Exploring the Resilience among Pre-Service Teachers in an Evolving Academic Environment through Photovoice

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Abstract: In today's fast-evolving academic landscape, pre-service teachers (PSTs) face increased demands in navigating digital tools, diverse classrooms, and emotional stress, particularly during their teaching internships. This study explored the resilience of pre-service teachers in an evolving academic environment in one of the private higher institutions in Misamis Occidental during the academic year 2024-2025. Using a qualitative approach through a participatory action research design, the study employed photovoice methodology. The participants of the study were the ten (10) fourth-year secondary education PSTs specializing in English. They were selected through purposive sampling. Data were gathered through in-depth interviews guided by the SHOWED framework. Hyper Research was used to analyze the study participants' responses, which aided in the formation of themes. Findings revealed six major themes: navigating technological barriers in digital-centric classrooms, embracing and managing student diversity in the classroom, cultivating inner balance through personalized coping mechanisms, drawing strength from purpose and support systems, acknowledging mentorship as a catalyst for growth and professional identity, and recognizing peer relationships as pillars of emotional resilience. It was concluded that pre-service teachers' professional growth and emotional resilience are shaped by how they manage challenges, cope personally, and draw support from purpose, mentorship, and peers. It is recommended that school administrators support pre-service teachers through improved infrastructure, mentorship, and inclusive education policies.

Keywords: Education, Evolving Academic Environment, Philippines, Photovoice, Pre-Service Teachers, Resilience.

I. INTRODUCTION

The 21st-century society is marked by its demanding, unrelenting, challenging, and fast-paced rhythm. People from different life avenues experience family, work, or school hurdles. For instance, pre-service teachers from different parts of the globe experience challenges in their studies, one way or another, in the form of heavy academic workloads, challenging curricula, internships, and highly competitive and evolving academic environments —to name a few, which can ultimately lead to stress and burnout. However, it is important to note that to survive in the unyielding and demanding 21st-century classroom, pre-service teachers must develop the ability to be resilient and adaptable to navigate any stage of their academic journey successfully.

One of the highlights of the academic journey of a would-be teacher is the teaching internship (Reyes & Ventura, 2023). A teaching internship is vital in every teacher education program to prepare for becoming a full-fledged educator (Rogayan & Reusia, 2021). The Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSEd) is an undergraduate teacher education program designed to equip pre-service teachers with adequate and relevant teaching competencies in their chosen area of specialization/major at the secondary level (CHED Memorandum Order No. 75, series of 2017). Given the said CMO, the course is a one-semester full-time teaching internship in basic education schools using a clinical approach under the mentorship of a cooperating teacher (Santos, 2023). The BSEd-English focused on training professional English secondary school teachers (Reyes & Ventura, 2023). The abovementioned course takes place both on-campus and off-campus.

Pre-service teachers are defined as education students who are bound to have their practicum in the form of practice teaching (Crisostomo & Miranda, 2023). Pre-service teachers are students who major in the education department and prepare themselves to become teachers after graduation (Soleas & Hong, 2020). They are assumed to develop mixed emotions of anxiety and excitement in the last year of their

teaching preparation program (Bansiong, 2021). A room full of learners may make other pre-service teachers eager to put the theories they learned in the classroom and manage the class; however, to some, it may make them feel nervous, stressed, and anxious. This is evident in a study carried out by Krisdianata and Mbatom (2022) in which pre-service teachers face many adversities, such as passive students, negative emotions, and anxiety. Their teaching experiences also involve perceiving themselves as having low language proficiency, fearing making mistakes, lacking teaching preparation, struggling with inadequate classroom management, and feeling anxious about being observed and evaluated (Ugalingan et al., 2022).

Becoming a teacher is challenging on many levels, particularly emotionally and physically. In this process, pre-service teachers (PSTs) have to learn how to cope with the demands of two worlds: those of the teacher education programme and those of the schools (Fokkens-Bruinsma et al., 2023) through becoming adaptable and resilient, especially during their internship. In its most simplistic definition, resilience is the ability to remain positive despite experiencing adversity (Jordan et al., 2020). The PSTs' resilience in an evolving academic environment is influenced by their perseverance, ability to reflect, adaptive help-seeking attitude, reasonable responses to negative situations, and emotional regulation (Krisdianata & Mbato, 2022). Therefore, pre-service teachers must cultivate resilience early on, enabling them to navigate the teaching field effectively once they become full-fledged educators. Studies showed that early career teachers with higher resilience are more inclined to stay in the profession, whereas teachers with lower resilience may leave the profession (Fokkens-Bruinsma et al., 2023).

Despite many social, academic, and emotional stressors, pre-service teachers must successfully cope with this complex new life role and achieve academic success (Gorospe, 2023). Therefore, resilience plays an important role in the academic field as promoting it leads to developing social, academic, and personal skills, allowing them to overcome adverse situations (Trigueros et al., 2020). Academic resilience enables them to recover from setbacks and embrace efficient study and teaching techniques, resulting in enhanced scholastic achievements and a more gratifying learning journey (Martin & Marsh, 2008). The ability to quickly recover from setbacks and adapt in an evolving academic environment is just a few of the qualities that a pre-service teacher must possess.

For PSTs to successfully integrate within the ever-changing and considerably more demanding and diverse cultural contexts of schools, they need to exit their programs with strategies that support resilience and enhance their confidence in managing challenges (Mansfield et al., 2020). In a study by Wu et al. (2020), strengthening psychological resilience among undergraduates, such as pre-service teachers, may help increase their tendency to adopt positive coping style.

Resilience can help English major PSTs perform adequately in an evolving academic environment. The academic environment is the general atmosphere of the education process, encompassing the different intellectual, social, emotional, and physical aspects that can aid the learning experience or distract from it (Silva & Vettore, 2023). It comprises a complex interplay of physical, social, and virtual factors that shape student engagement, perception, and overall development (Gruppen et al., 2019). The academic environments field had experienced impressive expansion and diversification during the previous half-century (Fraser, 2023), most especially because of the advancement of modern technology.

Unarguably, technology has become an irreversible force driving the transformation of teaching and learning practices (Cheung et al., 2021). Digital transformation has significantly altered various sectors, with education being one of the most impacted fields (Joseph et al., 2024). The academic environment, especially the teaching and learning process, has been evolving, as evidenced in the study of Bachova (2022), in which technology integration positively impacts classroom management by increasing student engagement and reducing disruptive behavior. This is supported in the study conducted by Kusumo et al. (2024), which indicates that technology-based learning significantly increases student engagement in terms of active participation in class and interaction with fellow students and lecturers. This is a complete contrast to the characteristics of traditional classrooms. This means that pre-service teachers must not only be well-versed in lesson planning and in crafting their instructional materials, but they must also be digitally proficient, especially in productivity tools like Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint presentations — to name a few.

Distractions, especially those resulting from technology, can hinder students' ability to focus on their studies (González-Ortega & Aguiar-Pérez, 2023). In a study by Sampasa-Kanyinga et al. (2022), excessive and problematic technology use is common among adolescents. While smartphones, social media, and video games have potential educational benefits, concerns have emerged about their possible detrimental effects on students' academic performance (Kus, 2025).

Moreover, the rise of Large Language Models (LLMs) such as ChatGPT has posed new challenges for the academic community (Ogunleye et al., 2024). This has led to a surge of issues in academic integrity, plagiarism, and academic misconduct. Therefore, PSTS need to adapt to the diverse behaviors exhibited by today's learners, whether through implementing innovative pedagogical approaches, embracing learner-centered philosophy, shifting the focus on the diverse students' needs in a 21st-century classroom, or being vigilant in detecting lapses in academic integrity.

The evolving academic environment of the 21st century can create a mental strain, especially for PSTs. Juggling a heavy workload and high expectations while juggling the roles of student, researcher, and practice teacher

can definitely be challenging. Therefore, to produce high-quality education graduates, the first step is understanding their experiences and addressing their challenges. This is supported by a study by Almazroa (2020), which revealed that student teaching can be enhanced when student teachers' concerns are addressed and acknowledged.

The researcher identified a methodological gap in the prior research. There is a lack of photovoice research designs in exploring the resilience of English major pre-service teachers in an evolving academic environment. Based on the research, the researcher is trying to implement a research design, which was found to be lacking in prior research on qualitative research designs, specifically photovoice. In this study, the researcher seeks to establish a new inquiry on research designs with the photovoice methodology. The researcher seeks to extend and deepen the research by addressing the gaps with innovative approaches in the research methodologies with English major pre-service teachers' experiences (Miles, 2017).

This study explored the resilience of English major pre-service teachers in an evolving academic environment. The results can provide insightful viewpoints on the internship challenges of English primary pre-service teachers and their resilience to cope with these academic hurdles through photovoice.

The findings of this study are significant in the field of education, for they will help better understand how these experiences impact the performance of pre-service teachers, especially during their internship. This study uncovered the PSTs' coping and resilience strategies in an evolving academic environment. Learning and understanding these strategies employed by the PSTs can help curriculum developers formulate targeted instructional strategies that address the challenges of the 21st-century classroom. Additionally, incorporating this into the curriculum could enhance the overall performance of the PSTs.

This study provides valuable insights into the adaptive strategies and resilience of pre-service teachers amidst the dynamic challenges of teacher education. The findings of this study can be utilized in various ways to enhance teacher training programs, inform educational policies, and support the professional growth of future educators. Specifically, the research output can be utilized in the following areas: First, the results of this study will serve as a basis for integrating resilience-building strategies into teacher education curricula. By understanding the lived experiences of pre-service teachers, teacher education programs can incorporate activities that strengthen adaptability, emotional intelligence, and problem-solving skills.

Second, teacher training institutions can use the study's findings to develop targeted support programs such as mentorship initiatives, counselling services, and workshops that help pre-service teachers navigate academic and practicum-related challenges. Lastly, the photovoice methodology used in this study provides a visual and narrative representation of resilience, making it an effective

tool for community engagement. Schools, universities, and educational organizations can use these visual narratives in exhibits to highlight the importance of resilience in teacher education.

A. Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on the following theories: Academic Resilience Theory by Andrew J. Martin and Herbert W. Marsh (2006) and Self-Determination Theory (SDT) by Edward L. Deci and Richard M. Ryan (1985).

Academic Resilience Theory was developed by Andrew J. Martin and Herbert W. Marsh in 2006. Academic (sometimes educational) resilience has been defined as an increased likelihood of educational success despite adversity (Fullerton et al., 2021). Additionally, Martin and Marsh (2006) developed the 5-C model of academic resilience: confidence (self-efficacy), coordination (planning), control, composure (low anxiety), and commitment (persistence) (Fullerton et al., 2021). Martin et al. (2010) also proposed strategies for fostering the 5Cs among students.

They suggested that to develop confidence (self-efficacy) in school settings, educators must address and enhance students' beliefs about themselves and develop their skills in practical goal setting that would help lead to success. Moreover, the suggested pathways to build students' coordination (planning) are to develop skills in self-regulation and goal setting, enhance the student's capacity to plan and persist in the face of challenges and use time more effectively by prioritizing and being clear about what is expected or required for, e.g. homework, assignments. In addition, the suggested pathway to develop control among students amidst scholastic difficulties is to show students how effort and effective strategies are key means of improvement, provide feedback in effective and consistent ways, and provide input on students' work that makes it clear how they can improve (Martin et al., 2010).

In developing students' composure (low anxiety) amidst any academic adversity, it was proposed to encourage educators to show students how to deal with the fear of failure, help students to prepare academically and psychologically for pressure situations such as exams and tests, show that mistakes can be a springboard for success, and teach that success should be seen in terms of personal progress and improvement. Lastly, to cultivate the value of commitment among learners, it was recommended that teachers show students how to work towards goals and enhance their capacity to persist in the face of difficulty (Martin et al., 2010).

However, further examination is necessary to advance our understanding of how these resources interact in the overall resilience process (Fullerton et al., 2021). Hence, in their subsequent studies, Martin and Marsh introduced the concept of academic buoyancy in 2007. Academic buoyancy is "a student's ability to successfully deal with academic setbacks and challenges typical of the ordinary course of school life" (Martin & Marsh, 2007, p. 54).

