

INVESTIGATING THE OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTING PAIR TEACHING DURING TEACHING PRACTICE SESSIONS OF INTERN TEACHERS

Steven L. Baylan

Cebu Normal University, Philippines

ABSTRACT

Corresponding author:
Steven L. Baylan
stevenbaylan@yahoo.com

Received: 17 May 2020
Revised: 1 September 2020
Accepted: 9 September 2020
Published: 14 October 2021

Citation:
Baylan, S. L. (2021).
*Investigating the opportunities
and challenges in implementing
pair teaching during teaching
practice session of intern
teachers. Humanities, Arts and
Social Sciences Studies* 21(3):
457-466.

Many teacher education institutions across the globe are revamping their teacher preparation program from conventional to non-conventional such that advanced professional learning opportunities are highly embedded in the initial-preservice teacher program. This investigation aims to explore the underlying challenges and opportunities encountered by the intern teachers on pair teaching during their teaching practice sessions at the Integrated Laboratory School of Cebu Normal University. Participants ($n = 12$) comprising female intern teachers were made to respond to a qualitative questionnaire with open-ended questions. Using the content analysis method, the analyses of texts unveiled explicit opportunities for contextualizing pedagogical and theoretical competence while building essential skills of the intern teachers with the pragmatic and punctilious guidance of practice mentors. However, a *bottleneck* stemmed primarily from a *triad-pedagogical partnership* such as teaching beliefs and personality differences, practice mentors' expectations, and conflicting time and schedule that could potentially encourage intern teachers' career adaptability in the future. The challenges and opportunities unearthed from this qualitative study, suggest for a careful rethinking of what comprises effective mentoring and coaching program hinting to incite discussions for the enhancement of current mentoring practices.

Keywords: Pair teaching; intern teachers; teaching internship; triad-pedagogical partnership; content analysis

1. INTRODUCTION

Many teacher education institutions across the globe are revamping their teacher preparation program from conventional to non-conventional such that advanced professional learning opportunities are highly embedded in the initial-preservice teacher program. It is believed that teaching internship provides a contextualized venue for student teachers to have a glimpse of the interaction of theory and practice in the real context of classroom settings. And as intern teachers familiarize the realities of teaching, opportunities enhance

their teaching capacities while challenges test their readiness as they begin their early practice of the teaching profession. According to Perry (2004 as cited in Onyebukwa-Nwanoro, 2017) and Broadbent (1998 as cited in Koross, 2016) teaching practicum is thrilling, however challenging. Some studies confirm the various challenges (Koross, 2016; Jusoh, 2014; and Ulla, 2016) and difficulties being encountered by student teachers during their practice teaching (Mutlu, 2014). Otara, (2014) avowed that despite these challenges, students' teachers still view their internship program as significant in the formation and development of their teaching career. This is why it is a pivotal component of any preservice teacher preparation programs (Guyton and McIntyre, 1990 as cited in Sulistiyo et al. 2017). Eze (2003) as cited in Onyebukwa-Nwanoro (2017) posited that "teaching practice is the first opportunity for the student-teacher to participate in activities involved in teaching in the actual situation." And the role of the practice mentors in the mentoring and coaching of preservice teachers cannot just be underscored.

Research studies have indicated the purpose and impact of mentoring on the many facets of preservice teachers. It serves as a professional development venue (Hudson, 2013a; Oparah et al., 2017; and Zhao and Zhang, 2017) and enhances the confidence of teachers (Izadinia, 2015a) and while practice mentors consider the importance of their coaching relationship on the formation of student teachers' identity (Izadinia, 2015b). This compels practice mentors to design a coaching program that offers intern teachers with a repertoire of pedagogy at the same time to ensure a nurturing internship atmosphere for the formation of exceptional preservice teacher qualities. The significance of investigating opportunities and challenges has been recommended by pedagogist, curricularist, and even practice mentors, because it uncovers the authentic engagement of the preservice teachers in the teaching practice thereby providing rich information for practice mentors in crafting an internship program that is anchored on evidenced and research-based practice to further improve their mentoring practices.

