

## Experiences of Student Teachers in Thailand: A Pre-service Teacher Training Encounter

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### ABSTRACT

COVID-19 greatly impacted the lives of students in universities worldwide, more so for the students who are to take their last year of schooling and are about to enter their pre-service teacher training. Students who wished to become teachers before and even during the pandemic needed their pre-service teaching training or teaching internship. It can be done locally or abroad. This study aimed to explore the professional experiences of student teachers while having their pre-service teacher training and on-the-job training abroad. This study aimed to determine the future teachers' professional needs as demonstrated by the challenges experienced by these student teachers, especially in addressing the call of the global community. A qualitative design was used employing individual interviews of the nine (9) Student Teachers participants based on purposive sampling. Then, it was supported by a group interview after the first interview round. Through thematic analysis, the professional experiences of the student teachers were determined and analyzed. Results showed that the student teachers had unique professional experiences, such as dealing with the English level of students, multi-level classroom teaching experience, use of different strategies, professional development, learning the Thai Language, and use of good facilities. The student teachers also faced challenges along with their professional experiences. These are challenges related to the difficulty in teaching English, teaching in multi-level classes, teaching more than the expected class size, multiple co-curricular tasks, and difficulty in learning the Thai language. However, despite these challenges, the student teachers learned and improved themselves in their pre-service teacher training abroad. They managed to equip themselves to become fit regarding the call of Internationalization and Globalization through quality education.

### 1. Introduction

The disruption of COVID-19 in the educational system is of great magnitude that universities must cope with as soon as possible. The call is for higher education institutions to develop a resilient learning system using evidence-based and needs-based information to implement responsive and proactive measures (Dayagbil et al., 2021). This statement formulated a benchmark considering the intense desire to achieve quality education to address the need for time. The rationale of CMO, 2017 says that the Policies, Standards, and Guidelines implement the shift to learning competency-based standards/outcomes-based

education in response to the 21st Century Philippine Teacher Education framework. Therefore, it emphasizes developing graduates with the abilities and qualifications needed for a 21st Century teacher. Before and even during a pandemic, students who wish to become teachers must have pre-service teacher training. It is mandated in the curriculum of students enrolled in Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEED) and Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSED). It can be either in the laboratory school of their Teacher Education Institution (TEI) or the In-Campus Pre-service Teaching, outside the laboratory school or the off-campus Pre-service Teaching in the public school or

even outside the country. [Zuilkowski \(2021\)](#) mentioned that pre-service teacher practicum, devised to provide pre-service teachers with practical teaching experience, has been recognized by many scholars as one of the important elements of pre-service teacher preparation. Also, based on the result of the study, [Ocampo \(2021\)](#) recommended that educational institutions may start to develop pre-service teachers' learner skills and train pre-service teachers to acquire teaching skills. Therefore, this magnifies that experience matters most in preparation for being a future global educator.

Experience helps a lot in attaining knowledge and wisdom in the chosen profession. Experiential learning theory (ELT) provides a holistic model of the learning process and a multilinear model of adult development, consistent with what is known about how people learn, grow, and develop ([Kolb et al., 2018](#)). Associating with Swartz's statement, experiential education first immerses learners in an experience and then encourages reflection about the experience to develop new skills, attitudes, or ways of thinking ([Swartz, 2013](#)). The stated concepts emphasized the significance of experience as part and parcel of human development. Considering quality learning, therefore, requires varied sources--experience is one of the best sources of learning and development. Claims on experience as the basis of learning can be strengthened through Constructivism theory.

Constructivism is a learning theory in psychology that explains how people might acquire knowledge and learn. It, therefore, has direct application to education. The theory suggests that humans construct knowledge and meaning from their experiences ([Olusegun, 2015](#)). Since experience is important in learning, it is also interesting to note the different kinds of experiences, like professional experiences especially related to the field of expertise, like teaching not only locally but if done abroad.

Research on Turkish pre-service teachers' experiences showed that they perceived that the international teaching experience helped them develop professionally and personally. This research investigates Turkish pre-service teachers' experiences related to two-month international teaching in the United States of America. This study was a collaborative project from 2001-2010. It was done in a two-month international teaching ([Ateşkan, 2016](#)).

The study of [Kabilan \(2013\)](#) titled, A phenomenological study of an international teaching practicum of Pre-service teachers' experiences of professional development reported that out of the six pre-service teachers, six weeks in the Maldives experienced beneficial and meaningful professional development from their experiences of teaching in the

Maldivian schools. Therefore, it is interesting that they acknowledge their international teaching internship as an avenue for professional exposure and development. The importance of internship abroad says working cultural competence is essential for American interns to acquire for creating and maintaining positive interpersonal relationships in professional contexts ([He & Qin, 2017](#)). The findings of the research emphasized that internationalization and linkages increase the quantity of graduate's efficiency in the way institutions are managed and produce graduates and professionals' global outlook ready to be hired by internationalized economies ([Mejia et al., 2014](#)).

