

Exemplars of Higher Education Teaching in the Bicol University College of Education, Philippines

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Abstract

The study explored teaching strategies in the tertiary level of Bicol University College of Education faculty and provided exemplars of higher education teaching. Classroom observations using validated instructional monitoring tool, interviews, and narratives through the teaching exemplar template were utilized to identify the instructional moves indicators used in the exemplar teaching strategies. The highly evident and frequently used instructional actions in the participants' strategies are Giving directions, Explaining, Differentiating, activating, connecting, scaffolding, attaching, re-teaching, annotating, and Coaching-facilitating. These were observed among the teaching strategies like lecture-discussions, oral presentations, Socratic Method, simulations, role-playing, and games. Emphasis on student-centered product and performance-based strategies were also observed. Interviews and syllabi reviews showed that BUCE faculty employed student-centered strategies to integrate lessons to real-life situations, aligned with the National Competency-based Teaching Standards (NCBTS). The study further revealed that the teacher-participants are proficient in their teaching as their strategies generate desired learning outcomes, and the necessary instructional moves indicators were highly evident. Using videos and narratives as documentation of exemplar instructional practices gives concreteness to the teaching and learning process and strategies employed. The teaching practices of the various academic units of Bicol University should be studied and documented to know the prevailing teaching and learning environment.

Keywords: *approaches, education, instruction, instructional practices, teaching practices*

Introduction

Various researches point to the importance of noting best practices in education and management, psychology, medicine, and other fields. The need for identifying best practices or exemplars is supported by literature on best practice models. Vesely (2011) stated that the Theory and Methodology of Best Practice Research (BPR) "as a way of thinking, is oriented on constant learning, feedback, and reflection, on what works and why, and even what does not work." There are many ways of understanding the context of best practice. The term "best practice" is even synonymously used to mean the same thing as "good practice" or "exemplar." Best practice is defined as "the most efficient way of doing something, with the fastest method that uses the least resources to create the highest quality output" (Vesely, 2011). This study is reflective of the most precise definition of best practice by Overman and Boyd (1994), which states that "it is the selective observation of a set of exemplars across different contexts

to derive more generalizable principles and theories."

In identifying exemplars in teaching, the role of the learner is taken in its totality alongside the learner's growth and development in a learning environment, reflecting concepts of Humanistic Theory by Carl Rogers and Malcolm Knowles. This is the same with that of the teacher as they reflect on their methods and the strategies utilized within the learning environment and how these affect the learners; and by doing so, construct their new understandings or knowledge through the interaction of what they already know and believe and the ideas, events, and activities with which they come in contact, reflecting the Constructivist meaning-making concepts. With the current thrust of the K to 12 Curriculum on addressing "diverse learner needs, adaptable to fit specific learner groups" (DepEd, 2016), the need to explore teaching practices to come up with exemplars is relevant. The center for exemplars is reflected in the social constructivist approach and the idea of implicit knowledge (Smyth, P., & Carless, D., 2020). Teachers must

examine what strategy, method, or practice works; and find ways to supplement weak or limited ones.

As Marton, Hounsell & Entwistle (2005) stated, “our task is, thus, to describe more clearly how learning takes place in higher education and to point out how teaching and assessment affect the quality of learning; from these descriptions, teachers should be able to draw their lessons about how to facilitate their students’ learning.” Therefore, when teaching practices as exemplars are identified from those involved in the process, they can better describe, understand, and draw the necessary lessons and insights to facilitate further furtherment or enhancement of an existing matter or phenomenon and making meaning of such. These theories are presented to support forming insights and reflections by identifying teaching practices as exemplars. It recognizes the need to reflect on the practices and the ways of making meaning in the respective learning environment.

This is in line with maintaining a learning organization that continuously looks for better and newer ways to enhance organizational performance (Katorbo, 1998). Identifying what could be considered teaching exemplars or models from the teachers’ experiences will foster the desired “learning organization.” To keep abreast of newer and better teaching practices, educators should remember that “the best approach for educators seeking a best practice model is to keep in mind that educational practices, like technologies, are ever-evolving and fluid, and should be adjusted to fit the needs of the learner, fit the context of learning, and achieve desired outcomes identified by the extent to which the activities embody the highest standard or value, contributing to successful results (Miller & Williamson, 2008).” In this context, the teaching practices in higher education must also be given preferential attention, particularly in Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) that develop pre-service teachers.

In the Bicol Region, one of the oldest teacher training institutions is lodged at Bicol University. The Bicol University College of Education is the oldest institution among the 17 colleges of Bicol University. It is in the Main Campus, specifically in the municipality of Daraga, Province of Albay. It is a Teacher Education Institution (TEI) and a Center of Excellence in Teacher Education in the Bicol Region, with integrated laboratory schools offering elementary and secondary education and Senior High School in line with the Kto12 Basic Education Curriculum.

Over the years of being a teacher training institution with its laboratory schools, the teaching practices of Bicol

University College of Education faculty have not been identified, examined, and documented. Thus, there is a significant need to explore the cases of what its faculty would consider exemplars from among their teaching practices and document the teaching exemplar practices to produce a compendium of teaching exemplars for its internal clients, including other stakeholders and partners in education beyond its borders. By exploring the cases of selected faculty and their experiences in teaching practices, teaching strategies as exemplars can be identified.

