

Pre-Service Teaching Challenges of Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEED) Students: Basis for Pedagogical Competence and Strategic Readiness Enhancement

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Abstract

One of the major educational issues concerns that of the teachers' competence and overall effectiveness vis-à-vis pedagogy. This particular challenge could root from the teachers' encounters during their pre-service teaching experiences and could grow vastly as a huge factor that directly influences the teaching-learning procedure. The study aimed to identify the pre-service teaching challenges faced by the Bachelor in Elementary Education (BEED) students, further aiming to extract the effect of these problems across the teaching procedure. The researchers endeavoured to draw data from the narrative reports and interviews with the students, and used the textual analysis as the data elicitation technique. The result of this study showed a number of pressing issues as stated in the teaching portfolio of students. These problems are categorized as student's misbehavior, classroom management, learning capabilities of students, unavailability of learning resources, classroom size and space, time management, and family factors. Among the challenges, student's misbehavior rose as the major and prominent problem of the pre-service teachers. They considered it the most difficult aspect in the role of a teacher. This was verbally verified even by the seasoned teachers, who agree that some students constantly test their patience. Each of these issues has its prevailing effect that is clearly impactful to the professional development of the student-teachers; thus explaining the observable and obvious need to for a further intervention.

Keywords: Pedagogical competence, Pre-service teacher challenges, Strategic competence

Introduction

According to the Faculty of Education, NKC CTE, Angul, Odisha, India (2016), one of the effective ways to make pre-service teachers acquire skills and competencies to become efficient teacher is through internship program and each teacher education has the implementation of 1 to 2 months of practice teaching sessions in school [1]. However during the internship program, a student teacher faces some challenges in relation to social, psychological, pedagogical and other miscellaneous dimensions can be a barrier to achieve the goal and objectives of teacher education program. Upon the conduct of the practice teaching, it is inevitable that pre-service teachers will be faced to the realities of their chosen career in terms of its demands, excitements, and challenges. This study mainly wants to determine Pre-Service Teaching Challenges of Bachelor of Elementary Education students, find out how these problems affect the pedagogy, and seek intervention that could help in the avoidance of these problems.

Several researches have revealed the problems across the process of pre-teaching. In the research of Ozdemir (2018), the five major problems of pre-service teachers were stated [2]. These are the following: (a) inadequate practicing; (b) conflict between theory and practice; (c) state of being under pressure; (d) being idealistic and (e) anxiety with observation. In an interview conducted by this researcher, there were instances wherein the practice teachers were teaching students without the supervision of the cooperating teacher. It is quite alarming because the cooperating teacher must supervise the pre-service teacher for mentoring. She/he must give strategies to use

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if there are negative feedbacks observed. The practice teacher finds it also hard to adjust from academics to reality. In this case, there will be conflict between theory and practice. The expectations of the pre-service teacher might be different from reality. There are also instances that the lesson plan may not be used exactly as it is because of the diversity of learners. Pressure might also be a problem in the class most especially if the teacher is conscious to commit errors in the class, if the pre-service teacher teaches under pressure the whole lesson may look like scripted. Classroom observation can also give awkwardness to the teacher however, on the other hand, these classroom observations will help the teacher to be used to it because at the end of the day the pre-service teacher must really observe for evaluation.

On the other hand, in the other research, classroom observation is not stated as one of the challenges but one of the solutions in facing the challenges in pre-service teaching. Takaoglu (2017) stated that before the actual pre-service endeavor, the prospective teachers ought to examine other candidates, criticize them and pay attention not to commit the same error [3]. Student teacher must observe other teachers, list down their errors to refrain from doing those and observe effective strategies to apply these in their class. Takaoglu (2017) also stated materials and time pressure as challenges faced in pre-service teaching. Soon-to-be teachers encounter some challenges about time because some of them prefer studying their lessons on the last minute and find it efficient that way, reviewing at the last moment, and swamped with extra work. On the other hand, some of the pre-service teachers said that they have prepared their lessons and instructional materials ahead of time. With regard to materials, this study found out that pre-service teachers expressed difficulties in finding supplementary resources needed in the teaching procedure. They also added that textbooks did not suffice as references.

