Mentors’ Perception on the Preparedness of Student Teachers for Practice Teaching

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Abstract

The importance of adequately prepared student teachers calls the attention of the teacher-educators to equip the future teachers with sufficient and up-to-date knowledge of subject content, to have their skills in a full repertoire of instructional methodologies, and foster acceptable values and attitudes. Practice teaching is perceived as an important component in preparing a student towards becoming a teacher. Hence, this study aimed to determine the perception of mentors or cooperating teachers on the preparedness of the student teachers for practice teaching in elementary and secondary schools in the second district of Cagayan Valley, Philippines. This paper utilized the descriptive, evaluative design using a questionnaire to gather the data from 25 mentors. This study also determined the comments and suggestions of the mentors on the preparedness of the student teachers assigned to them. Overall results showed that the preparedness of student teachers was very satisfactory. Looking into the individual attribute evaluated, it is found that the preparedness of student teachers concerning teaching skills and strategies was only satisfactory. The personal and professional attributes and classroom management and evaluation were very satisfactory. The mentors also noted few issues to consider relevant to the success of practice teaching. The findings of this study may provide feedback not only to equip the future teachers with knowledge and skills but also to help enhance the delivery of instruction during practicums.

Keywords: attribute, practicums, skills, strategies, teacher-educators
Introduction

It is a truism that teachers occupy a center stage in youth education in the Philippines. This center stage continuously receives attention from government and non-government sectors from the time the Spanish colonizers established a formal educational system for the country (Savellano, 1999). The teachers are the ones responsible for laying a solid foundation for a secure nation. As people always say, “tell me the kind of teachers that you have, and I will tell you the type of society that you will have tomorrow.” Cognizant to the perennial quest for quality teachers, and in the long run, quality primary education, Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) are continuously implementing curricular innovations and innovative reforms (Janer et al., 2015). Nonetheless, change becomes permanent. Teachers had taught much, but there is an urgency to discard and replace some teaching strategies and enhance the curriculum to cope with innovations and to meet the fast-changing need of time (Hagos & Dejarme, 2008; Moore, 2014).

A nearly impossible situation for teacher educators has been created due to the external demands placed on teacher education for globalization, professionalization, and the call of many experts to teach for understanding combined with the inherent professional needs of teachers and student teachers (Ben-Peretz, 2001). These external demands are exacerbated by teachers’ needs for certainty and control making their roles complex. The gaps between teachers’ professional self-images and the demands of their teaching contexts also contribute to the complexities of their role. Teachers have to demonstrate their roles explicitly and shall not be fraught with uncertainties (Ben-Peretz et al., 2003).

Inadequate preparation of teachers could result in most of the perceived failures in school because teacher education is deficient (Knoblauch & Chase, 2015). The image of teacher education students as intellectually inferior compared to other students in universities has to change. This endeavor is only possible if TEIs would look into the external and internal factors that may improve the attributes of student teachers (Savellano, 1999). The university is then expected to make a significant contribution in preparing the student teachers so
they could enter into the teaching profession with adequate skills (Turner et al., 2004).

Teachers need more depth and breadth in their field of specialization because an uninformed or ignorant teacher can do much harm to the learning clienteles (Savellano, 1999). Hence, the experiences in TEIs should not limit the preparation of a prospective teacher. Student teachers should not confine themselves to theories and principles within the boundaries of the classroom. Sufficient opportunities and experiences are needed for prospective teachers to put into practice the theories and principles learned (Acenas, 2004).

An effective integration of theory and practice requires sound judgment on the part of student teachers for them to understand the school as an organization and the way people behave in it (Fish, 2013; Allen & Wright, 2014). The integration is therefore possible through the exposure of student teachers to practice teaching, an approach that allows them to showcase their attributes in demonstrating the principles, theories, methods, skills, attitude, and values they learned from TEIs (Ranjan, 2013; Oonk et al., 2015). Aside from applying what the student teachers have learned, practice teaching serves as an avenue for the development of effective human relations and communications, two significant factors in the field of education (Savellano, 1999; Jones et al., 2014).

