Bridging the Gap: Unpacking the Competencies of Bataan Peninsula State University Dinalupihan Campus' Bachelor of Elementary Education Graduates as Basis for Extension Programs

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ABSTRACT

The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic brought unprecedented disruptions in the lives of people all over the world and the herculean challenge was how to continue teaching and learning beyond the usual face-to-face instruction, hence the release of CHED Memorandum Order (CMO) 04, series of 2020 containing the Guidelines on the Implementation of Flexible Learning. The aim of this study is to determine whether the Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEEd) program graduates of Bataan Peninsula State University Dinalupihan Campus (BPSU-DC) Batch 2022 have fulfilled the requirements outlined in CMO No. 74 series of 2017 (Policies, Standards and Guidelines for BEEd Program), while adhering to CMO 04 series of 2020 guidelines. This study uses the convergent parallel design in which quantitative and qualitative data are collected simultaneously but analyzed separately, and the results are merged or integrated and allow for the collection of rich, detailed data and provides a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. The result of the quantitative and qualitative analysis indicates that the least learned competencies of the BEEd graduates include the Skills in Communication, Higher Order Thinking Skills, Use of Tools and Technology to Accelerate Learning and Teaching, Utilizing Appropriate Assessment and Evaluation Tools, In-depth Understanding of Learners in various learning areas and that they need to improve their competencies in terms of Personal and Professional Development. Significant difference is not evident in terms of In-depth Understanding of Learners; Pedagogical Content Knowledge; Assessment and Evaluation; Communication, Higher Order Thinking, and Technology; Attributes of Model Teacher; Personal and Professional Development; thus, failing to reject the null hypothesis. The analysis's conclusion also suggests that the BEEd graduates' self-evaluations align with those of their cooperating teachers and coordinators, confirming the graduates' actual and true level of competency. Based on the results of the analysis, the following are suggested as Contextualized Input in Aid for development of Extension Program: Mentor-Mentee engagement, Personal Engagement in Learning, On-the-Job Training (OJT), Attending Training Seminars, Practicing for Improvement. Of the 122 respondents, 62 are the BEEd graduates-respondents, while 60 are Cooperating Teachers and Coordinators.

Keywords: Competencies, BEEd Program, Extension Program

INTRODUCTION

The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic brought unprecedented disruptions in the lives of people all over the world. It came unexpectedly where no one was ready enough to brace its impact on society. (CHED.CMO 4, 2023)

The Philippines in particular, faced a critical situation due to the rise of said health crisis. For higher education institutions, avoiding and limiting the risks of infection of the academic community has become a primordial concern. The herculean challenge then was how to continue teaching and learning beyond the usual face-to-face instruction. (CHED.CMO 4, 2023)

Hence, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) then issued CMO 04, series of 2020 containing the Guidelines on the Implementation of Flexible Learning. In that CMO, it was very clear in guideline No. 5 that flexible learning should complement outcomes-based education approach which allows flexibility for the HEIs to employ various means of delivery and assessment as long as they can show the achievement of the set learning outcomes for each course or subject for the program. Further, guideline No. 14 also states that the implementation of flexible learning by HEIs for both undergraduate and graduate programs should still be guided by the principles of Outcomes Based Education (OBEs) and by applicable Policies, Standards and Guidelines (PSGs) to assure quality of teaching and learning. (CHED.CMO 4, 2023)

Bataan Peninsula State University (BPSU) is one of the state universities in the country that continued to implement CMO 74, series of 2017 which indicates the PSGs for Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEEd) while also adopting the flexible learning. BPSU through University Memorandum 2020.0267 advised all faculty members to adopt flexible learning scheme through the implementation of Blended Learning as its modality of learning where the schedule is a blend of synchronous and asynchronous class. The graduates of Bachelor of Elementary Education Batch 2022 experienced two years of face-to-face learning and two years of blended learning where most of the specialization subjects were taken during their third and fourth year under the blended learning modality.

This now poses a question of whether the competencies that they are supposed to have gained as stipulated in CMO 74 series of 2017 were not sacrificed with the unexpected shift brought by the pandemic where the shift is a challenge both to the students and the teachers.

In a study on the Blended Learning During Pandemic Corona Virus: Teachers' and Students' Perceptions by Aji, Ardin, Arifin (2020), they found out that there were challenges for the teachers in teaching through blended learning such as poor internet connection, time-consuming, and less experience while the students considered their challenges on poor internet connection and incomprehensible materials were considered as the problem that hampers their learning (Aji, Ardin, & Arifin, 2020).

