

Coping Strategies of BEED Teaching Interns During Classroom Demonstration

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ABSTRACT

Prospective teachers usually conduct classroom demonstrations during a teaching internship for one semester. Thus, teaching interns then perform actual teaching among students at varying grade levels. This study investigated the challenges and coping strategies of BEED teaching interns in the western part of the Philippines. In this study, the researchers employed a single-case study model method of Sharan B. Merriam. Triangulation of data was also employed to validate the results of the study. They gathered the data through one-to-one interviews with BEED teaching interns who conducted classroom demonstrations on-campus and off-campus, four corresponding cooperating teachers, and the instructor of the research participants. Following the data analysis of Braun and Clarke (2008), the results revealed that these teaching interns experienced different challenges. These challenges involved difficulty in classroom management and difficulty in creating learning objectives. However, they showed positivity in their performance and applied the right coping strategies to lessen their burden. Among these coping strategies were using effective classroom management strategies, being confident, and asking assistance from their cooperating teacher to cope with those challenges. Through these experiences, teachers learned to adjust and cope with their challenges. Thus, they became better teaching interns. These findings are original and contribute to the plans and programs of the Commission of Higher Education in broadening the knowledge and developing the skills for improving student teacher's academic success.

Keywords: challenges; coping strategies; classroom demonstration; teaching interns

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1. INTRODUCTION

A teaching internship is essential in every teacher education program to prepare for becoming a full-fledged educator. In this stage, prospective teachers are trained with the rudiments of learning-centered instruction and immersed in the actual classroom experience to become equipped and qualified teachers in the country (Rogayan & Reusia, 2021). In the Philippines, the Department of Education implemented policies and guidelines for teaching internships (DepEd, 2022).

A teaching internship is a course required among prospective teachers. Teaching internship plays a vital role in teaching development in pre-service teacher education. As exposed to both on and off-campus training, teaching interns are molded by their supervisors and cooperating teachers in providing feedback and evaluation to enhance their teaching performance.

Internships are internationally recognized as a critical element in teacher education. In recent years, many countries have attributed an even higher level of significance to schools and classrooms, for example, exploration of teachers' professional tasks and lesson learning during and from practice, whereby several terms are utilized to describe these practical experiences, for example, internship, practicum, field experiences, clinical experiences, and student teaching (Bach, 2019).



It is difficult for a teaching intern to conduct actual classroom demonstrations, especially at the primary level, and dealing with different behaviors and needs may be difficult. The teaching intern will need help conducting learning activities and managing the behavior of the pupils. It requires significant effort, self-confidence, and patience to benefit from practical strategies. Besides, teaching interns' academic achievement may be insufficient if courses such as teaching internships are not required and they are not adequately trained.

Teaching interns encountered experiences and struggles from preparing lesson plans, teaching various subjects, and classroom and management techniques. According to Maulimora (2019), there are several experiences by English pre-service teachers in Universitas Kristen Indonesia, namely: feeling anxious, being worried about their English language skills, teaching skills, classroom management, and needing more clarification on the preparations they had made.

In any teacher education practicum program in the Philippines, teaching demonstration is the most challenging undertaking of the student teachers during the internship program (Magday & Pramoolsook, 2021). Furthermore, according to Bolonio et al. (2018), there are challenges experienced by the student interns from the University of Bohol: difficulty in time management when completing reports and paperwork. Moreover, Ugalingan et al. (2021) study described the experiences of preservice teachers who have undertaken an online teaching internship program in the Philippines during the pandemic. Specifically, they argue that while the online teaching internship may be helpful for preservice teachers in gaining relevant professional development experiences in the new typical, different challenges, specifically (1) interaction in an online environment, (2) lack of self-confidence in teaching, and (3) technical difficulties.

An actual classroom demonstration plays a vital role in training the teaching interns, allowing them to apply their acquired knowledge and practical skills to becoming a teacher among students. In delivering a classroom demonstration, various challenges arise within the classroom setting relating to students, cooperating teachers, and technology which could affect the performance of the teaching interns. Therefore, identifying how the teaching interns cope with their feelings and struggles during classroom demonstrations should be done to determine the coping strategies that will enable them to cast their negative emotions to maintain confidence and composure in teaching effectively. Since the previous studies investigated the challenges of the teaching interns during classroom demonstrations in an online environment, the researchers were interested in immersing themselves in determining the challenges and managing strategies of pre-service elementary teaching interns during face-to-face classroom demonstrations. This research explored the challenges and coping strategies of BEED teaching interns of Pagadian City, Zamboanga del Sur, Philippines.

