Navigating the Classrooms in the Paradigm Shift: The Diary of Outstanding Teachers in Dinagat Islands Division

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ABSTRACT: In order to catch up with global standards in basic education, the Philippines launched its comprehensive educational reform – shifting from the old curriculum to the new framework known as the K to 12 Program. With this, teachers have learned to revolutionize their classroom from the old setting and innovated instructional practices necessary to meet the needs of the learners for employment, entrepreneurship, and college readiness. Hence, this study aimed at exploring the best practices of outstanding teachers in the Division of Dinagat Islands particularly on content knowledge and pedagogy, learning environment and diversity of learners, curriculum and planning, and assessment and reporting. Data collection was done through semi-structured interviews while codes and themes have been derived using Thematic Analysis. Codes and themes are used to generate theory as an integral process of Grounded Theory approach. Based on the data gathered, the Teaching Excellence Model Theory has emerged from eight essential themes: (1) Instructional Competence; (2) Partnership; (3) Value Laden; (4) Research and Innovation; (5) Student Centered; (6) Classroom Leadership; (7) Professional Development; and (8) Outstanding Achievements. The theory generated from the study stated that "teaching excellence is achieved when the teacher possesses professional competence and personal innate factors and which can be modelled through interpersonal strengths and exemplars" is anchored on four hypotheses. The generated theory will provide a framework and benchmark for all promising teachers in the field to gauge their performance towards achieving a competitive K-12 classroom.

Keywords: paradigm shift, outstanding teachers, K-12 program, professional competence, personal innate factors, interpersonal strength, exemplars

INTRODUCTION

Rationale

The passage of the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 (R.A. 10533) has changed the paradigm of teacher quality parameters in the country. This development in the educational system requires an equivalent supportive focus on teacher quality – high quality teachers who are properly equipped and prepared to assume the roles and functions of a K to 12 teacher. Minimum standards have been set in order to guide teachers on what they should know, be able to do to achieve competence, and how to improve student learning outcomes (DO 42, s. 2017). Proficient and highly proficient teachers are vital to raising student achievement, i.e., quality learning is contingent upon quality teaching. Quality teachers are one of the most important school-related factors found to facilitate student learning (Loeb, 2019). This also acknowledge the role of the teacher as the crucial element in the drive to raise educational standards (Sorensen, 2016). While this is true, the fact that not all teachers who have sound skills, professionalism, and creativities can become outstanding teachers.

Sorensen (2016) points out that outstanding teachers are those who have: expertise as a journey; reflective practitioner, dialogic practice, focus on the outcome, committed to teaching, believe on the students, and be themselves. Relevant to this, the race on becoming the "Most Outstanding Teacher" under the standards of the Department of Education is tough and highly competitive. It requires an "outstanding" performance rating, competence, unique teaching and leadership practices, and the drive for innovation and research. Thus, these encompass all the attributes of outstanding teachers in the K to 12 classroom.

To be an outstanding teacher is not only a recognition of one's performance and hard works but also an attestation of the teacher's significant contributions in the field. Thus, this study intends to explore the best practices of outstanding teachers in the new educational system and to develop an emerging theory which synthesizes their attitudes, beliefs, and actions. Findings of this study may help human resource practitioners in the Education sector to improve strategic directions for employee's development, recalibrate teaching parameters, improve classroom practices, and provide evidence-based approaches on awards and incentives for teaching excellence.

Literature Review

Professionalism of Teachers

Professional teachers are those who love jobs. It means that they are working as a teacher not only to share knowledge or teaching but also how to educate students to get better. "There are three major categories on the definition of professional teachers; (a) the inter-personal, most of the traits mentioned frequently and in strong terms referred to warm student-teacher relations, respect for students and a show of consideration (b) the professional: This was seen in the behaviors of the exemplary teachers in terms of didactic skills and broad subject matter knowledge: and (c) the social-value dimensions ; who transmitted moral values and provided personal examples, especially in tense situations" (Yariv & Maskit, 2014). Qualified teachers' categories are those able to have a warm welcome and respect their students so that there will be an understanding among them, which finally forced the students to perform the

best they can. Professional teachers also have holistic knowledge which relates the experience itself with the real-life faced by the students. Professional teachers are those that advanced professional practice is best described through the notion of 'a teacher with expertise' and that this is preferable to the term 'the expert teacher' (Sorensen, 2016).

To make them perform the best, the qualified teachers still need to have professional development. "Professional development is understood as representing the growth of teachers in their profession. Mukeredzi (2016) defined it as "a long-term process that includes regular opportunities and experiences planned systematically or unplanned to promote growth and development in the profession". Professional development as a way to develop the ability and skills shall be supported by planned development from the institution. Teacher professionalism has been a subject of growing interest in recent years because of its emphasis on developing standards for the teaching profession and on improving the knowledge, skills, and capabilities that teachers need to meet the varying needs of students (Kilinç, 2015). Professional teachers are ones that can be left behind as the students change very rapidly. The rapid changing and various needs of society shall influence the needs of the graduate's quality and outcomes.

