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Research Article

Tindig! Lesson Planning Challenges and Coping Strategies of Pre-service Teachers in a State University

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ABSTRACT

"Tindig" is a Filipino word that means "to rise" for pre – service teachers to be full fledge teacher in the future and a word that fits to capture their resilience, capability, and strength in overcoming challenges in order to be where they want to be. This study focuses on knowing what are the challenges that pre – service teachers are experiencing in making their lesson plan and their strategies in coping with the challenges in lesson planning. The researchers gathered data through a form of semi structured interview among BSED students. The results of the interview showed the difficulties that pre – service teachers experiences, that affects the quality of a lesson plan. These includes time famine, resource bottlenecking, cognitive overload, and spatial precarity. Nonetheless despite these challenges, the pre – service teachers showed resilience and were able to develop their tactics in addressing these challenges through coping strategies such as prioritizing essential task, allocating focused time intervals, practicing lesson plan deliberation and using applications, and seeking assistance and support from artificial intelligence.

Keywords: *Coping strategies, Lesson Planning, Pre service teachers*

Introduction

The research entitled "Tindig! Lesson Planning Challenges and Coping Strategies of Pre – Service Teachers in a State University" explores the experiences that the pre – service teachers are facing. In which Lesson planning is one of the pre-requisite skills that every pre-service

teacher must go through. It is to develop mastery in teaching strategies that should be implemented inside the classroom setting. It sets a clear structure on how to conduct classes or teaching and is usually based from a guided curriculum; it is to ensure that it is align with

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the educational standard. However, implementing these plans into more efficient classroom practice, cannot be done easily due to a systematic challenges and ongoing curriculum changes. These results into teachers relying into one another, building collaboration with colleagues, simplifying lesson contents when needed and applying available institutional support. This highlights the importance of lesson planning that it is both foundation skills in teaching field and a flexible process, requiring teachers to fully understand the Curriculum Guide while maintaining a realistic environment for their learners.

By the study of Cevikbas et al. (2023) emphasizing its relevance across subject areas and the need for strong competence among pre-service teachers. This is visible in the teacher education college program, lesson planning serves as fundamental pre-requisite that prepare future educators the ability to organize instruction, manage classroom, proper deliberation of lesson proper or known as class discussion and effective transition into actual teaching practice. Similarly, Marquez and Marquez (2023) found that effective lesson planning in the Philippines context requires mastery of content, pedagogy, and learner understanding. Aside from this, lesson planning is also considered as blueprint for effective teaching demonstration. This is emphasized by, Ponce (2024) in which lesson planning is underscored its necessity before engaging in practice teaching. It means that lesson planning serves as a bridge into connecting theoretical knowledge and applying it into real – life situation inside the classroom.

In the Philippine education system, the content in lesson planning is anchored in the Curriculum Guide (CG) provided by the Department of Education. In which from DepEd Order No. 42, s. 2016 explicitly mandates that lesson plans should be aligned with the CG, reinforcing its central role in instruction. This supports the study of Marquez and Marquez (2023) noted that misalignment with the CG can lead to significant instructional issues. As the lesson plan provides an outline that requires content standard, performance standard, and learning competencies that the teacher must implement into daily instruction, making it the primary reference for systematic, goal - oriented

teaching and student - centered learning process. This emphasized by Abaiz et al. (2025) highlighted that under MATATAG Curriculum, effective lesson planning begins with a careful interpretation of the CG to ensure coherent lesson progression.