Competencies are deemed important in performing job responsibilities. Alamsyah, Sari, Utami, Adzni, Haris & Abdurohim's (2023) study about Competence-Based Human Resource Development: A Literature Study in the Era of Information Technology and Digitalization underscores the modification in professional competence toward adaptability, communication and willingness to learn due to digitalization (Alamsyah, et al., 2023). Competence in adaptability and ICT skills as emphasized in CMO 74, Sec. 6.2e is more important than ever specifically because the teaching method of flexible learning may have affected the achievement of these skills.

However, the underlying challenges in the CMO 04 flexible learning model likely hindered with the student's ability to fully develop the mandated personal/ interpersonal and ICT competencies. As revealed in the study of Gocotano, Jerodiaz, Banggay, Nasibog & Go, challenges like loss of motivation and distractive learning environments were cited. These are stumbling blocks that can sternly hinder the development of personal and interpersonal competencies, like self-management, self-discipline and effective communication, which require engagement and focus (Gocotano, Jerodiaz, Banggay, Rey Nasibog, & Go, 2021).

Anent to this, the study aims to investigate if the graduates of the BEEd program of Bataan Peninsula State University Dinalupihan Campus Batch 2022 have met the expectations as provided in CMO No. 74 series of 2017 while adopting the guidelines of CMO 04 series of 2020.

Determining if the skills were reached would assist the institution in assessing how well the aforementioned CMO was implemented, which ultimately would benefit the students by preparing them to take on the challenging tasks of teaching in the twenty-first century. In addition, it would assess how closely the university, in its capacity as a Teacher Education Institution, adheres to the CMO in spite of the disruption caused by the pandemic, ensuring that the BEEd Program will continue to support the university's goal of producing graduates who are competitive and community members who are empowered. More importantly, the results of this research could serve as a foundation for designing extension initiatives.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Commission on Higher Education (CHED), in response to the 21st Century Philippine Teacher Education Framework implements the shift to learning competency-based standards/ outcomes-based education as provided in the Guidelines for the Implementation of CMO No. 46 s. 2012. (CHED. CMO 46 s2012, 2023)

With this, CHED released Memorandum Order (CMO) No. 74 series of 2017 otherwise known as the Policies, Standards and Guidelines (PSG) for Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEEd) that specifies the 'core competencies' expected of BEEd graduates "regardless of the type of Higher Education Institution (HEI) they graduate from". (CHED. CMO 74 s2017, 2023)

The PSGs described in Section III of CMO No. 2 series of 2011 shall include the curriculum, program of study, course specifications, faculty and learning resources and support structures needed to attain learning competencies. (CHED. CMO 2 s2011, 2023)

Competencies as defined in CMO No. 46 series of 2012 refers to the combination of knowledge, complex skills and behavior and attitude that enables an individual to perform specific tasks or role. (CHED. CMO 46 s2012, 2023)

Competencies is pivotal to the personal and professional success of an individual, as it will guarantee that necessary skills, knowledge and abilities are there, enabling an individual to surpass the roles expected of him/her efficiently and be able to contribute meaningfully to the success of an organization (Maharaj, 2023).

Similarly, Sieck (2021) discussed competence as having the ability to be effective in performing a task or a job, knowledgeable and skilled enough to respond and solve complicated problems. He also emphasized that human resources in the modern workplace keep on innovating ways by experimenting with competence-based education. (Sieck, 2021)

Likewise, Garcia-Alvarez, Vázquez-Rodríguez, Quiroga-Carrillo, & Caamaño (2022), concluded in their study that there is a need for higher educational institutions to incorporate "pedagogies for employability," which is focus on strengthening the connection between the academic setting and work-related reality which will guarantee the graduates of appropriate transition to work environment. (Garcia-Alvarez, Vázquez-Rodríguez, Quiroga-Carrillo, & Caamaño, 2022)

However, the pandemic had diverted and forced the education system to shift from the traditional face-to-face mode of teaching and learning to an alternative remote modality which eventually interrupted the usual delivery of education leading to the underachieved competency-based education, prompting challenges and limiting the students' attainment of the needed competency.

The study of Namkung, Goodrich, Hebert , & Koziot (2022), found that low instructional effectiveness were reported due to changes in delivery modes of instruction by teachers, suggesting that disruption in education projected to result in learning loss significantly.

