

BEYOND THE CLASSROOM: EXPLORING PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS' NOVEL ENCOUNTER IN THE COMMUNITY EXTENSION TEACHING ADVENTURES

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.18739474

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Abstract:

Teaching in the community extension plays a crucial role in teacher education programs, providing future educators with practical experience and exposure to diverse learning environments. This study aimed to explore the significance of pre-service teachers' lived experiences in teaching in the community extension, its impact on teacher preparation, and the benefits it offered to both pre-service teachers and the communities they serve. The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of 4th-year students under the program of Bachelor of Elementary Education for the academic year 2023-2024 who are conducting their pre-service teaching training program in the community extension. The design used in this study is a qualitative methodology. Five students were chosen to be the respondents to this study using purposive sampling. The researchers employed an unstructured questionnaire, which was distributed to the respondents through an interview. The study uses qualitative inquiry to examine the difficulties, successes, and life-altering incidents that are experienced by student-teachers in different communities. The aim of this research is to find out how community involvement affects teacher training with a view to facilitating meaningful partnerships between local people and schools in the area. This research project is an attempt to understand pre-service educators' struggles, victories, and life-changing experiences within diverse communities employing a qualitative approach. By exploring these events, this study sought to answer questions regarding the impact of community engagement on teacher preparation and growth.

Keywords: Real-life Experiences, Community Extension, Teacher Training, Pre-service Teacher, Novel Encounters, Serve

Introduction:

A key component of global teacher education is field-based experiences, which help pre-service teachers move from philosophy to practice. Pre-service teaching is one of the requirements that a student enrolled under the degree program of education should accomplish. The term "teacher training" describes formalized educational programs designed to get potential educators ready for entry into the teaching profession at a particular level of education. Pre-service teacher is an essential component of the educational ecosystem and has a significant impact on how the next generation of students is taught. Philippine colleges and universities are required to perform the trilogy of fundamental functions of Higher Education Institution (HEI) which are the instructions, research and extension that can lead towards production of knowledge.

The goal of Community Extension Services' (CES) initiatives and programs was to assist individuals in empowering themselves through long-term initiatives. Building relationships via education was the foundation of community extension work. Good relationships between the school, and the community support a person's intellectual, social, and emotional growth. Colleges, universities, and education departments are addressing the difficulties of preparing the teachers for diversity, with this, the institution incorporated fieldwork in the community curriculum (Yuan, 2017) in the form of extension services. Preparing pre-service teachers for cultural diversity has grown in importance in recent years as a component of teacher education programs across the country.

The study observed changes in the college community extension services and activities for the students, instructors, and non-teaching personnel. This also includes the growing number of stakeholders or partners in providing services to the community. The Education department rendered a literacy and numeracy program to the partner public school catering to the needs of the learners from grades 1 to 10. With this, it opens opportunities to link and partner with the Public Library and an international Non- non-government organization that leads to the expansion of literacy to the community in a non-formal education set-up. This community engagement would give the pre-service teachers unique experiences that will also serve as a better training ground in the field of teaching.

The purpose of this study was to explore the lived experiences in the Community Extension and to support the Pre-service teacher's learning development. These opportunities can also expand pre-service teachers' understanding. It helps the pre-service teachers' learning journeys by exploring the lived experiences in the field of community extension. This study attempted to reveal the diverse range of experiences that pre-service teachers and community people have in common by getting into the particulars of community engagement and extension initiatives. The study also looked for methods to use these experiences to improve the way aspiring teachers learn, allowing them to have a better awareness of community dynamics and interact meaningfully in learning environments. Employing this study, the study hopes to support the creation of efficient plans and programs that close the knowledge gap between theory and practice, thus enhancing the educational environment and encouraging holistic growth among pre-service teachers.