Practice teaching is a platform where student teachers can demonstrate the art of teaching before going into the real world of their profession (Gregory et al., 2011). It serves as the actual interface between studenthood and membership in the teaching profession. Practice teaching is therefore perceived as an important component in preparing a student towards becoming a teacher (Ranjan, 2013). The preparedness of the teacher may determine to a large degree how teaching tasks are performed to make a tangible difference in student achievement (Jones et al., 2014). It requires understanding the fundamental teaching-learning process and mastery of skills in continuous learning (Espineti, 2001; Loughran, 2013).

The importance of adequately prepared student teachers calls the attention of the TEIs. Teacher-educators need to equip the future
teachers with adequate and up-to-date knowledge of subject content, develop their skills in an extensive repertoire of instructional methodologies, and foster acceptable values and attitudes. Hamley (2001) stressed several tasks that student teachers are bound to carry out. The student teachers shall prioritize their duties as stipulated in school regulations. They need to exhibit punctuality in classes and meetings along with school rules. Student teachers need to notify in advance the mentor or cooperating teacher and the university supervisor when absent. It is relevant for them to exhibit professionalism at all times and become acquainted with and be able to abide the school policies as Brevik et al. (2014) also emphasized. Hamley (2001) further stressed that the student teachers need to regard some information as confidential. They also need to prepare when they receive the teaching responsibilities. They have to provide the mentors with teaching plans along with the guidelines and policies established by the school. Student teachers are bound to demonstrate teaching skills that include individualizing for pupil differences and management skills for diverse student behavior.

Student teachers should also develop an attitude of openness, willingness to learn and to adjust to the personality of the mentors to successfully perform their functions (Jones et al., 2014). They should learn to collaborate with their mentors to achieve goals to the maximum extent (Burton, 2015). Moreover, the student teachers must know how to manage their time effectively because teaching experiences create new demands for time management skills (Dicke et al., 2015). These skills include planning the next week’s lessons, grading papers, contacting parents and still having time to spend with friends and family. Learning to manage time as a student teacher will yield benefits throughout one’s career (Dalug, 2000; Burigsay, 1998; Acorda, 1998).

There have been many discussions on how important the preparation and how vital the role of a teacher and would-be teachers (Ranjan, 2013; Ambrosetti, 2014; Allen & Wright, 2014). Nevertheless, there are instances wherein negative remarks arise before and after student teachers finish with the arduous work of teaching (Ferber & Nillas, 2010; Fazio & Volante, 2011; Goh & Matthews, 2011). Hence,
this study aimed to determine the perception of mentors on the preparedness of their student teachers or mentee for practice teaching concerning their personal and professional qualities, teaching skills and strategies, and classroom management and evaluation. The findings of this study may provide feedback not only to equip the future teachers with knowledge and skills but also to help enhance the delivery of instruction during practicums.

Material and Methods

This study used the descriptive - evaluative design and survey method. The survey was conducted in the cooperating schools in the 2nd district of Cagayan Province in Region 2, Philippines where the BEED (Bachelor of Elementary Education) and BSE (Bachelor of Secondary Education) student teachers took their off-campus practice teaching. Purposive sampling and complete enumeration in identifying the respondents were carried out. The respondents of this study were 25 mentors or cooperating teachers. Informed consent was secured from each of the respondents before the conduct of the study.

The study utilized a questionnaire consists of 32 items or indicators based on the provisions of the National Competency-Based Teacher Standards (NCBTS). The mentors evaluated the preparedness of their student teachers from the College of Teacher Education at Cagayan State University (CSU), Sanches-Mira Campus by rating three sets of their qualities. These attributes include the personal and professional attributes (10 items/indicators), teaching skills and strategies (10 items/indicators), and classroom management and evaluation (12 items/indicators).

The questionnaire used the five-point Likert scale: 1 = Not at all satisfactory, 2 = Slightly satisfactory, 3 = Satisfactory, 4 = Very satisfactory, and 5 = Extremely satisfactory. The weighted mean was calculated and given the interpretation as follows: Extremely satisfactory (4.20-5.00); Very satisfactory (3.40-4.19); Satisfactory (2.60-3.39); Slightly satisfactory (1.80-2.59); Not at all satisfactory (1.00-1.79). The population standard deviation (SD) was computed to determine the
coefficient of variation (CV) which was interpreted as the percentage of variability of the responses. The standard CV value is at most 10% which assures that the responses are comparable. This study also gathered the comments and suggestions of the mentors regarding the preparedness of the student teachers assigned to them.