Thus, this research explored the cases of the BU College of Education faculty by identifying and documenting the teaching strategies considered as exemplars to contribute to the status of the college as a Center of Excellence in Teacher Education. From these, exemplars of Higher Education teaching are provided, which were documented through video and narratives, describing the salient features of the teaching exemplars using a template; and collecting these in a compendium. This will help enhance instruction for teacher education and strengthen its teacher training program. Similarly, the analysis of exemplars is a useful instrument for developing capacities for evaluative judgment (Carless, Chan, To, Lo, & Barrett, 2018). Exploring cases of identified exemplars along teaching strategies and documenting these will serve as resource material for teachers.

The “selective observation of a set of exemplars across different contexts to derive more generalizable principles and theories” as the core of Vesely’s (2011) Best Practice Research concept entails the development of an observation tool that is “oriented on constant learning, feedback and reflection, on what works and why, and even what does not work.” The modified Instructional Monitoring Tool as the main instrument used for classroom observations in determining exemplar teaching practices for higher education aligns with Vesely’s Theory particularly because it served as a feedback mechanism and a means for reflection on what teaching practices works and why, and provided glimpses into what practices may not work; which are concepts of Best Practice Research.

Materials and Methods

This descriptive-qualitative research focused on identifying teaching practices through the selected cases of Bicol University College of Education faculty using narratives that were documented through a template supplemented by videos. The participants are full-

time teachers whose length of service in the university is between 5 to 16 years. The entire college faculty was given an orientation before the implementation of the research. In the orientation, they were informed that class observations would be conducted, particularly in classes with some teaching strategies that they can share as a possible exemplar. Those who signified their interest to be observed and share their strategies were requested to contact the researcher. Seven faculty members consented to participate in the class observations. The researcher observed classes using the modified Instructional Monitoring Tool.

The tool was based on the validated Instructional Monitoring Tool designed for teaching Filipino subjects in combination classes (Avisado, 2015). The modified instructional moves as descriptors of the Instructional Monitoring Tool were based on the literature on indicators for standards of effective pedagogy (CREDE, 2021) and instructional moves (Swanson *et al.*, 2015). Using this tool, the researcher conducted classroom observations for each participant depending on their chosen classes and schedule. Table 1 shows the Instructional Monitoring Tool that provides the indicators for teaching practices through the instructional moves.

A typical classroom observation may last for 1 hour and 30 minutes. The classroom observations were documented through videos and narratives.

All the observed indicators were added for exemplar points and divided by the number of criteria for teaching practices using the following equation: where Σf is the summation of all observed indicators and $\frac{\Sigma f}{n}$ is the total number of instructional moves.

The weighted mean of the indicators of teaching practices are accordingly classified with ratings that ranged from 1.0-2.0, interpreted as Slightly Evident; 2.1-2.5, interpreted as Moderately Evident; and 2.6-3.0, interpreted as Highly Evident. Instructional moves that gained an average mean rating between 2.6-3.0 (Highly Evident) were considered exemplars.

The extracted exemplar teaching strategies were documented through narratives using the Teaching Exemplar Templates modified from Dr. Jayne's (2012) exemplar template from Southern Cross Business School-Lismore. The template was modified with the inclusion of the following categories: (1) Name of Faculty and Field of Specialization; (2) Brief Description of the Exemplar; (3) Objectives; (4) Teaching and Learning Areas Addressed by Lesson Exemplar, (4) Process, including (5) Impact on Learning and (6) Tips for Best Practices.

Results

Observed teaching strategies. Based on observations using the Instructional Monitoring Tool shown in Table 2, the participants frequently used the instructional moves of Differentiating, Explaining, and Giving Directions used by six of the seven faculty participants. These instructional moves or practices were followed by Activating-Connecting, Attributing, and scaffolding used by five of the seven faculty participants. Among the least used instructional practices are Affirming-Appreciating, Motivating, Questioning-Thinking, and Recapping, which were least used by six of the seven faculty-participants. With a mean rating of 2.64 (Highly Evident), Teacher A used 11 out of the 17 instructional moves or practices. These are Activating-Connecting, Annotating, Attributing, Coaching-Facilitating, Constructing, Differentiating, Explaining, Giving Directions, Questioning-Thinking, Re-teaching, and Scaffolding. With a mean rating of 2.35 interpreted as Moderately Evident, teacher B used six instructional moves such as Affirming-Appreciating, Differentiating, Giving Directions, Guiding Practice, Recapping, and Scaffolding. With a mean rating of 2.47 interpreted as Moderately Evident, teacher C used eight instructional moves such as Activating-Connecting, Attributing, Coaching-Facilitating, Differentiating, Directly Instructing, Explaining, Giving Directions, and Motivating. With a mean rating of 2.64 interpreted as Highly Evident, Teacher D used 11 instructional moves out of the 17. These are Activating-Connecting, Annotating, Attributing, Constructing, Differentiating, Explaining, Giving Directions, Guiding Practice, Modeling, and Re-teaching. Teacher E, with a mean rating of 2.80, interpreted as Highly Evident, used 11 instructional moves such as Activating-Connecting, Affirming-Appreciating, Annotating, Attributing, Coaching-Facilitating, Differentiating, Explaining, Giving Directions, Modeling, Motivating, and Scaffolding. Teacher F, with a mean rating of 2.70, interpreted as Highly Evident, used 12 instructional moves such as Activating-Connecting, Annotating, Coaching-Facilitating, Constructing, Differentiating, Directly Instructing, Explaining, Giving Directions, Questioning-Thinking, Recapping, Re-teaching, and Scaffolding. Teacher G, with a mean rating of 2.41, interpreted as Moderately Evident, used seven instructional moves: Attributing, Directly Instructing, Explaining, Giving Directions, Guiding Practice, Re-teaching, and Scaffolding. In general, the average mean of the instructional moves indicators utilized by the participants in their teaching strategies is 2.55 or Highly Evident. The faculty-participants utilized the 17

