Student to Teacher: Experiences of Non-Education Graduates Teaching in Higher Education Institutions

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Abstract: One factor to consider in producing quality graduates is the quality of teaching teachers give. However, there is one issue arising, and that is that non-education graduates need more training in teaching. The study aimed to determine the experiences, coping mechanisms, and insights of non-education graduates teaching in Higher Education Institutions. A qualitative design was employed, particularly phenomenology. A purposive sampling technique was used to determine the six participants. It is revealed that the non-education graduates teaching in HEIs had experienced difficulties dealing with diverse students, overloaded teaching loads, lack of instructional resources, and complying with academic requirements. The participants believed that to cope with their different challenges, using technology-driven and creative teaching strategies helped them deal with diverse students, support from peers, including superiors and colleagues, and time management. The participants desired to grow professionally, see their students succeed, and limit school activities to focus on learning. Based on the result of the study, further investigation may consider using other research designs to explore the experiences of non-education graduates teaching in HEIs. Exploratory factor analysis is suggested to craft a standardized research questionnaire for this topic since researchers have yet to find a research questionnaire related to this study.

Keywords: College Instructors, HEIs, Non-education Graduates, Phenomenology, Qualitative Research

1.   Introduction

One of the factors needed to consider in producing quality graduates is the quality of teaching teachers give. Teachers have an ultimate role in educational change (Bullock & Russell, 2010). Teachers play a significant role in the school, whether in primary education or higher education, as they are the ones who give knowledge in the subject matter, help students grow to the fullest, develop proper attitudes, and unfold the student personality (Go et al., 2020). Moreover, teachers in higher education institutions are responsible for producing and disseminating knowledge and preparing students for professions, social services, industry, and rational citizenship (Sethy, 2021). Furthermore, teachers and teaching quality are believed to be essential factors in shaping students' learning and growth (UNESCO, 2014). However, some problems usually occur inside the classroom. One of the issues arising in teaching and learning is that non-education graduates need more training in instruction (Cobbold, 2010).

This phenomenon is not new to the education system. The Australian Council for Educational Research reported that 26% of teachers teaching for 7-10 years are outside their major field (Weldon,

2015). In Washington, some teachers taught subjects outside their major or did not match their training or education, although all were holders of the essential qualifications (Bayani & Guhao, 2017).

In the Philippines, teachers who are not education graduates are also rampant. In Higher Education Institutions, college instructors teach in their major field but do not have training in teaching, and some are new to the teaching field. This characterization suggests they are likely to perform inferior duties, lacking sufficient disciplinary knowledge to teach effectively (NÍ Ríordáin & Hannigan, 2011). Teachers play an essential role in students' academic journey; new teachers should apply reasonable teaching practices to meet student needs (Somosot, 2018).

In Davao del Norte State College, some programs are taught by non-education graduates and novices in the teaching field. These teachers are teaching core subjects in their respective programs. The novice teachers must also keep pace with veteran teachers in the College. This study was conducted to look at the social meanings that non-education graduates teaching higher education have constructed themselves. This kind of understanding has become part of their daily lives. The study would like to know how teachers work in a higher education institution. This study also would like to understand the experiences of these teachers so that their sentiments will be appropriately addressed.

This study aimed to understand the experiences of non-education graduates teaching in Higher Education Institutions. This study also determines how non-education graduates teaching in HEIs cope with their challenges. At this research stage, on-education graduates teaching in Higher Education Institutions are generally defined as teaching in the College who are not Teacher Education graduates. These teachers may include those teaching General Education subjects and Major Subjects. Specifically, this study aimed to answer the following questions: (1) What are the lived experiences of non-education graduates in teaching Higher Education Institutions, (2) what are the coping mechanisms of non-education graduates in teaching Higher Education Institutions, and (3) what insights can be drawn from the experiences of non-education graduates teaching in Higher Education Institutions?

2. Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on Lave and Wenger's (1991) Situated Learning Theory. Situated Learning Theory posits that learning is unintentional and situated with authentic activity, context, and culture. In addition, Lave and Wenger claimed that learning occurs typically and is embedded within the movement, context, and culture. This theory further explains that knowledge should be delivered in an authentic context. Moreover, beginners should be involved in authentic settings of daily practice, applying knowledge and using artifacts in productive but low-risk ways (Besar, 2018).

