

Field Study Experiences of Pre-service Teachers in the Philippines

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ABSTRACT

Field study courses are part of the university's curriculum, which pre-service teachers are required to take. These courses allow them to apply what they have learned from their chosen programs and gain real-world experience in the teaching profession. The journey in field study is an excellent way to learn about the responsibilities of a teacher and to develop one's growth in professional knowledge, skills, and attitudes. This study described the challenges and opportunities encountered, as well as the coping mechanisms used, by pre-service teachers during their field study journey. Seven pre-service teachers from a Philippine state university, enrolled in the Bachelor of Secondary Education Major in English during the academic year 2023-2024, were purposely chosen as participants of the study. A qualitative narrative inquiry research design and validated researcher-made, open-ended interview questions were used. The findings revealed that the student teachers were most challenged in adjusting to a new environment, lesson planning, adjusting to their role as practicing teachers, dealing with personal struggles, and managing personal expenses. Meanwhile, the study revealed that the pre-service teachers encountered opportunities primarily through learning from resource teachers, trying out the teacher's role, handling students, adapting to various teaching-learning environments, using technology in teaching, and learning from students. The coping strategies they used included personal motivation or willingness to learn, effective time management, balancing personal struggles as student teachers, applying learning theories, applying previous learning and life experiences, and personal ingenuity. These findings may provide educational institutions with opportunities to intensify and improve their practice teaching curriculum.

Keywords: pre-service teachers; field-study experience; narrative analysis, students' challenges and coping mechanisms

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1. INTRODUCTION

Quality teacher education is essential for establishing competent educators. Pre-service teachers must acquire both comprehensive knowledge and practical experience before entering the professional world. One way to achieve this is through field study. Bulawat (2021) defines field study as a component of the pedagogical requirements that aspiring teachers must fulfill in their final year of study. It serves as a practicum that provides hands-on experience within a real teaching and learning environment. Antallan et al. (2022) argue that field study is indispensable because it enables students to apply the theoretical knowledge acquired during their college education in a practical context. This process extends beyond the mere acquisition of content knowledge and teaching methods, aiming instead to develop a range of competencies in pre-service teachers, including interpersonal, pedagogical, intercultural, and psychological skills (Aldabbus, 2020).

Educational institutions worldwide are increasingly recognizing the significance of field study in developing future educators. Consequently, many nations are taking steps to boost their teaching practice systems and are paying greater attention to the role of practical experiences in teacher education (Zhan & Xiu, 2021). Furthermore, the Global Framework of Professional Teaching Standards, established by UNESCO and Education International, outlines the essential components of a professional teaching standards framework. This framework is intended to serve as an internationally accepted standard that education unions, teachers' associations, and individual educators can use to augment their professional practices. The fifth underpinning principle of these standards emphasizes that all teachers should be trained at a university or equivalent institution and possess the requisite knowledge, skills, and competencies to meet the diverse needs of students (UNESCO & Education International, 2019, p. 10). This principle underscores the critical role of field study in teacher education.

On a national level, the K–12 Reform (R.A. 10533) enacted in 2013 has significantly altered the standards for teacher quality in the Philippines. The reform aims to improve teacher quality from pre-service education through in-service training. In response, the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers was developed as a framework that uses clearly defined domains, strands, and indicators to measure professional development, effective practice, and meaningful engagement, thereby articulating the criteria for teacher quality within the K–12 system (Department of Education, 2017, p. 4).

Given this context, it is evident that field study is a vital experience for pre-service teachers, ensuring they are well-prepared to become competent educators upon entering the professional sphere. However, the experiences of pre-service teachers in field study vary; some encounter opportunities, while others face challenges. Practice teaching demands various strategies, preparation, and classroom management, which can be particularly challenging for novice educators (Antallan et al., 2022). For example, Evans and Gray (2023) found that inadequate lesson planning and classroom management skills hindered pre-service teachers' learning during their teaching practicum. Aldabbus (2020) also identified significant challenges pre-service teachers face in field study, including a lack of confidence, poor classroom management skills, insufficient collaboration between student teachers, school principals, and cooperating teachers, as well as inadequate support and guidance from supervisors.

While many studies have focused on the challenges faced by pre-service teachers in field study, Antallan et al. (2022) noted these opportunities also arise alongside these challenges. This study seeks to determine whether similar opportunities and challenges are experienced by pre-service teachers in this setting.

