

MICROTEACHING EXPERIENCE OF PRESERVICE ENGLISH TEACHERS: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Teaching is regarded as being the most fundamental of all professions because of how heavily the other professions rely on them. To prepare teacher educators for the realities of the classroom workplace, it is essential that prospective teachers receive adequate training. The microteaching experiences of the preservice English teachers are the best way in knowing the challenges of the teaching profession. A phenomenological qualitative research design was used in the study. An in-depth interview and focus group discussion was used to gather data and pieces of information from the 10 preservice English teachers who were randomly selected from Monkayo College of Arts, Sciences, and Technology (MONCAST). Findings suggested that the challenges encountered by the preservice English teachers are diverse learners, fluency in oral communication, lack of self-confidence, and financial problem. Furthermore, they overcome these struggles through optimism and resourcefulness. Hence, the author suggested that the institution will conduct training and orientation for preservice teachers before conducting the practice teaching, assessment of the preservice English teachers about their capability and readiness for the service and monitor the students' basic skills and knowledge needed for the preservice teachers.

Keywords: - *microteaching experience, preservice English teachers, challenges, phenomenological study*

1. INTRODUCTION

In an in-depth analysis made by Mangila (2018) in Zamboanga del Sur, Philippines, preservice teachers considered establishing rapport with school community members as an important way of making themselves more aware and better prepared for teaching. As a researcher, I have encountered a lot of challenges during my practicum days. Though many of the fundamental skills were taught in the class there are unprecedented problems that occurred. These challenges must be known to all the educational students, especially the graduating students who will be having their preservice teaching.

Everyone in the Philippines is now aware of the chores that must be completed before graduating from college thanks to practical teaching. In his research on English student-teachers from a private institution in Mindanao, the Philippines, Ulla (2016) discovered that these pre-service teachers are trained to become knowledgeable educators who can pass on their expertise to the following generation of students.

The unprecedented coming of the pandemic hit everyone's life including the field of education. In March 2020, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic dramatically changed educational practices. Blended learning is adopted by all of the students, and this has significant effects on the performance of the PSTs. Fortunately, after a couple of years, Face-to-Face Class is back and the conduct of practicum will never be at stake and will be done accordingly. Reportedly, there are gaps in learning due to the pandemic and many also have reported that they felt unprepared and unready to teach for their future career (Ersin, 2020). This is just one of the challenges that PSTs will be facing.

Other than that, Starkey and Rawlins (2012) stressed in their study that an important aspect of learning during

practice teaching is knowing the teaching environment to which the student-teachers will be exposed. Teaching is regarded as being the most fundamental of all professions because of how heavily the other professions. To prepare teacher educators for the realities of the classroom workplace, it is essential that prospective teachers receive adequate training. The conduct of OJT or On-the-Job-Training is an integral part of the tertiary education curriculum. Through teaching practicum, PSTs can be equipped in the teaching-learning process. (Murray-Harvey et al., 2000).

Since the teaching practicum is a crucial component of every PST's course curriculum, it is important to understand their experiences with and challenges from the new teaching practicum method. As a researcher, I think it is critical to concentrate on how these pre-service teachers overcome the challenges that result from their actual experiences in classrooms of various sizes that are conceptualized differently from those of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to that of the Department of Education (DepEd). This is especially important considering the literature discussed above on the value and benefits of conducting pre-service teaching in schools and communities.

1.1 Research Questions

1. What are the experiences of the participants in their preservice English teaching?
2. What are the challenges encountered by the participants in their preservice English teaching?
3. How do the participants cope with the challenges in their preservice English teaching?
4. What are the insights gained by the participants in the preservice English teaching journey?

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design

A Qualitative phenomenological research design was utilized. The ability to obtain rich information is made possible by this research design. Bhandari (2020) claims that qualitative research entails gathering and studying non-numerical data (such as text, video, or audio) in order to comprehend thoughts, beliefs, or experiences. It can be applied to get comprehensive understanding of a situation or to come up with new research concepts. Thus, choosing this design aided me in directly gathering accurate information from the experiences of my participants.

2.2 Research Participants

To identify the participants of the study for the in-depth interview, I utilized the purposive sampling technique. According to Saunders et al. (2012), purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique in which the researcher uses his or her own judgment to select members of the population to take part in the study. It is also referred to as judgment, selective, or subjective sampling. This may be the only appropriate method available if there are only a limited number of primary data sources who can contribute to the study. The research participants were the college students in the Municipality of Monkayo who took Bachelor of Secondary Education major in English, are currently in their fourth year, and are about to undergo preservice teaching.

