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Research Article

A Perspective-Changing Teaching Experience in Araimiri

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ABSTRACT

The study underscores the remarkable human capacity for resilience and determination when confronted with challenging life situations. Specifically, this research delves into a teacher's interactions with a group of high school students who, due to their unique circumstances, embarked on a transformative journey, overcoming obstacles in the realm of education. The research focused on a private school in Araimiri in the Gulf Province of Papua New Guinea. Employing a qualitative methodology, the study specifically adopts an autoethnographic approach. This autoethnography unfolds against the backdrop of a unique and immersive experience, exposing the researcher to the intricate social dynamics, behaviors, and practices of a group of students. Through keen observations, profound conversations, shared experiences, and the examination of artifacts, the study offers an in-depth and distinctive perspective on the educational landscape during the specified period. The study sought to determine the circumstances that made the experiences of students and teachers significant, to identify key elements of the initial education-related situations of students, to determine the initiatives made to help students improve academically, and to reveal significant findings that manifested through the analyses of the experience. These are the conclusions of the study. First, teachers' awareness of students' struggles and unique conditions helps them strengthen their teaching approaches. Second, students' commitment to their lead role in the education process is imperative. Third, teachers' depth in the understanding of topics and their commitment to teaching help in the ability to simplify complex concepts. Fourth, students' prerequisite capabilities when introducing new lessons reinforce learning. Fifth, the implemented curriculum should match with relevant assessments that are often provided by the government or industry. These conclusions imply that educational processes are multifaceted and interconnected with components that have to be harmonized to ensure effectiveness.

Keywords: *Education as multi-faceted and interconnected, Matching implemented curriculum with relevant assessments, Matching students' capacity with lessons, Simplifying complex concepts, Students' background, Students' motivation*

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Introduction

The study underscores the remarkable human capacity for resilience and determination when confronted with challenging life situations. Life, as experienced, is rife with various forms of adversity. Adversities are detrimental to human life and cannot simply be ignored. A study on adversities in childhood and young adulthood revealed that childhood adversities were associated with an increased risk of cardiovascular diseases which can be magnified by adulthood adversities (Zou et al., 2024). A study on persistent financial adversity revealed that consistent financial challenges have a direct link to cognitive performance and might impact brain atrophy (Liu et al., 2023). As human beings, however, we are not completely at the mercy of adversity. We can be resilient. A literature review on building resilience in students revealed that positive emotions, self-efficacy, causal attributions, coping skills, and social support are potential factors that we can leverage to become more resilient (Waters & Halcomb, 2016). Moreover, a literature review on teacher resilience revealed that emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, optimism, coping skills, and social support (Watt & Skaalvik, 2007) are among the factors that facilitate resiliency. The same study likewise revealed that school climate, workload, student behavior, and professional development opportunities have the potential to diminish teachers' ability to be resilient. A study on self-efficacy and adversity quotient of employees revealed that employees with higher self-efficacy tend to exhibit greater resilience in the face of adversity (Ramadan & Huriyati, 2023). This implies that training and education in general increase an individual's ability to be resilient in the face of adversity. A study by Hsieh et al. (2024) revealed that resilience is vital for mitigating the effects of adversities on overall well-being. In a study referring to recent events where organizations have had to implement forced change, resilience is a way of surviving. The same study revealed that organizational culture represents a stabilizing force, highlighting the social dimension of resilience (Aasen & Klakegg, 2023). Furthermore, a study on reimaging teacher resilience revealed that there is a notable correlation between teacher resilience and job satisfaction (Chen, 2024). In an organized environment like a workplace, good relationships help employees face adversities by way of productivity. A study on psychological empowerment and psychological well-being revealed that enhanced organizational support fosters employee empowerment, thereby resulting in enhanced job performance (Putra et al., 2023). A similar study revealed that positive workplace relationships have a beneficial impact on job performance (Niere (Mecon) et al., 2024). Indeed, human beings from all walks of life, could not escape the threat of adversities in varied forms, however, the human capacity to be resilient could not be underestimated.