Teacher's Satisfaction as Precursor to Teaching Excellence

Studies of teacher satisfaction based on Maslow's (1954) hierarchy of needs theory have supported the connection between need-fulfillment and job satisfaction (Carver & Sergiovanni, 1971). These authors cited an absence of three higher-order needs (esteem, autonomy, and self-actualization) as major contributors to low teacher satisfaction. Simmons (1970) has identified teacher satisfaction factors and has categorized them as content and context. Content factors relate to the teaching process itself (e.g., achievement in teaching, the nature of the work itself, and recognition), while context factors relate to the job situation (e.g., interpersonal relations, school policy, salary, etc.). The context serves only to reduce pain in the lower-order needs areas (e.g., physiological and safety) and cannot lead to satisfaction. The content aspects correspond to esteem and self-actualization, which are at the top of Maslow's hierarchy (Maslow, 1954). Those factors that are content-centered (i.e., intrinsic aspects of teaching) contribute most powerfully to satisfaction.

According to a recent national survey (USDOE, 1992), approximately 32% of new teachers chose the teaching profession because they enjoy working with children. Approximately 30% found the teaching process satisfying. The same report projected that the number of teachers would need to increase from 2.8 million in 1991 to 3.3 million in 2002 to meet the demand.

Clarke and Keating (1995) discovered that interaction with students was the most satisfying aspect for teachers, while lack of administrative support was the least satisfying aspect. Perkins (1991) observed that teacher satisfaction was not significantly affected by background variables such as teacher or principal gender, years of experience, or school-type assignment. He also found that teachers are most satisfied with their co-workers and least satisfied with the monetary aspects of teaching. Inadequate salary, low status of the profession, and excessive paperwork are some common sources of distress that affect job satisfaction (Kyriacou & Sutcliffe, 1979).

Teachers' perception of locus of control is another factor influencing job satisfaction. Bein, Anderson, and Maes (1990) found a negative correlation between job satisfaction and teachers' perceptions of external control. Those with a greater sense of personal control were

significantly more satisfied. This finding confirms the importance of teacher autonomy identified by Wright (1985).

Barkdoll (1991) found a differential connection between stress and job satisfaction. For example, the most satisfied teachers reported low stress and high job satisfaction, while the least satisfied teachers reported high stress and low satisfaction.

Statement of Objectives

This research specifically aimed to generate a theory pursuant to the best practices they have employed by the Outstanding Teachers of Dinagat Islands Division under the K to 12 program anchored on the following questions:

1. How is teaching excellence reflected based on the attitudes, beliefs, and actions of outstanding teachers?
2. What are the best practices they have employed in their respective classrooms which lead them to become an outstanding teacher?
3. Based on the emerging themes, how teaching excellence can be best described?

Research Design

This study is a qualitative research in nature, employing the Grounded Theory design. Grounded Theory has been used for the generation of substantive or formal theory using data generated from research interviews, observation, written sources, or some combinations thereof (Glasser and Strauss, 1967). The purpose of Grounded theory is to generate "concepts and their relationships that explain, account for and interpret the variation in behavior in the substantive area under study (Glasser, 1992). In this context, the researcher specifically used the Glasserian Approach to investigate the subject of interest and to develop a theory relevant to the practices of outstanding teachers in the K to 12 Classroom.

Research Environment

The study has been conducted at the Division of Dinagat Islands for the School Year 2020-2021. The Division of Dinagat Islands is one of the newly created schools division offices in Caraga Region, comprising 141 basic education schools within the 10 functional districts where participant's stations are situated.

Research Participants/Informants

Desiring to explore the best practices employed by outstanding teachers in the classroom, the researcher, who happens to be one of the teachers in the Division of Dinagat islands, recruited 15 teacher-participants who has been recognized by the Division PRAISE (Program on Awards and Incentives for Service Excellence) Committee and other award-giving bodies as "Outstanding Teacher". Due to the comprehensiveness of the definition of a "teacher", an Outstanding Teacher is limited only to the following description: he/she is either an Elementary Teacher, High School Teacher, ALS Mobile Teacher, Multigrade Teacher, or a Master Teacher.

Sampling

The participants have been chosen using purposive sampling since the researcher selectively involves teachers who are recognized and have won the award. Specifically, they have been included in the study if they have met the selection criteria as follows:

1. He/she must be an incumbent public school teacher with a permanent status.
2. He/she has been recognized as an Outstanding Teacher within the last the five years.
3. He/she has been actively involved in the teaching profession as an Elementary Teacher, JHS Teacher, SHS Teacher, SPED Teacher, Multigrade Teacher, ALS Mobile Teacher, and a Master Teacher.

Research Instrument

Semi-structured interviews have been conducted among the participants of the study. Semi-structured interviews were utilized since it is more flexible. An interview guide, usually including both closed-ended and open-ended questions, were prepared; but in the course of the interview, the interviewer had a certain amount of room to adjust the sequence of the questions to be asked and to add questions based on the context of the participants' responses.

Data Gathering

Data gathered came from individual interviews. Prior to the interview process, the researcher asked permission from the school principal and the participants themselves; conducted an orientation session with the participant; and made them familiar with the content of the interview guide. They were briefed on the manner of the conduct of the interviews and how the researcher was supposed to validate the results. Time allotment for the conduct of interview shall be between 20 to 30 minutes. The participants were assured of the anonymity and confidentiality of all the data transpires from the interview.