Atheoretical Stance:

The study was not grounded in any theory to prevent biases. Though challenging, separating oneself from knowing bias was not impossible. To minimize inductive data contamination and to support the emergence of themes from the phenomena, which was the essence of qualitative research investigations. The research purposefully did not identify a theory in this section. This was done to suspend prior assumptions. The study's descriptive Husserlian phenomenology was used to establish reliable philosophical and scientific knowledge. It was qualitative by nature. It was the custom of an inquest, which tries to investigate the Pre-service of teaching Community Extension by college students who are also employed. Since it was inextricably linked to the real-life situations and experiences of Pre-service teaching in the Community Extension, it was said to be qualitative. Descriptive phenomenology was used in the study. As a result, themes were developed near the conclusion of the study process (Goddard & Melville, 2004).

Research Method:

The Husserlian Descriptive Phenomenology was applied in this qualitative study. The main reason this design was selected was to gain a deeper knowledge of the Pre-service Teachers Lived Experiences in Teaching in the Community Extension. This approach was appropriate since it was essentially to analyze and describe the experiences, difficulties, and reflections of Pre-service teaching in the Community Extension which will serve as the foundational elements that

lend legitimacy and guide the understanding of the phenomenon's occurrence.

The pre-service teachers were immersed in the following adopted community extension - the four barangays in Mandaue City namely: Paknaan, Banilad, Umapad, and Mantuyong but, the Pre-service teachers were interviewed here at Mandaue City College in a place where the informants comfortable which in Library, Research Room, Student lounge as long as they are comfortable. The research informants of the study were the pre-service teachers in Mandaue City College enrolled in the Academic Year 2023-2024.

The informants were the five Pre-Service teachers who are studying Bachelor of Elementary Education. The researchers used identified purposive sampling in this study. The informants were purposefully chosen by the researchers from those who were available, and those who were not available were not coerced into taking part in the study. The following inclusion and exclusion criteria were taken into account by the researchers.

Findings and Discussion:

This provided the analysis of the findings of the study with regards to Beyond the Classroom: Exploring Pre-service Teachers novel encounters in the Community Extension Teaching Adventures. By using Collaizi's Method, the researcher was able to analyze the themes as well as the sub-themes that occurred from the data gathering.

Theme 1: Service to the Community

Contributing back to the community gives me the chance to develop personally and gain a deeper understanding of my place in the world. Working with a diverse team of individuals will not only help me become a better communicator, but it will also provide a wealth of other experiences that will be useful in the future. It can even find a new interest or passion through volunteering (Ames (2024).

"It is fulfilling ang pag-serve sa community dili ra kani ang prayoridad naa sad laing responsibility na angay e fulfill sa pag-eskwela ug sa panimalay." ("It is fulfilling to serve in the community because serving is not one of our priorities, but we also have responsibilities at school and home that we need to fulfill.") - Smart Volunteer Teacher, line 15

In addition, serving the community through volunteer work may be a life- changing experience that has a profound effect on society and personal development. Participating in a variety of tasks with a diverse team helps hone important abilities like empathy and communication. These encounters broaden perspective on societal issues and part in resolving them. Volunteering also broadens horizons by introducing to new passions and interests, which helps feel purposeful and connected to the world.

Sub-theme 1.1 Grassroots Community

Grassroots initiatives are often focused on local solutions for social, economic, or environmental issues to drive change and progress. They depend on the involvement and collaboration of members of the community. This approach promotes a feeling of unity and collective accountability among residents, while also empowering individuals to lead the development of their community.

"Ang nag-unang problema sa community extension mao ang time ug environment. ("The main problem with community extension is the time and environment.") - Calm Volunteer Teacher, line 6

Determining how community leaders will involve grassroots stakeholders and members in the planning decision-making process was a crucial phase in the grassroots neighborhood planning process (Wilson (2018).

Sub-theme 1.2 Meaningful Community Service Experience

Volunteering in the community was carried out to benefit specific communities in a way that will make life easier for those who live there on a daily basis. Additionally, by sharing their skills with the community, the students will be able to further develop themselves through this experience.