Specifically, this research delves into a teacher's interactions with a group of high school students who, due to their unique circumstances, embarked on a transformative journey, overcoming obstacles in the realm of education. Through their shared experiences, the study sheds light on how individuals can navigate and triumph over challenges. In the same line of thinking, overcoming challenges in education persists today. A study on rural teachers' development showed among other things the need for teaching resources, adequate training, and teacher incentives (Zhongzhuoma & Abdul Aziz, 2024). A study by Lestari et al. (2022), revealed that sound pedagogical knowledge and teaching experience were among the factors that support teachers' capacity to help students overcome learning difficulties. From another standpoint, the study brings attention to the profound value that students place on education and the substantial efforts they undertake to attain it. It also emphasizes the initiatives implemented to address challenges within the teaching-learning process. This situation, however, is not the case in some settings. A study on pedagogical approaches in teaching secondary mathematics revealed problems in implementing a sound pedagogy. The problems among other things highlight the students' unwillingness to learn cooperatively, teachers' lack of time for preparation, and teachers' heavy workloads (E. Evangelio, 2023). Contrary to the preceding situation, the study sheds light on the dynamic process of education, illustrating the dedication and collaborative efforts required to elevate

students to a level of proficiency aligned with educational standards. In support of this assertion, a study on the contributory factors to student success in higher education revealed that among other factors, addressing students' needs, an enabling environment, and involving students as partners contribute to students' success (Sabelo & Legg-Jack, 2022).

The focus of the study centers on a teacher's encounter with a group of high school students within the setting of a High School in Araimiri, positioned about 20 kilometers west of Kerema, the capital of the Gulf Province in Papua New Guinea. Employing an autoethnographic approach, the research delves into the nuanced landscape of education-related challenges. By illuminating these challenges, the study endeavors to offer insightful perspectives that contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of education as a discipline.

Research Questions

The study centered on the unique experiences of a teacher and groups of students caught in challenging circumstances in Araimiri, spanning the years 1991 to 1993. Specifically, the study sought to answer the following inquiry.

1. What were the circumstances that made the experiences of students and teachers in Araimiri significant?
2. What were the initial defining encounters between the teacher and students that made a profound impact?
3. What adaptation strategies were initiated by the teacher in Mathematics to become more relevant to students' situation?
4. What were the significant realizations that manifested through the experience of both teacher and students?

Methods

Critical autoethnography, which involves deep self-examination and reflection through intricate and critically reflexive storytelling within the research framework (Boylorn & Orbe, 2020) is utilized in this research. There are two main types of autoethnography: evocative autoethnography and analytic autoethnography. The key distinction lies in how they present their narratives. Evocative autoethnography aims to immerse readers in the researcher's lived experiences accomplished through richly detailed storytelling (Koay, 2023). Ellis & Bochner (2006), asserts that in evocative autoethnography, narratives represent a type of knowledge that does not necessarily demand explicit analysis. This is because storytelling inherently involves analytical processes. In essence, storytelling entails the selection of pertinent events and their presentation to serve a specific purpose or achieve a particular objective. In analytic autoethnography, the analytical agenda is overtly embedded within storytelling. This is accomplished by linking personal narratives to established theories and research findings (Anderson, 2006). On the themes that were explored in the study, analytic autoethnography was used.

The research focused on a private school in Papua New Guinea, specifically in the remote locale of Araimiri, approximately 20 kilometers west of Kerema, the capital of the Gulf Province. This region, with the Coral Sea separating it from Australia, sets the backdrop for the study. Spanning the years 1991 to 1993, the research delves into the challenges confronted by both teacher and high school students. It meticulously traces educational highlights, explores theoretical underpinnings, and captures firsthand perspectives. Employing a qualitative methodology, the study specifically adopts an autoethnographic approach. This autoethnography unfolds against the backdrop of a unique and immersive experience, exposing the researcher to the intricate social dynamics, behaviors, and practices of a group of students navigating challenging circumstances with resilience and determination. Through keen observations, profound conversations, shared experiences, and the examination of artifacts, the study offers an in-depth and distinctive perspective on the educational landscape during the specified period.

While this autoethnographic research provides valuable critical perspectives, a limitation is its reliance on the perspectives of a single individual. Although this is not done in the study, albeit an appropriate suggestion, a focus group comprising individuals from diverse

backgrounds, and offering multiple viewpoints, could enrich the discussion on the study's themes and provide a more comprehensive understanding (Egitim & Watson, 2024).