Teaching in the Philippine context is viewed as a profession that ultimately requires the teacher candidate to undergo a teaching internship, usually, one-semester equivalent to 4.5 months before a teacher candidate is allowed to receive a diploma and then process for licensing to become authorized and recognized practitioner of the profession. The practice of the internship program varies according to the type of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). For instance, in the private HEIs program, it is done outside the institution. Intern teachers are deployed immediately in the public school under the supervision of cooperating teacher[s] who provide practical teaching experiences and genuine teaching conditions. While for state-funded HEIs, such as the original normal schools, intern teachers are first mentored by the student teaching mentors (STMs) at their respective Integrated Laboratory Schools for a particular period time before they are endorsed for off-campus practice in the public educational institutions. Such practice is grounded on the idea that interns teachers have to be ready to deal with the realities of teaching outside the university. For normal school without ILS, intern teachers are entrusted to their partner schools that have a memorandum of agreement with the university. From the foregoing, it can be deduced that teaching internship practice of TEIs in the Philippines reflects a traditional framework. And the need for a continual reshaping of the current internship model as today's 21st-learning environment has radically changed and the demand for relevance in a teacher preparation preparations is of dire importance. Recent research studies have mounted that teacher education programs inadequately honed preservice teachers (Stuart and Thurlow, 2000, as cited in Mutlu, 2014).

In response to the limited research exploring nontraditional and innovative teaching internship models in the country and in an attempt to concur with the university's priority agenda which is cultivating significance and sustaining quality in the preservice teacher preparation program in the university, this investigation was made to provide authentic teaching practice engagement for student teachers. Pair teaching was applied in this investigation, intern teachers collaborated in planning instructional task and in implementing it to their respective students. In view of the foregoing, this study investigated the challenges and opportunities of preservice teachers who were exposed to PT during their teaching internship at the Integrated Laboratory School. Investigating the experience of the participants is expedient for reshaping the mentoring and coaching program of the university. The study further is presumed to contribute to the increasing studies on a non-conventional internship program that would potentially encourage local and national state-run teacher education institutions for comparative discourse, thereby enhance teacher education preparation program of the country.

2. AIM OF THE STUDY

The current investigation primarily aims to uncover the intern teachers' challenges and opportunities on pair teaching exposure during their student teaching phase. Specifically, the study answers the following research questions:

- RQ (1): What were the opportunities and challenges encountered by intern teachers on pair teaching?
 RQ (2): What relevant mentoring and coaching proposal can be offered based on the salient findings of the study?

3. METHODOLOGY

The current study employed the qualitative research design, specifically content analysis. This approach is congruent with the research aim, that is to unveil the opportunities and challenges of intern teachers during their teaching internship through a written response researcher-made questionnaire. Hsieh and Shannon (2005), as cited in Hashemnezhad (2015) explicate content analysis as “a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns.” Krippendorff (1969), as cited in Mayring (2000) added that “content analysis as the use of a replicable and valid method for specific inferences from the text to other states or properties of its source.” In terms of purpose, Bengtsson (2016) elucidated the use of content analysis that “the purpose of content analysis is to organize and elicit meaning from the data collected and to draw realistic conclusions from it.”

3.1 Participants and selection procedure

Participants in the current study were fourth-year Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEED) preservice teachers who were in their teaching internship phase at Integrated Laboratory School (ILS) of Cebu Normal University. A total of research participants ($n = 12$) from the intermediate level were purposively included in the data collection. Patton (2014), as cited in Duman and Erdamar (2018) asserted that the purposeful sampling method is following a line of reason in the determination of research participants to obtain valid research data from the participants that are consistent with the primary objectives of the study. The population chosen in the investigation was considered fit for two valid reasons. First, the participants completed their teaching internship program before the data gathering. Second, participants had exposures of pair teaching (PT) and regularly received mentoring and coaching from their subject mentors. The investigation was conducted during the 2nd semester of the academic year 2017-2018 after the participants' internship program. Consent was secured from the participants before the qualitative research questionnaires were sent out to the participants. They also attended a short briefing about the importance of the study and the voluntary participation in the data collection. The researcher emphasized that they can withdraw their participation anytime during data gathering. It is noteworthy to mention that participants voluntarily gave their consent to provide data for the study. The demographic profile of the participants showed all respondents $n = 12$ or (100%) were females, single, with an average age of 19.9. As to the specialization of the participants, a majority were generalists with a total of 9 or (75%) and 3 or (25%) were special education specialists.

3.2 Instrument

According to Berg (2001); Burnard (1991); Catanzaro (1988) and Downe-Wambolt (1992), as cited in Bengtsson (2016) any type of written document regardless of their origin may be used in content analysis. Thus, the data gathering instrument used in this study was a researcher-made qualitative questionnaire consisting of two primary parts. The use of such data gathering method in this investigation conforms with Donath et al. (2011, as mentioned in Bengtsson, 2016) who specified that written data may be collected through a questionnaire with open-ended questions for a qualitative study. The data gathering instrument consisted of two parts. The first part elicits the participant's demographic data and the last part was the questionnaire intending to collect data with open-ended questions as follows: (1) *“What did you find challenging in pair teaching?”* and (2) *“What were the opportunities did you have in pair teaching?”*