Similarly, disruptions in education due to COVID-19 pandemic and the transition to alternative remote delivery of learning widened the effect of digital divide and eventually widened the gap in the academic outcome, consequently worsened the persistence of academic challenges due to lack of approriate resources (Golden, Srisarajivakul, Hasselle, Pfund, & Knox, 2023).

Although there are numbers of literature that provides different perspective on the impact of the interruption of academic activities due to COVID-19 pandemics, there remains little empirical discussions on structured mechanisms that measures the competency of the students, particulary during the later years of the disrupted educational contexts.

The result of the study conducted by Punla & Farro (2021), implies that there is a need address the In-depth Understanding and Motivating Learners; Pedagogical Content Knowledge; Assessment and Evaluation;

Communication Skills and Technological Competencies; and Personal and Professional Development of the graduates. (Punla & Farro, 2021)

In this light that this study, as followed-up research and explored the competencies of the graduates of Bachelor of Elementary Education who belong to the limited face-to-face modalities of Bataan Peninsula State University and attempted to disclose the gaps in the competency-based education amidst the pandemic.

Objectives

1. To describe the number of respondents in their respective groups:

1.1 BEED graduates; and

1.2 Cooperating teachers and Coordinators

2. To describe the competence of graduates based on CMO No.74, s.2017 in terms of:

2.1 demonstrating in-depth understanding of learners in various learning areas;

2.2 manifesting meaningful and comprehensive pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) of the different subject areas.

2.3 utilizing appropriate assessment and evaluation and evaluation tools to measure learning outcomes;

2.4 manifesting skills in communication, higher order thinking and use of tools and technology to accelerate learning and teaching;

2.5 demonstrating positive attributes of a model teacher, both as an individual and as a professional; and

2.6 manifesting a desire to continuously pursue personal and professional development

3. To determine the significant difference in the ratings on competency level given by the graduates and Cooperating teachers and Coordinators.

4. To explore the experiences and challenges of BEEd graduates, cooperating teachers, and coordinators on the underlying factors regarding the development, and demonstration of competencies of the graduates.

5. To derive input on the findings of the study as basis for extension programs.

Theoretical Framework of the Study

This study is anchored on Siemens (2004) Connectivism Learning Theory, Bandura (1986) Social Cognitive Theory, and McClelland (1970) Theory of Competencies.

Connectivism Learning Theory acknowledges that a significant portion of learning happens through technology and that being constantly connected allows us to make decisions about what we want to learn. The theory emphasizes that there is a constant change in knowledge and influenced by multiple contributory factors, such as peers, technology, and media which lead students to link their previous and current understanding together (Underwood, 2016).

Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) on the other hand posits that learning is influenced by attention, retention, and motivation. The theory significantly emphasizes that individual's learning is based on one's own behavior. SCT suggests that learning happens when a learner is committed to make an effort to learn and modify their behavior (Bandura, 1986).

Finally, McClelland's Theory of Competencies, or Competency Model is a framework for defining and identifying the essential skills needed to succeed in particular roles or careers. The model places equal emphasis on the value of technical proficiency and character traits like drive, assurance, and flexibility. This framework includes McClelland's Iceberg Model of Competencies, which conceptualizes competencies as having both

visible and hidden components. The skills and behaviors that are readily apparent are the visible components, and the underlying motivations, character traits, and values that underlie those behaviors are the hidden components (Cripe, 2012).

These theories are relevant to the current investigation because they provide the framework for identifying the competencies attained by the participants in relation to the competencies that are specified in CMO No. 74, series of 2017.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

Research Design: This study used mixed methods of research design, specifically the convergent parallel (concurrent) design in which quantitative and qualitative data are collected simultaneously but analyzed separately, and the results are merged or integrated. This type of design allows for the collection of rich, detailed data and provides a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. (Alele & Malau-Aduli, 2023)

The convergent parallel design was appropriately used to provide comprehensive view of the competencies being studied. By facilitating triangulation of findings through merging and corroborating the data sets, enable a differ understanding of the graduates' competencies and educational gaps brought about by the pandemic.

Complementary analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data and integration findings, the researchers were able to highlight areas of agreement and disparity between graduates' self-assessment and teachers' assessment of the graduates which is vital in understanding the competency of the graduates which then be the basis of an extension program.

