

Pedagogical practices, challenges and coping strategies of non-education course teachers

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ABSTRACT

This study describes the pedagogical practices, challenges, and coping strategies of non-education graduate teachers in the Balbalan District, Kalinga. A structured Likert-scale questionnaire was used to collect data from 29 respondents from seven different educational institutions using a descriptive-comparative quantitative approach. Albert Bandura's Teacher Self-Efficacy Theory serves as the foundation for this study, which looks at how teachers without formal pedagogical training operate in the classroom. The results show that these teachers use a variety of pedagogical approaches to a very high degree, with traditional lecture-discussions and textbook-based instruction being the most common, even if they lack official training. Regardless of age, sex, experience, or level of education, statistical analysis using the Mann-Whitney U and Kruskal-Wallis tests revealed no significant variations in teaching approaches. However, a lack of formal pedagogical preparation and an abundance of teaching responsibilities are the main obstacles that teachers face. Respondents regularly use proactive coping strategies, such as self-study, improvising resources, and looking for mentorship from senior colleagues, to lessen these obstacles. Systemic loads and pedagogical gaps prevent non-education graduates from being as effective as they could be, despite their high resilience and instructional flexibility. To assist the development of these educators' professional identities and long-term retention, the district may consider formalizing mentorship programs, implementing targeted induction programs for non-education graduates, and reviewing administrative workloads.

Keywords: Pedagogical practices, non-education graduates, teacher self-efficacy, coping mechanisms, Balbalan District.

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INTRODUCTION

Most people agree that good teaching is essential to a high-quality education. Student learning results are greatly impacted by teachers' readiness, especially their pedagogical competency, classroom management abilities, and instructional planning (DepEd RPMS Manual, 2018). Graduates of education programs are prepared to enter the teaching profession by formal instruction in educational theory, pedagogy, and practicum experiences. However, a

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growing tendency in many educational systems, including the Philippines, is the hiring of non-education graduates for teaching positions. This trend is frequently caused by changes in educational needs, legislative changes, and teacher shortages (Diamas-Palo, 2025).

Those with degrees outside of teacher preparation programs, or non-education graduates, contribute important subject-matter expertise and practical work experience to the classroom. In specialist areas like science or math, where depth of topic expertise boosts instructional richness, these strengths can be especially helpful. But moving from a non-educational background to a teaching position can also present serious obstacles, such as a lack of pedagogical training, difficulty with instructional design, classroom management, and curriculum standard alignment (Diamas-Palo, 2025).

Research on these shifts shows that non-education graduate teachers have similar difficulties in a variety of educational settings. The need for support mechanisms like peer collaboration and efficient time management is highlighted by research done with non-education teachers in higher education institutions, which revealed challenges in managing a variety of student needs, heavy teaching loads, a lack of instructional resources, and compliance with academic requirements (Somosot & Relox, 2023). In a similar vein, Diamas-Palo (2025) discovered that although non-education graduates offer useful viewpoints and industry insights, they frequently run into difficulties with administrative and instructional planning duties. Successful adaptation is influenced by resilience, peer support, and access to professional development opportunities.

Studies that concentrate on the pedagogical practices of non-education graduate senior high school teachers in the Philippine basic education context emphasize issues with school forms, uncertainty about instructional capabilities, challenges with teaching-learning procedures, and a lack of confidence during early career stages. In addition to deficits in formal preparation that go beyond material comprehension, these challenges underscore the need for targeted pedagogical support, mentoring, and structured induction programs (DepEd RPMS Manual; non-education teachers study, DepEd archives).

Although there is literature on pedagogical competence and teacher readiness, most of it either concentrates on education degree holders or gathers the experiences of both in-field and out-of-field teachers without distinguishing the unique experiences of non-education graduates in basic education. For example, general studies on teacher readiness usually evaluate readiness in terms of subject-specific competencies or instructional technologies, but they don't thoroughly look at how non-education background affects teachers' sense of preparedness and identity development in the educational setting (Palero & Mutya, 2020).

Furthermore, there is an absence of localized, comprehensive research on non-education graduates' lived experiences in Philippine basic education settings, especially in senior high school teaching, as their experiences have mostly been studied in higher education or foreign teaching contexts (Masa, 2025). This gap includes inquiries about how these educators view their preparedness, how they deal with administrative and pedagogical difficulties, and which institutional resources and coping strategies are most effective for their ongoing professional development.