Results and Discussions

Context of the Teaching Experience

Several years ago, I took on a volunteering opportunity to teach high school students in a remote area of Papua New Guinea. It was my first teaching assignment after I finished a bachelor's degree in education. At the age of twenty-two, I embarked on this adventure with little time for formal preparations due to the urgency of the assignment. Despite the lack of extensive planning, I focused on cultivating a resilient mindset, drawing inspiration from a quote by Epictetus that I encountered in grade 9: "Wealth consists not in having great possessions, but in having few wants" (Epictetus Quotes, n.d.). Embracing this philosophy, I adopted the belief that contentment could be found in simplicity, allowing me to be happy with whatever circumstances I encountered. By lowering my expectations to the essentials needed for survival, I learned to appreciate everything beyond those basics as a valuable blessing.

The school is in Araimiri, approximately 20 kilometers west of Kerema, the capital of Gulf Province. Nestled between the Coral Sea and an untouched, bushy landscape, the setting is defined by coconuts, sago palm trees, and pristine black sand beaches. The coconut trees stand as remnants of the area's past as a plantation. Sago palm trees thrive abundantly, providing a staple food source for the locals, while the beaches showcase black fine sand, creating a picturesque backdrop. However, this idyllic location is notably isolated from civilization. Drinking water relies on rainwater, and electricity is generated and maintained by the school's generator. Communication is limited, with no telephones, and communication was done through radio transmission. Beneath the stunning natural beauty of the surroundings, there are inherent risks. The region is home to snakes and other potentially dangerous animals. Additionally, the swampy terrain contributes to a high prevalence of mosquitoes, including those carrying malaria. Despite these challenges, the captivating scenery and unique environment create a truly memorable and distinctive experience.

Distance of Students Residences and its Consequences

The students attending the school hail from remote villages, where the lack of transportation options compels them to undertake the journey on foot. In the past, the scarcity of roads, particularly in mountainous regions, meant that many villages remained unconnected. This geographical isolation renders the distance between these villages and the school quite substantial, adding an extra layer of difficulty to the students' occasional trek. Notably, some students navigate this challenging journey barefoot, as a testament to their resilience and determination. During one particularly striking moment, I observed a student using the sole of his foot as a support while sharpening a stick with his knife. Although initially concerned about the potential for harm, I discovered that the thickness of his sole, measuring about a quarter of an inch, was a result of constant barefoot walking. This insight highlighted the remarkable adaptations these high school students undergo in their pursuit of education. It truly is awe-inspiring to witness the lengths they go through to access the opportunities provided by the same.

Given the considerable distance students had to traverse, often spanning several hours and, for some, even days, staying at the school was the only practical solution. Consequently, part of the school's infrastructure included provisions for board and lodging, transforming teachers into not just educators but also guardians responsible for the student's well-being, including overseeing their dormitories. My specific role was overseeing the kitchen, a critical responsibility that involved preparing their daily meals and baking bread, a staple in their diet. The decision to have students reside at the school not only addressed logistical challenges but also generated additional responsibilities for teachers. Beyond teaching, we became organizers of recreational and sports activities, daily chores, and occasional events like variety shows, plays, treasure hunts, and quiz bowls throughout the school year. Despite the added

workload, this multifaceted approach allowed for a more holistic engagement with the students, fostering a deeper understanding of their individual needs and personalities. In turn, this comprehensive involvement contributed to a richer and more fulfilling educational experience. Referencing holistic engagement with students, a study on an educational system adapting a holistic integrative approach revealed that students develop their emotional and intellectual abilities among other equally relevant traits in the said educational context (Hamami & Nuryana, 2022). Another study related to a holistic approach to education pointed out informal settings as an important dimension (Kauppinen & Palojoki, 2023). A dimension that the school has plenty of given the situation that students have a lot of chance to be in contact with teachers in non-classroom settings.