Population and Study Locale: The respondents are the Bataan Peninsula State University- Dinalupihan Campus Bachelor in Elementary Education Batch 2022 graduates as well as the program's cooperating teachers and coordinators. This included each graduate from the cohort, as it is anticipated that they have all acquired the necessary competencies after finishing the BEEd program. The quantitative survey covered all the Coordinators and Cooperating Teachers while participants for the study's qualitative phase were chosen according to set criteria. Through the many communication channels that were available, they were informed.

Variables to be investigated: This research explores competence of graduates based on CMO No.74, s.2017.

Instrumentation/Data Collection Tools: To collect quantitative data on the acquired competencies of the BEEd graduate-respondents and Cooperating teachers/ Coordinator-respondents, the researcher adopted the questionnaire of Punla and Farro (2021) which was utilized in their study "Are We There Yet? An Analysis of the Competencies of BEED Graduates of BPSU-DC." (Punla & Farro, 2021)

Statistical and Data Analysis Plan: Descriptive statistical tools including frequency counts, percentages describe the number of respondents in their respective groups, while mean and standard deviation was utilized to describe the competence of graduates based on CMO No.74, s.2017. Moreso, Independent Sample t-test was used to determine the significant difference in the ratings on competency level given by the graduates and Cooperating teachers and Coordinators.

Ethical Considerations: To ensure the integrity of the study and to protect the respondents and the participants, the researcher had fully informed the respondents and the participants on the purpose, procedures, risk, and their right to withdraw at any given time. Respondents and participants were given equal treatment, avoiding any act of discrimination, more so, they were guaranteed that their personal information was safeguarded and kept confidential and made available to the public without their consent.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Part I: Quantitative Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1 presents the number of respondents when they are grouped accordingly.

Table 1 Profile of the Respondents (Number of Cases = 122)

Profile		**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Group	Bachelor of Elementary Education Graduates	62	50..80
	Cooperating Teachers and Coordinators	60	49.20

As can be seen on table 1, from a total of 122 respondents, 62 or 50.80% belongs to the group of BEEd graduates' respondents, while 60 or 49.20% are Cooperating Teachers and Coordinators.

Of the 60 total number of Cooperating Teachers and Coordinators, 3 of them are Coordinators. It can also be gleaned from the data that the number of BEEd graduates is not equal to the number of cooperating teachers, this is because some of the Cooperating Teachers handled more than 1 student-teacher (graduate) during their Student-Teaching.

Table 2 presents the respondents' competency based on the expected competencies as stated at CMO No. 74, series of 2017.

Table 2 Respondents Level of Competency

Indicators	**Mean**	**SD**	**Descriptive Interpretation**
A. Demonstrate in-depth understanding of learners in various learning areas	3.82	0.78	Moderately High Level of Competence
B. Manifest meaningful and comprehensive pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) of the different subject areas.	4.03	0.62	Moderately High Level of Competence
C. Utilize appropriate assessment and evaluation and evaluation tools to measure learning outcomes.	3.92	0.70	Moderately High Level of Competence
D. Manifest skills in communication, higher order thinking and use of tools and technology to accelerate learning and teaching.	3.97	0.72	Moderately High Level of Competence
E. Demonstrate positive attributes of a model teacher, both as an individual and as a professional.	3.97	0.85	Moderately High Level of Competence
F. Manifest a desire to continuously pursue personal and professional development.	3.89	0.87	Moderately High Level of Competence
Overall Competency	**3.93**	**0.73**	**Moderately High Level of Competence**

Legend: 4.20–5.00 High Level of Competence; 3.40–4.19 Moderately High Level of Competence; 2.60–3.39 Average Level of Competence; 1.80–2.59 Low Level of Competence; 1.00-1.79 No Level of Competence

The combined responses of the BEEd graduates and Cooperating Teachers/Coordinators in table 2 show that the BEEd graduates have moderately high level of competence (Mean=3.93). It can also be gleaned that the highest rating provided by the respondents is on 'Manifest meaningful and comprehensive pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) of the different subject areas.' (Mean=4.03) described as 'moderately high level of competence,' which implies that graduates are predominantly strong in understanding and delivering the subject matter, which is accordingly crucial for effective teaching.