Along the importance of lesson planning, it also shows several challenges that pre-service teachers face. For instance, Sebulen (2023) reported the difficulties in integrating ICT, weak alignment among lesson components and limited resources. Some of the most common challenges is that they must ensure that their lesson plan is aligned to the curriculum guide, adjust and supply into the diverse needs of each learner, and maintain an attainable objectives, teaching strategies and assessments. Ras (2023) identified issues such as curriculum overload, time constraints, and resources shortage under the K to 12 programs, prompting teachers to simplify their plans and focus on essential competencies. The transitions brought by the MATATAG Curriculum continue to challenge both pre-service and in-service teachers, primarily due to insufficient training and limited adjustment periods. Unlike the previous K to 12 frameworks, the MATATAG Curriculum places major emphasis on foundational skills, streamlined learning competencies, and more focused learning outcomes. These changes require pre-service teachers to carefully interpret curriculum standards and adapt their lesson plans to meet revised instructional expectations. As they are still developing their pedagogical knowledge and classroom management skills, pre-service teachers may experience difficulties in aligning learning objectives, instructional strategies, and assessment tasks with the requirements of the new curriculum. The need to adjust to these curriculum shifts while simultaneously fulfilling the demands of practice teaching creates additional challenges in lesson planning and implementation. These challenges reveal the gap between theoretical expectations and actual classroom practices. According to Abaiz et al. (2025), teachers often struggle to align curriculum demands with real classroom conditions, making lesson implementation more complex and demanding.

To address these challenges, teachers adopt various coping strategies that help them manage instructional tasks more effectively and realistically. These include collaborating with peers, seeking professional guidance, and engaging in mentorship with experienced educators. According to Rubio et al. (2025), peer support and mentorship play a significant role in strengthening lesson planning skills and improving teaching practices. Through collaboration, teachers gain practical insights and shared strategies that enhance their instructional effectiveness.

Another important strategy is engaging in reflective practice to continuously improve teaching approaches. According to Ras (2023), teachers often streamline lesson content and prioritize essential competencies to adapt to curriculum transitions. They also interpret the curriculum guide (CG), participate in professional development opportunities, and share best practices with colleagues. These strategies enable teachers to navigate the complexities of lesson planning while maintaining effective and responsive instruction.

This study highlights how pre – service teachers respond to curriculum transitions as inputs for improving instructional practices and lesson planning. However, limited literature focuses on how teachers adapt specifically to the MATATAG Curriculum in real classroom settings. Understanding these experiences can contribute to developing more practical and responsive teaching strategies that support both teachers and learners.

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in Constructivism, pre – service teachers examine their lesson planning experiences and identify challenges and strategies for improvement. According to the constructivist approach, learners actively build knowledge from experience (Salandanan, 2012). “Learners analyze their experiences and construct understanding through reflection” (Ebro, 2022, p. 163). Meanwhile, Lev Vygotsky emphasized that learning occurs through social interaction and guidance (Grageda et al., 2022). In lesson planning, pre – service teachers rely on mentors and peers to improve their skills. Hence, constructivism highlights that lesson

planning develops through experience, collaboration, and reflection. According to Kolb (1984), experiential learning explains that skills improve through experience and reflection, which applies to how pre-service teachers revise their lesson plans. Wherein it is also known that learning was more effective if it is received by actively participating and engaging through reflection, experience and interaction rather than receiving the information passively.

Cognitive Load Theory states that complex tasks can overwhelm learners due to limited mental capacity (Sweller, 1988), explaining the difficulties in lesson planning. Furthermore, self-efficacy influences confidence in performing tasks (Bandura, 1997).

While Coping Theory explains how individuals manage challenges through problem-focused and emotion-focused strategies (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). These theories explain how Pre – Service Teachers experience challenges and develop coping strategies in lesson planning.

While Coping Theory explains how individuals manage challenges through problem-focused and emotion-focused strategies (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), these theories help explain how pre-service teachers experience difficulties and develop coping strategies in lesson planning. Lazarus and Folkman also stated that stress occurs when individuals perceive that environmental demands exceed their available resources, which is evident in cultural stress experienced by pre-service teachers as they adapt to diverse school environments and expectations. This cultural and contextual pressure can influence how they do lesson planning and apply coping strategies in response to instructional challenges.

Procedures

The study adopted a qualitative research approach, utilizing narrative inquiry as its design to explore the lived experiences of pre-service teachers in lesson planning. Narrative inquiry allows researchers to understand participants’ experiences through their personal stories, which reflect their academic responsibilities, challenges, and coping mechanisms within their educational context.