“ Samtang nag tudlo sa community extension, nalipay ko nga makita ang mga bata tungod kay ang mga bata nga kinahanglan namong tudloan dili makamaong mo basa .(“While teaching in the community extension, I was happy to see the children because the children that we needed to teach were illiterate, so the children didn't know how to read.”) - **Calm Volunteer Teacher, line 1**

Engaging in community service fosters a feeling of togetherness, promotes social unity, and contributes to the overall well being and progress of society. It was often driven by selflessness, compassion, and a wish to enhance the well-being of others.

Theme 2: Embracing Novel Encounter

Pre-service teachers often encounter a variety of chances and challenges that contribute to their growth in the field. As a result of this study, pre-service teachers focus on a greater understanding of their role as facilitators of information and agents of change. Embracing new encounters involves maintaining a positive and hopeful mindset while being receptive to unfamiliar experiences and situations.

“Dako siyag tabang as a future educator kay didto nimo ma enhance imo skills areas na need nimo improvement regarding sa pag handle sa mga bata.(“It's a big help to us as a future educator because it will enhance our skills and the improvement regarding how to handle the children.”) - **Funny Volunteer Teacher, line 61**

Teachers' emotional and social connections with colleagues were positively related to classroom management, while their social involvement with students was linked to a supportive environment (Huang et. al (2023).

Theme 3: Roadblocks Encountered

Experience in the classroom, struggling with managing student behavior, finding a middle ground between theory and practice, meeting various learner needs, and navigating professional standards are some challenges that pre-service teachers might face. Help, guidance, and opportunities for growth were essential for tackling these issues.

*“Number one problema gyud na imong masugatan is ang attitude sa mga bata kay diman jud nimo ma-control ang bata especially na dili sa inyo nag-dako. (“The number one problem that you'll encounter is the attitude of the children, because it's difficult to manage or control them, especially if they don't live and grow in the place where you live.”) - **Smart Volunteer Teacher, line 21***

It was observed that cognitive support-focused coping methods were the most generally used, followed by instrumental support-focused coping strategies and affective support-establishing tactics. To recapitulate, the obstacles experienced during the professional training process, as well as the ability to find solutions to these problems, will forecast the projected resolutions made by pre-service teachers to the problems they will face when practicing their profession (Ezgi et.al (2022).

Theme 4 :Core Values

Core values are the fundamental beliefs and principles that govern actions and decisions within an individual, team or society. These values serve as a structure for deciding priorities and actions, reflecting what was fundamental to an organization's identity. Values such as accountability, righteousness, equity, empathy, morality, truthfulness and admiration can be included.

Sub-theme 4.1 Accountability

Being accountable was acknowledging the circumstances, taking responsibility for the issue, coming up with fixes, and putting things into action. It's an acknowledgment of worth. It implies that others can rely on it. Having accountability as a fundamental principle gives business a unique edge. Hold everyone with responsibilities to high standards of performance.

“Para nako kay Accountability kay bisag unsa mahitabo jud kay dapat accountable mi sa mga bata kung maunsa ba sila.

So, accountability mao na among responsibilidad na e handle ang bata ug tarong bisag sipat na kaayu ug sa mga behavior nila. ("For me, it's Accountability, no matter what happens, we must be accountable to those children while doing community extension. So, accountability because it is our responsibility to handle the child properly even if they misbehave.") - Shy Volunteer Teacher, line 56 & 57

Sub-theme 4.2 Diversity

Diversity means more than just acknowledging or tolerating people's differences. diversity was the "otherness or those human qualities that are different from our own and outside the groups to which we belong yet are present in other individuals and groups." Recognizing diversity not only involves how to perceive yourself, but also how to perceive others. Those perceptions affect interactions (Loden et. al (2022).

"Diversity kay lain-lain man gud na bata ang among tudloan from different barangay. "Diversity, it is because we teach children from different barangays." - Confident Volunteer Teacher 3, line 43

Sub-theme 4.3 Agility

Understanding where it can stretch current resources and goals to do new things in new ways and what specifics need to be maintained the same to facilitate faster adoption and productivity was the first step in evaluating the agility of the firm. Be flexible, responsive and courageous when needs require change in practice and condition. Learning agility was crucial in raising the caliber of teacher performance, which in turn raises the caliber of education and fosters a learning culture that inspires the next generation (Santoso et al (2021).