Although slightly lower, it can also be gleaned that graduates have moderately high level of competency in terms of 'Demonstrate positive attributes of a model teacher, both as an individual and as a professional' (Mean=3.97); 'Manifest skills in communication, higher order thinking and use of tools and technology to accelerate learning and teaching.' (Mean=3.97); Utilize appropriate assessment and evaluation and evaluation tools to measure learning outcomes.' (Mean=3.92); and 'Manifest a desire to continuously pursue personal and professional development' (Mean=3.89).

While considered moderately high, the competency in terms of 'Demonstrate in-depth understanding of learners in various learning areas' (Mean=3.82) is considered the lowest among the domain, an area where further development might be required. This is consistent with the findings of the study of (Punla & Farro, 2022) that there is a need for improvement in the graduates' competency in understanding the learners' diversity.

Table 3 presents the significant difference in the ratings on competency level given by the BEEd graduates and Cooperating teachers and Coordinators based on the expected competencies as stated at CMO No. 74, series of 2017 when respondents are grouped accordingly.

Table 3 Differences in the Competency of the BPSU Graduates

Variables	**Group**	**Mean**	**SD**	**t**	**Sig.**	**Decision on H_o**	**Interpretation**
In-Depth Understanding of Learners	BEEd Graduates	3.70	0.76	1.78	0.08	Failed to Reject	Not Significant
	Cooperating Teachers & Coordinators	3.95	0.79				
Pedagogical Content Knowledge	BEEd Graduates	3.95	0.63	1.42	0.16	Failed to Reject	Not Significant
	Cooperating Teachers & Coordinators	4.11	0.62				
Assessment and Evaluation	BEEd Graduates	3.88	0.71	0.72	0.47	Failed to Reject	Not Significant
	Cooperating Teachers & Coordinators	3.97	0.69				
Communication, Higher Order Thinking, and Technology	BEEd Graduates	3.95	0.72	0.21	0.83	Failed to Reject	Not Significant
	Cooperating Teachers & Coordinators	3.98	0.72				
Attributes of Model Teacher	BEEd Graduates	3.86	0.84	1.46	0.15	Failed to Reject	Not Significant
	Cooperating Teachers & Coordinators	4.08	0.85				
Personal and Professional Development	BEEd Graduates	3.83	0.86	0.76	0.45	Failed to Reject	Not Significant
	Cooperating Teachers & Coordinators	3.95	0.87				
Overall	BEEd Graduates	3.86	0.72	1.11	0.27	Failed to Reject	Not Significant
	Cooperating Teachers & Coordinators	4.01	0.73				

.05 level of Sig.

The results of the analysis using the Independent Sample t-test, indicates that significant difference is not evident in the competency of the respondents based on the expected competencies as stated at CMO No. 74, series of 2017 in terms of in-depth understanding of learners (t=1.78, p=0.08); pedagogical content knowledge (t=1.42, p=0.16); assessment and evaluation (t=0.72, p=0.47); communication, higher order thinking, and technology (t=0.21, p=0.83); attributes of model teacher (t=1.46, p=0.15); personal and professional development (t=0.76, p=0.45); when respondents are grouped accordingly, as provided by the p-values which are statistically greater than the alpha of .05. Further, the overall t-value of 1.11, significant at 0.27 indicates that there is not enough evidence to claim that there exists a significant difference in the average responses of the respondents when they are grouped accordingly, since the p-value is greater than the alpha of .05, thus, failing to reject the null hypothesis.

The result of the analysis further implies that the self-assessment of the BEEd graduates coincides with the assessment of their cooperating teachers and coordinators and thus, validating the true and actual level of competencies graduates have. This implies that the graduate's self-assessment of their competencies accurately reflects their actual preparedness as validated by their respective cooperating teachers and coordinators.

The consistency of the assessment underscores the reliability of the findings as the basis for the crafting of an extension program, that will accurately reinforce program's curriculum and developmental training consistent with the CHED's mandated outcomes.

Part 2. Presentation Of Qualitative Data

To have an in-depth understanding of the acquired competencies of the BEEd graduates of BPSU, based on the expected competencies as stated at CMO No. 74, series of 2017, qualitative data were collected and analyzed using the thematic analysis through the utilization of the MAXQDA 2018.

The analysis resulted in the emergence of two (2) major themes, and these are the *Underdeveloped Competencies; and Coping Intervention to develop competencies.*

Underdeveloped Competencies

Developing key competencies are growing in importance. Significant factors that strengthen competencies establish the capability of an individual to contribute to the development of his or her state or in creating his or her own path towards professional advancement. Developing essential competencies becomes a significant task for every individual and is crucial for lifelong learning.

