American Journal of Educational Research, 2017, Vol. 5, No. 9, 959-964
Available online at http://pubs.sciepub.com/education/5/9/5

DOI:10.12691/education-5-9-5

Reforming Instructional Practices via Interactive Engagement, Deliberate Practice and Coaching in Professional Education Courses

Frances A. Abuso*

Dean of Faculty, College of Education, PHINMA Cagayan de Oro College, Cagayan de Oro City, Philippines
*Corresponding author: francesarevaloabuso@gmail.com

Abstract Attempts to get Education students more actively involved in their own learning in professional education courses call for viable models of instruction. Hence, promotion of interactive engagement, deliberate practice and coaching in professional education courses are taken as instructional reforms to maximize Education students' learning. Active learning approaches such as technology-enhanced learning, cooperative learning and project based approach make up a sustainable teaching-learning set up in professional education courses. Education students then view encouragement of teachers to do their best and keep on trying of prime importance. In addition, teachers' provision of learning targets is likewise primarily valued by Education students in addition to receiving help and guidance from the teacher as well as additional instruction on concepts that they do not understand.

Keywords: *instructional practices, active learning professional education courses*

Cite This Article: Frances A. Abuso, "Reforming Instructional Practices via Interactive Engagement, Deliberate Practice and Coaching in Professional Education Courses." *American Journal of Educational Research*, vol. 5, no. 9 (2017): 959-964. doi: 10.12691/education-5-9-5.

1. Introduction

Making students learn better demands educational reform efforts for knowledge as an outcome of education is no longer adequate for students to successfully cope with the socio-economic and technological changes in the world. There is thus an intense call to raise educational achievement levels. Students accordingly need to master survival skills in solving problems. Regardless of the field they choose, the ability to think and act quickly are indispensable tools for learning. As a matter of fact, Andersen [1] stressed that students today need to acquire new skills and new knowledge to continually succeed in the world of rapid change. Teachers therefore must create dynamic environments to train productive learners [2] and to prepare students in the 21st century world.

Research on millennial generation likewise urges educators to modify instructional practices to connect with today's students. This is the reason for PHINMA Schools' shift to creating more classroom interactions that engender excitement and engagement for learning as these favorably influence students' attitudes and achievement. Considering the well-known identified positive correlation between active learning and gains in intellectual skills, PHINMA Educators have initiated and transformed teaching practices in Professional Education courses. PHINMA Educators have moved from teacher-centered learning to student-centered learning which engages students as active participants in their classes. These teachers have provided students with different opportunities to learn through meaningful learning activities. Through these dynamic learning environments, learning is characterized by transferring learning responsibilities to students.

1.1. Instructional Practices

Many educators today approve that students learn further in an active learning environment than they do in a passive learning environment. As this occurs, the aim of active learning is to move away from rote recall and memorization. In an active learning class, students are dynamically engaged in understanding facts, ideas and skills. Consequently, understanding constructivism as the framework that active learning approaches are built upon is essential.

More reading discloses that Constructivism as a theory of knowledge stresses how learners must physically construct knowledge involving them as active learners. Relative to this, Dagar's [3] study concludes that "focus of education needs to be shifted from placing content in students' knowledge building." This means that teachers need to encourage students to develop their own thoughts; thus involving them as active learners. This practice challenges students and make learning experiences both contextual and meaningful. When students' point of views are considered, teachers uncover students ability to interpret, explain, reflect and analyze. More likely, teachers expose students to passion and perseverance which contribute to outstanding achievement [4].

One meaningful teaching practice considered in constructivist orientation is students engaging in dialogue with the teacher or with one another. Besides that

student to student dialogue is the foundation of structured cooperative learning experiences, dialogues promote interaction and transform perspectives. Other constructivist oriented teaching practices include teachers serving as guides, facilitators of learning , tutors and coaches; use of scaffolding to guide students from what is presently known to what is to be known and use of primary data for authentic and real world teaching [5].

Further analysis of research literatures in effective instructional practices suggests that students must do more than just listen. Students must engage in in solving problems, discussions and writing. Given these points of view, adopting active learning strategies to improve student learning has been recently reinvigorated in many learning institutions such as the PHNMA schools. More comprehensively, improving instructional practices for student learning in this article is presented in the following model (Figure 1) and articulated in the form of questions listed in Table 1. This paper will report on the instructional practices consisting of the highly rated excellent teaching behaviors and commonly used active learning approaches.

