

STUDENT TEACHERS' PRACTICUM EXPERIENCES IN THE ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL) CLASSES: A THREE DIMENSIONAL PRESENCE ANALYSIS

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic that massively hit the globe in 2019 did not just become an alarming health issue in history but has gravely affected the educational system at large, bringing unprecedented adjustments and challenges among schools and their constituents, including the HEIs that offer Teaching internships. Thus, this study aimed to explore the student teachers' practicum experiences in the English as a Second Language (ESL) classes during the pandemic through a three-dimensional presence study. The phenomenological design was utilized in the study to explore the practicum experiences of the ten student teachers during the pandemic. The findings revealed that doubt in their capabilities as teachers, awareness of weaknesses, awareness of strengths, and practice shock due to sudden changes in teaching modality could affect how they perceive themselves as student teachers. In addition, the student teachers' experiences during the practicum are influenced by their connections and relationships with the cooperating teachers and students. Student teachers reported that some of their experiences with their cooperating teachers include a general feeling of unease, reluctance to approach, and the incidence of miscommunication. In contrast, the issues they observed among the students were misbehavior and a lack of interest. It was also revealed that during the practicum, student teachers encounter difficulties and constraints when creating lesson plans and applying theories and concepts in practice while teaching in a real classroom. Furthermore, the student teachers still recognize the difficulties that the students have in face-to-face classrooms. The pandemic presents considerable challenges for students' interests, comprehension, and skills. Several pedagogical implications were drawn based on the findings of the study.

Keywords: Student-Teachers, Practicum, Second Language, English, Dimensional Presence Analysis.

Introduction

Successful and effective training and programs for pre-service teachers call for concerted effort. Any higher education institutions (HEIs) can take a significant part in preparing the future language educators and practitioners since in the future they assume a vital responsibility to spread universal education among the younger citizens. Teachers' professionalism and preparation are frequently held responsible for their successes or failures. Pre-service teacher education (PTE) is vital because adequately-prepared teachers contribute to better student performance, higher school effectiveness, and the efficiency of an entire system of education in a country. If teachers do not meet expectations, educational activities in a school may not be successful (Tasdemir, Iqbal, & Asghar, 2020 [28]).

The Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSEd) is an undergraduate teacher education program designed to equip learners with adequate and relevant competencies to teach in their chosen area of specialization/ major in the secondary level (CMO No. 75, series of 2017). One of the courses that the learners need to take before they finish the program is the Teaching Internship. In light with the aforementioned CMO, the course is a one semester full time teaching internship in basic education

schools using clinical approach under the mentorship of the cooperating teacher. Teaching internship shall be done both in the in-campus or off campus. Thus, the course plays an important role towards future teachers' preparation and readiness to be in the teaching profession. The internship provided by the HEIs has an important impact on training and preparing the future generation of educators. It may aim to develop their awareness and concern about the teaching and learning process and its associated problems and which they should possess the knowledge, attitudes, motivations, commitment, and skills to work individually and collectively toward solutions of current concerns.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic that massively hit the globe in 2019 did not just become an alarming health issue in history but has gravely affected the educational system at large, bringing in unprecedented adjustments and challenges among schools and its constituents including the HEIs that offer Teaching Internship. Consequently, halfway through the academic year 2019-2020, students, teachers were forced to stay at home amid the fast-spreading infections that has long devastated the countries, leaving us with a lot of restrictions and fear of uncertainties. The pandemic has become a major public health concern worldwide. The concern that the pandemic would somehow cause to

people calls for the urgency to make an adjustment in the way lessons should be taught in general. Teaching and learning process and engagement have been effectively changed, as a period of quarantine, social isolation and health crisis caused by Pandemic has been experienced.

More than two years have passed, and fortunately, the educational sectors have been doing their best to adapt to the unconventional teaching methodologies that are seen to have withstood the pandemic era while still battling to deliver a high-quality education by persistently looking for ways to further improve the current system as we adjust to the "Now Normal" in education. Student teachers are now allowed to do their internship in a Face-to-Face classes.

In this context, the importance of redesigning the internship programs for future teachers cannot be denied and ignored. With the growing number of concerns in the educational setting that the Philippines has been facing nowadays, such matter validates the need to explore the experiences of the student teachers during their practicum. Particularly, education has played a significant role as a source of information in shaping awareness and extending the knowledge.

A deeper sense of self-reflection, based on pre-service teacher experiences, must be apparent as a caution to prepare skills for those pre-service teachers within internship experiences. It is through this reflective experiences that PST can construct their own knowledge of teaching (Ramirez, 2018 [19]). The standard of teacher education impacts mostly the performance of educational activities conducted by teachers in institutions, and Teachers generally reflect on how they were trained (Cruikshank, Jenkins, & Metcalf, 2009 [6]). Pre-service teacher education and significant factors affecting PTE are absolutely crucial for effective teaching and learning procedure (Tasdemir, Iqbal, & Asghar, 2020 [28]).

The issue and need for additional study on experiences of student teachers validates the need for research into this area. The investigation in this field is an important consideration in the innovation in the curriculum for practicum and the provision of development program for them especially in language pedagogy in general.

Given the above-mentioned relevance, this study aims to explore the student teachers' Practicum experiences in the English as a Second Language (ESL) classes during the pandemic through a three dimensional presence study.

Statement of The Problem

The main concern of the study is to explore the student teachers' practicum experiences in ESL class through the three dimensional presence in teaching.