Simulation tasks of future teachers and experience in other countries and their professional experiences will be excellent and meaningful. One of the provisions of [D.O. \(2017\)](#) which stipulates the national adoption and implementation of the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST), there are qualities expected of teachers. Teachers must, among others:

- 1) Know what to teach and how to teach it
- 2) Maintain a learning-focused environment
- 3) Respond to learner diversity
- 4) Plan and design effective instruction
- 5) Use a variety of assessment tools to inform and enhance the teaching and learning process
- 6) Establish community relationships and uphold professional ethics
- 7) Engage in professional reflection and assume responsibility for personal and professional learning

Hence, upcoming Filipino educators must be thoroughly equipped to meet the requirements of 21st-century students. In parallel, the [United Nations \(2015\)](#) embraced the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), commonly known as the Global Goals. These encompass 17 sustainable development objectives, with the fourth goal focused on Quality Education. The pursuit of inclusive and high-quality education for all underscores the conviction that education serves as one of the most influential and effective catalysts for sustainable development ([UNDP](#)).

Considering the context of globalization, [Misra \(2012\)](#) mentioned that globalization symbolizes a paradigm shift involving the rethinking of beliefs and structures in traditional consciousness. It symbolized a shift from a mono-cultural approach to education to a multi-cultural approach with attendant implications for changes in the school curriculum and attendant practices. Therefore, the education community is no longer limited to the home experiences of the learners

but rather the future teachers to gain experiences within and outside the country. The experiences of practice teachers abroad will equip them to face the battle in the global setting. Further, this is also a realization of quality education, the fourth sustainable development goal (SDG).

This study serves as an avenue for Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) to understand the needs of Pre-service Teachers who will become future globally competitive teachers. The professional experiences and challenges these Pre-service Teachers meet will serve as the bases for revising and innovating the existing policies and guidelines of Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) to address the demand of the global community. On the part of the pre-service teachers, this is a call for them to elevate themselves to a higher quality of future global teachers.

### *Theoretical and Conceptual Framework*

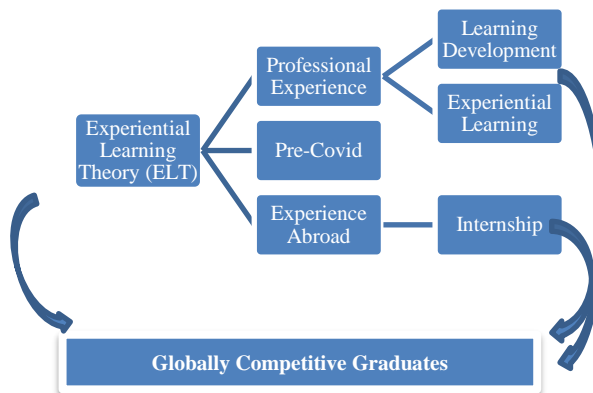
This study is anchored by Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) and guided by Progressivism and constructivism. Experiential learning is a learning process initiated by a concrete experience, which demands reflection, review, and perspective-taking about the experience; then abstract thinking to reach conclusions and conceptualize the meaning of the experience, leading to a decision to act, engaging in active experimentation, or trying out what you have learned (Institute for Experiential Learning, 2023). Student teachers' experiences in the simulation task of being practice teachers in Thailand will demonstrate learning development through reflection review and perspective-taking, specifically concerning their professional endeavors. These experiences of practice teachers can be determined under the umbrella of the Philosophy of Progressivism.

Progressivists believe individuality, progress, and change are fundamental to one's education. Believing that people learn best from what they consider most relevant to their lives, progressivists center their curricula on students' needs, experiences, interests, and abilities (John Hopkins University, 2013). Putting more emphasis on the significance of students' experiences and later helping them in coming up with new knowledge, Constructivism theory supports the concept. Constructivism is a learning theory that emphasizes the active role of learners in building their understanding. Rather than passively receiving information, learners reflect on their experiences, create mental representations, and incorporate new knowledge into their schemas (Mcleod, 2023). These philosophies and learning theories support the significance of experiences as a springboard for learners to discover significant concepts and thoughts. The experiences of the practice

teachers in Thailand would give them more opportunities to improve their expertise.

The following diagram presents the schematic illustration of the study.

**Figure 1.** Paradigm of the Study



The simulation activity of students enrolled in Teacher Education is to have their practice teacher training or on-the-job training to ensure the quality of their performance. Their professional experiences refer to their experiences related to the field of teaching. It did not include personal experiences since it only focused on professional experiences to further highlight the development in terms of their growth professionally as future teachers. Considering the time before the pandemic, the professional experiences of the student teachers outside the country show evidence of what they learned in their Professional Education Courses, specifically in Field Study 5 and 6 and Internship, that equipped them to become globally competitive graduates.

### *Objectives and significance of the study*

This study centered on the professional experiences of University of Baguio Practice Teachers who went abroad for their practice teaching.