2. METHODS

A qualitative research design was employed in this study to examine the experiences of pre-service teachers during their field study, focusing on the challenges and opportunities they encountered as well as the coping mechanisms they used. The study aims to explore and analyze the participants' lived experiences with the phenomenon and to understand the significance of these experiences. Tenny et al. (2022) stated that qualitative research investigates real-world issues and provides deeper insights. By utilizing qualitative research, the researchers gathered detailed information about the opportunities, challenges, and coping mechanisms that pre-service teachers experienced during their field study at their respective schools. Nassaji (2020) emphasized that qualitative research seeks to understand and explore rather than manipulate variables.

The researchers adopted a narrative inquiry approach to collect and analyze the stories of pre-service teachers in the Philippine educational setting. Norman (2020) concluded that the objective of narrative inquiry research is to generate responses and discussions around the narratives being shared by

the participants. This approach is necessary for obtaining detailed insights into the experiences of pre-service teachers during their field study.

Given these considerations, the study found it essential to use a qualitative narrative inquiry design to thoroughly explore and explain the experiences of pre-service teachers during their field studies. This approach enabled the researchers to obtain a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the participants' responses.

The purposive sampling technique was employed to select participants for this study. According to Nikolopoulou (2022), purposive sampling is a non-probability method in which participants are chosen based on specific characteristics required for the data collection.

This technique was appropriate for the study as it allowed for the selection of participants who could provide detailed insights into their field experiences, particularly regarding challenges, coping mechanisms, and opportunities.

The participants were seven pre-service teachers enrolled in the Bachelor of Secondary Education Major in English program, who were engaged in the field study program from October 2023 to January 2024. They were selected based on the researchers' judgment that they were the most suitable to address the research questions. The criteria for selection were: (1) enrollment in the Bachelor of Secondary Education Major in English program; (2) fourth-year student status; and (3) current enrollment in the field study program and active deployment for field study. Their willingness to participate in the study was also considered.

The interviews were conducted via Google Meet, with the setting chosen to ensure that it was conducive for recording the conversation and convenient for both the participants and the researchers.

This study utilized researcher-made, open-ended interview questions as an instrument to gather data. There was a total of 12 semi-structured interview questions drafted, which were designed to generate responses to three main queries: "What are the challenges faced by the pre-service teachers during their field study? "; "What coping mechanisms do they employ to cope with the challenges?"; and "What are the opportunities met by the pre-service teachers during their field study program? "

The interview questions underwent pilot testing to properly elicit relevant responses. Pratt and Yezierski (2018) noted that conducting a pilot study validates the methodology and interview guide while improving the credibility and dependability of the research. The pilot interviews also familiarized the researchers with the interview platform and addressed potential issues.

The study considered research principles such as confirmability, credibility, transferability, and dependability to ensure the reliability of the findings (Elo et al., 2014; Nowell et al., 2017). To maintain the validity of the data, referential adequacy was applied. The researchers revisited archived data to test the initial themes identified during data analysis, as outlined by Lincoln and Guba (1985). This process of re-evaluation was essential to achieve external validity through a thorough account of events. The thematic analysis was conducted in three phases, beginning with open coding to identify key statements, which were then grouped into categories and developed into themes using QDA Miner.

Ethical considerations were upheld throughout the research process. The researchers ensured anonymity by coding participants' identities and removing signed consent forms from the data collection instruments. A non-disclosure agreement was signed by all involved parties to maintain confidentiality, as emphasized by Hoft (2021). In this study, privacy was strictly maintained, with no disclosure of participants' names in the research reports or publications, thus ensuring the ethical integrity of the research.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Challenges

The following are the themes deduced from the collected data on the challenges pre-service teachers experienced.

1. Adjustment to the new environment

Moving to a new school or location for field study can be an overwhelming experience for pre-service teachers. They may encounter culture shock and require time to acclimate to the school's atmosphere, policies, and practices. Two pre-service teachers expressed:

"I'm unfamiliar with the environment, so I overthink how I'm going to portray myself. You'll discover a lot of new faces because the teachers I knew are no longer there; they've already left, which makes it harder to interact and become acquainted with the new ones. That was my thinking at the time: how could I get along with them if I am not an outgoing person?"

"Adjusting to a new setting affected my experience in field study as a pre-service teacher. There was an English major in the cooperating school where I was assigned who was an alumnus of the school where I was deployed. However, I was from a different school, which affected me, particularly during the first week of my field study, because the school climate was extremely different. I felt the need to familiarize myself with the school's location and facilities."