Memo Writing

Writing memo is an essential part of Grounded Theory, Birks and Mills (2012) recommend that memo writing should interrupt other research activities, and include feelings and assumptions, philosophical positions, ideas from literature, concerns regarding the study designs, reflections on research process, procedural and analytical decision making, coding categories and generating theory. Glaser (1978) states that memos should remain open and to be categorized so that they can be referred to as theory emerges and also provide part of the audit trail. Birks and Mills (2012) stress that memos need to be written from the start of the study and can be used as part of the thesis. Diagrams are used concurrently to "map and connect codes" to increase transparency (Birks and Mills, 2012). With these protocols, the researcher served the above citation to guide him and to ensure rigor and trustworthiness of the data gathered.

Categorizing and Coding Data

"Coding is analysis. Codes are tags or labels for assigning units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during a study" (Miles and Huberman, 1994). To organize data into meaningful chunks, descriptive codes was used. This allows translation of text by attributing a class or theme to segments based on their content.

Data Analysis

Qualitative researchers were in agreement on the challenging task of analyzing, categorizing, and synthesizing the mounds of data collected by the novice researcher (Yin, 1994). Specifically, for this research, thematic approach by Creswell (1998) as cited by Prieto et. al (2017) following its generic steps will be utilized to analyze data and generate a theory.

Generally, the first step of data analysis according to Creswell (1998) was to organize and prepare the data. This involves the careful process of transcription or transcribing the responses of the participants verbatim. The next step was obtaining the general sense of information and reflecting on its general meaning. In this stage, the qualitative researcher had written marginal notes or begin reflecting over-all thoughts.

Prior to generating themes, the researcher should begin the detailed analysis with the coding process. This was done through taking text data or segmenting sentences into themes or categories. The following step was to use the coding process to generate a description of the setting or people as well as categories or themes for analysis. These themes were the ones that appear as major findings in this study and were stated under separate headings in the findings section of the study. The researcher decided how the description and themes were represented. One approach was to use a narrative passage to convey the findings of the analysis and the detailed discussion of the themes and sub-themes or interconnecting themes. In addition, the researcher must present a process model in order to expound the generated theory out from the themes.

Finally, checking the findings with the case study participants can be a valuable part of the analysis and can enhance validity. Besides, the analyzing of data was enhanced by reference to the existing literature and using this to raise questions about whether the researcher's findings were consistent with or different from extant research.

For one-on-one interviews, audio tapes or phone recorder had been used and which had been assigned a code. This served as the researcher's data base.

CHAPTER 2

THEORY GENERATION PROCESS

Grounded Theory is an attempt to extract a general abstract theory of a process, or interaction grounded in view of research participants. This process had used multiple stages of data collection and the refinement and interrelationship of categories or themes. In this research design, data are constantly compared with emerging categories and theoretical sampling of different groups to concretize similarities and differences of information (Prieto et. al, 2017).

Results and Discussion of Preliminary Study for Theory Development

In this kind of approach, the theory or general pattern of understanding had emerged as it begins with initial codes, develops into broad themes, and redounds into a grounded theory or broad interpretation. The preliminary results of the study have presented the demographic profile of the participants and the codes and emerging themes based on the participant's responses.

Demographic Information: Based on the table below, there are 10 female participants while only 5 are male whose age ranges from 27 to 58 years old. Most of them are married and only 5 are still single. It is noteworthy that majority of the participants have enrolled/obtained master's and doctorate degree while teaching experience is between 3 to 35 years. There are 5 Secondary School Teachers, 3 Multigrade Teachers, 2 Elementary School Teachers, Secondary Master Teachers, and ALS Teachers, and only 1 Elementary Master Teacher.

Table 1: Demographic Information of Preliminary Study Participants

Participant	Sex	Age	Civil Status	Highest Educational Attainment	Teaching Experience	Teaching Category
1	Female	27	Married	Bachelor's degree holder	3 years	Multigrade Teacher
2	Female	35	Married	Doctorate degree holder	12 years	Secondary Master Teacher
3	Male	32	Single	With units in master's degree	13 years	Elementary Master Teacher
4	Female	37	Married	Doctorate degree holder	15 years	Secondary Master Teacher
5	Male	29	Married	CAR in Doctorate degree	8 years	Secondary School Teacher
6	Female	34	Married	Master's degree holder	12 years	Elementary Master Teacher
7	Male	38	Single	With units in master's degree	6 years	ALS Teacher
8	Male	28	Single	Doctorate degree holder	6 years	Secondary School Teacher
9	Female	58	Married	With units in master's degree	35 years	Elementary School Teacher
10	Female	34	Married	With units in master's degree	11 years	Multigrade Teacher
11	Female	52	Married	Bachelor's degree holder	32 years	ALS Teacher
12	Female	55	Married	With units in master's degree	34 years	Elementary School Teacher

13	Female	40	Married	Doctorate degree holder	15 years	Secondary School Teacher
14	Male	30	Single	With units in master's degree	10 years	Secondary School Teacher
15	Female	29	Single	With units in master's degree	6 years	Multigrade Teacher

Results of Thematic Analysis: Thematic Analysis is a form of pattern recognition within data. It provides a simple interpretation and concise description of themes and patterns in data set (Prieto et. al, 2017). In this view, the researcher had created the codes based on the responses of the participants. The responses are being "chunked" before bringing meaning to their response. These codes are then classified to form themes. Based on the result, 8 emerging themes have been derived from the participants.