The purpose of the study is to find out the professional experiences of student teachers while having their practice teaching in Thailand. It also aimed to discover the challenges along with their professional experiences. After presenting the results, this study can be used as a reference for other pre-service teachers in different parts of the world. It will also help Teacher Education Institutions develop policies to advance the qualifications of a new generation of teachers teaching 21st learners in the global community. The curriculum makers can also refer to the findings, especially in revising the Teacher Education Curriculum.

Along with these objectives, the following problems were sought to address:

- 1) What are the professional experiences of pre-service teachers while having their practice teacher training in Thailand?
- 2) What do the pre-service teachers encounter the challenges along with their professional experiences while having their practice teacher training in Thailand?

## 2. Method

### 2.1 Research Method

This study was conducted to find out the professional experiences of student teachers in Thailand

during their pre-service teacher training. The researcher used qualitative research employing the phenomenological research design. As stated in [Duquesne University \(2022\)](#), a phenomenological study explores what people experience and focuses on their experience of phenomena. Purposive sampling was used because not all practice teachers participated in the International on-the-job training. Only those who went to Thailand to practice teaching from its first implementation in 2016 up to the batch of May 2019 were the participants in this study. They were from the School of Teacher Education of the University of Baguio, Philippines.

**Table 2.1** Population of the study

Area of Specialization	Males	Females	Total
English	2	2	4
Science	0	2	2
MAPE	2	1	3
Total	4	5	9

The researcher used purposive sampling since the respondents had their practice teaching in Thailand. The total population was the basis of the respondents since only 16 were, but only nine (9) responded during the data gathering. The number of respondents is minimal since it is qualitative research focused on personal experiences, so it has been accepted. The statement is supported by [Ellis \(2016\)](#), in saying that different textbooks suggest different-sized samples for phenomenological research, but a sample of between 6 and 20 individuals is sufficient.

### 2.2 Instruments

The researcher focused on the professional experiences and the challenges that came along their way while they were having their pre-service teacher training abroad. The researcher used individual and group interviews as the study's main instruments. The individual interview was done because student teachers attended pre-service teacher training in different semesters and years. Their experiences vary from one another. However, group interview was also conducted after the consolidation of the individual interview results to validate and support further the result of the individual interview. There were two main questions

asked with corresponding follow-up interview questions. The first question was more about professional experiences, and the second was about the challenges the students experienced during pre-service teacher training abroad.

### 2.3 Data Collection

Before gathering data, the researcher made a letter to the participants for their consent through the messenger, a private message for each of them. The Letter of Consent was also sent for them to be clarified on the extent of their participation. The responses of those who responded were treated with full confidentiality. The informants had their choice if they wanted to participate in the research and were according to their own volition. The researcher did not force the informants, who participated according to their free will, as shown by the signed consent letter. The researcher gave interview questions, and responses were gathered through text messaging since the participants were no longer connected to the university. After gathering the data through text messaging, the responses were collated and came up with a summary of the results. After this, the researcher again invited the respondents for an informal group interview, and verification was

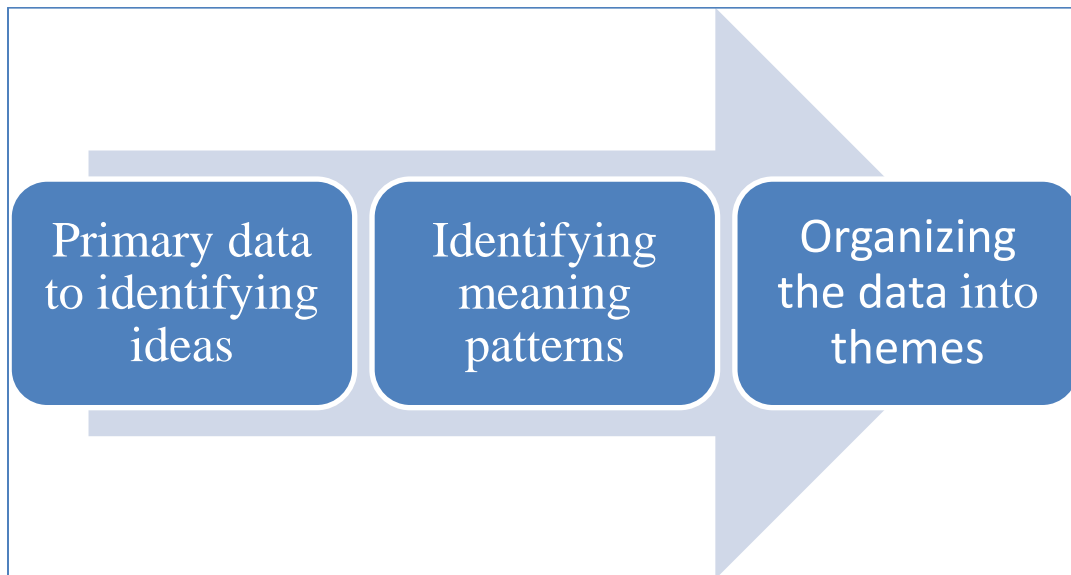
made since these participants had different years of deployment in Thailand. Also, some went during the first semester, while others were during the second semester. After conducting the research, the informants were informed of the result and asked to re-check if there were statements, they thought were not according to their statements.