The adjustment to a new environment can profoundly impact the behavior of pre-service teachers, influencing their daily routines, thoughts, and emotions. Muhammad (2020) noted that the environment plays a significant role in helping individuals make adjustments, as the surrounding life can impact personal and behavioral changes either directly or indirectly, on both individual and group levels. This unfamiliarity can lead to anxiety and nervousness among pre-service teachers in their new school settings. Kreitzer (2020) adds that the environment can either produce or reduce stress, which in turn affects the body in various negative ways. Consequently, these environmental changes and stressors significantly influenced the pre-service teachers' experiences during their transition to the new setting.

2. Struggle in Lesson Planning

Pre-service teachers' ability to create lesson plans is essential to their training program. However, lesson planning is often perceived as a demanding process that requires significant effort, and pre-service teachers frequently encounter various challenges when developing a lesson plan. As one participant explained:

"My experience with lesson planning was, of course, challenging. Although the template is the same as what we use at the university, the implementation is what makes it difficult. When we are doing lesson plans to be implemented at the university, we have the confidence that the students will understand the lesson because they are our classmates. However, that isn't the case in real life in the field. Just like with our demonstration teaching, you have to ensure that you will come up with a learner-centered lesson plan."

Lesson plans are very important in pre-service teachers' experiences. As Ferer (2021) notes, when pre-service teachers discuss their difficulties in creating lesson plans, one of the most common responses is the challenge of "making lesson plans." During interviews, participants pointed out specific parts of the lesson plan they found most challenging. Two out of seven participants mentioned that the motivational component was particularly difficult. Engaging and motivating students can be challenging for pre-service teachers, especially when addressing diverse student needs. Hayden (2021) supports this by stating that the motivational aspect of the lesson's objective is significant for sparking students' interest in the subject matter. It also serves as an opportunity to assess what students already know about the lesson's topic.

3. Adjustment as a Practicing Teacher

Transitioning from a student to a teacher role presents numerous challenges for pre-service teachers, as they must adapt to the responsibilities, expectations, and professional behaviors associated with teaching. One pre-service teacher said:

"It started with me being a student, and then suddenly I was deployed to another school as a pre-service teacher. The environment is very different. I'm surrounded by people who are not the same age as me because my students are, of course, a little younger than me, and I experienced culture shock. I frequently asked myself if I should continue this. Is teaching really for me? These were the emotions and questions I had at that time"

The sudden transition from student to teacher can be difficult. Field study is designed to equip pre-service teachers with the skills and competencies required in the teaching profession. However, for inexperienced teachers, executing teaching exercises in unfamiliar settings is not always easy. Ratih et al. (2021) identify four main areas of adjustment faced by pre-service teachers: adapting to a new environment, a new education system, students' criticality, and the demands of teaching material. Additionally, Orlov et al. (2018) emphasize that any adaptation requires changes in how individuals relate to their surroundings, approach tasks, and organize their lives.

4. Personal Struggle

Participating in a field study often means balancing the roles of being both a student and a teacher, which can be particularly challenging. One participant shared:

"I was nervous because I'm not outgoing, so I was thinking, 'How can I open up to the kids? How can I get them to open up to me if I'm also having problems opening up? How can I open up to them?' But I have worked on it, and now the relationship between me and the students is good; they are already making jokes."

Beyond academic struggles, pre-service teachers often face personal conflicts, such as anxiety and a lack of social skills, as noted by the participant. When pre-service teachers step into the classroom for the first time, they often experience tension due to their lack of teaching experience, limited subject knowledge, and the expectations placed on them by students. Han et al. (2020) note that pre-service teachers struggle with relationships with colleagues, students, and the teaching profession as they confront the conflict between their ideals and the realities of the classroom. Field studies can induce feelings of powerlessness or inadequacy, which can have a profound emotional impact (Tsybulsky & Oz, 2019). To address these personal challenges, pre-service teachers can strengthen their resilience and seek support from peers or mentors.

5. Teacher as Role Model Projection

Deployment in the teaching field marks the beginning of a teacher's responsibilities as a key role model who can influence students' attitudes, values, and behaviors. One student-teacher remarked:

"We believe in the saying, 'First impressions last.' So, how they saw you during your first deployment seems like it will be imprinted on their minds. Even for the teachers, officers, or faculty of the school, it's really scary. But all you have to do is pray before you enter. Before you go to the first deployment, just ask for guidance too. You have to remember that they are not below you, but above. You should not be equal to the teachers. You will not come down, either. Just know exactly what respect and proper manners are; that's what you should show."