3.3 Data collection and analysis

Data collected from the participants was through a researcher-made questionnaire which was done at the conclusion of the participants' internship program. A short briefing was conducted before proceeding with the collection of data. The participants gave their consent to participate in the collection phase of the investigation. To establish emerging themes and find the connections between categories from the codes and patterns of the qualitative data, a manifest analysis was adopted. Berg (2001); Catanzaro (1988) and Downe-Wambolt (1992), as cited in Bengtsson (2016) explained that in manifest analysis, the researcher elaborates the information provided by the informants and stays as much as possible in proximity to the text, utilize the words and takes a cue from the text in determining the underlying meaning. The adoption of the manifest analysis method is primarily anchored on the importance of establishing the trustworthiness of a qualitative approach to data analysis as well as the replicability of the current study.

4. RESULTS

4.1 The challenges and opportunities

The subsequent section presents the significant findings of the investigation. From the qualitative data analysis, it captures challenges that emerged around the aspects of intern teachers' (a) teaching beliefs incompatibility and personality differences, (b) conflict of time and schedules, and (c) practice mentors' expectations, while the opportunities revolved around the aspect of (a) professional learning-related opportunities, and (b) essential skills development-related opportunities.

4.2 Teaching belief incompatibility and personality differences

Teaching beliefs among intern teachers during the internship program is assumed to have varying beliefs that are believed to be unfixed and could be subject to shifting as they begin their preservice training and development. The current study findings supported this notion. The result found that majority of the respondents echoed teaching beliefs to be a challenging aspect. For instance, a respondent narrated her teaching belief differences, *"I find it challenging to work with my partner because we differ in many aspects such as ways of teaching, strategies of teaching, writing of lesson plans and especially we differ in personality as a teacher. I was afraid we might build a wall between us due to misconceptions."*

One respondent specifically pointed out an aspect of their pedagogical collaboration that was considered challenging and hinted at what makes a good partnership. She stated, *"I find challenging in pair teaching is making the lesson plan together. We have to collaborate with each idea in order to come up with good lesson plans but I guess we didn't do that much because our lesson plan was not approved."* Varying teaching beliefs and differences in personality could result in teacher interns' confusion, disagreement, and even conflict as they perform their pedagogical partnership. This was reported by some intern teachers. For instance, a participant recalled, *"There are a lot of challenges we went through like clashing of ideas and having a different personality."* In a similar experience, a respondent said, *"The most challenging in pair teaching is the brainstorming part and planning stage. At some point, there will be clashes of ideas between the two."* Another participant also said: *"There were instances that I and my partner got into conflict because our ideas didn't meet."* In a similar vein, a respondent seemed to have encountered multiple challenges. She hurdled communicating ideas with her teaching partner. She further added that arguments resulted in personal conflict as she recounted, *"Sometimes it's hard to communicate on our ideas as to what activities are appropriate and should we utilize for the lesson to be delivered very well. Sometimes, arguments arise that turn into conflict and it's really a challenge to settle things down between my pairs."*

4.3 Conflicting time and schedule

For some, the availability of time has been a great challenge. Oftentimes, intern teachers are in conflict with their vacant time and schedule as one participant shared, *"Time management. There were instances that both of you were busy doing another subject's stuff and since you are both from a different section you must find time so that you can work together."* Another mentee commented, *"Challenging in terms of time, because there are points or situations that your partner is not free at that time and also the distance of your partner is really a big challenge."* This was reported by another student intern who added that aside from time management coping with heavy teaching loads also adds up to a major problem on time management, *"Finding time with the pair, so far that is really my primary issue. We had lots of subjects, and we have different pairs, so it was a struggle and a battle of when to meet it and which subject should be done first, during the little vacant time we had."* Similarly, an important skill that intern teachers need to harness was pointed out by one participant as she recalled, *"Time management in a way that your schedule will not meet with your partner."* There's also another mentee who stressed the availability of time as a challenge, *"The common problem that I can encounter is the time which we don't have the same vacant hour in doing the lesson plans, ideas in making the lesson plan."*

4.4 Practice mentor's expectations

While it's true that intern teachers consider their practice mentors as a significant source of knowledge in the teaching profession, their expectations could also be a source of intern teachers' provocation to question their teaching competence. More often than not, high expectation results in better student learning and perhaps could also help student interns to do better on pedagogical partnership. For example, one respondent voiced, *"It's very challenging knowing that mentors have an expectation in pair-made lesson plan."*