#### 2.4. Data Analysis

After the verification, the data were analyzed. Through thematic analysis, themes were derived from their responses until data saturation was reached.

Additional information during the informal interview was used to support the details of the findings.

In the thematic analysis, data were analyzed, starting from the primary data to identifying ideas, identifying meaning patterns, and then organizing the data into themes. How a person experiences something is how it appears in their own life (Sundler et al., 2019). The respondents were coded using R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, R7, R8, and R9, which R representing the Respondents and 1-9 represents the sequential presentation of the participant's responses.



**Figure 2.1** Process in analyzing the data

The primary data refers to the participants' responses where ideas were based. After coming up with the general ideas, meaning patterns were noted as bases for organizing the data, and lastly, we proceeded to themes. This process provided the salient findings of the study.

### 3. Findings

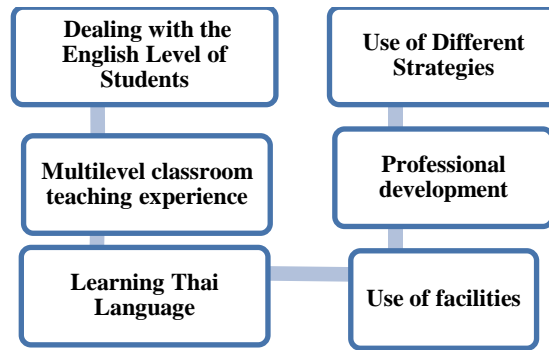
Practice teaching or pre-service teacher training as a simulation to future teachers is a way for them to be

equipped and be qualified in their profession. In this study, the following transpired according to the research objectives.

#### 3.1 Professional Experiences of Student Teachers Having OJT in Thailand

The first research question of this study concerned the professional experiences of student teachers having OJT in Thailand.





**Figure 3.1** shows the result of the professional experiences of student teachers having their OJT

**1) Dealing with the English Level of Students.**

The following are supporting details from the participants' statements, also in consonance with their experience with language barriers since English is not their first language.

*The level of English taught for some classes in the college... lessons are still for beginners. (R1)*

*Another unique professional experience was when we taught students with a language barrier. At first, it was not easy to connect ourselves with the students (R6)*

*It is easier to teach English if the students need help understanding. I had to use translators. (R7)*

The common professional experience of the practice teachers in Thailand on the level of students is the use of the English Language. English is considered an unofficial second language (Tourism Thailand, 2023), Thai is the official language, and it is the language of instruction in regular classes and schools throughout the country. English is taught as a foreign language, along with other languages, including French, Chinese, and German. In some schools, English is the language of instruction students need to be fluent in English (TIMSS & PIRLS, 2015). This statement concludes that for a foreign practice teacher, it is a significant experience for them to communicate with the students taught using their official language.

**2) Multi-level classroom teaching experience.**

The multi-level class set-up is another significant experience for the practice teachers. The participants expressed their experiences:

*I had the chance to teach students from elementary, secondary, tertiary, and even master's degree students. Being able to experience the different levels of education, I knew I was prepared to be in the teaching field. (R2)*

*I was asked to teach and handle classes in the College of Nursing, and College of Law was a challenge. (R9)*

From the articulated statements, it is a new experience for them to handle all the different levels of students. The student teachers are accustomed to the different levels of students being taught by different sets of teachers. For the elementary learners, teachers who graduated with a Bachelor of Elementary Education are assigned, while at the high school level are the graduates of a Bachelor of Secondary Education. For the College levels, teachers with master's degrees are the priority. It is a unique experience that gave them an avenue to be more flexible in dealing with these students.

**3) Learning the Thai Language.** Contrary to the Thai students' inability to use English, they are well-versed in their national language. However, on the part of the practice teachers, this experience also challenged them.

*I learned the Thai language with their Resource Teachers; because of our urge to teach better, we learned how to speak Thai (R6)*

*At first, connecting with the students took much work. However, we learned to speak Thai because of our urge to teach better. It is when I realized that we still need to adjust ourselves to improve classroom instruction as a teacher. R7*

From the expressed experiences of the participants, it can be gleaned that they also had trouble. However, with the help of the people around them, they were able to help themselves. It is also evident that they have the desire to learn. The Constructivism Theory can support this expression that emphasizes the active role of learners in building their understanding (Mcleod, 2023). From their stories, it can be gleaned that they developed independence and became more self-reliant. They accept and deal with unusual experiences with positive thoughts.

**4) Use of Different Strategies.** It was also sought that using different strategies is also their experience. This strategy is employed by the student teacher just for them to be assured that learning will take place.

Although only a few of them mentioned this, it is still glaring. As mentioned by a participant, *I spared some consultation hours for them at the library to help them with their assignments and lessons (R1); I learned how to approach them differently. (R8)*. Corroborating with their statement about their experiences in multi-level teaching, the level of English of students, and the need to become more familiar with the Thai language, it is indeed necessary for them to use different strategies. These statements are experiences that led to their abilities being elevated to a higher level. It is clear evidence that from their experiences, without their knowledge, they are helping themselves to become equipped with the necessary skills needed, especially in teaching in different nations.