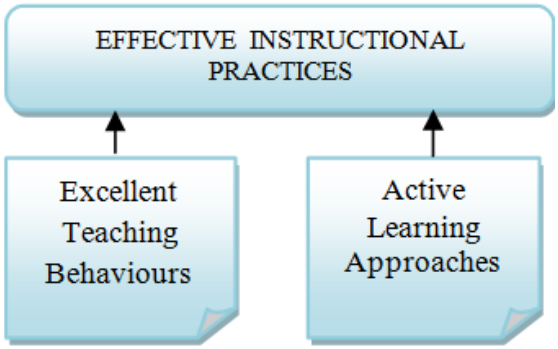

Figure 1. Reforming Instructional Practices Model

Table 1. Study Questions on Reforming Instructional Practices in Professional Education Courses

Study Questions
1. What teaching behaviors are rated highly and considered excellent by Professional Education students? 2. What Active Learning approaches are commonly used in Professional Education classes?

2. Methodology

2.1. Research Design

This paper was carried out by employing the descriptive method of research designed to gather information about an existing situation at the College of Education, PHINMA Cagayan de Oro College. This method allowed this writer to describe and explore the best teaching behavior and what active learning approaches were carried out in teaching the Professional Education courses.

2.2. The Sample

The population from which the sample frame was derived were Professional Education Students and Faculty at the College of Education. This paper made use of non-probability sampling procedure particularly the purposive sampling in identifying teachers and in selecting student-respondents. After determining the faculty teaching Professional Education courses, this writer estimated the appropriate size of the sample and recommended the sample size of 11 randomly chosen Faculty. Student-respondents were then identified using non-random sampling procedure which first criterion considered was that student–respondent must be enrolled in one of the Professional Education courses such as Assessment Of Student Learning 1, Child And Adolescent Development, Educational Technology 1, Field Study 1, Developmental Reading 1, Principles Of Teaching 2, Facilitating Learning. Enrolment of student respondents must be in the First Semester, of School Year 2016-2017. Table 2 presents the number of Faculty and number of respondents as well as their subjects taught. These teachers were also handling other professional courses and major courses.

Table 2. Number of Respondents by Faculty with Professional Education Courses

Faculty	Number Of Students	Professional Education Courses
A	15	Assessment Of Student Learning 1
B	15	Child And Adolescent Development
C	15	Assessment Of Student Learning 1
D	15	Child And Adolescent Development
E	15	Educational Technology 1
F	15	Educational Technology 1
G	15	Field Study 1
H	15	Field Study 1
I	15	Developmental Reading 1
J	15	Principles Of Teaching 2
K	15	Facilitating Learning
TOTAL	**165**	

Distribution of Faculty by Educational Qualification is presented in Figure 2. It is important to note that by faculty qualification, Figure 2 shows that 63 % of the Faculty chosen in this paper have Masters and PhD degrees. This implies that majority of the faculty teaching Professional Education courses are qualified according to CHED standards.

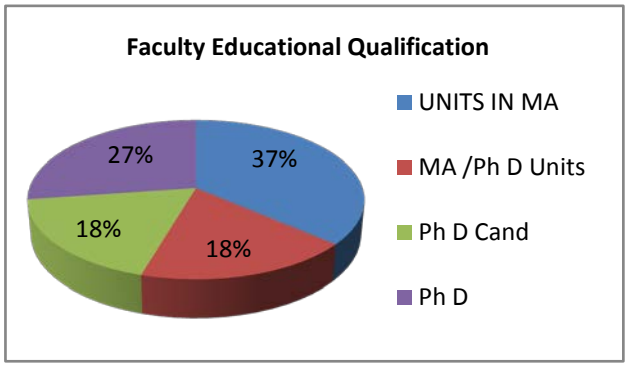

Figure 2. Distribution of Faculty by Educational Qualification

2.3. Research Instrument

In drawing together the necessary data required to meet the goal of this paper, a Student Survey on Teachers was

used. This survey instrument consisted of 24 items classified into three core elements of Active Learning which are Skill Mastery, Feedback and Engagement. Student-respondents were required to respond by rating the items with Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. Each of these items were identified in this paper as teaching behaviors that corresponded to each of the active learning core elements. The second instrument used in this article was the Professional Education Syllabi. Secondary data analysis, interpretation and recording were done to facilitate the data needed for question number 2.