Given the context, the study will answer the following questions:

1. How may the practicum experiences of the student teachers in ESL class be analyzed in terms of:
 - 1.1. Presence as Connection to Self;
 - 1.2. Presence as Relational Connection; and
 - 1.3. Presence as Pedagogical Connection?
2. What pedagogical implications may be drawn from the findings of the study?

Scope and Delimitation

The focus of the study is on the exploration of student teachers' practicum experiences in ESL class through the three dimensional presence in teaching. The discourses were scrutinized by the researcher to examine the representation of presence in teaching. Data analysis was done through thematic analysis. While efforts were made to ensure that this study was rigorous to make a worthwhile contribution to research, there were some unavoidable limitations. First is time limitation. The data for this part of the study was collected over one quarter only. The second limitation is that of population, since only three (3) student teachers were involved in the study.

Methodological Framework

The study is anchored on the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). SFL provides a social semiotic theory of meaning making, learning, and social change. First developed in the 1960s by Michael Halliday, SFL has expanded into a theory that informs many branches of applied linguistics, including educational linguistics, studies of multimodality, and critical discourse analysis. Halliday's contribution is found in his conceptualization of grammar as a functional meaning-making resource that expands to reflect and construct the situational and cultural contexts in which semiotic systems are used and evolve (Halliday, 2009 [9]).

The issue that should be explored and undertaken in this study is strengthening the role of language as a tool to narrate "the presence in teaching".

The present study follows the SFL since the core of the study is the concern about one's experiences. The researcher in this study analyzed some linguistic features or language phenomena based on the experiences of the respondents from the perspective of systemic functional linguistics.

Rodgers & Raider-Roth (2006) [21] introduces the three dimensions of presence in teaching namely Presence as Connection to Self, Presence as Relational Connection, and Presence as Pedagogical Connection. Essentially, the analysis of three-dimensional presence in this study involves three levels of analysis: (1) presence as “being-while-teaching”; (2) a relational stance of teachers to students that includes empathy with and attunement and responsiveness to “the subjective inner experience” of the students at “both a cognitive and affective level.”; and (3) a connection with the subject matter and the educational purpose of students’ broad development. This dimension concerns the teacher’s focus on students’ engagement with the subject matter and thus indirectly the teacher’s connection to the subject matter and the students both as individuals and a

group (Roefs, Leeman, Oosterheert, & Meijer, 2021 [22]). For Rodgers & Raider-Roth (2006) [21], Presentness arises when the ‘Thou becomes present’, when one comes to see the other and allows one’s self to be seen”. This quote, in addition, illustrates that presence is embedded in and emerges in interaction. Presence then, is also a relational phenomenon. For this study, we embrace this first definition of presence in teaching as being the most comprehensive and substantiated.

The Three Dimensional Presence analysis provides multiple points of analytic entry. All levels are included and are shown to be mutually explanatory. It is in the interconnections that the researcher of the study found to see the interesting patterns that need to be described, interpreted and explained.

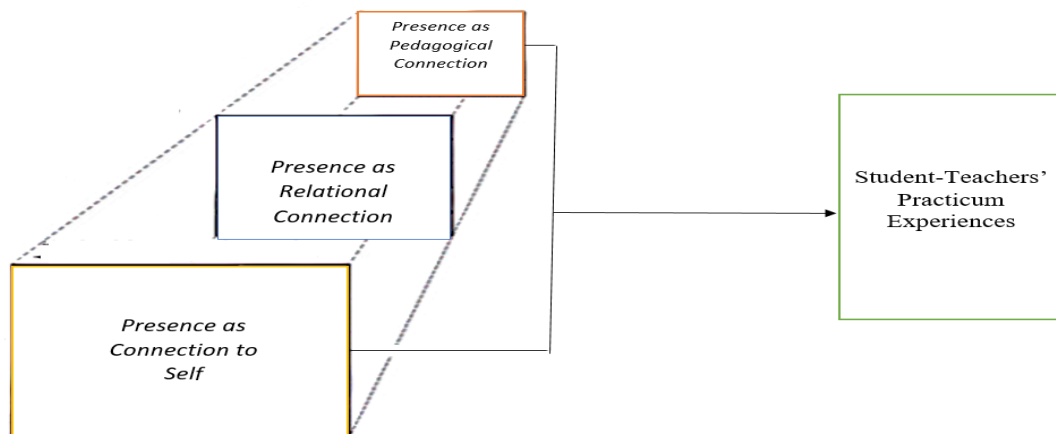


Figure 1: Conceptual Model of the Study

Figure 1 presents the conceptual model of the study. It is easier to capture the inter-dependence of the boxes. As shown in Figure 1, the three dimensionally can be visualize as separate but connected boxes. This three dimensional image enables the researcher to understand that an analytic move to examine a single box is necessary to observe the interdependence among the boxes. The focus on any one box therefore has to be seen as a relatively arbitrary place from which to begin. This also facilitates the drawing of linking lines across the boxes to stress inter-connections.

As can be seen from Figure 1, the study explored the practicum experiences of the student teachers through three dimensional presence.

Research Design

The study is a qualitative method research that involved the collection of qualitative data. The phenomenological design was utilized in the study to explore the practicum experiences of student teachers during the pandemic. The assumption was

that presence is found in intersubjective relations between teacher, students, and subject matter (the didactic triangle), and that teachers’ experiences of presence move in and through these intersubjective relations (Roefs, Leeman, Oosterheert, & Meijer, 2021 [22]). To capture a rich picture of teachers’ experiences of presence within this didactic triangle, we focused on teachers’ concrete experiences, in which presence is ‘lived through’ in daily practice (Roefs, Leeman, Oosterheert, & Meijer, 2021 [22]).

