Pre-Service Teachers in Action: Experiences and Challenges During Internship

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Abstract:

This study examines the internship experiences of pre-service teachers at Central Bicol State University of Agriculture-Sipocot Campus, focusing on the development of competencies in content delivery, pedagogy, and technology integration. Using qualitative methods, data were gathered on interns' confidence, challenges, and mentorship experiences during their teaching practice. Results revealed strong content delivery skills and effective student engagement but identified gaps in addressing misconceptions and adaptive teaching strategies. Technology integration was valued but hindered by technical difficulties and limited training. Mentorship positively influenced professional growth, though inconsistent communication posed challenges. The findings underscore the importance of comprehensive support systems that balance practical skills, emotional resilience, and technological proficiency. The study recommends enhancing mentorship quality, digital training, and emotional support to improve internship outcomes and better prepare future educators.

Keywords: pre-service teachers, internship, teaching competencies, mentorship, technology integration, adaptive instruction.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the Philippines, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) outlines the requirements and standards for teacher education programs through CHED Memorandum Orders (CMOs). Specifically, CMO No. 74, series of 2017 for the Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEEd) and CMO No. 75, series of 2017 for the Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSEd), require the inclusion of a teaching internship course designed to bridge theoretical coursework with real-world teaching experience (CHED, 2017a; CHED, 2017b). These mandates stress the importance of field-based learning where pre-service teachers engage in actual teaching, lesson planning, classroom management, and technology integration under the guidance of experienced mentors. Internship not only develops practical competencies but also cultivates professional identity, pedagogical judgment, and adaptability.

Internship plays a crucial role in shaping a teacher's foundational practice. Through hands-on experience, interns are able to integrate theory with practice, gain exposure to diverse learners, and develop the professional habits essential for effective teaching. The experience also allows them to understand the realities of the teaching profession and equips them with strategies for classroom management,

differentiated instruction, and adaptive learning. Raymundo and Ignacio (2023) noted that pre-service teachers often experience increased self-efficacy, engagement, and innovative lesson delivery, especially when guided through structured and collaborative mentoring programs.

Recent literature from the past five years provides insight into the lived experiences of pre-service teachers. Raymundo and Ignacio (2023) highlighted how pre-service teachers benefited from using contextualized and creative teaching strategies during the pandemic, while Valdez (2021) emphasized the challenges and triumphs of online internship formats. Similarly, Scarparolo and Subban (2021) underscored the importance of self-efficacy in managing diverse classroom contexts. The need for technology integration and digital competence was also emphasized by Trust and Whalen (2021) and Reyes (2023), particularly during and after the shift to online and hybrid education systems. These studies collectively stress the value of support systems, school context, and adaptive capacity in successful internship outcomes.

On the other hand, the challenges encountered by pre-service teachers are significant. Woodcock (2011) found that interns often struggle with classroom management and adapting lesson content to learners' needs. The inability to use digital tools effectively and the lack of training in technology integration were major concerns during the pandemic, as documented by Reyes (2023) and Ugalingan et al. (2021). Furthermore, feelings of isolation, unstructured feedback, and pressure to meet expectations were also common themes in the literature.

This study, therefore, aims to explore the experiences and challenges of pre-service teachers in CBSUA-Sipocot Campus, focusing on three core domains: content delivery, pedagogy, and technology integration. Specifically, it seeks to: (1) identify the positive experiences gained during the internship, (2) determine the challenges encountered, and (3) offer evidence-based recommendations for strengthening internship support systems and policy implementation.

2. Materials and Methods

The study employed a mixed-methods research design, combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches to systematically document the experiences and challenges of pre-service teachers in their internship. The target population was the total number of BSEd pre-service teachers enrolled in CBSUA-Sipocot Campus for the academic year 2024–2025. Given the small population size (N = 34), total enumeration sampling was used, ensuring that all individuals in the population were surveyed to avoid sampling bias and to enhance data reliability (Union Christian College, 2023).