2.4. Data Gathering and Statistical Analysis

As operational instrument, the Student Survey on Teachers was floated to classes of the 11 faculty members to primarily make generalizations and provide information from student- respondents. Responses from the survey instrument were analyzed using simple statistics of mean and percentage. The survey administration was followed by second data analysis of the Professional Education syllabi to identify the most commonly used active learning approaches.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Improving Instructional Practices in Professional Education

The best instructional practices are commonly known to guide interaction in the classroom. In this context, this paper identified the best instructional practices in the Professional education courses which are means of teachers to efficiently move students forward in their learning. The first is corrective feedback and second is skill mastery substantiated with students' rating of the faculty teaching behaviors. Notably, only the highest rated teaching behaviors are discussed for this article.

Table 3. Respondents' Rating of Teaching Behavior in Corrective Feedback

	Teaching Behaviors In Corrective Feedback	Average Rating
1	Encouraging students to do best and keep on trying	4.62
2	Helping and guiding students	4.59
3	Commenting or feed backing on schoolwork/performance	4.56
4	Giving examples to show how student can succeed by hard work	4.55
5	Accepting and caring for students	4.54
6	Recognizing when students do well and show improvement in schoolwork	4.53
7	Giving clear explanations of key concepts	4.5
8	Appreciating good behavior or disciplines properly for inappropriate behavior	4.47

3.1.1. Corrective Feedback

Corrective feedback, as operationally used in this article refers to coaching and communicating to students how well or how poorly they are doing in their lesson or in their studies in general. Since communication is a great part of teaching skills, this plays a vital part in students' learning skills. The purpose of feedback is to help students improve or maintain performance in their courses. Giving corrective feedback, both positive or negative helps students do well in their studies.

In the institutional context of this article, corrective feedback mainly denotes coaching and motivating students in their studies. In fact, an enhanced achievement motivation is revealed by these student-respondents as the highest rated (4.61 mean score) Faculty Teaching Behavior is "*encouraging students to do their best and keep on trying*" (Table 3). Student-respondents value this teaching behavior as this gets them involved in their learning activities in Professional Education courses. This teaching behavior has definitely influenced how much students learn from performing activities and exposure to concepts in Professional Education courses. Undoubtedly, a good number of respondents (68.48%) rated this teaching behavior Excellent. As reflected in Figure 3, more than one half of the student- respondents treated encouragement from their teacher an outstanding teaching behavior. Influence of this behavior is first rate according to students.

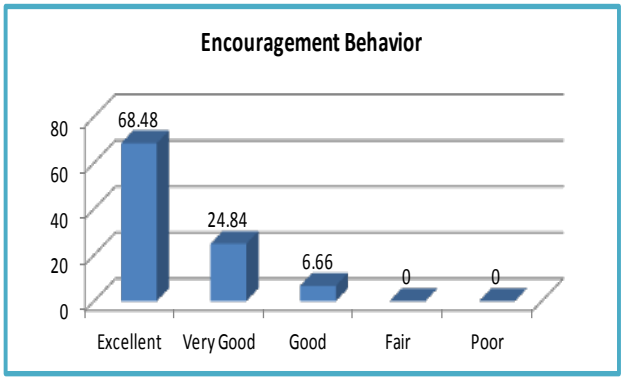

Figure 3. Impact of Encouragement to Respondents

This result likewise implies how Education students appreciate being motivated to keep on trying in their studies. Evidently, teachers stimulated students' desires to participate in the learning process of Professional Education courses. This corroborated with Marzano's [6] point of view on the need to communicate high expectations to students. In fact, Marzano stressed that unconscious actions of a teacher either negatively or positively impact students performance. Remarkably, Ambrose [7] also pointed out in his model of motivation the value that students must place on goals. These expectancies of success likely played a part in influencing students' motivation.

To be motivated to pursue specific goals, students must hold positive outcome expectancies. For this, teacher's behavior matters a great deal. Hence, giving feedback and motivating students about behaviour or an activity, recognising and reinforcing something well done or offering suggestions about how to do something better are appreciated by students. It only makes sense that the more motivating messages teachers give, the more likely students are to immerse themselves in their Professional Education courses.