Table 2: Excerpt of the Thematic Analysis Conducted based on Participant's Response

Themes	Codes	Frequency of Codes
Theme 1: Instructional Competence	employing varied strategies	13
	integrating ICT in the classroom	3
	monitoring learner's progress	1
	responding to multiple learning needs	12
	setting up good learning expectations	6
	showing flexibility	2
	understanding learner's diversity	1
	establishing a good learning environment	10
Theme 2: Partnership	collaborating with stakeholders	9
Theme 3: Value laden	having a sense of work commitment	17
	having a high regard to superiors	1
	imbibing perseverance in teaching	5
	modeling desirable behaviors	2
	showing positive values	3
	working harmoniously with colleagues	1
Theme 4: Research and Innovation	developing local resources	3
	engaging in research	6
	initiating instructional improvements	3
	using creative engagements	8
Theme 5: Student Centered	empowering students	3
Theme 6: Classroom Leadership	exhibiting leadership	1
	managing learner's behavior effectively	1

Theme 7: Professional Development	linking with professional learning community	2
	sharing best practices	1
Theme 8: Outstanding Achievements	upholding academic excellence	9

Theme 1: Instructional Competence

Employing Varied Strategies:

"I employ different instruction as often as possible." (P1)

"I do apply Marungko approach in remedial reading…I can say that it is very effective approach." (P4)

"In leading a diverse group of students, I employed various strategies to meet their individual needs and differences as well as differentiated instruction and activities given to them to cater the unique personality and ability of my pupils." (P5)

"In dealing with low literacy and numeracy skills of pupils, I applied strategies and various exercises to enhance learner's performance." (P6)

"In my teaching, it has been my practice to really find teaching strategies as well as the varied type of assessments that match to the type learners that I have in the classroom to make the teaching and learning meaningful and relevant to them. This way, students become interested and motivated to take their part in the discussion." (P9)

"Through verbally expressing their ideas and responding to others, your students will develop their self-confidence, as well as enhance their communication and critical thinking skills which are vital throughout life." (P11)

"Differentiate your teaching by allocating tasks based on learners' abilities, to ensure no one gets left behind." (P13)

"But, when the teacher is creative and resourceful in planning the lesson; using appropriate teaching strategy, fun and engaging activities like interactive games, excellent use of ICT, and the use of different type of assessments based on students' learning preferences and most importantly, students become interested to participate if you are able to connect the key concept/s of the lesson to their day-to-day living." (P15)

Integrating ICT in the Classroom:

"Incorporating technology in teaching is a great way to actively engage the learners, especially as digital media surrounds young people in the 21st century." (P3)

"Another challenge is the lack of resources to deliver quality instruction like ICT equipment. I addressed this by using my own resources to procure this equipment." (P9)

"I have utilized technologies and 21st century skills in teaching." (P14)

Monitoring Learners' Progress:

"I also monitor what and how the learners are doing the task for me to provide appropriate interventions." (P12)

Responding to Multiple Learning Needs:

"I usually made a profile of my learners at the beginning of the school year using the results of the conducted survey on Multiple Intelligences and Learning Styles. After profiling, I considered it as my basis in designing my lessons in terms of conducting differentiated instruction." (P2)

"Given this diversity, you need to personalize your teaching (and eventually your assessment methods) to respond to the different backgrounds and learning styles/needs of each of your students. This includes identifying early on children who are at risk of failing and giving them the extra attention, they need to make sure they succeed and stay in school." (P3)

"Be flexible in using of time, moving from one kind of group to another and balancing the attention given to strong learners acting as peer tutors and weaker students needing extra attention." (P6)

"I did remedial reading before they go home in the morning and same in the afternoon." (P8)

"I acknowledge the differences of my learners and as much as possible, I try to suit my delivery to their needs. It is not easy, but it is possible." (P9)

"Give remediation and additional activities for learners lagging behind." (P10)

"I always do profiling of my students to get to know them better in terms of their individual talents and skills as well as their weaknesses. This is important because this will determine what teaching strategy would the teacher use that best fit to their respective learning capabilities." (P11)

"Being an effective teacher is a challenge because every student is unique, however, by using a combination of teaching strategies you can address students' varying learning styles and academic capabilities as well as make your classroom a dynamic and motivational environment for students." (P12)

"Imbibe instructional competence through utilizing strategies suited to my learners' needs and interests, make sure that my learners fully understand the lessons and acquire mastery of competencies." (P13)

Setting up Good Learning Expectations:

"For me, I can describe excellence in the classroom when your lessons are attainable and bearing a fruitful result to your learners." (P1)

"Excellence in the classroom is described as having learners who are holistically formed. This means that there is total and integral formation of the human person- they are not only academically excellent but also socially, emotionally and spiritually enriched." (P2)

"Instructional competence in the classroom always starts from how well a teacher plan for his/her lesson. A well-planned learning plan will yield to positive learning outcomes." (P3)

"An effective teacher nurtures the talents and the skills of the students and helping them accomplish their goals." (P8)

"Excellence in the classroom is achieved when the teacher is able to effectively carry out her objectives, when there is interaction among students, when there is real connection between teacher and students, and most importantly, when the teacher is able to bring positive change in the lives of the learners." (P9)

"Through our organized PPAs, my job as a teacher had become light because we produced learners who have leadership skills- they had become responsible learners who could assist us in the classroom. For me, that was the most tangible result." (P11)

Showing Flexibility:

"I have the determination and perseverance to achieve my goals… wiling to adapt to change and upgrade myself with the latest trends and 21st century skills." (P10)