The study was conducted in May 2025 at the Central Bicol State University of Agriculture (CBSUA), Sipocot Campus. Data were collected during the final week of the internship period, with prior approval from the subject instructor and voluntary participation consent obtained from all respondents. The setting provided a realistic and immediate context for reflecting on the internship experience.

The primary instrument used for data collection was a researcher-made questionnaire. The tool was developed after reviewing relevant literature and structured to capture both quantitative and qualitative data. It consisted of three sections: (1) Likert scale items (1 = Never to 5 = Always) to measure the frequency and degree of experience in various areas, (2) Yes/No questions for binary assessment of specific teaching experiences, and (3) open-ended items to allow respondents to elaborate on significant experiences or challenges. The questionnaire underwent face and content validation by academic experts and a pilot test with 10 pre-service teachers not involved in the final study, yielding a Cronbach's alpha of 0.80 or higher, which indicates good internal consistency.

Data gathering followed ethical research practices. Surveys were administered through google form to account for the variability of individual availability of the BSEd Science 4 teachers or the pre-service teachers. Data were encoded and processed using Microsoft Excel. Descriptive statistical techniques were employed to analyze the data, including frequency counts, percentages, means, and standard deviations. Responses from open-ended questions were subjected to thematic analysis to extract common themes and insights. This mixed data approach allows for both numerical clarity and contextual depth, which are essential in understanding the multifaceted nature of the internship experience.

3. Results

This section outlines the study's findings conducted among 34 BSEd pre-service teachers enrolled in CBSUA-Sipocot Campus for the academic year 2024–2025, focusing on their experiences and challenges during their internship.

Table 1: Experiences and Challenges of Pre-service Teachers During Internship in terms of; A. Content Delivery

Statement	Weighted Mean (WM)	Rank	Inter.
1. I felt confident in my understanding of the subject matter.	4.42	5	Strongly Agree
2. I was able to effectively present the subject matter to students.	4.39	6	Strongly Agree
3. I adapted my content delivery to meet the diverse needs of students	4.48	4	Strongly Agree
4. I used variety of methods to present the content.	4.52	3	Strongly Agree
5. I incorporated real-world examples and applications into my lessons.	4.76	1	Strongly Agree
6. I used assessments that accurately measured the student understanding.	4.67	2	Strongly Agree
7. I provided timely and constructive feedback to students.	4.48	4	Strongly Agree
8. I was able to effectively manage student questions and discussions.	4.52	3	Strongly Agree
9. I felt prepared to address student misconception.	4.36	7	Strongly Agree
10. I was able to differentiate instruction based on student learning styles.	4.33	8	Strongly Agree
Overall Mean (OM)	4.49	-	Strongly Agree

Legend:

4.21 - 5.00 – Strongly Agree

3.41 - 4.20 – Agree

2.61 – 3.40 – Neutral

1.81 – 2.60 – Disagree

1.00 – 1.80 – Strongly Disagree

The overall weighted mean was 4.49, indicating a generally high level of agreement among pre-service teachers regarding their confidence in delivering lessons. The highest-rated item was "I incorporated real-world examples and applications into my lessons" with a weighted mean of 4.76. This was followed by "I used assessment tools that accurately measured student understanding" (WM = 4.67) and "I used varied teaching strategies to accommodate different learning styles" (WM = 4.52). The lowest-rated item was "I felt prepared to address student misconceptions during the lesson" with a weighted mean of 4.36.

Table 2: Experiences and Challenges of Pre-service Teachers During Internship in terms of; B. Pedagogy

Statement	Weighted Mean (WM)	Rank	Inter.
1. I effectively planned and organized my lessons.	4.42	4	Strongly Agree
2. I created a positive and supportive learning environment.	4.61	1	Strongly Agree
3. I managed student behavior effectively.	4.18	6	Agree
4. I used classroom management strategies effectively.	4.48	3	Strongly Agree
5. I incorporated active learning strategies into my lessons.	4.48	3	Strongly Agree
6. I was able to engage students in learning.	4.61	1	Strongly Agree
7. I used assessment data to inform my instruction.	4.42	4	Strongly Agree
8. I collaborated effectively with my mentor teacher.	4.61	1	Strongly Agree
9. I received constructive feedback from my mentor teacher.	4.55	2	Strongly Agree
10. I felt comfortable seeking help from my mentor teacher when needed.	4.39	5	Strongly Agree
Overall Mean (OM)	4.48	-	Strongly Agree

