

## **Towards Continuous Quality Improvement: Assessment of the BEED Student Program Outcomes Through Exit Strategy**

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### **Abstract**

Quality assurance should look at institutional performance in terms of the capacity of the HEIs to translate the VMG into quality programs and quality results, hence the need to formulate the program educational objectives and identify the program outcomes which have to be measured, to confirm if they are realized and if there are key areas for improvement. This is to continuously ensure the quality of higher education. The exit strategy, an effective mechanism used to measure student outcomes, shows that the BEED Program Outcomes of the College of Education are achieved. The exit survey conducted with the Pre-service Teachers confirms that they have attained all the program outcomes targeted. Furthermore, the interviews with the cooperating teachers affirm that the PST's have developed the competencies of an effective future teacher.

**Key words:** Program Outcomes, Quality Improvement, Pre-service Teachers, Exit Strategy, Exit Survey

### **I. Rationale:**

Institutions of higher learning in the Philippines are mandated to put a great deal of emphasis on quality and quality assurance (QA) in order to contribute to building a quality nation capable of transcending the social, political, economic, cultural and ethical issues that constrain the country's human development, productivity and global competitiveness. This entails alignment of the learning environment with the institution's vision, mission, and goals (VMG) and translating them into learning outcomes, quality programs and systems. It is for this reason that the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) has developed and implemented an Outcomes-Based Approach to QA monitoring and evaluation because it has the potential to greatly increase both the effectiveness of the QA system, and the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of higher education (CMO No. 46, series 2012). Evaluation, therefore, are based upon outcomes, particularly the intended, implemented and achieved learning outcomes.

In order to implement this system, a program must formulate the program educational objectives and identify the program outcomes (PO) that directly address the educational objectives and incorporate certain specified outcomes (Felder & Brent, 2003). These program learning outcomes have to be attained by students at the time of degree completion which means that they should exhibit what they know and what they are able to do successfully at

the end of their learning journey in school (Kapfer, 1971). Hence, this kind of teaching-learning system must have a systematic and ongoing evaluation scheme of student performance.

To attain this goal, infinite measures are being considered; continuous monitoring and upgrading of educational programs, courses, curriculum, assessment, reporting systems (Malan, 2000) and restructuring of the administrative functions and responsibilities are just some of these measures. This quality measurement is significant in all educational programs to warrant that objectives are achieved and to identify key areas for improvement (Owlia and Aspinwall, 1996, 1998). Furthermore, systematic program outcomes assessment should be done continuously to ensure the quality of higher education (Noor et.al., 2009).

Two different approaches to outcomes-based evaluation of programs can be utilized, these are the direct and indirect methods. Direct assessments provide for the direct examination or observation of student knowledge and skills. On the other hand, indirect assessment of student learning ascertains the value of the learning experiences. Student knowledge and skills are assessed through information on their perception of learning (Rogers, 2006). This assessment process also encompasses the aspect of continuous improvement or Continuous Quality Improvement (Ayob, et.al., 2011). However, the two aforementioned methods have their own limitations, hence, the use of multiple methods can be more reliable and can provide a converging and concrete evidence of student knowledge as well as to check if the program mechanisms, procedures, and process actually deliver the desired quality. To this end, the use of exit strategy as a counterpart of the existing assessment approaches is considered to provide a helpful system to gather feedback (Mazzei, 2008) from all stakeholders and graduating students' performances and perspectives through exit tests, exit interview and survey.

The College of Education in Isabela State University, in its commitment for quality and excellence, has kept a mindset for Quality Assurance. Hence, it ensures that the desired quality is defined, measured and delivered through the provision of evidence for quality teacher education. As a Teacher Education Institution, it has to deliver products and services necessary to achieve the outcomes it intends to produce. These, in turn, can be achieved through monitoring and review of the program's strengths and weaknesses. Therefore, the conduct of this study can provide additional insights and data for the graduate attribute assessment process as this is used to assess the Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEEd) students' achievement on program outcomes through a comprehensive exit strategy. Specifically, the conduct of this study will measure students' perception of how well their education program at the Isabela State University has prepared them as regards to the seven program outcomes of the College of Education. The gap between the actual measure and targets of the program outcomes serves as the basis for evaluation and interventions for continuous quality improvement of the program.

## **2. General Objective**

This study sought to assess the BEEd pre-service teachers' achievement of the program outcomes using exit strategy.

### **Specific Objectives:**

1. Evaluate the perceived attribute competencies as prescribed in Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) using exit survey.
2. Describe the cooperating teachers' observations in terms of students' abilities in achieving the Program Learning Outcomes.

### **3. Methodology**

This study was conducted to evaluate the BEEd program outcomes using a mixed-method approach involving descriptive, quantitative and qualitative data from pre-service teachers (PST) and cooperating teachers (CT) during the teaching internship. Specifically, sequential explanatory design was utilized where quantitative data was collected first followed by qualitative data collection. The main purpose of this was to use the qualitative results to further explain and interpret the findings from the quantitative data (Cresswell, J.W., 2013).

