

A Qualitative Study of Teacher Interns' Experiences of Pair Teaching During Teaching Practice Sessions

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Abstract: *Teaching internship is considered as the pinnacle of the teacher education preparation because it provides numerous opportunities for teacher interns to contextualize pedagogical skills and theoretical knowledge. Given the significance of teaching internship, this qualitative content analysis study examines the teacher interns' [n=15] unique experiences on pair teaching during their 4.5-months pre-service teaching internship at the Integrated Laboratory School of Cebu Normal University. Research participants were purposively selected to complete the written response questionnaire with open answer questions. Utilizing the inductive analysis approach, findings indicated students interns' experiences on pair teaching were characterized around four (4) emerging themes which are a pedagogical partnership, roadblocks and drawbacks, student interns' collegiality, and emotional endeavors. The study concludes with practical applications and suggestions for enhancing the current mentoring practices.*

Key Words: *Pair teaching, Teaching internship, Teacher intern, Practice mentor, and Content analysis.*

1. INTRODUCTION:

Teaching internship is considered as the pinnacle of the teacher education preparation because it provides numerous opportunities for student interns to contextualize pedagogical skills and theoretical learning. According to Smith and Snoek in Liu (2012), teaching interns consider teaching internship as the most beneficial of their teacher preparation programs. It is, therefore, the primary goal in teaching internship to afford teacher interns with authentic hands-on teaching experience to test their teaching abilities in the real world of the classroom setting. This process allows teacher interns to cement their teaching philosophy and beliefs about teaching and learning. In recent years, universities all over the globe have been trying to create innovative and teaching internship program designed to make prospective teachers not only to become effective teachers but also reflective teacher practitioner.

The term "teaching internship" has been interchangeably used with practice teaching. It is referred to as "clinical student teaching," "clinical teaching practice," "field studies," "infield studies," "student teaching," "practice teaching," "teaching apprenticeship," "pre-service training program," "student teaching internship," "pre-service teaching program," and "student teaching practicum." It is defined as both an in-school and off-school designed to offer practical experiences in the real classroom environment under the mentorship of a seasoned practice mentor and cooperating teacher.

A great deal has been written about the benefits of teaching practice in the internship program is well-documented in research. It has been linked to the promotion of professional identity and resulted in professional commitment (Zhao & Zhang, 2017), impact pre-service teachers perception about the teaching profession (Koross, 2016), gain real understanding and experience about teaching, gain valuable teaching experience, explore teaching career path, establish networks with teacher practitioner who can be a potential mentor in the field of teaching, offer viable options to engage on the aspect of professional development (Stephens, 2011), and acquire the necessary skill for the learning environment (Emerson, 2014). In a sampling of the cross-disciplinary literature from different countries revealed that teaching internship programs have a critical role in professional identities of student interns (Izadenia, 2015a; Izadenia, 2016b; Cameron, 2017; Nghia & Tai, 2017; Lopes & Tormenta, 2010; Kaelin, 2013; Matter, 2002).

The culmination of teacher education students 4 years of study and practice would not be meaningful without the mentoring of a seasoned practice mentor. As the teacher interns begin the initiation process of familiarizing classroom realities, mentor teachers should ideally devote their expertise in nurturing them. Practice mentors are interchangeably referred as, "practice teacher," "practice mentor," "mentor teacher," and student teaching mentors (STM) and cooperating teachers who guide student interns as they begin their professional practice of the profession in the Philippine context.

Literature has established a clear role of the practice mentors in the internship program of student interns. For instance, they are considered to have a critical role for student interns in learning to teach (Lu, 2007; Msangya, et.al 2016), professional development of student teacher interns (Russell & Russell, 2011), perform an important role in the

internship programs of student interns from the preparation, evaluations and even “signing off” after passing the standards of the program at the end of their internship. (Adam, 2013). Thus, the role of the practice mentors cannot just, therefore, be underscored as it has a critical role in student interns professional learning and personal growth. And it is therefore imperative that practice teachers understand the role that they play in both professional and personal development of student teachers at an early phase of their teaching internship.