**5) Professional development.** The student teachers were able to help themselves through their professional experiences. Several exposures to different activities made them realize that they were professionally developed. The identified evidence of their professional development. The following experiences provided evidence of their improvement.

*I had the chance to heighten my strengths and somehow get rid of my weaknesses through teaching in a whole different learning set-up (R3)*

*My experience in Thailand honed me to become a better professional than I am today (R4)*

*We traveled to every Elementary school to promote English mini-camps and Krasaepattana school to all incoming first-year high school students. (R6)*

*In terms of professional experiences, I worked with Thai professors and teachers. (R7)*

*I also learned to be more professional when it comes to work ethics (R8)*

Participating in different professional tasks demonstrates grasping new knowledge, which will contribute to professional development. The philosophy of Progressivism is very much linked with this since it emphasizes that individuality, progress, and change are fundamental to one's education. Believing people learn

best from what they consider most relevant to their lives (John Hopkins University, 2013 ). From those experiences, they can see the significance of their lives as future educators.

**6) Use of Facilities.** From the participants' responses, they also expressed their unique experiences regarding the use of facilities found in the schools they visited and stayed in Thailand. Respondent 4 mentioned,

*Going to different schools in Thailand also made me realize how good their facilities are; though considered public, schools are fully equipped with laboratories, grounds for physical activities, and equipment needed for teaching-learning. (R4)*

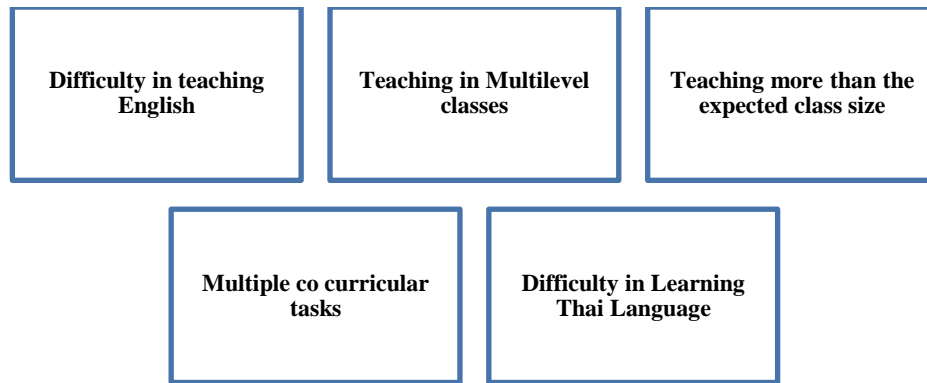
*Though considered public, schools are fully equipped with laboratories, grounds for physical activities, and equipment needed for teaching-learning.*

These professional experiences of student teachers made their on-the-job training abroad become productive. They gained different experiences that made them realize the significance of sustainable development goal 4, quality education (UN). Corroborating with the findings of Ulla (2016), found that the student-teachers also reported some challenges in practicum teaching; classroom management, teaching confidence, and lack of teaching resources. This statement shows that part of the participants' experiences in this study was reflected as challenges in the previous study.

In conclusion, these professional experiences were highlighted by the pre-service teacher participants. They claimed the significance that provided impact in their chosen profession. Their expressions provided a positive thought that these experiences are lessons that can be applied in their future works as teachers who will cater to the needs of 21st-century education.

### **3.2. Challenges experienced by the practice teachers while having OJT in Thailand**

This study also discovered the transpired experiences of student teachers that challenged them while having an OJT in Thailand.



**Figure 3.2** Challenges experienced by the practice teachers while having OJT in Thailand

The following were considered professional challenges among the student teachers who had their practice teaching in Thailand:

1) **Difficulty in Teaching English.** The student teachers needed to have more background on the language exposures of Thai students. The student teachers belong to different areas of specialization like English, Math Science, and MAPEH. However, they are good in English because it is the medium of instruction in the Philippines (EO 210, 2003). The following are the statements that served as evidence in terms of the challenges they experience in their teaching:

*It is easier to teach English if the students need help understanding. At first, I had to use translators(R1)*

*One big thing! Language barrier. It is a challenge, especially because I am an English teacher. But I couldn't hide the feeling of frustration sometimes due to their inability to comprehend even the slightest and simplest words in English. (R4)*

*The class of none English speakers was mind-blowing, but with hard work, effective mentoring of my professors, and God's grace, I could cater to the individual learning needs. (R8).*

Students' frustrations were expressed due to the reason that they find it difficult how to deal with it and how they would be able to survive in the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST). It emphasized that teachers must know what and how to teach (D.O.42, 2017). Therefore, as they experience this in their training, they must help themselves face the challenges. Difficulty in teaching English led to the concept of having a language barrier. The study of Hwang (2013) also finds that the language barrier is a critical handicap not only to non-English-speaking partners but also to English speakers in scientific collaboration.