In addition, Situated Learning Theory discusses that when individuals join and interact with others who share different opportunities, they will be able to gain more opportunities and will develop personally, professionally and intellectually (Besar, 2018). Moreover, when teachers are new, novices, or beginning in the learning space, they can learn from the expert in the working space. These experts have developed an outstanding understanding and skill in any area of expertise which will provide opportunity for refining knowledge and practicing skills (Caspari-Sadeghi & Konig, 2018). Further, involving novice professionals in authentic practice settings needs social interaction and collaboration within the community of practice. However, they progressively move away from this community to engage in more dynamic and complex activities.

Furthermore, it is explained that beginning professionals do not accumulate professional skills through a collection of facts. However, instead, they learn through socializing in a community by working with other professionals or experts. It is explained that learning is most effective when the beginning teachers and novices are situated within the community of practice (Howard. 2010). These beginning and novice learners will later move from beginning or novice to expert because they are engaged in more dynamic and complex activities (Besar, 2018).

4. Methodology

4.1. Research Design

This research used Qualitative research. It is used to collect and work with non-numerical data. It seeks to interpret meaning from these data that helps researchers to understand social life through the

study of targeted populations or places (Crossman, 2018). This design is appropriate since the study delved into the lived experiences of non-education graduates teaching in higher education institutions. The strategic inquiry that was used is Phenomenological Inquiry. This research inquiry is a qualitative study in which researchers attempt to build the essence of experience from participants.

Furthermore, according to Creswell (2014), phenomenology inquiry constructs a rich, detailed description of a central phenomenon. In this study, the researchers collected stories from the concerned teachers, retold those stories, and developed themes. In addition, phenomenology was employed to report the experiences of non-education graduates teaching in higher education institutions and provide a better understanding of the focus of the study. Through the stories delivered, researchers would be able to achieve the purposes of the study.

This study is grounded with limitations to define the study's scope clearly. The researchers explored the lived experiences of non-education graduates teaching higher education institutions. Furthermore, the researchers had six participants (Creswell, 2014). These participants are non-education graduates teaching General Education subjects and major subjects. In line with this, the data are not generalized statements but are limited to the study participants.

The participants of this study were six (6) non-education graduates teaching in higher education institutions. The research participants were selected and identified through purposive sampling. Purposive sampling determines the number of participants in this study (Patton, 2015). In the case of the number of participants, in qualitative research, particularly on phenomenological inquiry, the number of participants ranges from three to twenty-five. This study used six non-education graduates teaching in higher education institutions. Table 1 shows the details of the participants through the use of pseudonyms.

Table 1. Participants of the Study by Pseudonym

Pseudonym	Institute	Years in Teaching	Course	Subject Handled
Marco	Institute of Aquatic and Applied Sciences	9	Bachelor of Science in Food Technology	Major Subjects
Ricky	Institute of Computing	5	Bachelor of Science in Information Technology	Major Subjects
Marie	Institute of Teacher Education	3	Bachelor of Arts in Filipino	General Education Subjects
Sheryl	Institute of Leadership, Entrepreneurship and Good Governance	4	Bachelor of Science in Tourism Management	Major Subjects
Karen	Institute of Leadership, Entrepreneurship and Good Governance	1	Bachelor of Public Administration	Major Subjects and General Education Subjects
Sammy	Institute of Teacher Education	2	Bachelor of Arts in Communication	Major Subjects and General Education Subjects

The researchers employed purposive sampling. This sampling technique is a non-probability sample selected based on the population's characteristics and the study's objective (Crossman, 2018). The researchers identified and selected the participants using the following selection criteria: college instructors who are not a graduate of the Teacher Education program with at least six months or more years in teaching in higher education regardless of their age and gender; and who have at least handled general education and major subjects.

The researchers lived on the different efforts of non-education graduates who may experience issues teaching higher education. The researcher must describe relevant aspects of self, including biases, assumptions, expectations, and experiences. In conducting this study, researchers served as the interviewer of the participants that asked questions, listened, thought, and asked more probing questions to get to deeper levels of the conservation. Researchers served as the Recorders of the data. It also includes data interpretation and analysis, formulating conclusions and recommendations. After

gathering the data, the researchers served as transcribers and translators or made a written copy. The researchers served as reviewers of the data, made sense of it, and organized it into categories or themes that cut across all data sources (Creswell, 2014). The themes that the researcher developed came from the responses given by the participants.

In this study, the primary data source came from the interview using the Interview Guide Questionnaire (IGQ), which is unstructured to gain sufficient data necessary for the study. After the questionnaire's formulation, the content was validated and enhanced before its utilization. The study used an In-depth Interview (IDI) that needs intensive individual interviews with non-education graduates to explore their insights about trust-related issues in teaching higher education.