The importance of teaching internship program to teacher education students by the state colleges and universities (SUCs) in the Philippines cannot just be overstated. More often than not, it affords student interns the necessary professional skills needed to uplift the educational outcomes of the country. According to Corrigan and Loughran (2008) “Teachers grow professionally when they are afforded opportunities to engage in professional dialogue with peers and in reflective practice and which in turn can also be critical aspects of their professional satisfaction.” Hence, it is in this premise that pair teaching was introduced by the student teaching mentors of the Integrated Laboratory school of the university. Pair teaching as defined in this study is characterized by two student interns tasked to develop an instructional plan, design instructional tools, formulate an assessment of instruction and then deliver the instructional plan to students while under the mentorship of seasoned practice mentors. It is believed that pair teaching allows teacher interns to argue on a certain aspect of pedagogical responsibility and even challenge student interns’ competence in their understanding about teaching and learning aspects. Finally, it is perceived to stand in sharp contrast to the traditional internship practice of teacher education internship program in the country.

Teaching internship in the Philippine setting commences in the fourth year of teacher education students. It is a 6 units laboratory subject that requires the teacher candidate a full time teaching assignment and full semester equivalent to 4.5 months with 8 hours duty every day. They should meet the minimum requirement to proceed such as approval from their respective college deans or experiential learning director. For the original normal school in the Philippines, they recognize the role of practice mentors and student teachers are mentored by a highly qualified student teaching mentor prior to deployment in the public school system. Anchored on the College of Teacher Education of the university’s objective to develop a teaching internship program for student teachers that is evidenced-based internship program and in an attempt to provide a relevant experience where teaching capacities are nurtured and build a professional identity of prospective teachers, the introduction of PT into the university internship program was made. Additionally, with the PT strategies, it is believed that the introduction of this approach can stimulate reflective teaching practice among pre-service teachers and challenge student teaching mentors in enhancing student learning and student-practice mentors engagement. As Darling-Hammond, (2011) puts it, higher education institutions can improve teacher education preparation programs with solid induction and mentoring scheme. The primary purpose of this investigation is therefore, to examine the experiences of teacher interns during their 4.5 months of teaching practice at the Integrated Laboratory School of Cebu Normal University. Subsequently, it tries to unravel the authentic experiences of teacher interns on PT. Arguably, findings can offer data that can be used for enhancing evidenced - based and research-based teaching practice program. Results can also offer insights for student teaching mentors on the effective pathways of mentoring using pair teaching strategy.

2. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY:

The primary purpose of the study was to unveil the unique experiences of the student teacher interns ($n=15$) on pair teaching during their 4.5 months of teaching internship at the Integrated Laboratory School of Cebu Normal University. This investigation was premised on the university’s goals to sustain excellence and relevance in teacher education preparation program. It is believed that findings from this study would offer valuable insights to practice mentors in crafting an effective mentoring program for student interns using the pair teaching strategy.

3. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

The present investigation aimed at the following objectives:

- Unveil the experiences of student interns on pair teaching and;
- Offer suggestions for the improvement of the mentoring practices of the practice mentors.

4. METHODOLOGY:

The present investigation used a qualitative approach, specifically qualitative content (QCA) that is compatible with the primary aim of the study to explore the unique experiences of teacher interns during their 4.5 teaching internship. According to Krippendoff in Bengtsson (2016) defined content analysis as “a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use.” Bengtsson (2016) further emphasized that “the purpose of content analysis is to organize and elicit meaning from the data collected and to draw realistic conclusions from it.” Hsieh and Shannon in Hashemnezhad (2015) defined it 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.”

4.1 Participants and sampling technique

Fridlund & Hildingh in Bengtsson (2016) suggests that participants for qualitative study can be comprised of 1-30 respondents. Thus, participants in this investigation included a total of 15 intermediate student interns who were purposively selected (14) females, (1) male, all singles, and with an average age of (19.9). They were enrolled in the student internship program for about 4.5 months at Cebu Normal University-Integrated Laboratory School. In terms of the participants' field of specialization, (11) were general education and (4) were special education. The investigation was set up at the end of the first semester of the student internship program for Academic Year 2017-2018.