2. **Teaching in multi-level classes.** This theme was supported by the codes: elementary, secondary, tertiary, master's degree, different levels of education, and different learning set-ups.

*Being able to experience the different levels of education. (R4)*

*I had the chance to heighten my strengths and eliminate my weaknesses through teaching in a different learning set-up. (R8)*

*I had the chance to teach students from elementary, secondary, tertiary, and even master's degree students. (R9)*

Multi-grade learning is familiar to the practice teachers regarding concepts; they did not experience staying in the classroom and having these kinds of learners in the Philippines. As Swartz mentioned, experiential education first immerses learners in an experience and then encourages reflection about the experience to develop new skills, attitudes, or ways of thinking (Swartz, 2013).

3) **Teaching more than the expected class size.** Class size matters in the teaching-learning process. Here is evidence that countries also differ in how they consider class sizes, but what is more important is addressing the needs of the students and maintaining the quality of education. Here are some of the statements of the participants:

*We were given another teaching load in April with 100 or more students. (R2)*

*It was a huge task because I needed to sustain my energy to keep them motivated. (R5)*

*My task was to teach a class of 120 Thai freshmen, Nursing students, and the basics of grammar took a lot of work. (R8)*



Considering the number of students per class in the Philippines, there is a teacher-student ratio according to House Bill 473 or An Act Regulating Class Size in All Public Schools and Appointing Funds Thereof, which says one teacher shall handle a standard class size of 35 learners with a maximum of no more than 50 students (Montemayor, 2018). Therefore, the number of students exceeds what they used to have, making them challenged.

4) **Multiple co and extra-curricular tasks.** The fourth category is on other roles aside from teaching. There are also other roles that the students were challenged in their professional abilities. One of these is Editing Dissertations and Law Papers. During the interview, the informants mentioned professional experiences outside the expected classroom instruction to pre-service teachers' training. As noted from their statements,

*Planning and making programs for English camps for three days per week. We had three consecutive weeks for that. It was challenging because we handled almost 200-300 college students. (R3)*

*We were given many tasks to accomplish, like editing dissertations, translating texts from Pasa Thai (Thai Language) to English, and conducting "English Camps" and "English Proficiency Training Courses" for different levels of learners. (R5)*

*Aside from teaching is doing Zumba sessions. Having Zumba sessions almost every afternoon is tiresome. We need to set up the stage and call all the teachers to join (R5)*

*Aside from teaching in the graduate school program and editing Law Papers, I went to elementary schools in Thailand to do career guidance. (R9)*

Multiple co-curricular tasks for student teachers also served as a challenge. In the Magna Carta for teachers, it says any teacher engaged in the actual classroom instruction shall not be required to render more than six hours of actual classroom teaching a day, preparation and correction of exercises and other work incidental to his normal teaching duties (Bilbao et al., 2015). In other words, looking at the policy in the Philippine educational system, six hours is already good for the whole day, and as per experience, it must be distributed at different hours of the day.

#### 5. Difficulty in learning the Thai language

In order to meet halfway, practice teacher students also need to learn the native language of the students. That is where they again experience challenges. As new to that country, they needed to immerse themselves in the culture, especially the language they use. Here are some of the statements of the pre-service students:

*Professionally, I also have the same issue with the language barrier. Sometimes I need to understand the instructions given by my cooperating teacher. I found it embarrassing to let my CI repeat the instruction or the words 2-3 times for me to get what he meant. However, soon after, I learned some Thai words, making communicating easier. (R7)*

*It was also difficult to learn their language, especially since we were highly encouraged to write and speak Thai during our first weeks. I saw the purpose of learning their language to minimize the language gap, but I found learning, reading, and writing language quickly impossible. (R8)*

Difficulty in learning the Thai language is a challenge associated with a concern regarding the language barrier. Quoted from an article by Michael (2018), the language of instruction is generally Thai, apart from a small number of private institutions and international study programs that use English as a medium of instruction.

In conclusion, the professional experiences led to the professional challenges experienced by the practice teachers in Thailand. They considered language barriers, and pedagogical challenges, including classroom management, as the bases of their significant experiences and challenges as pre-service teachers in Thailand.

#### 4. Discussion

This study focused on the professional experiences and the challenges while having the practice teaching of student teachers in Thailand. As part of helping the students make their practice teaching fruitful and by society's needs at present, having OJT abroad will equip them with the needed abilities to address the need of time.

On the professional experiences, the following findings were presented: 1) **Dealing with English Level of Students**, 2) **Multi-level teaching experience**, 3) **Learning the Thai Language**, 4) **Use of Different Strategies**, 5) **Professional development**, and 6) **Use of Facilities**.

The professional experiences of student teachers helped them realize their strengths and weaknesses, and they can further recognize their needs to improve their abilities, which will hone them to become better teachers in the global community. Ocampo (2021) revealed a significant connection between using teacher skills in the 21st century and learner skills in cognitive ability, autonomy, adaptability, and creativity.