Academic buoyancy and academic resilience are two important factors that underpin students' positive connections to school and academic life and their ability to bounce back when they face minor and major academic adversity (Comerford, 2017). Whereas academic buoyancy deals with minor setbacks, academic resilience, on the other hand, is relevant to majorly adverse experiences such as challenges at home or in the community, chronic underachievement, chronic self-handicapping behaviors, and natural disasters, such as school closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Anderson et al., 2020)

In this study, the researcher unraveled the stories of resilience among pre-service teachers. This includes persevering despite the everyday challenges. Thus, academic resilience theory is essential for the study, for it guides the researcher to understand the PSTs' unique narratives better. For instance, strong self-efficacy (confidence in one's talents), which is tackled in the abovementioned theory, will help PSTs overcome obstacles like adjusting to new teaching techniques and pedagogies, taking constructive criticism, or efficiently managing their time. Furthermore, time management, problem-solving efficiency, and decisiveness in asking for assistance are some stress management techniques resilient PSTs employ to be effective in their assigned role. On the contrary, people who experience stress and burnout are unable to develop effective coping mechanisms. Lastly, PSTs may encounter difficulties because of the evolving educational landscape, which includes new teaching strategies, digital learning, and evolving expectations. Academic resilience will enable them to adjust and thrive instead of feeling overburdened, stressed, or burned out.

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) was introduced by Edward L. Deci and Richard M. Ryan in 1985. SDT is a macro-theory of human motivation, emotion, and development that takes an interest in factors that either facilitate or forestall people's assimilative and growth-oriented processes (Ankori et al., 2022). According to Guay (2021), SDT has been used to understand students' or PSTs for this matter, motivation at school in general, and in various subjects. Deci and Ryan also defined two kinds of motivation: extrinsic and intrinsic. Extrinsic motivation is a drive to behave in specific ways based on external sources, resulting in external rewards. Meanwhile, intrinsic *motivation* comes from within; these internal drives inspire an individual to behave in specific ways, including one's core values, interests, and personal sense of morality (Ryan & Deci, 1985).

SDT depicts humans as having three basic psychological needs that contribute to developing their intrinsic motivation towards striving, well-being, and performance (Szulawski et al., 2021). The three basic psychological needs proposed in SDT are autonomy, competence, and relatedness, which are defined as universal and relevant within all people and cultures (Vansteenkiste et al., 2020). *Autonomy* involves feeling internal approval of one's behavior, thoughts, and emotions rather than feeling controlled or pressured; competence involves feeling efficient and qualified in one's behavior rather than incompetent and ineffective; and relatedness involves feeling meaningfully connected to others rather than feeling alienated or ostracized (Szulawski et al., 2021). In simpler terms, SDT was developed by Deci and Ryan to uncover what truly motivates people, or in this case, the English pre-service teachers.

In this study, self-determination theory guides the researcher to understand how concepts of autonomy, competence, and relatedness play a role in developing resilience among English major pre-service teachers. PSTs are more likely to become resilient if they can make choices and find solutions independently. They may feel helpless if they are not given autonomy (for example, via rigid regulations or a lack of control). They are more likely to remain motivated and persevere despite challenges if they believe they are competent and skillful in their profession (teaching, writing, or research). They may doubt themselves and give up if they feel incapable. Most importantly, PSTs can manage stress with the aid of peers, instructors, mentors, and cooperating teachers. They are more resilient when they have a strong support network, but scholastic obstacles may be more challenging to overcome if they are alone.

B. Conceptual Framework

The term resilience is derived from the Latin *resilire*, which means "to bounce back" (Baatz & Wirzberger, 2025). In other words, resilience is a personal skill to cope with crises by drawing on personal and social resources, ultimately resulting in personal growth (Baker et al., 2021). Promoting resilience is essential to strengthen people's ability to face difficulties and develop a sense of self-efficacy (Masten & Motti-Stefanidi, 2020). Resilience has become a fundamental educational construct, especially in teacher training and practice (Salvo-Garrido et al., 2025). Resilience is especially crucial for pre-service teachers who are still novices in education. They must develop personalized coping strategies while receiving consistent guidance and support from their cooperating teachers.

This study identified the different concepts that were derived from the themes of the study, namely: navigating technological barriers in digital-centric classrooms, embracing and managing student diversity in the classroom, cultivating inner balance through personalized coping mechanisms, drawing strength from purpose and support systems, acknowledging mentorship as a catalyst for growth and professional identity, and recognizing peer relationships as pillars of emotional resilience.

- *Navigating Technological Barriers in the Digital-Centric Classroom.* The shift towards digitalization in the Philippine education system has gained increasing attention due to the transformative potential of integrating digital tools into traditional teaching and learning processes (Kunjiapu et al., 2025). One of the challenges teachers face is the lack of access to ICT resources and tools (Adarkwah, 2021). These also include a lack of skill and understanding of the technology among users and the cost of acquiring,

installing, operating, maintaining, and replacing ICTs (Gizaw & Tessema, 2020).

Teachers, or pre-service teachers, for this matter, need to have access to reliable and appropriate ICT tools and resources to support their teaching and learning (Arnado & Aviles, 2023). There is a pressing need for functional laptops and an ample supply of up-to-date smart TVs. A steady electricity supply or generator access is crucial to prevent class disruptions, particularly in public schools. Most importantly, schools must have stable and reliable internet access to support effective teaching and learning. Lack of network connectivity hinders teachers from accessing and downloading important ICT materials for instructional use (Alpuerto, 2022).

- *Embracing and Managing Student Diversity in the Classroom.* Around the globe, the inclusion in a regular classroom setting of children with differences for disability, development, ethnicity, race, religion, language, gender, and poverty became a significant educational policy reform (Lualhati, 2022). Student diversity should be recognized by designing learning activities that address their unique needs. In line with this, there is a pressing need to scale down class sizes, particularly in public schools, to provide adequate attention to learners' differences. By doing so, teachers can better understand their students and select appropriate activities, materials, and resources to support their growth and learning.

While diversity can enrich the learning environment by exposing students to different perspectives and fostering critical thinking (Hurtado et al., 2019), it can be problematic, especially in overcrowded class environments. Therefore, pre-service teachers (PSTs) must develop strategies to maintain learners' attention, such as removing distracting objects like cell phones during class. In doing so, students can better focus on the tasks and absorb the key lessons from that day's discussion. Moreover, prohibiting the use of cell phones encourages students to become independent thinkers and rely on their knowledge instead of depending on AI for answers.

By acknowledging and valuing student diversity, PSTs first recognized student variations. Then, they took steps toward inclusion and effective classroom management by implementing engaging strategies, fostering empathy and positive reinforcement, identifying individual strengths to support students, and creating adaptive discipline techniques.

- *Cultivating Inner Balance through Personalized Coping Mechanisms.* Teachers who report high engagement in intentional coping strategies (e.g., self-care and social and leisure activities) experience lower levels of burnout than teachers who indicate lower coping engagement (Herman et al., 2018; Ansley et al., 2021). Teachers who practice self-care feel happier, feel more fit to teach, experience higher productivity, are more content at home and in schools, and report that self-care is essential to cultivate (Murphy et al., 2020). Educators can provide

more quality education when they are not experiencing compassion fatigue (Yang et al., 2023).

To maintain resilience throughout their internship, PSTs must develop personalized coping strategies and intentionally organize and manage their time. These strategies included engaging in their hobbies and creating checklists to track their tasks. Checklists provide transparency and organization and reduce the risk of human error (Gawandee, 2011). Similarly, educational checklists are tools designed to outline criteria for educators and students to assess skill development, track progress, and support learning.

- *Drawing Strength from Purpose and Support Systems.* A strong support system, especially during teaching internships, helps create a nurturing environment where student teachers feel valued, validated, and secure in expressing themselves and taking risks (Dreer-Goethe, 2025). Support at an interpersonal level, such as having supportive teaching relationships, having a best friend at work or internship, and having someone to laugh with, talk to, and listen to (Turgeon-Brown, 2025), is essential for maintaining motivation and resilience. Moreover, PSTs value mentorship and peer support, understanding the importance of professional connections for career development and job satisfaction (Waworuntu et al., 2022).

A teaching internship is pivotal in teacher education, allowing PSTs to apply the theories they have learned in their studies. However, it is not without challenges, making it essential for PSTs to reframe or view their struggles in a different light. Positive thinking is grounded in students' gaining a perspective that increases their quality of life and allows them to perceive and evaluate opportunities and constructive solutions (Gür & Kocak, 2018). In addition to having a positive mindset, PSTS must possess intrinsic motivation to continue pursuing their chosen career path. Intrinsic motivation, the inherent drive to engage in activities for their own sake, is a cornerstone of meaningful and lasting learning experiences (Jiménez Valverde et al., 2025).

- *Acknowledging mentorship as a catalyst for growth and professional identity.* The success of the pre-service teachers in their future careers will significantly depend on how well the cooperating teachers have trained them to teach effectively (Caceres, 2015). One of the central roles of a cooperating teacher from the cooperating school is to oversee the pre-service teachers throughout the school placement (Amorim & Ribeiro-Silva, 2024). In addition, they are expected to support pre-service teachers in their professional development. Qualified pre-service teachers should possess the necessary skills (i.e., cognitive, task management, and stress management) during their internship that would assist them in achieving memorable teaching moments (Manowaluilou & Reeve, 2022).

A good mentor should be "intrinsically motivated to take the role of mentor," and he/she should "demonstrate an enthusiasm & passion for the mentoring role" (Ellis et al.,

2020, p. 6). The PSTs received professional guidance and moral support from their cooperating teachers, which helped them learn new strategies, refine their lesson planning and instructional materials (IMs) development skills, and build confidence in their chosen career path. In the case of the PSTs, their mentors catalyze their growth and the development of their professional identities.

- *Recognizing peer relationships as pillars of emotional resilience.* Peer support can be defined as the connection between people with shared lived experiences (Reidy, 2024). In increasing academic resilience, peers are a factor related to individual interactions and relationships with their peers, including quality time, positive support that can influence positive behaviour, and being role models for each other (Rustham et al., 2022). In educational settings, peers serve as a crucial support

system due to shared trust, their ability to recognize early signs of distress, and their close presence, fostering acceptance and belonging (Parmar et al., 2025).

Additionally, social support also plays a pivotal role in promoting emotional resilience (Feng & Wang, 2025). Social relationships provide emotional, informational, and practical support, which can mitigate the effects of stress (Cohen & Wills, 1985). Humans are naturally social beings; we rely on one another to survive and overcome adversity. In the case of the PSTs, having the support of their peers and family helped them maintain resilience and continue striving toward their full potential, particularly in the field of teacher education.
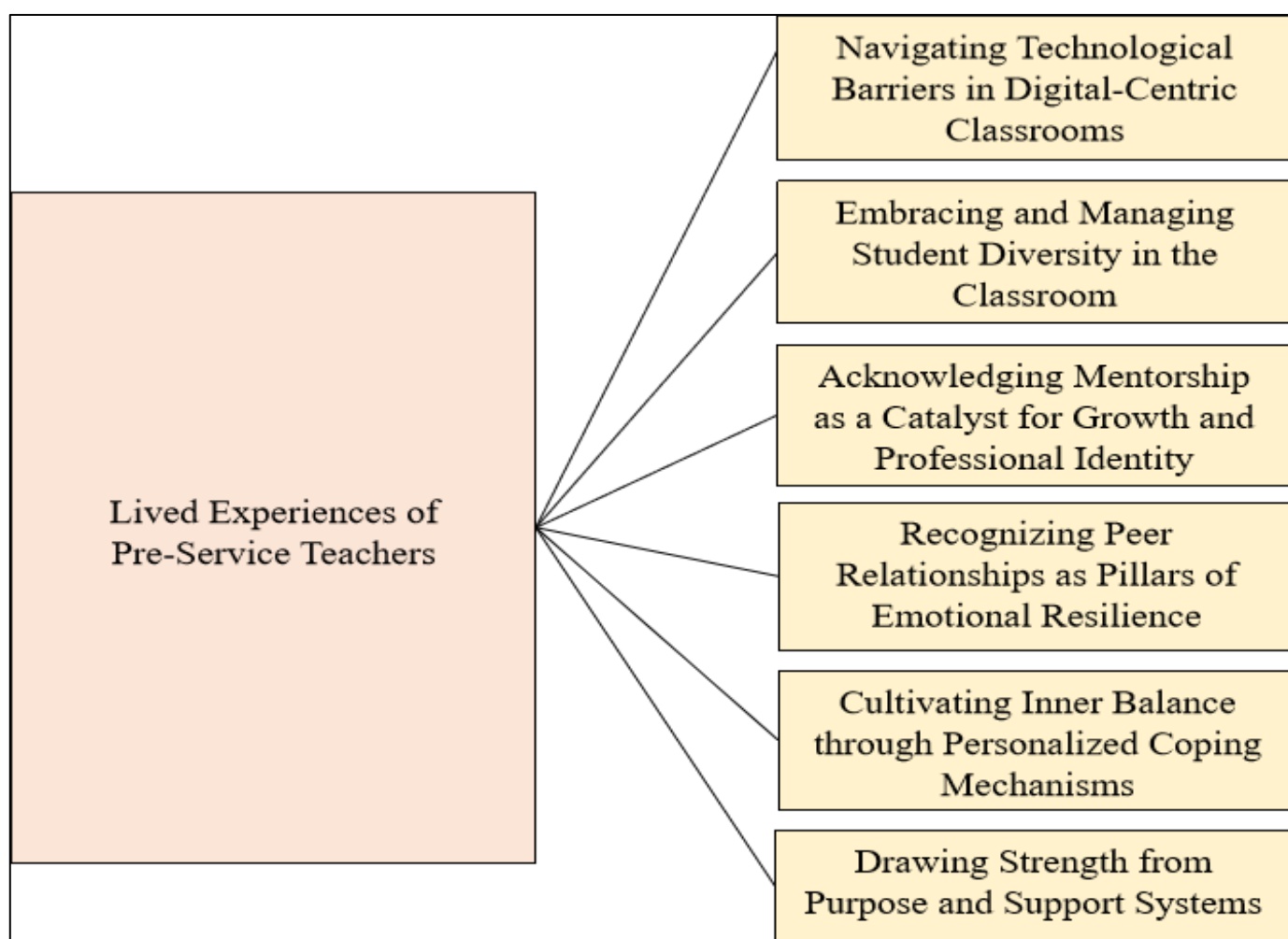

