

Personal and Professional Competencies of Senior Teacher Education Students

Ligaya H. Morillos¹, Ronato S. Ballado², Fe S. Arandia³, Sol R. Muncada⁴

^{1,2,3,4} Faculty Members, College of Education, University of Eastern Philippines, Catarman, Northern Samar, Philippines

Abstract: The study determined the performance of senior teacher education students in the in-campus teaching phase as rated by their cooperating teachers. The performance was studied in terms of the personal and professional qualities of the students. Using descriptive research design, a 35-item questionnaire was utilized. Data were treated using frequency counts, percentages, ranking and means. Findings revealed that most of the student respondents are female, having ages ranging from 19 and above. A bigger number constituted of majors in English. Majority of the respondents have Good performance. The respondents are rated Good in personal qualities. Highest means were for indicators on personal appearance, such as dressing and grooming appropriately, having good posture and carriage and being neat and pleasing in appearance. Lowest means were for indicators in having a keen sense of humor, being well informed on current social problems and issues and manifestation of creativity. The respondents are rated well in professional qualities. Highest means were for indicators on preparing instructional materials, showing respect for students' personality, and deriving objectives from curriculum requirements and students' needs. Lowest means were for indicators on creating wholesome classroom atmosphere conducive to learning, giving careful attention to the physical condition of the classroom and showing mastery of subject matter or content.

Keywords: personal competencies, professional competencies, senior, teacher education, student teachers

I. INTRODUCTION

Student teaching is the final phase in the teacher education curriculum. The practicum period in teacher education curriculum is very vital in the over-all development of the future teacher. Barber and Mourshed (2007) mentioned that all the better school systems had integrated practicum into their teacher training programs. The practicum period in the University of Eastern Philippines, the locale of the study, is done in the second semester of the last school year of the teacher education student. This is composed of two phases – the in-campus student teaching where the fourth year teacher education students are assigned in the laboratory schools of the university – the University of Eastern Philippines Laboratory High School (UEPLHS) and the University of Eastern Philippines Laboratory Elementary School (UEPLES) and the off-campus student teaching where the student teachers are assigned in various schools under the Department of Education. The practicum period provides the student teachers the actual test of becoming a teacher. The theories they have learned in the teacher education curriculum are put into practice. Student teachers are designated to practice-teach in a certain class under a cooperating teacher who will be responsible in harnessing their pedagogical knowledge and rating them according to their teaching performance.

The student teachers' stay in the laboratory school is an enriching experience. With the guidance of the cooperating teachers, they are able to acquaint themselves with the ins and outs of teaching. They are able to expose themselves to the actual class situations – the daily routine a teacher undertakes, dealing with students who come different family backgrounds, and disciplining those who are deviants. In the performance of the student teachers' duty can be seen their competencies, which in this study, are categorized into personal and professional. Teacher competencies are defined as the general knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to effectively and efficiently fulfil the requirements of the teaching profession (MEB, 2006 in Koksai, 2014). Bhargava & Pathy (2011) posited that teaching relies on clearly defined set of

competencies possessed by professionals working on the field of education. In the Philippines, teacher competencies are clearly described in the National Competency Based Teacher Standards (NCBTS), a teacher education framework.

In the study of Bhargava & Pathy (2011) on the perception of student teachers about teaching competencies, competencies were categorized into personal and professional. The study found that preferred teacher's personal competencies of the students are confidence, intelligence, friendliness, politeness and patience while the preferred teacher's personal competencies include knowledge of subject matter, effective communication skills, punctuality, being a disciplinarian and understanding the nature of child psychology. Moreover, the study of Oliva, et al (2009) show that initial teacher training should deal in depth with the competencies related to the organization and management of teaching-learning, the use of new technology in the primary classroom, the involvement of families, education in values, social skills and skills for working in professional groups. In addition, Malm (2009) stated that student teacher considered commitment, interest and openness as essential in teacher education. Pantic and Wubbels (2010) found out that the teachers view teacher identity and professional development as the most important competency for teachers while teacher involvement in the development of the national education system as the least important. The study of Abu Sharbain & Tan (2012) showed that the teacher's competency level correlated strongly with their attitudes before and after a three-competency training. The same finding was observed by Koksai (2014) in her study of the relationship between general teaching competency perceptions and attitudes towards the profession. Particularly, the study of Edwards (2010) stated that among language competencies, beginning student teachers rated skills in "spelling", "grammar" and "structure of English" as the most important skills that an English teacher should possess.