Prior to the actual data gathering, the instrument was validated. Then, a pilot interview was conducted to test the credibility of the interview questions. This process ensured that the questions were appropriate for producing responses and allowed revisions to improve the quality of the questions in the interview.

After the revisions of the question, the researchers pursued approval from BSED Program Chairperson to conduct the data gathering. The eleven (11) participants were chosen through both purposive and convenience sampling techniques, selecting third-year Bachelor of Secondary Education students at President Ramon Magsaysay State University who had experienced lesson planning during their immersion. Participants were purposively chosen based on their relevance to the study and conveniently selected based on their accessibility and availability.

Data were gathered using semi-structured interviews, which allowed modification of questions to have a deeper response from the participants. The interview guide consisted of open-ended questions designed to explore the challenges encountered in lesson planning and the coping strategies used by pre-service teachers to aid this. Follow-up questions were also used to clarify and expand participants' responses.

For ethical consideration, a consent form was given to the participants then the interviews were conducted in the Campus Library to ensure that participants could freely express

their experiences in lesson planning. Each session was recorded using a smartphone with the participants' consent and later transcribed for thematic analysis. The participants used a Filipino language to answer, which helped them provide more accurate and broader responses without language variation. Afterward, the researchers translated these responses into English with the assistance of Grammarly for transcription and analysis. Before proceeding, the researchers also stated the purpose of the study for the participants to know about the nature on what will be asked to them.

The collected data were transcribed and thoroughly reviewed, coded, and categorized to identify recurring patterns and key themes through a thematic analysis. A thematic analysis is a research method that is used to classify, scrutinize and determine patterns from the data (Ahmed et al. 2025). These themes were then interpreted to highlight the common challenges and coping strategies of pre-service teachers in lesson planning. To verify accuracy, some participants were asked to validate the identified themes.

Findings and Discussion

Challenges of Pre-service Teachers

Table 1 shows the challenges of pre-service teachers in making lesson plan, wherein it includes having difficulties on time famine, resource bottlenecking, cognitive overloading, and spatial precarity.

Table 1. Life of Junior College Students at School

Themes	Description	Simple Verbatim Statement	f(n=11)
Time famine	Pre-service teachers struggle to do task due to time utilization that leads to rushing academic task just the sake of submission.	"So, isa sa mga challenges na-experience ko as a third-year student is yung time management. Kasi alam naman natin na hindi madaling gumawa ng lesson plan. It takes a lot of time. Pero as a student kasi, as a member of organization din, binabalance ko lagi yung time ko sa paggawa ng lesson plan. Minisan nakakompromise pa yung lesson planning ko. Minamadali na lang kasi nga sobrang daming gawain ng third year students." [PS 3]	9

Themes	Description	Simple Verbatim Statement	f(n=11)
Resource bottlenecking	Limited access of resources that is essential to make a lesson plan like access to internet, printer and laptop.	"Siyempre ako cellphone lang yung meron akong gadget, which is dapat ang gagamitin ko is laptop." [PS 2]	2
Cognitive overloading	Knowing multiple information all at the same time	"Yung motivation po kasi doon dapat makuha mo ang attention ng student at dapat maintegrate mo yung motivation sa lesson mo." [PS 5]	9
Spatial Precarity	A poor physical environment negatively affects lesson planning. That can reduce focus and motivation that can affect in lesson planning.	"Tapos kapag meron ding hindi maganda yung environment sa bahay, ano parang wala ka sa mood gumawa ng lesson plan." [PS 11]	2

Time Famine. Pre-service teachers' satisfaction with their academic responsibilities is significantly affected by limited time, as insufficient time hinders their ability to effectively complete tasks such as lesson planning. Time constraints reduce productivity and increase pressure, which may lead to rushed outputs and lower-quality work. One of the participants stated, "*Hindi madaling gumawa ng lesson plan. It takes a lot of time*" [PS3]. Research shows that pre-service teachers frequently struggle with managing instructional and academic demands within limited timeframes, resulting in challenges in task completion and performance (Sebullen, 2023).