Identifying the first theme, **dealing with the English Level of Students**, and the third theme,

**Learning the Thai Language**, connotes that a language barrier exists. It is a significant experience for a practice teacher in a monolingual country. Language is perceived as a barrier in study abroad programs as it may limit students' opportunities to interact with the local culture (Mancini-Cross et al., 2009). In the article of Giron (2017), she mentioned that past and current research indicates that at least 12 years are necessary for children to gain the level of language ability to extend and use it for the rest of their lives. These ideas are related to the idea mentioned by Llagas (2019) that effective communication means expressing ourselves verbally and non-verbally in ways that are appropriate to our cultures and situations. Along with these statements, it can be corroborated with the study of Simbolon (2023), which emphasized the English Medium Instructions (EMI) that in their findings, the lecturers agreed with all three main issues: terms used as a reference to EMI, EMI practice in the classrooms, and necessary support for EMI implementation. Therefore, his study supports the current study's findings that language is a significant consideration when students go abroad because it will affect their ability to communicate better. An article suggests that language-supportive learning can significantly improve learner outcomes and more effective engagement with subjects across the curriculum (Milligan et al., 2016). This study proves that the support from the Thai teachers to the practice teachers is helpful. The statement of Ningsih et al. (2019), vocabulary is an essential language learning ability, including English, because, without vocabulary, nothing can be conveyed supports the findings that if you are not equipped with the language, it will lead to a big concern.

**Multi-level teaching experience** is another result of the study. This experience is associated with the concept of classroom management. Managing a class with a combination of different ages combined in a classroom is an experience for a teacher that would challenge his classroom ability. In the study of Holzberger and Prestele (2021) on Teacher self-efficacy and self-reported cognitive activation and classroom management: A multi-level perspective on the role of school characteristics. In their study, multi-level analyses revealed relationships between teachers' self-efficacy and self-reported cognitive activation and classroom management at the teacher and school levels. Classroom management differed depending on whether a teacher was in a low- or a high-efficacy school (context effect). Therefore, the experience of teaching students multi-level is one thing they must consider since it can affect their self-efficacy. This statement indicates that Teacher Education institutions should provide a wider range of experiences for their practice teachers in terms of classroom management in a multi-

level scenario since other countries have different classrooms.

Other findings are the **Use of Different Strategies and the use of facilities**. These can be combined since pedagogies of teaching can capture it. Considering the use of different strategies as can be gleaned in the study of Misnawati (2023) on Instructional Strategy for Comprehensible Meaning-Focused Input: Backward Learning Instruction, this is an avenue to ponder on different strategies to be used in teaching and learning, especially that education is already transforming to internationalization and globalization. A study found that they were able to prove that lack of motivation and perspective, as well as factors resulting in low learning attainment, may be overcome through culturally grounded ICT-supported teaching and learning (Kárpáti et al., 2014). These studies support looking into strategies to capture the learners' interests. The practice teachers' abilities in using ICT saved them from the challenges they encountered, specifically in preparing teaching materials as part of their strategies. In the article of Valenzuela (2017), common attributes define a competent teacher in Southeast Asian countries, and one of these is pedagogical skills. These statements can be corroborated by the reports on differences in teaching loads, language, student behavior, recruitment, and career-ladder issues across countries (Jepsen et al., 2014). As such, the findings correspond to the result of a study that the international student teaching experience and the overall internship program with its cultural components contributed in a positive way to student teachers' professional and personal development and helped student teachers increase their cultural awareness (Sahin, 2008). As reiterated in the Approaches K to 12 Curriculum, learning should be interactive, integrative, and collaborative (Corpuz & Salandanan, 2015). From the participants' different experiences, it is safe to conclude that they learned a lot as they improved their professional growth as student teachers outside the country.

Regarding pedagogies, facilities can make teaching and learning more interesting and motivating. From the cited experiences of the students, having these different facilities gave them the confidence to make their practice teaching abroad more fruitful. Akomolafe et al. (2016) revealed in their study that the availability and effective utilization of school physical facilities play a significant role in enhancing students' academic performance, while inadequacy of such physical facilities could contribute to poor academic performance. From what the practice teachers experienced in Thailand regarding the use of facilities, it magnifies their positive feedback on it. In other words, to make teaching and learning effective, the presence of good facilities is necessary.

**Professional development** is another finding. Professional experiences are attributed to professional development. However, this study exposed the practice teachers to other activities like co-curricular activities that helped them more professionally deal with different kinds of people, especially the dignitaries they meet in different situations. Ashton (2019) said practical implications for teacher professional development and initial teacher education programs where mentoring and support for teachers in differentiated practices and resources are needed, particularly for early career teachers.

It can be gleaned, therefore, that universities offering such programs would continue widening their perspectives, especially in offering significant experiences which can be helpful to students, especially when thinking from a global perspective.

The second focus of this study is on the challenges encountered by the student teachers along with their professional experiences while having their practice teaching in Thailand. As stated in the findings, the following transpired as the challenges: 1) **Difficulty in teaching English**, 2) **Teaching in Multi-level classes**, 3) **Teaching more than the expected class size**, 4) **Multiple co-curricular tasks**, 5) **Difficulty in Learning Thai Language**.