Per observation by the researchers, difficulties in coping with the task of the student teaching phase have been experienced by student teachers. It is along this premise that the researchers investigated the evaluation of the fourth year BSED student teachers during their in-campus teaching along their personal and professional qualities.

II. METHODOLOGY

This study is conducted in the College of Education, UEP Laboratory High School during the second semester of the school year 2012-2013. The respondents were 50 senior teacher education students enrolled in the Bachelor of Secondary Education program who were having their student teaching in the laboratory high school. The student teachers were evaluated by 24 cooperating teachers using a 35-item questionnaire which listed several competencies of a student teacher, which were grouped into personal and professional competencies. Descriptive-survey research design was employed for the study. It described the performance of the respondents as evaluated by their cooperating teachers in the terms of personal qualities and professional competencies. To describe the data on the competencies of the respondents, frequency counts, percentages, means and ranking were used.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Profile of the Student Teachers:

Table 1 show the profile of the respondents in terms of major or specialization, age and sex. The table show that out of 50 respondents, 12 or 24 percent were majors in English, 7 or 14 percent were majors in Mathematics, 10 or 20 percent were majors in Science, 7 or 14 percent were majors in Filipino, 8 or 18 percent were majors in Social Studies and 6 or 12 percent were majors in MAPEH. Most of the respondents are majors in English. It implies that the students in the College are given the opportunity to choose their field in interest.

Table 1: Profile of the Student Teachers

Major/Specialization	F	%
English	12	24
Mathematics	7	14
Science	10	20
Filipino	7	14
Social Studies	8	16
MAPEH	6	12
Total	50	100

Competencies of Student Teachers:

Table 2 shows the over-all evaluation of the competencies of student teachers during their in-campus teaching. It can be gleaned from the table that out of 50 student teachers, 33 or 66 percent were evaluated as Good, 13 or 26 percent as Very Good, 3 or 6 percent as Excellent, and 1 or 2 percent as Fair in their competencies. The finding shows that the majority of the respondents had good competencies. This finding conforms with the study of Seferoglu (2004) which found out that majority of the respondents evaluated themselves as moderate or good in the majority of the teaching competencies. This finding indicates that there is still a lot of room for improvement for the student teachers. Student teachers still need to be honed in their competencies to perform better.

Table 2: Over-all Level of Competency of Student Teachers

Level	F	%
Excellent	3	6
Very Good	13	26
Good	33	66
Fair	1	2
Total	50	100

Personal Competencies of Student Teachers:

The student teachers are rated good in personal competencies. Only one indicator on “being neat and pleasing in appearance” (M=98.84) was rated Excellent. This indicates that the student teachers recognize the need for a teacher to carry a good personality. Three other indicators rated Very Good are also on personality such as “dressing and grooming appropriately” (M=92.96), “having good posture and carriage” (M=92.68) and “being mentally and emotionally sound” (M=91.70). This affirms the finding of Romo and Forneas (2010) that the student teacher’s personality got the highest mean rating among the different criteria. However, perceptions of student teachers in Bhargava and Patty’s (2011) study suggested pleasant personality and neat/smart dressing as not in the top list of essential competencies for teachers. Veldman and Peck (1963), on the contrary, found that being “friendly”, “cheerful” and “admired” are personal qualities that students most look up to teachers. Lowest means for the personal competencies were for “having a keen sense of humor”, “being well informed on current social problems and issues” and “manifestation of creativity”. The same indicators were in the bottom list of Bhargava & Patty (2011).

Table 3: Personal Qualities of the Pre-Service Education Students

Quality	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
Is neat and pleasing in appearance	98.84	Excellent	1
Dresses and grooms appropriately	92.96	Very Good	2
Has a good posture and carriage	92.68	Very Good	3
Is mentally and emotionally sound	91.70	Very Good	4
Has clear, pleasant, and modulated voice	91.28	Good	5
Is at ease in social situations	91.08	Good	6
Is free from bad speech, habits and mannerism	90.94	Good	7
Performs task cheerfully and willingly	90.74	Good	8
Is active and energetic	90.59	Good	9
Shows initiative and resourcefulness	90.52	Good	10
Articulate clearly and naturally	90.50	Good	11
Is perceptive to suggestion	90.37	Good	12
Manifests creativity	90.04	Good	13
Is well informed on current social problems and issues	89.36	Good	14
Has keen sense of humor	88.94	Good	15
Mean	91.36	Good	