Table 4. Respondents' Rating of Teaching Behavior in Skill Mastery

	Teaching Behaviors In Skill Mastery	Average Rating
1	Letting students know of learning targets /objectives of lesson	4.61
2	Giving additional instruction for concepts not understood	4.58
3	Asking questions for concepts not understood	4.55
4	Guiding in reviewing concepts and connection to new lesson	4.55
5	Making students aware of class rules and procedures to be followed	4.51
6	Teaching at a pace not too fast or too slow	4.5
7	Giving enough practice activities to help master skill and procedure	4.5
8	Giving time to think before and while answering a question	4.48

3.1.2. Skill Mastery

As applied in this article, skill mastery refers to deliberate practice and display of knowledge or technique in learning. Widely seen as a way of motivating and engaging students, skill mastery drives teachers to outline learning objectives with students so they clearly know what these are that they are supposed to be able to do as a result of having gone through the lesson.

Skill mastery in the institutional level of this article requires all Professional Education Faculty to post their learning objectives of the day. Apparently, letting students know of the learning objectives every class time has major impact on Professional Education students. Indeed, Table 4 specifies the highest rated teaching behaviour, "knowing learning targets /objectives of lesson" (4.61). These students are provided with structured lesson activities with objectives in improving performance. These objectives must have stated what they will be able to do once they have completed instruction of faculty.

It is equally imperative to note that writing and implementing learning objectives in the classroom can have major impact on students' success. This is giving students access to as much knowledge and training as students can. Rating this teaching behavior prominently imply that Professional Education students need to have clear understanding of what the expected learning for the day is and what they need to do to demonstrate competence. Teachers need to re-connect to objectives and do a last check. Students appreciate much when before students leave the room, teachers give them clear idea if they have mastered the objective or competency [15].

According to a prominent view, when teachers state objectives, s/he clearly informs students what to expect and what to be able to accomplish by the end of the instruction. Objectives must be specific in content and must focus on observable behaviour. Objectives should also let students know what is going to happen in the lesson which is important for skill mastery.

Establishing a mastery climate where students are offered directions (through posting learning objectives) for developing practice tasks leading to skill mastery is definitely valued by students given that close to 70% rated this teaching behavior, Excellent. (Figure 4). Creating a mastery environment as well as designing deliberate practice tasks have maximized Professional Education students' learning. Giving them opportunities to understand learning goals and how learning activities support these objectives essentially influenced their learning. They also find their learning more meaningful and purposeful. As a matter of fact, teachers need to make students solve problems, think critically and apply skills in game-like environments. They likewise need to focus on integrating tactics and strategies, and providing specific corrective feedback and assessment [8].

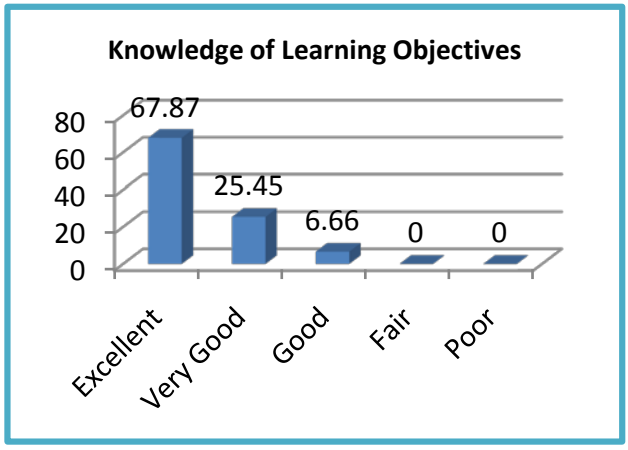

Figure 4. Impact of Knowing the Learning Objectives

Posting lesson objective in the same visible location every class time is a technique endorsed by Lemov [9]. This is important because students should know what they are trying to do. This trains students to put objectives in context and connect this to their learning. In case anyone visits the classroom, he or she can identify the teacher's purpose for teaching and can give useful feedback. Similarly, being in a classroom without knowing the direction for learning is similar to taking a purposeless trip to an unfamiliar place. Teachers in a nutshell need to set objectives to ensure that students' journeys with learning are purposeful. When teachers identify and communicate clear learning objectives, they send the message that there is a focus for the learning activities to come. This reassures students that there is a reason for learning and provides teachers with a focal point for planning instruction.

One common view is that without specific learning objective, teachers may spend their time on unimportant things making it hard to know if their time was worth it in the classroom. This is supported by Dean [10] who underscored the idea that " shared learning target frames the lesson from the students' point of view. Relatively, a shared learning target helps students grasp the lesson's purpose and why this is crucial to learn a chunk of information, on this day, and in this way". This target likewise describes exactly how well teachers expect Professional Education students to learn and how teachers will ask them to demonstrate that learning.