2.3 Data Collection Procedure

Since individual face-to-face interviews are the most suitable method of data collecting while performing in-depth research, I employed them. The interview comprises leading questions that reveal the participants' experiences. There are supplementary questions to help participants answer the main question, and they are free to respond in any language they feel most comfortable with, including English, Bisayan, or Tagalog. I will also provide them with the interview authorization from the school administrator, which gave me permission to carry out the study. Throughout the interview, I jotted down notes. To record the relevant information in detail, recording equipment was used. In order to preserve participant responses, prevent ambiguity and repetition when I begin our talk, and avoid repeat, recording devices are required.

The identities of the participants were concealed using pseudonyms. Each participant's response is literally translated by me. Following the interpretation, the results were sent back to participants so they can clarify their responses and indicate whether they agree with it being utilized as the focus of our study.

2.4 Data Analysis

The researcher used content or thematic analysis to manually delve into the experiences, struggles, and insights about the microteaching experience of the preservice teachers. The information gathered during interviews was

verbatim transcribed, and the content of the informants' comments was classified using coding. After transcription and coding, the researcher extracted common themes from the informants' responses. In relation to my study, I transcribed the information in light of the participants' statements about their themes.

3. RESULT, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 On the Experiences of the Participants in their Preservice English Teaching.

As the responses would have it, the participants have different descriptions regarding their experiences in their preservice teaching which were categorized into the following themes: strategies of teaching, code-switching during the discussion, and flexibility of being a teacher. One theme only on the significant experiences of the preservice teachers which is teaching is an eye-opener.

Strategies of Teaching. Most of the respondents learned in their preservice teaching that they are going to employ a lot of strategies in teaching. These strategies are important since they will serve as their way of delivering the lessons to the entire class. Students are diverse thus there are variations of strategies to be used. According to the European Journal of Science and Mathematics Education, 2013, effective learning needs strategies for controlling one's own learning and thinking. This proves that in order to learn is accompanied by strategies.

According to Orlich et al. (2012), it is through experiences that we can gain sort out strategies. Strategies of teaching are needed to have meaningful learning. It is through experience also that we can prove if a certain strategy is good or not. Preservice teachers learned that through having teaching strategies, meaningful learning is achieved. Nothing is more satisfying to a teacher who is very rich in the strategies of teaching because he or she will have many ways in delivering his or her lessons.

Code-Switching. Moreover, pre-service teachers experienced the importance of code-switching. Another method used in the classroom to show the teacher's preference for one language over another is code-switching, which minimizes the significance of the target language. In order to aid students in learning difficult, the teacher also employs code-switching techniques (Ambarini and Parabowo, 2022). It is all about translating the language into vernacular as this will really help the learners to understand clearly what the story or text is all about. Translating takes time but it makes the learning more meaningful as the words will be contextualized depending upon the explanation of the preservice teacher. English is not that hard to understand but code-switching made it easier to comprehend.

Flexibility of Teachers. Furthermore, preservice teachers experienced that the teacher must be flexible in all aspects of life especially if they are in school. According to Dennis et al. (2020), a teacher's flexibility is a broad idea. Being a teacher requires more than simply being an expert in one field; one must also have a broad understanding of all subjects. Even though teachers aren't always the best at everything, a student still needs to be able to understand things correctly. As the preservice teachers rendered their service, they come to realize the importance of being flexible as a teacher. This is a good experience because this will be the stepping-stone in their future career.

Preservice teaching is not an easy task as this is the first exposure to becoming a teacher. There are so many experiences learned by the preservice teachers that enabled them to learn of what are the roles of teaching. These experiences are very important since they will be their guides in their future career. These lessons they have obtained from their practice teaching is very essential that a teacher must have a lot of teaching strategies, code-switching is one of the best techniques in making the lesson easy to understand, and flexibility is also the best characteristic to be an effective educator.

Eye-Opener. Teachers currently operate in a rapidly evolving environment. Over the past few decades, there have been significant changes in many facets of education, including the role of the teacher and the adoption of fresh approaches to curriculum and evaluation (Rouse, 2008). The instructor offers suggestions and direction, aids in the students' idea clarification, and establishes assignment parameters. This position may be a fantastic method to give each student personalized attention. It may also enable a teacher to modify a course to meet the needs of students. Teaching is not an easy task because there are a lot of things to consider.

Preservice teachers may come to realize the roles of teaching. There are a lot of responsibilities to bear and to

get to. A teacher oversees creating lesson plans and instructing learners of all ages. They are responsible for distributing homework, marking exams, and keeping track of student progress. The ability to teach a variety of subjects and engage pupils who are very diverse. These are just some of the roles of a teacher that opened the eyes of the preservice English teachers.

