

## An Analysis on the Best Practices on Classroom Instruction of Selected Student Teachers in Bulacan And Pampanga

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### Abstract

The focus of the study was to provide an analysis on best practices on classroom instruction of selected student teachers of Bulacan State University deployed in national high schools in Bulacan and Pampanga for AY 2017-2018. The study determined if best practices of student teachers call for syllabi revision and enrichment of student teaching programs. Data gathering was done through self-made student-teacher evaluation forms disseminated to cooperating teachers who evaluated the best practices of their respective student-teachers and were assessed in terms of physical appearance, punctuality, instructional materials, delivery of lesson, appropriateness in curriculum, classroom management, working attitude and support to community. Results revealed that student teachers excel in terms of physical appearance, punctuality, working attitudes and support to community. Classroom management got “satisfactory” rating meaning student teachers were able to maintain the appropriate behavior of students. However, areas namely instructional materials, delivery of lesson, appropriateness in curriculum needs improvement which obtained “good” in the rating. The result does not necessarily call for syllabi revision but the inclusion of additional topics to address the needs of student teachers. Teacher education programs must be enhanced through trainings, seminars and workshops to produce future competent teachers.

**Keywords:** best practices, student teacher, syllabi

### Introduction

Student teaching refers to the act of teaching in a school for a limited period of time under supervision as part of a course to qualify as a teacher. It involves the actual demonstration of teaching skills honed by the teacher-education institution. A student teacher or a practice teacher is a college student who is teaching under the supervision of a certified teacher in order to qualify for a degree in education. A *best practice* is a technique or methodology that, through experience and research, has proven to reliably lead to a desired result. It plays an inherent role in the curriculum by developing thinking and problem-solving skills through integration and active planning. Best practices motivate, engage and prompt students to learn and achieve. Classrooms that exhibit best practices can be easily detected upon entering the room. Students are focused on their works and teachers use collaborative tasks that place students as center of the learning process. Seating arrangements are clustered, varied and functional. There is a joyful feeling of purposeful movement and vibrant environment inside the classroom.

A commitment to using the *best practices* in any field is a commitment to using all the knowledge and technology at one's disposal to ensure success. The student teacher who has learned the principles and methods of teaching will put into practice the pedagogy of teaching. To facilitate the application of acquired teaching competencies in the classroom, education

institutions design program that guides the student teacher what to teach, how to teach and how to assess learning. Student teaching offers critical reflection on how teacher education institutions promote quality teacher education programs. The assessment of the effectiveness of the best practices of student teacher program will determine the competencies of student teachers in classroom instruction.

Learning from professionals in the field of teaching contributes a lot in the effective performance in the classroom. Seasoned teachers develop a philosophy, one that inspires them in performing their challenging role as a teacher. Susan Giroux' philosophy focuses on the children and what she can do to be a better teacher (Stone, 2002). Her philosophy clearly involves reflective teaching and student-centered decision-making strategies. To focus on the children is to make a classroom student-centered thus all activities and learning interactions are specifically planned and implemented for the benefit of the child. According to Jones (2007), the student-centered classroom is a place where needs of students are considered and students are encouraged to participate in the learning process at all times. It is not a place where students make random decisions about what they want to learn. The teacher becomes a member of the team as a participant in the learning process and functions as a facilitator, who guides, manages activities, and directs.

According to Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2005), determined teachers need to understand child development, motivation and management in their roles as facilitators. By taking into account student development and understanding key concepts, teachers can plan instruction according to their students' needs. Classroom management is strengthened through learning communities, which give children a chance to work together. By using developmental interests as a motivator, students become more engaged in their learning. Just as the research for collaborative learning had not yet produce effects that are able to be generalized, so too is the research on partnerships between teachers and students.

An important aspect that student teachers need to demonstrate as they seek to meet the demands of challenges of actual teaching is to develop strategies that help diverse students make connections from prior learning and experiences to new learning and across disciplines. Tileston (2000) cites that Sousa's philosophy that "teachers should not assume that transfer will automatically occur after students acquire a sufficient base of information; significant and efficient transfer occurs only if we touch to achieve it." No doubt, seasoned teachers have acquired a certain level of confidence using different strategies that match their students' styles across disciplines and lessons. The student teacher still needs to develop and enhance them. It is therefore of great interest to assess how student teachers demonstrate teaching strategies that match their students' abilities, and learning preferences, strategies that really do some connections, approaches that build significant experiences.