The study explored the experiences of non-education graduates teaching in higher education. It means that the participants' safety and complete protection must be safeguarded. The researcher strictly followed ethical research standards stipulated in Belmont Report (1974).

The first principle to consider is to respect the person. This principle includes two ethical convictions; first, participants should be treated as autonomous agents, and second that participants should be given protection (Patton, 2015). In this study, their opinions should be respected to treat participants as autonomous agents. A consent letter should be given to the participants, stating the study's benefits and risks. Furthermore, to ensure the protection of the participants, they should be freely undertaking the activities, and the researcher will be aware of the participants' possible consequences. Lastly, the researcher will include the participant's right to withdraw from the study, the focus of the research and methods to be employed, statements surrounding confidentiality, and a signature of both the researcher and the participant.

Participants are treated ethically by respecting their decisions, protecting them from harm, and making efforts to secure their well-being. This is what beneficence means, the second principle in ethical consideration. This principle states that the researcher should perform two general rules: do not harm the participants, maximize possible benefits, and minimize potential harms (Patton, 2015). Participants should be given code names to protect their identity in this study. This will ensure the participant's secure, confidential, and anonymous responses. Moreover, the researcher will ensure that the outcome of this study will be positive and beneficial to the research participants.

Lastly, justice is one of the principles that the researcher should also consider. This principle states that all participants allow those distinctions based on experience, age, deprivation, competence, merit, and position. Participants should be treated equally. There are different formulations to ensure justice in the research. Formulations include equal share, individual needs, individual efforts, societal contribution, and merit (Patton, 2015). In this study, the researcher selected the research participants correctly. Their privacy is also considered. The researchers ensure that all the principles were addressed to protect the rights of the participants. The study results was presented to the participants to ensure justice.

5. Results and Discussions

The study aimed to explore and understand the experiences of non-education graduates teaching in higher education institutions. The non-education graduates teaching in higher education institutions enter the teaching career by accident or choice. Teachers in every school are considered diverse. They were trained during their college and their practice teaching program. However, some are not education graduates who entered the teaching profession, especially at the tertiary level. These conventional teachers were hired after undergoing an induction program and training (Nghia & Lee, 2019).

After analyzing the sentiments of the participants about their experiences of non-education graduates teaching in Higher Education Institutions, four (4) major themes emerged: 1. Dealing with diverse students, 2. Overloaded teaching loads, 3. Lack of Instructional Materials, and 4. Complying with Academic Requirements. The study confirmed that non-education graduates teaching in higher education had experienced challenges dealing with diverse students. One essential characteristic of a teacher is the ability to facilitate learning among diverse learners in a unique learning environment (Bayani & Guhao, 2017). Teachers must understand that learning not only means social activity but is also a unique personal practice that serves the learners' talents, interests, passion, and needs (Kin, Omar, Musa, & Ghouri, 2022). However, it is posited that working with diverse learners is difficult, especially in preparing beginning teachers to teach all types of learners (Andreasen, 2016). The participants of the

study confirmed their difficulty in handling diverse students since they needed to be trained in how to handle these students. Furthermore, teachers also need to consider the ethnicity, gender identity, culture, language abilities, and interests of the students. Diversity in the classroom exists not only among the students but may also be found through language and cultural differences among teachers and students (Malgapo & Ancheta, 2020). Sammy expressed his sentiments and said that, "I think the real challenge for a non-education graduate teacher at an HEI for me is the handling of students. I think your ability as a teacher is measured by creating a safe and conducive environment for your students to learn and grow in their chosen field. I have seen multiple occasions of some non-education graduates having a hard time handling students because they were not molded to become teachers during their college days."

A teaching career is considered rewarding but demanding work because it needs to work in extended hours and a heavy workload. The teaching profession involves different tasks that may interfere with teaching jobs, including administrative work-related tasks (Jomuad et al., 2021). The study revealed that an overloaded teaching load is experienced by the non-education graduates teaching in HEIs. The result confirmed that teachers are preoccupied and overloaded with duties and responsibilities. They are stressed and burdened because they were given many tasks. Aside from teaching loads, they were given additional work to perform. In the case of those teaching at the college level tasks include instruction, research, and extension (Tancinco, 2016). Moreover, as mentioned by the participants of this study, they were also given extracurricular tasks such as coaching, handling events, and attending school activities. Though these are added as extra jobs, they are still thankful because they learned from them. Marco expressed that, "Another thing is juggling teaching loads and extracurricular tasks as well as taking my masters, all at once." Marie also conveyed the same experience and said that, "I was able to handle having 25 units of teaching loads, extracurricular tasks such as coaching and handling events, as well as taking my master's degree at the same time because of the strategies I used."

