the cooperating teacher was done as well. The themes below were extracted based on the interview.

## Challenges extracted from the Individual Interviews

1. **Time Management.** It is related to class preparation and the lack of time to prepare lesson plans and instructional materials.

- a. **Lesson preparation.** The participants had a hard time in preparing their lesson because they don't know how to manage their time so, they end up going to bed late at night to prepare the lesson plan and instructional materials. One of the participants said that *"I always sleep late at night to make good instructional materials so that my presentation in the class would be smooth, but when I woke up I felt sleepy due to lack of sleep."*
- b. **Classroom time management** refers to the management of time in the classroom during class discussion and to help the teacher to prioritize work. It also establishes routines that eliminate wasted *time*. Classroom time management is a big challenge for student teachers. One participant said that *"Sometimes it's hard for me to adjust, especially if I gave them seatwork. Some of them finish the seatwork too late; as a result, I can't start my next class"*

*on time. I really have to set the alarm clock on my phone so that I won't forget the time of my next subject."*

- c. **Inability to accomplish the lesson objectives.** This refers to the inability to finish the lesson on time due to students' behavior. One participant indicated that she spent time for scolding students, she said that *"I struggled because time was short. I cannot meet the objectives of my lesson plan for I have to reprimand them because of their misbehavior. And so, the time would be divided instead of intending it for class lesson and discussion."*

2. **Classroom management.** It is one of the most significant challenges that the student teacher experienced during their student teaching. It is a challenge inside the classroom during lesson discussion and probably the most crucial part of being a teacher. Students' misbehavior is the major root of this challenge. The participants said that it's really hard for them to manage a large class because they are very noisy and hard to handle.

Moreover, one of the participants said, *"I've got a hard time catching their attention, for their attention span was too short, they are easily distracted. Whenever there's a student who would run, all of their attention was diverted and I can't continue my discussion for I have to reprimand them,"* and in addition, the participant said, *"If only they would listen, I could start and end the discussion on time."*

3. **Lack of instructional materials.** Instructional materials like books help the students learn better in school. It can add more savor to the learning of the students to widen their knowledge and also it is a big help for the teacher to be knowledgeable enough in the subject matter.

The participant said that *"I have to search for the lesson of my topic because they don't give us any books due to the unavailability of the materials."* It is a fact that the school lack of instructional materials like books. Book is the source of information even if without the internet, one can teach your students if there is a book available.

4. **Financial problem.** It is concerned with the planning, procuring, and controlling of the financial resources and the expenses the student teacher use. It is one of the huge problems of student teachers. All the participants have a problem in financial matter, Due to lack of books they had to search the internet causing them huge expenses, for internet time, visual aid printing, and the fare back and forth, and for the food during lunchtime.

In addition, one of the participants said that *"It is a financial problem that really challenged me most. In just one week, I spend one thousand pesos (₱ 1000.00) including my food and fare. Even if my money is already budgeted for my visual aids, but it is not enough."* It is worth mentioning that financial management must be considered in student teaching.

### **Key Informant Interview Responses**

According to the key Informants, the challenges experienced by the student teachers

they supervised are the following:

1. **Classroom management.** It is a term to describe the process of ensuring that classroom lessons run smoothly despite the disruptive behavior by the students.

a. **Inability to manage students' behavior.** The student teachers did not know how to control the behavior of the students and handle them as well.

b. **Unable to finish the lesson due to lack of time.** The student teacher was unable to finish the lesson because they are not particular about time management.

c. **Lack of routine and procedure.** The student teacher lack of routine in the classroom and the procedure of the lesson plan was not being followed.

d. **Lack of knowledge about the use of technology.** The student teacher did not know how to use the technology for the better learning of the student.

e. **Lack of knowledge how on to encourage critical thinking on the students.** The student teacher just copies the lesson, encouraging rote memorization and mostly more on the surface structure.

f. **Lack of knowledge about approaches and strategies.** They also have insufficient knowledge on how to use the approaches and methods in the discussion and they don't know what to do inside the classroom if the expected outcome is not meet.

g. **Lack of extra and intervention activities.** The teacher lacked activities that promote learning that will enhance the skills of the student. Sometimes the teacher only made one activity, but it should have an intervention activity for mastering the subject matter.

h. **Lack of briefing and orientation.** It is the debriefing of the student teacher before the actual teaching and it is important to note that the student teachers know what to do inside the classroom. One of the participants stated that "*Sometimes I don't know how to start the class.*" In this case, the student teacher is not well informed, or in other words, the student teacher did not undergo orientation on classroom management and what to do during the student teaching.

2. **Problem with lesson plan preparation.** A lesson plan is vital to teaching. The student teachers have a problem in this aspect due to the following reasons:

a. **Did not know how to prepare the lesson plan properly.** One thing that the cooperating teacher observed is that they did not know how to prepare their lesson plan well because it was not organized and they did not follow the prescribed procedures.

b. **Unable to form the objectives of the lesson.** They also have a problem formulating objectives. The objective is important to the lesson plan because it can guide the teacher on what to accomplish in the subject matter.

c. **Lack of checklist to monitor their accomplishments for the day.** The

student teacher must have a checklist to ensure if all the task written in the checklist would be accomplished on that day.

3. **Interpersonal relationship.** It is a social association that promotes a good relationship with colleagues, teachers, students and the community

a. **Pressure from comparing with colleagues.** The student teachers felt pressure if they are compared with their selves to others and they felt bad about it when one of them has the ability to do better in the field of teaching.

b. **Conflict between the student and the cooperating teacher.** This is a challenge when there is a conflict between the student and cooperating teachers because of misunderstanding with each other. Sometimes the teacher's critique was too much that can create barriers to the student teacher and it leads to conflict later on in their student teaching.

## CONCLUSIONS

This study showed that as reported by the participants, the student teachers faced multiple challenges related to time management, related to lesson preparation, classroom management, lack of instructional material, financial problem.

From the perspective of the cooperating teacher, student teachers face challenges related to lesson plan preparation, classroom management, and interpersonal relationship with colleagues and cooperating teacher. Entering the classroom unprepared due to lack of orientation before going to student teaching.

Based on the finding of this study, student teachers have multiple challenges that need to be managed before going into student teaching to make student teaching a pleasant experience.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study results, the following recommendations have been formulated:

1) There should be a seminar and workshop before sending the student teachers to the field and proper orientation must be done so that they would know what they are doing inside the classroom.

2) Regular conference for transparency and sharing of experience is needed to remind them of their mistakes and their improvements. The cooperating teachers and the student teachers must have an open forum to discuss things and to be transparent to each other.

3) The student teachers should follow the cooperating teacher's advice as well as the critiques of the modules to have peace with the teacher and serves as their guide.

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