Table 1. Instructional Monitoring Tool

Instructional Moves	Adjectival Descriptions
Activating-connecting	generates interest in learning, activates prior knowledge, connects instruction to the real world or the solution of real problems
Affirming-appreciating	appreciates, encourages, praises, or rewards students' actions, attitudes, thinking, processes, verbal statements, and work products. The praise is specific and focuses on excellent work products as well as improvements in students' thinking and efforts
Annotating	adds additional information while reading or during a discussion, builds background and vocabulary knowledge as often as possible using relevant examples from students' experiences
Attributing	communicates to the students that their accomplishments are the result of effort, wise decision making, attending to the task, and exercising good judgment and perseverance, rather than their intelligence or ability
Coaching-facilitating	thinks along with students and helps them develop their ideas, rather than directing their thinking and telling them what to do
Constructing	works collaboratively with the students to construct multiple meanings from conversations, discussions, and the reading of text
Differentiating	calibrates the difficulty of learning tasks to create the best match possible with students assessed skills and knowledge
Directly Instructing	uses a direct, explicit, systematic, and supportive approach to teaching
Explaining	tells students what will happen in the lesson, what the goal is, why it is being done, how it will help students, and what the roles of the teacher and the students will be during the lesson
Giving directions	gives clear and concise verbal instructions supported by written directions, picture cues, or modeling as needed) that help students see how they are going to get from where they are at the beginning of the lesson, task or unit, to the completion of the task or outcome
Guiding Practice	leads students through rehearsals of skills processes or routines to ensure understanding of accuracy or automaticity
Modeling	thinks aloud regarding the cognitive processing of text and physically represents that thinking by constructing graphic organizers or writing in response to reading while students observe
Motivating	encourages, inspires, and stimulates his students to achieve both personal and group goals by scaffolding instruction, affirming academic efforts, and providing extrinsic rewards as needed to jumpstart struggling students
Questioning-thinking	uses a variety of questioning techniques and types of questions to stimulate students' while also teaching students how to answer their questions
Recapping	summarizes what has been concluded, learned, or constructed during a given lesson or discussion; tells the students why this new learning is important, and lets them know where they can apply it in the future
Re-teaching	teaches recursively by repeatedly coming back to important skills, concepts, outcomes, or standards, giving students multiple opportunities to achieve mastery
Scaffolding	supports students at their independent learning levels, enabling them to solve problems, carry out tasks, master content, and skills, utilize appropriate cognitive strategies, and generally achieve goals that would otherwise be impossible for them

Table 2. Instructional Practices of Teacher-Participants

Instructional Practices	Teacher Participation							Interpretation
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	
1. Activating-connecting	3	2	3	3	3	3	2	Highly Evident
2. Affirming-appreciating	2	3	2	2	3	2	2	Moderately Evident
3. Annotating	3	2	2	3	3	3	2	Highly Evident
4. Attributing	3	2	3	3	3	2	3	Highly Evident
5. Coaching-facilitating	3	2	3	2	3	3	2	Highly Evident
6. Constructing	3	2	2	3	2	3	2	Moderately Evident
7. Differentiating	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	Highly Evident
8. Directly Instructing	2	2	3	3	2	3	3	Highly Evident
9. Explaining	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	Highly Evident
10. Giving directions	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	Highly Evident
11. Guiding Practice	2	3	2	3	2	2	3	Moderately Evident
12. Modeling	2	2	2	3	3	2	2	Moderately Evident
13. Motivating	2	2	3	2	3	2	2	Moderately Evident
14. Questioning-thinking	3	2	2	2	2	3	2	Moderately Evident
15. Recapping	2	3	2	2	2	3	2	Moderately Evident
16. Re-teaching	3	2	2	3	2	3	3	Highly Evident
17. Scaffolding	3	3	2	2	3	3	3	Highly Evident
Mean Range	2.65	2.35	2.47	2.65	2.65	2.71	2.41	Highly Evident

instructional moves indicators based on the Instructional Monitoring Tool used by the researcher during class observations.

All seven teachers used Collaborative and Integrative Learning as part of their strategies in teaching their respective subjects. Six utilized buzz sessions and group discussions as part of collaborative and integrative learning. All the activities employed by the six teachers were student-centered and revolved around various group dynamics – from buzz sessions to small group discussions. As observed, collaborative student-centered strategies were employed. The main activities given as part of the collaborative learning strategy are buzz sessions with group proposal writing, collaborative concept mapping, group documentation, role-playing, and group oral presentations, which utilized the majority of the instructional practices from the indicators in the Instructional Monitoring Tool.