The study also concluded that non-education graduates teaching in higher education observed the need for more instructional resources, which they believed may affect the students' learning. Quality education requires different learning resources such as textbooks, laboratory equipment, and materials. The well-designed learning resources and enough numbers of learning materials and equipment may lead to the improvement of student learning (Bayani & Guhao, 2017). However, a lack of teaching resources and for teaching is also found to be one of the factors that cause stress to teachers (Wakoli, 2013). This statement was agreed by Ricky as he said that, "Since BSIT is an output-based program, students also an advantage if they have their laptops. However, most of my students do not have this opportunity. During activities, some of my students have no device to use. They cannot also practice at home because of this." Marco also pointed the same sentiment, as he narrated that, "College resources in terms of laboratory equipment and materials are seriously lacking."

Lastly, non-education graduates teaching in higher education find complying with different academic requirements challenging. Writing syllabi, test questionnaires, tables of specifications, computing grades, and checking student outputs are some of the academic requirements they need to do, and learn how these are correctly done. Sheryl who is not a graduate of Teacher Education courses expressed that, "When you are a beginner to formal teaching, I think it is more challenging for a non-education graduate to prepare an outcome-based syllabus." Non-education graduates must be given the time to train on how academic requirements are written properly so that it will be manageable for them. Moreover, aside from the teaching tasks, they are also expected to perform multiple roles such as communicator, facilitator, counselor, disciplinarian, mentor, and surrogate parent, among others. These different tasks given to them may affect the teaching performance in the classroom (Go, et al., 2020). Karen also said that, "Difficulty in doing paper works. Especially creating TOS and TQ. That gave me my very first culture shock. I had to ask a colleague who is an education graduate for the specifics. I was caught off guard."

After analyzing the sentiments of non-education graduates teaching in higher education institutions about their coping mechanisms in the different challenges they encountered as non-education graduates teaching in HEIs, the following three themes were created, 1. Use of Technology-Driven and Creative Teaching Strategies, 2. Support from Peers, and 3. Time Management. To cope with the different challenges, non-education graduates have revealed what they need to do. One of them is to use technology-driven and creative teaching strategies. According Karen, "One of the strategies I

employed is to provide diversity in teaching styles to keep the students interested/excited and prevent boredom. Since varying learning activities and modifying them accordingly to increase the attentiveness and participation of students". It is important to note that teachers need to use various learning strategies and applications to help students awake and learn during classes. Teachers must enhance their ability to make instruction stimulating. If teachers can stimulate the classroom environment, it will motivate the students to learn and become interested in learning. A stimulating, creative classroom environment will benefit students and teachers (Bayani & Guhao, 2017).

Asking for help and peer support is a suitable coping mechanism to overcome challenges in teaching higher education. Ricky stated that, "I was not alone in my adjustments, though. It was easier to tackle everything when you have supportive and motivating colleagues with you. All I needed to do was ask the right questions."A teacher should not only depend on their ability, but they also need to look at how other teachers do their tasks, specifically in teaching. They can adapt strategies and techniques from their peers to cope with the challenges in the teaching profession. Non-education graduates can seek inspiration from other teachers and advice from them (Bayani & Guhao, 2017). Moreover, it is explained that beginning professionals only accumulate professional skills through a collection of facts. However, they learned through socializing in a community by working with other professionals or experts. It is explained that learning is most effective when the beginning teachers and novices are situated within the community of practice (Howard. 2010). These beginning and novice learners will later move from beginning or novice to expert because they are engaged in more dynamic and complex activities (Besar, 2018).

Lastly, time management is also found to help cope with the challenges of non-education graduates teaching in higher education. Marie narrated that, "I managed my time well despite living many lives at once. I always allot time for each task and make sure to follow a strict schedule." Teachers should focus on giving time to classroom instruction activities to help students acquire the right attitudes, knowledge, and skills. Further, teachers must practice good time management because it may show their passion and commitment to work (Olivo, 2021).

