



BITTERSWEET MOMENTS IN TEACHING NON-SPECIALIZED SUBJECTS AMONG SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS

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Article history:	Abstract:
<p>Received: 20th June 2021 Accepted: 7th July 2021 Published: 3rd August 2021</p>	<p>This research was designed to unveil the bittersweet moments in teaching non-specialized subjects among senior high school teachers. Ten (10) participants of the study were identified based on the criteria set by the researcher from the senior high school teachers in the Division of Pampanga during the school year 2020-2021. A semi-structured interview guide was made and utilized as the primary data gathering tool. Further, Colaizzi's modified model of thematic analysis was utilized in analyzing the data. Based on the findings, the struggles of the participants identified were Struggle of Responding to Students' Inquiries, The burden of Curriculum and Lesson Planning, and Scarcity of Learning Resources. Conversely, the opportunities in teaching non-specialized subjects, two (2) themes have surfaced: Well-Rounded Educator and Life-long learner. Further, the coping strategies to hurdle the challenges in teaching non-specialized subject were Peer Mentoring and Coaching, Continuing Professional Engagement, and Adaptability and Flexibility in Teaching. The proposed framework entailed various themes emerged from the in-dept perspective of the teachers.</p>

Keywords: Bittersweet, Non-specialized subjects, Senior High School,

1. INTRODUCTION

Out-of-field teaching is prevalent in the global education system wherein teachers are tasked to teach outside the area of specialization without proper training or standards and yet educators are expected to be efficient for enough learning and knowledge building (Plessis, 2013). It is a phenomenon where teachers are teaching beyond their expertise or qualification. (Hobbs, 2013).

The efforts and expertise of the teachers in their certain field plays a crucial role in acquiring knowledge, skills, and attitudes of the learners for the nation's development by preparing them to become globally competitive individuals who possessed the 21st century skills. Every learner deserves nothing but quality and free education at all levels. This statement is guaranteed in the 1987 Philippine Constitution Article 14 Section 1 states that "The State shall protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels." Anent to this law, the Department of Education (DepEd) released DepEd Order No. 42 Series of 2017 establishing a National Competency-Based Teacher Standards (NCBTS) where teachers have a vital role in the development of the nation that the right educators create competent learners.

Additionally, Republic Act 10533 of 2013 also known as the Enhanced Basic Education of 2013 Section 7 set a standard for the teachers' qualification of performance standard anchored on the new K to 12 basic education curricula.

In accordance with this law, the Department of Education issued DepEd Order 3, S. 2016 also known as "Hiring Guidelines For Senior High School (SHS) Teaching Positions Effective School Year (SY) 2016-2017", which aims to clearly define the application, selection, and appointment process of SHS teachers as well as to establish professional standards and evaluation criteria which will ensure that highly competent individuals with the appropriate qualifications and specializations are hired to teach in (SHSs).

This policy was later substantiated and approved by the Civil Service Commission through Department Order no. 27 series of 2016 also known as "Qualification Standards (QS) for Senior High School (SHS) Teaching Positions in the Department of Education" where the candidates need to meet the required qualification standards subject to the existing guidelines on the appointment and promotion on teaching positions.

Conversely, due to inadequacy of teaching force, educators are forced to teach beyond their specialization. This phenomenon is known as "out-of-field teaching" which is a global problem in the field of education that causes significant effect on the part of both the teaching process and students' learning. Teachers do significant adjustments on the subjects that were assigned to them which are not related to their area of expertise.

In effect, Caldis (2017) divulged that out-of-field teaching affects the subject quality and it has massive results in the students' level of passiveness and learning. It also implies low esteem among educators to their competency to deliver the lesson efficiently. Teachers are assigned by school leaders to teach subjects that are unrelated to their prior knowledge just to fill the gaps and achieve the school requirements. Further, the findings of the study conducted by Umoinyang, Akpan, and Ekpo (2011) showed that out-of-field teaching negatively influenced the teachers' performance and the study of Bosse and Torner (2014) considering this phenomenon caused such bad impact on the students' academic performance.

Kola and Sunday (2015) observed that teachers who are assigned to teach outside of their subject specialism lack confidence which is manifested in different ways such as when preparing lesson plans, choosing, or devising activities and analogies to aid students' learning, answering students' questions, setting up laboratory experiments, generating students' interest and passion for the subject area. Moreover, he further discussed that teaching out of the teacher's expertise offers many other considerable challenges that the teachers must deal with.

It was concluded by Shaplin (2014) that out-of-field teaching is a serious problem that can affect teachers' effectiveness. He also added that educators that lack their quality and experiences that are needed in the subjects pose challenges for them. Out-of-field cases are greatly increasing in number accompanied by its negative result on the learning process of the learners. The increasing number of this case indicates the unjust organization of teachers (Zhou, 2012).

As supported by the study of Shueler, Winter, Weißenrieder, Lambert, and Römer (2015) it is found that although out-of-field is prevalent it is accompanied by some considerable lapses. Moreover, Vale and Kim (2011) implicated that out-of-field teaching is a threat and calls for the quick involvement of the government is needed. The government should ensure actions to solve the problem to strengthen the quality of education.