Informants of the Study

The informants of the study were the three (3) student teachers in a University in Bulacan during the School Year 2022-2023. The researcher purposively included student teachers from the same school in order to ascertain the perceptions within a specific school context. They were selected using purposive sampling. The inclusion criteria for the study of includes: (1) a student teacher, (2) an English major (3) has been doing the practicum for 3 months or more already, and (3) currently enrolled in a university in Bulacan.

Instrument of the Study

The study utilized the semi-structured interview to gather information on the practicum experiences of student teachers in ESL classes. Semi-structured interview is a type of data gathering technique and a verbal interchange where the interviewer attempts to elicit needed information from another person or an interviewee. In this technique, the interviewer develops pre-determined questions to be used as interview guide during the formal interview (Clifford, Cope, Gillespie, & French, 2016). The researcher prepared the interview questions that answered the statement of the problem.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data gathering was done in two (2) phases: 1) interview, and 2) thematic analysis.

The first phase is the interview. A letter was sent to the target informants to ask for their consent to participate and give them some background about the aim of the study as well as the ethical considerations. Then, they were tasked for an interview.

The second phase is the thematic analysis. This is related to the purpose of the study, which is to scrutinize discourse shared by the student teachers following the three dimensions of presence in teaching. Once the data was collected, thematic analysis was incorporated. As norm in qualitative research projects, the data from the discourse was analyzed based on codes and categories starting with aggregating the text process of data coding. Thematic Analysis was utilized as the data processing method in the study. Thematic analysis (TA) is a method for identifying and analyzing patterns of meaning in a data set Braun & Clarke (2012) [2]. The study followed the phases of thematic analysis:

1. Familiarization - This phase includes reading transcripts taking notes of the initial observations obtained from the green discourses.
2. Coding - In this phase, relevant features of the data gathered were identified and labelled according to the research questions. Similar data segments were grouped together to be able to identify patterns.
3. Searching for themes - This includes clustering together codes from the previous phase in order to create themes or key patterns in the data.
4. Reviewing themes - The patterns found in the data were reviewed or checked to see if the candidate themes are appropriate or if they fit the coded data and the entire data sets.
5. Defining and naming themes - The researcher selected a name for each theme to ensure conceptual clarity then write a brief summary of each theme.
6. Writing the interpretation - The researcher had written a vivid analysis of the data extracted and provide analytic conclusions drawn from the themes.

Thematic coding requires thorough investigation of the data, thus, the researcher read and reread the written discourses from start to finish to acquire knowledge about the background and experiences of the informants and identify their significant statements regarding the focus of analysis. From the excerpts, interpretive meanings of the statements were developed then arrange into clusters that allowed the emergence of themes or the comparisons of how the views, experiences and practices. The themes were then be described and interpreted by the researcher.

Results and Discussions

The three dimensions of student teachers' practicum experiences of presence- *Presence as Connection to Self*, *Presence as Relational Connection*, *Presence as Pedagogical Connection* -structure the description of the results. The researcher elaborated each component by describing the themes, the similarities and variations that was found within them, and the interplay between the themes and codes within each component.

1. Presence as Connection to Self

The first dimension, "Presence as connection to self," is a key element of presence in teaching and forms the basis for the connection to students (Rodgers & Raider-Roth, 2006 [21]).

The process of knowing oneself is, of course, a never-ending process, especially as these aspects of self are 're-storied' (Holstein & Gubruim, 2000; Cook-Sather, in press), shift and evolve over time. Kegan (1982, 1994) noted that evolution of the self is a process of moving from 'embeddedness' (in our beliefs, prejudices, values, history, culture and feelings and the various contexts that give rise to these) to 'differentiation', where we can observe these beliefs, prejudices and so forth as objects, rather than being subject to them (as cited by Rodgers & Raider-Roth, 2006 [21]).

This section explores the student teachers' experiences in terms of their presence as connection to self in ESL class. The themes that emerged are the following: *Doubt in capabilities as teachers, awareness of weaknesses, awareness of strengths, and practice shock due to sudden change in teaching modality.*

1.1. Student Teacher's Doubt in their Capabilities as Future Educators

In this category, the student teachers, through their excerpts, indicated that they doubt their capabilities as future ESL educators. Student Teacher 1 admitted that she perceived herself as someone who can only give what she can since for her, she is still a beginner teacher.

"I see myself as a beginner teacher. I can give only what I can. When I realize that I cannot do this, I do not force myself. When I feel tired and exhausted, I let myself rest. For example, when I feel that I am not satisfied with my performance during the first-period class, I would tell myself that it is okay, and I can still do better during the second period class." - Student Teacher 1

The extract from Student Teacher 1's interview shows that she stressed the importance of rest and not forcing oneself to perform once he/she feels tired. In addition, the principle of *"Okay na yan, bawi nalang"* (That is enough, just do better next time) was also observed in her response.

Student Teacher 2, on the other hand, shared that she doubted her capability in mastering the lesson in language or literature and said that she is now in doubt if she really wanted to become a teacher.