Legend:

4.21 - 5.00 – Strongly Agree

3.41 - 4.20 – Agree

2.61 – 3.40 – Neutral

1.81 – 2.60 – Disagree

1.00 – 1.80 – Strongly Disagree

The overall weighted mean for the pedagogical aspect was 4.48, which falls under the interpretation of "Strongly Agree." The statements "I created a positive and supportive learning environment" and "I was able to engage students in learning" both received the highest weighted mean of 4.61. Similarly, the

statement "I collaborated effectively with my mentor teacher" also had a weighted mean of 4.61, followed by "I received constructive feedback that helped me improve my teaching" with a weighted mean of 4.55.

Table 3: Experiences and Challenges of Pre-service Teachers During Internship in terms of; C. Technology Integration

Statement	Weighted Mean (WM)	Rank	Inter.
1. I integrated technology effectively into my lessons.	4.39	4	Strongly Agree
2. I used technology to enhance student learning.	4.48	2	Strongly Agree
3. I utilized technology to differentiate instruction.	4.42	3	Strongly Agree
4. I used technology to assess student learning.	4.24	6	Strongly Agree
5. I felt confident in my ability to use educational technology tools.	4.30	5	Strongly Agree
6. I had access to the necessary technology resources.	4.15	7	Agree
7. I received adequate training on the use of educational technology.	3.61	9	Agree
8. I encountered technical difficulties during my internship	3.33	10	Neutral
9. Technology integration enhanced my teaching effectiveness.	4.61	1	Strongly Agree
10. I was able to troubleshoot technology issues effectively.	3.97	8	Agree
Overall Mean (OM)	4.15	-	Agree

Legend:

4.21 - 5.00 – Strongly Agree

3.41 - 4.20 – Agree

2.61 – 3.40 – Neutral

1.81 – 2.60 – Disagree

1.00 – 1.80 – Strongly Disagree

The overall weighted mean for the integration of technology was 4.15, interpreted as "Agree." The highest-rated statements were "Technology integration enhanced my teaching effectiveness" (WM = 4.61) and "I used technology to enhance students' learning" (WM = 4.48). Meanwhile, lower scores were observed in the items "I encountered technical difficulties during lessons" (WM = 3.33) and "I was able to troubleshoot basic technical issues" (WM = 3.97), indicating some challenges in handling technology-related concerns.

Table 4: Pre-service Teachers Overall Internship Experience

Serial Items	Number of Respondents	YES No. (%)	NO No. (%)
1. Did you feel adequately prepared for your teaching internship?	34	26 (76.5%)	8 (23.5%)
2. Did you receive sufficient support from your mentor teacher?	34	30 (88.2%)	4 (11.8%)
3. Did you feel challenged during your internship?	34	32 (94.1%)	2 (5.9%)
4. Did you feel supported by your university during the internship?	34	32 (94.1%)	2 (5.9%)
5. Did you gain valuable experience during your internship?	34	33 (97.1%)	1 (2.9%)
6. Would you recommend this internship program to others?	32	31 (91.2%)	1 (3.1%)
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Out of 34 respondents, 33 (97.1%) reported gaining valuable experience during their internship, while 31 out of 32 (91.2%) indicated they would recommend the program to others. A total of 32 pre-service teachers (94.1%) felt challenged throughout the internship, suggesting that the activities and responsibilities assigned were demanding yet meaningful. In terms of support, 30 (88.2%) acknowledged receiving sufficient guidance from their mentor teachers, and the same number—32 (94.1%)—felt supported by their university. Meanwhile, 26 respondents (76.5%) felt adequately prepared prior to deployment, while 8 (23.5%) indicated a lack of preparation.