Bayani and Guhao (2017) study revealed that out-of-field teachers experience insufficient administrative support and difficulty in the mastery of the lessons, frustration, and low self-esteem. Thus, a key-informant in their study revealed that the negative effect of out-of-field teaching is that students tend to have low academic performance due to educators are incapable of teaching content that is important in daily life. Also, the participant added that out-of-field teachers often rely on additional methods and become ineffective by just relying on the books. On the other hand, Cruz et. al (2017) discovered that out-of-field teaching is a problem that can have a significant effect on the efficiency of teaching. However, the learning process varies with the intellectual level of the learners that are holistic.

In view of these contentions, the researcher was determined to unveil the bittersweet moments in teaching non-specialized subjects among senior high school teachers.

2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The major concern of the study was to unveil the bittersweet moments in teaching non-specialized subjects among senior high school teachers as basis for proposed framework in the Division of Pampanga during the school year 2020-2021.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. How do the participants describe the struggles in teaching non-specialized subjects?
2. How may the participants perceive the opportunities in teaching non-specialized subjects?
3. How do the participants describe their coping strategies to hurdle these challenges in teaching non-specialized subject?
4. Based on the findings, what framework in teaching non-special subjects may be proposed?

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study utilized qualitative research method using phenomenological approach to discover and explore the bittersweet moments in teaching non-specialized subjects based on the lived experiences of the senior high school teachers. The participants of the study were purposively selected from the public secondary schools offering senior high school program in the Division of Pampanga. More so, the key-informants were determined using the following set of criteria: a) must be a public secondary high school offering senior high school program in the Division of Pampanga b) considered novice teacher with less than 2 years of teaching experience c) with 2-4 teaching preparations or assignment. Further, a semi-structured, interview was facilitated to achieve the needed data through online and/or offline interviews since face-to-face interview is not possible during this time of pandemic.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Shared Views on the Struggles in Teaching Non-Specialized Subjects.

The struggles of the participants in teaching non-specialized subjects are the stories of hardships, sacrifices, challenges, and painful experience in teaching non-specialized subject. After a thorough evaluation of the transcript, three (3) emerging themes have surfaced: The Struggle of Responding to Students' Inquiries, The burden of Curriculum and Lesson Planning, and Scarcity of Learning Resources.

Shared Views on the Opportunities in Teaching Non-Specialized Subjects.

In every hardship in life will eventually yield great opportunities. In context, these opportunities entail the favorable value and benefits in teaching non-major subjects. In other words, teaching subjects beyond their area of specialization is a great deal of opportunity to learn new perspective, move out of the comfort zone, and opportunity to self-discovery. After a careful scrutinizing the transcript, two (2) important themes emerged: Well-Rounded Educator and Life-long learner.

Coping Strategies to Hurdle the Challenges in Teaching Non-Specialized Subject

Coping strategies are the specific efforts or initiative of the teachers employ on both personal and professional aspect to overcome the challenges and limitations of teaching non-major subjects. Apparently, these are the adaptation strategies to cope with the challenges to improve their teaching skills. Thus, optimize teaching performance. After further evaluation of their impressions, three (3) themes emerged: Peer Mentoring and Coaching, Continuing Professional Engagement, and Adaptability and Flexibility in Teaching.

Proposed Framework in Teaching Non-Specialized Subjects.

The proposed framework entailed various themes emerged from the in-dept perspective of the teachers that suggest relationship concerning struggles, opportunities, and coping strategies in teaching non-specialized subjects.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the summary of findings, the following are the conclusions drawn.

1. The journey of becoming a teacher is not always a smooth sailing experience. The struggles of the participants in teaching non-specialized subjects are the stories of hardships, sacrifices, challenges, and painful experience in a day-to-day classroom experience.
2. Despite of all these challenges, teaching classes beyond the area of specialization is a great deal of opportunity to learn new perspective, great way to move out of the comfort zone to explore new things, and self-discovery.
3. Peer Mentoring and Coaching, Continuing Professional Engagement, and Adaptability and Flexibility in Teaching emerged as the coping mechanisms of the participants in out-of-field teaching.
4. The in-depth analysis of the participants shared views and critical insights concerning out-of-field teaching revealed a meaningful framework for beginning teachers who experienced the phenomenon of out-of-field teaching.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusions drawn, the following recommendations are hereby presented.

1. The Department of Education through Human Resource Department may intensify the teacher induction program through effective monitoring and evaluating program to provide meaningful feedback and to address the gaps on its implementation. Further, increasing the supply of teachers to meet demand, and ensure the right sort of teachers in the schools must be addressed since out-of-field teaching is a reality that many schools must manage to inhibit the growth of the out of field phenomenon at school level.
2. School administrators may provide effective professional development programs and in-service trainings that are focused on enhancing teachers' quality, teaching approaches and techniques, and formal mentoring to cater the needs of the teachers who teach outside of their specialization. Further, teaching qualification must be the primary considerations in assigning and delegating of teaching loads.
3. Teachers should also sustain engaging activities through focus group discussions and professional learning communities where they can learn from and provide support for each other.
4. Other researchers may conduct related and relevant studies concerning on the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching for further investigation by focusing on the significant influence of out-of-field teaching on students' performance and behavior.

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