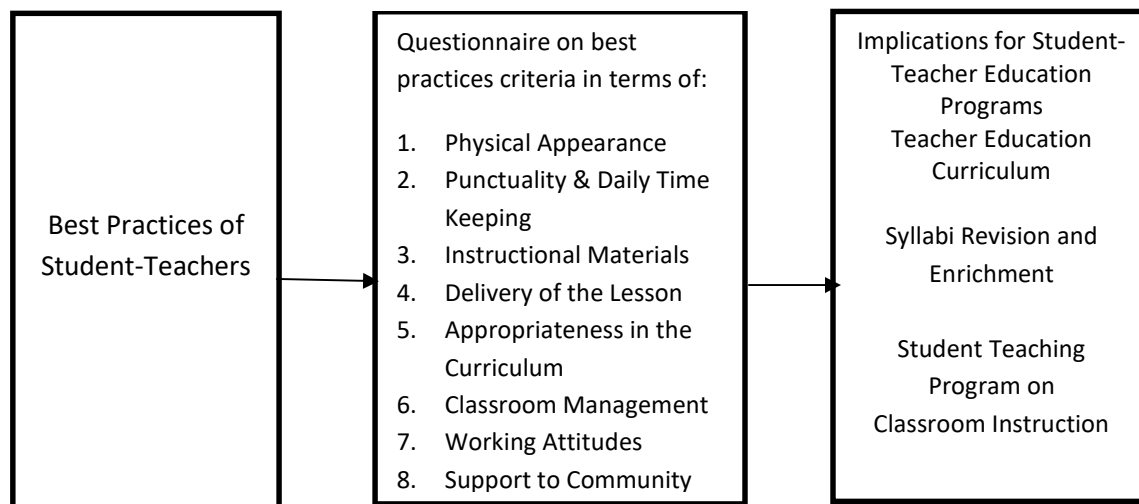
Effective student teachers use several strategies in classroom instruction. Concern and respect for students is very important thus good teaching does not mean making things hard and frightening students. Benevolence and humility is needed in trying to help students feel that a subject can be mastered and encouraging them to succeed at something quickly. Just like their cooperating teachers, student teachers must create learning tasks appropriate to the level of understanding of their students. They recognize the uniqueness of individual learners and treat them as if they were exactly the same. Appropriate assessment techniques and feedback is also used to allow students to demonstrate their mastery of the material in different ways and recognizes the power of feedback to motivate more effort to learn. Good teaching is open to change and it involves finding out the effects of instruction on learning.

Student teachers must let their cooperating teachers know their expectations upfront. They must remind their cooperating teachers that they are there to learn a variety of learning style in order

to develop their own teaching style. They must gain respect from cooperating teachers and students by voluntarily doing small tasks. They must also stay in contact with their professor or advisor on a regular basis in order to overcome nervousness especially during the actual teaching demo. They must not be afraid to integrate their own teaching techniques or classroom management skills.

Alternative assessments measure performance in forms other than traditional paper-and-pencil, short answer tests. These assessments focus on what studentteachers can do without emphasizing their weaknesses, especially in test-taking skills. Alternative assessments are not graded like standardized tests are. Rather than counting the number of right and wrong responses, these assessments give a holistic picture of a student's abilities and highlight where further improvement is needed. They give the student a chance to demonstrate the depth and scope of learning without being limited to narrow questions or make-or-break tests. Often, alternative assessments are utilized for students with learning disabilities who have difficulties performing on standardized tests. However, in the case of student teachers' competencies assessment, the most common way of assessing them is through teaching demonstration. This activity allowsthe supervising and cooperating teacher as well as guest observers to assesshis students performing the skills he is teaching. This particular assessment is a very meaningful area of evaluation that measures critical thinking and problem solving activities of students.

However, the study is not focused mainly on the teaching demonstration wherein cooperating teachers, supervisors, principal and other guest teachers rate the student-teacher performance using an evaluation sheet. Rather, the self-made evaluation form on the best practices of student-teachers will cover many aspects that can assess their daily performances on the course of their on-the-job training period. The figure below illustrates the conceptual framework of the study.



**Figure 1: Conceptual Paradigm**

The paradigm of the study sought to analyze the best practices on classroom instruction of the selected student teachers deployed in national high schools in Bulacan and Pampanga. The assessment of these best practices could possibly determine teacher education curriculum

decisions, revision and enrichment of syllabi, student teaching program planning and enhancing classroom instruction. The study aims to answer the following questions:

1. How may the best practices in teaching of student teachers be described?
2. How may the best practices enrich the curriculum of teacher education?
3. What are the implications of the study to teacher education program?
4. Are the implications drawn from the study be enough bases for syllabi revision and student teaching program enhancement?