4.2 The procedure of data collection

This investigation used quantitative data collection as a method of inquiry to investigate the experiences of student teachers on pair teaching strategy. Collection of data was conducted at the conclusion of the teaching internship program of the respondents. Prior to the gathering of data, consent from the prospective participants was obtained. They were given a brief orientation about the data procedure after their internship program. The researcher stressed that they can withdraw their involvement prior to the distribution of the data gathering instrument if they feel the need to be excluded in the investigation. None of the targeted participants expressed their intention to withdraw their participation. Thus, data collection proceeded.

4.3 Instrument

The qualitative data in this study were collected through written responses questionnaire that primarily elicit participants responses to questions that relate to their unique experiences on pair teaching. Data gathering instrument in this study consists of 3 parts. The first part seeks to obtain the respondents' consent to participate in the study. Part 2 elicits respondents' biographical information such as name, gender, age, the field of specialization, and civil status. The last part consisted of a questionnaire with open-ended questions. Some exploratory open-ended questions in the survey - questionnaires include: “*What is your experience about the implementation of pair teaching?*” “*What kind of partnerships have you formed with your co-mentees and practice mentors?*” and “*How do you feel working with a pair of teacher interns and having been mentored by a practice mentor?*” The use of survey - questionnaire as data gathering technique in this investigation adheres to Donath, Winkler, Graessel, & Luttenberger, in Bengtsson (2016) who opined that data collection may be obtained through a written text such as a questionnaire with open-ended questions.

4.4 Data Analysis

Qualitative data collected from participants was through a researcher-made questionnaire analyzed through qualitative content analysis with an inductive approach to establish codes, categories, patterns or themes and to find associations between patterns and analysis. The codes that came out in the initial process of the data analysis that has similarities were then condensed and collapsed into generic and independent categories. Hence, four (4) emerging themes pertaining to the unique experiences of student interns on PT were established. In order to provide evidence and support of how the codes, categories, and themes were identified during the preliminary phase of the analysis, quotations from the written responses of the research participants were presented in the findings and discussion section.

5. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS:

The subsequent section provides and elaborates the results of the investigation. The study delved into the experiences of teacher interns who were exposed to pair teaching during their 4.5 months of teaching practice at the Integrated Laboratory School of the Cebu Normal University. Four (4) emerging themes came out from the qualitative data analysis on student teaching interns' experiences that include: *pedagogical partnership, roadblocks and drawbacks, student interns' collegiality, and emotional endeavors.*

5.1 Pedagogical Partnership

Forging pedagogical partnership was the prominent voice of student-teacher interns indicating the numerous positive aspects of PT. For instance, a teacher inter said, “*Pair teaching helps the student teachers make the work easier. My experience was stress-free because I was not the only one who does all the works.*” Another student interns enumerated how the partnership has benefited both of them, “*Easy work, sharing of time and resources and building rapport between your co-mentees.*” A participant expressed how she loves the PT model and emphasized on the pedagogical outcome she made with co-mentees, “*I love the idea of PT because it gives chances to the student teachers to cooperate and collaborate to come up with ideas about the lesson.*” There were responses that were referred to as