"At first, I doubt myself if I can really teach and can easily master the lesson. But when I teach, I realized that I can... Honestly, I am too burned out. Before, we were deployed, I felt so excited since finally it would be a new experience. But now, I doubt myself if I would really want to become a teacher after graduation. I told to myself, maybe I cannot really teach. Now, I cannot see myself as a teacher. I also realized that I maybe young when I decided to take this course (program). And now, I am just doing this for my parents, since I am already in fourth year college and about to finish the course. But deep inside, I am no longer happy." -Student Teacher 2

This is the same concern shared by Student Teacher 3.

"When I become an ST, I doubt my teaching skills, especially my patience. At the back of my mind, I realized that I may not really meant to become a teacher. So far, I do not think that I am really to become a teacher. I cannot multi-task."

-Student Teacher 3

The excerpts, especially of Student Teachers 2 and 3, show how doubt can affect our motivation and desire to do or continue a certain task. This implies that there are certain factors that causes doubt among the Student Teachers and these are insufficient information or mastery, unfulfilled expectations, performance problems, and lacking future

perspective. This is in congruent with Heinrichs, Hermülheim, González, & Loerbroks' (2021) [10] study, wherein other factor was identified such as poor study conditions.

Similarly, Rakasiwi (2013) [18] as cited by Collantes (2021) [5] found out that there were some student teachers who thought that their ability to teach English was insufficient.

The distance between personal and professional selves can cause a tentativeness, beyond the tentativeness that naturally exists for new teachers, that undermines both their trust in themselves and, thereby, their students' trust in them (Rodgers & Raider-Roth, 2006 [21]). The existing values of the institution in which teachers must survive tend to have 'greater pragmatic value' than their own set of values, the values that comprise their moral and spiritual selves (Hargreaves, 1994; Moore et al., 2002; Noddings, 2003) as cited by (Rodgers & Raider-Roth, 2006 [21]).

1.2. Awareness of Student Teachers' Own Strengths and Weaknesses

The three (3) Student Teachers were able to share their strengths and weakness as student teachers.

"I am a kind of student teacher who is willing to learn also from the students. Although, in terms of teaching, I think I still need to improve my art of questioning."

-Student Teacher 1

"In teaching, I guess my strong point is the mastery of the lesson and the flow of discussion. While my weakness would be something related to health. I feel exhausted at the end of the day."

-Student Teacher 2

"My strong points are creating detailed presentations, clear and loud voice that it can be easily understood by the students. And My weakness is the mastery of lesson since I am teaching literature and it is related to History." -Student Teacher 3

Every student teacher is unique. They have their own strengths and weaknesses in facilitating the teaching-learning process. The excerpts suggest that the student teachers are very much aware of their own strengths and weaknesses. The excerpts imply that the student teachers are completely aware of their own strengths and weaknesses. The first student teacher saw her eagerness to learn from students as a strength and the art of questioning as a weakness. However, student teacher 2 claimed that while her strength was lesson mastery and discussion flow during daily teaching, her weakness was health-related. Last but not least, student teacher 3 stated that while preparation for the presentation

and her loud, clear voice are her strengths, mastery of the lesson is her weakness.

This further show that student teachers' self-awareness develops through contextual reflection on experiences which occur within their interactions with students and cooperating teachers (Žydžiūnaitė & Daugėla, 2020 [31]). Through a teacher's inner reflection, which happens because of their relations with students, their self-awareness grows (Schussler & Knarr, 2013).

1.3. Practice Shock from Online to Face-to-Face Modality

Student teachers 1 and 2 shared similar concerns that they have experienced practice shock due to the shift in the teaching modality during the pandemic, from the implementation online modality to face-to-face modality.

"I am culture shocked since for how many years, we were utilizing online learning modality. Now that we are in a face-to-face scenario, I am somehow lost on how I should handle my students."

-Student teacher 1

"The F2F set up really shocked me. Physically and mentally. From how many years, we were in online classes, and we were accustomed to that. I noticed that as the day wore on, my voice would spontaneously stop."

-Student teacher 1

"I find it difficult to teach now since from online teaching, now, we were sent to teach in face-to-face set up."

-Student teacher 2

The practice shock exhibited by the student teachers due to the two-year implementation of online learning modality has an adverse effect on their teaching now that they have to do it in the face-to-face setup. Both student teachers might have difficulties in the face-to-face classes. This shows that student teachers, who used to attend online classes, are guided and rather limited by features and elements of online teaching as compared to onsite teaching.

It is acknowledged that this global "experiment" has had and continues to have a massive impact on students and educators. Both were forced to make a rapid transition from one form of education (mainly face-to-face) to another (online) and now it is vice versa (Nolan, Bart, Mairead, & YingFei, 2022 [14]). Rogoff (2003) and as cited by Nolan, Bart, Mairead, & YingFei (2022) [14] defines transition as "movement from one environment or context to another, with a corresponding change in identity; people change their role in their community's

structure." This might lead to the great adjustment as experienced by the student teachers.

Furthermore, student teacher 1 admitted that there is a need to give an extensive orientation for the student teachers before the deployment.

"I think before being deployed as ST, we should be given more orientations on our role as ST, what we may experience among other things. Most of the orientations given to us were on Health Protocols"

The said orientation would focus not only on procedural matters but also on their roles as student teachers. The supervisor or the department needs to give proper orientation to student teachers along many aspects that they have to consider in the practicum to make student teaching experiences more meaningful to them (Collantes, 2021 [5]). This might prepare the student teachers on the things they may encounter during the practicum.

