

AN ANALYSIS OF CERTAIN DIFFICULTIES MET BY STUDENTS IN THEIR STUDENT TEACHING⁽¹⁾

by *Evangelica D. Padernilla*⁽²⁾

1.0 *Statement of the Problem.* Student teaching is one of the most valuable phases of the training of teachers. In fact, it is considered the core of the teacher education program. It is during this period of preparation and adjustment that students meet innumerable problems which they usually cannot cope with. These problems strongly affect them by way of retarding their growth and progress.

If instructors, critics teachers, and other superiors are to work intelligently in preparing the students into well-trained professional teachers, they should know what these problems are. This study, therefore, aimed to answer the following questions:

1. What are the most difficult problems met by students in their practice teaching?
2. What are the probable causes of these problems?
3. How can the students be helped in overcoming these problems?

2.0 *Procedure.* The procedure used in this study involved the following steps:

1. Survey of problems usually met by student teachers in their practice teaching.
2. Preparation of a questionnaire in an effort to discover the most difficult problems of interns.
3. Tabulation of the responses of the interns.
4. Preparation of a similar questionnaire for critic teachers in order to find out how closely the critic teachers'

(1)A condensation of the author's master's thesis, which was submitted to and approved by the Graduate Committee, School of Graduate Studies, Central Philippine University.

(2)Mrs. Padernilla is presently the Principal of the Elementary School, Central Philippine University.

AN ANALYSIS OF CERTAIN DIFFICULTIES
MET BY STUDENTS IN THEIR
STUDENT TEACHING

PADERNILLA

judgment on the most difficult problems agreed with the student teachers' responses.

5. Determination of the percentage of agreement between the critic teachers and interns on each of the ten most difficult problems and on the five least difficult problems.

6. Content analysis of the responses of practice teachers to two questions related to the study which were given by the Division of Teacher Training to the practice teachers.

7. Getting the responses of practice teachers to the same questionnaire that was given to the interns to check whether the ten problems identified by interns as the most difficult would also be considered serious by the practice teachers.

8. Interviewing and conducting a questionnaire survey in which interns were asked for reasons why the ten most difficult problems were hard to deal with and how they could have been helped in meeting these problems.

9. Making of recommendations based on the results of the interview and the responses of interns to the above questionnaire.

3.3 *Presentation and Discussion of Findings.* As stated in the procedure 134 interns were asked to give their opinions regarding the degree of difficulty of the problems they met in their student teaching. Table I shows the scores of the problems which ranked the first ten highest in difficulty.

To find out how closely the interns' responses agreed with their critic teachers. An analysis of the findings shows that the critic teachers' responses closely agreed those of the students. On the average, there was an agreement of 88.4 per cent between the critic teachers and the practice teachers. Table III shows the scores and percentage of agreement.

It is interesting to note, however, that although there was a considerable agreement between the critic teachers and student teachers in recognizing the chief problems of practice teachers, their opinion on the degree of difficulty somewhat varied. Seven of the ten problems, numbers 1, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, and 10 were seen as more difficult problems by the critic teachers than these were felt by practice teachers.

Student teachers tend to underestimate their problems. This is probably explained by the fact that people do not see their own faults as well as others do. This makes it easy for them to understand that students may not be keenly aware of their difficulties while they are teaching. They are so busy thinking of their subject matter or activities that they most likely overlook the factors that adversely affect their progress in teaching. The critic teacher, on the other hand, who does nothing but observe and criticize the student in his teaching, is more observant and is, therefore, more sensitive to the practice teacher's problems.

Additional information was found in the file of the office of the Division of Teacher Training. This consisted of answers to a set of questions. The first question which is related to this study was "What is the most difficult element in your work?"

Out of the 130 student teachers who answered the questions, 103 said that their greatest difficulty lay in matters of discipline or class control. This was substantiated by the finding on the questionnaire in which class control topped the list of the most difficult problems of student teachers.

The other question which was answered by the students was, "Did you feel comfortable with your critic teacher?" Out of 130 students who answered this question, 122 or 94 per cent answered "yes" and only eight or 6 per cent answered "no". This finding was consistent with the finding of the questionnaire in which the problem on student and teacher relationship is among the problems indicated by interns as one of the five least difficult prob-

AN ANALYSIS OF CERTAIN DIFFICULTIES
MET BY STUDENTS IN THEIR
STUDENT TEACHING

PADERNILLA

lems indicated by interns as one of the five least difficult problems they met in their practice teaching. It is evident, therefore, that student teachers do not find any difficulty in dealing with their critic teachers. This is the kind of relationship that should be continually developed between students and critic teachers, for the work in the training school is a cooperative endeavor of both. If student teachers do not feel at ease with their critic teachers and if they are afraid to approach them for help, their growth and progress will probably be retarded. Consequently, the children who are under their teaching and guidance will suffer the same.