4.5 Professional learning-related opportunities

Evidence from the data collected showed two emerging trends on the opportunities that intern teachers had in teaching practice with pair teaching introduction. When asked about what opportunities they have had during the PT exposure, they reported opportunities that include (1) professional learning-related opportunities and (2) essential skills development-related opportunities. As for professional learning-related

opportunities, a substantial number of responses tended to indicate pedagogical, content knowledge, and instructional material construction learning. In this regard, one mentee reported thus, *"The opportunities I have in PT strategy was that I and my partner were able to communicate and share our ideas about a certain topic. Through PT, it gave me new leaning, new knowledge with the help of my partner."* Another teacher intern remarked that with the teaching partnership resulted in better instructional decisions, *"In pair teaching, I can say that I can be able to think of different unique strategies and can come up with good ideas, with the help of my partners."* In a similar vein, a respondent recalled, *"I had the opportunities to learn my co-teacher teaching styles and preferred strategies and my mentors' methods in teaching the different subjects."* This was further expounded by another respondent who said, *"The opportunities I had with PT were the instructional materials making and delegation of a task for the demonstration proper. It also creates a chance of improving one's ideas since there is another point of view to be acknowledged for the task needed for the demonstration."* One respondent broadly described the opportunity she had, mentioning the benefit of PT and what seemed to work well in the partnership, *"You'll gain many ideas from your partner, also both of you benefits with each other it's just like give and take."* A similar experience was also echoed by another respondent and summed up this way, *"Through this strategy, I was given a lot of opportunities in improving myself of becoming a better teacher. I learned new things and strategies with the help of my teacher partner."*

4.6 Essential skills' development-related opportunity

Respondents acknowledged opportunities in personal and interpersonal growth. For the interpersonal aspect, they unanimously noted that in the process of pedagogical partnership they became aware of the value of openness about ideas and perspectives of others. For example, a respondent recalled, *"The opportunity is that I was able to value the opinion of others and also how to handle when you are having some arguments in making the lesson plan. I learned to value the sense of partnership."* Similarly, another mentee said, *"Learn to respect and accept different ideas from different people to meet the expectation to get the expected outcome. Basically what I learned in pair teaching is good if your partner is doing her/his task. In the same vein, a student intern expressed, "I learned to accept and listen to ideas. It can also make my work easier."*

Aside from professional learning, one mentee elucidated several personal growth opportunities as she narrated, *"Opportunities like you'll learn how to be patient, learn how to manage your time, you'll also gain many ideas coming from your partners that will motivate you to continue dreaming for the best to come."* One respondent described learning experience from engaging PT with co-mentees as she recalled, *"I gained new friends and learned a lot of ways on how to write an LP. I had the chance to be corrected. I have someone to ask for help whenever I cannot think of any new ideas. I became more motivated with my partners. I learned to be open-minded and not just be biased on my ideas."* Likewise, one mentee, noted that on the personal aspect, being collaborative and acknowledging that partner would also accord the same zest could be an opportunity for personal development as she narrated, *"At some point, you'll be able to collaborate ideas with your pair who knows how to cooperate. If only all your pairs are cooperative perhaps your work will be great."*

5. DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSION

The present study sought to investigate the underlying challenges and opportunities encountered by intern teachers on pair teaching experience during their teaching practice sessions. Collection and analysis of data from participants after their teaching internship have unveiled emerging challenges and opportunities on pair teaching which are subsequently discussed in this section.

A major result of the current investigation was that the challenges expressed from the lens of intern teachers have shed light on the complexity and difficulty that they typically encountered on PT experiences during their teaching practice sessions. Although the present investigation has mounted the positive result of collaborative teaching, challenges such as varying teaching beliefs and personality types seemed to be a systemic issue on PT experience of intern teachers. According to Kennedy (1997); Donaghue (2003); Ellis (2008), as cited in Mellati et al. (2015) teachers' beliefs are stemmed from different sources particularly experiences and personality. While it's true that coming up with decisions as to what strategy to use because every teacher approach lesson content in different ways, the process of decision-making to come up with mutually agreeable instructional plans can be quite exhausting and the need to examine intern teachers competence is needed as Cansiz and Cansiz (2015) and Moussaid and Zerhouni (2017) pointed out that preservice teachers lack pedagogical content knowledge and pedagogical competence. It is believed that preservice teachers during internship offer opportunities for intern teachers to experiment with pedagogical content knowledge whose beliefs about teaching vary in some degree and ways. Those with strong beliefs tend to become less willing to accept others' opinions about teaching, pedagogy, and other classroom practices. Zeichner and Tabachnick as mentioned in Rath (2001) "advanced one explanation—namely that the thousands of hours