Amerstorfer and Von Münster-Kistner (2021) assert that students' interest in academic endeavors is significantly influenced by their impressions of their teachers and the interactions they have with them. Teachers are regarded by society as individuals who impart knowledge in specific fields, and they are held

in high regard. According to societal standards, a teacher must embody what it means to be an educator and model appropriate behavior, setting a standard in all circumstances, both inside and outside the school (Dirsa et al., 2022). Pre-service teachers often feel the pressure of being a positive role model for their students. Balancing professionalism, ethical conduct, and personal authenticity can be challenging. Mentorship and guidance from experienced teachers can assist pre-service teachers in managing the expectations associated with being a role model.

6. Personal Expenses

In addition to personal needs, pre-service teachers must often cover the cost of materials using their funds. One participant noted:

"That's why 4th-year students spend a lot on printing. Well, I'm lucky because I have my printer, but imagine the struggles of those who don't have a printer at home. How much does printing cost? 5 pesos, even if it's black. Then, how many learning modules do we have? It's 30 pages and then handwritten. There is another department that allows you to print for them. That's where you can print your learning episodes, which can also lessen the burden of printing. But, of course, it's shameful to abuse it. So, you have to prepare money. It's very expensive. Just think about the activities. You need to make traditional materials, so you will buy things that you need."

According to DepEd Order No. 13 s.2020, "Guidelines on the Allocation, Delivery, and Distribution of Instructional Materials to Support the K-12 Curriculum," the Department of Education aims to provide both students and teachers with a comprehensive set of learning materials, subject to funding availability. Despite this directive, teachers are often required to compensate for the lack of resources using their own money. Pre-service teachers find it challenging to manage their finances, particularly if they are not compensated for the work, they do during the field study. Balancing professional development with financial constraints can be difficult.

7. Insufficient Learning Resources

Achieving quality education requires adequate resources. A lack of classroom materials significantly impacts the teaching and learning process. One pre-service teacher shared:

"As for me, in terms of resources in books, they don't have enough of them. There is a free reading corner, but not every student can use it because the school's reading corner is small, so not all students can read books, and not every student wants to go to the reading corner since it's not required."

Chi (2023) concluded that despite annual agreements to supply learners with adequate materials, data from the Department of Education indicate that not enough textbooks have been reaching students since 2012. Sen. Pia Cayetano raised this issue during the Department of Education's budget briefing in the Senate, noting that only learners in Grades 5 and 6 receive complete textbooks in all subjects, and DepEd has only been able to purchase and distribute 27 textbook titles in 11 years. When students and teachers do not receive the resources they need, it hinders their ability to learn and teach effectively. Even highly skilled teachers with ample personal resources can experience stress and burnout due to high demands and limited organizational resources, which can negatively affect decision-making and teaching strategies (Bottiani et al., 2019). Limited access to educational resources makes it more challenging to prepare and execute lessons effectively. Without adequate resources, pre-service teachers must be inventive and innovative in finding alternative ways to engage students and convey knowledge.

Coping Mechanisms

The following are the themes deduced from the collected data on how pre-service teachers cope with the challenges they experience.

1. Balancing Personal Struggles as a Student-Teacher

The transition to the field requires pre-service teachers to balance their personal lives, university obligations, and responsibilities as student teachers. One participant shared:

"I allotted enough time the next day for other things I have to accomplish. For example, tutoring, making graham balls, attending church practice, taking time off—going to SM. The bottom line is to leave some space for your 'me time,' because if you don't, you'll be burned out. You'll be drained because you don't have an outlet, and you don't do the things that make you happy anymore."

This reflection aligns with Praveen (2020), who asserts that individuals play multiple roles throughout their lives—such as parents, siblings, friends, and coworkers—and must skillfully balance these roles to manage the demands each one places on them. Maintaining a balance between personal and professional responsibilities not only benefits relationships and well-being but also improves productivity (Muthulakshmi, 2018). For pre-service teachers, acknowledging personal struggles and seeking support from mentors, peers, or counseling services is important. Developing resilience and maintaining a positive mindset are essential strategies for overcoming the challenges they face.

2. Group Learning

To ease the challenges they face, pre-service teachers often collaborate with their peers, sharing the workload and developing a sense of community. A participant illustrated:

"If there's one thing that helped me after the lockdown, it is probably that we're allowed to meet our classmates in person now and can collaborate with them in doing things like, for instance, creating IMs (Instructional Materials). When we had our practice demo, I invited them to collaborate in creating IMs, and it turned out to be helpful because making Instructional Materials is time-consuming."

