PROBLEMS AND MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS OF STUDENT TEACHERS DURING THEIR PRACTICE TEACHING

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Abstract: Practice teaching in any school, whatever activities that are undertaken, is bound to present some problems to student teachers because it is their first experience in this kind of learning activity. From purely learners, they become both learners and teachers at the same time. This study was conducted to determine the problems encountered by Bachelor of Technical Teacher Education student teachers of Cagayan State University, Tuguegarao City, Cagayan. Forty (40) student teachers were interviewed using a questionnaire. It made use of descriptive research. Results reveal that the most serious problems reported by the respondents were identified through ranking and percentage. It was found out that the most common problems of student teachers were poor discipline of the students, lack of facilities and teaching materials, and lack of financial support. Also, majority of the problems encountered fall under management and classroom situation. Practice teaching allows students to have a firsthand experience inside the classroom but problems are inevitable. However, this study will shed light to the problems and proper interventions can be introduced to assist the practice teaching students in their off campus exposure.

Keywords: motivational factors, problems, practice teaching, descriptive research, questionnaire, interventions

INTRODUCTION

In the task of nation-building, the teachers play a great role in the education of the future leaders of the country. To assume this role, the regional normal schools and teacher education institutions are entrusted with the prime responsibility of producing competent and quality teachers. To this end, normal schools and teacher-education institutions should endeavor to provide the best training for prospective teachers. Included as one of the aspects of professional training is student teaching or practice teaching.
Practice teaching in any school, whatever activities that are undertaken, is bound to present some problems to student teachers because it is their first experience in this kind of learning activity. From purely learners, they become both learners and teachers at the same time. During teaching practice, a student teacher is given the opportunity to try the art of teaching before actually getting into the real world of the teaching profession. Student teachers also know the value of practice teaching as they perceive it as ‘the crux of their preparation for teaching profession since it provides them with real interface between student hood and teacher profession. As a result, practice teaching creates a mixture of anticipation, anxiety, excitement and apprehension in the student teachers as they commence their teaching practice. (Edith Kiggundu and Samuel Naimuli, 2009)

In previous years as at present, student teachers have encountered several problems but no systematic study in the college has been undertaken to determine what these problems are. In order to benefit both the student teachers and the management of the college, this study was conceived. It is hoped that through this study, the practice teaching experience of BTTE student teachers will be made less difficult and at the same time, common problems encountered can be made the basis of the content of future action researchers on the improvement of teaching.

It is on this note that the researcher endeavored on this study.

FRAMEWORK

Good teaching practice is a key influence on student learning - a desired outcome and primary goal of higher educational institutions. Teachers strive to meet the principles of good practice in an effort to provide the best learning experience for their students. (https://www.flinders.edu.au/teaching/quality/.../good-teaching-practice.cfm)

Practice teaching is of paramount importance in the vocational training of student teachers. It is this immersion into the real world of school that prepares the student in making the transition from trainee to professional. (Wagenaar, 2005)

Practice teaching plays an important part in their development as teachers by providing a context wherein they could merge theory and practice, find their own teaching and management styles as well as cope with the demands of multi-tasking that being in a classroom demands. The paramount role of the host teacher and the importance of positive
relationships with all stakeholders was foregrounded - as was the importance of an awareness of the cultural and contextual make-up of learners. (Wagenaar, 2005)

The important aspect of school-based teaching practice is that it provides trainee teachers with the opportunity to integrate different types of knowledge and use them in specific school contexts. In other words, in order to achieve the desired educational aims, objectives and values, the trainee teachers must teach contents by applying their general pedagogical knowledge and their specific knowledge of each subject. At the same time, they must also take into account the characteristics of the students who are recipients of this teaching as well as the knowledge of the educational context in which teaching takes place.

There is evidence to suggest that school-based teaching practice is considered to be the most important part of teacher training by student teachers. In research carried out by Pérez Serrano (1987), for example, 82.3% of student teachers and 73.7% of teachers from Education Faculties and University Colleges indicated that this component is the most important aspect of the initial teacher training programme; only 29.6% of active primary school teachers, however, provided the same assessment. In Madrid (1996 and 1998b) we were also able to show that the practicum is considered to be one of the most relevant stages of teacher education, with a mean store of 3.8 on a scale from 0 to 4, appearing just after the subjects of English and English Language Teaching (Didáctica de la Lengua Inglesa), which scored 3.9 on the same scale. (http://www.ugr.es/~dmadrid/Practicas/Introduccion%20al%20Practicum.htm)

