



Teachers' Best Practices: A Phenomenological Philosophy

Jonifer Q. Dultra

¹Cebu Normal University, Philippines

*Corresponding Author: Jonifer Q. Dultra



Article Info

Article history:

Received 21 July 2022

Received in revised form 20

August 2022

Accepted 23 August 2022

Keywords:

Theory of Teachers' Practices

Grounded Theory

Phenomenological Philosophy

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to explore the perceptions of teachers in the field in order to generate a theory from teachers' best practices. This qualitative study utilized a survey questionnaire and followed a Straussian grounded-theory design to guide the coding and collection of interview data to identify emerging categories and generate such theory. The researcher had collected data through interviews with 15 respondents who are regular/permanent secondary school teachers. A constant comparative analysis of the data were generated on teachers' best practices theory. This emergent theory states that the perception of teachers' practices will matter that there is great interest in educational leadership in the early part of the 21st century because of the widespread belief that the quality of leadership makes a significant difference to the school and student outcomes.

Introduction

The importance of teachers' best practices in school plays explicitly towards achieving the quality of education. One of the studies revealed that best practices can be utilized positively in the classroom, this gives impacts among learners by providing motivation to learn and promoting success in a global world (NC Teacher, 2006). Likewise, these practices will eventually of great help in managing and supervising teacher/school Leaders. Thus, curriculum, instruction, and school operation must be aligned with teachers' practices. In other words, this culture must be studied thoroughly because things like practices change so fast as the new generation changes. Many schools find the difficulty of how it manages considering the augmentation of millennials generation and the culture that the teachers' practices. There is a great interest in educational leadership in the early part of the 21st century because of the widespread belief that the quality of leadership makes a significant difference to the school and student outcomes."

However, to augment such gaps, there should be an intervention to encapsulate teachers from old practices to a more challenging and meaningful school environment in this present generation. Phenomenologically, this phenomenon will somehow create reforms that will adapt the 21st-century practices of teachers and achieve positively quality education.

Teaching and Learning Practices

Bryant (2003) argued that the anyone deemed to invent new knowledge or generate new ideas he or she should know what has already been invented. On the other end acknowledged that an initial literature review may be needed and can be used without precluding the researcher's open approach to data collection and theory generating. Likewise, the literature review shows that when we are confronted by a difficult and frustrating situation in our classroom, the tendency is for us to want to exert our authority rather than to examine the situation critically in the light of our democratic ideals or research-oriented learning theory. For teachers and school leaders, linkages between the Practice Principles and the Framework for Improving Student Outcomes (FISO) will be clear. Focusing on three FISO priority areas – Excellence in

teaching and learning, Positive climate for learning, and Community engagement in learning – teachers and school leaders can guide conversations with students, parents, and school communities about our values and our beliefs about teaching and learning. These conversations will help to build consensus around our moral purpose and mobilize partnerships in ways that improve learning (Department of Education and Training, Melbourne, 2018). It means that best practices for teachers by principle will create a positive environment from the school administration, teachers, and down to students and eventually contribute to society.

According to Hyland (2002), the so-called ‘crisis in professionalism’ in teaching and teacher education in recent years have turned on the epistemological undermining of professional knowledge and the problems surrounding the synthesis of theory and practice which underpins teacher performance. Hyland argued that teaching and learning in the field of professional development should not merely rely on providing technical support but should be welcoming among teaching professionals.

Elliott (1993) also argues that they represent a ‘production technology for commodifying professional learning for consumption and also operate as ‘an ideological device for eliminating value issues from the domain of professional practice and thereby subordinating them to political forms of control’.

Indeed, these developments and policies have resulted to the common misconceptions among some commentators as the ‘crisis in professionalism’ (Barnett, 1997; Bottery, 1998; Furlong, 2000). Thus, this crisis brought some revisions of rectifying professionalism strategies like the emerging of those reconstructions but not limited to 1) Reflective Practice and Research: Inspired by Schon’s work (1983,1987) there have been various attempts to reconstruct professional knowledge – not as theoretical or discipline-based – but as derived and constructed from the everyday judgments and experience of practitioners (Furlong & Maynard, 1995).

