

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY: APPLIED BUSINESS AND EDUCATION RESEARCH

2021, Vol. 2, No. 5, 413 – 416

<http://dx.doi.org/10.11594/ijmaber.02.05.07>

Research Article

Cases of Pedagogical Discontentment of Secondary English Teachers

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Article history:

Submission May 2021

Revised May 2021

Accepted May 2021

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ABSTRACT

This research aimed to analyze secondary English teachers' pedagogical discontent and identify factors relating to this construct. Further, this study established the teachers' affective response to his evaluation of the effectiveness of his existing teaching practices and goals. This study utilized descriptive research with a qualitative approach using the multiple-case study design. The researcher distributed a pedagogical discontentment checklist to identify the English teachers with 'high' or 'very high' pedagogical discontentment, wherein eight (8) participants were identified. They belong to the eight (8) secondary schools in one of the districts in the Schools Division of Zambales. The eight (8) participants were subjected to individual interviews and focus group discussions. It was found out that most of the participants were female, middle adult, holding Teacher I position; Seven (7) participants have high pedagogical discontentment whereas only one (1) participant has very high discontentment; Teachers are recommended to undergo training workshops on pedagogy. Conducting regular focus group discussions on improving the weak areas are noted; An investigation on the frustrations, attitudes and beliefs, interventions, classroom practices, and aspirations of the English teachers should be conducted considering their contexts. Professional learning communities are deemed necessary.

Keywords: Pedagogical Discontentment, Secondary English Teachers, Qualitative Research

Background

The beginning of collecting, reflecting, reasoning, understanding, and accumulating practical wisdom is teacher thinking. Teachers' thinking and practice are shaped through practical experience and through deliberate application of theory to practice. It starts with guidance during pre-service teacher education and continues through in-service professional

development (Huang, 2015). It means that the teachers' knowledge and beliefs greatly affect their teaching and how they take up new messages about their teaching. This is a process that is heavily influenced by a teacher's thinking as one enters the experience called Pedagogical Discontentment (Southerland et al., 2016)

How to cite:

Balmeo, B. J. S. (2021). Cases of Pedagogical Discontentment of Secondary English Teachers. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary: Applied Business and Education Research*. 2(5), 413 – 416. doi: 10.11594/ijmaber.02.05.07

Pedagogical discontentment, according to Southerland, is the "measure of teachers' satisfaction with their past and current teaching practice and is understood to be an indicator of whether an individual is poised for change." It can also be defined as the immediate assessment of the teacher's current teaching practices. Research has shown that teacher change is facilitated by unhappiness, or discontent with current practices (Feldman in Hathcock, 2014). (Gregoire, 2003) suggests that it is important that a teacher experiences a certain degree of discontentment with the effectiveness of his/her current teaching practices because only upon undergoing it can he/she really engage and consider new teaching practices, strategies, or techniques. This means that without PD, it is most likely that there will be no change that will take place in the teacher's teaching practices.

Pedagogical discontentment is grounded on Satisfaction Theory – also known as Customer Satisfaction Theory. This study rested on the satisfaction taken by the teacher on the quality of his teaching, which is primarily measured by the connection between his expectations versus actual results.

The present literature in education shows little research that measures teachers' level of pedagogical discontentment. A study by Sowell, who created an instrument with 38 items, was designed to help teachers show their level of discontentment with their pedagogical practices. But the instrument was applied to American Science teachers. A similar study was conducted by (Qablan et al., 2010) in Jordan. They measured the level of pedagogical discontentment among Jordanian Science and Vocational teachers. However, there were no similar studies in the Philippines that can be found. Further, there was no study conducted about this construct in terms of qualitative inquiry internationally and locally.

The Philippines is recognized globally as one of the largest English-speaking nations, with most of its population having at least some degree of fluency in the language. English has always been one of the country's official languages and is spoken by more than 14 million Filipinos. It is the language of commerce and

law, as well as the primary medium of instruction in education (Cabigon, 2015).

Proficiency in the language is also one of the Philippines' strengths, which has helped drive the economy and even made it the top voice outsourcing destination in the world, surpassing India in 2012. The influx of foreign learners of English is also on the rise due to the relatively more affordable but quality English as a Second Language (ESL) programs being offered locally.

However, at a recent roundtable organized by British Council Philippines, key stakeholders from the government, academe, private, and non-government sectors acknowledged that even if the country is doing fine in terms of English competency, concerns on how much of a competitive advantage it still is here were raised. The stakeholders agreed that the country needs to step up its efforts in improving the teaching and learning of English, developing it as a vital skill of the workforce. This is an initiative that can potentially strengthen the Philippines' distinct advantage in this part of the world, particularly with the upcoming ASEAN economic integration (Cabigon, 2015).