2. METHODS

This study used a descriptive qualitative research design and employed the single-case study model developed by Sharan B. Merriam. In qualitative research, the case study method has the following characteristics: particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic (Merriam, 1998). The researchers dealt with the BEED teaching interns' experiences, especially their challenges in conducting actual classroom demonstration and their different coping strategies. The study was then conducted at a private institution in western Mindanao, Philippines. Ten teaching intern participants in this study have conducted three classroom demonstrations on-campus and two classroom demonstrations off campus.

After seeking permission from the school's president, dean, and respective elementary department principal, the researchers asked for the voluntary participation of the research participants. A consent form was also produced as part of the data triangulation, asking permission for the participants'

cooperating teachers and instructors. After signing the informed consent, the researchers asked them for an interview.

This research followed the thematic analysis method of Braun and Clarke (2008). It started with completing interview transcripts, identifying patterns, developing themes, writing the interpretation of the data, and describing patterns. The researchers ensured that the essence of the results matched the focus of the study. They also made sure that they presented the voice of the research participants and applied triangulation of data to ensure that results were well supported.

With the use of qualitative research design, the researchers will be able to gather information about the coping strategies of the BEED teaching interns and use semi-structured interviews characterized by open-ended questions for generating knowledge and ideas. In this study, the researchers ensured that the participants were coded for confidentiality and anonymity. They also assured them that they would preserve the originality and truthfulness of their response.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This part of the study presents the findings based on interviews conducted among selected BEED teaching interns. They have experience conducting actual classroom demonstrations on-campus and off-campus. It involves investigating the coping strategies the BEED teaching interns used to deal with the challenges during classroom demonstrations.

Challenges

Based on the research participants' testimonies, the sub-themes that came out are difficulty in classroom management and difficulty in creating learning objectives.

Difficulty in classroom management. According to Wolff et al. (2021), Classroom management includes how teachers monitor events and maintain an ongoing awareness of classroom situations. It also impacts decisions about when and how to respond to events. Managing the behavior of the pupils is a struggle among teaching interns. Many research participants who were interviewed expressed their challenge in the following manner:

"Executing classroom management is hard para sa akoa kay nanglabaw na ang tingog sa akoang mga pupils then sakto lang ug volume akong tingog so dili ko madungan sa tanan [Classroom management is hard for me to execute. Pupils have louder voices than me, so everyone will not hear me.] (TI8)

"Kanang mga bata dili maminaw challenge kaayo na nako. Once gani wala nako nakuha ang attention sa bata, ma-mark gyud ko sa evalution form didto nga gamay a kay wala naminaw ang mga estudyante [During my final demonstration, it was a great challenge for me to teach inattentive pupils. Consequently, I will be marked with a low score if the students do not listen.]" (TI2)

"Classroom management is a big minus point for me. If my application part is chaotic, it will affect the evaluation. Furthermore, the cooperating teacher might stop my demonstration." (TI6)

"I struggle in managing the classroom, especially in lower grades. Pero dili gyud matabang ang lower grades specially kung dili ka nila teacher, dili sila mo show ug respect at first. I need to find a strategy na maminaw sila sa akoa [In the lower grades, I struggled to manage the classroom. Being with the primary grades is helpless if you are not their teacher. At first, the pupils don't show respect. Therefore, I need to find a strategy for me to be listened by the pupils.]" (TI7)

"Major struggle gyud na as a teaching intern nga maminaw sa akoa ang mga bata."
(TI9)

"As a soft-spoken person, classroom management is the greatest challenge for me."
(TI10)

The responses above of most of the research participants manifested their challenge in handling elementary learners. During their demonstration, the teaching interns must take action, ensuring that all their pupils listen and pay attention. Since some pupils are not in their proper seats and keep talking with their classmates, the teaching interns are challenged with handling the situation during their demonstration. This dramatically affects the rating of their cooperating teachers on how they handle their pupils.