Results and Discussion

**Personal and professional attributes**

The personal and professional attributes of student teachers were very satisfactory in all ten indicators (Table 1), and the responses of the mentors were comparable. The pleasing personal appearance and manners of the student teachers obtained the highest weighted mean among the indicators used. The free seminars on personality development provided by the college may have contributed to the finding of this present study. Hashim et al. (2014) stressed that teacher’s personality is an important determinant of student proficiency. The attendance of student teachers was very satisfactory with no absences due to personal reasons. The result implies that absenteeism is not a concern among the student teachers in this study. Lee et al. (2015) highlighted the wide-ranging implication of absenteeism that includes inhibiting student achievement.

The finding suggests that student teachers were respectful of the authority and mentors. Teachers being able to show respect to school authority can create a positive school environment that can foster youth development and can learn necessary to improve the quality of school life (Cohen et al., 2011). The result also showed that the mentors rated the student teachers very satisfactory being a good leader and good follower. The study of Ali and Yangaiya (2015) showed the significant influence of this quality on teaching effectiveness. The result further suggests that student teachers were fair, just and impartial to students. Whitley et al. (2000) stressed that students expect a teacher to treat everyone in the class equally.
Table 1. The perception of mentors on the preparedness of student teachers as to their personal and professional attributes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal and professional qualities</th>
<th>Weighted mean</th>
<th>Verbal interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Pleasing personal appearances and manner</td>
<td>4.04</td>
<td>Very satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Do not get absent for personal reasons</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>Very satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Respectful of authority</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>Very satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Good leader and good follower</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>Very satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Fair, just and impartial to pupils/students</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>Very satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Effective and efficient</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>Very satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Able to understand the nature of the learners</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>Very satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Able to exhibit initiative and common sense</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>Very satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Willingness to join social gatherings</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>Very satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Willingness to accept their assignments</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>Very satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall Weighted Mean</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.65</strong></td>
<td><strong>Very satisfactory</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>0.2100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CV</td>
<td>5.76%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the rating of the mentors, the result is not similar to the claim of Hobjilă (2012) that student teachers are sometimes ineffective and inefficient in their chosen field. Another indicator with a very satisfactory rating is the willingness of the student teacher to join social gatherings and ready to accept another assignment aside from teaching. Such quality is essential in developing positive relationships with the people around them. Likewise, they would benefit the social support from other teachers, staff, and school administrators in the delivery of their roles as student teachers (Davey & Arnold, 2000).

**Teaching skills and strategies**

Table 2 presents the perception of the mentors on the preparedness of the student teachers concerning their teaching skills and strategies. As shown, the responses of the mentors are comparable. The overall weighted mean indicates that their preparedness was satisfactory. Writing the outline of topic discussion, and understanding
the principles, methods, and strategies of teaching were the two indicators with a very satisfactory rating. The finding suggests that the student teachers are organized in the topic presentation by providing a clear outline for the learners to follow. An effective teaching and learning process requires a simple outline of topics. The finding also implies that the College of Teacher Education in CSU-Sanchez Mira has successfully inculcated the basic principles, methods, and strategies for teaching. Teacher education programs need dynamic development to establish the most up-to-date and useful content (Adnan et al., 2015). Teachers need to demonstrate content-pedagogical expertise and also a more definitive understanding of the different teaching and learning styles (Futrell, 2010). In particular, understanding teaching strategies that are effective to develop the critical thinking skills of students is necessary (Abrami et al., 2015).

Table 2. The perception of mentors on the preparedness of student teachers as to their teaching skills and strategies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching skills and strategies</th>
<th>Weighted mean</th>
<th>Verbal interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Understands the principles, methods, and strategies of teaching</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>Very satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Constructs good lesson plan</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Displays mastery of the subject matter</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Cites relevant life experiences and illustrations</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Writes outline of topic discussion</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>Very satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Uses appropriate and practical instruction materials</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Integrates values in the lesson</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Can encourage pupils participation</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Provides appropriate reinforcement</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Defines and explains objective and scope of the course at the start of the term</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall Weighted Mean</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.29</strong></td>
<td><strong>Satisfactory</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SD</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.0985</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CV</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.99%</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The mentors gave a satisfactory rating to other student teacher attributes on preparedness. These attributes need to be improved. For example, the ability to provide appropriate reinforcement,
the indicator of the teaching skills and strategies that obtained the lowest weighted mean in this study. The finding implies that student teachers could hardly provide appropriate reinforcement at the end of the lesson. In one of the interviews conducted, student teachers revealed that they often give a monotonous type of assignment and often go beyond the perceptive theory, which calls for an appropriate reinforcement. According to Peters (2010), support can take many forms including tangible items and intangible motivator activities that engage students in the lesson, motivate learning, and encourage the success of assigned tasks.