3.2. Active Learning Approaches to Maximize Learning in Professional Education Courses

Active or experiential teaching as operationally used in this paper hints at student-centered approach to teaching.

Hence, active teaching approaches not only change the pace of the classroom but also increase students' involvement, motivation and excitement. In order to substantiate these active teaching approaches and excellent teaching behaviours identified by students, this writer explored syllabi of selected Faculty in Professional Education courses. Top three (3) Active Learning Approaches were classified in this article. These are Technology-enhanced Approaches, Cooperative learning approaches and Project based approaches.

3.2.1. Technology-enhanced Approaches

Faculty members are encouraged to apply meaningful practices around current technologies that continue to help students learn in richer and deeper ways. Educational videos are endorsed which have become available to teachers and which have impact in the learning process. Unquestionably, Youtube videos and other educational videos aid in transferring and acquiring knowledge. Some 95% of the Professional Education Faculty have listed video materials as learning resources in the syllabus. Given this number, there is a preference of using video materials as they provide strong context through which to teach Professional Education courses. Meaning of concepts come alive and bring the outside world into the classroom. Briefly, videos focus on information that cannot be readily presented in a traditional classroom [11].

Using the internet for research is one of the most useful skills students are made to carry out in their classes. The ability to find resources quickly is an advantage for students. Around 90% of the surveyed syllabi of Professional Education faculty has listed use of internet research . Since internet is flexible, convenient and accessible, it is an outstanding communication channel that enriches students' lives. Thus, internet research can be an excellent knowledge resource accessed to a global repository of information. Since internet allows for instant access, students who use internet are able to search for and locate both current and historical sources in multiple languages and from mobile points of view. As compared to a number of print sources, students save time during a search especially with the quick spread of broadband internet access nowadays.

3.2.2. Cooperative Learning Approaches

Cooperative learning is a successful teaching strategy since it is a form of active learning where students work together to perform specific tasks in a small group. There are 88% of Professional education faculty who listed this approach in their syllabi. Students of different levels of ability are put in small groups and use variety of learning activities to improve their understanding of Professional Education topics. Each member of the group is responsible not only for learning what is taught but also for helping groupmates learn. This type of grouping creates an atmosphere of achievement. Tsay and Brady [12] stressed that this approach is useful as it improves academic achievement, improves behavior and attendance, increases self-confidence and motivation, and increases liking of school and classmates. Cooperative learning is also relatively easy to implement and is inexpensive.

3.2.3. Project- based Approaches

Research shows that project-based learning increases critical thinking skills and fosters positive attitudes toward subjects. Projects such as portfolios and instructional materials help students learn how to work independently and discover the answers to their own questions. By learning to complete projects in groups, students also gain communication and leadership skills that they can adapt to real world. No wonder around 86% of Faculty has listed down projects such as portfolios and research projects as learning activities in their syllabi. Relatively, a growing body of researchers who used project-based learning has identified several positive benefits. This includes better attitudes toward learning, better work habits, improved problem-solving capabilities, and more self-esteem. implementing projects relevant to the learners' needs. Further, this project-based learning approach teaches critical thinking, problem solving, teamwork, negotiation skills, reaching consensus, using technology, and taking responsibility for one's own learning [13].

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

Excellent teaching behaviors that inspire active learning are encouragement behavior and giving learning objectives. Students' success then in the classroom is hooked on the amount of active learning they are involved with. As a result, encouraging students to beat their personal best needs to be enhanced among students of Professional Education courses. This can be done by deliberately designing learning exercises that keep students working at the very edge of their abilities, and keep them beat difficulties as they improve.

Providing students with multiple opportunities to set their own academic goals is essentially proposed by this article. According to psychologists, goals set for oneself, in contrast to goals set by others, are intrinsically more motivational. Hence, students are more liable of following these goals and delight in the success that comes about when these are achieved.

Motivation to learn is enriched by the use of thought-provoking activities and materials, as well as by the diverse ways these are presented. Active student participation is encouraged through technology-enhanced, cooperative learning and project-based activities and materials. Many research studies highlight findings on student learning correlating with quality and quantity of student involvement. Accordingly, it is recommended that teachers steer clear of dominating classroom discussions but rather facilitate learning by all means.

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