Results of the study will provide data on how acquired theories and principles, learning styles and the issue of standards into a classroom instructional model applied by the student teachers of the college during their internship program.

### **Methodology**

The researcher will use the descriptive survey method. According to Jackson (2009), the advantage of the survey method over the other descriptive methods is that it allows researchers to study larger groups of individuals more easily.

A descriptive study describes and interprets. It relates to conditions or relationship, opinion held and processes going on, effects that are evident trends that are developing. It is primarily concerned with the present, although it often considers past events and influences as they relate to current conditions (Best and Khan: 2005)

Descriptive research also provides scientific basis for professional judgment. Data generated through the use of the said method may serve as concrete basis for future decisions. Hence professional judgments are made objective since they are based on scientific findings (Good and Scales: 1992). The aim of descriptive research is to verify formulated hypothesis that refer to the present situations in order to elucidate it and the primarily concerned with describing the nature or conditions and the degree in detail of the present situation.

A total of one hundred (100) cooperating teachers in National High Schools in Bulacan and Pampanga for the School Year 2017-2018 are chosen as respondents for the study. A self-made student-teacher evaluation form is disseminated to the cooperating teachers who will assess the best practices of their respective student-teachers. Student-teachers' best practices will be assessed in terms of appearance and good grooming, punctuality and daily time keeping, instructional materials used, delivery of the lesson, appropriateness in the curriculum, classroom management, working attitude and enthusiasm and lastly, support to the community.

Data gathered from cooperating teachers will be scored, tabulated and results will be assessed and interpreted using the descriptive method through the five-point Likert scale. Likert scale which is named after its creator, American social scientist Rensis Likert is quite popular because it is one of the most reliable way to measure opinions, perceptions, and behaviors. It functions by having a person complete a questionnaire that requires them to indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with a series of statements. The Likert scale below will be used to evaluate the commonly observed best practices of student-teachers during the span of their deployment in National High Schools both in Bulacan and Pampanga. The Likert scale below will evaluate or rate the best practices of the student-teachers.

Scale	Weighted Mean Interval	Descriptive Equivalent
5	4.51-5.0	Excellent
4	3.51-4.50	Satisfactory
3	2.51-3.50	Good
2	1.51-2.50	Fair
1	1.00-1.50	Poor

## Results and Discussion

The presentation of data follows the manner by which the self-made evaluation form is presented. Eight (8) best practices of student teaching criteria namely: appearance and good grooming, punctuality and daily time keeping, instructional materials used, delivery of the lesson, appropriateness in the curriculum, classroom management, working attitude and enthusiasm and lastly, support to the community. Under each criteria is a detailed indicator/s which falls under the category of a particular best practice. The rating scale will be as follows with the corresponding verbal interpretation: 5 – excellent; 4 – satisfactory; 3 – good; a – fair; and 1 – poor.

**Table of Results for the Self-Made Student Teacher Evaluation**

BEST PRACTICE CRITERIA	BEST PRACTICE INDICATORS	WEIGHTED MEAN	DESCRIPTIVE INFORMATION
PHYSICAL APPEARANCE	Wears the prescribed uniform for the on-the-job trainee	4.81	Excellent
	Hair is neat and wears appropriate make-up for female while clear face for male	4.69	Excellent
PUNCTUALITY & DAILY TIMEKEEPING	Arrives at the classroom at least 15-20 minutes before the start of class	4.79	Excellent
	Honestly fill-up his/her daily time record	4.88	Excellent
INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS	Manifests resourcefulness & creativity in visual	3.48	Good

	aids used		
DELIVERY OF THE LESSON	Voice is clear and language used is grammatically correct	3.50	Good
	Knowledgeable in the topics discussed	3.48	Good
	Asks students to express their opinion on the topic discussed	3.48	Good
	Instructs students to listen attentively	3.50	Good
	Administers quiz after the lecture/discussion	3.19	Good
	Students are engaged in interactive class discussion	3.49	Good
	Uses collaborative tasks placing students as the center of the learning process	3.20	Good
APPROPRIATENESS IN THE CURRICULUM	Relevance in topics discussed	3.50	Good
	Chooses activities aligned with topics discussed	3.49	Good
	Focuses both on ideas and content	3.48	Good
	Empower values in every lesson taught	3.38	Good
CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT	Ensures conducive learning environment for students	4.39	Satisfactory
	Uses seat plan with due considerations on students with poor eyesight and hearing problem	4.03	Satisfactory
	Prepares list of rules to be observed by the students in & out of the classroom	4.03	Satisfactory
WORKING ATTITUDES & ENTHUSIAM	Establish harmonious working relationship with cooperating teachers	4.58	Excellent
	Exhibits a vibrant atmosphere and passion for teaching	4.56	Excellent