Drills or Exercises were also provided as part of the strategy to gain mastery of the skills and competencies expected to be developed. For Individualized Instruction,

a set of drills and exercises were the central focus of the lesson. Said drills were patterned after the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) as part of the teacher-made multi-modal instructional material for listening and reading. Similarly, the technology integration in the teaching-learning process was either deftly done and seamlessly apportioned throughout the lessons or in some parts of the lesson.

All the employed strategies ensured the integration of lessons to real-life situations or relevant current issues. The integration of technology in the lesson properly activated students' prior knowledge on the topics or lessons while ensuring a more concrete presentation of the lesson, aside from catching the students' attention. The Socratic Method, which draws ideas from the students through questions and answers, was embedded in all of the observed teaching-learning processes except for the Individualized Instruction. Table 2 shows the instructional practices of teacher-participants.

Only one class (the one that used Individualized Instruction) from the seven observed did not utilize

reflective teaching. The rest of the classes had infused reflective teaching by including a deepening process through a series of questions that allow the students to reflect on the significance of the lesson to their life and how much can be used to create solutions to modern issues and concerns.

Generally, there was no single strategy employed by those observed. Instead, each teacher reported to the Eclectic Approach, which is a combination of several strategies and approaches. Similarly, the technology integration in the teaching-learning process was either deftly done and seamlessly apportioned throughout the lessons or in some parts of the lesson.

Exemplars of Higher Education Teaching Practices. From the seven who volunteered for class observation, four faculty members were identified as having exemplar teaching strategies from among their instructional practices. The descriptions and discussions of the teacher-participants' identified exemplars are Based on the modified Teaching Exemplar Template. Teacher A had a mean rating of 2.64 interpreted as Highly Evident, Teacher D also had a mean rating of 2.64 interpreted as Highly Evident, Teacher E had a mean rating of 2.80, interpreted as Highly Evident, and Teacher F, with a mean rating of 2.70, interpreted as Highly Evident. What was significant about them is their use of most of the instructional practices which they incorporated in their teaching strategy. Teachers A, D, and E all used 11 out of the 17 instructional practices, while teachers were able to use 12 from the 17 indicators of instructional practices. The emergence of similar patterns in their respective narratives was noted through guide questions and the template provided. Through anecdotal recordings using the Exemplar Template and interviews, the faculty were asked to determine the salient features of the identified teaching practice. After completing the Teaching Exemplar Template, these were then collected to form the compendium of the teaching exemplars on strategies. Table 3 presents the summary of frequently used instructional practices.

The four teacher-participants manifested exemplary teaching practices by integrating the instructional moves indicated in the Instructional Monitoring Tool. The first exemplar teaching strategy from Teacher A integrated 11 instructional practices in the collaborative, task-oriented, and performance-based strategy utilizing real-world contexts. The springboard of the performance task, which becomes the basis for assessing the knowledge, concepts, and skills learned on the topic The Convention on the Rights of the Child by the students taking the course The

Child and Adolescent Learners, are taken from actual video documentation of cases that the students will first view; integrating multi-media in the lesson. Through the series of activities, including proposal writing integrating Multi-Media Presentation with Collaborative-Performance-Based Assessment, the students experienced real-world contexts related to the ongoing national and international crises involving children. The teaching strategy becomes a seamless integration of summative assessment, which is collaborative and performance-based. Using contextualization, specific tasks are given through the GRASPS model that enables summative performance-based assessment of the students. The GRASPS (Goal, Role, Audience, Situation, Product/Performance/Purpose and Standards, and Criteria of Success) model for Performance Task was utilized and made the teaching and learning process more streamlined with the students' experiences. Activating-connecting and scaffolding as instructional practices were utilized throughout the lesson.

Individualized instruction using multi-modal instructional material for listening in teaching the course Developmental Reading is the second teaching strategy by Teacher D. The focus of the exemplar teaching strategy is on the teacher-made instructional material used as the main strategy for teaching Developmental Reading with a special focus on listening. These teacher-made Assessment Tools and Recommended Exercises in Listening and Reading are multi-modal and utilized either as core instruction or depending on the objective of the teacher and the competencies to be covered. Though it greatly helps the teacher evaluate the students' listening and reading skills, its function is dynamic and can vary depending on the purpose of the teacher. The learning areas addressed include listening and reading comprehension, including assessment skills necessary for the pre-service teachers. The teaching exemplar provided the students an idea of how to connect what they are learning and what the other industry other than teaching demands from graduates of higher education institutions, which is a better command of the English language and the ability to comprehend well. Using multi-modal instructional material allows for flexibility in the teaching and learning process. Integration of technology through the audio aid used in the listening part was likewise evident, which addresses the mandate of 21st Century learning on the integration of technology. The exemplar teaching strategy used the following instructional practices: Activating-Connecting, Annotating, Attributing, Constructing, Differentiating, Explaining, Giving Directions, Guiding Practice, Modeling, and Re-teaching.