The fact that the answers to two of the questions agree with the answers to similar questions in the questionnaire lends further support to the validity of the questionnaire data.

To further support the findings of the questionnaire survey among interns, a study was conducted among the practice teachers. The practice teachers of the second semester, 1964-1965, were asked to answer the same questionnaire that was given to the interns.

The data gathered from the student teachers' questionnaire corroborated the findings of the questionnaire survey among the interns. Eight of the ten most difficult problems of the interns are found in the first ten most difficult problems of the student teachers. The other two problems which ranked fifth and seventh among the interns were ranked eleventh and twelfth, respectively, by the practice teachers. The other two problems of the practice teachers which are not found among the ten most difficult problems of the interns were also ranked fifth and sixth among the practice teachers.

The coefficient of correlation was found to be .26 which indicated that the correlation between the ranks given by both the interns and the practice teachers on the twelve problems is present but slight. However, although

each of the problems was given different ranks by the two groups of students, all of them were among the first twelve top ranking problems. The problems that were considered most difficult by the interns were also regarded difficult by the practice teachers.

When the interns returned to the university from their off-campus teaching, some of them were interviewed informally and were asked to answer questions regarding the ten problems considered the most difficult. They gave reasons why the problems were difficult or hard for them to deal with and also some suggestions on how their instructors, critic teachers, and supervisors could help them meet their problems.

On the basis of their reasons and suggestions, recommendations were made for the benefit of the supervisors, instructors, critic teachers, student teachers, and the whole teacher education program.

4.0 *Conclusions.* After a careful review of the findings of this study, the following observations and conclusions are made:

1. Practice teachers are beset with many problems in their practice teaching, but the problems which they consider the most difficult are the following, arranged in the order of their difficulty:
 - a. Can I keep the class free from distracting noise, disorderliness, and misbehavior?
 - b. Do I have a good command of oral English with correct grammar, pronunciation, and intonation?
 - c. Do I get the attention of all the pupils in my class?
 - d. Do I get the full cooperation and active participation of all pupils ?
 - e. Do I try to discover pupils' weaknesses and help these pupils in their own errors and needs?
 - f. Am I creative, resourceful, and full of initiative?

AN ANALYSIS OF CERTAIN DIFFICULTIES
MET BY STUDENTS IN THEIR
STUDENT TEACHING

PADERNILLA

- g. Am I careful, clear, and correct in written expression?
 - h. Am I skillful in planning motivation, in framing questions, and in giving assignments?
 - i. Do I provide for individual differences by re-directing the activities of overdoers or bright pupils and guiding the dull or timid pupils?
 - j. Do I have a prompt and systematic distribution and collection of materials that do not create confusion?
2. The problem which the students find most vexing is on discipline and class control. Critic teachers closely agree with the students on the seriousness of this problem.
 3. Student teachers do not always recognize the difficulty of the problems as seen by the critic teachers.
 4. The problems of practice teachers are probably caused not only by the inadequacies of their present learning experiences but also the inadequate pre-college preparation they had in basic skills, like communication and mathematics.
 5. There are many ways by which supervisors, instructors, and critic teachers can help the student teachers in meeting their problems.

5.0 *Recommendations.* On the basis of the findings and conclusions of this study, as well as the responses and suggestions of the students, the following recommendations are given for the benefit of the students, critic teachers, instructors, and the whole teacher training program:

1. For the teacher training program in general:
 - a. Reduce the study load of the student teachers. This recommendation is given because even at

Central Philippine University where the study load is already reduced, students still feel they do not have enough time to prepare for practice teaching.

b. Follow conscientiously the requirements of the Bureau in screening students carefully before enrolling them in the College of Education.

2. For the supervisors:

a. See to it that classroom conditions, like poor ventilation and crowding, be corrected for these make pupils restless, hence more difficult to manage.

b. As much as possible, avoid assigning too many student teachers to one class, so that more opportunities for practice can be given to each.

c. Hold frequent seminars for further enriching student teacher's experiences in the phases of teaching in which they are quite weak and inefficient.

3. For the college instructors:

a. Instructors should give the students the necessary preparation for helping them cope better with their problems whenever they arise.

b. More instruction should be given in the development and improvement of the following:

- 1) Personality, poise, creativeness, resourcefulness, and other qualities or traits that characterize a good teacher.
- 2) Framing and organizing of questions that stimulate thinking.
- 3) Class management and handling of classroom routine activities.
- 4) Giving of good assignments.
- 5) Lesson planning and executing plans effectively.
- 6) Effective oral and written communication.
- 7) The ability to diagnose pupils' weaknesses and to give remedial treatment.