that prospective teachers spend as pupils in the classroom shape their beliefs. These conservative beliefs remain latent during formal training in pedagogy at the university and become a major force once the candidate is in his or her classroom." Some researchers further confirmed regarding the beliefs of teachers tend to be fixed and resistant to change for it comprises a personal understanding, judgment or opinion about the reality that is perceived to be precise (Phelan and McLaughlin 1995; Richardson 1996, as cited in Tang et al., 2012). Others further contend, it is difficult to change teachers' beliefs since it is already well-established and is inclined to perform their teaching tasks the way they were fashioned by their mentors (Pajares, 1992; Kagan, 1992; Korthagen and Kessels, 1999, as cited in Tang et al., 2012). Le Huu Nghia and Ngoc Tai (2017) affirmed that preservice teachers' identities are shaped even before they begin their teaching internship program and pointed out that these identities continue to develop as they mingle with educational experts. Thus, the need for the mentors' practical guidance is expedient. José Itzigsohn, a recipient of Graduate School Faculty Award for Advising and Mentorings quoted in an article *Inclusive mentoring* from The Harriet W. Sheridan Center for Teaching and Learning (n.d.), admonished that: "*it is important to help [mentees] develop their interests. I believe that mentorship is not about replicating one's work, but about guiding [mentees] in becoming who they want to be*" (<https://www.brown.edu/sheridan/teaching-learning-resources/inclusive-teaching/inclusive-mentoring>).

During teaching internships, it is expected that student-teachers have to mingle with different teachers from different orientations, backgrounds, dispositions, and experiences that teachers exhibit unique personalities. Hence, personal and professional tensions are more likely inevitable. Participants in this investigation explicitly expressed intern teachers' personality as a barrier of their pedagogical partnership citing instructional planning and implementation to be challenging and have ignited the professional conflict. This result reiterates previous research indicating the personality of an intern is a challenge among preservice teachers (Samusevica and Striguna, 2013). This prompts practice mentors to discuss the role of personality in workplace productivity and that ignoring it could result in counterproductive workplace behavior (CWB) that dampens creativity. The role of personality is well-recognized in previous research. It has been linked to job satisfaction (Judge et al., 2002, as cited in Wiens and Ruday, 2014), job performance (Barrick and Mount, 1991, as cited in Wiens and Ruday, 2014) and career exploration (Eryılmaz and Kara, 2017). In the teaching profession, it is associated with teaching self-efficacy (Jamil et al., 2012, as cited in Wiens and Ruday, 2014 and Üstüner, 2017) and teacher effectiveness (Kim et al., 2019) improved level of professionalism (Idris et al., 2018). Therefore, preservice teachers should surmount their 'fixed mindset' inclination and muster a 'growth mindset' if they intend to cultivate lifelong learning skills and acquire reflective teaching practice. Given the importance of rudimentary background understanding of personality differences in the workplace, the experiences on pair-teaching would make them learn how to deal with different personalities which is vital for preparing them to discover maladaptive behavior solutions in the future. When asserting what constitutes a 'quality preservice teacher preparation,' practice mentors should also evaluate what constitutes 'quality teaching internship program. A highly contextualized mentoring program that develops respect for diversity in teaching and learning, interdependence, and conflict resolutions may be embedded aside from pedagogical content knowledge. As Darling Hammond (2006), as cited in Wiens and Ruday (2014) assented, "*teachers are born, not made is a myth and highly damaging to teacher education and education more broadly.*" It is therefore imperative that the teacher education preparation program of Higher Education Institutions are responsive to the lingering and pervasive issues surrounding innovative reforms in teacher preparation.

Intern teachers expressed a common consensus that conflict of time and schedule appeared also to be a pressing challenge in pair teaching. According to the participants, conflicting schedules of their partner teacher add to the complexity of the barriers to their partnership and often lead to failure accomplishing and performing their pedagogical partnership. The emergence of this result is not surprising since intern teachers handle multiple subjects also loaded with extra-curricular activities. The result could serve as a basis for reforming the way into workloads and teaching load of intern teachers who are just about to test their knowledge on teaching such that it allows them to create good instructional plans by providing ample time. Likewise, it is not just enough that intern teachers would receive inputs from the coaching and mentoring of their practice mentors, but also be accorded with teaching loads that define a nontraditional and collaborative teaching internship to facilitate preservice teachers' development. This salient result reflects the possibility of poor time management, which resounds the study results of Moussaid and Zerhouni (2017) and Nguyen et al. (2016) wherein preservice teachers struggle to manage their time during their preservice training. In the context of this investigation, the nature of pedagogical partnership demands adequate time for discussions and collaboration to satisfy expectations of practice mentors. Practice mentors must, therefore, consider emphasizing a balanced initiative and shared responsibility among preservice teachers as these can translate into better instructional plans and better lesson execution.