In view of these research gaps, this study sought to explore the experiences of non-education graduates seeking teaching positions, including their pedagogical practices, encountered difficulties, and coping techniques. The study aimed to provide insights that could direct teacher preparation programs, professional development activities, and support systems in order to ensure that all educators, regardless of academic background, are prepared to provide high-quality learning environments.

Statement of the Problem

Generally, this study aimed to describe the experiences of non-education graduates who are in the teaching career in Balbalan District. It sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the participants as to age, sex, highest educational attainment, subject taught, years in teaching and appended duties?
2. What is the participants' extent of use of pedagogical approaches?
3. Is there a significant difference on the extent of use of pedagogical approaches when participants are grouped according to profile?
4. What are the challenges encountered by these teachers?
5. How do teachers cope with these challenges?

METHODOLOGY

The study employed a descriptive-comparative methodology within a strictly quantitative research design to examine the professional status of non-education graduates in the Balbalan District. All variables, including participant profiles, utilization of pedagogical strategies, challenges encountered, and coping mechanisms employed, were measured through a structured survey questionnaire as the sole instrument for data collection. Subjective experiences were systematically transformed into quantifiable data using a 4-item Likert scale applied across multiple domains, thereby enabling comprehensive statistical analysis and objective interpretation aligned with the study objectives.

The respondents of the study consisted of 29 teachers distributed across seven educational institutions in Balbalan, Kalinga, reflecting a concentration within the public school system while still incorporating representation from smaller institutions. Specifically, Balbalan National High School accounted for 6 respondents or 20.69%, while Balbalan Agro-Industrial High School contributed 8 respondents or 27.59%, collectively comprising 48.28% of the total sample. Eastern Balbalan National High School, Western Kalinga National High School, and Saint Paul Memorial School each contributed 3 respondents or 10.34%, while Daoangan Integrated School accounted for 4 respondents or 13.79%. Saint Theresita's School represented the smallest proportion with 2 respondents or 6.90%. The combined contribution of the remaining five schools amounted to 51.72%, thereby ensuring a diverse representation of perspectives from both larger national high schools and smaller integrated and parochial institutions. This distribution provided a broader cross-section of the local academic community, allowing the study to capture varied teaching experiences and institutional contexts.

Data were collected using a structured survey questionnaire composed of multiple integrated components designed to capture both quantitative and qualitative dimensions of the study variables. The first component focused on the participants' profile, gathering professional and demographic information such as age, sex, years of teaching experience, subject taught, highest level of education attained, and additional responsibilities. These variables enabled contextualization of the findings and facilitated a detailed characterization of the respondents. The second component examined the utilization of instructional methodologies, incorporating statements that described various pedagogical strategies including collaborative learning and lecture-based instruction. Respondents rated their use of these strategies using a Likert scale to quantify the extent of their application. The subsequent components addressed the challenges encountered and the coping strategies employed by the respondents, likewise measured through a Likert scale to determine the extent and frequency with which these experiences occurred. In

addition, a qualitative component was included through open-ended questions, allowing respondents to elaborate on their experiences, which were later subjected to thematic analysis.

The validity and reliability of the research instrument were rigorously established prior to its administration. Content validity was ensured through evaluation by a panel of three experts specializing in pedagogy, curriculum development, and research methodology. The experts assessed the instrument in terms of organization, clarity, relevance, and alignment with the objectives of the study. Their feedback and recommendations were carefully incorporated to refine the questionnaire. A pilot test was conducted involving ten teachers from the Municipality of Tanudan who were not included in the actual sample but shared similar characteristics with the target population. The data obtained from the pilot testing were analyzed using Cronbach's Alpha to determine internal consistency. The instrument yielded an overall Cronbach's Alpha of $\alpha = 0.87$, indicating a good level of internal consistency. Based on commonly accepted standards where values of 0.70 and above are considered acceptable and 0.80 and above are regarded as good, the results confirmed that all sections of the instrument demonstrated good to very good reliability. Consequently, the questionnaire was deemed valid and reliable for use in this study.