The quantitative part of the study consisted of the perceived attribute competencies as prescribed in Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) of the BEEd pre-service teachers using exit survey. On the other hand, the qualitative part of the study consisted of the exit interview with the Pre-service teachers and interview with the cooperating teachers.

#### **3.1. Sample**

This study was conducted at the College of Education of Isabela State University, Cauayan City Campus during the first semester of the school year 2018-2019. A total of 27 BEED pre-service teachers participated in the quantitative study.

The respondents on the qualitative data were the selected pre-service teachers and the cooperating teachers coming from the three cooperating schools. They were chosen using the purposive sampling technique. This technique allows the researchers in selecting the respondents who would most likely provide essential data to the study, both in terms of relevance and depth. The following criteria were considered in selecting the cooperating teacher-respondents for the interview.

1. The cooperating teacher having at least 3 years of experience in mentoring pre-service teachers.
2. The cooperating teacher having at least a performance rating of very satisfactory for the last 3 years.
3. The cooperating teacher must preferably a master teacher.

#### **3.2. Data Collection**

The quantitative data were collected through a researcher-made questionnaire to assess the BEEd students' achievement of the program outcomes using exit strategy which consists of data from the exit survey. The initial development of the instrument was guided by the program outcomes of the college of education and the review of related literature and studies

conducted by the researchers. Content validation was conducted by five experts who were asked to evaluate whether the indicators for program outcomes effectively capture the information needed for the topic under investigation. Also, the survey was piloted to selected pre-service teachers from other campus to confirm the interpretation of the questions and the validity of the survey. A 5 point Likert scale was utilized, and the questionnaires' reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha.

Qualitative data on the other hand were gathered using exit interview with the graduating students to assess student learning experiences, institutional process, curriculum and student services. Prospective quality assurance, through methods such as exit interviews, can assure that the educational experiences meet the objective of an academic unit currently and in the future (Biggs, 2001). Likewise, interview with the cooperating teachers was conducted to obtain feedback regarding the performances of the BEEd students.

### 3.3. Data Analysis

The quantitative data analysis was done using simple statistical software. On the qualitative part of the study, data were analyzed using thematic analysis. The transcripts of the interview were organized, synthesized, and searched for common statements and ways of thinking. The data were arranged according to themes. In this study, the cooperating teachers' observations and experiences were categorized based on the strengths and weaknesses of the pre-service teachers during their teaching internship.

## 4. Result and Discussion

**Table 1. Perceived Attribute Competencies of the BEEd Pre-service Teachers**

Perceived Attribute Competencies	Mean	Description
1. Possess wide range of theoretical and practical skills of an effective delivery of instruction.		
1.1. Understand and convey knowledge of the subject matter.	4.89	Strongly Agree
1.2. Apply the different pedagogical theories, principles, and concepts in instructional planning.	4.70	Strongly Agree
1.3. Integrate appropriate technology in planning for instruction.	4.63	Strongly Agree
1.4. Construct objectives and select supporting activities.	4.93	Strongly Agree
1.5. Apply a variety of teaching strategies.	4.70	Strongly Agree
2. Perform the necessary competencies needed in the different learning areas in the elementary school.		
2.1. Apply the knowledge of pedagogical theories and practice through actual classroom teaching under the supervision of a supervising or cooperating teacher.	4.78	Strongly Agree
2.2. Discuss the tools used in assessment of and for learning.	4.82	Strongly Agree
2.3. Differentiate the roles of teachers in assessment of and for learning.	4.82	Strongly Agree

2.4. Manage student behavior for effective learning.	4.74	Strongly Agree
2.5. Organize and maintain an effective classroom environment.	4.67	Strongly Agree
3. Conduct research of instruction.	4.82	Strongly Agree
4. Undertake actual training in community development through extension activities.	4.70	Strongly Agree
5. Apply appropriate innovative and alternative teaching approaches.	4.74	Strongly Agree
6. Practice the professional and ethical requirements of the teaching profession.	4.89	Strongly Agree
7. Demonstrate desirable Filipino value as a foundation for social citizenship participation.	4.67	Strongly Agree

The table above shows that the respondents strongly agree that they developed the competencies expected from them to manifest, an indication of the attainment of all the program outcomes. They perceive that they **possess a wide range of theoretical and practical skills of an effective delivery of instruction**, and they are most confident with the **construction of objectives and select supporting activities**. They also believed that they **understand and convey knowledge of the subject matter**, a pleasant attribute of a good PST.

They also claimed that they are proficient in the performance of the necessary competencies needed in the different learning areas in the elementary school specifically the **discussion of the tools used in assessment of and for learning** and the **differentiation of the roles of teachers in assessment of and for learning**.

Furthermore, they strongly agree that they can **practice the professional and ethical requirements of the teaching profession** as well as conduct **research for instruction**. However, they find the **integration of appropriate technology in planning for instruction** as the least attained outcome.