Correspondingly, Stenhouse (1975) posited that the so-called reflective practice model wherein the teacher itself serve as researcher is an inspiration that contributes to the vast valuable tool in the task of re-capturing professional autonomy. It means that the teachers are the main source of whatever benchmarking of best practices. They are the reasons of whatever changes in policy making decisions.

On the other end, Rowland (2000) found that the ability to inquire, to engage others in one’s inquiries, and to learn from them are the characteristics of the good teacher. This is a manifestation of being a teacher that considers a good researcher as well as a good student. Rowland further observed that research, teaching, and learning are not different events and activities.

There are some concepts of Aristotelian practical wisdom in professional studies that underlined the current policy studies which analyses the epistemological responses of higher education institutions to the forces of globalization and the emergence of the ‘knowledge economy’ (Barnett, 2000; Symes & MacIntyre, 2000). On the other hand, work-based learning strategies significantly attribute to the development of professional learning.

Definitely, even the most effective activities, programs and projects for professional developments among teaching personnel might surely neglect the emotions of teaching. Similarly, the tendency for professionalization discourses to be ‘devoid of talk about the moral nature of teaching...as if the moral dimensions of teaching were lost, forgotten about or...simply taken for granted’ (Fenstermacher, 1990, p.132). Carr (1996) observed that it is most worthy to consider that education and teaching are inherently moral enterprises.

Teachers' Best Practices their Motivations and Aspirations of Doing It

The participants shared their best practices and their motivation to do it and the reasons why they do it. Varied responses were surmounted upon by the teacher-participants. The following were the quotes and quotes of the participants and were subjected to coding and categorizing from word cloud generator software:

Participant A

Being a librarian in the school because I develop the library collections and services to suit the needs of the students.

I am motivated to perform my duty through my expertise and skills. On the other end, Participant A is actually holding a background of a librarian but performing a regular teaching loads and at the same time assigned as school librarian. It means that she is inspired being a librarian in everything she did in teaching career.

Participant B

I served as a division trainer for 3 consecutive years during School Based Training Program (SBTP), in cooperation with Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). In this training, teachers were gathered to discuss fellow teachers in order for them to share, reflect, and come-up better ideas on how things in teaching and learning be improved. Together with my fellows' science teachers from a different school, was gathered together every first Friday. Last Friday of the month we were having series of class observations (SCHOOL-BASED) and sessions with the presence of all school heads from diff. schools.

It motivated me to perform well by encouraging also everyone to still implement the said program in their class, even if the program ended already.

Participant C

The inductive method of teaching is to observe fact: students were more challenged to do the task.

Participant D

The best practice I consider is listening to the students' needs because every student is unique in their way.

It motivates me to do better to address the different bits of intelligence my students may show.

Participant E

Kolaboratibong pagkatuto- nagkakaroon ng pagkakataon ang bawat isa na makapagpapahayag ng kaalaman sa kapwa niya mag-aaral. Mas napapadali ang pagkatuto ng bawat isa sapagkat buhay ang pagtutulungan at pagkakaisa ng bawat mag-aaral. May kalayaan ang mag-aaral na makibahagi at makapag-ambag sa kani-kanilang pagkatuto.

Lalo akong ginaganahan at nauudyok ang pagsasanay sa kaalaman ng mga mag-aaral. Nakikita ko ang mabuti at epektibong resulta sa gawaing ito (It's a collaborative effort of learning to happen. It's an opportunity for each one to express knowledge to a fellow student. Each student learns more easily because each learner's work and unity are alive. The learner has the freedom to participate and contribute to their individual

learning. I'm getting more and more motivated to learn learn. I see good and effective results in this work).

Participant F

Instruction-CLT communicative language teaching in English SOP- Standard Operational Procedure or English only policy during class interaction. Usage of drills, differentiated Instruction to tap the multiple intelligences (MI) of the students.

- School Operation –Facilitator, Division of work, Consultation

In instruction, it enables me to address the needs of my students according to their learning styles and intelligence. As per recorded: if possible much better if we will have used ICT and multimedia tools to improve the instructional way of teaching.

-In school operation, it lessens my work as a guidance coordinator for there are people whom I can refer to ... less work but more productive.