The data gathering procedure followed a systematic and ethically grounded process. Formal approval was secured from the Schools Division Office and the District Office of Balbalan prior to data collection. Permission from the respective school heads was also obtained to facilitate access to participants. Respondents were selected based on the inclusion criteria that they were non-education course graduates and were currently teaching within the Balbalan District. The researcher personally approached the participants, explained the purpose of the study, and secured informed consent, emphasizing voluntary participation and confidentiality. The survey questionnaires were distributed in person, and respondents were given sufficient time to complete the instrument. Upon completion, the questionnaires were collected, organized, and prepared for analysis. For the qualitative component, responses to open-ended questions were compiled and transcribed to facilitate thematic analysis. Throughout the process, strict adherence to ethical principles such as anonymity, confidentiality, and the right to withdraw from the study at any point was maintained.

Ethical considerations were integral to the conduct of the study and were consistently upheld. Participants were provided with clear and comprehensive information regarding the objectives, procedures, potential risks, benefits, and their rights as research participants. Informed consent was obtained prior to participation, and individuals were assured of their freedom to ask questions and withdraw from the study at any time without consequence. Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained, with all data securely stored and anonymized to prevent identification of respondents. Access to the data was limited solely to the researcher, and findings were reported in a manner that preserved participant anonymity. Participation in the study was entirely voluntary, and no coercion or undue pressure was exerted on any individual to take part.

Data analysis was conducted using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques appropriate to the nature of the data. For the respondents' profile, descriptive statistics including frequency and percent were utilized to summarize the distribution of variables. The interpretation of computed mean values for pedagogical strategies, challenges encountered, and coping strategies employed was guided by established mean ranges and corresponding descriptive ratings. A mean range of 3.26 to 4.00 was interpreted as Very Great Extent for pedagogical approaches and challenges, and Always for coping strategies. A mean range of 2.51 to 3.25 corresponded to Great Extent and Often, while 1.76 to 2.50 indicated Slight Extent and Rarely. A mean range of 1.00 to 1.75 was interpreted as Not at all or No Extent for pedagogical approaches and challenges, and Never for coping strategies. These interpretive scales ensured consistency in the analysis and reporting of results. For inferential analysis,

non-parametric statistical tests were employed due to the ordinal nature of the data derived from the Likert scale and the potential violation of normality assumptions. Specifically, the Mann-Whitney U test and the Kruskal-Wallis test were used to compare differences between groups, as these tests are appropriate for skewed data or data measured on an ordinal scale.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This Results and Discussion section presents the findings of the study based on data gathered from 29 respondents using a descriptive research design, with data collected through a structured survey instrument and analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, mean, and average weighted mean, as well as inferential statistics through the Mann-Whitney U test and Kruskal-Wallis test. The discussion is grounded in the empirical data obtained and is interpreted in direct relation to the objectives of the study, ensuring that all statistical results are explicitly reported and meaningfully analyzed within the context of pedagogical practices, challenges, and coping strategies among teachers.

The demographic profile of the respondents reveals that out of 29 participants, 16 (55.17%) are female and 13 (44.83%) are male, indicating a higher representation of female teachers. In terms of age distribution, 9 (31.03%) fall within 21–30, 18 (62.07%) are within 31–40, and 2 (6.90%) are within 41–50, with no respondents above 51, suggesting a predominantly early to mid-career workforce. Educational attainment shows that 8 (27.59%) hold a bachelor's degree, 12 (41.38%) have master's degree units, and 9 (31.03%) have completed a master's degree, reflecting ongoing professional advancement. Teaching experience indicates that 11 (37.93%) have 0–5 years, 15 (51.72%) have 6–10 years, and 3 (10.34%) have 11–15 years of experience, further confirming the early to mid-career status of most respondents. Regarding appended duties, 21 (72.41%) have additional responsibilities, while 8 (27.59%) have none, indicating that the majority of teachers perform roles beyond classroom instruction. These findings align with existing literature suggesting that teaching is a female-dominated profession and that early to mid-career teachers are more inclined toward professional growth and adoption of innovative practices, supported by studies emphasizing the importance of continuous development and graduate education in enhancing instructional effectiveness.