### **Strong Partnership**

The value of strong professional experience partnerships has long been recognized (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Loughran, 2010, Zeichner, 2010) particularly given that professional experience is commonly regarded by PSTs as having the greatest impact on learning to teach (Adoniou, 2013). AITSL principles (AITSL, 2015) also place an increased emphasis on meaningful, sustainable and supportive relationships that can integrate theory and practice to increase depth of student reflective learning. PST 1 recognizes this saying:

*“The program has already built students who can compete to the national level. The partnership with other educational institutions was a big help in equipping us to be adept in the teaching world”.*

This means a closer alignment of “knowing and doing” within the professional experience (Loughran, 2010) which is central to teacher’s strong philosophy, professional identity and “thoughtful adaptation” in developing a sense of agency and efficacy in the kinds of decisions they make to facilitate learning (Fairbanks, et.al., 2010). This was also valued by PST 2, stating that:

*“Continue to have a strong partnership with other educational institutions, it is a big help to a practice teacher like me.”*

### **Technology Literacy**

Basic digital competencies are generated in the educational system, and students’ level of digital competencies depends on the level of digital competencies of teachers. Hence, teacher education institutions are expected to provide pre-service teachers with the necessary competencies to integrate technology in their classrooms (Tondeur, Aesaert, Pynoo, van Braak, Fraeyman, Erstad 2017). This idea was realized when CT 3 pointed out during the interview that the PST under her care was proficient in the use of technology. However, PST 3 opined the need to improve technology for instruction. She said:

*“There is a need to improve the use of technology in the classroom. Proficiency on the use of it means better performance of future life-roles”.*

The abovementioned revelation is in consonance with (Davies, Pittard 2008; Teo, Milutinović, Zhou, Banković 2017; Wastiau et al. 2013) research which indicates that teachers’ scarcely use ICT for teaching and learning, or constrainedly to low-level purposes. PST 4 has shared technology integration in the classroom as an aspect that needs to be looked into, stating that:

*“Encourage the future educators to integrate technology in their reports so that they will develop a sufficient level of competence on the use of technology.”*

PST 5 also highlighted the need to integrate technology in education. He said:

*“Trends and technology integration is a must”.*

Therefore, teachers are expected to have an adequate level of digital competencies, especially to be familiar with modern concepts, methods and tools in the fields they teach in (Digital Competence Framework – Teacher for a Digital Age 2017) since, as stated earlier, students’ level of digital competencies depends on the level of digital competencies of teachers.

It is also noteworthy to cite that all of the PSTs who were interviewed had mentioned the need to upgrade the facilities in the old college building to make it conducive to learning.

### **Pedagogical Competencies**

The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) through CMO # 30, s. 2004 has directed all TEIs to improve their curricula by setting higher standards in the definition of the purposes, mechanisms and procedures of their programs and provide pre-service teachers with appropriate, goal-oriented and contextualized experiences. This means that the preservice

teachers should demonstrate their ability to conduct learning and assessment tasks successfully in the classroom. This idea was confirmed by CT 1 during the interview, stating that:

*” The pre-service teacher under my care starts classroom activities promptly and accomplishes tasks tactfully”.*

CT 2 also revealed the same observation for the PST under her, citing the competence she appreciated the most:

*“My PST prepares well-thought and well-organized lesson plan. She motivates lesson effectively and relates them to the learners needs, interests and capabilities.*

This idea also holds true for CT3 when she expressed in the interview that:

*“The PST who was under my care was so efficient. He diligently follows lesson planning based from the K to 12 curriculum. He is expert in using technology as well.”*

Samusevica&Striguna(2017) cited that in terms of teacher competence, preservice teachers need to be prepared before immersion: knowledge , skills, attitudes , values, abilities and experience. This thought was evident in the revelation of CT 4:

*“The PST who was with me during his internship maintains pleasant personality, wholesome social relationship, good moral and ethical conduct. Furthermore, he uses effective teaching strategies and considers diversity of learners in choosing his instructional materials”.*

CT 5 has also shared that:

*“The PST whom I worked with during her immersion has shown mastery of the subject matter and effectively uses instructional materials in her instruction”.*

The interviews conducted with the PSTs and CTs have once again proved that the BEEEd program outcomes are attained, and itprepares future teachers to achieve educational goals.

## **5. Conclusion and Recommendation**

The exit survey has elicited valuable information which can serve as basis for evaluation and intervention for quality improvement of the BEEEd Program. The PST’s perceived that they developed the competencies they need to possess as they pursued Teacher Education which shows that the Program Outcomes are attained. Their perceptions were confirmed through the interviews conducted with the Cooperating Teachers. However, the PST’s felt the need to upgrade the facilities in the College Old Building as well as the use of technology to maximize students learning.

The researchers hereby recommend that the good educational practices of the College of Education must be sustained and the areas needing improvement must be addressed, in order to produce more graduates with high levels of academic, thinking, behavioral and technical competencies that are aligned to the national and international standards. It is also further

recommended that a related study along this line may be undertaken to include exit test as a source of data in the exit strategy.

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