For one participant, who felt practice mentors' expectation as a challenge although she did not elaborate details, this result is still worthy of attention for it supports the contention that mentoring is viewed

as a collaborative engagement. Mentees already have expectations in mind before the beginning of their teaching practice. More often than not, these existing expectations of intern teachers could maintain their motivation as mentor teachers coach them in a variety of ways. On the one hand, unrealistic expectations without the practical guidance of the practice mentors could wreak havoc on the partnership and redound to poor student learning. When expectations are perceived clearly by intern teachers, it encourages good teaching practices because it breaks down the walls that divide between mentors and mentees. Practice mentors should therefore clearly communicate these expectations to their mentees. Equally crucial in transforming preservice teacher preparation is the effort of the university in building a transparent and supportive working environment for practice mentors and mentees. And just like in any partnership, the practice mentor-mentee relationship requires as well a two-way clear communication for it to be mutually beneficial. Mentees to create a positive relationship should strive to be open about concerns that are related to the pedagogical tasks and issues arising in the performance of their functions while the practice mentors should endeavor to address the needs of mentees through regular feedbacking regarding their weaknesses as well as what they are good at and passionately driven about teaching.

From the voices of intern teachers' experiences on PT, professional learning-related opportunities such as reaffirming personal understanding on learning content, and designing instructional aids, and testing out pedagogical styles in the actual classroom environment while under the mentoring of their practice mentor proved the benefit of the nontraditional internship program. These positive experiences could bring about the desirable impact to intern teachers on how they view teaching as a profession that is considered critical to the development of their teaching beliefs and philosophies. These study results are indicative of a healthy peer-to-peer learning approach, an important component of any teacher preparation to cultivate communication skills, instructional leadership, creativity, adaptability, commitment, empathy, teamwork, multitasking skill, enthusiasm, and respect for diversity in the learning place. However, Davis and Fanozzi (2016) found out that student interns opted for emotional and instructional support, and no one opted for socialization. Hudson (2013b) espoused that preservice teachers learn professional relationships and relationship building when immersed in school culture. Exemplary teachers in today's learning environment demonstrate these qualities, the university must, therefore, revisit their internship program and realign such program and mentoring framework that facilitates the formation of exemplary teacher qualities.

The present study findings expand the literature and studies on nontraditional teaching internship wherein preservice teachers gain professional insight through peer to peer learning and collaborative partnership. With the nontraditional teaching internship through integrating PT, significant hands-on experiences may nurture distinctive desires in the teaching profession while nurturing pedagogical skills of preservice teachers by letting them become highly empowered and highly involved in the various aspects of instructional planning, instructional materials designing, and implementation of instructional plans. They become, therefore, prospective teachers who take personal responsibility for personal and career advancement that is critical for enhancing reflective teaching practice.

It is assumed that mentor teachers' primary responsibility is to provide venues for cementing pedagogical skills and content knowledge of their student interns through practical and careful guidance. But more importantly, they must as well provide avenues for developing the intern teachers' interpersonal skills. Such skills are needed for prospective teachers who will soon engage as players in a highly diverse learning place. Hence, a concern of paramount significance then, is how do practice mentors cement soft skills of preservice teachers? Finding a better answer to this could result in the long-term success of preservice teachers as they embark on the early practice of the teaching profession. Results from qualitative data analysis are mounting evidence that with the introduction of PT aside from the theoretical and practical element, there was as well chances for cultivating essential skills such as collaboration, creativity, leadership, problem-solving and critical thinking awareness. Indeed, PT does not only provide professional learning venue in a mentor-mentee collaboration but likewise offers a viable means of understanding appropriate norms that could enhance personal and interpersonal skills of preservice teachers through reflection and evaluation of the quality of their engagement with their co-mentees. As the healthy relationship between mentees is vital for the cultivation of meaningful skills, intern teachers with good experiences about working with colleagues will tend to replicate when they mingle with their future colleagues and school leaders. This authentic engagement in the early practice of the profession nurtures professionalism in the workplace. Additionally, it is believed that increased exposure of intern teachers to different personalities, different background, and orientations of their co-mentees may not be viewed as perfectly as they begin their professional teaching practice, but the *teaming* in instructional preparations may be well-acknowledged as a requisite for developing essential skills of preservice teachers as they collaboratively put their effort to foster effective teaching for their students. When it comes to preparing intern teachers for the 21st-century learning environment, practice mentors need to rethink the traditional approach to mentoring and coaching.