Participant G

Cooperative Teaching/Peer Group Teaching It caters to concrete experiential learning Based on the results observed. The learning is lasting the students experience the real input.

Participant H

Discovery Method- Students will learn if the lesson you what them to learn is not being fed but they unfold it through experimentations. They learn it by doing.

Students show interest and they enjoy doing experiments and unfold each lesson by themselves makes me motivated and prepares more activities for them.

Participant I

Importing classroom discipline before starting the discussion. Preparing students' activities enhancing students' participation. Recognizing the efforts made by the students. Be open-minded to whatever students' suggestions.

Teaching is a noble profession thus, we must impart our knowledge to our students which can help them in achieving their goals in life. Teachers are always part of their life whether they are successful or not. It is our responsibility to touch their lives heartily and sincerely ensuring them a better and more responsible person.

Participant J

Teaching my students to embrace the words of God through this, I believe that good things will follow.

Observing my students' behavior made me feel happy knowing that they let me touches their hearts. Minds may forget but not their hearts.

Participant K

Implementation: Curriculum, Instruction, teacher development, and assessment. Demonstrate instructional balance in learning and writing instruction. Maintain effective classroom management.

Engage them in every activity. Help them improve in every lesson taken. Give them independence especially in doing an individual activity. Inspire always a learner and involve them in different activities.

Actual use of real tools in TLE so that learners will be guided and discover by themselves.

Participant L

Always have activities (beadwork/seatwork) every after my discussion. Encourage students' participation.

I was inspired by my students especially the less fortunate ones, that I have to do my best in imparting knowledge to them so that they will become successful and improve their ways of living and in the end, I would be very happy knowing that I was able to contribute to their Achievement.

Participant M

Classroom Management. The practice of using varied teaching techniques to address individual learning styles. Integration of subject matter in other fields. Use of Assessment tools to measure learning outcomes.

Evidence of performance on the learners. Students are well-motivated to learn the ideas.

Participant N

Imposed proper management to the students. Start the class with prayer. Attendance checks and monitors the correct arrangement of seats and cleanliness of the classroom for conducive learning. Apply varied strategies in teaching.

...to perform well due to the active participation of the students. Good outcomes are gained.

Participant O

Classroom Management- maganda ang kinalalabasan ng iyong pagtuturo at pagkatuto ng iyong mag aaral. Naging maganda ang daloy ng iyong diskasyon ... kaya inaasahan rin na maganda ang kanilang partisipasyon sa klase.

Free from stress- if you are free from stress you can always handle your class-friendly and mother care. And your way of teaching is always best for your students. Sa pamamagitan nito makukuha mo pa ang kanilang loob.

The Concept of Active Learning

This study was designed to understand the lived experiences of teachers' best practices. By principle, active learning is not spoon-feeding meaning not passive. It comes from the Latin word *activus* which means to drive and do. It is a facilitation of learning. In other words, it is a student-centered approach. Learning theories like pragmatism, constructivism, cooperative learning, and the like teachers are considered a facilitator of learning. Vygotsky (1985) states that "the role of the teacher is not a content provider but rather facilitates learning. It means that there are many theories to support this principle of active learning in which a kind of learning environment entails many different perspectives in terms of belief and culture. This belief and culture is relevant to active learning just like participant J, as her way of teaching and responded accordingly "I want my students to embrace the words of God through this, I

believe that good things will follow and by observing my students behavior it made me feel happy knowing that they let me touches their hearts. Minds may forget but not their hearts”. Carr (1996) observed that education and teaching are inherently moral enterprises. Another participant responded, participant E (PE):