Cognitive Overloading. This happens when there's more information than the brain can effectively process. One of the participants pointed out "Nahihirapan ako sa development of the lesson" [PS7]. Additionally, another participant remarks that "*Sa'kin kasi hindi ko alam kung ano iniisip ko na kasi kung ano yung magiging motivation ko*" [PS2]. These significantly capture that implies that there is a difficulty in managing information due to its complexity during the development of the lesson this is supported by the study of Van den Berg and Du Plessis (2024), which stated that lesson planning challenges are not only focused on time constraints but also on dealing with excessive informations. The helplessness to process excessive information hinders the overall efficacy of the lesson planning.

Resource Bottlenecking. Refers to the lack of important resources. Participants identified that one of the major hindrances to the efficacy is the absence of technology. One of the participants said, "*Yun Yung pinaka-struggle ko. Kahit mahirap siyang gawin, kung wala kang laptop na talaga mas mapapadali mong gawin, mahirap*" [PS2]. The verbatim implies that not having enough resources can hinder the efficiency in lesson planning. These findings also support the study of the Institute of Education Science (2025), which indicates the consistent struggle of pre-service teachers in having limited resources that hinder the progress of teachers in pursuing professional development.

Spatial Precarity. When there is a disturbance in the environment in an individual's workspace. Fewer participants experience this challenge; however, its impact is significant in the development of lesson planning because it serves as a barrier that can hinder the effective use of other lesson-planning strategies. One of the participants highlighted that, "*Tapos, kapang meron ding hindi maganda yung environment sa bahay na nakaka apekto rin sa pag-gawa ko ng lesson plan*" [PS11]. This emphasizes how the status of the working space affects the effectiveness of the output. This aligns with the study of Lansangan (2021), which defines spatial precarity through crowded living spaces, noise pollution, and lack of privacy. This shows that there is decreased productivity in doing one's task.

Coping strategies of Pre-service Teacher in lesson planning.

Table 2 shows the coping strategies of pre-service teacher in lesson planning. These strat-

egies include Choosing what matter most, focusing intervals, cultural stressing, and utilizing data.

Table 2. Coping Strategies of Pre-service Teacher in lesson planning.

Themes	Description	Simple Vervative Statement	f(n=11)
Utilizing data	With the help of technology pre-service students learned to utilize the resources available such as Artificial Intelligence, Internet, and social media wherein they don't start from scratch but rather learn and adopt improving their classroom instructions.	<i>"Minsan po nagpapatulong ako sa AI gumawa ng lesson plan. Sa accurate na resources ang ginagawa kopo is hinahanap kopo yung link nung resources tapos tinatanong ko po si AI kung reliable ba iyon o hindi."</i> [PS 9]	8
Focusing intervals	Time management strategy, like focusing interval is a strategy that helps the pre-service teacher balance academics and personal life.	<i>"Siguro, po isa na rin yung pag-allot ng time talaga para sa mga gawain".</i> [PS 3]	5
Choosing what matter most	Students cope by prioritizing tasks. Completing one requirement at a time helps maintain focus and prevents fragmented outputs, ensuring lesson plans are finished with coherence.	<i>"Kung maraming ginagawa, tinatapos ko muna yung isang gawain para hindi putol-putol."</i> [PS 4]	3
Cultural stressing	Consistent practice and simulation help students develop mastery of the lesson that leads to a reducal of stress and enable them to have a better learning output.	<i>"Kapag natapos ko yung development of the lesson prinapRACTICE ko sya na parang nag demo narin ako".</i> [PS 6]	3

Utilizing Data. Pre-service teachers learn and cope up as they utilized existing resources available and accessible such as; internet, AI (Artificial Intelligence is a technology used to assist and enhanced learning process), and social media platforms rather than starting from a scratch. One participant shared that, "Kapag po nahihirapan ako gumawa ng motivation sa lesson plan, nagse-search ako ng mga video sa TikTok ng mga nag-demo teaching." [PS11]. This shows that to cope up with the challenges being able to utilize resources is needed. This suggests that pre-service teachers actively seek alternative sources of information and inspiration when they encounter difficulties in lesson planning. For the participant, digital platforms such as TikTok serve as accessible tools that provide practical examples and ideas that can be adapted to their own lesson plans. Through the use of these resources, the participant was

able to address challenges in developing lesson components and continue the lesson-planning process more effectively. This approach aligns with the study of Goldman and Bell (2021), which states that teachers modifying existing lesson plan to fit their classroom instructions also improves the learning. Furthermore, Kwaah et al. (2022) Also states that being digitally literate and capable helps the teachers cope up in challenges and allows them to navigate to the digitally changing world.

