TRAINING OF PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS ON THE PEDAGOGIES THROUGH EXPERIENCES IN THE PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION COURSES

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ABSTRACT: *This study determined if the pedagogical approaches prescribed in the Philippine K to 12 Enhanced Basic Education Program were taught to pre-service teachers in the Bachelor of Secondary Education program of the University of Science and Technology of Southern Philippines. Through the lens of Bandura's social learning theory and Kolb's experiential learning theory, it attempted to see if students experienced the pedagogies in the foundational courses of the teacher education program, closing the theory-practice gap that experts constantly point out. The pedagogical approaches studied were the following: collaborative learning, technology integration, multimedia presentation, reading and writing, library work, lecture, discussion, exercises and demonstration, interactive learning, oral reporting, interviewing, and fieldwork. Through curriculum content analysis, it was determined that the pre-service teachers of the university were adequately prepared with the majority of the pedagogical or teaching-learning approaches. However, a gap was noted in interviewing, which prompted recommendations on how this can be addressed.*
Keywords: pre-service teacher education, pedagogical approaches, theory-practice gap, teacher experiential learning

INTRODUCTION

Teaching practice, as a contributing factor to student academic performance, has been the subject of many studies in the field [1, 2, 3, 4, 5]. As such, pre-service or initial teacher education in preparing high-quality teachers has been continuously assessed. This is what initially propelled the conduct of this study. It attempted to determine how the Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSED) program of the University of Science and Technology of Southern Philippines was training pre-service teachers with the pedagogical or teaching-learning approaches qualifying them to teach secondary-level subjects.

Functioning on the supply side of teacher training, the Philippine Commission on Higher Education (CHED) issues the policies, standards, and guidelines for all higher education programs in the country. Its issuance of the CHED Memorandum Order No. 75 Series of [6], prescribes a set of guidelines for the BSED program that is anchored on competency-based standards and outcomes-based education. This interprets the key features of the 21st-century Philippine Teacher Education Framework and the K-to-12 Enhanced Basic Education Program of the country.

On the other hand, a factor exerting influence on the demand side of teaching training is the K-to-12 Enhanced Basic Education Program [7]. Its curriculum framework stresses that the content and performance standards of the curriculum must be achieved through the utilization of a set of constructivist, inquiry-based, reflective, collaborative, differentiated, and integrative teaching-learning approaches [deped.gov.ph]. Thus, the prescribed pedagogical approaches include the following: collaborative learning, technology integration, multimedia presentation, reading and writing, library work, lecture, discussion, exercises and demonstration, interactive learning, oral reporting, interviewing, and fieldwork [7].

The inclusion of these approaches as topics in the professional education courses in the BSED program can be inferred as training for pre-service teachers on the pedagogies. With the exclusion of internship and field study, these courses compose 36 credit units of foundational study under the program. However, it was deemed that theoretical concepts alone may not be enough. For instance, McGarr et al. (2017) [8] revealed that while theories come from experts in the field, they are perceived as external or distant from real practice – i.e., a theory-practice gap scenario. Phillips and

Condy [9] likewise said that there is a gap between university training and the real world of teaching.

Hence, there was a need to further look if the teaching pedagogies were taught with practice, not merely delivered as plain theoretical concepts in the foundational courses. As Bandura's social learning theory tells us, new patterns of behavior can be acquired through direct experience [10]. Students learn by observing and imitating the behaviors and attitudes of teachers and others in the teaching-learning environment. In addition, the pre-service teachers' experiences would enable them to learn the pedagogical approaches naturally and organically as Kolb's experiential learning theory suggests [11]. They take part in the pedagogical approaches employed by the professors, reflect on their performance in the activities, think about how their insights could be useful, and consequently apply them in actual teaching.

METHODS

Inference about the practice of the pedagogical or teaching-learning approaches was made through the process of curriculum content analysis. The content of the syllabus of each of the following professional education courses in the BSED teacher education program was analyzed in terms of the practice or utilization of the pedagogies as a teaching-learning activity. These are foundational courses in the BSED program and are categorized into (1) theories and concepts and (2) methods and strategies.

Theories and Concepts:
- The Child and Adolescent Learners, and Learning Principles
- The Teaching Profession
- The Teacher and Community, School Culture, and Organizational Leadership
- Foundation of Special and Inclusive Education

Methods and Strategies:
- Facilitating Learner-Centered Learning
- Assessment of Learning (*two courses*)
- Technology for Teaching and Learning (*two courses*)
- The Teacher and the School Curriculum
- Building & Enhancing Literacy Skills Across the Curriculum

The results were then validated with the faculty through a member-checking process. Finally, with the use of an interpretation guide developed for this study, the content analysis generated a matrix that

succinctly presents the level of sufficiency of the practice or utilization of specific teaching-learning approaches.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 below shows the practice or utilization of the pedagogical or teaching-learning approaches in the professional education courses of the Bachelor of Secondary Education program of the university.