The result suggests that preparedness in constructing a good lesson plan needs to be improved. The teaching-learning process requires a good lesson planning. A teacher who has prepared an excellent lesson plan can have a successful instructional experience. Lesson planning, therefore, forms the bedrock of effective teaching in the classroom (Savage, 2014).

The preparedness of student teachers to display mastery of the subject matter has to be given attention based on the result. The study of Kamamia et al. (2014) pointed the necessity for the student teacher to adequately master the subject matter as an essential skill that has a direct impact on the teaching-learning process. It is indispensable to master the subject matter before imparting it to the students to adequately prepare for content delivery. The subject mastery enables the student teachers to sequence the selected materials correctly in developing a lesson plan (Kamamia et al., 2014).

Secondary teachers should also have a sound knowledge of the learning area to become competent and effective (Chili, 2014). Moreover, Kamamia et al. (2014) emphasized that practitioners also need to acquire sufficient professional training to impart the knowledge effectively and efficiently. The finding of this study suggests that student teachers must obtain the necessary training to improve their preparedness for mastery of the subject matter.

As the finding implies, preparedness to cite relevant life experiences and illustrations has to be improved. Citing relevant life experiences can create a meaningful learning outcome. Life experiences
can be the source of learning and development among students as pointed by Kolb (2014). Also, the use of visual aids can make the learning process smooth and efficient (Awasthi, 2014). The use of educational technology can develop literacy skills among the students (Abrami et al., 2014). Although the latest technology is a vital classroom tool to aid the learning process, it is not as an end in itself. Nonetheless, the impact of citing relevant life experiences and presenting visualization tools among students is the significant and substantial gain in comprehension.

This study also suggests that the use of appropriate and practical instructional materials has to be addressed. These materials can significantly improve the performance of students. The instructional materials assist the teacher in the preparation and imparting the lesson to facilitate learning (Uzuegbu et al., 2013). With limited resources in schools, the use of improvised materials is beneficial to make the abstraction of concepts more concrete and practical to the learners (Iwu et al., 2011).

Another indicator to consider is the ability of the student teachers to integrate values into the lesson. In the study of Hadi (2015), teachers were capable of identifying character values appropriate for integration with the subject matter; however, the surveyed respondents appeared to be limited in skills and hesitant in applying the appropriate methods during the teaching-learning processes. Based on the finding of this study, there is a need to improve the value integration while teaching the subject matter to help develop good character in students through the nurturing nature of education.

The ability to encourage pupil participation is another attribute that has to be improved as the finding suggests. Fostering an atmosphere that allows students to engage classroom activities requires good preparation. Many ways can promote pupil participation such as enhancing student's self-belief, preparing learning activities that are active and collaborative, and creating challenging educational experiences that can extend their academic abilities (Weimer, 2012).

The preparedness of the student teachers to define and explain objectives and scope of the course before the start of the term is another
attribute with a satisfactory rating. Student teachers who could not specify the objectives and scope of the course do not help their students to know precisely the outcome expected from them. Moreover, defining the goals of the course can help in choosing the educational materials and the learning activities (Fontaine & Bernhard, 1988). Objectives can also provide a medium of clarifying the purpose of evaluation at the end of the term. As the finding suggests, it is necessary for the student teachers to improve in this context. It is also paramount to note that student teachers can only expect a very satisfactory result if they can relate the objectives to the other aspects of instruction.

The satisfactory rating of mentors to their student teachers in some indicators of teaching skills and strategies suggests that the latter are a little bit weak in applying the principles, methods, and strategies of teaching. A competent student teacher should not only master all the different strategies and methods of teaching theoretically; they must know how and when to apply these schemes (Philippine Association for Teacher Education, 2000). The findings of this study as shown in the overall perception of the mentors about the teaching skills and strategies of the student teachers conform to the idea of Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2007).