	Shows support in programs carried out by the school	4.55	Excellent
SUPPORT TO THE COMMUNITY	Shows support in programs carried out by the school	4.65	Excellent

Results of the study show how our selected student teachers excel in the four (4) best practices criteria such as: physical appearance which deals with wearing of uniform, having neat hair, appropriate make up and clear face; punctuality and daily time keeping; working attitudes most especially with the cooperating teachers; and lastly, support to the community which is manifested through their participation in school programs and activities. These four (4) criteria mostly deals with physical attributes, honesty especially in time-keeping and good working relationship with peers, supervisors and the school community as a whole.

Next is classroom management which is a very visible manifestation of a best practice, got a “satisfactory” rating. Upon entering a classroom, seeing students are organized and well-behaved, one can detect that there are set of rules that they observe inside the classroom thus order and discipline is maintained. One can feel a vibrant atmosphere when seats are properly arranged taking into consideration the needs of those with poor eyesight and hearing problems. The seat plan serves as a tool that helps the teacher to facilitate monitoring attendance and familiarization with students. It also serves as a directory reference on students’ behavioral routines. The environment is conducive to learners wherein project materials and books are numerous despite the limited resources in our national high schools.

However, there are three (3) best practices criteria which only obtained “good” from the evaluation survey conducted namely: the use of instructional materials, delivery of the lesson and appropriateness in the curriculum. These three are considered the most critical of all criteria because the effectiveness of these three best practices plays a major factor in producing competent teachers in the future.

Student teachers need to be resourceful and creative in the use of instructional materials like visual aids. Pictures, posters or even real objects can establish link with the lesson to be tackled. Aside from visual aids, motivational practices can also be used to arouse the interest of the students. These motivational practices may include film showing, role playing, mini games, story-telling, songs or even poetry. These techniques encourage maximum participation and anticipation on the new lesson. Ice breaker activities commonly used in group therapies can also be conducted to ease the boredom of students in between class discussions.

In the delivery of the lesson, it has been usually observed by most cooperating teachers that the voice of their respective student teachers are not loud enough to get the attention of the learners. Lack of preparation for the lesson results to drawing out of the topic in the middle of class discussions and incorrect grammar usage. There are times when they forgot to ask the opinions of their students after topics discussed. Asking one’s opinion particularly from learners can enable teachers identify the value system of their students based on their opinions and reactions. Only a few students instruct their students to listen attentively without notetaking. Note taking must be done after the lecture because this strategy can test whether they process all information in their memory. After the class discussion, some student teachers give quizzes in order to test how students easily retrieve information from their memory or to retain much information gained from the lectures.

Lastly, appropriateness in the curriculum also needs improvement. Relevance in the topics being discussed also includes choosing the appropriate classroom activities. Some student teachers conduct activities that are partially aligned with the lesson. Role playing, simulation, socio drama and skit are some of the motivational activities which provide clear understanding of the lesson if executed appropriately. These activities enable students to showcase their talents. The content of the lesson must also inculcate values to the students because most values are acquired from school. Require students to write their own reflections and insights about the lesson for the day in order to know what values they learn from the topics discussed and activities done in the class.

### Conclusions and Recommendations

Results of the study shows that over-all our student teachers were able to promote the objectives for student teaching. Syllabi revision is not a must but additional topics will certainly help our student teacher address best practices that needs enhancement. They must be guided properly to help them set professional goals in instruction and encourage them to reflect on the development of their lesson designs. Mentors like their respective student teaching supervisors must challenge them to try new strategies, explore new ideas and make positive changes in their teaching styles. This can also be achieved if there will be an enhancement in student teaching program. More seminar workshops, conventions and conferences to make them updated with the recent trends and issues in the field of teaching must be included in the program. This will help them strategize and find effective means on how to enhance instructional practice. Supervisors, through their knowledge and experience must provide them ideas on how to cope up or surpass obstacles in teaching. On the part of the student teacher, learn how to collaborate with your cooperating teacher because through this you will develop a give-and-take relationship wherein each has input in professional conversation.

Best practices require mentor-teachers to support their student teachers with concentrated instructional assistance thus helping them succeed in their future teaching professions. According to Andy Hargreaves and Michael Fulton, both educators and researchers, *“it is what teachers think, what teachers say and what teachers do at the level of the classroom that ultimately shape the kind of learning that young people get.”*

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