Initial Encounter with Students

In my initial days, while acquainting myself with the responsibilities handed over by the teacher I replaced, I received a crash course in the fundamentals of baking, a domain now under my purview as the new overseer of the kitchen. Coincidentally, this transition occurred when the said teacher was scheduled for a Mathematics class. Curious about his approach, I inquired, and he casually mentioned assigning an activity, expressing that his physical presence did not significantly impact the student's learning experience. Uncertain whether he meant this in the context of his imminent departure or the inherent challenges of instructing these pupils, I found myself pondering. Subsequently, when I assumed control and initiated a mathematics lesson—beginning with a concise concept explanation followed by illustrative examples—I was met with a disconcerting cacophony from the students. This audible discontent served as their explicit disapproval of my teaching style. Eager to comprehend my students better and, in turn, enhance my instructional approach, I sought information from various sources to gain insights into their preferences and expectations. Speaking of expectations, I wanted to do more. Having high hopes for students relates to the study by Hollenstein et al. (2023), which revealed the positive relationship between teacher expectations and student achievement along with students' self-concept.

During my investigation, I unearthed a noteworthy educational landscape in the Gulf Province during that period—there existed a pronounced disparity in the number of elementary schools versus high schools. Related to this situation were the findings of a study on the right to education in the context of elementary education, that point out the notable delay in the development of school infrastructure, highlighting various worries for educational administrators (Longkumer & Langstieh, 2024). Moreover, upon completing elementary school, all students faced a pivotal qualifying examination for high school. Those unable to amass sufficient points to meet the criteria were denied access to high school education. This circumstance rendered the private high school where I taught a vital alternative pathway for those who fell short of the required qualifications. Essentially, our student body comprised individuals from the lower stratum of the high school qualifying examination, suggesting a potential challenge in instructing them. A study on the role models of teachers in facilitating students' learning suggests that struggling students could be assisted by teachers in showing them how to learn (Subagia, 2020). A task that may be easier said than done. Moreover, it hinted at the likelihood of some students harboring feelings of inferiority in comparison to their successful peers. Such a scenario creates a dynamic where certain students may require additional support in their learning journey and necessitate guidance to rebuild their self-confidence. About self-confidence, a study by Putri et al. (2023), points out the association of students' self-confidence to their self-esteem. This study showed the potential complexity of the situation.

A Change in Perspective

Recognizing the considerable efforts these students invest to access education, along with the myriad intellectual and emotional challenges they navigate, places them right before me. When I lock eyes with them, it feels as if they are silently conveying, "We've endured numerous adversities; please lend us your

assistance." Initiating my mission to assist them, I embarked on the task of gauging each student's proficiency in mathematics. Regarding gauging students' proficiency, a study on curriculum implementation and diagnostic assessment pointed out the latter's relevance in determining students' weaknesses and challenges (Aringka, 2023). This paves the way for the teacher to tailor-fit classroom strategies. Furthermore, a study on developing a diagnostic framework to assist teachers emphasized the provision of a ready-to-access tool for diagnostic assessment of students (Säfström et al., 2023). This affirms the relevance of diagnostic assessments which greatly applies to students included in the study who may have potential education-related problems based on the circumstances they were in.

Once I discerned their skill levels, I recalibrated the lesson plans. Instead of adhering strictly to the predetermined curriculum, I began instruction at the collective level of the majority, while also tailoring my approach to accommodate the specific needs of those at the lower proficiency tiers. Addressing these needs involved a personalized teaching approach and facilitating group dynamics, where adept students could guide their struggling peers. Similar to the preceding situation, a study on the impact of peer learning on student performance in an architectural sustainability course revealed that peer learning increased students' knowledge, motivation, and commitment (Àndrés et al., 2021). Moreover, a study on the influence of personalized learning intervention systems on student learning revealed that personalized learning approaches are more effective than traditional ones (Zhou et al., 2022). Furthermore, a study on teachers' capacity to create inclusive learning environments revealed that teachers' support is an important component for accommodating students with special needs (Leifler, 2020). From another perspective, recognizing the sequential nature of mathematical concepts, I understood the importance of ensuring students possessed a requisite skill mastery before delving into advanced topics. Consequently, I diligently assess their mastery levels before progressing to more complex lessons. Similarly, a study on students' readiness for e-learning during the recent pandemic alludes to the importance of readiness and reveals the variability of the same (Adams et al., 2021). Moreover, a study on student readiness for online learning in higher education pointed out three dimensions of student readiness, namely, self-management of learning, lecturer quality, and access to technology (Fadhilah & Husin, 2023). The same study suggests monitoring the improvements in student readiness through a performance map, alluding to the nature of student readiness as dynamic.

