



Influence of International Pre-service Teacher Training on Southeast Asian Teacher (SEA Teachers) Project Completers' Personal Qualities and Teaching Competencies

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Abstract -Pangasinan State University started its partnership with higher education institutions in different Southeast Asian countries like Thailand and Indonesia through the exchange student program in 2017. One of the projects offered by Pangasinan State University in collaboration with the Southeast Asia (SEA) Teachers and Southeast Asian Ministers of Educational Organization or SEAMEO is the SEA Teachers Project. The respondents of this study as the SEA Teacher Project completers of batch 2019. The objectives of this study is to describe the personal qualities of the SEA Teacher Project completers; and the level of teaching competencies of the respondents as influenced by the SEA Teacher Project sponsored by the SEAMEO and Pangasinan State University. This study found out that the respondents are provided with opportunities to learn the local policy and standards of the school like work ethics, moral conduct, and organizational behaviour. There is also a refinement in the respondent's communication skills. They are motivated to engage themselves in the local school environment and capable to manage this engagement for the benefit of all the stakeholders. The recommendations of this study are the conduct of regular meetings and other activities spearheaded by the Linkages Office with the active participation of the foreign students and better comprehension of the English language by the foreign students enrolled in the SEA Teacher Project.

Keywords: *SEA Teacher Project completers, personal qualities, competencies, foreign exchange students*

INTRODUCTION

The pre-service teacher training provides instruction in the basics of teaching and they are expected to enter classrooms and ensure that students benefit from their education in the best possible way. Learning to teach was viewed as learning about teaching in one context (the teacher education program), observing and practicing teaching in another (the practicum), and, eventually, developing effective teaching behaviors in yet a third context (usually in the first years of teaching).

Every teacher will agree that the teaching profession is affected by various

factors which are based upon a number of other factors. Teaching is based on experience, personal characteristics, and preparation in teaching and its context. Pretorius (2012) underlines that in a rapidly changing world, teachers are faced with multiple tasks combining their teaching work and ancillary functions, and the training teachers receive, is the major factor that influences their effective work execution. At this point, one could question how teachers can catch up with the evolving world in this profession and thus, it becomes essential to underline the importance of professional development in the form of teacher development and in service teacher



training, hence in-house training. However, what effective teaching is also to be questioned, and in which context this teaching is regarded as effective. In other words, it can be seen as essential to comprehend that teaching may be regarded as effective in different ways in different contexts.

Training for the teachers is essential for their development and successful practice of their profession. Development for the teachers is an essential part in every attempt to improve education. The reason for this need is that young teachers in terms of age and length of experience do not possess the needed expertise to cope with the demands of the profession (Farrell, 2012). The mismatch between expectations and realities within the classrooms forces many novice teachers to quit their profession in their first years of teaching. This is commonly known as burnout. Also, teacher development is essential if teachers are aiming to pursue their career for more than their first years. In order to achieve this goal, in house training, workshops, seminars, courses and meetings and other activities as offered in many institutions as part of professional development. Professional development is in a way, an input and educational tool to help the novice and inexperienced teachers as well as the experienced teachers become aware of new trends in teaching process and practices as well as giving them the chance to reflect on and develop their teaching practices (Borko, 2004).

A different perspective especially on addressing insufficient pre-service education programs and explaining the necessity of teacher training is presented by Gonzalez (2003) who argues that teachers who need training during their service did not receive sufficient pre-service education as teachers and that the teachers may require some

assistance during the teaching phase. The author supports her argument by stating that new graduates are loaded with theories because in the curricula there is not enough focus on practical aspects of teaching and that teaching practice is only addressed during the practicum. Furthermore, she states that training is sought due to insufficient language skills of the graduates. Language skills is necessity to develop and adapt different teaching and learning materials and learning tasks, to seek help in the management of the students' personal and academic problems and the urgent need of the new graduates to learn to learn on their own after graduation.