Focus Interval. A strategy of pre-service teachers in which they spend their time focusing solely on one lesson planning. This strategy enables them to produce effective lesson planning output. As one of the participants said "Mas inuuna ko yung ibang task para yung focus ko ay nasa mismong lesson plan" [PS6]. This shows the importance of having a time and focus on doing a curriculum. This indicates that

the participant deliberately manages other responsibilities first to minimize distractions during lesson planning. By allocating dedicated time and attention to the task, the participant is able to concentrate more effectively on organizing lesson content and instructional activities. This practice demonstrates how focused engagement contributes to the development of more coherent and well-structured lesson plans. This aligns with the study of Olivo (2021) stating that when a teacher focuses on first on doing task one at a time, they enter a state of "flow" in which the continuous doing to task makes them enter a state of higher concentration resulting to a better output.

Choosing What Matters Most. Choosing What Matters Most. To address the complexity of lesson planning participants adapts in a way that they choose to finish the most urgent task need. One of the participants emphasized that "Kailangan talagang balansin lang yung pag-aaral at yung pagbabalibol" [PS1]. This shows that to adapt in the challenges one must balance the task needed and must spend time on both tasks rather than having to compromise, this shows a balance between academics and personal life. This suggests that the participant recognizes the importance of managing both academic responsibilities and personal interests without neglecting either one. By maintaining this balance, the participant is able to cope with the demands of lesson planning more effectively. This situation aligns with the study of Erss and Kalmus (2022), in which teachers cope up in professional demand through focusing in meeting specific goals especially in their instructional objectives.

Cultural Stress. The art of adapting and learning. It is when pre-service teachers break their limit, it is a transition between being a student to becoming professional. As one of the participants emphasized "Kapag po natapos ko na yung lesson plan ko, lalo na yung development of the lesson plan. Sinusubukan ko siya para ma-imagine ko or makita ko, doon ko makikita kung pwede itong ganitong flow" [PS7]. This highlights the importance of consistency and the relevance of continuous simulation and practice. This suggests that the participant actively evaluates the effectiveness of

the lesson plan by imagining its actual implementation in the classroom. Through simulation and rehearsal, the participant is able to identify possible improvements in the sequence of activities and determine whether the lesson flow is appropriate for achieving the intended learning outcomes. Such practice allows the participant to refine the lesson plan before its actual delivery. Hence, this aligns to the study of Zaragoza et al. (2024) In which teachers practice their lesson to address the part where it is lacking and need further improvements.

Conclusion

This study revealed the challenges of being a mere student into becoming a professional. This highlights the struggle of the pre-service teachers and challenges they encounter such as time famine, resource bottlenecking, cognitive overload, and spatial precarity among these challenges many pre-service teachers struggle mostly in time famine and cognitive overloading. However, they address these challenges through choosing what matters most, focusing intervals, cultural stressing, and utilizing data in which majority of the pre-service teacher cope up through utilizing the resources available.

Recommendations

The Pre – Service Teachers may balance academics and personal life by spending time in doing things they love while not having to compromise academics. To the Teachers they may balance the giving of requirement to the students or expand the submission time so that activities needed to finish don't overlap. As for the curriculum planners, they may conduct further investigations in the struggles of pre-service students and address the issues needed to improve the learning. Additionally, to the Student Leaders may propose plan that will help pre-service teachers handle struggles effectively such as seminars that focus on well-being. Furthermore, to the Program Chair may conduct a training workshop that will enhance the capabilities of pre-service teachers in lesson planning.

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