Table 5: Open-ended Questions

What was your most positive experience during your internship?		
Theme	**Tally**	**Representative Statement**
1. Supportive and inspiring mentor/cooperating teacher (CT)	10	"My most positive experience during my internship is having a good, supportive and kind cooperating teacher."
2. Building meaningful connections with students	8	"The positive experience was to have a connection with students and to have my colleagues by my side…"
3. Growth in confidence and teaching identity	6	"It built my confidence during that time with kind and supportive students and teacher…"
4. Effective lesson delivery and student understanding	5	"My students are able to understand the lessons and my

			mentor commended me for making them easier yet interactive."
5.	Hands-on or successful projects/events	2	"Working on a project that made a real impact, and learning new skills that boosted my confidence."
6.	Positive and welcoming school environment	2	"The environment of the school…everyone was approachable and supportive even if they weren't my CT."
7.	Exposure to real-world challenges of teaching	1	"I was introduced to the reality of teaching, that sometimes it's not the students, it's the co-teachers."
TOTAL:		34	

Pre-service teachers frequently identified supportive and inspiring mentorship as a key positive aspect of their internship. Ten respondents specifically mentioned their cooperating teachers as vital guides who not only provided instructional support but also modeled effective teaching practices, which contributed to shaping their teaching habits and professional identities. One participant captured this by stating, "My most positive experience during my internship is having a good, supportive and kind cooperating teacher," emphasizing the emotional and practical influence of this mentorship.

Building strong connections with students was also highlighted by eight respondents as a fulfilling experience that motivated their teaching. Additionally, six interns noted an increasing confidence and emerging teaching identity, often linked to moments of successful lesson delivery and student feedback. Less frequently mentioned positives included involvement in school projects, a welcoming school environment, and real-world teaching exposure, indicating that the internship provided a broad platform for growth and engagement.

What was your biggest challenge during your internship?		
Theme	**Tally**	**Representative Statement**
1. Managing diverse student behavior and attitudes	7	"The student itself, since they are diverse and living with the free and like a boss at this era..."
2. Communication issues with mentor/teachers	4	"I was not able to connect with my mentor and express myself more..."
3. Lesson planning and instructional materials	4	"My biggest challenge during internship is creating DLPs and IMs daily..."

4. Time management and multitasking	4	"Time management... aside from being a student-teacher, I am also SK Chairperson..."
5. Emotional or mental stress/self-doubt.	3	"Unstable emotionally, tired and stress but still you need to continue..."
6. Health-related challenges	2	"My health concerns..."
7. Classroom management (noise, order, engagement)	2	"Maintaining the noise because there are a lot of students..."
8. Financial difficulties	2	"My biggest challenge during my internship is financial problem especially during my final demo."
9. Final demonstration stress	2	"The final demonstration was the biggest challenge... I slept for only an hour..."
10. Adapting to students' learning needs	2	"Adapting my teaching style to meet the diverse learning needs of my students."
11. Paperwork (grades, certificate, encoding)	1	"Paperwork like SF9, SF10, encoding of grades, making certificates."
12. Miscommunication/socializing difficulties	1	"Sometimes I find it hard to socialize with others..."
13. Mastery of subject matter	1	"One of the biggest challenges... was mastering subject matter..."
14. Limited resources	1	"The availability of the resources."
TOTAL:	34	

Managing diverse student behaviors and attitudes emerged as the most common challenge, reported by seven respondents. One participant described this difficulty by noting the complexity of handling students who "are diverse and living with the free and like a boss at this era," illustrating the nuanced classroom dynamics faced. Communication barriers with mentors and other teachers were another significant issue, expressed by four participants who struggled with connecting and expressing themselves, as highlighted in the statement, "I was not able to connect with my mentor and express myself more."

Preparing daily lesson plans and instructional materials was also a demanding task for four interns, compounded by time management difficulties, especially for those balancing additional roles. Emotional and mental strain, including stress and fatigue, was noted by three respondents, pointing to the resilience required to sustain the internship. Other challenges, though less frequent, involved health concerns, classroom management, financial difficulties, and pressure from the final demonstration, reflecting the multifaceted nature of the internship experience.