Table 1. Sufficiency of the practice of pedagogical approaches in the professional education courses of the BSED program

Pedagogical Approach	Percent Coverage	Description of Practice
Lecture	100.0	Very sufficient
Discussion	100.0	Very sufficient
Collaborative Learning	100.0	Very sufficient
Technology Integration	100.0	Very sufficient
Multimedia Presentation	100.0	Very sufficient
Library Work	91.66	Very sufficient
Oral Reporting	83.33	Sufficient
Exercises & Demonstration	83.33	Sufficient
Interactive Learning	83.33	Sufficient
Reading and Writing	75.00	Sufficient
Interviewing	58.33	Partially sufficient
Field Work	41.67	Partially sufficient

The analysis revealed that all the professional education courses very sufficiently utilized lectures and discussion as teaching-learning approaches. Despite its drawbacks, lecture as a teacher-centered pedagogy continues to be regarded as useful and relevant as it facilitates the presentation of a large amount of information or concepts [12, 13]. Recently, there have been more student-centered methods and technology integration in the delivery of lectures. Hence, its advantage and flexibility could be the reasons for its inclusion in the K to 12 Enhanced Basic Education curriculum as a prescribed pedagogy, which the BSED program provides in all of its professional education courses for pre-service teachers.

On the other hand, discussion as a student-centered pedagogy which involves interactions like critiquing, debating, refuting, questioning, and persuading, remains widely used [14]. By having this type of activity in all the professional courses, the pre-service teachers regularly experienced the role of a facilitator and had many opportunities to practice talking as well as to develop critical thinking skills. Such experience adequately prepares them to utilize discussion-based learning methods when teaching at the secondary level in the future.

Another pedagogical approach that was very sufficiently practiced in all the courses was collaborative learning. Working together to achieve a common learning goal provides opportunities for pre-service teachers to enhance their social skills. Viewed from the lens of experiential learning theory, the recognition of the value of social interactions in learning prompts pre-service teachers to apply collaborative learning when they begin to teach. Such then would be congruent with the focus of the K to 12 Enhanced Basic Curriculum, which is anchored on the constructivist perspective.

Likewise, technology integration and multimedia presentation were very sufficiently practiced in all the professional education courses. In line with the studies of Tondeur et al. [15], it could be said that the

experiences of professors using technology will motivate beginning teachers to use a wide range of technological applications. For this reason, there was no gap between teacher training and teacher competency requirements under the K to 12 Enhanced Basic Education Program and the CHED standards for that matter.

Library work or library-based assignment was also practiced very sufficiently in many of the courses. It is speculated that this includes library instruction as a teaching strategy, which has been shown to increase student academic performance [16]. In addition, critical library instruction has been seen as a pedagogical tool worth expanding [17], especially because it supports information literacy [18]. This focus is aligned with the goals of education – i.e., for students to be able to locate, access, evaluate, and use relevant information to complete writing assignments.

Pedagogies related to demonstration and oral reporting were sufficiently practiced, providing ample experience to pre-service teachers which could motivate them to use these approaches when teaching. In turn, this practice will contribute to the realization of the educational goals of the K to 12 Enhanced Basic Education for two reasons. Firstly, the demonstration has been linked with student success [19, 20], especially with enhancing reasoning skills [21]. Secondly, the oral report technique aids in teaching speaking skills in the English language [22, 23, 24].

Likewise, the interactive learning approaches were found to be sufficiently practiced in professional education courses. This included techniques such as brainstorming, think-pair-share, and buzz sessions. This is particularly helpful for pre-service teachers in their future role as leaders or mentors of learning where students are actively engaged in the lessons rather than passively absorbing the lectures. Moreover, the interactive method encourages discovery learning, research, collaborative and independent learning, and practical application [25].

Similarly, the reading and writing pedagogical approach has been found to be practiced sufficiently in many foundational courses. It is assumed that reading instruction in higher education refers to digesting and processing large amounts of detailed information [26]. If this was experienced by pre-service teachers, it can be surmised that they would be influenced to use the same pedagogy when teaching at the secondary level. On the other hand, even while writing is a multi-layered skill [27] normally taught under general education courses, it can be presumed that all the professors of the professional education courses were also "language teachers." Thus, the adequate experiences gained by students would contribute to their confidence and motivation in utilizing writing as a teaching-learning approach.

In contrast, the use of interviewing as a teaching-learning approach was only partially practiced or experienced. This is consistent with what Roulston. [28] said, that while interviewing has become popular, the mechanics of a good interview is not taught. Hence, lacking confidence in this pedagogy may not encourage pre-service teachers to utilize it when teaching. Consequently, this could be a hindrance for secondary school students in their classes to be able to ask questions and generate interview data.

Finally, fieldwork was also partially sufficient in the professional education courses. However, there are six units of field study as a distinct course taken during the fourth year of study. This presumably cancels out the partial coverage in the foundational courses, rendering the pre-service teachers prepared to introduce field work perhaps in the research work of their future students at the secondary level.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

There were no major gaps between the pedagogical approaches in the professional education courses and the K to 12-prescribed teaching-learning approaches. Except for "interview or interviewing," the pre-service teachers had rich experiences in the prescribed pedagogical or teaching-learning approaches that would motivate or encourage them to apply these as beginning teachers of basic education. This means that pre-service teachers are adequately prepared with pedagogical approaches to be able to teach secondary-level subjects.

A recommendation is given to the university to consider integrating interviews into the teaching-learning activities. Pre-service teachers could be required to conduct small research projects that utilize the interview method in their coursework, both in the professional education courses and the major courses.

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