requisite in professional behavior as they forge a pedagogical partnership. For example, a student intern explained that while the partnership has numerous benefits she also commented on the poor partnership wherein she seemed to have encountered with co-mentees implying much-needed attention on professional behavior and attitude has to be looked into by the practice mentors. She explained, *“The good points with pair teaching strategy were the collaboration of ideas from two teachers and the preparation of instructional materials for the demonstration but the bad point is that it is somehow unfair because some of our partners purely rely on us.”* One student interns believed that there are numerous positive outcomes of the PT introduction in the internship program. The participant stated the potential impact of the experience to prospective teachers, *“My experience was good. My partner did her task so it was not hard for us to teach and same on preparing lesson plans. I believe that PT will help us grow individually, improve our critical thinking skills, and articulate communication in the classroom.”* A student interns seemed to imply that a clear definition of their role on the teaching partnership and highlighting instructional outcome, *“It enabled both student interns to have a shared responsibility and will let them discover different ways on the strategies in teaching, It was somewhat a big help because we have a lesser burden when it comes to planning the lesson and implementing it.”* Another student - teacher intern also restated on the same experience, *“I have a great experience. My partner was very cooperative and we helped each other in making our visual aid and in revising the lesson plan.”* There are student interns who reported that their pedagogical partnership involved fostering a healthy communication climate between and among them. For instance, a student intern said, *“I learned to communicate to the people who differ on how I think and what I’m capable of. One has to cooperate so you can understand each other, and needs to be open-minded on the things that your co-mentees suggests.”* One even excreted effort by extending their communication through using social media platform as she recounted, *“I had the chance to reach out and be reached out to by the other student teachers from the other section. We would meet during our vacant time and sometimes we do collaborate through chat. I had the chance to share even my most bizarre ideas and my partner as well, had the same chance/opportunity like mine.”*

5.2 Roadblocks and drawbacks

While there are a good number of positive aspects of PT strategies as reported by student interns, there are as well barriers, hindrances, impediments and bad sides of PT encountered during their teaching practice sessions. Most of these hindrances are professionalism - related issues that particularly point to the hard and soft skill of teacher interns. For example, a student intern commented that *“I was really having a hard time on pair teaching because I and my partner would not come up with the same ideas or strategies that lead to misunderstanding and confusion with the subject.”* Similarly, another student interns also reiterated the downside of PT commenting on the same experience referring to the soft skill of her partner who said, *“The experience about the implementation of pair teaching strategy was not that good since I can’t feel that it was my pair because I am the only one who was really working and doing the plan.”* Another student-teacher participants voiced her experience, *“I could have a partner I can work with. Also, the work especially the instructional materials could be shared or divided by the two of us. But, I have also experience and happenings wherein most of the works such as lesson planning, delivering of the lesson was all done by me while my partner did not give me any idea or help.”* A student-teacher intern resented about the practice. She noted bad assessment practice of the practice mentors as she explained, *“There was a time when I was paired with a teacher who didn’t help at all, not even in the lesson plan, instructional materials [IMS], nor demo. And what’s sad is that we both got the same grade. It is unfair for the part of the student teacher who did her best while the other one gets the credit.”*

A participant made lamentation of about the collegial partnership. However, she cited how her mentor teacher helped her teaching skills as he recounted, *“My experience in pair teaching was not that successful, the pair teaching strategy was not beneficial at all in terms of partnership with my co-mentees. Nevertheless, the kind of partnership I had with my mentor helped me to grow more as a teacher since my skills and abilities were developed and improved.”* The positive role of the practice mentors in the program was further reiterated by one mentee who said, *“There is a collaboration of ideas between me and my co-mentees. But it doesn’t happen all the time because some of my pairs are so lazy to do such a task. But with regards to my mentors, there is an exchange of learning and insights.”*

5.3 Student interns’ collegiality

With regards to the kind of partnership between teacher interns and their practice mentors, a variety of descriptions came out. Specifically, a collegial partnership was the prominent theme that emerged from the student-teacher interns' responses. Majority of them commonly commented they were able to form a genuine friendship. For example, a participant recalled, *“Partnership with friendship. I had the chance to make friends with my partner and gain trust with each other.”* In a similar vein, another mentee mentioned, *“A mutualistic kind of partnership because we both benefit from each other. Friendship, I met new people and gain new friends.”* Another intern described similarly her experience, *“It was both harmonious and stressful for me in terms of running after the mentor and mentees. Yet friendship was formed and that was indeed was one of the best experience pair-teaching has brought to our mentees.”*

A participant appreciated the quality of the partnership she had with another student intern, *“I have formed a partnership that helps one another especially when they see that their partner is having a hard time. I commend my partners’ action because they offer help whenever they see me struggling on other tasks. They are not even asking anything for a return. They are such good people with good hearts.”*