"Agility kay flexible mi mo teach sa mga bata from different age like 5 to 10. ("Agility, because we know that we should be flexible to teach children from 5 to 10 years old.") -Confident Volunteer Teacher, line 44

Sub-theme 4.4 Unity

Imbibe the importance of collective good and bond was greater than the gain of individuals, departments, and colleges. Being united means remaining in one group. That entails lending a hand and standing by one another no matter what. The foundation of a good and robust society and relationships was unity. At every stage of life, unity is crucial. Unity means being or staying together. That means helping and supporting each other in any situation. Being together was the key to building a good and strong society and relationships. Unity was important at every step in our life (Kishore Shintre (2023). *"Ang panaghiusa mao ang core values. Ang panaghiusa makahimo sa mga magtutudlo sa estudyante nga magkahiusa, makahimo sa saktong communication ug pagtinabangay, ug pag-share sa ilang mga ideya unsa nga epektibo nga mga estratehiya. ("Unity is the core value that we used. Unity enables student teachers to come together, make proper communication and share ideas on what strategies are effective.") - Calm Volunteer Teacher, line 9 & 10*

The prospective teacher often comes to the teacher education program with a desire to help others. Intentional service-learning field experiences are able to harness this desire within teacher education programs (Riggle 2022).

Theme 5: Enhanced Personal and Professional Skills

Reflective teaching practice has long been recognized as a critical component of pre- service teachers' early professional development. This research examines pre-service teachers' reflective practice during a teaching practicum in which they engaged in peer observation, self-reflection, and student teacher-mentor teacher collaboration. The findings demonstrate that reflective practice, combined with organized professional learning tasks, assists pre-service teachers in developing their teacher identity and agency (Hendriwanto 2021).

Akong e change guro no akong pagka shy type ganahan ko mabuild akong 100 percent na self-confidence."I want to change my shyness and build self- confidence." Teacher 5, line 78

In this section, identifying the key themes that emerged from the findings is being focused. Thematic analysis was used to identify the main themes and sub-themes that emerged from the collected data. Novel encounters were the unique ,unexpected and groundbreaking experiences that lead to new directions or opportunities for further exploration

and development of the pre-service teachers. Pre-service teachers can offer service to the community by volunteering and imparting knowledge and skills that equip the students for future success in their careers and lives. Additionally, by volunteering pre-service teachers can learn to embrace novel encounters that may approach with a sense of wonder, passion and willingness to learn and grow. Embracing the unknown can lead to growth and progress. In embracing novel encounters, it was essential to venture into unfamiliar experiences. Teaching adventures in the community extension have roadblocks being encountered. Pre-service teachers have obstacles being faced while teaching due to barriers that hinder progress. Pre-service teachers must adhere to core values since they form the basis of their professional identity and direct their behavior in the classroom. Their interactions with students, co-workers, and the larger school community are shaped by them. Pre-service teachers can become successful educators who have a positive impact on the lives of their students by incorporating their core principles into their profession. Enhanced personal and professional skills were essential for pre-service teachers as they prepare for their careers in education. These skills shape their overall growth and achievement for their capacity to succeed as teachers. Embracing lifelong learning to personal and professional growth enables pre-service teachers to stay updated with innovations in education and adapt to evolving teaching strategies.

Conclusion:

Pre-service teachers often encounter a variety of chances and challenges that enhance their growth as professionals. As a result of this study, pre-service teachers will gain a greater understanding of their role as facilitators of information and agents of change. Pre-service teachers can utilize the theoretical knowledge gained in the classroom by engaging in community extension activities. They not only learn valuable tips for effective classroom management and teaching strategies but also how to adapt their teaching approaches to cater to the unique needs of students with various backgrounds.

Limitations and Further Research:

The study involved pre-service teachers as informants selected through purposive sampling in selecting. The researchers deliberately choose a sample that is most likely to provide information that will answer the research questions. This type of sampling technique is often used in qualitative research.

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