Collaborating with peers is an effective strategy for managing teaching responsibilities and combating feelings of isolation (Piersol, 2023). By working together, pre-service teachers create a support system that facilitates the sharing of experiences and strategies. Group learning encourages diverse perspectives and collective problem-solving, thereby enriching the overall learning experience. This collaborative environment also allows the development of interpersonal, intrapersonal, presentational, and communication skills, all of which are valuable in real-world teaching situations (Gautam, 2018).

3. Applying Previous Learning and Life Experiences

Pre-service teachers often draw upon their past lessons and experiences when applying what they have learned in real classroom settings. A participant reflected:

"I thought to myself, 'This is easy-peasy.' But when I was deployed, I realized that there were still a lot of things I couldn't do. I can't do this; I can't do that. Then I realized that you just have to go back to where you started. So, what I did was go back to our past course, The Teaching Profession, and reread the modules that our professor gave back then. From there, I realized once again what my purpose was. I realized what I should do as a pre-service teacher. I realized that these challenges should be my motivation. This is me; I convert my weaknesses into strengths."

Reflection allows pre-service teachers to revisit past experiences, extract lessons, and apply newly constructed knowledge to current challenges (Sanchez, 2023). The field study phase is often a "make it or break it" moment for pre-service teachers, who may experience anxiety due to a lack of classroom experience or insufficient subject-matter expertise (Ji et al., 2022). The ability to draw from previous learning and experiences, and apply them in a real-world context, can help reduce this anxiety and increase their capacity to direct classroom challenges and adapt to new situations.

4. Effective Time Management

Field deployment demands effective time management, as pre-service teachers must balance multiple responsibilities. One participant shared:

"During my first semester, if I still have time, I manage my schedule well. I should have a planner and a goal, as well as sticky notes posted on the wall indicating the time you should finish your tasks. For instance, the objectives for the presentation of the lesson must be finished now; around this time, I have to drink coffee, then I have to finish the generalization up to the application, and this time, I have to review my lesson. Without managing your time, you'll find it difficult to succeed at what you are aiming for."

Creating a realistic and efficient schedule enables pre-service teachers to allocate time for lesson planning, reflection, coursework, and self-care. As pre-service teachers develop time management skills, their ability to focus improves, leading to increased productivity (Olivo, 2021). Effective time management involves prioritizing tasks, setting goals, and using time management tools to organize activities (Nigussie, 2019). By setting priorities and adhering to deadlines, pre-service teachers can create a more manageable workload.

5. Personal Motivation and Willingness to Learn

Developing strong internal motivation and a genuine desire to learn is essential for pre-service teachers as they progress on their professional development journey. One participant said:

"This experience taught me the things that I could only do; I can do more than that. Whatever you think about yourself, you can't do it, but once you try to do it and put your best effort into it, you will be able to interact with students. It's a struggle for an introvert to figure out how to unite and communicate with others. When you feel like you're unable to interact and it looks embarrassing, it can be discouraging, but when you try to push yourself beyond your thoughts, you'll be surprised that you're going to do well to interact. And, well, soon enough, you'll be able to build a good relationship with the people around you."

Curiosity and openness to new ideas lay the foundation for continuous development, keeping pre-service teachers adaptable and engaged. This attitude equips them with the skills needed to explain the ever-changing needs of education. Developing strong emotional competence helps pre-service teachers manage the demands of the teaching profession and improves their commitment to becoming effective educators (Ivanec, 2020). The intrinsic motivation to excel drives pre-service teachers to push beyond their perceived limits and strive for excellence in their professional journey.

6. Personal ingenuity

Personal ingenuity is important for pre-service teachers because it helps them come up with new ways to teach based on their skills and interests. It raises a sense of integrity in teaching and also makes managing the classroom much easier. A pre-service teacher explained:

"I am a student teacher now, and when I was still a student, I encountered a teacher who was not very nice in dealing with and treating the students. Instead of being down about it, I used it as inspiration and told myself that I wouldn't be a teacher like them. I want to be the type of teacher where my students are learning and having fun with the discussion and lesson as well. And during my deployment, I ensured that my students had a fun and engaging experience during the first activity I facilitated."