Fig 1: Schematic Diagram of the Study

C. Statement of the Problem
    This study explored the resilience of pre-service teachers in an evolving academic environment in one of the private higher institutions in Misamis Occidental during the academic year 2024-2025.

➤ *Specifically, it Sought to Answer the Following Questions:*

- What are the lived experiences of English major pre-service teachers in dealing with stress within an evolving academic environment, specifically in navigating digital-centric classrooms and in managing the class with diverse student behavior?

- What are the resilience strategies employed by English major pre-service teachers in navigating the evolving academic environment?
- How do mentorship and peer support help in fostering resilience among pre-service teachers?

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

A. Design

This research employed a qualitative approach using a participatory action research design facilitated by photovoice methodology. Qualitative research is a form of social action that stresses how people interpret and make sense of their experiences to understand the social reality of individuals (Mohajan, 2018). Photovoice is a specific visual methodology used to engage participants through photo-taking (Wang & Burris, 1997). Photovoice, a (visual) arts-based method, is a creative form of community-based participatory action research strategy that offers a unique opportunity to "see" the relevant issues from participants' viewpoints (Booth & Booth, 2003). A photovoice methodology design was appropriate for this study because the researcher's focus will be uncovering the resilience of pre-service teachers in an evolving academic environment. Employing this design in this study allowed the pre-service teachers majoring in English to visually record their struggles, coping strategies, and moments of resiliency in real-time.

B. Setting

The research was conducted in a non-sectarian higher educational institution in Misamis Occidental. The school currently offers Junior High School, Senior High School, College, and Graduate programs. It is an Autonomous University granted by the Commission in Higher Education (CHED) with ISO 9001:2015 Management System Certified by Det Norske Veritas-Germanischer Lloyd Business Assurance. It was also awarded by the Philippine Association of Colleges and Universities Commission on Accreditation, which has the highest number of certified programs in the area. The Basic Education Department is granted Level II accreditation by the Philippine Association of Colleges and Universities Commission on Accreditation (PACUCOA).

C. Participants

The participants were 10 English majors student interns chosen through purposive sampling. Purposive sampling was utilized as the sampling method to select participants who were knowledgeable about the research problem and who could provide abundant insight into influencing factors rather than relying on a random selection of subjects (Winters, 2024). The participants were chosen using the following criteria: 1) Fourth-year students who were enrolled in a teaching internship course for the second semester, the academic year 2024-2025, 2) pre-service teachers who were taking secondary education major in English, 3) had experience in-and-off campus internship, 4) they were 25 years old and below and 5) gave their full consent to serve as participants of the study. Participants were excluded from the study if they met any of the following criteria: 1) they were over the age of 25, 2) pre-service teachers who were taking elementary education and PSTs not majoring in English, and 3) they had not provided informed consent to participate.

D. Instrument

The researcher used six researcher-made questions, which were asked to English major pre-service teachers. The students then answered the questions by capturing photos that described their answers to each question. An in-depth interview was conducted using the SHOWED Framework (Werremeyer et al., 2020). This framework was first developed by Wallerstein and Bernstein (1988) in which the acronymn SHOWED means "What do you **S**ee here?", "What is really **H**appening here?, "How does this relate to **O**ur lives?" "**W**hy does this problem or strength exist?" "How can we be **E**mpowered?" and "What can we **D**o about this?" (Wang, 1999, as cited in Rai et al., 2023). Observation, analytical notes, and reflections from the activities conducted will also serve as other sources of data. Moreover, the data that were gathered were arranged and given acronyms to make referencing easier in the findings and discussion section.

E. Data Gathering Procedure

Before the conduct of the actual interviews, the researcher secured permission from the Dean of the Graduate School to allow the researcher to conduct her study. Upon the approval of the letter request, the researcher made another written request for permission to conduct the study from the Dean of the College of Education. As soon as approval to conduct the study was secured, the participants were given a consent letter from the researcher, who explained the significance of the study. To gather more revelant information regarding the lived experiences of English major pre-service teachers, the researcher conducted in-depth interviews, sort the photographs into categories, and provide opportunities where the participants could share their photographs and the stories associated with each one. Following Wang et al. (1998) strategy, the researcher will conduct the study following these phases: 1) Implementation Method and Data Analysis, 2) Dissemination of Findings, and 3) Advocating Policy.

The researcher employed the Storytelling SHOWED framework, which was developed by Wallerstein and Bernstein (1988) and modified by Wang et al. (1998), to help them with the discussion and their critical reflection. Using the framework, the participants presented the images they captured and answered the following questions: "What do you See here?", "What is really Happening here?" "How does this relate to Our lives?", "Why does this problem or strength exist?", "How can we be Empowered?" and "What can we Do about this?". In order to gather more relevant data, the researcher will employ the Rosario et al. (2016) approach in conducting a photovoice methodology design in which the participants will take part in an in-depth interview after sharing their experiences about the images.

F. Ethical Considerations

Before the conduct of the study, an approval from Misamis University Research Ethics Committee (MUREC) was sought to conduct the study accordingly. Participation in this research was purely voluntary. Participants were also given the freedom to refuse participation at any given time and change their minds even after initially accepting the terms of participation and signing this consent form. There would be no penalty for refusing or withdrawing participation in this study, and it would not affect any relationship with the researcher/s. Additionally, participants had the option to examine any information they submitted and remove any or all of the data that was collected during the study, as well as when they wanted to decline or withdraw from participation.

Furthermore, an informed consent form was provided to ensure participants were aware of significant information. This information includes the benefits, implications, and institutional approval of participating in the study prior to agreeing or disagreeing to answer the interview questions and participate in this study. Moreover, participants were informed that the photo capturing would be completed within a week. The in-depth one-on-one interviews took place in the subsequent week to accommodate their schedules.

To safeguard the privacy and confidentiality of the personal data of the participants who consented to take part in this study, complete anonymity was upheld. To indicate their responses about their resilience in an evolving academic environment, their identities were withheld from the readers and substituted with numbers (e.g., Participant 1, Participant 2, Participant 3, etc.).

Proper credits were given, credible and reliable sources were used, results were made transparent, and research reports and information were correctly interpreted and accurate. This research upholds integrity and institutional credibility for an ethically correct and acceptable research study.

G. Data Analysis

➢ *This study adhered to the phases of photovoice in order to facilitate data analysis:*

- *Orientation regarding the concept and the methodology of photovoice.* The participants learned more about photovoice and its potential applications in field research.
- *Photography training.* Following that, the participating students received instruction on how to take pictures while considering important elements like appropriate lighting and the placement of the image's focal points.
- *Time to take pictures.* The participants took as many photos as they liked to record their positive and negative internship experiences.
- *Critical reflection and dialogue.* Following one image, the participants began to share their backstories.
- *Codifying.* After the group discussion, contextualizing, and storytelling, the participants engaged in the photo essay activity. They collaborated in grouping the photos by themes. Under the given themes, lived experiences of English major PSTs in an evolving academic environment, resilience strategies employed, and the impact of mentorship and peer support, the participants grouped the photos under several sub-themes.
- *Theming.* To identify themes, the researcher reviewed a collection of data and used hyperresearch to search for patterns in its meaning.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study's participants comprised ten female pre-service teachers (P1, P2, P3 …), and all are in early adulthood. They were fourth-year students enrolled in the teaching internship course during the second semester of the academic year 2024–2025. All participants were taking secondary education courses specializing in English. Furthermore, each participant had undergone both on-campus and off-campus teaching internships, which helps provide an informed perspective on the challenges and opportunities encountered during their practicum.

This study yielded the following themes: navigating technological barriers in digital-centric classrooms; embracing and managing student diversity in the classroom; cultivating inner balance through personalized coping mechanisms; drawing strength from purpose and support systems; acknowledging mentorship as a catalyst for growth and professional identity; and recognizing peer relationships as pillars of emotional resilience.

A. Navigating Technological Barriers in Digital-Centric Classrooms

Teaching in the 21st century demands pedagogical competence and proficiency in utilizing technological tools. Both teachers and pre-service teachers must be proficient in using technology, especially since today's learners are digital natives. Integrating technology into class discussions—through videos, audio materials, and interactive PowerPoint presentations—is one of the effective ways to capture and sustain their attention. However, this becomes a challenge when essential devices like laptops are defective or unreliable. Gadgets like laptops enable them to prepare practical lessons, which is particularly important to high school learners. As observed, these learners see learning as more engaging if there is an integration of technology.

P1 identified the primary obstacle during her teaching demonstrations as the incompatibility between her laptop and the classroom television. Attempting to connect a computer to the television can be a source of anxiety, particularly when a critic teacher, or observer is present. Technical issues, such as device incompatibility, can quickly escalate into a stressful and frustrating experience for pre-service teachers. Therefore, this experience frustrated her because she exhausted all the possible solutions for her gadget to connect, but all her attempts were futile.