The extent of use of pedagogical approaches demonstrates an overall average weighted mean of 3.31, interpreted as Very Great Extent, indicating that teachers widely employ diverse instructional strategies. Among the approaches, lecture-discussion ($M = 3.53$) and textbook-based instruction ($M = 3.50$) obtained the highest means, both interpreted as Very Great Extent, signifying the continued dominance of traditional teacher-centered methods. Simultaneously, learner-centered approaches such as inquiry-based learning ($M = 3.47$), problem-based learning ($M = 3.47$), collaborative/group learning ($M = 3.40$), role-play/simulation ($M = 3.40$), and project-based learning ($M = 3.33$) also fall under Very Great Extent, indicating strong integration of constructivist strategies that promote critical thinking and active engagement. Other approaches, including community-based/experiential learning ($M = 3.23$), technology-integrated teaching ($M = 3.30$), digital assessment tools ($M = 3.20$), integration of local history/context ($M = 3.13$), integration of current events ($M = 3.00$), and values integration ($M = 3.00$), are interpreted as Great Extent, suggesting slightly lower but still substantial utilization. These results reflect a balanced instructional approach where traditional and innovative methods coexist, supporting literature that emphasizes the effectiveness of combining structured content delivery with interactive, student-centered learning to enhance educational outcomes.

The test of significant difference on the extent of use of pedagogical approaches when grouped according to demographic variables shows no statistically significant differences across all categories. For sex, the Mann–Whitney U test yields $U = 78.000$, $Z = 1.071$, $p = 0.284$, leading to a decision to fail to reject H_0 , indicating no significant difference between male ($n = 12$, mean rank = 13.00, sum of ranks = 156.00) and female ($n = 17$, mean rank = 16.41, sum of ranks = 279.00) respondents. For age, the Kruskal–Wallis test shows $H(2) = 1.868$, $p = 0.393$, with mean ranks of 16.17 for ages 21–30 ($n = 9$), 15.03 for ages 31–40 ($n = 19$), and 4.00 for ages 41–50 ($n = 1$), resulting in a failure to reject H_0 and indicating no significant difference. For educational attainment, $H(2) = 1.326$, $p = 0.515$, with mean ranks of 11.67 for Bachelor ($n = 6$), 16.11 for Master Units ($n = 14$), and 13.81 for Master Completed ($n = 8$), also leading to a failure to reject H_0 . For years in teaching, $H(2) = 3.147$, $p = 0.207$, with mean ranks of 12.27 for 0–5 years ($n = 11$), 17.47 for 6–10 years ($n = 16$), and 10.25 for 11–15 years ($n = 2$), again resulting in no significant difference. For appended duties, the Mann–Whitney U test yields $U = 68.500$, $Z = 0.763$, $p = 0.446$, with mean ranks of 15.74 (sum of ranks = 330.50) for those with duties ($n = 21$) and 13.06 (sum of ranks = 104.50) for those without duties ($n = 8$), leading to a failure to reject H_0 . Across all variables, the consistent p -values greater than the significance level indicate that demographic characteristics do not significantly influence the extent of pedagogical approach utilization. This suggests that instructional practices are shaped more by shared institutional standards, professional development, and collaborative environments than by individual demographic factors, consistent with existing research emphasizing the role of professional learning communities and systemic support in shaping teaching practices.

The extent of challenges encountered in teaching yields an overall average weighted mean of 2.95, interpreted as Great Extent, indicating that teachers experience considerable difficulties. The highest challenges include overloaded teaching tasks ($M = 3.20$) and lack of formal pedagogical training ($M = 3.17$), both interpreted as Great Extent, highlighting issues of workload and insufficient formal preparation. Additional challenges such as difficulty in assessment construction ($M = 2.97$), classroom management issues ($M = 2.97$), large class size ($M = 2.97$), and limited professional development ($M = 2.97$) further emphasize instructional and institutional constraints. Challenges related to limited access to technology ($M = 2.93$) and difficulty relating lessons to real-life context ($M = 2.93$) indicate barriers to effective integration of modern and contextualized teaching approaches. Other challenges, including low student motivation ($M = 2.87$), lack of mentoring support ($M = 2.80$), difficulty in lesson planning ($M = 2.83$), and inadequate instructional materials ($M = 2.77$), although slightly lower, remain within Great Extent, demonstrating pervasive issues affecting teaching effectiveness. These findings reflect the multifaceted nature of teaching challenges, encompassing pedagogical, institutional, and learner-related factors, and align with literature indicating that workload, lack of resources, and insufficient training negatively impact teacher performance and student outcomes.