Chikendu (2022) stated that it is essential for teachers to take into consideration the diverse learning preferences of their students, develop instructional strategies that accommodate those preferences, and maintain awareness of these preferences throughout the teaching process. Examining how teachers might develop student involvement during lessons is valuable, considering the significance of student engagement for both present and future achievement. Pre-service teachers can develop skills through instructional activities that utilize design thinking (DT). To effectively use design thinking in their

future classrooms, pre-service teachers must first have a solid understanding of the concept (Liu et al., 2023). Effective classroom management can be supported by creating lessons that suit the interests and skills of each student. Pre-service teachers can maintain their attention and create an enjoyable learning atmosphere where students are more likely to be involved and invested in their learning. When teachers think outside the box and use creative approaches, they give their students a wide range of interesting and useful ways to learn that fit with how they learn best. Innovative methods of teaching may engage students, which can make lessons memorable and help them understand the subject matter better.

Opportunities

The following are the themes deduced from the collected data on the opportunities that pre-service teachers encountered in the field study program:

1. Student-Teacher and Resource Teacher Acquaintance Meeting

The Student-Teacher and Resource Teacher Acquaintance Meeting serves as an essential platform for pre-service teachers to engage with their resource teachers, creating a more conducive learning environment. Its primary objective is to facilitate improved communication and mutual understanding between students, teachers, and resource teachers. One participant emphasized the need for deeper engagement:

"I think the engagement between the pre-service teacher and the resource teacher needs to be deeper or more frequent. I've observed that the resource teacher and pre-service teacher aren't very close, almost as if they're hesitant to interact. The best course of action is to nurture a deeper relationship between them, as this would allow for greater impact and more effective guidance."

This emphasizes the importance of robust support systems for pre-service teachers, remarking the challenges in areas such as administrative support, cooperation with teachers, peer interactions, and the overall learning environment (Napanoy et al., 2021). Establishing a solid connection with the resource teacher provides essential assistance and guidance, helping pre-service teachers understand classroom management, lesson planning, and skill development. Regular meetings promote open communication, enabling pre-service teachers to share insights and receive valuable guidance for addressing classroom challenges and improving their learning experiences.

2. Adapting to Various Teaching-Learning Environments

Many students, having grown accustomed to online classes during the pandemic, face the challenge of adapting to in-person teaching environments during their field studies. One participant reflected on this transition:

"In an online class, I just had to wake up, and I didn't even need to fully prepare—just log on and I was present. But now, with on-site classes, I need to be efficient and manage my time well. For instance, if I have a class at 7 a.m., I need to wake up at 5 a.m., even if I live near the school, because I can't be late. This is an opportunity for me to train myself to be punctual, whether for class or any other task."

The pandemic has impacted the integration of technology into teaching and learning, prompting teachers to become more tech-savvy and flexible in their approaches (Yaseen & Joshi, 2021). Teachers' resilience and adaptability are valuable in addressing current challenges and developing effective learning environments. The experiences gained during the pandemic are likely to contribute to the sustainable development of quality education, where both teachers and students can develop their knowledge, skills, and abilities (Vulpe & Pribac, 2021). Exposure to diverse teaching environments allows pre-service teachers to develop the skills necessary to address varying student needs and learning styles.

3. Use of Technology in Teaching

The pandemic has accelerated the adoption of technology in classrooms, and field studies offer student-teachers the opportunity to learn how to blend modern and traditional teaching methods in real-world settings. One pre-service teacher observed:

"I've seen my Resource Teacher (RT) use ICT tools during lessons, and I noticed that students were more engaged with digital materials than with traditional ones like manila papers. Digital tools offer so many possibilities—for example, you can create dynamic presentations that are both entertaining and engaging for students."

The choice between modern and traditional teaching methods should be guided by the needs of the learners to maximize educational outcomes (Wang, 2022). The pandemic has revitalized teaching practices by incorporating advanced and innovative tools, which support distance learning and make educational resources more accessible (Rahayu et al., 2022). Teachers must stay current with new teaching approaches to ensure quality education in an increasingly digital world (Yadav, 2019).

4. Handling Students

Classrooms are diverse environments with students exhibiting a wide range of personalities, attitudes, and behaviors. Field studies expose pre-service teachers to these dynamics, helping them learn how to manage them effectively. One participant shared:

"We need to address each student's needs, regardless of personal feelings towards them. In the past, some teachers would neglect students they didn't like, but I'm glad to see a shift in the attachment between students and teachers. Even with the code prohibiting befriending students inside and outside the classroom, there is a noticeable difference."

Field experiences allow pre-service teachers to apply their theoretical knowledge to real-world situations, developing critical thinking skills as they explore complex issues (Lafayette College, 2023). Observation and participation are key components of this learning process, helping pre-service teachers prepare for future classroom management challenges (Pramesti, 2021). Understanding and managing student diversity is integral to creating an effective learning environment.