**Classroom management and evaluation**

The overall rating of mentors on the preparedness of their student teachers on their classroom management and class evaluation was very satisfactory (Table 3). As shown, the responses of the evaluators are comparable. Being able to call students who are ready to recite is the attribute that obtained the highest mean. The finding also suggests that student teachers were prepared in giving praises or encouraging remarks to students who answer the question correctly. They were also able to give prizes and rewards to pupils who respond to the question correctly. As teachers, it is essential that they make the process of providing feedback a positive learning experience for the students to provide them with an “I can do this” attitude (Reynolds, 2013).
Student teachers in this study exhibited very satisfactory preparedness to work within the allotted time. Allocated time is the “opportunity to learn.” Teachers who give more time to specific topic allow students to achieve at optimum levels than teachers who give less time to the same content (Florida Education Association, 2015).

The preparedness of the student teachers to maintain cleanliness and orderliness of the classroom and to set seating arrangement free from classroom traffic was very satisfactory. According to Niven et al. (2014), the physical environment is important and can influence the quality of learning experience. It is expected for teachers to create a climate conducive to enhancing the level of learning. Rose and Porgio (2015) showed a high level of academic achievement of secondary school students with high level of physical orderliness in the school.

Table 3. Perception of mentors on the preparedness of student teachers as to their classroom management and evaluation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classroom management and evaluation</th>
<th>Weighted mean</th>
<th>Verbal interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Maintenance of cleanliness and orderliness of the classroom</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>Very satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Systematic checking of attendance</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>Very satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Routinizing classroom courtesies in passing in and out of the Classroom</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>Very satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Setting a seating arrangement free from classroom traffic</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>Very satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Work within allotted time</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>Very satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Gives prizes and encouraging rewards to pupils who answer question correctly</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>Very satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Monitors pupils progress through appropriate assessment</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>Very satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Returns corrected papers, assignments, and requirements</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>Very satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Calls students who are ready to recite</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>Very satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Uses different types of test during periodical examinations</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall Weighted Mean | 3.54 | Very satisfactory

SD | 0.1162 |
CV | 3.28% |
The finding also implies that student teachers were systematic in checking the attendance. Haydon and Kroeger (2015) showed that active supervision of students by their teachers could prevent school failure. Student teachers also are able to routinize classroom courtesies and to pass in and out of the classroom as the result suggests. Diehl and McFarland (2015) emphasized that interactions between teacher and students in the classroom can shape academic achievement.

As implied from the findings of this study, student teachers were prepared in monitoring pupil’s progress and return corrected papers, assignments, and requirements. Jimerson et al. (2015) highlighted the importance of progress monitoring to facilitate student achievement.

The very satisfactory rating concerning classroom management and evaluation suggests that the student teachers possess the necessary management skills in a classroom. Moreover, the findings confirmed that student teachers are prepared and fully equipped with the management skills vital in controlling the physical conditions as well as the materials for instruction.

However, the preparedness of the student teachers for practice teaching was only satisfactory on the use of different types of the test during the periodical examination, an indicator that obtained the lowest weighted mean in this area. The finding implies that their knowledge in constructing a variety of test is less adequate. Polin and Talley (2000) emphasized that student teachers must learn and practice applying various assessment strategies in the classrooms for them to successfully evaluate their teaching performances.

Nevertheless, the overall finding on the preparedness of student teachers on classroom management and class evaluation is an implication that student teachers are good classroom managers. The finding of this study is different from the study of Conover (2015) which showed that student teachers did not feel entirely prepared for classroom discipline despite having a good understanding of classroom management. New teachers should exhibit the skills necessary to create a classroom environment of trust based on a positive tone, and they should display an in-depth knowledge of content that enables them to provoke the students’ interest (Intrator, 2006). The techniques and skills
for classroom management can hold the attention of the students to perform the task during the delivery of lessons (The Glossary of Education Reform, 2013).