One mentee felt a deep kinship with a co-mentee and elaborated pedagogical partnership, *“Friendship between my co-mentees in terms of planning what the strategies, methods, instructional materials to use. The friendship that involves knowing one’s strength and weaknesses. Discovering each other like and dislikes,”* A teacher intern described the quality of pedagogical partnership as she explained, *“I can say that both partners contribute so that the outcome would be much to what was expected. Both parties benefit each other and helped each other to grow. Furthermore, this kind of partnerships has brought something good to ourselves and to the mentors.”* As for one participant she further noted collegial network necessary for effective teaming, *“The kind of partnership that we formed with co-mentees is the one that we are able to think and be open-minded to all the things that are suggested by our mentors. Also in our, we member we need to follow the instructions that are suggested to ensure effective teaching.”* One respondent reported that despite the challenges their partnership managed to cultivate good partnership, *“I was able to build close, strong, and constructive partnerships with my co-mentees and mentors. Despite some misunderstandings and arguments, I always end up realizing that I am doing good in my development as a teacher.”*

Other student teachers emphasized their strengths in the partnership rather than focusing on the weaknesses leading to a strong, beneficial partnership, and effective teaming. *“As for my co-mentees, I guess we had consistent collaborations from the making of the LPs up to the demonstration period. We never left each other’s side. We worked as a team and I guess it was good training. As for my mentors’ consistent collaboration still topped. We really need to follow up on our paper, sometimes ask pointers to give the class a better demonstration and listen to their bits of advice.”* This experience was further expounded by another mentee who declared how the partnership can work. *“We had a collaborative partnership with our co-mentees and partners. We see to it that we have a consultation with them to clarify some points needed to improve the instructional plan.”* One respondent noted mutual benefits, *“My co-mentees and I formed a mutualistic kind of partnership because we both benefit from each other.”* This was further explained by another mentee, *“Having a pair by another teacher helps you create a smooth relationship with one another in making the lesson plan, designing of instructional materials and delivery of the lesson,”* In a different vein, a teacher intern illustrated the relevance of practice mentors’ role as she narrated, *“With my co-mentees, I have formed a good partnership. With my mentors, I can say that he did guide me very well. The lesson plans that we submitted were really checked and we’re also given the chance to talk to him and have some advice and suggestions to make our lesson plan more perfect.”* There is one student intern who remarked about the genuine relationships she had with co-mentees, *“I have formed a partnership that helps one another especially when they see that their partner is having a hard time. I commend my partners’ action because they offered help whenever they see me struggling on other tasks. They are not even asking anything for a return. They are such good people with good hearts.”* As summarised by one student intern, *“It was both harmonious and stressful. Yet friendship was formed and that indeed was one of the best experience PT has given me.”*

5.4 Emotional endeavors

This investigation also tried to further explore student interns’ feeling towards working with another pair of the student-teacher intern. Surprisingly, there was an emotional spectrum that is entwined in PT during teaching practice sessions of teacher interns. Based on the analysis of qualitative data collected, there was a relative consensus among student interns emotional endeavors that were categorized into 3, which are positive emotions, negative emotions, and emotional ambivalence.

5.5 Positive emotions

Elation was the most common emotional feeling reported by the teacher interns. For example, a participant recounted, *“It feels good working with another teacher and is beneficial because someone could work with you and ideas for the lesson can be shared.”* Another student interns recalled and elaborated the benefits of the introduction of PT to the internship program, *“I feel great because I was able to work with my co-mentees and I enhanced my interpersonal skills and time management.”* Meanwhile, a strong sense of beliefs about the positive role of the student teaching mentors was explicitly mentioned by some student intern. For instance, one participant said, *“It feels nice working in pair and having been mentored by a mentor teacher.”* Another student intern also said, *“It feels amazing working with a partner and being mentored by a mentor teacher because they can help you evaluate your work.”* With the bulk of heavy preparations on teaching schedule, being worried would be likely to occur. But one student interns felt positive as she narrated, *“I feel less worried when I know that I had a partner and I have someone to work with my lesson designs and everything.”* One of the participants felt being thankful for the teaching partnership, *“I feel grateful*