One of the first to draw attention to the necessity of evaluation of pre-designed in house training programs for teachers was Tomlinson (1988). Focusing on short-term in house training courses and describing the constraints of such courses by elaborating on the causes of these shortcomings and reporting from and extensive personal experience as tutor and designer of in house training courses, Tomlinson (1988) reports that in house training courses may have the result that teachers refrain from using newly learned techniques in class because they feel these techniques may threaten their traditional ways of teaching and therefore threaten their security zone they have built up throughout their career. Tomlinson adds that some teachers may feel that these new techniques may not be appropriate in their local school system and that some teachers may try too hard to adapt the things they have learned and oversee that some of the aspects are useless in their local context. The causes of the damage are explained by Tomlinson as deriving from the trainers who do not have enough experience in the practical aspect of the local teaching context and therefore are presenting no more than a bulk of theory. Furthermore, another



criticized aspect is that the participant teachers are rarely asked to contribute their experience and that the aims of such courses are content oriented rather than behavioral. In other words, they only present theories rather than showing how to use these theories in class.

Almost two decades later, another critical view was presented in terms of language teachers claiming that the demand for English instructors abroad has far outpaced the number of qualified instructors available and that this ever growing demand for English Language teachers has created a market of institutions claiming to certify teachers, creating a major economic turnover (Thomson, 2004). Unfortunately this type of certification has created a lack of trust in these types of programs and many teachers complete these programs without the necessary background knowledge and input. For this, teaching English has turned into an industry and that there a considerable number of certifying institutions which do not see the importance of teacher training. In order to overcome these obstacles, it is essential to evaluate in house training courses and identify the problematic aspects mentioned. It is vitally important to evaluate in house courses focusing on the effects these have on the teaching practices of teachers.

When it comes to evaluation of training programs, the objectives are to validate needs assessment tools and methods; confirm or revise solution options; confirm or revise training strategies; determine trainee and trainer reactions; assess trainee acquisition of knowledge and attitudes; assess trainee performance; and determine if organizational goals are met. However, in house training programs should be assessed according to whether they have assessed and met the needs of the teachers who are participating in them. The focus of

the training programs needs to be the teachers teaching in individual contexts and the major objective should not be to represent the institutions offering the courses but to improve the quality of teaching. Also, teachers to have more trainings on techniques and methodologies (Ferguson and Donno, 2003).

As to competencies, these are skills and knowledge that enable a teacher to be successful. To maximize student learning, teachers must have expertise in various competencies in an especially complex environment where hundreds of critical decisions are required each day (Jackson, 1990). Few jobs that demand the integration of professional judgment and the proficient use of evidence-based competencies as does teaching, the transformational power of an effective teacher is something many of us have experienced. Research confirms that of all factors under the control of a school, teachers are the most powerful influence on student success (Babu&Mendro, 2003; Sanders & Rivers, 1996). In educational research, four classes of competencies yield the greatest results. The competencies are instructional delivery, formative assessment, classroom management, and personal competencies or soft skills. Further, the research indicates that these competencies can be utilized to organize the numerous specific skills and knowledge available for building effective teacher development.

Better learning happens in a dynamic setting wherein teachers offer explicit active instruction than in situations in which teachers do not actively guide instruction but instead turn control over content and pace of instruction to students (Hattie, 2009). The systematic and structured approach of explicit instruction emphasizes mastery of the lesson to ensure that the students understand what has been taught. It also ensures familiarity in new material, and can



generalize what they learn to novel situations they encounter in the future. The concern on the utilization of explicit instruction approach is that it does not offer sufficient opportunities for students to build on acquired knowledge and skills in creative and novel ways that help them to assimilate the material. The reality is that all instructional approaches must aid students in generalizing newly taught knowledge/skills in a context that is greater than a single lesson. An explicit model accomplishes the goal of building toward big ideas, and then systematically introducing opportunities to integrate these critical skills in discovery-based lessons to maximize students' experience of success.

There are four important areas that classroom teachers should be proficient in to create a climate that maximizes learning and induces a positive mood and tone. Classroom management is one of the most persistent areas of concern voiced by school administrators, the public, and teachers (Evertson & Weinstein, 2013). Research consistently places classroom management among the top five issues that affect student achievement. To put it in perspective, classroom management is associated with an increase of 20% in student achievement when classroom rules and procedures were applied systematically (Hattie, 2005). These are the approaches that teachers and administrators can employ to teach and build acceptable behavior that is positive and helpful, and leads to greater success in school. The key to proactive classroom management is active teacher supervision or the regular observation and interaction with the students. The goal is to build a positive teacher-student relationship by providing timely and frequent positive feedback for appropriate behavior, and to swiftly and consistently respond to inappropriate behaviors.