"My lesson is completely disrupted because my laptop won't connect to the classroom TV. I've tried everything, and

I'm completely stuck. This picture perfectly captures how helpless and upset I feel." (P1)
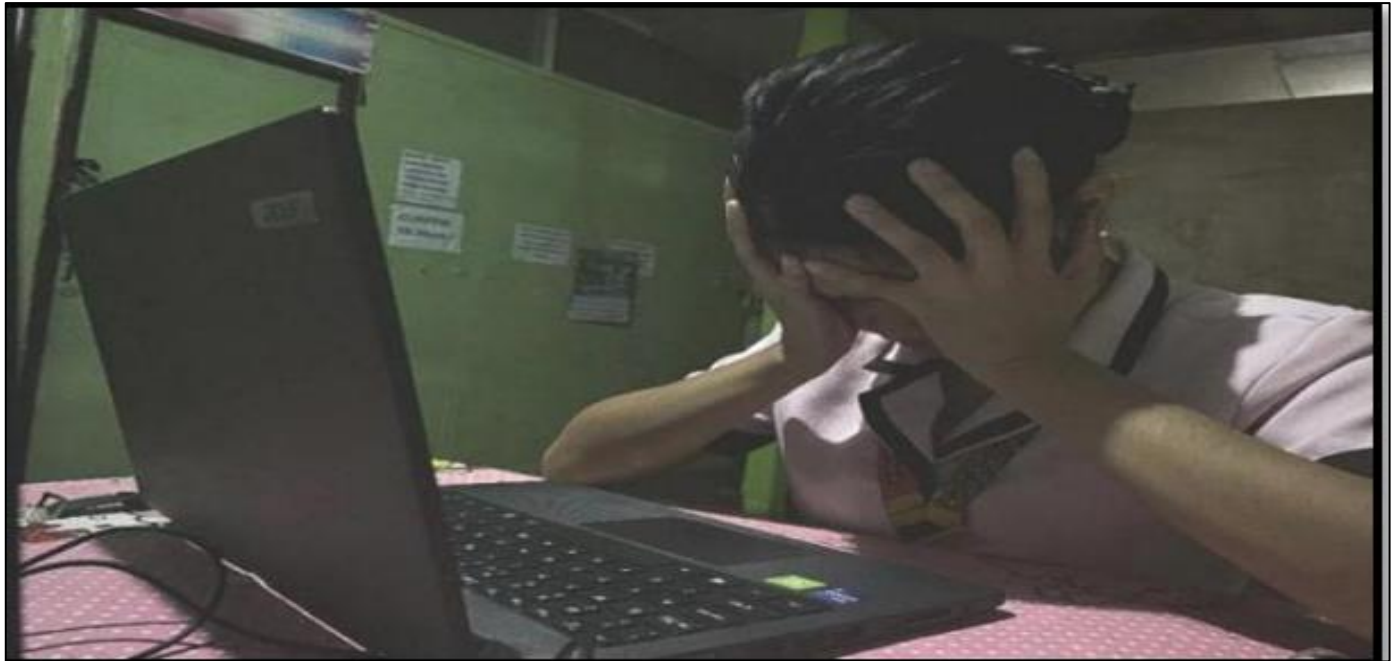
P1, Photo 1: Bombarded with Technological Issues in Teaching

In a similar manner, both P4 and P6 narrated that malfunctioning and out-of-date laptops were among the common stressors they experienced during their teaching practicum. This experience resulted in them being unable to perform their tasks efficiently. For instance, P6 narrated that she feels anxious whenever she works on her tasks using her laptop because she fears that the output she is working on might not be saved once her laptop screen begins glitching or flickering.

"I was in the middle of preparing a lesson plan, something that already demands focus and creativity, when my laptop started glitching, well, like the usual. Honestly, I felt so frustrated at that time because I wanted to finish my task that night, but could not because my laptop was acting up again. But then, I am reminded that I started this journey with a purpose. Therefore, I should not give up and must keep going. I have to be patient and try again." (P4)

"One of my challenges as a student teacher is my defective laptop. It is hard for me, especially when I make my PPTs, IMs, or LPs, because sometimes it glitches or the screen turns pitch black for quite some time. So, it really does get in the way. I also feel anxious whenever the screen goes black because what if the files I am currently making were not saved? I am afraid I will have to start over again." (P6)

Furthermore, P7 shared a similar experience, emphasizing the technical challenges she faced because her laptop is a Chromebook, which prevents her from installing essential productivity tools like Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint. As a result, she had to rely on their online counterparts, which do not offer the same features as the installed versions on traditional laptops. Productivity tools are vital applications that both pre-service teachers and in-

service educators should have on their laptops, as these tools support the efficient creation of lesson plans, instructional resources, and classroom activities.

"Despite its portability, the Chromebook has its limitations. Unlike other laptops, it doesn't support Windows 10, so I can't install Microsoft apps like Word, PowerPoint, or Excel. As a result, I'm left with no choice but to use their online versions. Unfortunately, the performance is not as smooth as the installed apps. Formatting often gets messed up, tables and pictures are hard to insert, and many features are missing." (P7)

Teaching internships present pedagogical challenges and technological obstacles that can impact pre-service teachers' performance. As novices in the field of education, PSTs may find these technological issues particularly disruptive. Possessing these devices would not only allow them to incorporate technology-centered discussions but also hone their troubleshooting skills, especially those related to technology.

Technological advancement has impacted the education system worldwide, enabling students and instructors to overcome the geographical barriers of the conventional class setting (Yasin & Yasin, 2024). As key agents of educational change, teachers must embrace digital transformation for the progressive and sustainable realization of stipulated educational outcomes (Ramaila & Molwele, 2022). Two significant challenges students face in digitalizing education are internet connectivity issues and limited access to digital devices (Barrot et al., 2021). As the teaching field also shifts toward integrating technology in classrooms to cater to the needs of 21st-century learners, teachers and pre-service teachers face challenges, such as

stress from inadequate and malfunctioning technological tools.

In addition to malfunctioning or defective laptops, another significant technological challenge encountered by the pre-service teachers was the insufficient number of available television units in the schools where they were assigned. In traditional classrooms in the Philippines, pre-service teachers would typically write their lessons on Manila paper or cartolina.

However, with the shift toward more modern teaching practices, reliance solely on these materials is no longer encouraged. PSTs are now advised to integrate technology into their instructional materials (IMs) through PowerPoint presentations (PPTs), audio recordings, and videos but incorporating these basic digital resources is highly dependent on the availability of smart televisions. TVs as digital blackboards are gradually replacing the era when teachers manually wrote lessons on blackboards. Unfortunately, in the case of the PSTs, the insufficient number of available smart TVs hindered their ability to project their prepared instructional materials effectively.

P8 narrated that one of the reasons she could not project the PowerPoint presentations she had prepared was the lack of televisions in the classroom she was assigned. She reverted to using traditional instructional materials such as printed carolinas to cope with the situation. She felt discouraged as she had invested significant time and effort in creating those digital resource materials, yet could not utilize them during her discussion.

"I am reminded of my struggles in our off-campus teachings due to a lack of TV. There is only a limited number of TVs in the school that we are assigned to; therefore, what we do is that we have to share. The problem is that I am assigned to a schedule where many teachers also use the TV. So, the tendency is even though I have prepared my PPT and online games for my students, I cannot push through with it because there is no TV available to use." (P8)

P8, Photo 2: Navigating in Screenless Classrooms

In addition, P10 recounted that she had to flip her laptop screen to the students' direction due to the TV not being available in the class. She also observed that not all students were able to view the presentation. This situation could lead to diminished interest and reduced students' attention during the class discussion.

"When preparing, I usually follow this order: first, I work on my lesson plan; next, I prepare my instructional materials; and lastly, I make my PowerPoint. However, there are times when I cannot use my PowerPoint in class because there is no TV or projector available. Sometimes, I just flip my laptop around so the students can see, even if not all of them can view it clearly." (P10)

One of the primary goals of the Philippine education system is to cultivate globally competent individuals. To achieve this, the quality of instruction delivered by teachers must align with international standards—beginning with integrating modern technological tools and innovative teaching strategies that support and enhance student learning. In Philippine classrooms, smart TVs are no longer considered a luxury but a necessity. Smart TVs project lessons and provide features such as helping with viewing videos, listening to audio, and incorporating game-based activities, which are impossible with traditional blackboards. They enhance classroom instruction by allowing for more engaging and interactive discussions by projecting vibrant images, clear audio, and interactive videos.

Instructional TV has been considered an effective instructional technology. Teachers can present their lessons in various forms while being anchored in today's students' characteristics as visually literate (Averion et al., 2020). Smart TVs can be utilized to project videos, digital games,

and PowerPoint presentations, enhancing the delivery of instructional content.

Furthermore, Abareta and Prudente (2025) stipulated that PowerPoint enhances lesson delivery through visual presentations. It has been shown that using videos as class material can increase learners' motivation and engagement, especially among digital natives (Valencia et al., 2023). It significantly enhanced various education aspects, i.e., reshaping traditional teaching methods (Okoye et al., 2023). Therefore, installing functional and up-to-date LED television units in classrooms is no longer a mere preference but a necessity.

Other than malfunctioning laptops with insufficient smart TVs, a reliable internet connection is another obstacle PSTs face. A reliable internet connection is essential for pre-service teachers (PSTs) to design and deliver engaging lesson plans, integrate digital activities that promote meaningful learning, and develop instructional materials that capture students' interest. A strong and consistent internet connection should be readily available in classrooms and school offices. With reliable access to the internet, teachers and PSTs can fully utilize the wide range of tools and resources that online platforms offer to enhance teaching and learning experiences.

P3 shared that she often had to stay up late or wake up early to upload or access online resources due to limited internet access. Moreover, P9 shared the need for reliable internet connections in schools. She expressed her frustration with the school's poor internet connectivity, which hinders her from participating in implementing online activities. Reliable internet connectivity is beneficial not only for her and teachers but also for students, as it allows a more engaging learning environment.

"For me, I think poor internet connectivity is one of my biggest struggles as a student teacher. There were many times when I had to stay late or wake up early   just to upload my files online or do my lesson plan. Having experienced these made me really feel frustrated and stressed." (P3)

"Losing internet access can be frustrating, ma'am, especially when we have planned online activities… I think this problem exists because not all schools have a strong internet connection… Technology can be a great tool because it allows a more interactive and interesting learning experience for the students. However, it can also be a challenge if there is poor internet. I think schools need to allocate a budget to improve or provide reliable internet in Philippine classrooms." (P9)
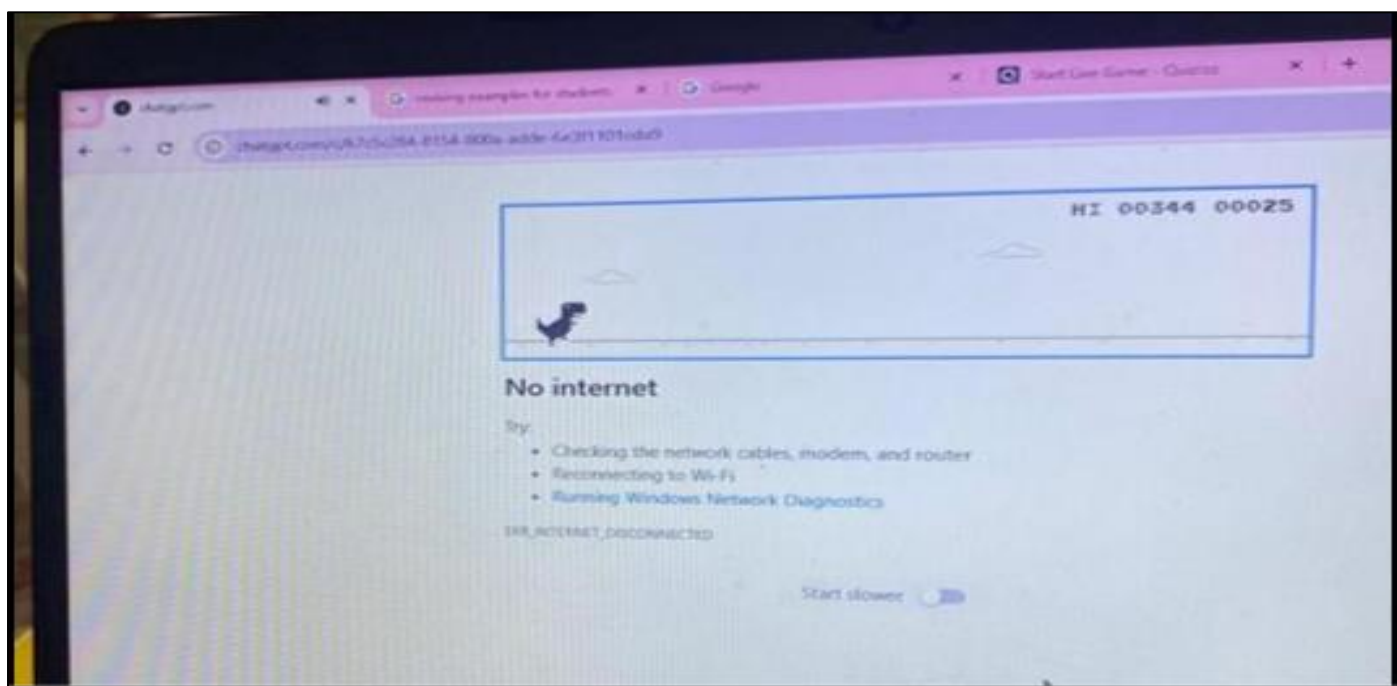
P9, Photo 3: "Disconnected" in Digital Classroom

Books remain one of the most reliable sources of knowledge. However, it is undeniable that, as time progresses, the internet has become the primary choice for obtaining information for most people due to its rapid delivery of relevant information and ease of use. However, PSTs prefer using the internet to search for engaging activities and locate teaching resources. Browsing the internet for educational resources is not only efficient but it is also help in significantly saving time. Since the Philippine education system is aiming for a digitalized classroom, the

call for investing in reliable internet access is becoming blatant.