Challenges are inevitable along the path of a pre-service teacher. However, the pre-service teacher must not focus on the problems but to the solutions to these problems. In order to be equipped to these problems, the pre-service teacher must be pedagogically and strategically competent enough to face difficulties in pre-service teaching. According to Ryegard (2010), “pedagogical competence refers to the educational and teaching qualifications” [4]. The quality of teaching should be the cynosure when assessing the pedagogical competence. He also added that “scope, breadth and depth are also important, as should the ability to plan, initiate, lead and develop education and teaching as well as the ability to provide research based teaching on the basis research in the relevant subject, subject didactics and teaching, and learning in higher education”. Another inclusion in the concept of pedagogical competence is the teachers’ skill in interacting and dealing with issues related to teaching and learning in higher education with them being active both within and outside the university. Moreover, pedagogical competence is grounded on “sound, broad and current knowledge within the subject area, as well as knowledge of student learning and subject-based teaching and learning issues”. Lastly, it is tied to one’s professionalism as it assumes a reflective and critical approach to teaching, learning and pedagogical development over time.

On the other hand, Koay (2017) postulated that strategic competence is an aspect of communicative competence, which pertains to the capacity to surpass difficulties in times of communication breakdown [5]. This entails that instead of viewing communication breakdowns as a discrepancy, it could be used as an advantage and an opportunity for learners to improve the strategic competence. Therefore, “strategic competence refers to the ability to get one’s meaning across successfully to communicative partners, especially when problems arise in the communication process”. As it was cited by Selin (2014), strategic competence is separated from language competence for the reason that it also includes the ability to relate language competence that the language is used in [6]. It includes language competence and it adds something more.

Teachers-to-be must enhance their pedagogical and strategic competence to teach effectively. They can also use this as a weapon in solving the problems encountered inside the classroom. It is stated by Martinjak (2017) to his research that students learned a lot through experiential method [7]. It is important to choose those methods of teaching and learning, which largely enabled the achievement of learning outcomes. In addition to, Torres (2015) conducted a research about developing the pedagogical skills of future English teachers [8]. She looked for the possible problems first before she came up with several recommendations as follow: “(1) Change in curricula programs at higher education institutions; (2) amendments and changes of educational practice and evaluation of a teacher; (3) specifying the criteria and standards for professional teachers status and quality

teaching and (4) additional forms of training the teachers as a result of insufficient pedagogical competencies acquired in initial education and teaching practice.”

Andreia (2015) emphasized that there should be increase in the number of pedagogical subjects that will strengthen the pedagogical skills of teachers by adding special subjects that will supply knowledge and skills in handling and managing students with special needs and complications in learning [9]. She also recommended increasing the time frame of the actual training or the practice teaching itself.

Teachers must also improve their strategic competence most especially the lessons that they will teach comprises communication as well. In a research entitled “Communication in the Real World: An Introduction to Communication Studies, suggestion are given to develop strategic competencies stated as follow (a) State ideas clearly; (b) communicate ethically; (c) Recognize when it is appropriate to communicate; (d) Identify their communication goals (e) demonstrate credibility (f) identify and manage misunderstandings, (g) manage conflicts; (h) Be open minded about another’s point of view and (10) Listen attentively. In dealing with such things according to CelceMuria, Dorynei and Thureell (1995) as cited in Koay (2015), teacher should have various of strategies to respond to communication breakdowns, specifically strategies that will draw students to learning. However it was contradicting to the work of Mariani (1994) wherein she explained that there should be reduction and achievement strategies concentrating particularly on the use of achievement strategies and discourse level [10]. Khalid (2017) postulated that as a pre-service teacher, one way to develop the strategic competence is through task- based language teaching [11]. He also exclaimed the same thing that CelceMuria, Dorynei and Thureell (1995) explained on the work of Koay (2015). To overcome communication breakdown a teacher should have variety of communication strategies to achieve his or her goals.

This study can be benefitted directly by the students in the specific program involved as they will undergo a practical training off campus. This may help them to have an idea and intellectual thinking to the things that they might face and how these will affect their teaching procedure. It will also help them to be prepared and to have the readiness before having their practice teaching. It will be a great help for the Education students to become quality equipped teachers with pedagogical practices that will them meet the demands associated with the teaching profession.