2. Presence as Relational Connection

Rodgers and Raider-Roth (2006) [21] argued that teachers must assume a relational stance toward students that includes empathy with and attunement and responsiveness to "the subjective inner experience" of the students at "both a cognitive and affective level." (Roefs, Leeman, Oosterheert, & Meijer, 2021 [22]).

This dimension explores student teachers' presence as a relational connection. Two themes have emerged from the excerpts related to this:

Connectedness with the cooperating teachers and connectedness with the students.

2.1. Student Teachers' Concept of Connectedness with the Cooperating Teachers

During the practicum, student teachers reflected about how they perceived their relationship with the cooperating teachers.

"I am pressured especially if the CT [cooperating teacher] is competent. He may have a lot of expectation with me. I am not comfortable when my CT is present during my teaching."

-Student teacher 1

Student teacher 1 expressed the positive perception she has of her cooperating teacher. However, this positive perception leads her to feel uncomfortable or afraid with his presence. Student teacher 1 may not be able to recognize herself is also competent and accepted. Thus, the feeling of intimidation is observed when her CT is present during her daily teaching. It is an inter-subjective state, which is a "attunement to, and responsive at both a cognitive and affective level to the other's subjective inner experience (Jordan, 1991). By taking this

perspective, student teachers may help themselves build their own knowledge by helping them understand their role as student teachers during the practicum.

“With my CT, she is kind. She allows me to think and design my own lessons. But there were times when I had questions and need an advice, I opted not to disturb her since she was very busy. There are instances also when we have to check my LPs (Lesson Plans) at night since she was very busy in the morning. But I really understand her.”

-Student teacher 2

Student teacher 2 admitted that there had been times when she had been unsure about approaching her cooperating teacher because she had seen that she was also quite busy.

According to Prastomo and Listyani (2016), a cooperating teacher ideally helps student-teachers in their student-teaching. A cooperating teacher is expected to give adequate feedback to student teachers about their teaching. However, this seems not properly observed, as revealed in the findings, given that the real root of the problems of the student teachers with their cooperating teachers was the irregular class observations performed by the latter (Collantes, 2021 [5]).

Another concern that the student teachers raised on their connectedness with their cooperating teacher is miscommunication. Both student teachers 1 and 3 shared an incident when miscommunication occurred between them and their cooperating teachers.

“Miscommunication usually happens between my CT and I. There was an instance when he thought that I demanded for a one-time evaluation.”

-Student Teacher 1

“Miscommunication happened between my CT and I. For example, there was an issue about the one-time evaluation. That is not what we mean but that was how she interpreted it.”

-Student Teacher 2

One instance of misinterpretation that both student teachers shared included the one-time evaluation that the cooperating teachers seemed to think they were demanding. Although the details of this was not explained by the student teachers. Student-teachers and cooperating teachers make meaning of each other's' actions and intentions. It is this kind of mutual meaning making that allows both of them to make their needs and desires known, In the process of mutuality both parties watch the other to see how their expressions and actions are received (Rodgers & Raider-Roth, 2006 [21]).

Supervision by the cooperating teachers also helped student teachers enhance their teaching skills (Qazi, Rawat, & Thomas, 2012 [17]). They followed instructions given by the cooperating teachers and improved their teaching accordingly. However, there seemed to have some dissatisfaction among student teachers for some supervision styles exhibited by the cooperating teachers.

2.2. Connectedness with the Students

One of the challenges that the student teachers face during their practicum is the student's lack of interest during the teaching and learning process. They believe that success of the daily teaching largely depends on the student's involvement.

Two student teachers, through their excerpts, emphasized that one of the challenges they experience in teaching English during their practicum is the students' lack of interest.

“My CT is a good teacher. He was loved by the students so much especially his way of teaching. And that pressured me in the classroom. The students are used to see the teaching styles of my CT so when I experienced to teach, I observed that I cannot easily get the attention of my students unlike my cooperating teacher. Sometimes, it's sad to know that, when you are too friendly with the students, they might not listen to you during the discussion, they would show it through non-verbal cues.”

-Student Teacher 1

“When my students do not listen during the discussion, I feel that I am not an effective teacher. There were instances when I wanted to cry after the class since they were very passive during the discussion. I asked myself, is there something wrong with me?”

-Student teacher 1

“The students cannot give the same respect that they give to my CT. During the class discussion, I noticed that my students treat me as their friends and not as a teacher. Thus, they do not behave well in my class.”

-Student Teacher 2

Student teachers 1 and 2 claim that one of the reasons they are unable to engage the students is because they are not treated in the same way as their cooperating teachers. The excerpt especially from the student teacher 1 shows this problem can affect them emotionally. This impact is related to what the student teachers shared about their presence as self.

The center of any educative process is the student. Without the student, there would be no need for teaching. The teacher's task is to guide the students in the learning process. But each student is a unique

individual who responds differently; hence, along the teaching and learning process and in guiding the students, problems might arise (Collantes, 2021 [5]). First of all, they do not feel threatened or afraid by the presence of student teachers, and secondly, they do not take their student teachers seriously since they believe they are not actual teachers and are only there to practice their profession (Collantes, 2021 [5]).

On the other hand, the student teachers indicated that despite the treatment described above they occasionally experienced from the students, they somehow made every effort to understand them.

“To establish a good relationship with the students, I realized that I should engage them more in the discussion, and also I have to be friendly with them but with boundaries.”