The internet has not only enabled young people around the world to stay in touch with each other. However, it has provided them with new learning opportunities, as it is an endless source of information that can speed up the educational process (Ladrón de Guevara Rodríguez et al., 2022). The use of the internet is beneficial and makes it easier for teachers to improve the teaching and learning

process and for students to find out how much material has been mastered, thus enabling these students to be motivated to learn and improve their learning outcomes from time to time (Prasetyo & Nurhidayah, 2021). Unfortunately for Filipino students, Philippine schools struggle with low computer and internet access rates, unlike those in neighbouring countries that have achieved universal access to computers and the internet (Navarro, 2024)

Despite the technological obstacles encountered, the pre-service teachers (PSTs) had to develop coping strategies and adaptive practices and offer suggestions to address these challenges. PSTs must be proactive and resourceful, especially when dealing with problems that arise in the classroom. Strategies and practices that are adaptive to 21st-century classrooms are vital for providing learners with lessons that provide them with lifelong learning. Furthermore, cultivating resilience and problem-solving skills prepares PSTs to navigate modern education's dynamic and ever-evolving landscape.

P4 asserted that arriving in class earlier than the scheduled time proved effective, particularly when addressing issues with malfunctioning technological tools.

Similarly, P5 discussed the necessity for PSTs like her to be proficient in manipulating technological tools to promptly address technological issues. The ability to do this is necessary because it helps minimize disruptions and maximize instructional time. In this vein, P8 emphasized the pressing need for institutions to furnish classrooms with adequate functional and latest TVs, especially since they are gearing for a digitalized classroom. Teachers and PSTs alike also need to be adept with the latest technological tools to meet the needs of 21st-century learners.

"In my case, since I know that the TV in the classroom where I will be having a discussion takes around 5 to 10 minutes to be set up, I come to class earlier than usual. I cannot waste time because I am only given 45 minutes per class to teach." (P4)

"What I can do with the technological problem I experienced would probably be to learn how to use the TV and efficiently connect it to my laptop. I had my students teach me how to do it. I had to remember everything they taught me so that I would not bother them the next time I had a class in their section. It helped me a lot." (P5)
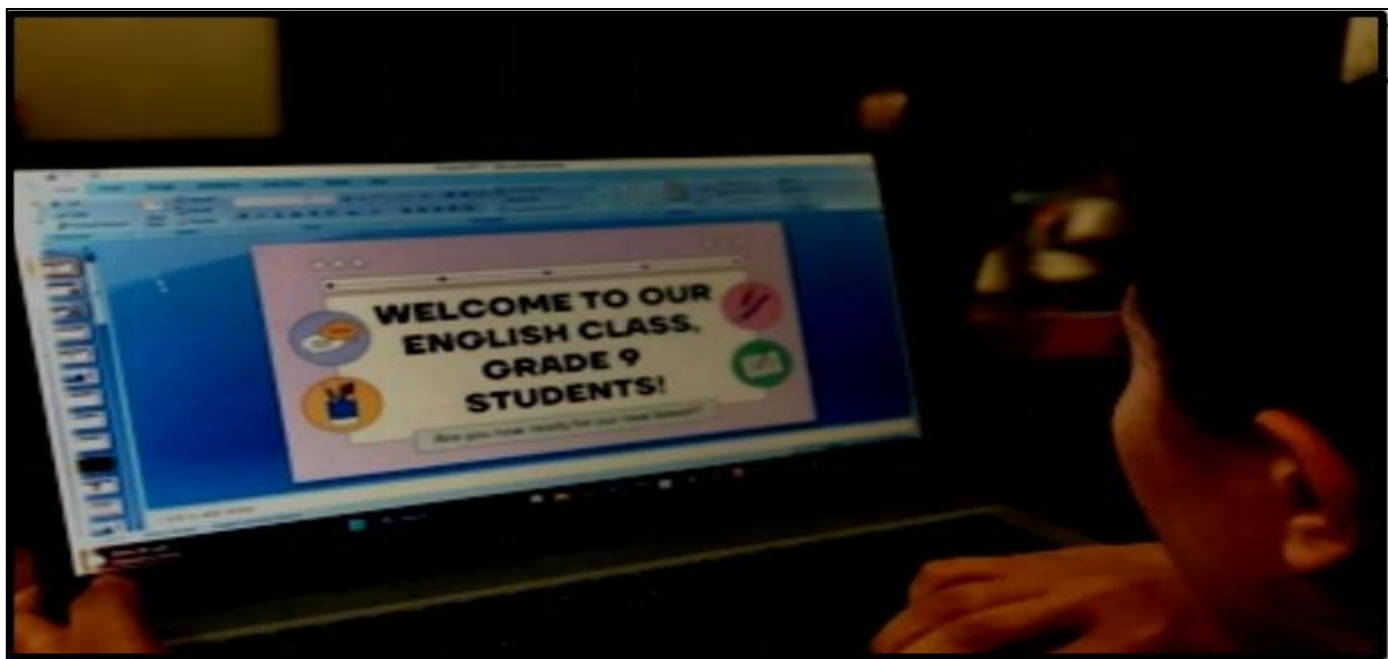
P4, Photo 4: Early Preparation Leads to Smooth Discussion

No matter how proficient one is with technology, there will inevitably be instances when the gadgets and digital tools used in the classroom malfunction. It is a fact that there is a growing call for functional TVs to be provided in Philippine classrooms and other relevant educational technologies. However, it is unrealistic to expect these to be granted in a short amount of time. Therefore, in the meantime, pre-service teachers (PSTs) need to develop strategies to overcome these challenges. Doing so ensures the continuity of their lessons and serves as valuable training in preparation for the realities of the teaching profession.

Teachers and PSTs must adapt to their surroundings and changes within them (Tortola, 2021). Adaptability is the ability to change one's actions, course, or approach to suit a new situation (Munda, 2021). Adapting to novel and changing situations in these ever-changing environments is an important capacity for thriving and effective teachers (Granziera et al., 2019).

One of the goals of today's era of education, especially in the Philippines, is to produce globally competent graduates. To achieve this goal, the Philippine curriculum has adapted English as a medium of instruction and introduced various cultures worldwide. These initiatives are

among the steps the Department of Education undertakes to help learners meet international standards.

However, producing holistic and well-rounded graduates remains challenging when fundamental resources such as functional laptops or computers, smart TVs, and stable internet connections are not widely available in Philippine classrooms. Achieving global competence must begin with addressing these basic needs. Providing access to essential technological resources is a foundational first step in empowering teachers and PSTs to deliver meaningful lessons to learners. Truly, there is a pressing need for Philippine policymakers to prioritize and elevate the learning environment for young Filipinos.

B. Embracing and Managing Student Diversity in the Classroom

The spread of globalization has made the world overcome geographical barriers, leading to one big globalized village. This phenomenon has resulted in individuals being constantly exposed to the unique cultures, traditions, and beliefs of countries. In education, it is common for learners with varying capabilities, backgrounds, and intelligences to coexist within the same classroom. For example, the traditional notion that "Section 1s" or "Section As" are composed solely of mathematically and linguistically gifted students has been set aside. Today, students are distributed heterogeneously across different classes. In essence, diversity has become a defining feature of modern classrooms. Consequently, recognizing student differences and making deliberate efforts toward inclusion and effective classroom management are critical

competencies that pre-service teachers (PSTs) must be well-equipped to handle.

P2 recounted her experience with a student with special needs during her teaching internship. Through this experience, she learned that providing learners with an opportunity to grow is vital. Being in that situation made her see diversity like empty chairs, detailing that no matter how different each chair might look, their function will always remain the same. This can be related to learners that, no matter their differences, share the same goal when they enter the school - to learn. The empty classroom also signifies that PSTs and teachers alike must intentionally create or provide space for learners, such as those with special needs. According to her, offering such a space enables these students to grow and reinforces the understanding that they have a valued place in the world despite their differences.

"I just took a pic of my students' chairs during break time because I don't know, but it reminded me of how diverse my students are. During one of my teachings, there was a student who was like in his world – a gifted one, you would say. In my opinion, ma'am, even though each chair looks slightly different in a way that someare shiny, some have marks and different kinds of bags around them, some are chipped, someare wobbly, and others are steady, they all serve the same purpose, just like our student's ma'am who, despite differences, they have the same goal which is to learn. As I have mentioned, the empty chairs here symbolize the importance of making space for special or gifted students. In this way, ma'am, they can grow and feel like they have a space in this world despite them being different." (P2)

P2, Photo 5: Making Room to Uncover Students' Endless Potentials

The teacher education curriculum in the Philippines includes a course that introduces pre-service teachers (PSTs) to student diversity, particularly students with special needs. This early exposure aims to prepare PSTs so that when they are deployed to real-life classrooms, they are not overwhelmed when encountering such students. Addressing these situations requires approaching them from a place of understanding, empathy, and informed practice.

The idea of inclusive education was first outlined in the 1994 Salamanca statement and framework for special needs education (Para & Siddiqui, 2022). Inclusivity is about providing an improved learning environment that considers the unique needs of these exceptional learners (Jawad, 2022). In other words, inclusion is understood to mean that all students can access learning opportunities within the same educational environment, irrespective of their educational

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needs, through the adoption of pedagogies and practices that align with the principles of inclusive education (Charteris et al., 2021)

Moreover, P8 likened the diversity of students in a classroom to emojis, discussing that in the modern learning environment, students possess a diverse range of personalities, backgrounds, and emotions. She highlighted that each learner possesses unique needs and experiences that can significantly influence their learning progress. Recognizing and giving importance to diversity is essential in creating an inclusive and supportive environment, which would be one of the deciding factors in fostering student success.

"What we can see here is a tree that has different emojis. It illustrates different emotions, personalities, and origins among people found in the classroom. Here is a visual metaphor for diversity in the classroom—each emoji stands for a unique student with individual needs and experiences. The image is a reminder that no one is entirely the same as another. In this context, each learner needs understanding and support from the PSTs and the teachers. Students express and learn uniquely, just like emojis express different emotions. Recognizing and valuing these difference shelps create a more inclusive and effective learning environment." *(P8)*

P8, Photo 6: Faces of Student Diversity

Diversity is vital to 21st-century education, as it broadens perspectives, prepares students for the real world, and fosters empathy and respect. Therefore, teachers and pre-service teachers (PSTs) need to acknowledge these differences and design instructional strategies that effectively address and embrace student diversity. Doing so can create a learning sphere in which learners feel supported and empowered to achieve their potential.

A classroom usually has a wide range of diversity among the students with varying social and cultural backgrounds, learning preferences, and levels of academic preparedness in various areas, confidence, and interests in particular topics (Fajariyah et al., 2023). Fostering awareness and respect for diversity is key to generating fair chances for all learners to grow and contribute to society (Borja, 2025). Due to student diversity, teachers must differentiate learning materials, processes, outputs, and environments to respond to student characteristics (Insorio, 2024).

The diversity of learners can be associated with a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it offers advantages by exposing the learners to various cultures. This leads to the

development of open-mindedness and respect for cultural differences. However, diversity can become detrimental if it becomes excessive, for it can be a challenge to adequately address and cater to all the learners' varied needs. Diversity in one setting can potentially leave some students underserved.

P10 emphasized that it is natural for learners to exhibit different behaviours and learning styles, and pre-service teachers (PSTs) are responsible for guiding and supporting them throughout their educational journey. Differences should not be avoided; instead, they should be acknowledged and given appropriate attention, particularly by educators.

"Students always have unique ways of learning and behaving, and that's normal. As interns, it's our job to guide them, support them, and help them grow." (P10)

Furthermore, P4 highlighted the importance of differentiated instruction in catering to the various intelligences in a classroom. Learners must be given opportunities to find their niche within the four walls of the classroom to realize their unique potential.

"I will prepare activities that suit most of their learning styles and intelligences, because some students are good at physical activities. Others are intellectual, artistic, and all of that. I believe that integrating a differentiated activity can help the learners find their niche and empower them to make their intelligence shine." (P4)

However, as previously mentioned, student diversity also necessitates effective classroom management strategies. In this regard, P8 shared that removing objects or stimuli that may cause distractions is important to manage diverse behaviours effectively. Students can better focus on the lessons by minimizing distractions and internalizing what they have learned during each class session.