However, those who lack or have low competency levels frequently overestimate their own skills, which gives them the confidence to adopt awkward behaviors and make bad choices. Even worse, those who lack competence might not seek out training or services for skill-remediation because they are unaware of their shortcomings (Cherry, 2022).

One of the competencies found to be underdeveloped based on the shared experiences of the participants of this study is *Communication Skills*. Participants believe that they have poor communication skills and have difficulty in communicating with other people.

I think the other least of what I developed during the midst of blended learning is communicating with other people or what we call collaboration because we don't have really a physical interaction with our teachers and classmates. We can only talk through chats and virtual meet up and in that set up I found it a little bit difficult to express my own idea and knowledge when we have an activity (ST3).

I think that the least developed that I'm not confident about is collaboration, because I'm a very shy person to the point that I can't communicate to other people that I'm not close with. It is difficult for me to express my ideas or knowledge (ST10).

During Blended learning I am having difficulties in communicating, collaborating, and collecting and managing information because that time it is hard to find a stable internet connection and sometimes I don't have a gadget to use in online classes and the noisy surroundings around me got me distracted during our discussion that's why it's difficult for me to communicate, collaborate, to collect and manage information during the blended learning (ST5).

Aside from the communication skills which is considered underdeveloped by the participants, they also shared that the *Use of Tools and Technology* is one of the weaknesses they have.

utilize appropriate technologies to achieve the learning outcomes. -It is because I'm not an expert or exposed to using Google classroom, Zoom, Google Meet etc. I'm not fully confident to use it in my class and achieve the learning outcomes, because I am new to these technologies, and we use face to face classes before the pandemic strikes (ST8).

I think the use of different technological tools is the least competency that I have developed because, I'm not tech savvy, so when the class suddenly became online, I had a hard time adjusting (ST2).

I think when blended learning start my least developed and not so confident in terms of being resourceful or digital gap. Access to resources because it's more on online class often requires students to utilize technology like laptop when doing a lesson plan, reports, presentation, thesis etc. (ST3).

Another competency that the participant believes they lack is with regards to *Higher Order thinking Skills*.

The competencies that least I developed during pandemic is my social and analyzing skills because the pandemic give us space from other people's and space from analyzing the actual sense of education (ST8).

Critical thinking, sometimes its hard for me to evaluate the needed information (ST5).

Likewise, it was found that one of the competencies they experience difficulties with is with *Utilizing Appropriate Assessment and Evaluation Tools*.

I am not confident when I am making an assessment for my students. I am not fully confident in creating table of specification. Even (though) I have the knowledge how to do it, I still not confident if I (am) doing it correctly (ST4).

The utilization of appropriate assessment and evaluation and evaluation tools to measure learning outcomes was the competency I developed the least. My data connection slowed when we tackled this topic. It is the reason why I did not fully hear the whole discussion (ST9).

The analysis of the shared experience of the participants revealed that *Personal and Professional Development* is one of the least developed competencies they have.

I think the least thing I developed during blended learning during the pandemic was to manage my time properly. I always do my task the day before the submission because of all the tasks assigned to us (ST6).

For me, developing personal time management skills. I often don't manage my time well, I often pile on tasks with too many things to finish, for that reason I find it difficult to finish them (ST9).

Lastly, *In-depth Understanding of Learners* is considered as one of the least learned competencies of the graduates as mentioned by the participant.

Demonstrate in-depth understanding of learners in various learning areas - this is the least / not so confident competences that I need to develop. I Experience blended learning, Virtual Classes, Examination, and I can say during those days I cannot fully provide a specific material / teaching material for a specific type of learner that always left behind the class because she is kinetic type of learner, It always bothers me because i know she's good, she has potential and I can't bring it out (ST5).

The result of the analysis establishes the issues and concerns with regards to developing competencies such as the *Communication Skills; Use of Tools and Technology; Higher Order thinking Skills; Utilizing Appropriate and Evaluation Tools; Personal and Professional Development; and In-depth Understanding of Learners* indicates that there is a need for Higher Educational Institution to devote resources in mitigating the effect of underdeveloped competencies by providing innovative intervening programs and activities that would enhance the competency development as it is deemed important in producing competent and competitive future teachers.