Looking at the connection from the study's first objective, the participants identified those professional experiences as the source of the challenges.

**Difficulty in teaching English.** The difficulty in teaching English is the most common challenge among the participants. It is aligned with their experience regarding how they deal with English Level of Students, as manifested in the first problem. This finding supports the findings of Misra (2012) that because of globalization, a paradigm shift involves the re-thinking of beliefs and structures in traditional consciousness from a mono-cultural approach to education to a multi-cultural approach with attendant implications for changes in school curriculum and practices. Language is a representation of each country and has a great impact on the field of education because it serves as the medium of instruction. In this regard, curriculum makers all over the world should consider then shifting from the traditional view to a more inclusive concept catering to all kinds of learners all over the world. It is to realize the goal of making countries' connections seamless in the education field.

The second and third challenges of **Teaching in Multi-level classes and teaching more than the expected class size** are related to policies and guidelines. Different countries have different perspectives in terms of the grouping of learners. In the

study conducted by Todd (2015) on the effects of class size on English Learning at a Thai University, he presented a class size ranging from 10 to 103 students for four fundamental English courses at a Thai university. On the other hand, it was identified in DepEd Order (2008), that the class sizes should range from 15 pupils/students to a maximum of 65 pupils/students per class. The average class size shall be 50. There is evidence that countries differ in policies, but what is more important is addressing the needs of the students and maintaining the quality of education. It is an avenue for the students, teachers, and policymakers to review what is best for the learners and the whole education system.

**Multiple co-curricular tasks** are also one of the challenges experienced by practice teachers in Thailand. Constructivism theory explains how people might acquire knowledge and learn. The theory suggests that humans construct knowledge and meaning from their experiences (Olusegun, 2015).

Having multiple co-curricular tasks to the practice teachers gave them an experience that tends to burden them. However, along the process, if they are managed properly, these become a fruitful experience for them. The Magna Carta for teachers also identified several works, like teachers engaged in the actual classroom instruction preparation and correction of exercises and other work incidental to their normal teaching duties (Bilbao et al., 2015). This implies that those who intend to become a teacher should know the expected managerial and clerical tasks for them. The identified co-curricular and extra-curricular activities that the pre-service engaged in boil down to the context that the students were challenged as to how they could meet their expectations.

The fifth challenge the practice teachers experience is **Difficulty in Learning the Thai Language**. Although it is not a need for them to learn the local language since their learners cannot communicate with them in the language they know, as a teacher, they must take action so that learning will take place. Learning the local language is also an advantage on their part since this will help them immerse themselves in the community. Therefore, nowadays, Teacher Education institutions should consider offering foreign languages across the different programs to address the need for globalization and internationalization.

During the group interview, they expressed their problems but, at the same time, their gratitude because they were able to surpass the challenge. These experiences suit the philosophy of Re-constructionism that aims to improve and reconstruct society, and the teacher acts as an agent of change and reform (Bilbao et al., 2015). As 21st-century learners, they were equipped

with different skills, so they turned these challenges into opportunities. From these professional experiences, these student teachers underwent more comprehensive training than their fellow student teachers' experience in the Philippines. The challenges they experienced in Thailand could be best explained by the study that internationalization and linkages increase the quantity of graduates' efficiency in the way institutions are managed and producing graduates and professionals' global outlook ready to be hired by internationalized economies (Mejia et al., 2014). This means that whatever challenges come their way are opportunities for them to make themselves fit into their chosen career.

As this study's subject, it is significant to note that the practice teachers unwrapped realities in practice teaching in the global community. From these experiences, policymakers should be more aware of the demands of global education. Also, Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs), as the curriculum developers, must realign the Teacher Education Curriculum to the demand of the global setting. TEIs can craft a program that will enhance the abilities of practice teachers, especially in handling the identified challenges for the practice teachers to take the initiative and every opportunity to develop themselves to become global educators.

## 5. Conclusions

The demand for globalization continuously grows, and education is not an exemption. This study proves that the demand for globalization and quality education is essential. In the identified professional experiences of the student teachers in Thailand, these manifested that their experiences in the international field offer greater opportunities to improve their professional abilities in the teaching field. This is also a good avenue for them to achieve quality education in response to the demands of the global community. The challenges that the student teachers experienced paved the way for realizing the importance of the internationalization of education. There are professional experiences that can be offered by schools outside the country that cannot be experienced in one's own country. There are challenging works that can elevate the abilities of these student teachers in a higher post.

However, future studies can also be conducted to find out the experiences of practice teachers after the pandemic to see the more recent challenges in the lives of practice teachers abroad. Future studies can also widen the scope of the population to include other programs that have pre-service training not only in teaching but also in terms of the locale to capture the global scene. This study generally contributes to the welfare of future teachers who will serve 21st-century learners in their respective countries and the global or

international classroom. This also addresses UNESCO's Sustainable Development Goal number 4, which is on quality education to make it a reality in the coming years.

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