After analyzing the sentiments of non-education graduates teaching in higher education institutions about their insights as non-education graduates teaching in HEIs, the following three themes were created, 1. Grow Professionally, 2. See Students Succeed, and 3. Limit School Activities. In terms of the insights of non-education graduates teaching in higher education institutions, it is revealed that they desire to allow them to grow professionally. As expressed by Sheryl that, "Working in the academe despite not being an education graduate is a challenge worth taking if you are up for it. So, HEIs should also conduct capacity-building efforts to improve themselves as non-education graduate teachers in order to truly contribute to the learning and lives of your students." Giving them a chance to attend graduate study will help them equip them to teach in the academe. It is also beneficial when HEIs conduct capacity building to help the teacher be prepared and interactive. When there is adequate professional development, like the advancement of professional learning, there will be changes in teacher practices and improvements in student outcomes (Darling-Hammond, Hyler, & Gardner, 2017).

Also, to see students succeed in their chosen field is what the non-education graduates teach in higher education. Seeing their students succeed was fulfilling, meaning they could effectively teach them valuable lessons. Sammy narrated that, *"My desire as a teacher is to see my students become successful in their chosen field. I make this my motivation and it is my way to assess my teaching method if it is effective or not."* Teachers also feel that they are successful and effective when they can prepare the student for a world where they must interact with others in the community, adapt quickly to change, and where success will join together with student knowledge, attitude, and skills (Beteille & Evans, 2019).

Lastly, it is also the desire of non-education graduates to limit school activities. In this way, students will become focused on learning. Ricky believed that, "One cannot effectively learn many things. Hence, a semester should not be congested with too many activities and assignments. Put more emphasis on essential topics which could be the foundation for other learnings. "Not too light nor too heavy". Besides, students also have non-academic aspects of their lives." Also, giving students essential activities that are also needed for their growth. Giving appropriate extracurricular activities to students has a positive impact on academic achievement and overall positive school effect (Furda & Sheleski, 2019).

5.1.   Concluding Remarks

In this study, non-education graduates teaching in higher education institutions were asked about their experiences as teachers in HEIs. Their teaching career is very much affected by the various challenges that occur during their lives as teachers. The study revealed that these teachers had encountered different lived experiences explored and understood by everyone through an in-depth interview. The challenges shown in this study were difficulty in teaching diverse students, overloaded teaching loads, lack of instructional resources, and complying with academic requirements. The study also revealed some essential views on how non-education graduates could cope with their challenges. They believed that using technology-driven and creative teaching strategies can enhance learning, especially when students feel bored.

Further, when there is support from peers, including superiors and colleagues, they can overcome their difficulties during their entire life of teaching in the HEIs. Also, they need to manage their time effectively to overcome their challenges in working in the academe. The narratives of non-education graduates teaching in the HEIs revealed the desires of these teachers in teaching. For the non-education graduates teaching in the HEIs to be given opportunities to grow professionally will be a great privilege for them. This will help them strive to do more to see students succeed in their chosen profession, which is the most significant factor in imparting life lessons to their students. In addition, limiting school activities is also revealed as the desires or insights of the non-education graduates teaching in the academe. This will help students focus on learning, which will be helpful when they proceed to reality after graduation.

The result of the study re-affirmed the Situated Learning Theory that beginning teachers and novices are situated within the community of practice in which they experience different challenges. These beginning and novice learners will later move from beginning or novice to expert because they are engaged in more dynamic and complex activities. Moreover, when teachers are new, novices, or beginning in the learning space, they can learn from the expert in the working space. These experts are those individuals who know the subject matter to be learned. Further, involving novice professionals in authentic practice settings needs social interaction and collaboration within the community of practice.

5.2.   Recommendations

Based on the result and conclusion of the study, the following recommendations are suggested. Since the College is already conducting training and workshops on making syllabi, TOS, and test questionnaires, it is suggested that the College will conduct training on teaching strategies, specifically training on handling diverse students. Additionally, Higher Education Institutions may consider looking at the number of laboratory instruments, equipment, and apparatus since this adds to the students' direct purposeful experience. Moreover, an extensive peer collaboration is encouraged to allow non-education graduates to observe how education graduates conduct teaching and learning. Further, HEIs may consider upgrading teachers' education to increase faculty profile. This may include scholarships, seminars, training, workshops, etc. Limited school activities per semester are suggested. Focus only on essential activities that will also help improve teachers' and students' well-being. A further investigation will be considered using the result of the study. Other research designs may be utilized to explore further the experiences of non-education graduates teaching in HEIs. Exploratory factor analysis is also suggested by crafting a standardized research questionnaire for the specific topic under investigation since researchers have not found a research questionnaire for this study.

6.   Co-author's Contributions

The author was responsible for the study's conceptualization, data analysis, presentation, and interpretation. The co-author was responsible for data collection and editing.

7.   Acknowledgement

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