Finally, this research can be of a great help to the professors as it will enable them to make positive changes in their professional practice, particularly when it comes to the pedagogical competence and strategic readiness of the Education students, hence resulting in increased confidence and sense of fulfilment in teaching.

Objectives of the Study

This research primarily aims to identify the Pre-Service Teaching Challenges of BEED Students of Cavite State University- Silang Campus. Specifically, it aspires to find out how each of the problems that emerged could affect the teaching procedure; and seeks to derive to possible interventions that could be useful to students in terms of enhancing and honing their pedagogical and strategic competence.

Materials and Methods

In order to meet and come up with the desired output of the study and seek to establish samples that will give information at various levels of meaning, the research proponent believes that this a qualitative design will be applicable in arriving to such result. A qualitative content analysis method was utilized to come up with a subjective interpretation using textual analysis technique. Additionally, descriptive statistics was used to interpret the data gathered from the narrative of the former pre-service teachers and interviews from selected cooperating teachers, head teachers, and principal in the cooperating school. The students are graduates of Bachelor in Elementary Education and the researcher believes that this would be the best source for the data as these are the most valid and reliable bases in determining the challenges that pre-service teachers are facing.

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Sampling Technique and Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher used purposive sampling technique that is also known as judgment, selective or subjective sampling. Black (2010) postulated that purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling method which relies on the judgment of the researchers when choosing credible population to participate in the study. This sampling also includes selection of participants that will address the research problem. The sample included the narrative reports of former pre-service for they will be the reliable source that will address the research problem.

The proponent gathered data using the data gathering technique called textual analysis. She came up with a tally of the challenges based off of the narrative reports.

Statistical Treatment of Data

The *Descriptive statistics* was used by which the *statistics mode* was determined. The mode is the value that appears most often and frequent in a set of data. According to Trochim (2006), “descriptive statistics as used to describe the basic features of the data in a study. They provide simple summaries about the sample and the measure. Together with a simple graphic analysis, they form the basis of virtually every quantitative analysis of data”. To best identify the ranking of each category, the percentage of each was determined.

Results and Discussion

The researcher attempted to identify the pre-service challenges of the BEED students that will be a basis for seminar workshop on pedagogical competence and strategic readiness of the education students through analyzing and scrutinizing the data gathered from the narratives of the former pre-service teachers. The researchers ought to determine the most frequent and the most significant challenges that the former pre-service teachers faced.

Each category was determined using textual analysis technique which results to the eight main category namely: student’s misbehavior, student’s lack of attention and interest, poor classroom management, unavailability of resources or equipment, classroom size, time in teaching science and difficulty of the subject, dependency on the teacher, family factor.

Table 1. Tally of Pre-service teaching challenges of BEED students

PRE-SERVICE TEACHING CHALLENGES CATEGORY	TALLY NUMBER
Student’s misbehavior	9
Student’s Lack of Attention and Interest	8
Poor Classroom Management	6
Unavailability of Resources or Equipment	4
Classroom Size	4
Lack of Time in Teaching Science and Difficulty of the Subject	2
Dependency on the Teacher	2
Family Factor	2

Table 1 shows the eight categories of the Pre-service teaching challenges of BEED students which are stated specifically from the 11 narratives of BEED students. These are student’s misbehavior, student’s lack of attention and interest, poor classroom management, unavailability of resources or equipment, classroom size, time in teaching science and difficulty of the subject, dependency on the teacher, family factor. Student’s misbehavior occurred nine times, student’s attention and interest occurred eight times, classroom management occurred six times, unavailability of resources or equipment occurred four times, classroom size occurred four times, lack of time in teaching science and difficulty of the subject occurred two times, dependency on the teacher occurred two times, family factor occurred two times.