3.2 On the Challenges Encountered by the Preservice Teachers.

As the preservice teachers responded to the questions, the responses resulted in the following themes: diverse learners, fluency in Oral Communication, lack of Confidence, and Financial Problems.

Diverse Learners. Teachers must be conscious of their student's needs in a classroom and always have been, in a number of respects. The demands on teachers mean that not only do they need to be able to keep order and provide useful information to students, but also to be increasingly effective allowing a variety of pupils to master increasingly complex content and acquire a larger range of capabilities (Arends, 2004; Rivkin et al., 2000). Obviously, teachers in today's schools must be prepared to instruct a diverse student body. How a teacher will deal with these challenges in daily life depends on the teacher. This problem in the classroom can be resolved with the appropriate approach.

Fluency in Oral Communication. Another common problem that the preservice english teachers that they encountered is Fluency in Oral Communication. As the product of pandemic classes or Online Classes, they were not able to develop their communication skills fluently. With this modality of learning, it became their struggle in rendering their practice teaching. The ability to communicate with speakers of that language is the main reason to study a second language, whether for business or pleasure. Speaking seems intuitive to be the most significant (Zhang, 2009). For the development of literacy as well as for thinking and learning, oral communication skills are crucial. It serves as the binding agent for all the elements of a language.

Lack of Confidence. Not all teachers are confident in their subject matter knowledge; those who lack confidence use a variety of coping mechanisms, some of which, when used frequently, substantially restrict children's learning. Confidence gives somewhat a better output in the teaching-learning process. Such dispositions must take into account the learner's confidence and how it affects whether learning is facilitated or inhibited. (Norman, 2003) Confidence is one factor of a certain individual in any field. Without it, learning is at stake.

Financial Problems. You are spending more than you make is one of the most obvious signs that you have a money problem. The cost of living is high for college students, and they frequently spend more money than they make. This is especially true for those who are living away from home and experiencing independence for the first time. In conducting preservice teaching, the financial matter is one of the struggles to conquer. According to (Daud, Norwani, & Yusof, 2018), Some students may have everyday financial difficulties as a result of their limited financial resources and the escalating expense of school.

Being a preservice teacher is not an easy endeavor, as evidenced by the hardships of the English teachers. Due to the demands of your career, you must be fully prepared. Despite these issues, they were able to discover solutions that allowed them to complete the required minimum time of practice teaching. Thus, the struggles and problems are just normal that the preservice will face, and these will serve as challenges to conquer.

3.3 On Coping Mechanisms of Participants of the Challenges Encountered by the Preservice Teachers.

As the responses would have it, the participants have different descriptions regarding their experiences in their preservice teaching which were categorized into the following themes: Optimism and Finding Strategies. One theme for the techniques and methodologies used while having the preservice teaching which is imposing differentiated activities in the lesson plan.

Optimism. Stress and setbacks are commonplace in life. The processes involved in carrying out preservice teaching are difficult. With all the requirements to be a teacher in this very demanding 21st-century environment, there are many obstacles to overcome along the road. The preservice teachers are able to see the bright side despite all of these difficulties. Results indicated a strong correlation between optimism and employee performance and job satisfaction (Mishra, 2016).

Finding Strategies. Finding a solution to a certain problem is a must for any problems that may arise. Despite the hardships encountered by the preservice teachers, they manage to find solutions to the problems they have encountered. Finding a solution to a problem should improve one's understanding of oneself and strengthen one's capacity to solve other difficulties in the future (Manthei, 2005). These solutions are their strategies for coping with the problems encountered, especially in classroom management and lesson planning.

Therefore, the preservice teachers were able to acquire these teaching skills thanks to these coping methods. Mindfulness, meditation, and deep breathing are all methods for reducing stress. When you are mindful, you carefully evaluate your current thoughts and feelings without placing judgment on them. Through self-discovery, peer evaluation, mentoring, and other methods, preservice English teachers navigate their careers. Optimism and resourcefulness are the coping mechanisms of these preservice teachers who managed to finish their hours of service.

Differentiated Activities in Lesson Planning. A lesson plan is the teacher's roadmap for what the class will cover during the period of instruction and how it will be accomplished. You may then create the right learning activities and come up with methods for getting information about the progress of your students. In conducting the procedure, there are activities that you are going to include. These instructions must fit with the learners' needs to be assessed accordingly.