"I do adapt and engage new teaching techniques and styles." (P15)

Understanding Learner's Diversity:

"As a multi-grade teacher, I should try first to understand the diversity and complexity of my students – by gender, age, family and socio-economic background, language, ability, and education needs – and see this diversity not as a problem to be solved but as an opportunity to be used to produce better learning." (P8)

Establishing a Good Learning Environment:

"I see to it that pupil's achievement and improvement are evident, constant progress and development of the learners, well-structured classroom, with instructional materials and healthy learning environment. Learning always takes place." (P4)

"I ensured all the pupils to have the sense of belongingness and feel at ease in my class by providing a good environment for learning." (P6)

"Be creative in managing the multi-grade classroom, arranging whole grades, mixed grades, large and small groups, pairs and space for individual work." (P7)

"I treated my pupils equally and gave them opportunity to showcase and develop their gifts of talents and skills." (P9)

"I am a good communicator in dealing my pupils inside the class." (P12)

"Inside the classroom I did set a clear values and beliefs that is practiced and reinforced by all, for the learners, teachers, and parents in the community." (P14)

"This requires special attention to establishing routines for students to work and study independently through activity-based learning." (P15)

Theme 2: Partnership

Collaborating with Stakeholders:

"I carry out a school self-assessment of its achievements and its needs and developing a school improvement plan to the stakeholders; mobilizing support from impoverished and often disempowered and disinterested parents." (P1)

"I have gained the support of local community leaders – all of these are skills useful in schools with multi-grade classrooms." (P2)

"I do collaborate with stakeholders in and out activities in school." (P3)

"As the father in the classroom, I made them feel my presence and care through regular home visitation and parent-teacher conference, and conducting fund raising activities and projects that would ease the hardships of my learners." (P7)

"These stakeholders helped me in many forms, financial, material, intellectual, etc." (P8)

"I tried to raise more resources whenever it becomes limited through the help of local officials" (P10)

"Since I am working in remote places, I take the advantage of whatever resources there are around me who could help my work – my school-in-charge, co- teaches, parents and the local community, and other schools relatively close to my school which can form a cluster and share useful experiences, materials and lesson plans." (P15)

Theme 3: Value Laden

Having a Sense of Work Commitment

"Dream big, work hard," this is the principle that I believed." (P1)

"Being an outstanding teacher, I always ensured that I always had my Daily Lesson Plan/Log before the delivery of my lessons to my learners." (P3)

"As Eskwela Kooperatiba coordinator, income generating projects are all documented and won prizes in the provincial level." (P6)

"I believe I am passionate about teaching. I am genuinely concerned with my students and I know my purpose." (P7)

"There were times that I prioritize my work than my responsibilities at home as a father." (P9)

"Teachers are the great backbone for the future of our dear learners." (P10)

"I work hard to provide relevant, meaningful and authentic activities to my class." (P13)

"Doing the right thing for the good of the learners, perform duties and responsibilities as an instructional manager." (P15)

Having a High Regard to Superiors:

"I obey my superior. I do not resist to the multiple tasks given by my school head to me." (P11)

Imbibing Perseverance in Teaching:

"The qualities that I have which help me become an outstanding teacher is my perseverance in teaching my pupils." (P7)

"With all these challenges, patience is my key to minimize and even solve it." (P8)

"I know teaching young learners is a lifelong process." (P11)

"A fighter, sometimes win, sometimes lost but never give up instead, keep on trying and improving. Accept defeat and use this as my steppingstone and learn from my experiences and mistakes." (P14)

Modeling Desirable Behaviors:

"Being a classroom teacher, I performed as a value-oriented role model to my students." (P12)

Showing Positive Values:

"Being hardworking, positive, open-minded, and goal-oriented are the qualities that helped me get through it." (P5)

"A good follower, reliable on assigned tasks, God-fearing and honest, true to myself and to others." (P12)

"Open minded for criticisms and feedback with no hurt feelings. Living without pride and have a very long patience in handling pupils, dealing with colleagues, respect and support my school head all the way for the benefit of the school and children." (P13)

Working Harmoniously with Colleagues:

"Multi-grade teaching is a challenge in itself but working with my co-teacher to make small school "work" requires other skills as well." (P15)

Theme 5: Research and Innovation

Developing Local Resources:

"I developed resource materials that can be adopted and shared to others in due process. I helped my learners improve their performance and mastery level of certain competencies." (P2)

"Be innovative in the development and reproduction of teaching and learning materials - use locally available resources and make them relevant to the local context and culture." (P3)

"I also developed and presented my contextualized big book which won and awarded as best contextualized and localized material in the division level. Submitted activity design of my application project FORCE (Filipino Oral Reading Comprehension Enhancement)." (P10)

Engaging in Research:

"I also present my action research under BERF fund… intervention in reading comprehension as my innovation, applied different strategies in my lesson as indicated in my plan and Powerpoint lesson presentations. I also gather my designation for my multiple coordinatorships in school, district, and division." (P1)

"In our BERF funded action research, the research team wrote stories of our tourist spots in the province, which was quality assured before it was utilized as reading material for students." (P4)

"One of innovations is the conduct of an action research focusing on the improvement of communicative competence of the learners. It significantly improves my teaching as it helped me achieve my objectives as a language teacher." (P9)