(Kolaboratibong pagkatuto- nagkakaroon ng pagkakataon ang bawat isa na makapagpapahayag ng kaalaman sa kapwa niya mag-aaral. Mas napapadali ang pagkatuto ng bawat isa sapagkat buhay ang pagtutulungan at pagkakaisa ng bawat mag-aaral. May kalayaan ang mag-aaral na makibahagi at makapag-ambag sa kani-kanilang pagkatuto. Lalo akong ginaganahan at nauudyok ang pagsasanay sa kaalaman ng mga mag-aaral. Nakikita ko ang mabuti at epektibong resulta sa gawaing ito (It's a collaborative learning--it's an opportunity for each one to express knowledge to a fellow student. Each learns more easily because each learner's work and unity are alive. The learner has the freedom to participate and contribute to their individual learning. I'm getting more and more motivated to learn learn. I see good and effective results in this work). PF) also responded that it enables me to address the needs of my students according to their learning styles and intelligence then (PC) also noted inductively that the Students are more challenge to do the task. While participant G and H shared almost the same perception and jotted, “Cooperative Teaching/Peer Group Teaching caters concrete experiential learning and based on the results observed, the learning is lasting and the students experience the real input such discovery method – students will learn if the lesson you want them to learn is not being fed but they unfold it through experimentations they learn it by doing”.

The Concept of 21st Century Generation

Adopting a 21st-century curriculum should blend knowledge, thinking, innovation skills, media, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) literacy, and real-life experience in the context of core academic subjects. To achieve authentic learning that is demanded in the 21st century, students engage in the learning environment effectively and develop 21st-century skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration. Thus, the school curriculum adapts such reform for the sake of the learners. In this manner, learners will have the necessary knowledge and life skills and eventually be prepared for their future careers.

Participant K spoke on her side during the TLE class and said: “it is better if the actual use of real tools in TLE so that learners will be guided and discover by themselves”. Preparing our students for life skills like in TLE subject (Technology and Livelihood Education) needs practical and realistic knowledge that can be acquired thru the use of actual tools. Another participant (PF) spoke in her English class that:

“if possible much better if we will have to use of ICT and multimedia tools to improve the instructional way of teaching”.

This idea is something to realize knowing that there are as many as a school doesn't have facilities to prepare students for their future per the principle of 21st-century learners.

The Concept of Professionalism

By definition, the term refers to skill, good judgment, and polite behavior. It is the standard practice among professionals (Encyclopedia Britannica). Participant A revealed that:

“being a librarian in the school, I develop the library collections and services to suit the needs of the students and I am motivated to perform my duty through my expertise and skills”.

In this way, the professional has been trained well and displays professionalism. Her expertise and skills make her job more viable. She then makes a sense of being skillful in her field of expertise. However, professionalism skills may not be defined in a manner of good judgment without instilling polite behavior.

Another participant (PB) noted that:

“I served as division trainer for 3 consecutive years during SBTP, in cooperation with JICA. Together with my fellows' science teachers from a different school, was gathered together every first Friday. Last Friday of the month we were having series of class observations (SCHOOL-BASED) and sessions with the presence of all school heads from diff. schools.

It motivated me to perform well by encouraging also everyone to still implement the said program in their class, even if the program ended already”.

Her encouragement will eventually promote the continuity of the program.

The Concept of Learning – Learner Environment (LLE)

Learning is gaining knowledge whereby the learner the one who acquired knowledge. This is a two-way idea wherein learning and learner are inseparable otherwise no learner without learning but simply a potential learner. It means that, because you are a learner then you are learning. But then again, participant D gave her notification that “the best practice I consider is listening to the student needs because every student is unique in their way, and that it motivates me to do better to address the different bits of intelligence of my students may show”. In this manner, her way of addressing knowledge to the learners creates a positive environment considering that every child needs not struggle with difficulties from others. It means that there is no traffic to learning.

A smooth flow of learning traffic would somehow result in a friendly environment in school. Thus, the pressure can't penetrate learning current and will initiate learners to perform well and everything will follow from the learners to the teachers and from the teachers to the school leader. This is something that a well manages class is also a well-managed school. In terms of classroom management, another participant (PL) discloses that “always have activities (beadwork/seatwork) every after my discussion, encourage students participation. I was inspired by my students especially the less fortunate ones, that I have to do my best in imparting knowledge to them so that they will become successful and improve their ways of living and in the end, I would be very happy knowing that I was able to contribute to their achievement”.