According to Eraut, teacher trainers provide professional theories while student teachers theorise during their practice and eventually form their own personal theories (O’Hanlon, 1993: Williams, 1999; Griffiths and Tann, 1992; Lavender, 1999). In this sense, the periods of initial teacher training and school-based teaching practice take on a major role in the training and professional development of the student teacher. It is during these stages that student teachers form theories which will guide them through the multiple, varied and complex pathways of teaching. The primordial role of the teacher trainer, then, is neither descriptive nor prescriptive, but rather mediating and facilitating, where efforts are made to provide student teachers with opportunities to be protagonists in their own learning and training: (http://www.ugr.es/~dmadrid/Practicas/Introduccion%20al%20Practicum.htm)
Teaching practice is an important component of becoming a teacher. It grants student teachers experience in the actual teaching and learning environment.

**OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

This study essentially determined the problems encountered by the BTTE student teachers during their Practice Teaching. It looked into the reasons for pursuing teaching as a course and the common problems encountered during their practice teaching.

**METHODOLOGY**

This study made use of the descriptive research design. This research design gathers data through the questionnaire technique to elicit information on the motivational factors and problems encountered by the Bachelor of Technical Teacher Education practice teaching students of Cagayan State University. The data in this study were obtained from 40 BTTE student teachers. A questionnaire was used to gather data which consisted of two parts, namely: a) reasons for taking teaching, and 2) problems encountered by the student teachers. The data and information gathered were presented in tables and analyzed using ranks and percentages.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Results disclose that twenty of the participants or 50% of them took teaching because they wanted to become successful teachers someday which is a very good reason. It is assumed that most of them were properly trained and equipped with more competencies in teaching. There were also 7 or 17.5% who took teaching to earn a degree, with no intent of pursuing a teaching career. Teaching should not be taken for granted because of the fact that it is the noblest profession. Other reasons aside from the reasons mentioned above were reported by 6 or 15%. There were also 5 or 12.5% who had no response. One (1) respondent or 2.5% took teaching to follow his parents’ decision which is not a good reason because the student is more in a position to choose what course is really suited to his ability. Only one student teacher took teaching to follow the occupation of his mother.

Also, data reveal that 35 participants or 87.5% of the student teachers encountered “poor discipline of the students” as their most serious problem. This implies that teacher education students need to be better trained and equipped with more competencies in classroom management and discipline. The next most serious problem encountered was lack of equipment/facilities and teaching materials. This was reported by 30 respondents or
75%. Teaching will not be effective without using equipment/facilities and other teaching aids. These are very important in teaching because it has been noted that about 70% of what one learns is acquired through the sense of sight (Wolfe 2001).

The third most serious problem as reported by 28 or 70% of the participants was lack of financial support. It is a common observation that most of the student teachers belong to the poor families, hence, may not have enough resources to produce teaching aids or visual aids.

Another problem also reported by 10 or 25% of the participants was the inadequate guidance by the cooperating teachers. This is a very revealing finding, considering that cooperating teachers have the precise role of guiding, assisting, and directing the student teachers during the period of practice teaching. In effect, cooperating teachers are practicum teachers of graduating students.

There were also other problems encountered but are deemed minor problems like: teaching subjects outside schedule, room not conducive to learning, lack of time for laboratory period, too big classes, short period for practice teaching, difficulty in dealing with students, disarrangement of schedule, distraction due to other subjects enrolled, personality of the student teacher and the absence of a teacher’s manual/teaching guide.

Further, data show that most of the problems encountered fall under the category-management, which includes 5 problems as reported by the student teachers. There were 3 problems related to classroom situation and the student teacher himself. Two (2) problems related to instructional materials and one (1) problem related to the cooperating teacher.

CONCLUSIONS

On the basis of the findings of the study, it can be concluded that some of the student teachers are not really interested in teaching but just enrolled in the course to earn a degree. Problems arise because of student teachers’ poor discipline which affects the process of assimilating best practices in the teaching profession. Also, the inadequacy of facilities, materials and equipment from the cooperating schools can also hinder the process of learning. Aside from this, some practice teachers cannot concentrate in their practice teaching due to other subjects enrolled in the same semester and lack of financial support. These difficulties can disturb the practice teachers from their exposure inside the classroom.
RECOMMENDATIONS

The study is limited identifying the motivational factors and problems encountered by the practice teaching students hence, future researchers are encouraged to conduct further study on the same subject but in a wider scope including other variables. Also, those who take teaching should be properly screened regarding their aptitude and interest in teaching so that they can be equipped with more competencies in classroom management and discipline. Furthermore, teacher education students should be taught how to prepare devices in the absence of available teaching aids and practice teaching should not be taken together with other subjects.

REFERENCES