With the present state of English education in the country, the researcher was concerned about why some teachers experienced difficulties in handling English classes. Based on his observation, factors affecting teachers' performance do not necessarily conform with job satisfaction. Lastly, he analyzed the 'pedagogical discontentment' of English teachers and its implication to the quality of English instruction that they deliver.

The main purpose of this research is to discover the affective construct that greatly influences teachers' practices in the room and to describe pedagogical discontentment as a factor in changing these practices.

Methods

The study utilized descriptive research with a qualitative approach using the multiple-case study design. The researcher investigated the eight (8) participants' perceived pedagogical discontentment in the eight (8) secondary schools in a district in the Schools Division of Zambales. The findings were drawn from the

semi-structured interviews. Teacher-participants were made aware that the research's objective was to inform and suggest intervention efforts to improve the teaching of English. Further, the research also intended to add in the existing body of knowledge in as much as the construct pedagogical discontentment is concerned. Semi-structured interviews were conducted, which lasted 20-30 minutes enough to cover the interview schedule's content. The interview protocol posed questions related to pedagogical discontentment, job satisfaction, and teaching self-efficacy. The interviews were audio-taped when agreed upon by the interviewee and transcribed by the researcher.

Constant comparative analytic methods (Boeije, 2002; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) will be used in conjunction with content analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Constant comparison as delineated by (Boeije, 2002) involves (1) coding with a single transcript; (2) comparison of codes between transcripts to develop categories; and (3) analysis on how and if each category is connected in order to (4) develop new categories, combine existing categories, and delete others.

Pseudonyms were used to differentiate or group the participants.

Findings and Discussion

Asking oneself, "Where do I fall short?"

This theme describes participants' difficult or negative experiences. According to the participants, they could hardly be contended due to their many frustrations as English teachers like lack of teaching resources, the students' difficulty coping, using bilingualism in the classroom, and too many competencies and topics to cover.

According to the participants, they could hardly be contended due to their many frustrations as English teachers. Their frustrations imply that the participants could hardly cope with the diverse learners that they have. Further, these teachers believe that they are helpless in making most of their students learn English. Simplifying the lesson to make it easy is the answer for one participant. This is improper if not dangerous since this will warrant the ineffectiveness of the K to 12 curriculum implementations.

Asking oneself, "Is it always about teachers?"

This theme describes the participants' attitudes and beliefs based on their past experiences as English teachers. Some believed that they are not effective, that the curriculum standards are too high for the learners, that the learners are too slow to cope, and that the curriculum is not appropriate for the grade level.

Public school teachers who participated in the study said that the competencies set by the Department of Education are too high and are not being followed all the time and thus brings discontentment towards their teaching practices. In contrast, the private school teachers who participated and admitted that they do not follow the curriculum guide stated that this is the reason why they feel pedagogical discontentment.

Asking oneself, "Am I too traditional?"

This theme identifies the participants' classroom practices as English teachers. The most important findings say that participants follow the book's sequence and not in the curriculum guides, and three participants said that their practices are traditional.

One participant said she has short patience for low-achieving students; that is why she prefers to use peer tutoring to help students with low-level abilities. Most of them admitted they do not use authentic assessment that much.

Asking myself, "What should I do?"

This theme identifies the interventions that the participants usually do as English teachers. This is to compensate the participants' feeling of discontentment toward their teaching practices and goals. However, some participants admit that sometimes, these interventions are still insufficient. Home visits and remedial classes were mostly cited by the participants as interventions.

The pedagogical discontentment mentioned by the participants were covered in the six (6) categories of pedagogical discontentment mentioned by (Southerland et al., 2011) These are (1) ability to teach all students, (2) content knowledge, (3) balancing depth versus breadth of instruction, (4) implementing inquiry instruction, (5) assessing learning, and

(6) teaching the nature of the subject being taught (Southerland et al., 2011).

Conclusion and Implication of the Findings

Key findings suggest that programs, projects, and interventions should be provided to these teachers to ensure personal, professional, and academic support to achieve quality English instruction. In sum, the qualitative findings on the pedagogical discontentment as viewed by the participants provide relevant information not often conveyed in quantitative investigations. Lastly, a closer examination of the English teachers' lived experiences in the study increases the current understanding of how teachers, in general, tend to perceive the real classroom contexts, which need immediate attention by DepEd officials.

Results suggest that there are important factors to consider in helping teachers who are struggling with their roles and functions. Their frustrations, attitudes, beliefs, interventions, classroom practices, and aspirations should be investigated for instructional supervisors and managers to provide appropriate technical assistance.

Acknowledgment

Gratitude is given to the Schools Division of Zambales for permitting to conduct the study. Special thanks to Dr. Rachelle Crisostomo - Diviva, Education Program Supervisor in

Mathematics, for the provision of technical assistance, and Dr. Dave Bueno and the Columban College, Inc. for the research guidance. Eternal gratitude is also given to all the participants who gave their time and efforts to finish the study.

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