Table 4 shows the overall rating of the mentors on the preparedness of their student teachers for practice teaching. The overall result was very satisfactory and the responses of the mentors were comparable. The teaching skills and strategies of student teachers obtained a satisfactory rating that requires more improvement among the three qualities evaluated. The mentors have a critical role in the preparation of student teachers. Whaley and Wolfe (1984) stated that mentors could become identified as a group making serious efforts to improve the profession of teaching. The overall findings imply that the student teachers were competent and well-prepared based on the Code of Competency for Teachers. Such manifestation proves the quality of training they have acquired from their institution.

Table 4. The overall rating of mentors on the preparedness of student teachers for practice teaching.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualities</th>
<th>Weighted mean</th>
<th>Verbal interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Personal and professional attributes</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>Very satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Teaching skills and strategies</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Classroom management and evaluation</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>Very satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall weighted mean</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>Very satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>0.1517</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CV</td>
<td>4.32%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The comments and suggestions written by the mentors on the questionnaire are shown in Table 5. Mentors observed students teachers showing interest in practicum which is a positive note because they are likely to deliver the topic efficiently with better methods, teaching approaches and styles (Haigh et al., 2006). Mentors also noted the effort of the student teachers to cope with what was required. This positive comment is an indication that the would-be-teachers were able to consider the requirements of the mentors as high priorities and promptly prepared the documents requested.
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Table 5. Comments and suggestions of mentors to the student teachers indicated in the questionnaire.

A. Comments

Student teachers

1. showed interest in their practice teaching and tried hard to cope with the requirements and expectations from them
2. performed well in their assigned task and prepared to assume responsibilities
3. showed the willingness to work beyond expectations and to accept suggestions
4. showed a positive and cheerful disposition
5. performed the traditional teaching sometimes
6. were unprepared for their teaching aids
7. were late in reporting to their cooperating school (some teachers)

B. Suggestions

1. to put up a Laboratory School
2. to have a higher degree of mastery of the subject matter
3. to be willing to attend the social gathering
4. to have a longer period of campus teaching
5. to prepare ahead of time
6. to observe grammatical structure in constructing lesson plans

Note: Numbers do not represent any particular order of comments/suggestions.

Mentors gave a positive comment regarding the performance of student teachers in their task. Field and Latta (2001) stressed that student teachers are expected to perform well in their tasks taking into account that practicums often focus on obtaining technical skills such as classroom management and effective instruction. Students who push hard and work intelligently can accomplish these goals (Kaplan & Owings, 2013). Mentors also wrote a positive note on student teachers’ disposition. A positive teacher-learner interaction is effective to address the immediate symptoms of disengagement which is a barrier to effective communication (Wallace, 2014).

However, the mentors observed that student teachers sometimes used the traditional teaching. There is a need for the student teachers to express openness to innovation and exploration to provide effective instructional strategies (Moore, 2014). For example, the use of multimedia aids can make the learning process efficient (Awasthi, 2014) which the student teachers in this study were not prepared. Another
negative comment of the mentors was on the punctuality of the student teachers in reporting to their cooperating teachers. Time management of teachers affects the performance of student teachers. Using time effectively leads to productivity and achievement (Nadinloyi et al., 2013). The mentors suggested for student teachers always to strive to master their subject matter, attend social gatherings, spend a longer period of practice teaching, be ready to teach, and improve their communicative competence. The feedbacks of mentors may help enhance the learning approaches (Azer et al., 2013).

Conclusion and Recommendations

The overall very satisfactory rating in the preparedness of student teachers signifies that these future teachers have the attributes of what is expected from them. The student teachers who have the sense of responsibility towards their expected functions and roles are equipped with the necessary managerial skills in controlling the physical condition and materials of instruction through the training provided by the College of Education in CSU–Sanchez Mira. However, improvement in teaching skills and strategies is a great challenge both to the mentors and student teachers. There is also need to enhance the preparedness of student teachers on their personal and professional attributes and classroom management and evaluation from being very satisfactory to extremely satisfactory for optimum learning. Based on the comments of the mentors, there are only a few issues to address, but these are relevant to consider.

The College of Teacher Education at the CSU–Sanchez Mira should design and implement a program for the supplemental training of effective and efficient teaching that includes seminars on test construction and lesson planning. The student teachers should also involve in activities that would help them become confident to overcome their stage fright.
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Literature Cited