The coping strategies of teachers show an overall average weighted mean of 3.39, interpreted as Always, indicating consistent application of adaptive strategies. The highest-rated strategies include self-study of teaching methods ($M = 3.47$), seeking help from senior teachers ($M = 3.47$), and improvising instructional materials ($M = 3.47$), all interpreted as Always, demonstrating proactive efforts in professional growth and resourcefulness. Other consistently practiced strategies include using online resources ($M = 3.43$), contextualizing lessons ($M = 3.41$), and peer collaboration ($M = 3.40$), reflecting engagement in collaborative and technology-supported practices. Additional strategies such as attending seminars and trainings ($M = 3.33$), time management strategies ($M = 3.30$), seeking administrative support ($M = 3.30$), and stress management techniques ($M = 3.28$) further indicate comprehensive coping mechanisms addressing both professional and personal demands. These findings

suggest that despite the challenges encountered, teachers exhibit resilience and commitment to continuous improvement through self-directed learning, collaboration, and institutional engagement, consistent with research highlighting the importance of professional development, mentorship, and support systems in sustaining effective teaching practices.

Overall, the findings indicate that the respondents are predominantly female, early to mid-career educators actively engaged in professional development and often handling additional responsibilities beyond teaching. Teachers demonstrate a very high extent of utilizing diverse pedagogical approaches, effectively balancing traditional and learner-centered strategies. The absence of statistically significant differences across demographic variables, as evidenced by $U = 78.000, p = 0.284$; $H(2) = 1.868, p = 0.393$; $H(2) = 1.326, p = 0.515$; $H(2) = 3.147, p = 0.207$; and $U = 68.500, p = 0.446$, confirms that instructional practices are consistent regardless of sex, age, educational attainment, years in teaching, and appended duties. Despite this, teachers face considerable challenges, particularly in workload, training, and resource availability, as reflected in the overall mean of 2.95. However, the consistent use of coping strategies, with an overall mean of 3.39, demonstrates strong resilience and adaptability. These results collectively reinforce the importance of institutional support, continuous professional development, and resource provision in enhancing teaching effectiveness, thereby contributing to the broader discourse on improving instructional quality and teacher well-being while providing a foundation for subsequent sections of the study.

CONCLUSION

The findings of the study reveal that non-education graduate instructors in the Balbalan District demonstrate notable resilience and a sustained commitment to professional growth, effectively navigating the demands of teaching despite their non-traditional entry into the profession. Their capacity to balance conventional pedagogical expectations with emerging instructional approaches reflects a high degree of adaptability and initiative, underscoring their readiness in terms of subject matter expertise and willingness to improve. However, the results also indicate that this readiness is tempered by persistent institutional constraints that challenge their instructional effectiveness. Chief among these are the substantial administrative workload and the absence of formal pedagogical training, both of which place considerable strain on their ability to deliver quality instruction. Furthermore, the lack of significant variation in teaching practices across demographic characteristics suggests that instructional approaches are shaped less by individual differences and more by systemic influences, including standardized curricula and collaborative mechanisms such as school-based learning cells. This reinforces the conclusion that institutional structures play a decisive role in shaping teaching practices within the district.

In light of these findings, it becomes evident that while non-education graduate instructors exhibit strong personal initiative, they remain functionally at risk due to gaps in pedagogical competence and the cumulative effects of professional fatigue. Addressing these challenges requires a strategic and coordinated response that aligns with the issues identified in the data. The implementation of structured pedagogical bridging programs is essential to equip these educators with foundational teaching competencies that are typically acquired through formal education training. At the same time, a critical review of administrative workloads is necessary to ensure that non-instructional responsibilities do not undermine classroom effectiveness. Strengthening collaborative support systems through structured peer mentoring within Learning Action Cells can further enhance professional development by encouraging the normalization of guidance seeking among less experienced teachers. In

addition, improving access to digital resources and contextually relevant instructional materials can alleviate the burden of lesson preparation and reduce reliance on improvised teaching strategies. Finally, fostering a culture that prioritizes continued professional education, particularly in areas such as methods of teaching and classroom management, can directly address the identified areas of weakness and contribute to long term instructional improvement. Collectively, these measures provide a coherent pathway for enhancing teacher effectiveness while mitigating the risks associated with non-traditional entry into the teaching profession, thereby reinforcing the broader objective of sustaining quality education within the district.

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