What recommendations do you have for improving the internship program?		
Theme	**Tally**	**Representative Statement**
1. Balanced and Reasonable Workload	5	"There were student teachers who handled too many loads that caused them stress and anxiety."
2. Regular Feedback and Monitoring	6	"I think to improve the internship program more, I recommend to have check-ins and evaluations daily for interns."
3. Mental Health and Emotional Support	4	"Maybe the University can have this program or maybe a catch up sessions to know what is the state of the students."
4. Pre-Internship Orientation and Training	5	"Offer comprehensive training sessions before deployment to prepare student interns for real classroom scenarios."
5. Mentorship and Guidance	3	"To have an open communication together with student teacher and adviser to the happenings in the cooperating schools."
6. Reflective Practice and Journaling	2	"It is also beneficial if they would require the interns to make a weekly reflection so that they could track their progress."
7. Use of Educational Technology	1	"Provide training and opportunities to utilize educational technologies relevant to the field."
8. Collaboration and Peer Support	2	"Teacher interns should have at least one day to visit the school to discuss the challenges they are currently facing and seek advice from fellow interns."
9. Spiritual and Character Development	3	"Prepare your whole self—mentally, emotionally, physically, and spiritually."
10. Hands-on and Practical Teaching Exposure	2	"Our institution should provide more hands-on teaching

		opportunities for the intern's to be fully prepared."
11. Nothing to Improve / Satisfied	1	"None."
TOTAL:	34	

Regular feedback and monitoring were the most frequent recommendations, with six respondents emphasizing daily check-ins and evaluations to provide timely support and guidance. One participant suggested, "I think to improve the internship program more, I recommend to have check-ins and evaluations daily for interns," underscoring the need for continuous oversight. Five interns highlighted the importance of a balanced workload to prevent stress and anxiety, supported by the observation that "student teachers who handled too many loads that caused them stress and anxiety." Pre-internship orientation and training were also recommended by five respondents to better prepare interns for classroom challenges. Mental health and emotional support programs were suggested by four participants, with one proposing university-led catch-up sessions to monitor student well-being. Other recommendations included enhancing mentorship quality, promoting reflective journaling, encouraging peer collaboration, and integrating educational technology training.

What are your reflections on your overall internship experience?		
Theme	**Tally**	**Representative Statement**
1. Personal Growth & Self-Discovery	11	"This internship shaped me in ways I never expected. It broke me at times, but it also built me into someone stronger, more compassionate, and more sure of the kind of teacher I want to be."
2. Challenges & Overcoming Difficulties	8	"Internship felt like a roller coaster ride, it makes me cry every night because of pressure in preparing everyday lessons. It brought fear and a lot of breakdowns but above all it was a fulfilling journey."
3. Importance of Support & Mentorship	5	"What truly kept me going were the people around me—my friends and co-teachers. Their presence reminded me that I wasn't alone."
4. Practical Experience & Skill Development	4	"It allowed me to apply the theories I learned in the classroom to real-world situations, helping me grow professionally and personally."

5. Teaching is More Than Content Delivery	3	"Teaching is not just content delivery. As a teacher you must be an all-time entertainer. Students these days need so much entertainment just to stay focused and motivated."
6. Emotional Resilience & Perseverance	2	"Showing up—regardless of how I feel—is one of the most important things I can do."
7. Professionalism & Responsibility	1	"I've learned to set boundaries with students and to maintain professional relationships with colleagues—even when there are misunderstandings or differences."
TOTAL:	34	

Many pre-service teachers described their internship as a transformative journey of personal and professional growth, with eleven respondents expressing how it shaped them unexpectedly. One participant reflected, "This internship shaped me in ways I never expected. It broke me at times, but it also built me into someone stronger," capturing the emotional complexity of the experience. The intense and sometimes overwhelming nature of the internship was a common theme for eight respondents, exemplified by the comment, "Internship felt like a roller coaster ride... it brought fear and a lot of breakdowns but above all it was a fulfilling journey." Support from friends and co-teachers was identified by five participants as a crucial factor in sustaining motivation. Practical skill development and applying theory in real classrooms were acknowledged by four interns as important aspects of their growth. Some recognized that teaching extends beyond content delivery, requiring engagement and entertainment to maintain student focus. Emotional resilience and professionalism were also highlighted, with participants noting the importance of perseverance and setting boundaries. These reflections underscore how the internship contributed significantly to preparing pre-service teachers for their future careers.