Differentiated instruction is a pedagogical-didactical method that provides teachers with a place to start when it comes to addressing the unique learning requirements of their students. Although research and practice have given differentiated instruction a lot of attention, little is known about the state of the empirical evidence or its benefits for improving student achievement in secondary school (Altintas & Ozdemir, 2015). The implementation of differentiated instructions will boost student achievement. It largely depends on the teacher whether a specific teacher would include it in his or her class.

In the end, the decision to include differentiated instructions in their lessons rests with the teachers. Given the wide range of interests among students, activities should be chosen to meet their needs. For presenting their material to the class, preservice English teachers believe this is the ideal technique. It's important to have fun when learning English, which is a lovely topic.

3.4 On the Insights Gained by the Participants in the Preservice English Teaching Journey.

Lessons learned After the Preservice Teaching Journey. Five themes were generated from the responses of the participants, there are a variety of descriptions of their preservice teaching experiences that were grouped into the following themes: instructional tactics, code-switching during discussions, flexibility of the teacher, take the board examination, and learning experiences.

Instructional Tactics. According to the European Journal of Science and Mathematics Education, 2013, effective learning requires strategies for controlling one's own learning and thinking critically about what one is learning. The majority of respondents discovered during their preservice teaching that they will use a lot of strategies in teaching. These strategies are important because they will serve as their way of delivering the lessons to the entire class.

Orlich et al. (2012), assert that we may determine our methods only via experience. To have meaningful learning, instructional strategies are required. We can also determine whether a particular method is effective or not through experience. Preservice instructors discovered that effective learning is accomplished using instructional strategies. Nothing is more fulfilling for a teacher who has a wide variety of teaching techniques because this allows them to present their lessons in a variety of ways.

Code-Switching. Future teachers learned the value of code-switching. Code-switching, which downplays the importance of the target language, is another technique used in the classroom to demonstrate the teacher's preference for one language over another. The teacher also uses code-switching approaches to assist students in learning challenging material (Ambarini and Parabowo, 2022). It is crucial to translate the language into everyday speech because this will allow the learners to comprehend the tale or material much more clearly. Although translating takes time, the learning is more meaningful because the preservice teacher's explanation will contextualize the words. Although English is not very difficult to understand, code-switching will make it simpler to grasp.

Flexibility of Teachers. Preservice teachers experienced that the teacher must be flexible in all aspects of life especially if they are in school. According to Dennis et al. (2020), a teacher's flexibility is a broad idea. Being a teacher requires more than simply being an expert in one field; one must also have a broad understanding of all subjects. Even though teachers aren't always the best at everything, a student still needs to be able to understand things correctly. As the preservice teachers rendered their service, they came to realize the importance of being flexible as a teacher. This is a good experience for this will be the stepping stone in their future career.

Since this is the student's first exposure to becoming a teacher, preservice teaching is not a simple undertaking. The preservice teachers gained so much knowledge from their experiences that they were able to understand the functions of teaching. Since they will serve as their mentors for their future careers, these encounters are crucial. These insights they have gained from their practice teaching show how important it is for teachers to have a variety of instructional strategies. Code-switching is one of the finest methods for making lessons simple to comprehend, and flexibility is another key quality of a successful teacher.

Taking the Licensure Examination for Teachers. Almost all the responses are going to take the Licensure Examination for Teachers. They will be reviewing for the board examination since taking the LET is not that easy to pass. To pass it requires a lot of effort. The informants have seen the wide process in this examination since this will determine their career in teaching. Though English major is not their first choice they are able to embrace it and continue what they have started.

On how to pass and succeed on the LET, five key factors were determined, including having metacognitive test-taking skills; having a strong faith in God; having a strong support system; having a strong foundation in college; and actively participating in a study group (Albite, 2019). The preservice English teachers must remember these skills for them to pass on the first take of board examination. The exam will present a quality measure to determine the graduates who have the required minimum degree of competence to practice the teaching profession in the field.

Learning Experiences. Teaching takes a lot of effort. With the demands of the world today in teaching, educators must be more steps forward than normal. Beyond what individuals find intrinsically engaging in the subject, learning can only be stimulated to a limited extent. Possibility of increasing students' interest in the subject while teaching with enthusiasm. Preservice English teachers have come to realize the role of being a teacher. Their journey during practicum made them feel that teaching is not an easy task to handle. They have grasped the significant roles of a teacher as they have experiences inside the classroom.

Due to the practically limitless availability of knowledge in the twenty-first century, the function of the teacher has grown increasingly complex. Teachers must have a strong focus on technology and be accountable for both the learning of their students as well as their own teaching. He or she has to learn time management, address emotional and social issues that affect learners, be flexible in any type of work in the institution, and be open-minded for whatever changes (Amin, 2016).