As to the cooperating teachers' perspective, they observed that most teaching interns struggled to handle different behaviors and reactions of the pupils. In conducting interactive games and activities, it is inevitable that the pupil willingly expresses themselves by complaining or raising their concerns. Therefore, they always speak whenever they have a problem. Accordingly, without focus, the class will be chaotic and challenging to take control. It will affect everything from classroom demonstration performance down to evaluation.

Classroom management is one of the significant challenges among pre-service teachers. According to Junker et al. (2021), Classroom management is a central aspect of effective teaching. It is related to student motivation and learning achievement. Unfortunately, pre-service and beginning teachers need more classroom management competence. The way a teacher manages the class can create a direct impact on their learning interest and progress. Furthermore, the study of Maulimora (2019) revealed that there are several experiences by English pre-service teachers in Universitas Kristen Indonesia, namely: feeling anxious, being worried about their English language skills, teaching skills, classroom management, and needing more clarification on the preparations they had made.

Difficulty in creating learning objectives. According to Sewagegn (2020), Learning objectives are the expected behavioral outcomes of the students at the end of a particular instructional process. The research participants are also concerned with their learning objectives, learning activities, and assessment. They have to ensure they are aligned and implemented during their classroom demonstration.

The research participants expressed their challenges and difficulties. One teaching intern said:

"For me creating the lesson objectives and learning activities is my struggle kay diha sa akong learning objectives diha man nako ealign akong learning activities [My struggle is creating lesson objectives and learning objectives. I have to align my learning objectives with my learning activities.]" (TI3)

Lesson objectives are essential in creating a lesson plan to determine what the pupils will attain at the end of the lesson. However, it is one of the teaching interns' most challenging tasks as they prepare their lesson plans. Another research participant said:

"Sa pagbuhat sa akong objectives is challenging siya kay emake sure aligned siya. Sa private school nga akong gidemohan dapat naa ang cognitive, pyschomotor, and affective domain and make sure ma-apply pud nako [It is challenging in creating objective because I have to make sure it is aligned. There is the cognitive, psychomotor, and affective domain and I have to make sure that I applied those three in my demonstration.]" (TI11)

Based on the answers of the research participants, the researchers found that the teaching interns are concerned with constructive alignment. They have to make sure that their learning activities are appropriate and accurate to the objectives they constructed.

The study of Rodrigue and Enama (2021) revealed that trainee teachers had more difficulty writing lesson outcomes, aligning lesson outcomes with assessments, providing variety in assessment and quality take-home assignments, and asking relevant questions to guide student work. Also, it was found that joint lesson plans contained fewer errors and were better in instructional quality than lessons planned by single teachers.

Coping Strategies

To deal with stressful situations and arising problems during classroom demonstrations, teaching interns shared these coping strategies based on their experiences. They found them helpful and practical as they performed their role and responsibilities as teaching interns. The teaching interns coping strategies are using effective classroom management strategies, being confident, and asking for assistance from their cooperating teacher.

Using effective classroom management strategies. According to the research participants, they use particular classroom management techniques to approach the pupils, keep them quiet, and behave respectively. Many research participants who were interviewed expressed their challenge in the following manner:

"Ang strategies or techniques akong gigamit para ma overcome kay ang classroom rules. Inig mag yagaw ang mga bata so moadto moadto dayun kos classroom rules basahon nako to aron mahilom sila og mocalm down sa saba [The classroom rules are the strategy I used to overcome challenges I let the children read it for them to calm down and be quiet.]" (TI4)

"What I usually do is duolan nako ang pupils ingnon nako sila nga sit down unless your points will be deducted which nakahelp gyud para mubehave sila [I usually approach the pupils and tell them to sit down, or there will be a deduction of points. It helped me to keep them behaved.]" (TI8)

"Kanang imange ang mga estudyante, dapat naa ko'y saktong kanang techniques gyud dayon prepared ko ug different strategies on how to deliver the lesson if dili effective naa ko'y lain ginagamit pareha anang technique sa akong cooperating teacher." [In managing the students, I should have proper techniques being utilized. In delivering the lesson, I should utilize different strategies in case the other strategy will not work, like using the technique of my cooperating teacher.] (TI1)