Professional Qualities of Student Teachers:

The student teachers are rated Good in professional qualities. Only one indicator on “preparing instructional materials” (M=91.98) were the students rated Very Good. This indicated that the student teachers are well-equipped in skills in devising materials to be used in teaching. Next two highest means were for indicators on “showing respect for students’ personality” (M=91.20), and “deriving objectives from curriculum requirements and students’ needs” (M=90.84). This indicated that the student teachers recognize the need to respect the individual differences among students. The findings of Bhargava and Pathy (2011) revealed a different ranking when their study showed that competencies of “knowledge of subject matter”, “effective communication skill” and “punctuality” are given more weight by student teachers. The finding of the study on student teachers being very adept in instructional materials preparation is different from the findings of Seferoglu (2004) that the teacher candidates have the lowest means in materials development, particularly, preparing video cassettes. Seferoglu (2004) also found out that the teacher candidates had lowest means along planning instruction on preparing annual and monthly plans.

Lowest means in professional qualities were for indicators on “creating wholesome classroom atmosphere conducive to learning” (M=87.70), “giving careful attention to the physical condition of the classroom” (M=88.90) and “showing skills in using a variety of questioning techniques” (M=89.04). The lowest means were focused on classroom management skills. The finding supports the finding of Romo and Forneas (2010) that questioning skills tend to be the lowest in the student teachers’ competencies. The study of Bhargava and Patty (2011) revealed “active participation in co-curricular activities”, “courtesy and respect to parents” and “being technology savvy” as least preferred competencies of student teachers. The study of Seferoglu (2004) revealed also a different finding as competencies on classroom management are among the top three best cluster of competencies of the teacher candidates.

Table 4: Professional Qualities of Pre-service Education Students

Quality	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
Prepares appropriate instructional materials	91.98	Very Good	1
Shows respect for students’ personality	91.20	Good	2
Derives objectives from curriculum requirements and students’ needs	90.84	Good	3
Exhibit tact and consideration in dealing with students	90.60	Good	4
Conceives objectives in terms of student knowledge, understanding, habits, skills, attitudes and appreciation	90.48	Good	5
Uses language within students’ comprehension	90.36	Good	6
Sets up attainable and measurable behavioral objectives	90.34	Good	7
Masters subject matter or content	90.26	Good	8
Speaks and writes clearly, correctly and logically	90.08	Good	9
Encourages and distributes student participation	89.84	Good	10
Shows familiarity with evaluation devices, instrument and techniques	89.82	Good	11
Constructs and uses appropriate evaluation instruments and techniques	89.76	Good	12
Provides varied activities according to the needs of different groups/individuals	89.74	Good	13
Records interest test results properly for remediation, reinforcement and enrichment	89.58	Good	14
Arouses and sustains student interest	89.46	Good	15
Handles disciplinary problems with tact and good judgment	89.26	Good	16
Routinizes activities systematically	89.12	Good	17
Shows skills and uses a variety of questioning technique	89.04	Good	18
Gives careful attention to the physical condition of the room	88.90	Good	19
Creates wholesome classroom atmosphere conducive to learning	87.70	Good	20
Mean	89.92	Good	

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Generally, the overall competency of the respondents was good. It can be inferred that there is still a lot of room for improvement for student-teachers and that while in the college, there is a need to harness these competencies to be better prepared in student teaching.

The student teachers have a balance of personal and professional competence, though the personal competencies had a higher mean than professional competencies. So, et al (1996) recognized the strong influence of personal factors of student teachers in developing professional competence. Before the students reach their student-teaching phase, their personal qualities and professional competencies should have been polished. Malm (2009) agrees that there is a need to heighten the awareness of what it means to be a teacher, with the personal 'being' and the professional 'becoming' as essential and interrelated dimensions of career development. With these contentions, there is a need to develop both personal and professional competencies in a happy balance among student teachers since the two aspects will be both used and assumed to complement each other when they reach the practicum period of the teacher education curriculum.

There is a need to develop more the personal competencies along creativity, awareness of social issues and problems, and injecting sense of humor and the professional competencies along classroom management in the student teachers. These competencies could be integrated in some professional education courses or the learning enhancement sessions of student teachers.

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