Table 3. Summary of Frequently Used Instructional Practices (n=7)

Indicators	Slightly Evident (1)	Moderately Evident (2)	Highly Evident (3)	Weighted Mean
1 Activating-connecting	-	2	5	2.71
2 Affirming-appreciating	-	5	2	2.29
3 Annotating	-	3	4	2.57
4 Attributing	-	2	5	2.71
5 Coaching-facilitating	-	3	4	2.57
6 Constructing	-	4	3	2.43
7 Differentiating	-	1	6	2.86
8 Directly Instructing	-	3	4	2.57
9 Explaining	-	1	6	2.86
10 Giving directions	-	-	7	3.00
11 Guiding Practice	-	4	3	2.43
12 Modeling	-	5	2	2.29
13 Motivating	-	5	2	2.29
14 Questioning-thinking	-	5	2	2.29
15 Recapping	-	5	2	2.29
16 Re-teaching	-	3	4	2.57
17 Scaffolding	-	2	5	2.71
				2.55

Another teaching strategy focused on Mathematics Investigation as taught to students enrolled in an Education program with Mathematics as a major field. The exemplar includes the Definition, Purpose of Mathematical Investigation, and Performing Mathematical Investigation. The students are given a background on the interconnectedness of Mathematics to all aspects of life. As Education students undergo the process themselves, they are allowed to develop a deeper understanding of the process, which they can eventually use with their future students. Likewise, the exemplar allows the students to understand the concept that “Math is all around us and all pieces of nature and the universe can be seen in the light of formula, equations, and solutions.” A video presentation emphasizes the idea that Math is everywhere on the various geometric signs patterns found in nature and the world in general. Processing of the concepts presented in the video is done via the video presentation. Throughout the processing part of the video, the students are asked to identify the meaning of a Mathematical investigation. The ability to investigate a situation is, in itself, an important skill for students to acquire. In mathematics—as in science, diagnosing the

ills of an automobile, a computer, or a person—proper investigation is often the first step in successful problem-solving. Students then collaboratively work together in small groups to answer the three sets of problems presented by the teacher. Once done, the teacher proceeds to discuss the differences between exercise, mathematical investigation, and problem-solving.

This teaching strategy exemplar allows the students to develop their ability to solve problems through logical thinking as concretely expressed through formulation and justifications of conjectures. Critical thinking and Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) are likewise formed among students as they collaboratively learn the necessary competencies on the problem and solution identification. In addition, the ability to find or derive formulas to solve a certain situation is a clear way to provide the students a chance to enhance their capacity to look for the bigger picture while becoming a keen observer. These competencies are necessary to develop their numeracy skills and place in context the critical stance of students to view mathematics as a practical subject for life-long learning. With this type of

strategy, the students are led to be acquainted, develop, and enhance their investigative skills, strengthen their curiosity about the “whys” of things around them, hone their pattern-seeking skills, train their minds to make sound conjectures and assumptions; thus, making learning a more meaningful, and relatable experience.

The last teaching strategy that is considered an exemplar from Teacher F is constructive and collaborative definition-making, which incorporates concept mapping, activating learning, and a collaborative approach that allows the class to be interactive as students are directly engaged. In this teaching strategy exemplar, the students’ schema is highly activated, allowing students to associate their background knowledge in key terms to form a new concept. With the initial concept mapping activity done in groups, students see the relationships among their ideas and get a greater picture of the lesson’s concepts. This allows formulating their definition of the new concept using words they have linked to the said concept and enables construct-building while being interactive and collaborative in learning. The exemplar showed how the teacher discussed the curriculum’s definition, scope, and purpose by utilizing the collaborative approach through concept mapping. The teacher allowed the students to activate prior knowledge by deliberately facilitating and leading the class to develop new constructs of the word curriculum. As they reflect on their prior knowledge of the term curriculum, they are then led to examine their experiences as Education students alongside their schema on curriculum. The exemplar teaching strategy addresses the need for more interactive and collaborative classrooms. It develops their conceptual understanding, becoming a means to conduct formative assessment since it allows the teachers to assess the students’ background knowledge and provide clarification during the presentation. The learning competencies addressed are developing conceptual understanding and critical thinking skills. It also creates a deeper appreciation of the teaching profession as they construct ideas and form new knowledge based on their existing schema.

Discussion

Collaborative, task-oriented, and performance-based strategy utilizing real-world contexts as an exemplar strategy fits the diversity of learners in the 21st Century. Reidel (2015) revealed that active strategies are established as more effective for retaining knowledge and student engagement. By considering instructional practices like activating-connecting and

scaffolding through collaborative, task-oriented, and performance-based strategy in real-world contexts, supportive learning environment, clarity in explanations, and effective interaction with and among students are indicators of teaching effectiveness as shown by the study on perceptions of First-Year undergraduate students from education-related non-teacher training programs in a modern United Kingdom university (Alan *et al.* 2009). With the current COVID19 global pandemic, there is a pressing need for higher education to continuously evolve and upgrade its instructional practices, particularly with the 21st Century learner. Engaging in individualized instruction using multi-modal instructional material optimizes the benefits of learning as 21st century learners have varied values and beliefs, and learning becomes successful when they are actively engaged by utilizing their diverse histories and preference for experiential learning (Reidel, 2015).