"Luckily, I was given opportunity to present my research entitled "Game Based-Instruction for Sustainable Reading Remediation Program" to the 37th Thailand TESOL International Conference at Bangkok, Thailand." (P12)

"I was also one of the proponents in an action research funded by the BERF entitled "Using Localized Stories to Improve Reading Literacy Skills of Grade One Learners" that was completed and presented during the 2020 Research O'clock at DepEd Central Office." (P14)

Initiating Instructional Improvements:

"Contextualized big book, reading intervention program, action research, income generation projects. It supplements teaching and solution to minimize low literacy and numeracy of the learners." (P7)

"I kept on reading and researching to improve my quality of instruction." (P12)

Using Creative Engagements

"Bring dull academic concepts to life with visual and practical learning experiences, helping the learners to understand how their schooling applies in the real-world." (P2)

"To capture their interest, I designed activities that make their learning experience fun." (P5)

"In the classroom of an effective teacher, students are motivated and engaged as the teacher makes the learning experience fun for the learners." (P6)

"Being an effective teacher therefore requires the implementation of creative and innovative teaching strategies in order to meet students' individual needs." (P11)

"Solving puzzles and acting out short drama sketches are just a few examples of how cooperative learning can be incorporated into classroom lessons." (P13)

"One challenge is the large class size. I try to address this by undertaking interesting and engaging activities." (P14)

"Pose thought-provoking questions which inspire your students to think for themselves and become more independent learners." (P15)

Theme 5: Student Centered

Empowering Students:

"When a teacher successfully empowered students, there is excellence in the classroom. This happens when majority of the students in a class acquired necessary knowledge and skills and become lifelong learners." (P4)

"I believe instructional competence inside the classroom is carried out every day. I make it a point that my students feel that they are the most significant part of the learning process." (P11)

"I always consider my learners in decision making. I believe that teacher's competence is measured on how the students feel and how well they do even outside the classroom." (P14)

Theme 6: Classroom Leadership

Exhibiting Leadership:

"I did not make an extraordinary innovation in my entire life as a classroom teacher. However, being a Student Affairs coordinator for a long time, I together with the student leaders organized programs, projects and activities that would form the learners holistically especially on the area of leadership." (P1)

Managing Learner's Behavior Effectively:

"Implementing an effective behavior management strategy is crucial to gain your students respect and ensure students have an equal chance of reaching their full potential." (P9)

Theme 7: Professional Development

Linking with Professional Learning Community:

"I had worked and presented my diploma in graduate studies and other skills." (P5)

"I have engaged in regular professional development programs which is a great way to enhance teaching and learning in your classroom." (P7)

Sharing Best Practices:

"I had shared best teaching practice in the classroom which are developing self-esteem, knowledge, understanding and skills of a learners." (P9)

Theme 8: Outstanding Achievements

Upholding Academic Excellence:

"Instructional competence in the classroom is a must to/for an outstanding teacher." (P2)

"Being recognized is a bonus for me. I just did my mandate as a teacher and I am just lucky that I got recognized. Of course, there are personal preparation like preparing my post grad studies, attending trainings, undertaking research, and many more." (P4)

"Being a passionate teacher, I have always a desire to uphold academic excellence." (P7)

"I also found out a good formula to sustain the culture of winning particularly in the field of journalism. Research plus hard work equals excellence." (P8)

"Actually, I did not prepare for it because I did not expect to be chosen and trusted by my school principal who recommended me to the district supervisor. Upon knowing it, I prepare all my supporting documents such as my certificate of commendations, recognitions, appreciations as winning coach in a certain competition and participation in the school, district, regional, national, and international trainings." (P12)

"I did not plan for it really… I just performed all my duties and responsibilities as Master Teacher with all my might. But when I read the criteria for the search for Outstanding MT, I felt that I can qualify because that time, I had my BERF funded action research in the region, had my regional and division certificate for demonstration teaching. Then I started preparing my papers for my entry." (P13)

"Excellence in the classroom for me is where excellent teachers are, and also where students are having high quality teaching and learning experience which is significant in their personal well-being as a person." (P15)

Hypothesis Derived from the Results

In order to the derive the hypotheses of the study, the researcher had used the generated themes and its underlying codes. The narrative interview analysis was used to derive meanings out from the responses, and which have been utilized for drawing hypothesis. These responses are coming from the teacher-participants who were purposively selected. In each generated hypothesis, a central question was asked to the participants and was further expounded through sub-questions to narrow down and validate their answers.

Generation of Hypothesis 1: The participants who were outstanding teachers in the field have been asked on how they imbibe instructional competence inside the classroom and their best practices in leading a diverse group of students.