-Student teacher 1

“I really understand my students, since they were still in Grade 4 before the pandemic and for two years they were in online classes. And now, they have to be in school. So somehow I can relate with them.”

-Student teacher 2

“For my students, I see how much they really try to adjust in the face-to-face classes.”

-Student teacher 3

Different factors were given by the student teachers on why the students probably behave inappropriately. These are the lack of opportunity to be engaged in the lesson, the 2-year period that they were in the online setup, and the adjustment to the new modality- Face-to-Face classes.

Concerning the issue that the research of Hernández-Hernández & Sancho-Gil (2021) addressed in their research: how online learning has affected students' well-being, different studies (Cidral, Oliveira, Di Felice, & Aparicio, 2018 [4]) have evidenced that user satisfaction and e-learning systems significantly impact students' success. Against this backdrop, in the context of COVID, the study by (Symonds, 2020 [26]) Quacquarelli Symonds (2020) [26] indicates that while some students reported that they were enjoying online teaching, others, due to university closures, expressed a lack of motivation and, negative attitudes toward online learning (as cited by Hernández-Hernández & Sancho-Gil, 2021). And now that they are in a face-to-face setting, this might have an impact on the same negative conduct that the student teachers have observed.

3. Presence as Pedagogical Connection

A teacher's pedagogy is the most visible aspect of presence. It includes interactions between the teacher and her students, among students, and between the students and the subject matter. In this third dimension of presence the student teachers pays close attention to the subject matter and her students' engagement with it (Rodgers & Raider-Roth, 2006 [21]).

This explores student teachers' pedagogical connections. Three (3) themes have emerged from the excerpts related to this: *Challenge in Writing the Daily Lesson Plan in English, Knowledge on Student's Struggles during Face-to-Face, Knowledge on the Application of Concepts and Theories in the Actual Classroom Setting.*

3.1. Challenge in Writing the Daily Lesson Plan in English

There were many tasks and responsibilities that student teachers had to accomplish in the classroom. Creating a daily lesson plan is one of them. Lesson planning employs both pedagogical and content knowledge. The processes are complex and student teachers, undergoing practicum, struggle to plan (Jantarach & Soontornwipast, 2018 [12]). The excerpts from the student teachers' interview responses that were connected to lesson planning correlates to this.

“So far, I enjoy teaching however I am still struggling in writing the lesson plan. I still do not master how to do it.”

-Student teacher 1

“I am so emotional everytime I would realize that I am already a fourth year student and yet even in the simple formulation of learning objectives and activities I am still struggling. Until now, it takes days for me to do a lesson plan.”

-Student teacher 2

Student teachers 1 and 2 acknowledged their difficulties in writing a lesson plan. They are struggling because of the lengthy and challenging period of preparation for the aforementioned. Additionally, student teacher 2 made it clear that it influences how she sees herself and how it affects her presence as connection to self.

Based from this, the student teachers realized the need for a well-planned lesson.

This is corroborated with the findings of Roefs, Leeman, Oosterheert, & Meijer (2021) [22] that contextualizing teaching by adaptation to that group at that moment in time required an ongoing exploration of the current events and developments surrounding their subject and thorough lesson

preparation. Many participants, in their study, referred to it as time constraints. In addition, presence could be neither predicted nor controlled. A well-prepared lesson and their own enthusiasm could lead to nothing but students watching indifferently, or presence could start unexpectedly from a student's contribution.

3.2. Knowledge on Student's Struggles during Face-to-Face

Presence is predicated on the student teacher's ability to translate the points of entry into curriculum, activities and learning environments and to link these to the students (Rodgers & Raider-Roth, 2006 [21]). As part of their practicum presence and experience, the student teachers conveyed their awareness and knowledge of the difficulties that learners encounter in Face-to-Face settings.

"I can see how students are also struggling in f2f classes. I handle Grade 7 students. When I prepare the lesson and activities, their activities should be appropriate for Grade 4 or 5 students. Because the activities intended for their actual level, Grade 7, would be difficult for them. For example, even they do not know the word, inform."

-Student teacher 2

Since she observes how students struggle to complete a task that is appropriate for their level, student teacher 2 stated that she must make the necessary adjustments while planning activities for the Grade 7 pupils.

"I can observe how the students are struggling in f2f set up. As ST, you can see how uninterested they were in listening and participating during the discussion or activity. So somehow, I have to make sure that my teaching strategies are engaging and interesting to catch their attention. Most students find it difficult to recall the information they just learned in class. They would always say when you asked them, "Maam di na po namin ma-recall." (Maam, we can no longer recall.)"

-Student teacher 3

Meanwhile, Student Teacher 3 highlighted two issues. The first is the students' interests, which were already underlined during the discussion of the second dimension, presence as a relational connection. The students' inability to remember the knowledge she just taught them comes in second.

Academic normalcy still seems out of reach for many students as everyone approaches the two-year milestone of the initial wave of pandemic that caused school closures. The impact is far reaching and has affected learning during this academic year or even more in the coming days.

COVID-19 caused significant disruption to the global education system. Early reviews of the first wave of lockdowns and school closures suggested significant learning loss in a few countries. A more recent and thorough analysis of recorded learning loss evidence documented since the beginning of the school closures between March 2020 and March 2022 finds even more evidence of learning loss (Patrinós, Vegas, & Carter-Rau, 2022 [15]).