"I think what I can do to manage their behaviour, for now, is to remove the object that distracts them. In my class, I implemented a new rule that cell phones are prohibited during my time. I also became strict so that I could enforce discipline." (P8)

P8, Photo 7: "No Cellphones" Classroom

All jobs in the world are challenging, but teaching is regarded as one most demanding. Teaching requires not only an academic background but also practical classroom management skills. This includes implementing differentiated activities to address diverse learner needs and removing potential distractions that may hinder students from engaging in meaningful learning experiences.

The different learning styles and needs of 21st-century learners led to differentiated instruction. Differentiated instruction is a teaching philosophy based on the idea that teachers should differentiate the learning environment and process according to students' differences, such as interests, readiness, and learning profile, so that they can have multiple options to understand, make sense of, and internalize the information (Nayman & Altun, 2022). Differentiation is a teaching philosophy rooted in a deep respect for students, acknowledging their differences, and the drive to help all students thrive (Smale-Jacobse et al., 2019).

Effective classroom management strategies are designed to maintain order in the classroom (Kumari & Biswas, 2024). Well-managed classrooms provide a structured environment that fosters student engagement and minimizes disruptive behaviour (Emmer & Sabornie, 2015). Thus, to embrace and manage classroom diversity, implementing a no-cellphone rule, especially during instructional time, has become necessary for the PSTs. It helps minimize distractions, allowing students to stay focused and engaged in the lesson. Moreover, it creates a more inclusive and respectful environment where all learners can thrive.

Following the challenge of addressing student diversity in classrooms, pre-service teachers also faced overwhelming paperwork, the task of managing overcrowded classrooms, and the constraint of insufficient instructional time. Lesson planning, the creation of instructional materials, the preparation of engaging activities, and effective classroom management are among the primary responsibilities of a teacher or pre-service teacher in running a classroom. In addition to these tasks, they are also burdened with paperwork and numerous other roles and responsibilities. Therefore, it is unsurprising that many teachers experience difficulties managing large class sizes, particularly when operating within limited time constraints.

P1 explained that teachers cannot fully address all their students' needs because of the overwhelming amount of paperwork and overcrowded classrooms. This is supported by P4 and P6, which underline the issues of crowded classrooms and the numerous paperwork, respectively. Managing ten students can already be challenging; managing a number five times greater becomes even more daunting. Under such circumstances, it becomes nearly impossible for teachers and pre-service teachers (PSTs) to adequately attend to every student's individual learning needs.

"Diversity is good; however, it can be problematic if the teacher is not given ample time to prepare lessons catering to their various needs. Learners today have their learning styles and coping strategies. I think teachers are unable to cater to their students' needs because they are bombarded with much paperwork and responsibilities on top of managing their classroom of 50 students." (P1)

"Being inside a classroom with 50 students around can be difficult to manage. But, as an educator, I need to do what I can to help them learn something from my discussion." (P4)

"It is considered a norm in the Philippine education system for teachers to not only teach but also have a mountain of paperwork." P6.
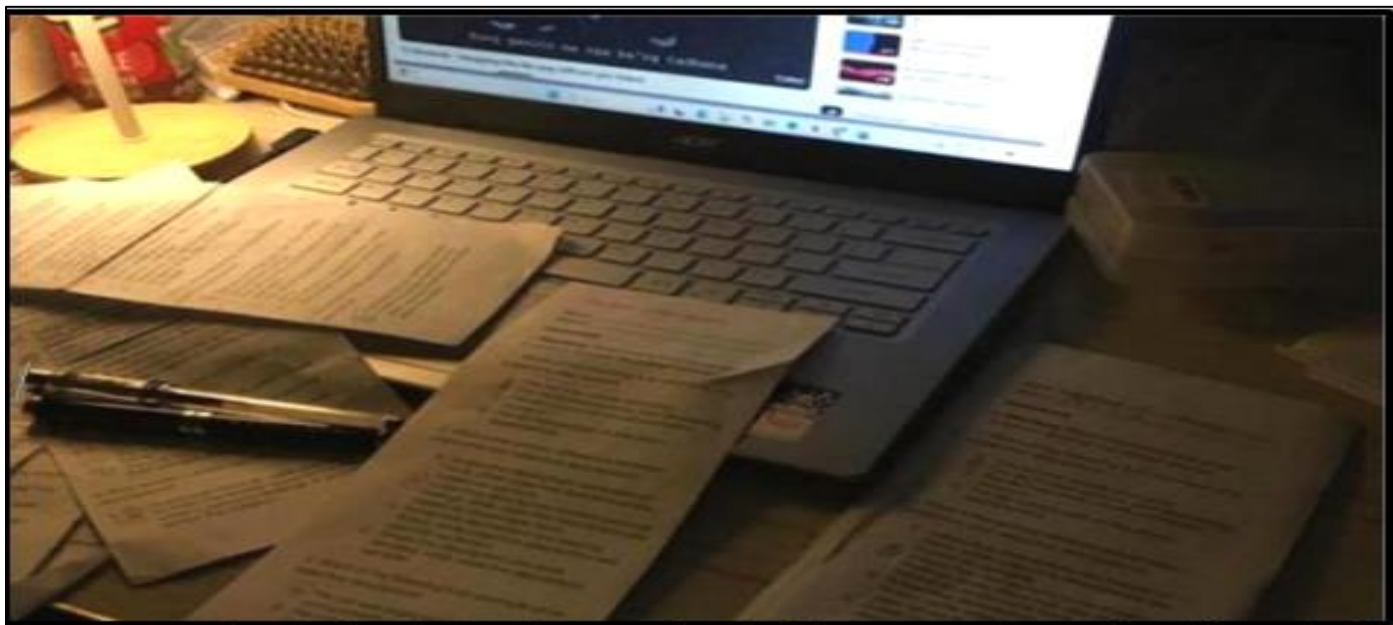
P1, Photo 8: Overloaded. Overcrowded. Overwhelmed.

A student-teacher ratio 1:50 presents a significant challenge for teachers, and even more so for pre-service teachers. To mitigate its detrimental effects, placing teachers in a smaller or lesser group of learners and providing ample time for classroom instruction would greatly support teachers and PSTs. A smaller number of learners to manage leads to sufficient attention being paid to learners with varying needs.

Moreover, adequate accommodation of students' diverse learning styles requires teachers to be given sufficient time for lesson and activity preparation. Planning aids teachers in organizing their instructional strategies, thereby avoiding potential pitfalls (Khan & Ilyas, 2024). Smaller class sizes allow for more personalized instruction, while favourable student-teacher ratios facilitate better teacher-student interactions, enabling educators to address diverse learning needs. Smaller classes positively impact student achievement and teacher well-being (Solomon, 2025).

In addition to large class sizes, the limited amount of time allocated to cater to many students further hinders pre-service teachers (PSTs) from fully implementing differentiated instruction in their classrooms. The Philippine education curriculum is heavily laden with numerous competencies that must be achieved within each academic quarter. As a result, PSTs are often compelled to hasten their discussions, frequently at the expense of consistently applying differentiated instructional strategies to address their learners' diverse needs.

P6 discussed that the 45-minute class allocated for each meeting sometimes pushes her to rush her discussion because it is one of her goals to finish the coverage on time. Additionally, P4 stated that she could not waste time because if she did, she would have to continue the discussion at the following meeting, which could drastically affect her schedule. Consequently, this often results in insufficient attention being given to struggling students or requiring additional scaffolding to grasp the lesson fully.

"However, diversity can become a problem if classrooms are densely populated. Teachers like me can't see everyone's uniqueness in my class, given that we were only given a short time to meet the students, 45 minutes only." (P6)

"I cannot waste time because I am only given 45 minutes per class to teach. There are several topics to teach, and I don't want to discuss the continuation of the lesson the next day because it would affect my schedule. I have several teachings to comply with; I cannot waste time." (P4)

P6, Photo 9: Teaching Under Time Pressure

Quality education is not the result of instantaneous efforts; instead, it is cultivated through deliberate preparation, sufficient instructional time and a commitment to meeting the individual needs of learners. If teachers cannot provide them with adequate attention due to curriculum limitations, the overall education experience of the learners will be hindered. This impedes the development of competent and well-rounded learners. Therefore, there is a pressing need for systemic reforms prioritizing sufficient time, resources, and support to ensure the delivery of meaningful and inclusive education.

The increasing workload and numerous other responsibilities and roles that teachers and PSTs assume have gradually diminished the time dedicated to actual teaching hours. Teachers are often tasked with administrative and ancillary work, including paperwork, training and seminars, budget-related tasks, disaster response, health, and others (Tarraya, 2023). Moreover, practice teaching demands various strategies, preparation, and classroom management, which can be particularly challenging for novice educators (Antallan et al., 2022).

Smaller class sizes often allow for more individualized attention, improving academic performance (Solomon, 2025). Moreover, increasing instruction time increases student learning. A general increase in instruction time is at least as efficient as an expert-developed, detailed teaching program that increases instruction with the same amount of time (Andersen et al., 2016). Thus, for PSTs, a 45-minute class becomes insufficient due to the numerous preparations they must undergo before their class discussion begins. The constrained time period is challenging for delivering a smooth and interactive classroom discussion. Extending class time may provide more effective teaching, student engagement, and reflective practice opportunities.

However, a study conducted by Stoltzfus et al. (2019) found that students are more engaged during short rather than long instructional sessions. Short class hours may support student focus, but they also challenge teachers to deliver comprehensive instruction within a limited time. In the Philippine education system, a wide range of topics must be covered within a quarter. As a result, class time is often shortened along with the scope of lesson coverage to sustain student engagement.

The lived experiences of pre-service teachers (PSTs) reveal that one of the common sources of stress stems from student diversity in the classroom. This highlights the importance of reducing classroom population sizes, extending class time, or streamlining curriculum content. These adjustments can enable PSTs to accommodate their students' diverse learning needs better. Addressing these structural challenges can significantly ease the instructional burden on PSTs and contribute to more meaningful and personalized student learning experiences. These findings emphasize the necessity of reducing population sizes in classrooms, extending class time, or, if not possible, streamlining the curriculum content.

The second objective focused on the resilience strategies employed by English major pre-service teachers in navigating the evolving academic environment. Central themes included cultivating inner balance through personalized coping mechanisms and drawing strength from purpose and support systems.

C. *Cultivating Inner Balance through Personalized Coping Mechanisms*
The resilience strategies employed by English major pre-service teachers in navigating the evolving academic environment included self-care as a foundational strategy, and being intentional with managing time and organization

are key approaches. One of the most pivotal moments of being a teacher education student is entering an internship. It is considered one of the most demanding phases of the program. Therefore, encouraging PSTs to maintain a balanced lifestyle and promoting self-care are a few ways to support them in this academic journey.

P5 shared that allowing oneself time to relax can lead to feeling recharged and better prepared to handle upcoming tasks. She explained that watching movies is one of her coping strategies, helping her stay resilient throughout her internship experience. P5 emphasized that relaxing makes PSTs feel recharged and prepared to handle another set of tasks. She also shared that due to the nature of teaching internships, PSTs often overlook the importance of self-care and work-life balance. Moreover, P7 expressed that her means of giving herself a break and pause is to watch her favorite anime series. For PSTs, engaging in activities that pique their interest, unravel their creativity, and spark their imagination is necessary to sustain motivation and drive.

"When we know how to relax and give time to ourselves, we can feel recharged and ready to tackle another challenge ahead… Life gets so busy and tiring that we forget to care for ourselves. For me, watching movies reminds me that it is alright to have a break and enjoy mundane things like this. Watching movies for me, ma'am, is also cost-effective and a way for me to breathe from the struggles of being an intern. " (P5)

"Watching anime isn't just entertainment, it's a way for me to pause, recharge, and reconnect with the things that spark my imagination. Anime really helps me get back on track, especially when it comes to waking up my creativity. Sitting in my room and doing my hobby, which is watching anime, reminds me that there are so many ways to learn. Learning does not only occur in the classroom. Also, anime helps with waking up my creativity and curiosity, which I think are important in my journey as an intern." (P7)

P5, Photo 10: Taking Time to Pause, Break, and Relax

Engaging in leisure activities is necessary for every PST and individuals in general. Watching movies can be a form of entertainment, but most importantly, it is also a form of self-reward after a long period of hard work. Generally, indulging oneself with hobbies and other activities that sustain self-interest is essential, especially in fostering resilience and motivation. Engaging in light and enjoyable activities helps PSTs maintain their resilience and develop coping strategies during their internship.