The key to maintaining a desirable classroom climate is to provide students with quality instructional delivery aligned to the skill level of each student. This enables students to experience success and keeps them attentive. These practices, designed to reduce problem and unacceptable behavior, are employed in the event the first three strategies fail. Behavior reduction strategies include giving students corrective feedback at the time of an infraction, minimizing reinforcement of a student's unacceptable behavior, and guiding students in how to behave appropriately.

Another teaching competency is formative assessment. An effective ongoing assessment, referred to in education literature as formative assessment and progress monitoring, is indispensable in promoting teacher and student success. It is frequently listed at the top of interventions for school improvement (Walberg, 1999). Feedback, a core component of formative assessment, is recognized as an essential tool for improving performance in sports, business, and education. Hattie (2009) identified feedback as the single most powerful educational tool available for improving student performance, with a medium to large effect size ranging from 0.66 to 0.94. Formative assessment consists of a range of formal and informal diagnostic testing procedures, conducted by teachers throughout the learning process, for modifying teaching and adapting activities to improve student attainment. Systemic interventions such as Response to Intervention (RtI) and Data-Based Decision Making depend heavily on the use of formative assessment (Hattie, 2009).

Last in the list of teacher competency is personal competency or soft skill. An inspiring teacher can affect students profoundly by stimulating their interest in learning. It is equally true that most students



have encountered teachers who were uninspiring and for whom they performed poorly. Unfortunately, effective and ineffective teachers have no readily discernable personality differences. Some of the very best teachers are affable, but many ineffective instructors can be personable and caring. Conversely, some of the best teachers appear as stern taskmasters, but whose influence is enormous in motivating students to accomplish things they never thought possible.

Typically, the finest teachers display enthusiasm and excitement for the subjects they teach. More than just generating excitement, they provide a road map for students to reach the goals set before them. The best teachers are proficient in the technical competencies of teaching: instructional delivery, formative assessment, and classroom management. Equally significant, they are fluent in a multilayered set of social skills that students recognize and respond to, which leads to greater learning (Attakorn, et al., 2014). Quantitative studies provide an overall range of effect sizes from 0.72 to 0.87 for effective teacher-student relations. Better teacher-student relations promote increased student academic performance and improve classroom climate by reducing disruptive student behavior (Cornelius-White, 2007).

In-house pre-service teacher training is offered by the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO). In the Philippines, Pangasinan State University is one of the fortunate higher education institutions that offer SEA Teacher Project of the SEAMEO. The first batch of the SEA Teacher Project was offered to 23 foreign students from Thailand and Indonesia last August 5 to September 5, 2017 and trained in the Lingayen and Bayambang Campuses of Pangasinan State University. The second batch and third batch of SEA Teachers

Project were offered from January to February 2018 and August to September 2018.

For the first batch of SEA Teachers completers, it is expected that they are occupying teaching position in their respective countries. As novice teachers who are in their first years of teaching, they usually experience more problems until they reach a certain level of experience and knowledge in their practice. Research has shown that supporting novice teachers in their profession is of crucial importance as there is a high level of teacher attrition, especially in the first five years. This assistance is often achieved through in-house training courses. These in-house training courses may be in the form of induction programs, training sessions, meetings, workshops, seminars and tutorials (Richards & Farrell, 2005). Novice teachers face totally different realities than they envisioned before they entered the classroom. In such cases, it is essential that novice teachers are assisted and encouraged by teacher trainers or experienced colleagues and in-house training programs in order to reduce both previously mentioned “reality shock” and the number of frustrated teachers leaving the profession (Farrell, 2012).

Nowadays, it is a common practice and a necessity that teachers should have the opportunity to educate and train themselves further. According to Ur (2000), throughout their career, teachers should improve their general professional knowledge and expertise and teachers should have the opportunity to join many teacher development courses offered by various institutions on various levels. For this reason, many universities are offering in-house training. In the case of the SEAMEO and Pangasinan State University, the in-



house pre-service training is offered to foreign students.