With a clear grasp of the student's proficiency levels, I embarked on a comprehensive approach to elucidate the underlying concepts of each lesson. I employed a variety of illustrative examples, delving into diverse angles that showcased the practical applications of the topics at hand. To ensure genuine comprehension, I engaged them actively in class participation, and board work, and encouraged inquiries in an open and supportive atmosphere. In this connection, a study on the implementation of a supportive classroom environment revealed that this type of environment helped middle and upper-group students and suggested an enhanced approach for lower-group students (Ghany & Wahyudin, 2021). Lower-group students, however, were given special attention in this renewed perspective. Speaking of lower-group students, a study conducted in a lower primary classroom revealed that the implementation of effective teaching strategies by teachers led to enhancements in their students' reading skills. Additionally, the study highlighted the significant benefit of daily phonics practice in improving vocabulary recognition (Chandra & Chand, 2024). This study points out the relevance of appropriate teaching methods and practice. Moreover, a study on the impact of classroom climate on emotional development revealed that supportive classroom environments promote general well-being and positive social-emotional outcomes among young learners (García-Peinado, 2024).

Embracing a new perspective, teaching transformed into a journey commencing at the level of students' existing mathematical skills, gradually progressing towards the mastery required by the curriculum, and extending onward to the application of knowledge in real-

life scenarios. This educational expedition begins with a profound awareness of students' capabilities, coupled with an understanding of the course's relevance in navigating life situations and its significance in advancing to higher educational levels. In line with students' situation, a study about an analysis of students' interests and motivations revealed that educators ought to consider variations in students' interests and motivations when creating suitable curricula and employing supportive teaching approaches (Aini, 2023). Within this teaching context, teacher commitment is essential, dedicated to assisting students who are eager to learn and collaborate. It is a partnership where teachers and students become allies in the pursuit of knowledge, collectively devoted to the learning process. A study about employing our students as pedagogical design partners asserts that the significance of listening to students' perspectives for both teachers and curriculum designers is crucial to curricular effectiveness (Kohen-Vacs & Hardof-Jaffe, 2023). As the teacher, I prioritized a deep understanding of each lesson to simplify complex concepts effectively. Related to the idea of simplifying complex concepts in lessons, a study on project-based learning lessons asserts that in the lesson plan, the teacher should highlight the uniqueness of each subject and its connection to lesson objectives (Gabrielyan, 2023). Furthermore, lesson activities were carefully crafted to adapt to the learning pace of students, fostering an environment where they could gain confidence in tackling mathematics problems that they previously deemed insurmountable. This initiative is reflected in the study on the relationship between instructional clarity with students' motivation and self-confidence which revealed that the clarity of instruction in physics lessons directly impacts students' motivation and self-confidence in learning physics (Pečiuliauskienė, 2023). This approach not only facilitated academic growth but also instilled a sense of empowerment and capability among the students.

Interesting Discoveries with the Teaching Experience

The adjustments I implemented yielded noticeable changes, and the once irksome noise that marked the beginning of classes became a thing of the past. Students became actively engaged and unreservedly asked questions, perhaps sensing my genuine desire to assist them. Beyond the confines of formal class hours, I fostered connections through casual conversations with students. These interactions provided invaluable insights, offering perspectives that often elude the structured atmosphere of the classroom. In one such conversation, I had the opportunity to speak with a standout student in mathematical prowess. Curious about the experiences that contributed to his proficiency, I discovered an unexpected source. He revealed that his adeptness in mathematics stemmed from a peculiar circumstance during his second-grade years. Strangely enough, being frequently tardy to class became the catalyst for his improvement. Elaborating on this, he shared that each time he arrived late, his teacher would task him with transcribing the multiplication table onto large leaves. Given the prevalence of plants with substantial leaves in the bush-filled Gulf Province, such an unconventional approach proved surprisingly effective in nurturing his mathematical skills. Related to this situation was a study about challenging primary teachers' views on mathematics teaching and learning, which led teachers to emphasize the necessity to focus on strategies for engaging and facilitating learners' participation in mathematics lessons, emphasizing the significance of learners independently discovering mathematical concepts (Fauskanger et al., 2022).