The COVID-19 pandemic has emphasized the need to modify learning to suit the current nature of education. The immediate growth of virtual academies and learning platforms has intensified the need for customized learning in the higher education context, particularly among Teacher Education Institutions. However, even before the pandemic, the focus of teaching strategies in the context of Bicol University, particularly in its College of Education as a Teacher Education Institution (TEI), has always been student-centered, collaborative, and geared towards getting the students to learn the tools of teaching. However, what the results of these teaching or instructional practices show based on the exemplars is that teaching in higher education goes beyond the traditional lectures and becomes even more effective when varied instructional practices and strategies are employed.

Another teaching exemplar incorporates the instructional practices of concept mapping, activating learning, and collaborative approach while activating the students’ schema and scaffolding directed students to associate their background knowledge represented in key terms or ideas to a new concept. With the initial concept mapping activity done in groups, students can see the relationships among their ideas and see a greater picture of the lesson’s concepts. The formulation of their definition of the new concept using words they have linked to the said concept follows. This allows them to formulate their constructs while allowing them to be more interactive and collaborative in their learning. Through the teaching exemplar, the students can brainstorm for ideas regarding the concept curriculum; formulate or construct a definition for curriculum using

the ideas shared by the students in a group; provide an opportunity for learning interactively and collaboratively; develop critical thinking skills by activating prior knowledge, and gain an appreciation of the teaching profession by constructing ideas based on experiences as an Education student. The exemplar teaching strategy addresses the need for teachers to make their classrooms more interactive and collaborative as it develops their conceptual understanding. It further encompasses the multi-modal nature of a teaching strategy. It becomes a means to conduct formative assessment since it allows the teachers to assess the students' background knowledge and provide clarification during the presentation utilizing the Questioning-Thinking instructional practice. The learning competencies addressed are developing conceptual understanding and critical thinking skills. It also creates a deeper appreciation of the teaching profession as they construct ideas and form new knowledge based on their existing schema. The exemplar showed how the teacher discussed the definition, scope, and purpose of the curriculum by utilizing the collaborative approach through concept mapping by deliberately facilitated and led the class to develop new constructs of the word curriculum, activating prior knowledge. As they reflect on their prior knowledge of the term curriculum, they are then led to examine their experiences as Education students alongside their schema on curriculum.

In utilizing this exemplar teaching strategy, students are grouped into four, and they are given craft papers and markers, which they will use to create a concept map about the term curriculum. Each member is requested to contribute one word they can associate with the term based on prior reading/ knowledge. After five minutes, each group is directed to define the term using all the words they have included in their map. They need to write this on a separate sheet of paper. After 10 minutes, each group will present the concept map and read their definition. The teacher or other students may raise questions to clarify their definition or the words used. After the presentation, the teacher facilitates the comparison and contrast of the concept maps and definitions and the synthesis, which includes definitions from curriculum experts. The value of buzz groups is utilized to make it more interactive. A Buzz Group is a useful way of encouraging students to participate, discuss, and share information. Comparing the constructed definitions of the curriculum through a concept map is made at the end of the discussion when the teacher presents definitions of curriculum from the experts.

This makes the discussion of the definition more

learner-centered as it is interactive and constructivist in orientation. The constructivism learning theory argues that people produce knowledge and form meaning based upon their experiences. Using this teaching strategy to introduce new concepts allows for deeper retention of learning. In this exemplar, the teacher is continually in conversation with the students, creating a learning experience that is open to new directions depending upon the student's needs as the learning progresses. Following Piaget's theory of constructivism, an exemplar that is interactive and collaborative while formulating new constructs through concept mapping challenges the student by making them effective critical thinkers; with the teacher not being merely a "teacher" but also becoming a mentor, a consultant, and a coach (<http://www.teach-nology.com/currenttrends/constructivism/>).

However, determining what constitutes effective teaching in higher education is a complex process that entails creating specific criteria and indicators. Devlin and Samarawickrema (2010) revealed that criteria for effective teaching in higher education have continuously evolved as he compared the researches and psychometric processes with Australian learning and the criteria for the effectiveness of the Teaching Council. This implies that examining teaching practices must be sustained to develop effective teaching criteria anchored on the challenges and changes in the higher education context. The conclusion draws on a call for "an ongoing agenda that continuously investigates and articulates the meaning of effective teaching in a changed, and changing, context." The instructional teaching practices of Bicol University, particularly its College of Education, has to be examined (as done in this study) being a CHED Center of Excellence for Teacher Education; particularly because in a huge academic institution, the teaching practices are normally undocumented as they tend to form the regular part of the everyday workplace practice. There are various practices, systems, and processes that go unnoticed and are implemented without the substantial evidence-based backup of proper documentation. Thus, there is a tendency to miss out on relevant practices, systems, and processes that may be considered exemplars that can be replicated. When undocumented, the institution loses its chance of improving as well as developing more innovative practices. This emphasizes the importance of documentation of certain practices in the workplace.