This hypothesis was emerged from the following themes:

Theme 1: Instructional Competence

"But, when the teacher is creative and resourceful in planning the lesson; using appropriate teaching strategy, fun and engaging activities like interactive games, excellent use of ICT, and the use of different type of assessments based on students' learning preferences and most

importantly, students become interested to participate if you are able to connect the key concept/s of the lesson to their day-to-day living." (P15)

"Incorporating technology in teaching is a great way to actively engage the learners, especially as digital media surrounds young people in the 21st century." (P3)

"Given this diversity, you need to personalize your teaching (and eventually your assessment methods) to respond to the different backgrounds and learning styles/needs of each of your students. This includes identifying early on children who are at risk of failing and giving them the extra attention, they need to make sure they succeed and stay in school." (P3)

"Excellence in the classroom is achieved when the teacher is able to effectively carry out her objectives, when there is interaction among students, when there is real connection between teacher and students, and most importantly, when the teacher is able to bring positive change in the lives of the learners." (P9)

"I treated my pupils equally and gave them opportunity to showcase and develop their gifts of talents and skills." (P9)

Theme 5: Student Centered

"When a teacher successfully empowered students, there is excellence in the classroom. This happens when majority of the students in a class acquired necessary knowledge and skills and become lifelong learners." (P4)

"I always consider my learners in decision making. I believe that teacher's competence is measured on how the students feel and how well they do even outside the classroom." (P14)

Theme 7: Professional Development

"I have engaged in regular professional development programs which is a great way to enhance teaching and learning in your classroom." (P7)

"I had shared best teaching practice in the classroom which are developing self-esteem, knowledge, understanding and skills of a learners." (P9)

Hypothesis 1: Teacher's professional competence is a significant indicator towards teaching excellence.

Proposition 1: If the teacher has a high regard to their professional competence, then, teaching excellence is remarkable.

Generation of Hypothesis 2: In this regard, the participants were asked about their personal description of teaching excellence, their qualities which helped them became an outstanding teaching as well as their preparations for such recognition.

Two themes were derived from this hypothesis:

Theme 3: Value Laden

"Dream big, work hard," this is the principle that I believed." (P1)

"Being an outstanding teacher, I always ensured that I always had my Daily Lesson Plan/Log before the delivery of my lessons to my learners." (P3)

"I believe I am passionate about teaching. I am genuinely concerned with my students and I know my purpose." (P7)

"There were times that I prioritize my work than my responsibilities at home as a father." (P9)

"The qualities that I have which help me become an outstanding teacher is my perseverance in teaching my pupils." (P7)

Theme 6: Classroom Leadership

"I did not make an extraordinary innovation in my entire life as a classroom teacher. However, being a Student Affairs coordinator for a long time, I together with the student leaders organized programs, projects and activities that would form the learners holistically especially on the area of leadership." (P1)

"Implementing an effective behavior management strategy is crucial to gain your students respect and ensure students have an equal chance of reaching their full potential." (P9)

Hypothesis 2: The good personality traits of the teacher create a highly positive learning environment.

Proposition 2: The personal innate factors of the teacher have a high regard in establishing excellent classrooms.

Generation of Hypothesis 3: The leading question which was thrown to the participants during the semi-structured interview had focused on their challenges encountered in the classroom and how they addressed it. Their common answers had implied on collaborating with the stakeholders of the school.

In this hypothesis, the theme "Partnership" has been derived.

Theme 2: Partnership

"I carry out a school self-assessment of its achievements and its needs and developing a school improvement plan to the stakeholders; mobilizing support from impoverished and often disempowered and disinterested parents." (P1)

"I do collaborate with stakeholders to in and out activities in school." (P3)

"As the father in the classroom, I made them feel my presence and care through regular home visitation and parent-teacher conference, and conducting fund raising activities and projects that would ease the hardships of my learners." (P7)

"These stakeholders helped me in many forms, financial, material, intellectual, etc." (P8)

Hypothesis 3: Establishing a good connection to stakeholders implies a high quality learning outcome.

Proposition 3: The interpersonal strength of the teacher significantly impacts student learning outcomes.

Generation of Hypothesis 4: This hypothesis emerged from the responses of the participants which focuses on the innovations they have made and how these had helped them performed their work as a teacher.

The following themes have been extracted:

Theme 5: Research and Innovation

"Be innovative in the development and reproduction of teaching and learning materials - use locally available resources and make them relevant to the local context and culture." (P3)

"One of innovations is the conduct of an action research focusing on the improvement of communicative competence of the learners. It significantly improves my teaching as it helped me achieve my objectives as a language teacher." (P9)

"Luckily, I was given opportunity to present my research entitled "Game Based-Instruction for Sustainable Reading Remediation Program" to the 37th Thailand TESOL International Conference at Bangkok, Thailand." (P12)

"In the classroom of an effective teacher, students are motivated and engaged as the teacher makes the learning experience fun for the learners." (P6)

Theme 8: Outstanding Achievements

"Being recognized is a bonus for me. I just did my mandate as a teacher and I am just lucky that I got recognized. Of course, there are personal preparation like preparing my post grad studies, attending trainings, undertaking research, and many more." (P4)

"I also found out a good formula to sustain the culture of winning particularly in the field of journalism. Research plus hard work equals excellence." (P8)

"Excellence in the classroom for me is where excellent teachers are, and also where students are having high quality teaching and learning experience which is significant in their personal well-being as a person." (P15)

Hypothesis 4: If teacher's creativity and performance is exemplary, then, there is a high regard of excellence in the classroom.

Proposition 4: Teaching excellence is a product of teacher's creativity and exemplary performance.

Generated Grounded Theory:

The emerging Teaching Excellence Model Theory has the following salient features:

Excellence in the classroom can be attributed when the teacher sets up good learning expectations, establishes a positive learning environment, and empowers the learners (*Theme 1, 5*). Also, these attributes are worthwhile when it is shared with colleagues and has been communicated effectively to the stakeholders of the school (*Theme 2, 7*).