In a different scenario, a student approached me with concerns about his performance in Mathematics. Despite expressing gratitude for the assistance in learning mathematical concepts, he voiced apprehension about a different challenge—weakness in comprehension. While adept at problem-solving, he struggled with grasping the essence of the problems themselves. This brought to light the intricate connections between various disciplines, particularly the symbiotic relationship between Mathematics and Language. Unlike the mathematical challenges I typically address, this concern delved into the realm of language comprehension, a domain more aptly handled by his English teacher. In recognizing

the interdisciplinary nature of learning, it became evident that collaboration among educators was essential to comprehensively address the diverse needs of students. In this connection, a study on cognitive and socioeconomic factors that influence the mathematical problem-solving skills of students revealed that text comprehension abilities indirectly influenced mathematical problem-solving skills, with science background knowledge serving as a mediator in this relationship (Amalina & Vidákovich, 2023). This study points out a more comprehensive interrelation among subjects. A study about taking interdisciplinary science learning to nature revealed that students as they immerse themselves in nature, develop an understanding of the role of science and their place as individuals in the natural world (Güler et al., 2023). Like the interplay between mathematics and language, we appreciate science from a different perspective if we view ourselves as part of it. Moreover, in a study on teaching and learning in interdisciplinary learning it was asserted that to implement interdisciplinary teaching, teachers must have an appreciation, a clear understanding, adequate knowledge, and teaching proficiency of the approach (Li, 2023). These requirements point out the challenging nature of interdisciplinary teaching.

Qualifying for Senior High School

As the academic sessions progressed, it came to my attention that our graduating class faced another hurdle: qualifying for an examination for senior high school, akin to their previous experience when transitioning from elementary to high school. Recognizing the significance of this assessment, I delved into our school's mini library in search of materials that could provide insights into the actual topics covered in the examinations and their format. The materials revealed a comprehensive scope, encompassing lessons from grades seven to ten, with a specific focus on the practical applications of these lessons in real-life situations and problem-solving. In connection with problem-solving, a study about helping mathematics teachers enhance students' problem-solving skills, asserts that having a lesson study of groups of mathematics teachers helps in teaching mathematics through problem-solving (Roorda et al., 2024). The same study revealed that what teachers perceived as challenging were the lesson phases that emphasized discussions on solution strategies rather than pinpointing the correct answers. Moreover. a study on problem-solving and mathematical competence revealed that problem-solving approaches vary depending on the specific teaching context and the competencies involved (Rocha & Babo, 2024). The same study revealed that students' proficiency in executing routine procedures hinges on their foundational understanding of mathematics. These studies point out the complex nature of problem-solving in mathematics.

The school had adopted a spiral curriculum approach, meaning that topics were revisited throughout grades seven to ten, gradually increasing in complexity as students progressed to higher grade levels. In line with the spiral curriculum, a study on the coherence of content topics in a spiral mathematics curriculum revealed that the spiral design of the curriculum fell short of alleviating the congestion of content distribution and learning competencies, making it impractical for implementation in typical classrooms (Dio, 2020). This showed that problems may arise in the implementation of this approach. However, a study on elementary school spiral curriculum implementation revealed that the curriculum was structured in a developmental sequence, with its dynamics tailored to specific learning areas and objectives, showing a more effective implementation of the approach (Özkale & MemiŞ, 2022).

Uncovering the nature of the examination questions, I noted that they primarily comprised multiple-choice questions. Notably, the incorrect choices in these questions often mirrored common mistakes students might make when answering. This realization underscored the importance of critical thinking and thorough understanding, as merely selecting an answer present among the choices did not guarantee its correctness. The examination format thus demanded a nuanced approach, emphasizing not just rote memorization but a deeper comprehension of the subject matter. In line with crafting multiple-choice examinations a study about assessing the quality of multiple-choice questions, revealed that the questions in