5. Learning from the Resource Teacher

Resource Teachers' (RTs) role is important in the professional development of pre-service teachers by offering guidance and feedback on teaching practices. One participant described:

"My Resource Teacher helps by unpacking lessons that aren't overly complex. We noticed that students weren't performing well, so we devised a new strategy to improve their scores. Now, we encourage students to write lecture notes, which earns them additional points."

Mentorship significantly impacts the professional growth of pre-service teachers, helping them build their identities and develop effective communication skills (Simon & Nissim, 2023). The exchange of ideas between mentors and pre-service teachers supports emotional and technical support, allowing pre-service teachers to learn new approaches and strategies (Mafugu, 2022). Resource Teachers are valuable mentors who provide insights into teaching methodologies, classroom management, and the broader educational landscape.

6. Learning from Students

Field studies also allow pre-service teachers to learn from their students, not just academically but also in terms of understanding their attitudes and behaviors. One participant noted:

"I need to be mindful of who you call on during recitations to avoid perceptions of unfairness. Students today are very competitive, and it's important to praise their answers and relate them to the topic."

Interacting with students provides pre-service teachers with insights into different learning styles and needs, helping them tailor their teaching approaches accordingly. Understanding how students perceive their teachers can improve the teacher-student relationship and improve learning outcomes (Inayat & Ali, 2020; Firda & Khairat, 2023). Competent educators are adept at recognizing and nurturing each student's potential, using their knowledge and skills to create an inclusive and supportive learning environment.

7. Classroom Facilities

Adequate classroom facilities are essential for creating a conducive learning environment for both students and pre-service teachers. One participant shared a positive experience:

"The school I was deployed to has well-maintained facilities—enough chairs, electric fans, and well-kept buildings, supported by the local government unit. They strive to provide the best for the students."

Sufficient classroom facilities enable pre-service teachers to focus on their responsibilities without being burdened by inadequate resources. Research indicates that well-equipped learning environments contribute to students' academic success (Zurainan et al., 2021; Usman, 2019). Classroom facilities play a critical role in supporting the development of knowledge, skills, and abilities, ensuring a more effective learning experience for all.

8. More Time for Demonstration Teaching

Pre-service teachers express the need for more opportunities to practice their teaching skills through demonstration teaching. One participant recommended:

"I think student teachers should have more opportunities for actual demonstration teaching so that those who will be deployed are competent and confident. It's important to ensure they are well-prepared before entering the field."

Teacher education programs should incorporate experiential learning approaches, providing adequate training in both pedagogical and content knowledge (Sharma, 2022). Experience is a vital component of learning, and allowing pre-service teachers ample time to practice their skills is fundamental for their development. Research shows that microteaching positively impacts pre-service teachers' performance in actual classroom settings, establishing the need for continuous improvement in curriculum, teaching methods, and resources (Meutia et al., 2018).

9. Improving Communication

Effective communication between pre-service teachers, resource teachers, and supervising instructors is essential for professional development. One participant suggested:

"I propose that pre-service teachers should provide weekly feedback to their Resource Teachers, which can develop a give-and-take relationship. This would help ensure that Resource Teachers are fully supporting their student teachers."

Feedback from mentors is instrumental in helping pre-service teachers become more competent educators (Choe, 2019). Constructive feedback and mentoring from university coordinators and supervisory stakeholders are critical components of teacher education programs, contributing to the overall quality of education (Rodriguez, 2018). Establishing open lines of communication and regular feedback sessions helps pre-service teachers refine their teaching practices and better support their students.

10. Trying Out the Teacher's Role

Field studies offer pre-service teachers the opportunity to assume the role of a teacher, gaining valuable experience in classroom management and student engagement. One participant reflected:

"I realized that I need to assert my authority as a teacher. My students should see me as their teacher, not just another student. This is key for managing a classroom effectively."

Teacher authority is a key factor in achieving the moral goals of education, and assuming the teacher's role provides pre-service teachers with essential experiences that contribute to their professional and personal growth (Namkung et al., 2022). Field study programs allow pre-service teachers to experiment with different teaching methods and approaches, raising their development as reflective practitioners (Xu et al., 2022; Hamilton, 2019).

11. Vast Learning Resources

Access to a wide range of learning resources is a significant advantage for pre-service teachers. One participant expressed appreciation for the resources available at their cooperating school:

"The school I was deployed to is well-equipped with both printed and digital materials, making it easier to find the resources I need."