working with a pair of teacher because it is not a burden to prepare instructional plans.” Aside from being grateful one student interns noted that *“I would feel honored and delighted since we were working for the betterment of our lesson to teach.”* For one of the participants, the feeling of isolation was felt eliminated as she echoed this way, *“I feel that you’re not alone. Because two is better than one and if you don’t know what to do you have a partner that will help you. Having been mentored by a mentor felt nervous and happy as well. Nervous because you are under the care of authority and expert.”*

5.6 Emotional ambivalence

In stark contrast, there was a good number of student interns who had mixed feeling regarding their teaching partnership with another student intern. This was reported by a participant who said, *“At first, I felt excited because I was thinking that the planning of lessons will be easier and less stressful. But it happened to be the opposite as I expected.”* This was also reported by another student inter who recounted *“At first when I knew about this method/strategy. I got excited with the thought that since I’ll be working with a pair, the work or the effort that I’ll need to get things done will be less and convenient to both mentees; but it wasn’t that way all the time as much as I expected.”* One mentee further explained in a similar experience: *“It’s both a relief and a burden for me to work with my teacher partner. Relief in a sense that I have my co-mentee who can help me with the demonstration and a burden whenever my partners do not help. On the other hand, I am grateful that there are mentors who guide us throughout our student teaching experience since we get to have a lot of insights from them which can help us in our profession.”* Another student intern expressed his satisfaction with his partnership with one of his co-mentees yet he expounded in details his dismay on the unapproved instructional plan. *“Still I feel good but not totally good as what others think our lesson plan was not approved and we were so down that time because we wrote the lesson plans many times yet on the day of our demo it was not approved.”* In a similar encounter, one mentee further expounded, *“It depends upon the co-mentees you have been paired into. Yet it feels great when we’re being mentored by our student teaching mentor. Like were are taught by correcting our lesson plans and meeting us by pair so that we will know which part are we going to revise. At some point also it is nice to be paired with a person who comes to a point that you can come up with a unique and nice lesson plan because there’s a collaboration of ideas between you and your partner.”* As summarised by one of the interns. She described her experience just like this, *“It was a challenging experience for me like a roller coaster ride having ups and downs.”*

5.7 Negative emotions

Only 2 of the 15 respondents expressed negative emotions. For one student intern, she recounted her struggles and stress while having a partner teacher, *“Working with a pair of teacher stressed me out. The struggle is real even though my pair could help me in a little way. I still prefer to work on my own.”* This was explained lucidly by another student intern although she sees something good in the partnerships, *“There are really moments when I wished I had to create a lesson plan only for myself. It wasn’t selfishness that drove me to think that way but the time constraint. It was hard to find the time when you’re given so many tasks to accomplish and your partner is also busy. And you can’t do the lesson planning during class hours so you have to communicate through the social media platform. Your partner doesn’t have an interest so you end up making the lesson plan yourself to submit on the day of the deadline or even after it. As for the mentoring, it really helped and I can say that it always makes me feel blessed whenever somebody would correct me for my own improvement or for my partnership improvement.”*

6. DISCUSSIONS:

Given a majority of research participants who echoed positive experiences on PT, the findings indicate that pedagogical partnership emerged as the most prominent voice of the student interns experiences on PT. The quality of the social relationship between interns as they collaborate in the pedagogical ask were also reported and obviously had impacted the many facets of their teaching practice. It has encouraged students interns to adopt instructional approaches and design instructional aids that are viewed as effective by both partners. It is believed that establishing a healthy communication climate is of paramount significance in a social relationship in the learning place and workplace. In the teaching and learning process, it is a pre-requisite to effective teaching and pivotal to a healthy learning atmosphere not just to student interns but also to their students. Research participants exemplified the value of fostering a stimulating communication climate. They further hinted that a positive communication climate paved the way to effective pedagogical partnership. This positive finding is suggestive that a stimulating communication climate is critical for effective experience on PT. This study finding runs parallel with the study of Yang (2013) whose study on team teaching in TESOL internship established that team teaching approach stimulates collaboration and team communication while promoting flexible teaching pedagogy and nurtures critical thinking skills.

