

Teaching Non-Major Subjects: A Challenged to Senior High School Teachers

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Abstract: The study aimed to determine the real-life experiences of selective senior high school teachers of Morong National High School who are teaching outside the area of their specialization. The feelings while teaching unfamiliar subjects, the support they got upon teaching, the challenges their encountered and, the coping solutions they applied.

The study employed a descriptive- narrative method of research. Respondents of the study were the selected eight (8) senior high school teachers of Morong National High School in the district of Morong province of Rizal. Intending to get the most appropriate result of the study, subjects of the study were the teachers who are currently teaching non-major subjects for the first quarter of S.Y. 2019 – 2020.

Furthermore, the result of the study shows that challenges are part of the development and changes that happened. Through challenges, different problems and difficulties arises were overcome. It enhances the capabilities and skills in every aspect once it was surpassed. Through this, the teacher must be equipped with different strategies and techniques to address the problem that arises in the field of teaching.

Keywords: *Teaching Non-major Subject, Senior High School Teacher, Challenges, Support, Coping Solution*

Introduction – Teaching is a profession that requires love, passion and, dedication. It is considered the noblest profession of all. Teachers should exhibit a jack of all trade attitudes to perform their duties and responsibilities. Different methods and strategies were applied to attain the learning and cope with the educational system. The implementation of the K to 12 Program of the Department of Education (DepEd) opens lots of opportunities for educators and learners as well. Despite it, different problems and challenges arise to devise the program. Few of it is the out-of-field teaching and teaching non-major subjects.

Under Section 2 of the Republic Act no. 10533 also known as An Act Enhancing the Philippine Basic Education System by Strengthening its Curriculum and Increasing the Number of Years for basic education, appropriating funds therefor and other purpose states;

The state shall establish, maintain and support a complete, adequate, and integrated system of education relevant to the needs of the people, the country, and society-at-large.

a.) Allow every student to receive a quality education that is globally competitive based on a pedagogically sound curriculum that is at par with international standards;

b.) Broaden the goals of high school education for college preparation, vocational and technical career opportunities as well as creative arts, sports, and entrepreneurial employment in a rapidly changing and increasingly globalized environment; and

c.) Make education learner-oriented and responsive to the needs, cognitive and cultural capacity, circumstances, and diversity of learners, schools, and communities through the appropriate languages of teaching and learning, including mother tongue as a learning resource.

In Morong National High School, there are unequal numbers of teachers to the number of subjects taught and students, wherein some teachers were assigned to teach a subject outside the area of their expertise. In the end, the study sought to determine the feelings, challenges, support, and coping solutions dealt with by the teachers.

This reveals that teachers played a big part in the academic achievements of the students. The experiences of teachers while teaching non-major subjects is one of contributing factors to be considered in the achievement ranking of the schools. Questioning the efficiency and effectiveness of the impart knowledge and skills of

teachers while teaching outside the area of their specialization gave stress to the said teachers.

As included in Section 16 of the Education Act of 1982, every teacher shall;

1.) Perform his duties to the school by discharging his responsibilities following the philosophy, goals, and objectives of the school.

2.) Be accountable for the efficient and effective attainment of specified learning objectives in the pursuance of national development goals within the limits of available school resources.

In this regard, teachers as the giver of learning to the students should be competitive in every task assigned to them. Enhance the performance of the learners in different areas and aspects of life. With the following factors to be considered teachers who teach non-major or out-of-field find ways or solutions to the difficulties that might be encountered or arises.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In education, teaching is one of the pillars to the learning of the student, not only in academics but also in moral, spiritual, and psychological aspects of self. It is one of the aspects of education that is a very humanistic profession and professional activity constructed by qualifications, standards, and accountability in the utmost feeling of understanding.

Also, teachers are responsible for their students' learning. They need to fill out what students need to know. However, some of them teach a subject that is outside the area of their expertise/ mastery. In the present situation, some of the teachers are handling a subject that is not their specialization. This phenomenon considered as out-of-field teaching, where teachers are placed in teaching positions in which they have to teach subjects outside their field of qualification or expertise, appears in public schools as well as independent schools. This happens either because of the managerial decision by the principal and the school management team or because of governmental recruitment and placement procedures as stated by Du Plessis (2015).

Further studies by Caldis (2017), teaching out-of-field is a situation many teachers experienced throughout their career; particularly those entering the

profession. Not only does teaching out-of-field disrupt the integrity of a subject, it inevitably results in heightened levels of student disengagement, lower than anticipated achievement of student learning outcomes, and an increasing lack of confidence amongst teachers about their ability to teach effectively.