most of the courses included in the study had poor discrimination index which highlights the need for careful formulation of multiple-choice questions for authentic assessment (Bhat et al., 2023). Moreover, a similar study revealed that multiple-choice exams show reduced discriminative ability among high-scoring students, suggesting that employing clinical vignettes, which are short scenarios or cases presenting real-world situations, may help preserve the discriminative power of multiple-choice questions (Iñarrairaegui et al., 2022). These studies point out an inherent quality in multiple-choice examinations. They were meant to be challenging. Moreover, armed with insights into the structure of the qualifying examination, I tailored every lesson to optimize the graduating students' chances of success in the upcoming assessment. The manner of lesson delivery considered the potential phrasing of questions that could appear in the examination. To familiarize students with the multiple-choice format, all topic drills were meticulously presented in this style. Moreover, the choices provided for each question were crafted to include the plausible wrong answers that students might be inclined to make. This strategic approach aimed not only to reinforce their understanding of the subject matter but also to enhance their ability to navigate the specific challenges posed by the examination. It was crucial to create a positive classroom atmosphere that encouraged open communication, prompting every student to share their difficulties with the lessons.

Findings Related to the Teaching Experience

I discovered that my genuine commitment to supporting students in their academic journey originated from a profound understanding of their challenges. Feeling a deep sense of empathy towards their struggles and pains, I developed a profound respect and admiration for each of them. As a teacher, I recognize the privilege bestowed upon me to make a meaningful impact on these individuals, fostering a mutually liberating relationship. This connection goes beyond academic assistance, encompassing a shared journey toward growth, empowerment, and the realization of their full potential. A study by Zeinstra et al. (2023) revealed that teacher's actions in terms of nurturing feelings of autonomy, competence, and relatedness during interactions with their students had an immediate impact on their engagement.

I discovered that when students comprehend the significance of education and its profound implications for their future, they are naturally inclined to muster the effort required to meet its demands. Acknowledging their role as the primary participants in the educational process, it becomes evident that teachers and parents are facilitators, playing a supporting role. In the specific context I experienced, the students displayed an abundance of motivation, viewing the school as a rare and singular opportunity for education. Their commitment was akin to a dog clinging tenaciously to a bone, never letting go. However, it is essential to recognize that such fervor may not be universal across all school settings. Empowering students to take ownership of the responsibility for their education is crucial. This self-driven approach, with its potential life-changing effects, emphasizes the transformative power of education. Encouraging students to recognize their pivotal role in their learning journey fosters a mindset that extends beyond the immediate academic challenges, preparing them for a future where they actively engage in shaping their destinies through education. A related study on perceived autonomy support revealed that perceived autonomy support was a positive predictor of both academic buoyancy and academic self-efficacy (Kingsford-Smith et al., 2024). The study suggests that when students are encouraged to be self-directed, they tend to be academically resilient and confident.

I discovered that a teacher's ability to simplify intricate concepts and procedures, especially in high school Mathematics in my case, is directly linked to the depth of his or her understanding of the subject matter. As I delved into the intricate details and interconnections inherent in the subject, what initially appeared complex gradually revealed its inherent simplicity. The exhilarating feeling that accompanied this discovery inspired me to share this heightened awareness with my students. Moreover, the commitment of a teacher to aid students in their learning journey, fueled by an acute awareness of the students' unique situations, catalyzes simplifying complex concepts.

This commitment creates an environment where the teacher actively seeks out ways to make the learning process more accessible and relatable. In essence, the process of simplifying intricate concepts becomes not only a pedagogical skill but also a reflection of the teacher's dedication to facilitating a meaningful and comprehensible educational experience for their students. A related study on student-centered and teacher-centered pedagogical approaches revealed that teachers who implemented student-centered teaching reported experiencing greater gains in pedagogical content knowledge compared to those who utilized direct teaching methods (Woods & Copur-Gencturk, 2024). Student-centered approaches are more complex but are potentially rewarding for students.

Recognizing the critical importance of ensuring that students possess the necessary skills before delving into a specific topic, especially in mathematics, became a foundational principle in my teaching approach. I understood that expecting students to comprehend concepts for which they were not adequately prepared posed a significant challenge. Conversely, by acknowledging the interconnectedness of topics and ensuring that students were at a level enabling them to tackle the subject at hand, not only did they become capable of understanding the topic, but they also gained a boost in self-confidence. This emphasis on prerequisite skills and a thoughtful approach to the progression of topics contributed not only to better comprehension but also fostered a sense of empowerment among students. The newfound self-confidence proved to be a motivational force, encouraging them to persevere in their educational journey. A related study on prior knowledge and additional courses revealed that students who participated in the extra course exhibited enhanced academic performance (Uhanova et al., 2023). The study implies that students who have the necessary prior knowledge can have a better chance of learning.