The everyday life of humans consists of numerous challenges leading to experiences of acute and chronic stress (Koehler et al, 2023). Engaging in leisure activities is crucial in promoting and maintaining mental health. The effect is

likely associated with resilience as the broaden-and-build theory suggests positive emotions elicited from leisure increase mental resources for stress coping (Takiguchi et al., 2023). Engaging in leisure activities has been associated with an increased sense of purpose and meaning and serves as a distraction from everyday worries (Lagunes-Córdoba et al., 2022).

Another personalized coping strategy the PSTs utilize to alleviate stress is strolling around the city. Some individuals find relief through activities such as watching movies or engaging in hobbies. In contrast, for others, something as simple as taking a stroll can serve as an effective way to alleviate stress. Activities that help promote

relaxation and encourage personal enjoyment are important in maintaining emotional resilience and well-being.

P1 shared that her preferred relaxation mode is walking around the city to clear her mind and alleviate stress. She described how walking at night, surrounded by city lights, helps her regain mental clarity. Being anonymous in the middle of the bustling city gives her a sense of freedom from the anxieties she is dealing with from her responsibility as a PST. Her proven and effective strategy is walking or strolling, especially when experiencing a heightened unease due to her upcoming final teaching demonstration. Taking time to stroll around allows her to stay grounded and maintain her emotional well-being during this demanding period.

"My way of coping from my stress ma'am is walking around the city in the early evening. Walking and looking at the city lights clears my head and energizes me. Being in the midst of these city lights, I felt like I was unknown. I don't know, but walking and seeing the city's bright lights comforts me. It makes me feel like I am unknown. The idea that no one knows you provides a freeing feeling to me. In schools and at home, people know me. My students know me as their teacher, and my parents know me as their child. However, I am unknown in the city. I feel like I don't have any responsibilities on top of my shoulders." (P1)

P1, Photo 11: City Lights Clear My Mind

People have different ways to cope with stress. For instance, PSTs walk or stroll the city to alleviate stress and pressure. Walking is a common method individuals use to relieve tension and clear their minds. For PSTs, taking intentional breaks is fundamental in building resilience, allowing them to recharge and effectively manage the demands of their academic and practicum responsibilities.

Walking is the most commonly reported physical activity and is often classified as light or brisk. Light walking is classified as low-intensity physical activity, and brisk walking as moderate-intensity physical activity (Ungvari et al., 2023). Nature-based walking interventions represent a low-cost, eco-friendly activity, designed to assist people in maintaining physical well-being and improving their mental health status (Ma et al., 2024). Additionally, nature walks have been proposed as a cost-effective and inclusive method for successfully exploiting nature to promote health and well-being (Grassini, 2022).

Moreover, aside from taking brisk walks, midday naps can also serve as an effective self-care strategy to maintain well-being amidst a demanding schedule. For PSTs, their way of restoring energy levels and improving mood is to take midday naps. Indulging in this makes them more effective and engaging during classroom discussions. A midday rest becomes essential, mainly due to the fact that PSTs are commonly sleep deprived due to the extensive preparation of instructional materials and lesson plans. It makes PSTs feel recharged and better prepared to carry out the day's remaining tasks with renewed focus and efficiency.

P6 recounted that taking a nap during break time makes her feel recharged, energized, and better prepared for the next class. She emphasized that one of her primary coping mechanisms is to rest whenever she feels physically or mentally fatigued from her responsibilities. For P6, to maintain her physical and mental health, she ensures that she gets enough sleep, such as midday naps. She finds it beneficial because it helps her feel refreshed after a nap. This allows her to think creatively, especially when planning

lessons for her upcoming class discussions. Similarly, P8 emphasized the importance of napping to grant herself a brief but necessary break from her demanding schedule.

"We were taking a nap here because the previous night, we were up making lesson plans and instructional materials for that day. One of my coping mechanisms whenever I feel tired or stressed is sleep. I think I can function better if I just get enough sleep or nap. Whenever I have a headache or don't know what to write for my lesson plan, I stop it all and

take a break by sleeping. Sleep does wonders for me because after I wake up, I have new ideas for my LP or IMs. So I think sleeping between tasks for me is worth it." (P6)

" I am a night owl, meaning I am effective during nighttime. So, I usually work on my tasks until dawn. This is why I feel extremely sleepy during the day, so I make sure to take every opportunity I have to sleep. I usually take a nap during my lunch breaks." (P8)

P6, Photo 12: Napping Before Teaching

Napping has been shown to boost cognitive function by enhancing memory retention and learning capacity. It also contributes to improved mood, increased productivity, and better focus. Within the context of a challenging and demanding teaching internship, taking short naps can serve as a practical and effective form of self-care, helping pre-service teachers manage stress and maintain optimal performance throughout the day.

A nap is defined as a short sleep episode typically during daylight hours, which can range from a few minutes to several hours, while the frequency can vary from occasional naps to several naps daily (Álvarez-Bueno et al., 2022). Daytime napping may improve cognitive performance by compensating for inadequate sleep at night, countering daytime sleepiness and fatigue, and boosting adult energy levels (Li et al., 2022). In a study by Xu et al. (2022), sleep is important for optimal cognitive performance, and both afternoon napping and nighttime sleep duration were associated with cognitive function.

The pressure to meet academic standards and achieve desired learning outcomes, often coupled with limited resources and support, can lead to feelings of stress, overwhelm, and frustration (Hargreaves, 2021). When teachers experience high levels of emotional exhaustion, their students tend to present below-average academic achievement levels, as measured by both school grades and standardized achievement test scores (Zito et al., 2024).

Teachers' elevated levels of emotional exhaustion also contribute to more negative perceptions of teacher support and school satisfaction among students (Arens & Morin, 2016). Therefore, teachers and PSTs must allot self-care time to maintain their well-being and effectively and efficiently deliver lessons. Teacher prosperity and taking care of oneself offer various advantages for teachers, students, and the school or college system (Abou Assali & Al Abdouli, 2024).

For educators and pre-service teachers, mindfulness, self-compassion, and life satisfaction are closely interconnected and foundational to navigating the stresses and challenges of the teaching profession (Wu & Qin, 2025). Thus, it is only fair for pre-service teachers—and individuals in general—to allow themselves a break from the demands of their work. Taking time to rest and recharge is essential for maintaining both mental well-being and long-term productivity.

Adopting self-care as a foundational strategy is the first approach PSTs use to maintain resilience. This is followed by intentional time management and organization, which emerged as an essential strategy, especially since balancing lesson planning, creating instructional materials, and scoring student activities can overwhelm novice teachers. Navigating the demanding world of an internship can be challenging; therefore, there is a need for PSTs to learn how to systematically track their progress to guarantee that all the assigned tasks are accomplished promptly. This can be

achieved by incorporating practical approaches such as checklists or to-do lists and prioritizing urgent tasks.

P3 emphasized that to manage her hectic schedule, she must develop excellent time management skills. She highlighted the importance of knowing what to prioritize. In this way, the urgent tasks will be accomplished on time, making her feel less stressed and thus helping her feel more accomplished. Meanwhile, P10 narrated that taking notes and making a to-do list helps them keep track of the tasks they must accomplish during their internship.

"In order to manage my hectic schedule, I need to be very mindful of managing my time. If I am aware of what needs to be done and I can accomplish it on or before the deadline, I will feel less stressed about it. I also need to do my tasks one at a time so it will not be piled. Most of all,

always prioritize doing the important and the urgent ones…I consider myself someone who is organized with my tasks. It actually makes me feel at ease, ma'am, if I do the organizing of my things or tasks… Being organized with my tasks and giving myself time to pause are beneficial. It is for my own sake " (P3)

"I believe that in order for me to keep track of my tasks, I need to write or take note of the things I need to do. This way, I will know which ones to prioritize and which not…I am not going to say that I have mastered my time management skills because I know that I still have a long way to go. However, I believe that in order for me to keep track of my tasks, I need to write or take notes of the things I need to do. In this way, I will know which ones I should prioritize and which are not." (P10)
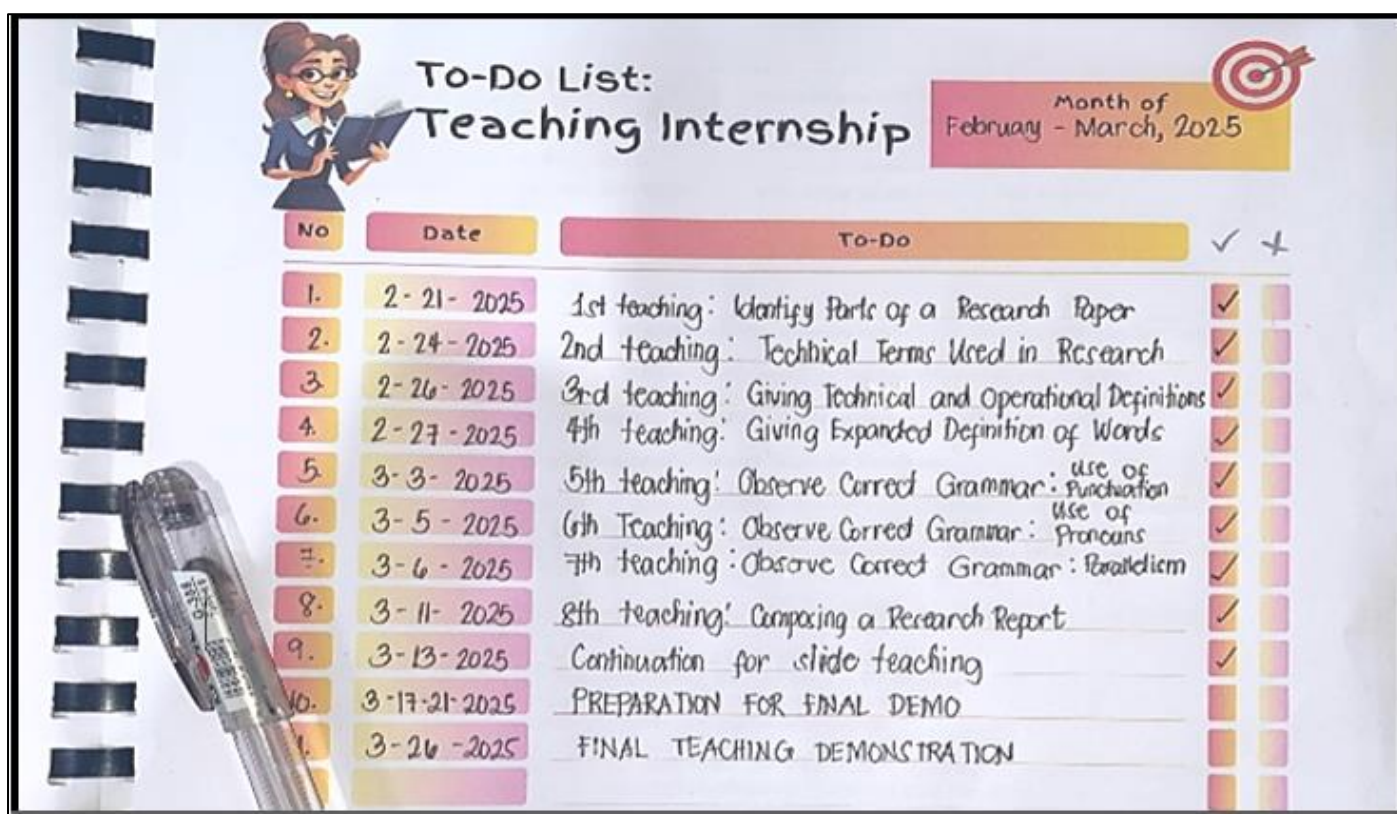
P3, Photo 13: Tracking Priorities, One Checklist at a Time

Being a teacher—specifically, a pre-service teacher—involves complex and mentally taxing tasks. Therefore, time management and organization are essential strategies that they can adopt to maximize student learning, reduce stress, and prevent burnout. By effectively managing their time and staying organized, PSTs can create a more structured and productive teaching environment, allowing them to focus on both instructional quality and personal well-being.