Coping Interventions to Develop Competencies

Developing competencies involves an array of different opportunities that will allow development of knowledge, skills, abilities, and behaviors needed for an individual to perform at the level expected of him or her.

As defined by KnowledgeWorks (2023), Competencies are lifetime knowledge, abilities, and attitudes that are applicable to learners of all ages and are meant to last beyond graduation day. These are the fundamental learning objectives required for success. It emphasizes interrelated knowledge, Skills and Attitudes which is applicable to any discipline. (KnowledgeWorks, 2023)

Participants of the current study, openly suggests possible interventions in developing competencies suggested by the CMO No. 74, series of 2017, one of which is the *Mentor-Mentee engagement.*

I (was) able to cope up with it by finding a solution about it also having a friend who support me in doing that specific task. Just think positively and (be) able to look for someone who willing to help you in your difficulties (ST1).

Learn to communicate and listen to others. Involve yourself in different activities that you can also use in the future (ST3).

I would suggest always seeking help from your friends, instructors, classmates, and someone with expertise in this competency (ST8).

In order to support the students in developing the desired competencies it is paramount to engage them in a *Mentor-Mentee* sessions which is a proactive and interactive mentoring session which allow the students to experience an effective learning and development opportunities. Kearney (2020), reiterates that a mentor-mentee journey involves an investment that can be a chance for a personal development in the very least or it can lead to an experience of complete transformation of one's life. (Kearney, 2020)

The result of the qualitative analysis found out that having *Personal Learning Engagement* could possibly help individuals to develop the need competencies they need.

To study hard and learn more in the subject areas that you recognized as difficult for you and enhance it more to help in developing the least developed competencies (ST3).

I suggest, to develop your least competency, face it and do something for you to develop it (ST4).

If you have a dream, you will do anything for that, therefore the intervention I would suggest is to keep studying, practicing speaking fluently and keep reading (ST6).

Foster & Ambrose (2023) suggested that students who are engaged go beyond simply retaining information, rather, they strive further to understand what they are learning by applying critical thinking skills and delve with difficult concepts. Students who are engaged take interest to educate themeselves and take responsibility for their own education. (Foster & Ambrose, 2023)

Another suggestion from the participants is the *On-the-Job Training (OJT)* which is a practical approach from where students acquire hands-on experiences and develop new competencies needed in the real work environment.

On the job learning and training is an important way of developing competence. Participate in new projects / working groups in your workplace (ST3).

On-the-Job Training according to Andreev (2023), is not always the norm, however OJT or Student Teacher-Internship can boost output and effectiveness by providing the learners with opportunities to have live-work experiences and acquire new skills and competencies needed in a real job. (Andreev, 2023)

Further, another viable option for others to acquire and develop their own competencies and be able to establish and boost their confidence in performing the task ahead is *Attending Training Seminars*.

I need to attend seminars about how to develop my ICT skills (ST1).

Watch online tutorials or attend seminar/webinar (ST2).

Attend training courses / seminars / conferences in and outside our school (ST3).

Seminars about different strategies on how to boost the confidence of other people to collaborate. Intervention strategies means various techniques utilized in teaching a child a particular skill such as physical or verbal prompts and cues, visual aids, modeling, imitation, repetition, and task analysis (ST5).

The result of the analysis also includes *Practicing for Improvement* as suggested by some of the participants. As suggested, practicing makes an individual develop competency and be at ease in performing a task.

My suggestion is practicing the different technologies by using it and if I'm not understand it, I can watch in youtube and ask help in my classmates etc, that are more knowledgeable in using these tools to achieve what learning outcomes in lesson plan, so that I will be confident in teaching the learners (ST3).

Model and practice estimating how long a task will take. Each student should have a time planner or calendar planner, so that they have a guide as to what order needs to be completed (ST7).

If I would suggest I'm sure that it wasn't useful anymore but if this situation happen again, I suggest that practice your future educator to develop their confidence in a form of allowing them report in class and correct them in a proper manner if they gave a wrong information (ST9).

Practice it with people who are available around me (ST10).