Likewise, participant, I jotted that:

“importing classroom discipline before starting the discussion. Preparing students' activities enhancing students' participation. Recognizing the efforts made by the students. Be open-minded on whatever students' suggestions”. She further elaborated that “teaching is a noble profession thus, we must impart our knowledge to our students which can help them in achieving their goals in life”. “Teachers are always part of their life whether they are successful or not. It is our responsibility to touch their lives heartily and sincerely ensuring them a better and responsible person”.

This kind of learning-learner environment will put learning to the real learner. These are the views of classroom management drawn from the following participants:

PM: Classroom Management. The practice of using varied teaching techniques to address individual learning styles. Integration of subject matter in other fields. Use of Assessment tools to measure learning outcomes.

Evidence of performance on the learners. Students are well-motivated to learn the ideas.

PN: Imposed proper management to the students. Start the class with prayer. Attendance checks and monitors the correct arrangement of seats and cleanliness of the classroom for conducive learning. Apply varied strategies in teaching.

...to perform well due to the active participation of the students. Good outcomes are gained.

PO: Classroom Management- maganda ang kinalalabasan ng iyong pagtuturo at pagkatuto ng iyong mag aaral. Naging maganda ang daloy ng iyong diskasyon ... kaya inaasahan rin na maganda ang kanilang partisipasyon sa klase.

Free from stress- if you are free from stress you can always handle your class-friendly and mother care. And your way of teaching is always best for your students. Sa pamamagitan nito makukuha mo pa ang kanilang loob.

Concept 1. Active Learning

PE ...nagkakaroon ng pagkakataon ang bawat isa na makapagpapahayag ng kaalaman. Nakikita ko ang mabuti at epektibong resulta sa gawaing ito. (each has the opportunity to express knowledge and I see good and effective results in this work).

PF ... their learning styles and intelligence.

PC ... Students are more challenge to do the task inductively.

PG and PH ... Cooperative Teaching/Peer Group Teaching caters to concrete experiential learning and based on the results observed, the learning is lasting and the students experience the real input such as discovery method – students will learn if the lesson you want them to learn is not being fed but they unfold it through experimentations they learn it by doing.

Proposition 1: Teachers will perform very well as they see the positive learning outcome.

Hypothesis 1: Theoretical categories of teachers' practices that emerged from best practices of teachers in the 21st-century generation and the principle of active learning.

Concept 2. 21st Century Generation

PK ... it is better if the actual use of real tools in TLE so that learners will be guided and discover by themselves.

PF ... if possible much better if we will have to use ICT and multimedia tools to improve the instructional way of teaching.

Proposition 2: Teachers will perform very well as they see the ICT as part of their teaching.

Hypothesis 2: If the learning process is done with technology, then teachers will perform it best.

Concept 3: Professionalism

PA ... being a librarian, I develop the library collections and services to suit the needs of the students and I am motivated to perform my duty through my expertise and skills.

PB ... I served as division trainer for 3 consecutive years during SBTP, in cooperation with JICA. Together with my fellows' science teachers from a different school, were gathered together every first Friday. Last Friday of the month we were having series of class observations (SCHOOL-BASED) and sessions with the presence of all school heads from diff. schools. It motivated me to perform well by encouraging also everyone to still implement the said program in their class, even if the program ended already.

Hypothesis 3: If the skills and expertise of a trained teacher in the school are recognized and be the practices among the schools, then both teachers and students will perform very well.

Proposition 3: Skills and expertise of a trained teacher become a performance indicator of students' achievement.

Hypothesis 3: Theoretical categories of teachers' skills and expertise in the exercise of their duty as professionals.

Concept 4: Learning – Learner Environment (LLE)

PD ... listening to the student's needs because every student is unique in their way and that it motivates me to do better to address the different bits of intelligence of my students.

PL ... I always have activities (beadwork/seatwork) every after my discussion, encourage students' participation. I was inspired by my students especially the less fortunate ones, that I have to do my best in imparting knowledge to them so that they will become successful and improve their ways of living and in the end, I would be very happy knowing that I was able to contribute to their achievement.

PI ... importing classroom discipline before starting the discussion. Preparing students' activities enhancing students' participation. Recognizing the efforts made by the students. Be open-minded to whatever students' suggestions.