In this study, the quality of becoming an outstanding teacher in the field can be described in terms of professional competence (*Theme 1, 5, 7*), personal innate factors (*Theme 3, 6*), interpersonal strength (*Theme 2*), and teacher's exemplars (*Theme 5, 8*).

Outstanding teachers have shown a high regard on instructional competence and classroom leadership (*Theme 1, 6*), strong foundation of good working and personal values, and collaboration to stakeholders (*Theme 2, 3*), high quality research outputs and innovations (*Theme 4*), as well as professional development and outstanding achievements (*Theme 7, 8*).

An outstanding teacher is not the most influential person in the classroom, instead, a professional who empowers his/her students on initiating improvements and decision making (*Theme 5*).

The theory generated can be summarized as follows:

"Teaching excellence is achieved when the teacher possesses professional competence and personal innate factors and which can be modelled through interpersonal strengths and exemplars".

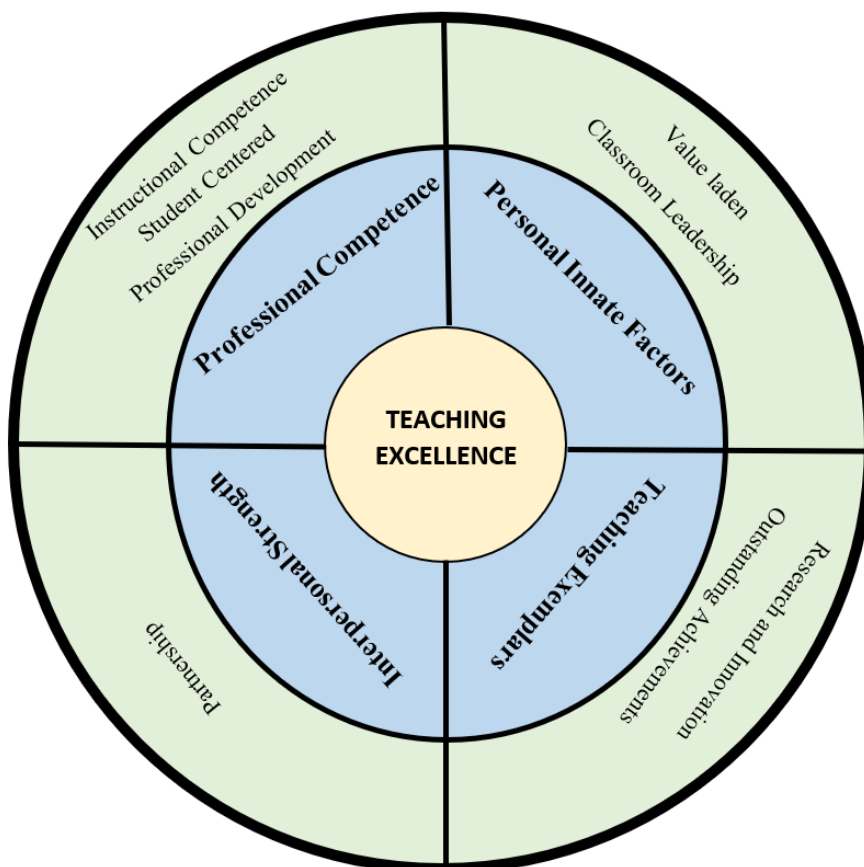## ECLE'S TEACHING EXCELLENCE MODEL THEORY

Figure 1: Conceptual Paradigm of Ecle's Teaching Excellence Model Theory

The personal and professional traits are common and general characteristics which proficient, highly proficient, and distinguished teachers have acquired upon entering the field. Formal trainings have been done pre-service or in-service but what lies between the boundary of a regular teacher and an outstanding teacher are their professional edge. These were the services they have rendered beyond the parameters of the Department of Education.

Personal and professional are guiding principles in the world of inspiring young people to become literate, skills competent, and lifelong learners in the community. An outstanding teacher is a committed person who values his work, imbibed perseverance in the classroom, and modelled desirable behaviors. He worked harmonious with colleagues and empowers his students in time of making a sound decision. Hence, an outstanding teacher is not just a professional holder of valid license, but a figure in the classroom who possesses instructional competence and advances himself in terms of acquiring graduate studies and professional trainings. He does not settle on minimum requirements set to him, instead, gaining more so that he could share these to the end users.

An outstanding teacher does not only personal and professional competence, hence, there is really a big distinction between him and the rest of the workforce. An outstanding teacher is an active and visible person, inside and outside the pillars of the school. He continuously collaborates with the stakeholders for purpose of improving the learning outcomes of the students and the school, in general.

One of the primary roles of an outstanding teacher is to influence others to excel in the field through his passionate works and sharing of best practices. He is a person of great creative quotient because he continuously improves teaching through research and innovation. This professional lead every innovation initiatives of his respective station and disseminates his works for others to benchmark. The improvement of instruction lies through the skillful and systematic research process.

Conclusion

It can be inferred from the findings of the study that teaching excellence is a product of professional competence and personal innate factors of the teachers as well as their interpersonal strength and teaching exemplars.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, the researcher recommends future researchers to conduct further validation of the generated theory which is composed of the following hypothesis:

1. Teacher's professional competence is a significant indicator towards teaching excellence.
2. The good personality traits of the teacher create a highly positive learning environment.
3. Establishing a good connection to stakeholders implies a high quality learning outcome.
4. If teacher's creativity and performance is exemplary, then, there is a high regard of excellence in the classroom.

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