In conclusion, pair teaching is practical that authentically affords intern teachers with explicit opportunities for contextualizing pedagogical and theoretical competence while building essential skills with the pragmatic and punctilious guidance of practice mentors. However, a *bottleneck* stemmed primarily from a *triad-pedagogical partnership* emerged as teaching beliefs and personality differences, practice mentors' expectations, and conflicting time and schedule that could potentially encourage preservice teachers' career adaptability in the future. Although incorporating pair teaching into the teaching internship program to make it nontraditional, there are significant considerations on mentoring and coaching practices cognizant of intern teachers' needs to ensure their optimum learning experience. The challenges and opportunities unearthed from this qualitative study on pair teaching during teaching practice sessions of preservice teachers suggest for a careful rethinking of what comprises effective mentoring and coaching program.

6. IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS, AND SUGGESTIONS

There are two implications with the current study results. First, for the practice mentor, the findings indicating challenges reported by the mentees could be used to craft an enhanced mentoring and coaching program. For indeed, the primary role of the practice mentors is to ensure their mentees are accorded with contextualized teacher preparation program as they begin in their professional practice of the teaching profession. Second, for student interns, while PT offers numerous opportunities, the challenges prompt them to exemplify a characteristic of an effective teacher-being malleable.

Few limitations can be identified in connection with the current study. First, the study although employed purposive sampling procedure with a limited number of participants, further investigation may complement the present study with the inclusion of larger respondents. Second, the use of a researcher-made questionnaire might offer valid data, the future study that uses multiple data-gathering sources may be adopted. Although there are potential advantages of integrating pair-teaching in the teaching internship program, the rigors and struggles encountered by the student teachers during their 4.5 months of teaching practice suggest for improvement in several aspects of PT implementation. The report on student interns' conflict due to clashes of ideas may be an indication of deficiency in pedagogical and content knowledge. Practice mentors need to address this challenge by contextualizing mentoring and coaching programs anchored on students interns' needs such as integrating into their mentoring and coaching program, a component that harnesses the gaps between pedagogical theories and practices. They should strengthen preservice professional development particularly during their pre-conference and post-conference to enhance teaching and content knowledge. Additionally, the university through the stewardship of veteran practice mentors should also try not only to develop their pedagogical competence but also to develop student interns' interpersonal skills like effective communication, collaborative skills, and a sense of professionalism. While pair-teaching is not a new approach, in the context of this investigation it indicated several challenges as reported by the student-teacher, some strategies can be launched to address challenges on PT implementation. These challenges require the practice mentors to establish a community of professional support and establish well-recognized norms on PT. Second, given the undefined and unclear pedagogical norms on PT could be challenging for practice mentors to determine their student interns' learning. The assessment practices aspect has to be made fit for the internship model. Developing appropriate and authentic assessment is not just fair for intern teachers but more pivotal to determining their actual learning during their internship program. Specifically, an assessment that uses appropriate sources of data to objectively evaluate performance and reflection. As to the coaching and mentoring, practice mentors may introduce differentiated-blended mentoring that takes into consideration another avenue like utilization of technology and social media platforms in the extension of the mentoring and coaching of the preservice teachers.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares that there was no conflict of interest in the completion of this research project.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author expresses his appreciation to the intern teachers of Integrated Laboratory School, Cebu Normal University for participating in the completion of this paper. The opinions, results, conclusions, and suggestions herein voiced are those of the researcher and do not necessarily indicate the views of the university.