PM ... Practice using varied teaching techniques to address individual learning styles. Integration of subject matter in another field. Use of Assessment tools to measure learning outcomes. Evidence of performance on the learners. Students are well-motivated to learn the ideas.

PN ...Imposed proper management to the students. Start the class with prayer. Attendance checks and monitors the correct arrangement of seats and cleanliness of the classroom for conducive learning. Apply varied strategies in teaching.

...to perform well due to the active participation of the students. Good outcomes are gained.

PO ... "maganda ang kinalalabasan ng iyong pagtuturo at pagkatuto ng iyong mag aaral. Naging maganda ang daloy ng iyong diskasyon ... kaya inaasahan rin na maganda ang kanilang partisipasyon sa klase. If you are free from stress you can always handle your class friendly and mother care. And your way of teaching is always best for your students. Sa pamamagitan nito makukuha mo pa ang kanilang loob" (experienced teacher will have a better edge among learners when it comes to teaching and learning and it follows a better participation towards the students. If you are free from stress, you can always handle your class friendly and motherly care. Thus, your way of teaching is always best for your students and therefore, you will have the full trust and even getting them motivated).

Hypothesis 3: Classroom management is associated with learners' performance.

Proposition 3: A well manage classroom produces a highly conducive learning environment and develops learners that will perform very well.

Hypothesis 4: Theoretical categories on teachers' command responsibilities and create a meaningful learning environment.

Conclusion

Teachers' Best Practices is featured from the following: Best practices will happen if teachers perceive that good things will follow, technology-driven, and life skills experience (concept 1,2). It is worthwhile for the teacher to perform well when learning outcomes show a meaningful result. (concept 1,2) School practices vary significantly perception of teachers' skills and expertise. Best practices that will improve learning – learner relationship requires a high standard of professionalism (Concept 2,3). Thus, it is concluded that Teachers' Best Practices will happen when the teacher realized the importance of technology, life skills, and professionalism.

References

- Barnett, R. (1997). *Higher education: A critical business*. McGraw-Hill Education (UK).
- Barnett, R. (2000). University knowledge in an age of supercomplexity. *Higher education*, 40(4), 409-422.
- Bottery, M. (2013). *Professionals and policy: Management strategy in a competitive world*. Routledge.
- Bryant, M. T. (2003). *The portable dissertation advisor*. Corwin Press.
- Carr, D. (1994). Educational enquiry and professional knowledge: towards a Copernican revolution. *Educational Studies*, 20(1), 33-52.
- Carr, D. (1996). *The moral role of the teacher*. Scottish Consultative Council on the Curriculum.
- Carr, W., & Kemmis, S. (1986). *Becoming Critical: Education, Knowledge and Action Research* (Lewes, Sussex: Falmer).
- Elliott, J. (Ed.). (2011). *Reconstructing teacher education* (Vol. 221). Routledge.
- Fenstermacher, G. D. (1990). Some moral considerations on teaching as a profession. philpapers.org
- Furlong, J. (2000). Intuition and the crisis in teacher professionalism. *The intuitive practitioner: On the value of not always knowing what one is doing*, 15-31.
- Furlong, J., & Maynard, T. (2012). *Mentoring student teachers: The growth of professional knowledge*. Routledge.
- Humphreys, M., & Hyland, T. (2002). Theory, Practice and Performance in Teaching: professionalism, intuition, and jazz. *Educational Studies*, 28(1), 5-15.
- McIntyre, J., & Symes, C. (Eds.). (2000). *Working knowledge: The new vocationalism and higher education*. Society for Research Into Higher Education & Open University Press.
- Rowland, S. (2000). Healthy marriage is on the rocks. *Times Higher Education Supplement*, 28-29.

- Schon, D. (1983). *The Reflective Practitioner* (Neww York, Basic Books). *SchonThe Reflective Practitioner*1983.
- Schön, D. A. (1987). *Educating the reflective practitioner: Toward a new design for teaching and learning in the professions*. Jossey-Bass.
- Stenhouse, L. (1975). An introduction to curriculum research and development. archives.umc.edu.dz
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1966). Igra i ee rol'v psikhicheskom razvitii rebenka. *Voprosy psikhologii*, 6, 62-76.