To come up with a concrete percentage of the most significant challenges that the former BEED students faced and to identify their ranking, the percentage of each category was used as the basis. This formula is being used to find the percentage of each category:

$$X = \frac{\text{tally number of the category}}{\text{Total tally number}} \times 100$$

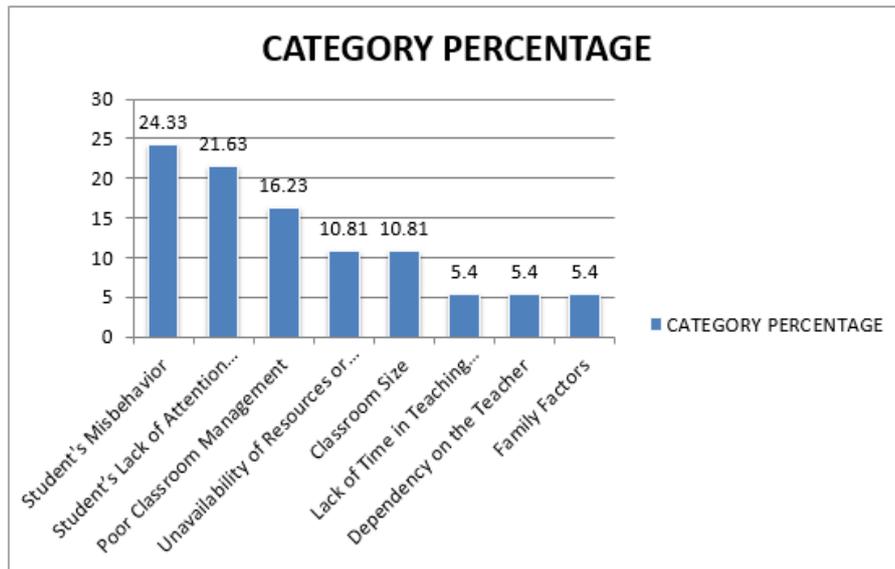


Figure 2. Category percentage

Figure 2 presents the percentage of each category of the Pre-service teaching challenges of BEED students. It presents the percentage allotted aligned with the total number of the tally which is 37. The highest percentage is 24.33% which is category 1 followed by 21.63% which is category 2; 16.23% which is category 3; 10.81% which is category 4 and 5; and 5.4% for category 6, 7 and 8.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics Graph

CATEGORY	TALLY	RANK
Student's Misbehavior	9	1 st
Student's Lack of Attention and Interest	8	2 nd
Poor Classroom Management	6	3 rd
Unavailability of Resources or Equipment	4	4 th
Classroom Size	4	5 th
Lack of Time in Teaching Science and Difficulty of the Subject	2	6 th
Dependency on the Teacher	2	7 th
Family Factors	2	8 th
Sum	37	

Table 2 presents the tally number and the rank of each pre-service challenge that BEED students faced. With the result presented the statistic mode of the data is Category 1 which occurs nine times. Based on the data gathered, Category 1 rank first followed by Category 2, Category 3, Category 4, Category 5, Category 6, Category 7 and the last which is Category 8.

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Conclusion and Recommendation

Majority of the former pre-service teachers who took up Bachelor of Elementary Education experienced and was challenged by the misbehavior of the students in their classroom during their off campus. On the descriptive statistics it resulted as the mode which appears most often and frequent in a set of data.

Being the rank 1 on the list of the category of the challenges that was faced by the pre-service teachers, this implies that most of the former pre-service teachers were struggling on dealing to the rudeness, noisiness of the students, disobedience and their disrespectful attitude toward them. This factor affected the teaching process of the pre-service teachers inside the classroom as it was stated in their narrative reports.

Indeed, challenges are inevitable along the path of a pre-service teacher. It is determined that most of the former pre-service teachers had a difficulty in handling their student's misbehavior during their practice teaching. They, themselves noticed their own deficiencies inside the class as they reflected on their narrative reports.

Therefore in order to overcome these problems that were faced by the former pre-service teachers, it could be wise to use a possible intervention that could help to develop the pedagogical readiness and strategic competence of the pre-service teachers.

The proponent recommends that a seminar should be conducted for the pre-service teachers as it will be the best solution for them to pedagogically ready and strategically competent. This seminar revolves with building a good classroom management in order to deal with the misbehavior of the students. Regarding the seminar that will be conducted, the following topics must be talked about: (a) the challenges that was faced by the pre-service teachers; (b) how does it affect the teaching procedure of the pre-service teachers; and (c) ways to solve these problems.

Therefore in order to be equipped to these problems, the pre-service teacher must be pedagogically and strategically competent enough to face difficulties in pre-service teaching and the intervention or the solution that can be use must be in accordance.

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