REFERENCES

- Bengtsson, M. (2016). How to plan and perform a qualitative study Using content analysis. *NursingPlus Open* 2: 8-14.
- Cansiz, N. and Cansiz, M. (2015). The challenges faced by preservice teachers during teaching practice. *The Eurasia Proceedings of Educational & Social Sciences* 2: 40-42.
- Davis, J. S. and Fanozzi, V. B. (2016). What do student teachers want in mentor teachers?: desired, expected, possible, and emerging roles. *Mentoring and Tutoring: Partnership in Learning* 24(3): 250-266.
- Duman, S. N. and Erdamar, G. (2018). Conflict situations between student teachers and mentor teachers. *International Online Journal of Educational Sciences* 10(5): 20-35.
- Eryilmaz, A. and Kara, A. (2017). Comparison of teachers and pre-service teachers with respect to personality traits and career adaptability. *International Journal of Instruction* 10(1): 85-100.
- Hashemnezhad, H. (2015). Qualitative content analysis research: a review research article. *Journal of ELT and Applied Linguistics* 3(1): 54-62.
- Hudson, P. (2013a). Mentoring as professional development: 'growth for both' mentor and mentee. *Professional Development in Education* 39(5): 771-783.
- Hudson, P. (2013b). Developing and sustaining successful mentoring relationship. *Journal of Relationship Research* 4(e1): 1-10.
- Idris, Z., Johari, K. S. K. and Bakar, A. Y. A. (2018). Meta-synthesis study: positive effects on positive personality of teachers in teaching profession. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences* 8(1): 737-746.
- Izadinia, M. (2015a). A closer look at the role of mentor teachers in shaping preservice teachers' professional identity. *Teaching and Teacher Education* 52: 1-10. [Online URL: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2015.08.003>] accessed on January 18, 2020.
- Izadinia, M. (2015b). Student teachers' and mentor teachers' perceptions and expectations of a mentoring relationship: do they match or clash? *Professional Development in Education* 42(3): 387-402. [Online URL: <https://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2014.994136>] accessed on January 18, 2020.
- Jusoh, Z. (2014). *Teaching Practicum: Student Teachers' Perspective*. [Online URL: <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Teaching-Practicum-%3A-Student-Teachers-%E2%80%99-Jusoh/24f99d1d801494717b1b53be03723d9d218baff4>] accessed on November 17, 2019.
- Kim, L. E., Jörg, V. and Klassen, R. M. (2019). A meta-analysis of the effects of teacher personality on teacher effectiveness and burnout. *Educational Psychology Review* 31(1): 163-195.
- Koross, R. (2016). The student teachers' experiences during teaching practice and its impact on their perception of the teaching profession. *IRA International Journal of Education and Multidisciplinary Studies* 5(2): 76-85.
- Mayring, P. (2000). Qualitative content analysis [28 paragraphs]. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research* 1(2): Art. 20.
- Mellati, M., Khademi, M. and Shirzadeh, A. (2015). The relationships among sources of teacher pedagogical beliefs, teaching experiences, and student outcomes. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics & English Literature* 4(2): 177-184. [Online URL: <http://www.journals.aiac.org.au/index.php/IJALEL/article/view/1222>] accessed on December 18, 2019.
- Moussaid, R. and Zerhouni, B. (2017). Problems of pre-service teachers during the practicum: an analysis of written reflections and mentor feedback. *Arab World English Journal* 8(3): 135-153.
- Mutlu, G. (2014). Challenges in practicum: pre-service and cooperating teachers' voices. *Journal of Education and Practice* 5(36): 1-7.
- Le Huu Nghia, T. and Ngoc Tai, H. (2017). Preservice teachers' identity development during the teaching internship, *Australian Journal of Teacher Education* 42(8): 1-15.
- Nguyen, N. T., Tran, A. H. and Luu, L. N. (2016). Classroom management: difficulties facing fast-track teacher-trainees in the tutoring program. *The English Teacher* 45(2): 84-95.
- Onyebukwa-Nwanoro, C. J. (2017). Challenges of student-teachers during teaching practice in Nigeria. *Journal of Educational Policy and Entrepreneurial Research* 4(5): 30-36.
- Oparah, J. S., Nwoke, B., Ihechukwu, and Ikwanusi, E. N. (2017). Influence of teaching practice exercise on pre-service teachers' professional development. *IOSR Journal of Research & Method in Education* 7(5): 34-39.
- Otara, A. (2014). Students' perceptions on education internship program in Rwanda: effectiveness and challenges. *Asian Journal of Education and e-Learning* 1(2): 181-193.
- Raths, J. (2001). Teachers' beliefs and teaching beliefs. *Early Childhood Research & Practice* 3(1): 1-10.

- Samusevica, A. and Striguna, S. (2013). Pre-service teacher education: experiences and developmental tendencies a Liepaja university. *European Scientific Journal* 9(10): 379-387.
- Sulistiyo, U., Mukminin, A., Abdurrahman, K. and Haryanto, E. (2017). Learning to teach: a case study of student teachers' practicum and policy recommendations. *The Qualitative Report* 22(3): 712-731.
- Tang, E. L. Y., Lee, J. C.-K. and Chun C. K.-W. (2012). Development of teaching beliefs and the focus of change in the process of pre-service ESL teacher education. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education* 37(5): 90-107.
- The Harriet W. Sheridan Center for Teaching and Learning. (n.d.) *Inclusive Mentoring*. [Online URL: <https://www.brown.edu/sheridan/teaching-learning-resources/inclusive-teaching/inclusive-mentoring>] accessed on May 27, 2019.
- Ulla, M. B. (2016). Pre-service teachers training program in the Philippines: the student teachers' practicum teaching experiences. *EFL Journal* 1(3): 235-250.
- Üstüner, M. (2017). Personality and attitude towards teaching profession: mediating role of self efficacy. *Journal of Education and Training Studies* 5(9): 70-82.
- Wiens, P. D. and Ruday, S. (2014). Personality and preservice teachers does it change, does it matter? *Issues in Teacher Education* 22(2): 7-27.
- Zhao, H. and Zhang, X. (2017). The influence of field teaching practice on pre-service teachers' professional identity: a mixed methods study. *Frontiers in Psychology* 8: 1264.