After two years of the implementation of the SEA Teacher Project, the proponent is conducting a study about the influence of their pre-service training here in Pangasinan State University related to their teaching competencies. There were four batches in this two years of the conduct of SEA Teacher project; 29 for first batch, 27 second batch, 37 third batch and 43 for the last batch. This is total of 136 completers. The objective of this study is to describe the personal qualities of the SEA Teacher Project completers; and the level of teaching competencies of the respondents as influenced by the SEA Teacher Project sponsored by the SEAMEO and Pangasinan State University.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study utilized the descriptive type of research. This type of research described the profile of the SEA Teacher Project completers, the personal qualities of the respondents, and the level of teaching competencies of the respondents as influenced by the SEA Teacher Project sponsored by the SEAMEO and Pangasinan State University. The instrument is sourced out from the Practice Teaching Manual of Pangasinan State University. There are 43 SEA Teacher Project completers in 2019 batch however, not all were able to and willing to answer the research instrument. The respondents of this study are 23 SEA Teachers foreign exchange completers from Thailand and Indonesia batch 2019. Mean was used to describe the personal qualities of the respondents and the level of teaching competencies of the respondents. The scale is presented below:

Scale	Mean Scale	Interpretation
5	4.21-5.00	Very strongly agree
4	3.41-4.20	Strongly agree
3	2.61-3.40	Moderately agree
2	1.81-2.60	Slightly agree
1	1.00-1.80	Very slightly agree

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Personal qualities of the SEA Teacher Project completers

Table 1. Personal qualities of Respondents

Personal Qualities	WM	DE
The SEA Teacher Project influenced me to/be....	4.63	VSA
1.Pleasant in general appearance		
2.Responsible, dedicated and enthusiastic in work	4.70	VSA
3.Resourceful and creative, and displays aesthetic sensibility	4.60	VSA
4.Get along with others	4.63	VSA
5.Follow a sound code of moral conduct and shows refinement in speech and manners	4.80	VSA
AWM	4.67	VSA

Note: Highest mean is in **boldface**; DE=Descriptive Equivalent;

WM= Weighted Mean;

Legend: 1.00-1.50 Very slightly agree (VSA)

1.51-2.50 Slightly agree (SA) 2.51-3.50 Moderately Agree (MA)

3.51-4.50 Strong Agree (SA) 4.51-5.00 Very Strongly agree (VSA)

As can be gleaned from the table, having moral conduct got the highest weighted mean of 4.80 and descriptive equivalent of very strongly agree while general appearance and getting along with others garnered the lowest weighted mean of 4.63 with descriptive equivalent of very strongly agree.

Level of teaching competencies of the respondents as influenced by the SEA Teacher Project sponsored by the SEAMEO and Pangasinan State University