AN ANALYSIS OF CERTAIN DIFFICULTIES
MET BY STUDENTS IN THEIR
STUDENT TEACHING

PADERNILLA

8) Motivating the lesson to gain pupils' interest.

c. College instructors in courses in which education students are enrolled should work hand-in-hand with critic teachers. They should make use of the laboratory school for illustration and practical application for their instruction. This college and laboratory school tie-in should be made in all phases of instruction, but particularly in the professional education college courses.

4. For critic teachers:

a. Help the practice teachers become aware of their most pressing problems and make specific suggestions for overcoming each problem.

b. Be more sympathetic and considerate in dealing with the student teachers. Avoid interrupting student teachers while they are teaching, unless the errors are very glaring. Even so, the corrections should be done as subtly as possible.

5. For student teachers:

a. Make a continuous effort to grow professionally by reading widely books and professional magazines that pertain to the development of skills in teaching. Books like *The Student Teacher in Action* by Sam P. Wiggins and *Student Teaching* by Raleigh Schorling are highly recommended. Professional magazines that are useful to teachers are *The Pilipino Teacher* and *The Philippine Journal of Education*.

b. Take more seriously suggestions of supervisors and critic teachers regarding such matters as discipline and class control, preparation, and meeting the needs and interests of each individual pupil.

TABLE I
PROBLEMS WHICH RANKED THE FIRST TEN
HIGHEST IN DIFFICULTY

Weight	Major Problem	Considerable problem	Somewhat of a problem	No problem	No opinion	Scores
	Frequencies					
	4	3	2	1	0	
1. Can I keep the class free from distracting noise, disorderliness, and misbehaviour?	88	117	134	6	0	345
2. Do I have a good command of oral English with correct intonation?	40	72	184	5	0	301
3. Do I get the attention of all the pupils in my class?	28	96	164	12	0	300
4. Do I get the full cooperation and active participation of all pupils?	8	84	166	21	0	279
5. Do I try to discover pupils' weaknesses and help these pupils find their own errors and needs?	24	72	160	21	0	277
6. Am I creative, resourceful, and full of initiative?	16	72	190	18	0	266
7. Am I careful, clear, and correct in written expression?	8	63	166	25	9	262
8. Am I skillful in planning motivation, in framing questions, and in giving of assignments?	24	42	156	34	0	256

AN ANALYSIS OF CERTAIN DIFFICULTIES
MET BY STUDENTS IN THEIR
STUDENT TEACHING

PADERNILLA

	Major Problem	Considerable problem	Somewhat of a problem	No problem	No opinion	Scores
	Frequencies					
	4	3	2	1	0	
9. Do I provide for individual differences by redirecting the activities of overdoers or bright pupils and guiding the dull or timid pupils?	24	45	152	34	0	255
10. Do I have a prompt and systematic distribution and collection of materials that do not create confusion?	12	54	150	36	0	252

TABLE III
PERCENTAGES OF AGREEMENTS* BETWEEN
CRITIC TEACHERS AND STUDENTS
REGARDING THE TEN MOST
DIFFICULT PROBLEMS

PROBLEMS	Number of Critic Teachers who:			Total	Percentage of Agreement
	Rated the problems more difficult than students did.	Agreed with students			
1. Can I keep my class free from distracting noise, disorderliness and misbehaviour?	15	9		24	96

PROBLEMS	Number of Critic Teachers who:		Total	Percentage of Agreement
	Rated the pro- blems more dif- ficult than stu- dents did.	Agreed with students		
2. Do I have a good command of oral English with correct grammar, pronunciation and intonation? .	6	15	21	84
3. Do I get the attention of all the pupils in the class?	12	9	21	84
4. Do I get the full cooperation and active participation of all pupils?	13	9	22	88
5. Do I discover pupils' weakness and help these pupils find their own errors and needs	15	8	23	92
6. Am I creative, resourceful, and full of initiative?	7	13	20	80
7. Am I careful, clear, and correct in written expression?	9	13	22	88
8. Am I skillful in planning motivation, in framing questions and in giving of assignments?	15	9	24	96
9. Do I provide for individual differences by redirecting the activities of overdoers or bright pupils and guiding the dull or timid pupils?	14	8	22	88

AN ANALYSIS OF CERTAIN DIFFICULTIES
MET BY STUDENTS IN THEIR
STUDENT TEACHING

PADERNILLA

PROBLEMS	Number of Critic Teachers who:		Total	Percentage of Agreement
	Rated the pro- blems more dif- ficult than stu- dents did.	Agreed with students		
10. Do I have a prompt and systematic distribu- tion and collection of ma- terials that do not create confusion?	16	6	22	88
Average				88.4

*Agreement means not only consistency of responses of critic teachers and student teachers but also when critic teachers considered the problem more difficult than students did.

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