This is in parallel with the result of the study of Zhdanov, et al (2022) [30]. Accordingly, there is compelling evidence that students lose more knowledge during lockdown than they do throughout a regular school year. The factors affecting learning losses in various situations may vary. With the reopening of schools, it is critical to ascertain the precise volume of learning losses and to provide remedies in order to avert the creation of medium- and long-term educational issues.

The presence of learning loss was even observed by the student teachers during their practicum experience.

3.3. Knowledge on the Application of Concepts and Theories in the Actual Classroom Setting

In this category, the student teachers, through the excerpts, indicated that the concepts and theories they have learned in college and how it can be applied in the actual classroom setting is one of the factors affecting the success of their practicum.

Student teacher 3 admitted that she finds it difficult to apply the concepts and theories she have learned in the program.

"We learned in College that the activities should be Student-Centered, but in real and actual classroom scenario, that is not applicable considering the level of interest and engagement of the students."

-Student teacher 3

She mentioned how the concepts and theories are different in the actual setting. On the other hand, student teacher 1.

"What's good is that, somehow I was able to apply what I learned from College e.g. the theories in learning which can be observed in my class" -
Student teacher 1

According to Collantes (2021) [5], the student teaching program is designed to provide student teachers the opportunities to apply the principles and strategies of teaching and evaluation in actual teaching-learning situations, utilization of appropriate teaching techniques and instructional materials. During practice teaching, a pre-service teacher experiences the rudiments of teaching in a

cyclical process of planning, actual teaching and evaluating learning. It is a college-supervised instructional experience, usually the culminating course in a university/college program leading to teacher education.

The student teachers' practicum experiences allow them to use the knowledge they have acquired during their four years of college study in actual classroom settings. However, this situation presence

as pedagogical connected suggests that they have had difficulty attaining this.

4. Pedagogical Implications of the Study

One could say that practicum experiences of student teachers primarily involves a critical analysis of their presence as self, presence as a relational process, and presence as pedagogical connected. In other words, for the analysis of the study, the given dimensions of presence were considered.

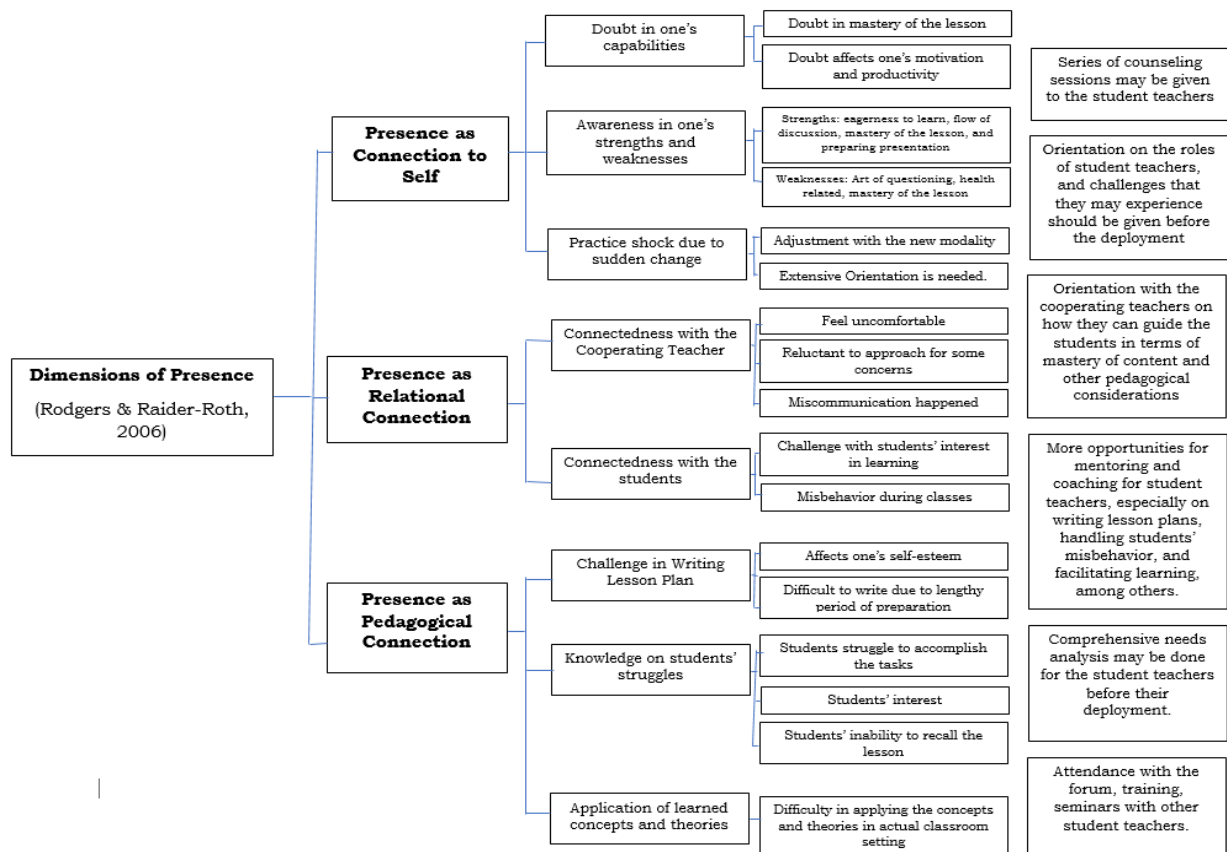


Figure 2: Identified Dimensions and Themes Based on The Result of Analysis

Figure 2 presents the identified dimensions and themes based on the result of analysis. From the analysis of the experiences of student teachers during the practicum, it can be gleaned that several constructs were identified such as doubt in the mastery of the lesson, doubt in ones capabilities, several strengths and weaknesses, adjustment with the new modality, the need for extensive orientation before the deployment (based from presence as connection to self), feeling of uncomfortable with the presence of the cooperating teacher, reluctant to approach the cooperating teacher due to his/her workload and deliverables, miscommunication that exists between the student teacher and cooperating teacher, challenges that the student teachers experiences due to students' lack of interest and misbehavior (based from presence as relational connection), difficulty in writing lesson plan that