Table 2. Level of Teaching Competencies of the Respondents

Teacher's Preparation	WM	DE
The SEA Teacher Project helped me to....	4.58	VSA
1.Understand educational objectives and provides ways of achieving them		
2.Have a good understanding of curriculum requirements, the pupils/students and in community relations	4.38	VSA
3.Have an adequate fund of knowledge and information and has subject matter content mastery.	4.48	VSA
4.Show evidence of logical thinking.	4.48	VSA
5.Be clear and fluent in the medium of instruction	4.35	VSA
Average weighted mean	4.45	VSA
Teaching Practices		
1.Show evidence and thorough preparation of lesson plans and other instructional materials and devices.	4.53	VSA
2.Use effective and continuing motivation.	4.50	VSA
3.Use with skill a variety of teaching-learning procedures.	4.53	VSA
4.Show skill I the arts of questioning and stimulates independent and critical thinking in students.	4.45	VSA
5.Encourage creative activity and provides for maximum student participation	4.35	VSA
Average weighted mean	4.47	VSA
Use of Teaching Aids		
1.Use the chalkboard, appropriate self-made materials and other suitable instructional materials.	4.40	VSA
2.Encourage and helps students prepare charts, models, etc.	4.30	VSA
3.Device suitable instructional materials and audio-visual aids	4.33	VSA
4.Make prudent use of modern instructional apparatus when necessary.	4.20	VSA
5.Provide for useful extra-class activities.	4.28	VSA
Average weighted mean	4.30	VSA
Appraisal of Student Progress		
1.Study the individual needs of students.	4.23	VSA
2.Use appropriate measures for diagnosing students' behavior.	4.18	SA
3.Employ remedial measures.	4.05	SA
4.Maintain accurate and up-to-date records of students.	4.38	VSA
5.Use tact in dealing with students who have problems and provides effective guidance.	4.15	SA
Average weighted mean	4.20	VSA
Class Control and Management		
1.Maintain discipline in the classroom.	4.48	VSA
2.Take good care of routine activities.	4.40	VSA
3.Provide physical facilities conducive to learning.	4.28	VSA
4.Organize the class for effective democratic living	4.43	VSA
5.Direct student's activities toward effective learning.	4.50	VSA
Average weighted mean	4.42	VSA
Professional and Cultural Growth		
1.Appraise intelligently my strength and weakness and accepts constructive suggestions willingly.	4.60	VSA
2.Show evidence of continuous independent study and research.	4.48	VSA
3.Participate actively in professional activities.	4.33	VSA
4.Show interest and plays an active role in cultural activities.	4.53	VSA
5.Show growth in terms of the development of positive attitude towards the teaching profession.	4.55	VSA
Average weighted mean	4.50	VSA
School and Community Relations		
1.Be familiar with local community.	4.65	VSA
2.Maintain harmonious relations with school personnel and members of the community.	4.60	VSA
3.Motivate/assist in school and community improvement program.	4.53	VSA
4.Gear class activities to community needs.	4.45	VSA
5.Make students, colleagues, parents and other members of the community conscious of the role of the school in community improvement/development	4.38	VSA
Average weighted mean	4.52	VSA
OAWM	4.41	VSA



Table 2 presents the competencies of SEA Teacher Project completers along teacher's preparation, teaching practices, use of teaching aids, appraisal of student progress, class control and management, professional and cultural growth, and school and community relations.

On teacher's preparation, the respondents rated the understanding and achieving educational objectives the highest with mean 4.58 and descriptive equivalent of very strongly agree, while the item with lowest rating is being fluent in the medium of instruction. For the teaching practices, preparation of lesson plan and teaching-learning procedures got the highest mean of 4.53 with descriptive equivalent of very strongly agree while maximum student participation has the lowest mean. When it comes to the use of teaching aids, the use of self-made materials got the highest mean of 4.40 with descriptive equivalent of very strongly agree while the use of modern instructional apparatus got the lowest mean. On appraisal of student progress, maintaining of accurate records of students has the highest computed mean of 4.38 with descriptive equivalent of very strongly agree while employing of remedial measures got the lowest mean. For the class control and management, effective learning got the highest computed mean of 4.50 and its equivalent descriptive equivalent of very strongly agree while physical facilities got the lowest mean. On professional and cultural growth, accepting of constructive suggestions willingly has the highest mean of 4.60 with descriptive equivalent of very

strongly agree while the participation in professional activities got the lowest mean.

On school and community relations, familiarization with the local community got the highest computed mean of 4.65 with descriptive equivalent of very strongly agree while making members of the community become conscious of the role of school in community development got the lowest mean.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The SEA Teacher Project provides more opportunities for the foreign students to learn the local policy and standards of the school like work ethics, moral conduct, and organizational behaviour. There is also a refinement in the respondent's communication skills. The completers are motivated to engage themselves in the local school environment and capable to manage this engagement for the benefit of all the stakeholders. They have that self-direction, purpose and target in joining the SEA Teacher Project and that is to actively engage in the local school, even for a short period of time.

It is recommended that the Linkages Office should conduct regular meetings, orientation program, team-building activities and other activities with the attendance of Linkages Office staff, the foreign students, faculty mentors and student buddy, and other concerned individuals to help the foreign students familiarize and comfortable with the local culture, the officials and staff of the University and the local school. The foreign students should have better comprehension of the English language both for teaching work and professional activities.



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