Preservice English teachers have met these standards and qualifications in the field of education. These learning experiences like the skills in making a lesson plan, integrating differentiated instructions, classroom management, etc. are all part of the everyday life of being a teacher. Others may see it as simple but the most complex of all. In their preservice journey, they have tasted the flavor of teaching. These experiences will determine their own perspectives on how they view teaching their own lives.

3.5 Implications for Practice.

On the Experiences of the Participants in their Preservice English Teaching. It can be reckoned that the preservice English teachers learned a lot about the importance of the different strategies of teaching in the class. Code-switching became one of the best ways in making the learners understand the lesson well and teachers must be flexible enough in the field. These lessons made the English preservice teachers acquire such skills as lesson planning, utilization of macro skills, and classroom management. Thus, it served as an eye-opener for the preservice teachers that teaching is not an easy job to handle and that will really need everything to fulfill their duties.

Therefore, the need to acknowledge these preservice English teachers by the institution must be done because what they have experienced is totally a learning experience for everyone who is taking the same or related courses. They have realized that before going to the field, they must be fully equipped with the knowledge and skills needed for

preservice teachers.

On the Challenges Encountered by the Preservice English Teachers. As mentioned by the participants, most of them have been challenged by the fact that learners are diverse, and they have to adjust to dealing with it. Fluency in oral communication is one of the challenges they faced. Maybe it resulted from online classes due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. They were not able to develop these skills inside the class while taking the subjects. Also, their confidence in front of the class was really challenged for they lacked exposure. The financial matter is the greatest struggle of the preservice teachers as they spent a lot during their service.

All those challenges encountered by the preservice teachers must be addressed by the institution where they are enrolled. These struggles may affect their performance as English teachers in which the learners will also be affected creating a ripple effect. All these challenges can be prevented if there are training and orientations before deploying them to the field together with the support of the parents and stakeholders.

On Coping the Coping Mechanisms of Participants of the Challenges Encountered by the Preservice English Teaching. The participants find ways to cope with the different challenges they have encountered. Being optimistic and finding strategies in the field of teaching are good characteristics. They were able to integrate differentiated instructions in lesson planning which is very important in crafting the topic. These good behaviors of the preservice English teachers must be recognized because this will serve as an inspiration to the next batch of preservice teachers to be deployed. Their resiliency towards challenges in the field is recommendable.

On the Insights Gained by the Participants in the Preservice English Teaching Journey. The different lessons learned by the preservice teachers are implications that preservice English teachers are rich in learning. The plans of the English teachers that is to take the board examination must be supported by the institution and the parents. In this step, they will be able to have a bigger future in the field of teaching.

3.6 Implications of Future Research.

This study is conducted among the preservice English teachers of Monkayo College of Arts, Sciences, and Technology (MONCAST). The following implications for future research are considered.

First, future research of the same focus may be conducted in another college institution to investigate the same phenomenon in understanding the journey of the preservice English teachers.

Second, a re-interview of the same research informants may be conducted to see whether their experiences, challenges, and actions they have taken during their preservice teaching have changed their lives over a period.

Third, the side of the academic institutions where they are enrolled can be probed. Their ways of handling the learners will be heard of the preparations they have made before sending them to the field.

Finally, it is a great idea that this research will be heard by the school since this will give them an idea on what are the teaching experiences of the preservice English teachers.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that the experiences of the preservice English teachers are good. It implies that the preservice teachers are learning during their time of practice teaching. Additionally, they have acquired a lot of skills that are essential in their future career as a teacher in the Department of Education. These serve as an eye-opener for them to practice teachers on how to be professional educators. On the other hand, referring to the findings on the challenges they encountered, it proved that the diversity of learners is still the main issue in teaching the students.

Furthermore, the preservice English teachers were able to overcome all the struggles and opted for different ways how to solve manifold problems in the field of teaching. Their consistency of goals and resiliency to any hardships have pushed them to finish the race. The microteaching experiences of the preservice English teachers will serve as an avenue for the next batch of practice teachers in English. It is not just limited to one major but to all majors in secondary who are taking education courses.

Moreover, this study encourages higher institutions to highlight the variety of opportunities for practice teachers in English. This may result in enhancing the academic instructions which will focus on the problems encountered by the preservice teachers. The performance of the practice teachers may rise and will gain quality graduates and excel someday in the field. With the constant monitoring and evaluation of the program heads, deans, and other concerned individuals regarding the performance of the preservice teachers, quality education will be achieved which will bounce back to the institution's performance also.

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