Viewing student achievement as evidence of learning, and linking students learning to the effective or successful teacher, is one way of defining quality education. This approach differs from that which identifies the quality teacher with the so-called "good teacher"- one who upholds the standards and norms of the profession. Good teaching means that the content taught accords with disciplinary standards of adequacy and completeness and the methods employed are age-appropriate, morally defensible, and undertaken to enhance the learner's competence concerning content. (Zuzovsky 2009).

RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

1. What are the real-life experiences of teachers in teaching the non-major subjects in terms of;
 - 1.1 feelings
 - 1.2 support
 - 1.3 challenges and;
 - 1.4 coping solutions?
2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of teaching a non-major subject?
3. What are the strength and weaknesses of teaching the non-major subject as perceived by the respondents?

METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design/ Method

The study employed a Descriptive- narrative method of research. This design describes the lives of individuals, the collection of individual stories of their experiences, and a discussion of the meaning of those experiences.

B. Participants and Sampling

The respondents of the study were the selected eight (8) senior high school teachers of Morong National High School in the district of Morong province of Rizal For School Year 2019-2020. Each respondent was

chosen using random sampling techniques among the teachers who were teaching non-major subjects. The subjects of the study were teachers who were teaching different subjects beyond their expertise and specialization.

The study administered a 15-30 minutes interview with the concerned teachers. The common theme of the responses was collected, interpreted, and discussed through narratives. In the end, lived experiences, challenges encountered, coping solutions, as well as the advantages and disadvantages of teaching non-major subjects, were revealed.

C. Data Collection and Tools

To collect data on the above-mentioned details, qualitative interviews were conducted. Open-ended questions were formulated and used to ensure the smooth flow of the study. The data during the interview were recorded and analyzed, looking for repeated themes using the constant comparison method and conceptual categories derived from the discussion. The results of the focus group discussion were used to support the findings of the study and to draw a conclusion from it.

D. Data Analysis

For the analysis and interpretation of the lived experiences of teachers teaching Non-major, a challenge encountered by the senior high school teachers, revealed the advantages and disadvantages of the said educational practice as well as the strength and weaknesses of the said practice, the qualitative discussion was administered.

RESULTS, DISCUSSION, AND IMPLICATION

1. Real-life Experiences of the Teacher Respondents on;

A. Feelings of Teachers Teaching Non-major

Different feelings were felt by the respondents when they are teaching non-major subjects. Some felt bad and sad, while the others are disappointed and nervous yet some felt excited.

According to Teacher B, *"I'm excited at first, knowing that they give me a major subject and I feel that the administration trust me that much."* A positive

response on the practice of teaching non-major gives a sense of excitement to some teachers. Killion, J., & Harrison, C. (2007) said that system leaders may use taking leads to advocate a teaching program focused on school. Giving personal support and team planning will help co-teachers to build an effective learning agreement.

On the contrary, many respondents' responded negatively upon giving teaching loadout from their specialization.

Teacher D, *"Hesitant and sad, but it's part of the job so I need to take the risk."*

Teacher F, *"Sad and a little bit of disappointment, because the subject is too far from my major."*

Teacher G, *"I felt sad upon receiving my teaching load, only to find out that I need to teach other subjects."*

It implies from the responses of the respondents that their feeling toward the practice of teaching non-major created different emotions on what they felt.

B. Support/ Assistance get by the Teachers Teaching Non-major

It reveals that teachers are given personal-emotional support by their co-teachers. The respondents also said that receiving this kind of support helps them in reducing their stress and worries about teaching what they do not have enough knowledge of.

Teacher A, *"Our key teacher in the department always provide me PowerPoint presentations, DLLs is already prepared and we never I find the topic difficult they are willing to assist me."*

Teacher F, *"Key teachers assist me in my lesson and they provide me ready-made quizzes and activities."*

Sympathy is not only good in it, but also motivates us to comfort those who suffer, then, and another person sympathizes, it is good for all the parties involved. It shows that the support provided to them is acceptable and a helpful way of building confidence in doing tasks.

Willis, J., & Willis, D. (2013) said that giving task support to the new teachers help them to have enough confidence in doing their lesson plans, assignments, etc. one of the reasons why this kind of support is important because it surely assists the teachers

o what to do when encountering such problems and difficulties in doing tasks.