The availability of extensive learning resources improves pre-service teachers' ability to design comprehensive and engaging lessons, nurturing creativity and innovation in their teaching practices. The pandemic has accelerated the adoption of technology in education, equipping pre-service teachers with the skills to integrate ICT into the classroom and prepare for potential shifts toward hybrid learning (Rahman et al., 2022; Joo et al., 2018).

12. Motivating Oneself

Maintaining motivation throughout the field study experience can be challenging, but it is fundamental for success. One participant shared their approach:

"I've learned that it's important to give your best effort and demonstrate a willingness to learn. Perseverance is key."

Pre-service teachers must stay motivated, especially when facing challenges such as adapting to new environments, managing diverse student needs, and balancing personal and professional responsibilities. Strategies for maintaining motivation include setting clear goals, seeking support from peers and mentors, and reflecting on personal and professional growth (Day, 2022).

13. Managing Personal Circumstances

Field studies often require pre-service teachers to balance their academic responsibilities with personal challenges. One pre-service teacher discussed:

"I need to be mindful of my actions. Although I may be tired, I need to ensure my responsibilities are fulfilled. I've learned that managing my time effectively and not procrastinating is essential for success."

Pre-service teachers must develop time management skills to handle the demands of field studies and personal responsibilities effectively. Effective time management strategies include prioritizing tasks, setting realistic goals, and maintaining a healthy work-life balance (Gustafsson et al., 2018).

14. Learning Group Cooperation

Collaborating with peers is a valuable aspect of the field study experience. One participant emphasized the importance of group cooperation:

"I've learned that teamwork is essential. It's important to cooperate with your groupmates, as this helps distribute the workload and ensures that tasks are completed efficiently."

Group cooperation fosters a collaborative learning environment, enabling pre-service teachers to share ideas, provide mutual support, and develop effective communication skills. Teamwork is a critical component of the teaching profession, as teachers often work collaboratively to plan lessons, manage classrooms, and address student needs (Vaughan et al., 2022).

15. Preparing for the Demo Teaching

Demonstration teaching is a basic component of the field study experience, allowing pre-service teachers to apply their learning in a real classroom setting. One pre-service teacher reflected on the importance of preparation:

"I've realized that being well-prepared for demo teaching is essential. I need to plan my lessons carefully, anticipate potential challenges, and practice my delivery to ensure that my students understand the material."

Thorough preparation for demo teaching helps pre-service teachers build confidence, develop effective teaching strategies, and refine their classroom management skills. Practicing lesson delivery, anticipating student questions, and seeking feedback from mentors are essential steps in the preparation process (Othman et al., 2021).

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the indicated findings, the following conclusions were drawn:

The findings indicate that pre-service teachers encountered several challenges during their field study, including adjustment to a new environment, lesson planning, transitioning into the role of a practicing teacher, personal struggles, role model projection, personal expenses, and insufficient learning resources. These challenges suggest that while pre-service teachers possess the foundational knowledge and skills necessary for field study, they face difficulties in specific areas.

The results of this study further revealed that most pre-service teachers employed multiple coping strategies to describe these challenges. The three most frequently reported strategies were the application of life experiences, effective time management, and personal ingenuity. The activities reported by the majority of participants, such as creating to-do lists, using planners, setting alarms, and applying previous learnings, appear to be effective in managing the difficulties encountered.

Opportunities also emerged from the participants' field study experiences following the pandemic. Notably, most participants identified learning from their resource teacher, experimenting with the teacher's role, and developing strategies for handling students as valuable opportunities. However, only a few participants explicitly mentioned the improvement of communication between the resource teacher and the student teacher, the interaction between the resource teacher and the supervising instructor, and the provision of weekly feedback to the resource teacher. This limited communication may be attributed to the lack of allocated time for meetings or consultations, resulting in fewer opportunities for pre-service teachers to share or express their ideas and opinions.

The study also revealed that pre-service teachers experienced significant challenges related to personal expenses, lack of resources, and personal struggles. During the interviews, many participants frequently expressed difficulties in addressing resource shortages and summarizes the impact of personal conflicts, such as anxiety and limited social skills. These challenges were particularly pronounced when pre-service teachers anticipated interacting with students and unfamiliar individuals, leading to feelings of nervousness and a lack of confidence in their performance.

Furthermore, the participants reported spending their own money on learning and teaching materials, which stresses the dual burden of insufficient resources on both lesson delivery and personal finances.

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