Even participants whose experiences were considered negative and those with emotional ambivalence seemed to clamor for a strong teaching partnership with their co-mentees and had a clear perception of the benefits of PT. They further indicated a clear understanding of the role of professional behavior to the pedagogical partnership. They seemed to have a clear understanding of the role of PT on developing pedagogic beliefs and practices. In contrast, assessment practice by their practice mentors was also pointed out. This finding suggests that a framework on evaluating performance practices of the practice mentors should be looked into. Perhaps, by developing an assessment model that is anchored on objectivity, fairness and fit to the model could be introduced. The inappropriate assessment practices of practice mentors could increase the likelihood of vulnerability to pedagogical “partnership fragility.” It is suggested that to reduce the shared sense of fragility between student interns tasked to deliver the instructional plan, practice mentors should not just put more on the emphasis on the process of ensuring effective and quality teaching by the mentees but also to consider on the evaluation component of student interns that conforms to ethical consensus.

It is believed that students interns have different approaches to subject matter content including pedagogic content and dilemmas are therefore more likely inevitable. And while it is believed that student teaching interns prior to teaching internship may have formed beliefs and assumption regarding teaching and learning. More often than not, these acquired learning have not been cemented and are still subject to shifting and modification as they begin to explore the realities of teaching their internship phase. This makes hard for them to meet pedagogic knowledge into practice. Therefore, the need for the presence of practice mentor is expedient since they can inject a positive impact not only on developing their mentees pedagogical knowledge and skills but also over how professional behavior of prospective teachers are formed into a habit. They should be able to articulate an effective mentoring and introduce a coaching model that uses data-driven mentoring. The result indicating ambivalent emotions could be due to the fact that in PT it doesn't have clear norms in terms of the partnership between student teacher interns. It is suggested that a study that would delve into the quality of the co-teaching partnership between mentees to unravel the causes of such negative emotions and emotional ambivalence on PT by a few numbers of respondents be conducted. Additionally, it is an indication of poor peer-network mechanism demonstrated by student teacher interns. This explains why a few of the student interns tended to have a negative experience in PT.

The study also found out that there were roadblocks and drawback encountered by the participants on pair teaching introduction in the teaching internship program. Of the hindrances reported by the participants, the analysis implies that the pedagogical partnerships had barriers that do not only indicate personal soft skills but also reflect teaching competence characterized by a minimal theoretical knowledge and pedagogical skills among mentees. It resulted in confusion and misunderstanding between teacher interns. The findings on roadblocks and drawbacks suggest that practice mentors have a critical role in student interns optimum learning outcomes and opportunities. It implies for the need by the practice mentors to lay down “pedagogical norms” that is considered a pre-requisite to positive engagement by the teacher interns in PT. The absence of pedagogical norms in the partnership seemed to create not just a “culture of dependency” but also a workplace climate that shuns teachers personal and professional growth.

To further unravel student-teacher interns' experience on PT, participants were also asked to respond to question “What kind of partnership did they have with another student intern? A good number of them provided answers tended to be congruent with their positive experiences. There is an agreement as to the kind of partnership that student interns expressed, that PT had nurtured collegial network and fostered supportive learning climate resulting in desires for passion to teach. This collegial teacher intern behavior offered opportunities for healthy discussions, sharing of opinion, ideas, and views about teaching and learning that consequently reduce teacher intern's feeling of isolation, and fostered a stimulating learning place because they were driven to magnify strengths while weaknesses eventually become less emphasized in the teaching partnership. The study findings emphasizing only the partnership between mentees indicates the need to explore the partnership between and among their practice mentors as this could provide inputs on effective coaching and mentoring program.