In this study, the teaching exemplar strategies are documented using short videos and recorded narratives through the Teaching Exemplar Template. The information from the classroom observations is organized while making sense of the experiences from

the teaching practices. The narrative is perhaps the oldest and most widely used form for organizing information and human experience and has used it as a way of organizing and making sense of experience; pointing to the concept of narrative intelligence, which is the human tendency to fit experience into narrative form (Wilkins *et al.*, 2005). The said template contains the competencies to be developed, including an explicit discussion of the process in carrying out the exemplar practice. Other aspects such as impact to learning in implementing the exemplar and some tips for better practice of the exemplar are also included. The narratives contained in the Teaching Exemplar Template are then compiled in a compendium of teaching exemplars that will serve as a guide for teachers who would want to replicate these. In addition, the faculty with the chosen exemplars were tasked to perform a demonstration lesson using said teaching strategy exemplar. These demo lessons are then documented through a video as the faculty demonstrates the teaching strategy exemplar with a specific demo class. The narratives are substantiated by the videos, making the images more understandable and the narratives more tangible through the video; hence, complementing and supplementing each other and making the teaching exemplars easier to understand.

The necessity of providing exemplars of teaching practices is echoed by Reyes (2002). She documented the 69 outstanding teachers in the Philippines in her study *Unveiling Teaching Expertise*, revealing sound practices of those declared as outstanding teachers. The quality of education is in the hands of instruction, and the quality of the outputs of education is the function of instruction and the students' interaction with their teachers (Reyes, 2002). Examining how exemplars are used to enhance student understanding and promote the positive transfer of strategies and skills from exemplars to assessment tasks suggests that peer discussion and teacher guidance play a complementary role in engineering a supportive learning environment (To & Carless, 2015). Two areas are specifically considered in examining exemplars – how teachers manage using exemplars and what decisions they take in using such (Smyth & Carless, 2020). In an integrative review on students' use of exemplars to support academic writing in higher education to identify emerging themes, exemplars were considered tools for structuring and preparing assessment activities, appraising exemplars as a teaching and learning activity, the impact of exemplar use on academic performance, and students' satisfaction of exemplars as a learning tool. Results further suggest that the benefits of exemplar use are not always a reflection of academic performance and concludes that further research is required to understand

the impact of exemplars on student learning (Carter *et al.*, 2018).

The context of higher education in a pandemic setting draws heavily on learning programs in universities. In the context of Bicol University, particularly with flexible learning as the main instructional practice, the teaching exemplars are suited and can easily fit into other courses and may even be designed for virtual learning as these are not content-specific. Similarly, the teaching strategies as employed by BUCE faculty are aligned to the goals and competencies and learning areas intended for teacher education and generate desired learning outcomes. Oliver (2001) looked into how the quality of online learning in the context of Australian higher education can be assured by proving several exemplar strategies. Different strategies emerged culled from data such as “developing proactive programs to improve teacher expertise in the design, development, and delivery of online teaching; using programs to support and maintain student readiness; the need to provide adequate technology infrastructure to support the programs; and using strategies supporting the design and development of online programs based on customizing and reuse of learning object.” This implies that teaching strategies can be derived from the established teaching practices of BUCE faculty. Other colleges and academic units of Bicol University can modify these to suit the needs of online learning.

The instructional monitoring tool used in this study is an appropriate tool that can be used for class observations to determine the exemplar teaching practices. Although an existing tool for assessing teaching effectiveness is already being utilized, the instructional monitoring tool will serve as an evaluative tool for assessing instructional practices to extract exemplars. However, it is also necessary to document these exemplar teaching practices that can be extracted across the University by using a triangulated approach in documenting through a template, anecdotal recording in the form of narratives, and videos. These are appropriate and timely documentation processes that can fully capture teaching practices as a means not only of preserving such practices but, more importantly, for replicating such good practices. Using a template or format for presenting exemplar teaching strategy is a useful means to ensure that such practices are documented in detail and can be seamlessly replicated because the essential parts are written in the template. Compiling exemplar teaching strategies in a compendium ensures its full documentation and replication of the exemplar teaching strategies as the compendium in itself can be treated as resource material

by teachers and instructional material at the same time by pre-service teachers. Certain exemplars, particularly on learning principles of teaching, are presented in video format or text format. Results showed that these formats are encouraged to promote effect and retention but with additional strategies for the longer transfer of theory into practice (Moreno & Valdez, 2007).

Out of these practices, strategies emerge that can be adopted as models or exemplars in teaching, which may prove effective. When a supportive learning environment is established, teaching practices become more effective, and learning is greatly ensured. However, it is also necessary to know and understand how teachers, particularly in higher education, can manage the process of using exemplars. Two areas are specifically considered in examining exemplars – how teachers manage using exemplars and what decisions they take in using such (Smyth & Carless, 2020). In an integrative review on students' use of exemplars to support academic writing in higher education to identify emerging themes, it pointed out that exemplars are tools for structuring and preparing assessment activities, appraising exemplars as a teaching and learning activity, the impact of exemplar use to academic performance, and students' satisfaction of exemplars as a learning tool. However, the results suggest that the benefits of exemplar use are not always a reflection of academic performance and concludes that further research is required to understand the impact of exemplars on student learning (Carter *et al.*, 2018).