C. Challenges Encountered by the Respondents while Teaching Non-major Subject(s)

It is said that challenges are part of the development and changes that happened. Through challenges, different problems and difficulties arises were overcome. It enhances the capabilities and skills in every aspect once it was surpassed.

According to Teacher A, “The greatest challenges that I encountered when teaching non-major subjects are those times that I am not familiar with the topic or content of the lesson, especially when the learners asked me some questioned and I doubt myself if I gave the precise answer. I approached my department chairman and asked for assistance.”

As revealed in the data of Schools and Staffing Surveys (SASS), indicate that out-of-field teaching in core subjects is common in both public and private high schools in the United States. But out-of-field teaching is not due to a lack of basic training on the part of the teachers.

It shows that teachers should be equipped with different strategies and techniques in teaching. Teachers should portray as facilitators of learning in every aspect.

Teacher B, “Honestly, I was challenged and sometimes questioned my teaching methodologies if I delivered my lessons effectively and efficiently. One of the hardest parts for me is when almost 75% of my students failed on our first quiz. Is it negligence on my teaching strategies applied or is the deliberation of the teacher of the lesson itself?”

With the increased demands for accountability in line with performance standards and with the growing demand for evidence-based policymaking, students' achievements are considered an accurate measure of effectiveness and have become a basis for a value-added teacher assessment system (Braun, 2005).

Teacher E, “being ready or prepared for your lesson is not enough, sometimes I still feel lost and numb

if I gave my 100% on the lesson proper, I feel challenged and anxious at the same time.”

Several studies show a positive relationship between teachers' preparation in the subject matter they later teach and student achievement, while others have less unequivocal results (Darling- Hammond, 2000). It insinuates that preparation on the part of the teacher was a contributing factor in delivering the lesson.

D. Coping Solution Established by the Teacher Respondents

The teacher provides a platform for every learner to acquire the required knowledge and skills. Teachers should know the various needs of students and their educational institutions. Through this, the teacher must be equipped with different strategies and techniques to address the problem that arises in the field of teaching.

According to Teacher A, “I plan ahead of time and I make sure that I studied the lessons or topic a week before. I also used new technologies to assist me and help me while delivering the lessons.”

The educational process experiences a tremendous impact due to the proliferation of technology. Through this teaching, non-major find its partner in assisting the needs and demands of the teachers.

On the other hand, the assistant coming from the co-teacher is one of the coping solutions that best help the respondents. Good relationships and communication were established among the parties. As Teacher G mentioned, “Well I asked for the help of my co-teachers and I study the lesson ahead of time.” Also, Teacher C, “I used lots of references for imparting and expressing the lesson easier. I also asked for the assistance of the co-teachers.”

Based on the journal article published by Arkansas State University (2017), research suggests that today's teachers and school administrators are more interested in teacher collaboration than the previous generation. The proponents of teacher collaboration believed that teachers working together have a positive impact on each other and contribute naturally to school improvement.

2. The Advantages and Disadvantages of Teaching Non-major Subject

Teaching Non-major has lots of advantages and disadvantages. According to Linda Hobbs (2015), despite no consistent relationship between student achievement and teacher qualification, research has shown that highly effective teachers have a deep

understanding of the subject they teach. They value both the subject and students engaging with the subject at a deep level. out-of-field teachers can be concerned about the negative impact their teaching might have on student learning, such as lower achievement scores. They have also shown concern that they are unable to demonstrate content is relevant to everyday life.

Table 1
The Advantages and Disadvantages of Teaching Non-major Subject as Perceived By the Respondents

Respondents	Advantages	Disadvantages
Teacher A	One of the advantages that I see, maybe it helps us to grow and learn more.	Maybe the difficulties on the part of teachers especially teaching which is too far from our specialization.
Teacher B	Additional learning and experiences can help me grow professionally.	You need to exert extra efforts and be creative and prepared at all times
Teacher C	The advantage of teaching non-major subject is helping us to grow more as a teacher.	One of the disadvantages of this practice is, maybe the insufficient learning materials from the department itself.
Teacher D	Maybe learning new ideas and knowledge.	Maybe the academic performance of the students might be affected.
Teacher E	Learning new things and go beyond your comfort zone.	I aged faster than usual because of stress and expectations.
Teacher F	Teaching non-major is enjoyable if you just look for its positive side.	Time-consuming, and extra effort to achieve the target lessons.
Teacher G	It helps me to grow as a teacher	So many to mention, but if it is the stress that it brought to me.
Teacher H	I think it helps us grow and explore our capabilities as a teacher.	Time-consuming, especially during the preparation of the lessons.