somehow affects their self-esteem, awareness on the learning loss that is observed among the students, difficulty in applying concepts and theories in actual classroom setting (based from presence as pedagogical connection). In light of the findings, it is suggested that the following strategies be incorporated into the development plan for student teachers:

1. **Series of counseling sessions for the student teachers.** The counseling session may help the teachers improve how they perceive themselves as future educators. It may also help them overcome their self-doubt as future educators. Other concerns related to mental health that impede them from performing well during the practicum may also be addressed through this.

2. **Orientation on the roles, responsibilities, and challenges that they may experience as student teachers may be conducted before the deployment.** This might help them better understand their roles as student teachers, and as a result, this can make their conduct practicums successful. In addition, being aware of the challenges that they may face as student teachers can help them be adaptive and responsive to any situation and challenge so that they can deal with whatever arises during their practicum. This might motivate them in some way.
3. **Orientation for the cooperating teachers on how they can guide the student teachers in terms of mastery of content and other pedagogical considerations.** The HEI may consider providing orientation for the cooperating teachers. Cooperating teachers play a vital role in practice teaching. As cooperating teachers, they were expected to help student teachers build camaraderie with the students. They should make it sure that student teachers had already established good rapport with students before finally leaving the student teacher all alone in the classroom (Collantes, 2021 [5]). Thus, an orientation on how they can guide the student teachers in terms of content and other pedagogical considerations can be considered.
4. **More opportunities for mentoring and coaching for student teachers, especially on writing lesson plans, handling students' misbehavior, and facilitating learning, among others.** The concerns expressed by the student teachers throughout the interview highlight the need for more mentoring and coaching opportunities. Mentoring-Coaching approaches helped teachers identify and interpret the issue in their classroom and then get possible solutions during the post-conference. The chosen behaviors abolished the distance between leaders and teachers, build confidence within themselves in finding solutions and admitting their mistakes, and raising the sense of belonging to the classroom (Dewi, 2021 [7]).
5. **Attendance in the forum, training, seminars with other student teachers.** They might understand better the nature of practicum and relate to other student teachers' experiences through a forum, training, or seminars with other student teachers. They need this to realize that what they are going through during the

practicum may be the same experience as the other student teachers. In addition, these activities may aid student teachers in understanding how to apply concepts and theories in teaching in a real classroom context, as they have also experienced difficulty applying their learning in the actual classroom setting according to them during the interview.

6. **Comprehensive needs analysis may be done for the student teachers before their deployment.** The conduct of a thorough need analysis may reveal information regarding the capabilities, skills, and competencies that student teachers still need to develop. The findings of this analysis could serve as a basis for crafting a development program for them. Additionally, the mentorship program for them might concentrate on the weaknesses found.

Conclusion

The study aims to explore the student teachers' Practicum experiences in the English as a Second Language (ESL) classes during the pandemic. Through the consideration of the three dimensions of presence, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Doubt in capabilities as teachers, awareness of weaknesses, awareness of strengths, and practice shock due to sudden change in teaching modality can affect how they perceive themselves as student teachers.
2. The experiences of the student teachers during the practicum are influenced by their connections and relationships with the cooperating teachers and students. Student teachers reported that some of their experiences with their cooperating teachers include a general feeling of unease, reluctance to approach, and the incidence of miscommunication. While the issues they observed among the students were misbehavior and a lack of interest.
3. During the practicum, student teachers encounter difficulties and constraints when it comes to creating lesson plans and applying theories and concepts into practice while teaching in a real classroom. It is theoretically possible, but in practice, it has failed to produce the desired results due to the numerous problems affecting its implementation in the classroom.
4. The student teachers still recognize the difficulties that the students have in face-to-face classrooms. The pandemic presents considerable challenges for students' interest, comprehension, and skills.

5. The findings drew several implications that may help student teachers and the HEI realize the need for a comprehensive programs, activities, plan, and supports to help the student teachers have meaningful practicum experiences.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are hereby offered based on the implications of the study:

1. Provide a series of counseling sessions for the student teachers.
2. Conduct an orientation for both student teachers and cooperating teachers. Orientation for the student teachers should focus on the roles, responsibilities, and challenges that they may experience. For the cooperating teachers, the topic may focus on how they can guide the student teachers in terms of mastery of content and other pedagogical considerations.
3. Provide more opportunities for mentoring and coaching for student teachers, especially on writing lesson plans, handling students' misbehavior, and facilitating learning, among others.
4. Attend forum, training, seminars with other student teachers.
5. Comprehensive needs analysis may be done for the student teachers before their deployment.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares there are no significant competing financial, professional, or personal interests that might have influenced the performance or presentation of the work described in this manuscript. The study involves only human participants who volunteered for this study and informed consent was obtained from them.

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