Teaching is believed to be an emotional endeavor. For students interns who were exposed to pair-teaching reported that routines related to PT resulted in a few emotional endeavors. Positive emotions like elation, gratitude, joy, and relief were emerging theme on the question of how they feel working with another mentee. However, there were also participants who expressed their negative feelings towards the introduction of the program. Surprisingly, a good number of teacher interns had emotional ambivalence during the internship. Along with professional roles, functions, and responsibilities in performing teaching tasks, the superficiality level of mastery on different teaching pedagogies likewise their own understanding of the lesson content created professional tensions. Hence, there's quite a good number of student interns who echoed ambivalent experience regarding their pedagogical partnership with another mentee. A healthy mentees interaction and relationship is something that student interns intuitively and explicitly expressed as reported in their responses. This result suggests that aside from focusing on harnessing the teaching abilities of student interns more attention should be given to their teaching competence during their internship programs. The result indicating negative feeling towards working with another teacher interns could be explained by the study findings of

Thomas & Beauchamp (2010) whose study used metaphors and suggested that beginning teachers can grapple to develop identities during their primary year of teaching and that this stage is perceived as cautious, composite and problematic. It is indeed, without a doubt that PT challenges student interns not only on developing instructional plans but also implementing in the most effective way but also demands cultivation of a stimulating learning atmosphere and healthy interactions between mentees and practice mentors.

7. CONCLUSION:

Conclusively, pair teaching (PT) in teaching practice session provides increased opportunities for a meaningful, engrossing, rigorous, and contextualized teaching internship experiences for teacher interns. The strong and positive pedagogical partnership between mentees characterized by a network of active peer-to-peer learning in the process of developing an instructional plan, designing instructional aids and implementing effective instruction proved that PT nurtures reflective teaching practice. Additionally, the active engagement of the teacher interns and practice mentors in a dialogue in the performance of their roles diminished some of the snags and pitfalls associated with traditional teaching internship model and instills the importance of lifelong learning skills acquisition. And as the student interns had conscientiously recognized practice mentor's role, as one of the sources of practical knowledge of the teaching profession, they should catalyze a culture shift in the ways future teachers are mentored. The roadblocks and drawbacks echoed by the student interns call for much-needed attention by the practice mentors on sensitizing such barriers to a meaningful PT experience. The study findings have shed light on the numerous positive aspect of PT. Arguably, the need to define "pedagogical partnership norms" can enhance teacher interns experience in PT during teaching practice sessions.

8. LIMITATIONS, FUTURE RESEARCH, AND PRACTICAL APPLICATION:

There are a few limitations that can be cited in connection to this investigation. First, the study was based on qualitative research design involving only a minimal number of research participants. The results are not therefore generalizable to a wider context of the population of the entire student teachers interns at the Integrated Laboratory School of Cebu Normal University. In a future investigation, the inclusion of larger samples with different demographic profiles may be conducted to corroborate the current study results. Second, the data was collected through a researcher-made survey questionnaire. It specifically, utilized paper and pencil questionnaire with open answer questions. Future studies may use other forms of collecting an in-depth data from participants; for instance, using self-report data, interviews, focus group discussions, and field notes, and observations that could ensure a richer report on participants' experiences. Third, a study investigating the impact of pair teaching strategy on various aspect of teacher interns may be worth considering for investigation. For example, a study on the association, effect, and influence on teachers' personal construct about teaching and learning, and teaching philosophy could be explored.

The practical applications and implications of this investigation, grounded in the primary themes that emerged from the study findings, it is suggested that a well-articulated and well-integrated mentoring program anchored on theory and practice to address the gaps between these two is suggested. This will enrich teaching practice sessions for prospective teachers. In a highly idealistic teaching internship atmosphere such as the Integrated Laboratory School of the state-run Teacher Education Institution, more often than not student interns would struggle to performs the demands of teaching. This could be due to that fact that a gap between theories and practice exist and harmonizing these two components is vital to an effective mentoring program. Thus, there is a growing and well-recognized need to re-think a creative and innovative university-based internship program that affords students a contextually integrated mentoring scheme.

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