I came to understand the crucial significance of aligning the implemented curriculum with the requirements of the qualifying examination for the next educational level. The harmony between the curriculum I adhered to and the nature of the impending qualifying examination for graduating students was evident. This alignment not only streamlined immediate preparations but also instilled confidence in both students and teachers, assuring them that all their academic endeavors were directly connected to the eventual assessment that held significant weight. While not every student achieved success in the qualifying examination, the match between the curriculum and the exam structure ensured that each student felt they had a fair chance. This realization emphasized the importance of strategic curriculum planning, aiming not only to impart knowledge but also to equip students with the skills and understanding needed to meet the specific challenges posed by critical assessments. A study on training systems as support to a digitally enabled workforce revealed the necessity to have collaborative and enduring partnerships among vocational education and training institutions, universities, government bodies, industries, high schools, and private training providers (Laundon et al., 2023). This partnership ensures that what is taught in school is what the government will assess and is what the industry requires. In the context of high schools, it is a coordination between academic institutions and the government. A study about technical curriculum implementation and evaluation framework revealed a cyclical curriculum implementation and evaluation dynamics to ensure that what students learn is also what will be required when they go for employment while highlighting the need for constant cooperation among involved parties because of the dynamic nature of curricula (Narsico & Narsico, 2023).

In my teaching experience, I recognized that education is a multi-faceted and interconnected process. Beyond the confines of the classroom, I witnessed the active commitment of students toward learning, driven by their intrinsic motivation. Simultaneously, teachers exhibited a dedicated commitment to facilitating student learning through well-crafted and engaging learning activities. The positive and supportive learning environment that emerged played a pivotal role in fostering the educational journey. The importance of a well-designed curriculum became apparent as it

seamlessly integrated into the learning process, complementing the efforts of both students and teachers. Education, as I observed, unfolded as a harmonious interplay of various factors, all converging to create an environment geared toward student learning. This holistic perspective left a profound impression on me, leading me to assert that, when all necessary factors are in place and work together cohesively, students find themselves in a situation where it becomes nearly impossible not to learn. A related study that looks at the multifaceted nature of education from the standpoint of teacher education showed that the three facets of epistemic relations include connections between various knowledge sources, relationships among diverse methods of knowledge creation, and the significance of epistemic relations in the learning process of student teachers (Hermansen & Mausethagen, 2023).

In its entirety, my teaching experience unfolded as a microcosm reflecting the dynamics of human life at large—an intricate tapestry woven with stories of resilience in challenging circumstances and an enduring struggle to overcome whatever adversities life may present. Being able to contribute my part to this narrative brought me a deep sense of fulfillment and gratitude. I found solace in the knowledge that, through education, I played a role in empowering students to face life's challenges with resilience and determination. My teaching journey presented both challenges and profound rewards. One defining moment encapsulates the essence of my experience, occurring as two graduating students approached me just before departing the school. Their heartfelt expression of gratitude, accompanied by the words, "If ever we become teachers, we will teach like you," left an indelible mark. Reflecting on those two years spent in Araimiri, I recognize them as among the best in my life.

Conclusions

Based on the findings through the impactful dynamics of the experiences of the researcher with students in the remote area of Araimiri the following conclusions were deduced:

1. The teacher's awareness of the struggles and unique conditions of students which are often hidden, is an important component in the teaching-learning process.
2. The students' commitment to their lead role in the education process had to be nourished and preserved.
3. The teacher's depth in the understanding of topics and his or her commitment to teaching had a positive role in the ability to simplify complex concepts.
4. It is crucial that students have the prerequisite capabilities when introducing a new lesson.
5. It is crucial that the implemented curriculum matches with relevant assessments like standardized government and industry examinations.
6. Education is a multifaceted and interconnected process. All relevant components must work cohesively to ensure learning.

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