"Sa akong first demonstration kay after sa akong activity maghatag ko ug lollipop by group. Mangutana ko kinsa man ganahan makareceive ug award. Mao ra gyud na akong mga strategies para makuha nako ilang mga attention." [In the first activity of my demonstration, I give lollipops by group. I also asked them if they wanted to receive an award. That's my strategy for getting their attention.] (TI2)

"I used to give the pupils activity to avoid unnecessary noise since pupils are yagaw. Sometimes I use games to give activity as part of my demonstration. [In my demonstration, I give activities such as group activities and games to avoid unnecessary noise from the pupils.] (TI9)

Classroom management strategy allows the teaching interns to control and manage the pupils' behavior for them to act and behave accordingly. Using appropriate techniques, the teaching interns can discipline pupils to show desirable behaviors in class.

The study of Gokalp and Can (2022) showed that most pre-service teachers regarded the primary goal of classroom management as establishing discipline in the classroom through deploying reactive disciplinary strategies before taking the course. Their conceptualization of classroom management changed, and they mostly started to include proactive strategies to create a learning environment fostering meaningful learning and enhancing students' social and emotional development.

Being confident. Usually, teaching interns experience feeling anxious with their pupils and cooperating teachers. Thus, they encourage themselves to be calm and composed to be confident. A participant shared:

"To stand before my pupils, I first build my confidence. They can feel if you are nervous and unprepared. That is why as much as possible, I must make sure to have a prepared demonstration. Everything must be aligned and smooth." (TI10)

Confidence helps them be composed and calm to deliver their demonstration successfully. In addition, they overcome their negative feelings, such as anxiety and nervousness, by doing particular preparation for their demonstration. Wearing confidence helps them overcome challenges and overwhelming feelings that arise during a classroom demonstration.

According to Petty et al. (2023), Motivated teachers are more likely to exhibit enhanced interest, persistence, and confidence when engaged in professional development. Accordingly, as novice teachers gain experience, they are more efficacious and likely to overcome adversity. The more authentic, rigorous, and frequent the experience in preservice methods coursework, the better-prepared candidates are to teach (Sheehan & Moore, 2019).

Asking for assistance from their cooperating teacher. Amidst the challenges they experienced, teaching interns found an effective way to deal with them. They were mindful of the knowledge and expertise the cooperating teachers could share to expand their professional knowledge and develop their skills.

To create a meaningful lesson plan and conduct a better classroom demonstration performance, they ask and listen to the suggestions and recommendations of their cooperating teacher. Some of the research participants said:

"I ask and listen to the suggestion of my cooperating teacher and perform it in my next demonstration para naa ko'y makita nga bag-o ba, nga kung na achieve ba to nako para effective rapud ang akong lesson. (TI9)

"I take criticism gyud pud para sa ako. Para sa akong improvement [I listen to the suggestion of my cooperating teacher. I will perform it in my next demonstration to see and achieve changes to create practical lessons. I take criticism for my improvement.]" (TI7)

Developing knowledge and skills and applying them in natural classroom settings is essential. Through the feedback and criticisms of the cooperating teachers, the teaching interns will be guided with the appropriate solution for their concerns and reflect on their teaching performance to present a better and enhanced classroom demonstration.

According to Rudio et al. (2020), it is necessary for cooperating teachers to give positive feedback about the approach of student teachers to shape partnerships, query skills, concentration, and excitement. As the student teacher takes more instructional leadership, there would be more opportunities for the cooperating teachers to provide detailed input on results. It is crucial that this feedback is ongoing and honest, with recommendations about how student teachers should use approaches and methods to enhance student learning.

4. CONCLUSION

The study was undertaken to identify the coping strategies of the BEED teaching interns during classroom demonstrations. Based on the results, the research participants experienced challenges such as difficulty in classroom management and difficulty creating learning objectives. The BEED teaching interns firmly believe that conducting classroom demonstrations requires patience, dedication, and hard work. Their experiences may overwhelm and make them anxious, yet they proved flexible. They learned to adjust and cope with the challenges by using classroom management strategies, being confident, and asking for help and assistance from their cooperating teacher.

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