Teaching practices can be continuously enhanced if instructional practices and strategies are identified and documented. Regular classroom observations in higher education suggest that peer discussion and teacher guidance play a complementary role in engineering a supportive learning environment (To & Carless, 2015). King (2012), in *Compendium of Effective Practice in Higher Education Retention and Success*, emphasized the need for collecting good practices as he identified the need for higher education institutions to learn from each other and "by learning from others' experiences and insights, universities can work together to take the sector forward." When undocumented, the institution loses its chance of improving as well as developing more innovative practices. This emphasizes the importance of documenting practices in the workplace, particularly if it is a teaching institution. Reflecting on the teaching practices of faculty from a teacher education institution and extracting exemplars gives the pre-service teachers an idea of models of teaching strategies that they can use.

As a premier academic institution in the Bicol

region, Bicol University needs to maintain a "learning organization that operates on a process of continuous scanning of the environment for new, better methods, and emerging opportunities to adapt and apply those methods to achieve improved organizational performance" (Katorbo, 1998). Identifying teaching exemplars from the teachers' experiences will foster the desired "learning organization." Over the years of Bicol University College of Education (BUCE) being a teacher training institution with its laboratory schools, the teaching practices of its faculty has not been fully examined and the wealth of teaching practices of its competent faculty has not been identified and documented. With innovation as the focus of Bicol University's vision of a World-class University, it is time to identify and analyze the teaching practices of the Bicol University College of Education (BUCE) faculty of extracting exemplars and contributing to teacher education as a CHED recognized Center for Excellence in Teacher Education by providing exemplars of higher education teaching in a Teacher Education Institution.

The study explored teaching strategies in the tertiary level of selected cases of Bicol University College of Education faculty and provided exemplars of higher education teaching. Classroom observations using validated Instructional Monitoring Tool, interviews, and narratives through the Teaching Exemplar Template were utilized to identify the instructional moves indicators used in the exemplar teaching strategies. The Highly Evident and frequently used instructional moves in the participants' strategies are Giving directions, Explaining, Differentiating, Activating-Connecting, Scaffolding, Attributing, Re-teaching, Annotating, and Coaching-facilitating. These instructional moves indicators were observed among the teaching strategies like lecture-discussions, oral presentations, question-and-answer, simulations, role-playing, games, and project-based tasks were preferred and integrated with collaborative strategies alongside computer-aided and web-based instructions. Emphasis on student-centered product and performance-based strategies were also observed. The participant used the more instructional practices, the higher the chance of being considered an exemplar.

The faculty conducted a demonstration lesson with the identified exemplar teaching strategy documented through videos and described using the Teaching Exemplar Template. Interviews and syllabi reviews showed that BUCE faculty employed student-centered strategies to integrate lessons to real-life situations, aligned with the National Competency-based Teaching Standards (NCBTS). The study further revealed that the teacher-participants are proficient in their teaching as

their strategies generate desired learning outcomes, and the necessary instructional moves indicators were highly evident. Using videos and narratives as documentation of exemplar instructional practices gives concreteness to the teaching and learning process and strategies employed. The teaching practices of the various academic units of Bicol University should be studied and documented to know the prevailing teaching and learning environment. The Instructional Monitoring Tool can be used in classroom observations and may be supplemented by video documentation and narratives using the Teaching Exemplar Template to validate good practices, identify enabling mechanisms and innovative programs on teaching and enhance other existing practices.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, the teaching practices on strategies as employed by BUCE faculty are aligned to the goals, competencies, and learning areas intended for teacher education and generated desired learning outcomes. From these teaching or instructional practices, exemplars of higher education teaching can be derived. Teaching practices can be continuously enhanced if instructional practices on strategies are identified and documented. However, it is also necessary to know and understand how teachers, particularly in higher education, can manage the process of using exemplars. The instructional monitoring tool used in this study is an appropriate tool that can be used for class observations to determine the exemplar teaching practices. In the context of Bicol University, particularly with flexible learning as the main instructional practice, the teaching exemplars are suited and can easily fit into other courses and may even be designed for virtual learning as these are not content-specific. Narratives and videos are two appropriate and timely documentation processes that can fully capture teaching practices as a means not only of preserving such practices but, more importantly, for replication. Using a template for presenting exemplars is a useful means to ensure that such practices are fully documented and seamlessly replicated because the essential parts are written in the template. Finally, compiling exemplars in a compendium will serve as resource material for higher education teachers and pre-service teachers.

Recommendations

Teaching practices, particularly on strategies utilized institutionally, should be identified per unit or college

to keep track of the continuously evolving trends in education and see whether the extant practices are aligned to the developing trends and emerging strategies. Teaching exemplars should be identified per unit or college to keep track of the good practices and replicate such to the other academic partners and clients. To accomplish this, class observations using the developed Instructional Monitoring Tool should be periodically done with a post-conference either to affirm the good practices or to set ways of enhancing the present teaching practices on strategy but not as an evaluation of teaching effectiveness. Likewise, teachers across units/colleges should be requested to keep narrative records and videos of their significant teaching strategies as implemented in the teaching and learning process inside their respective classrooms to ensure that their practices are documented and can therefore be shared. The developed exemplar template for documenting the teaching practices should be given to teachers as these will help them craft a write-up and keep track of their practices. Each unit or college across the University should gather their teaching exemplars not only for proper documentation but, more importantly, to serve as tangible outcomes of instruction.

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