4. Discussion

The internship experiences of pre-service teachers at Central Bicol State University of Agriculture-Sipocot Campus reveal a multifaceted development in teaching competencies, particularly in content delivery, pedagogy, and technology integration.

In content delivery, the strong confidence exhibited by pre-service teachers, especially in applying real-world examples and varied teaching methods, underscores effective preparation in translating theoretical knowledge into practice. This aligns with findings by Cainoy-Facunla and Tan (2020), who emphasized that contextualized instruction enhances students' academic performance and self-efficacy beliefs. However, the observed lower confidence in addressing student misconceptions indicates a developmental gap in adaptive teaching strategies. Woodcock (2011) notes that while general teacher efficacy may increase during training, personal efficacy, particularly in handling real-time classroom challenges, may not experience similar growth, highlighting the need for targeted support in this area.

Pedagogically, the interns' positive experiences in fostering supportive learning environments and engaging students actively highlight the significance of affective factors in teaching effectiveness. Scarparolo and Subban (2021) emphasize that high self-efficacy beliefs are crucial for differentiated instruction and addressing diverse student needs. Moreover, the significant impact of mentorship on these outcomes corroborates the findings of Raymundo and Ignacio (2023), who stress the role of collaborative guidance in professional growth. Nonetheless, the reported communication challenges with mentors suggest a need for more structured and consistent interaction to maximize pedagogical benefits.

Regarding technology integration, while pre-service teachers recognize its value in enhancing teaching effectiveness, reported technical difficulties and insufficient training point to areas needing improvement. Trust and Whalen (2021) found that during emergency remote teaching, educators faced significant challenges in accessing and effectively utilizing technology, highlighting the need for comprehensive digital training and support. Additionally, Ugalingan et al. (2022) emphasize the importance of reflective practices in developing pre-service teachers' efficacy beliefs, particularly in conducting action research, which can be instrumental in navigating technological challenges.

The challenges identified, including managing student diversity, emotional stress, and time constraints, validate the internship's role as a demanding yet formative experience. The high recommendation rate and perceived meaningfulness affirm the program's relevance in preparing future teachers. However, inconsistencies in mentor and university support, as noted by Woodcock (2011), highlight the need for more robust and consistent support systems. Furthermore, the high percentage of interns reporting feeling challenged suggests that while the program effectively promotes professional development, the associated stress requires attention.

These findings contribute to understanding how pre-service internships shape teaching readiness, emphasizing the balance between practical skills, mentorship, and emotional resilience. Future research could explore targeted interventions for improving adaptive instruction and technology proficiency, as well as longitudinal studies to assess the lasting impact of internship experiences on teaching efficacy.

5. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that internship experiences play a decisive role in shaping the professional identity and instructional readiness of pre-service teachers. The ability to deliver content effectively, engage students, and integrate real-world applications reflects strong pedagogical preparation; however, the difficulty in addressing misconceptions signals a need for deeper training in responsive and adaptive teaching. Mentorship emerged as both a support and a constraint, emphasizing that its quality—not just presence—determines its developmental value.

Technology integration remains a double-edged reality: while its potential is widely acknowledged, meaningful use still hinges on adequate support, access, and hands-on experience. The challenges of emotional stress, classroom diversity, and time management further underscore that teacher preparation must go beyond academic competence to include emotional resilience and situational flexibility. These findings suggest that internship programs must evolve into more holistic ecosystems, where feedback, mentorship, and mental wellness are systemically embedded.

Future research should explore interventions that strengthen adaptive instruction and digital competence, ideally through scenario-based simulations or peer coaching models. Longitudinal studies may also uncover how early internship experiences influence long-term teaching efficacy, retention, and identity formation, particularly in high-demand or underserved contexts. By rethinking the structure and support

systems of teacher internships, institutions can better cultivate confident, reflective, and context-responsive educators.

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