Many learners have underestimated the value of practice in enhancing their professional abilities by thinking that academic knowledge acquired in the classroom is sufficient. Learning a new skill and performing better requires a bulk of practicing, feedback and making progress by trying to realize what works and what does not, and making necessary adjustments along the way (LSA Global LLC, 2023)

Part 3. Covergence Of Findings Of Quantitative And Qualitative Analysis

The result of the quantitative and qualitative analysis indicates that one of the least learned competencies of the BEEd graduates includes the Skills in Communication, Higher Order Thinking Skills, and Use of Tools and Technology to Accelerate Learning and Teaching. This is further elaborated in the shared experience of the participants where there are claims that because of the implementation of the blended learning, the learners have not fully developed their communication skills. It is also the blended learning that other participants are blaming as the reason behind why he or she thinks that the use of different technological tools is the least competency that he or she has developed. Similarly, participants believe they lack higher order thinking skills due to the situation they have during the pandemic where face-to-face interaction is limited.

Furthermore, the findings of the quant-qual analysis established that BEEd graduates considered Utilizing Appropriate Assessment and Evaluation Tools as another least learned competency and claimed that they are lacking skills and not confident in creating table of specifications and measuring the learning outcomes.

Additionally, the result of the analyses signifies that BEEd graduates need to improve their competencies in terms of personal and professional development, as it was affected while on the blended learning during the

pandemic. The participants believed that they lack skills in managing their time properly and having difficulty in completing assigned tasks.

Moreover, it was considered by both the respondents of the quantitative survey and the participants of the qualitative interview that the in-depth understanding of learners in various learning areas is least learned competency they have, claiming that there exists a difficulty in contextualizing specific learning materials for specific type of learner.

Contextualized input in aid for the development of an extension program for the Bachelor of Elementary Education program.

Based on the results of the analysis, the following are suggested as Contextualized Input in Aid for development of Extension Program:

COMPETENCY GAP (Least learned competencies)	Intervention to address the gap
1. Communication Skills	➢ Mentor-Mentee engagement ➢ Personal Engagement in Learning ➢ On-the-Job Training (OJT) ➢ Attending Training Seminars ➢ Practicing for Improvement
2. Use of Tools and Technology	
3. Higher Order thinking Skills	
4. Utilizing Appropriate Assessment and Evaluation Tools	
5. Personal and Professional Development	
6. In-depth Understanding of Learners	

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusions

The study unpacks the competencies of the graduates of the BEEd program of Bataan Peninsula State University Dinalupihan Campus Batch 2022 who experienced two years face-to-face mode of learning and two years Flexible Learning using the indicators provided in CMO No. 74 series of 2017, the PSG for BEED Program while adopting the guidelines of CMO 04 series of 2020, Guidelines in the Implementation of Flexible Learning.

Results pointed out that there is a need to improve the competencies of the graduates in terms of Communication, Higher Order Thinking Skills, Use of Tools and Technology to Accelerate Learning and Teaching, Utilizing Appropriate Assessment and Evaluation Tools, In-depth understanding of learners in various learning areas and Personal and Professional Development.

Results from the self-assessment of BEEd graduates align with the evaluations of their cooperating teachers and coordinators, indicating a true and actual level of competency. Statistical evidence also suggests that there is no significant difference in respondents' assessments of the graduates' competencies.

The findings of the study strengthen the requisite of continuous development programs that focus on enhancing the competencies mandated by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and the necessary curricular reforms as required by the commission which encourage technology integration and higher order thinking skills into educational curriculum.

Moreover, the findings provide empirical evidence to advocate for extension programs and capacity development initiatives that coincide with the CHED's reform agenda which will enhance the readiness of the graduates and eventually become globally competitive, and responsive teachers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. BPSU may demonstrate its commitment to continuously improve both faculty and students by sending them to seminars, trainings and workshops that will enhance the competencies of the students in terms of Communication, Higher Order Thinking Skills, Use of Tools and Technology to Accelerate Learning and Teaching, Utilizing Appropriate Assessment and Evaluation Tools, In-depth understanding of learners in various learning areas and Personal and Professional Development.

2. Faculty members and curriculum planners may consider constructing curricula that will enhance students' abilities to measure learning objectives, create tables of specifications, and contextualize particular learning resources for different learner types.

3. Both the students' extracurricular and co-curricular activities may be planned to help them improve their time management and task completion abilities.

4. Faculty Extensionists may think about developing extension programs that will help close the competency gaps found in this study, enhancing graduates' capacity to carry out their duties effectively and helping their students acquire the most essential learning competencies.

5. It is recommended that more study be conducted with the inclusion of various variables in order to confirm that the competences acquired are in line with CMO 74 s.2017. To determine how well CMO 74 s.2017 are implemented, comparative studies may also be carried out.

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