It can gleam on the table the different responses of the respondents in the disadvantages and disadvantages of teaching the non-major subject. It includes their perception based on the personal experiences of the respondents while doing the practice.

On the statement given by one of the school principals in San Fernando, Pampanga Fe Rosalinda R. Caylao (2015), “as a public secondary principal for almost five years, it pains me to see that teachers are being hired to teach not their subject of specialization.”

Besides “while it is true that principals are supposed to be instructional leaders, we cannot deny the fact that we

have to exert double effort time in teaching our teachers the content, competencies, innovative teaching strategies, assessment, and everything there is to learn in a particular subject especially for out-of-field teachers.

3. The Strength and Weaknesses of Teaching Non-major Subject as Perceived by the Respondents

Every teacher has their strength and weaknesses to consider even in teaching their specialized subject or not. From every weakness that arises strength should be double, though the teaching capabilities were tested. One of the great strengths of a teacher was a good manager of skills and learning in the classroom. While weaknesses

of a teacher vary in the behavior of the students and their ability to imply the knowledge.

Table 2
The Strength and Weaknesses of Teaching Non-major Subject as Perceived by the Respondents

Respondents	Strengths	Weaknesses
Teacher A	Teachers gain more experiences and knowledge that might help them to grow professionally.	Maybe it developed trauma on the part of teachers especially if you are teaching different subjects every semester.
Teacher B	One of the strengths of teaching non-major subjects it opens new opportunities to learn and improve yourself.	I lost my focus and neglected to give my best in teaching.
Teacher C	It broadens our capabilities and skill as we grow professionally.	Not enough learning resources and teaching force for specific areas especially in Filipino Department.
Teacher D	It opens opportunities for educators to try new things.	It requires time and effort in preparing the lessons, and I found it as one of the burdens on the part of the teachers.
Teacher E	Unlocked difficulties and helps to grow professionally.	It takes lots of time and effort especially in mastering the lessons and topic.
Teacher F	Broaden the skills and develop our capabilities to teach more subjects.	Teachers were afraid to take new challenges for it requires more time and effort than usual.
Teacher G	It helps us to grow professionally.	Time-consuming.
Teacher H	It helps us to be decisive and creative.	Time-consuming also.

The table revealed the different perceptions of the respondents on the strength and weaknesses that they experienced in teaching the non-major subject. Through their experiences, and identified weaknesses the respondent find their ways to address their weaknesses and convert them into their strength. Those challenges and trials help them to become a better teacher.

Ingersoll (2000) implies in his article in ERIC Digest that the phenomenon of out-of-field teaching – teachers teaching subjects for which have little education or training – has long been a crucial but relatively unrecognized problem in schools. It is a crucial issue because highly qualified teachers may in actuality become highly unqualified if they are assigned to teach subjects for which they have little training or education.

Fulgado (2020) in her paper reiterates that there are problems encountered by the non-specialists in delivering their lessons and they make adjustments to

cope with the challenge in teaching the subjects that are not their area of specialization, thus they are flexible in teaching the mismatched subjects.

It implies that even a teacher is qualified to teach but the subject is not suited to its specialty, problems might arise and can affect teachers, mentally, physically, and emotionally.

CONCLUSION

From the data gathered the following conclusion was drawn;

1. Teaching a Non-major subject is one of the unaddressed problems in the educational system. It needs support and assistance from the school administration and other faculty members to adjust to the teaching situation they encountered. It challenged the capabilities, skills, and determination of the teacher to perform their

duties and responsibilities. The role of modern technologies plays a vital part in the coping solution of the teachers to address certain problems that arise upon teaching outside their specialization.

2. Teaching Non-major subject opens opportunities to grow professionally as one of its advantages, and exert more time and effort to deliver the lesson based on the needs of the learners indicated in the curriculum as its disadvantages.

3. Teacher broaden their capabilities and exposed to new skills in the teaching profession as one of the strengths of teaching Non-major, while it affects the physical, mental and emotional aspect of a teacher teaching the non-major subject as its weaknesses.

RECOMMENDATION

The following recommendations were identified for the future purposes and development of the study.

1. Educators need to strengthen their identities as professionals. Provide quality instructions and prepared teachers in different aspects as integral to teaching quality and student learning

2. Empowered teachers through seminars and training for out-of-field teachers on the content and pedagogy to broaden skills and capabilities.

3. Clear policies and guidelines for professional development opportunities that promote collaboration in both public and private schools.

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