Time management is crucial in various professional fields, but its importance becomes particularly pronounced in education (Jaballa & Nening, 2024). Every learner or PST in this matter must be capable of successfully organizing their time and incorporating time management strategies (Napoles & Anding, 2023), which is critical for successful

academic performance. Effective time management reduces stress as it produces a sense of achievement or satisfaction by fulfilling the items from their objectives on time with less time, and more time with your friends, family, and other hobbies (Dacoylo et al., 2024). Creating checklists and to-do lists is a simple yet effective strategy for managing a busy schedule, especially for pre-service teachers (PSTs) who constantly juggle lesson planning, instructional materials (IMs) making, and developing unique and purposeful pedagogical approaches.

In maintaining resilience, especially within an evolving academic environment, pre-service teachers (PSTs) must develop personal coping mechanisms to sustain balance and well-being. The teaching internship represents a

fundamental chapter in teacher education. While it is undoubtedly demanding and taxing, it provides invaluable experiences that can be applied once PSTs enter the professional field. Throughout their internship, PSTs encounter various challenges; however, such obstacles should not be viewed as insurmountable defeats but rather as opportunities for growth and problem-solving. Technological limitations, diverse student behaviors, large class sizes, and restricted instructional time can be mitigated—if not entirely overcome—through effective time management and organizational skills. Time management is a crucial component in education and a lifelong skill necessary for personal and professional success.

D. Drawing Strength from Purpose and Support Systems

The PSTs encountered numerous challenges throughout their internship. Rather than allowing these difficulties to discourage them, they reframed their struggles into growth opportunities, which proved essential to their development as future educators. Fostering self-efficacy is essential for pre-service teachers (PSTs) as it equips them with the confidence, resilience, and adaptability needed to successfully navigate the challenges of their internship journey. Furthermore, for PSTs, resilience is the primary driving force that propels them forward despite the adversities they encounter throughout their internship journey. While resilience may manifest in various forms and strategies, its common denominator lies in its ability to empower PSTs to persevere, adapt, and ultimately realize their potential as future educators.

P1 discussed that failures are not a means to give up; instead, they should be an inspiration to continue to move forward. She sees her everyday life as a PST as an opportunity for her to learn. There were moments when she had to fail to accomplish the task assigned to her, but instead of being disheartened, she saw it as an opportunity for her to learn and improve. This experience is related to P2, in which she likened her strength and resilience amidst challenges to that of a bamboo, explaining that no matter how intense the storm is, the chances of a bamboo breaking are minimal to none. This is compared to their experience that no matter the struggles they experience along the way, they may bend, but they will never break.

"I do not see failures as a means to give up. Although failures and disappointing others can hurt, I continue to work harder to improve instead of giving up. During my internship, there were moments when I failed to do well on tasks that I was assigned. I was reprimanded for it, and I learned from the experience. Every day is an opportunity to improve, whether through failure or success." (P1)

"No matter how strong the wind and storm are, although they may bend down, the chances of them breaking are close to zero…As interns, we experience many difficulties and obstacles along the way. We may get swayed from it time to time, but just like the bamboo, we may bend, but we never break. " (2)
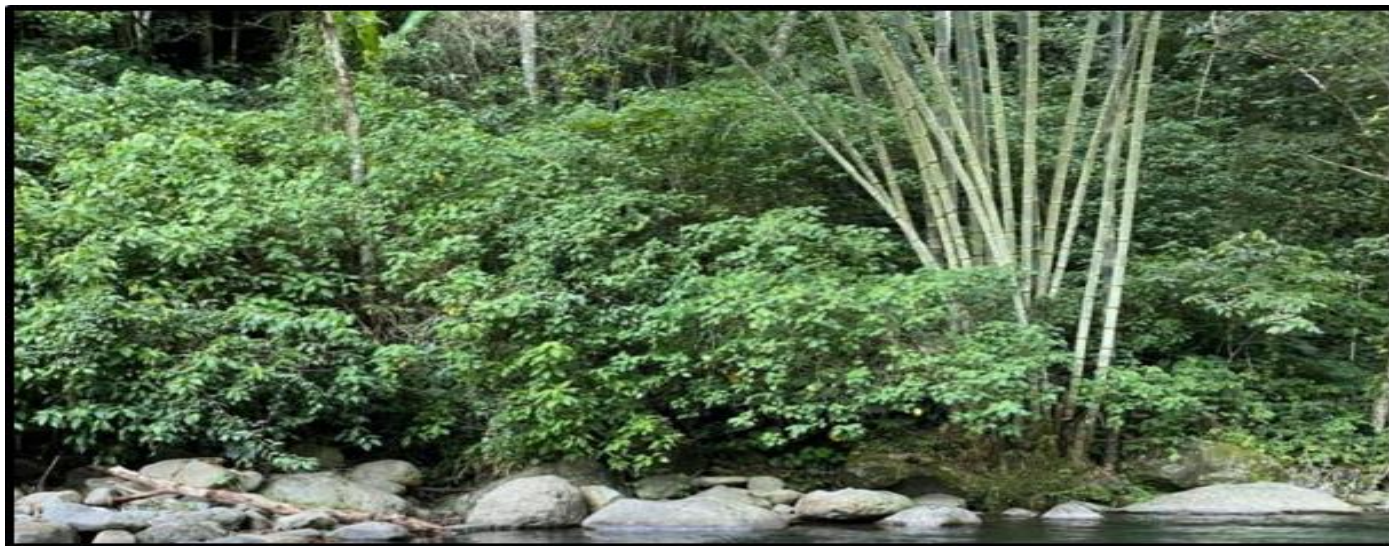
P2, Photo 14: Staying Resilient Amidst Storms

The role of a Pre-Service Teacher (PST) encompasses a wide range of responsibilities, including preparing lesson plans, creating instructional materials, managing classroom dynamics, and addressing student diversity. In addition to these teaching duties, PSTs are students themselves—they must submit journals, attend academic classes, and prepare rigorously for their upcoming licensure examinations. Given these multiple and overlapping roles, the teaching internship experience is physically, mentally, and emotionally demanding. There are inevitable moments of emotional exhaustion, where PSTs feel overwhelmed to the point of

breaking down. The PSTs' grit and tenacity are the highlights of their internship journey. These defining qualities allowed them to traverse their teaching practicum successfully. From this standpoint, the bamboo serves as a striking metaphor for their experience—though it bends under the pressure of strong winds and storms, it rarely breaks, symbolizing the flexibility and strength that PSTs embody amidst challenges.

The first step in acquiring resilience is acknowledgment. Acknowledgement involves recognizing available coping resources and accepting the reality of the

situation. Resilient individuals acknowledge adversity without becoming overwhelmed—a process that balances emotional awareness with problem-focused coping (Farchi & Peled-Avram, 2025). The concept of reframing or seeing challenges from a different lens is introduced in cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT). Reframing struggles is also known as cognitive restructuring— identifying, challenging, and replacing maladaptive thoughts with more constructive perspectives (Zlomke & Jeter, 2020). Throughout our life cycle, all of us will have to face different adversities. However, we know that we can activate a resilient process that will allow us to get through the situation and emerge stronger, so that we can continue to project ourselves into the future with greater self-confidence and trust in our possibilities (Moll Riquelme et al., 2022).

Teaching is not the only challenging part of the profession, but also the journey to becoming a full-fledged teacher. This pertains to being a pre-service teacher, a challenging and significant undertaking that all teacher education students must undergo. To achieve resilience, one requires a strong mental and emotional foundation. Self-efficacy is one of the known human abilities used to overcome adversity. It is a crucial factor in developing and maintaining resilience. Self-efficacy is defined as viewing difficulties as growth opportunities rather than insurmountable hurdles. Consequently, the first step towards building resilience in teaching is cultivating self-efficacy.

In this vein, P9 compared her internship journey to a flower—symbolizing resilience, growth, and perseverance. Despite her many challenges, she stood firm and radiated positivity, much like a flower that blooms even under harsh conditions. She acknowledged that the path of teaching internship is often filled with moments of self-doubt; however, she emphasized that dwelling in such a mindset would only hinder her progress. Instead, she embraced these struggles as integral to her personal and professional development.

"The journey of being a pre-service teacher is not a bed of roses, ma'am… Lesson planning, managing class, and doubting ourselves if we can survive this are just a few reasons why the road to becoming a teacher is not easy. When I took this picture, I was reminded that growth can happen even in adversity. It mirrors my journey as an intern. It is small, but it stands firm and bright despite its size, just like me. I may be small, but I am bigger than my problems. For me, teaching is a profession that requires one to be knowledgeable and also perseverant, passionate, and inspired… We can empower ourselves by embracing our struggles as part of our growth. Just as a flower needs sunlight and rain to flourish, teachers need challenges and successes to strengthen. " (P9)

P9, Photo 15: Blooming Brightly Amidst Hurdles

Self-efficacy is a critical factor in building resilience and perseverance. The ability to endure challenges does not primarily stem from external circumstances, but rather from an intrinsic belief in one's own capability to succeed. This internal conviction—defined as self-efficacy—serves as the foundation for overcoming adversity. For pre-service teachers (PSTs), cultivating a strong sense of self-efficacy is essential to navigate the demanding journey of becoming an educator and persist through the broader challenges that life may present.

According to Bandura (1997), self-efficacy is the confidence to execute tasks and overcome challenging situations. Therefore, self-efficacy presents an individual protective factor that enables individuals to remain resilient in the event of setbacks or failures because they perceive them as resolvable and temporary obstacles rather than as an expression of their overall competence (Hoferichter & Jentsch, 2024). Educationally speaking, self-efficacy beliefs relate to teachers' and students' academic performance and self-regulated learning (Alibakhshi & Labbafi, 2020).

In recent years, teacher resilience and self-efficacy have been recognized as essential components of teacher well-being and the prevention of teacher burnout (Daniilidou et al., 2020). Resilient teachers are better able to bounce back from setbacks and maintain their motivation and energy levels (Li, 2023). Several factors can contribute to teacher resilience, such as social support from colleagues and administrators, positive teacher-student relationships, and effective coping strategies (Beltman et al., 2011; Liu & Chu, 2022).

Moreover, challenges are inherent in life, particularly for pre-service teachers (PSTs) navigating a pivotal phase in their professional development. In handling challenges in their academic journey, PSTs draw strength from interpersonal relationships and intrinsic motivation. Humans are innately social, which suggests that although individuals claim to be independent, growth and resilience naturally arise from meaningful connections with people. Supportive relationships—whether with peers, mentors, or family—offer encouragement, affirmation, and a sense of belonging, all of which are crucial for PSTs as they strive to persevere amidst the demands of their internship.

P5 shared that pre-service teachers (PSTs) can derive strength and empowerment from the presence and support of those around them. She emphasized that the encouragement from her family, mentors, cooperating teachers, and friends played a crucial role in helping her overcome the challenges she faced during her internship. P2 echoed the same experience in which she narrated that her survival strength comes from the people around her. Knowing she had a reliable support system made her feel empowered and less alone. Given the demanding nature of teaching internships, a strong support network significantly contributes to a PST's motivation and resilience.

"I think as pre-service teachers, we can be empowered if we know that someone is supporting us. I could be our family, mentors, cooperating teachers, and friends. I know that undergoing this journey will not be a bed of roses, but I believe that if I know I have a strong support system, I will be motivated to work harder and rise above the challenges." (P5)

"One of my strengths is knowing how to manage and balance my life. I do not let myself succumb to many negativities around me or my many responsibilities. This strength exists because I need to stay optimistic and have people supporting me. I should not let them down." (P10)

P5, Photo 16: Shared Strength, Shared Success

The essence of being human lies in building meaningful connections with others. These relationships are vital for personal growth, fostering a sense of belonging, and supporting emotional well-being. Being surrounded by individuals who genuinely care for one's welfare enables one to find meaning, develop a sense of purpose, and establish a clearer sense of identity.

Additionally, the emotional well-being of individuals is largely dependent on the quality of their social relationships, as acknowledged by self-determination theory and the belongingness hypothesis (Hagenauer et al., 2024). Motivation, which influences human behavior, plays a significant role in shaping teachers' instructional practices. More specifically, intrinsic motivation involves people doing an activity because they find it interesting and derive satisfaction from it (Kula, 2022).

Furthermore, finding purpose in one's actions is essential for sustaining motivation and commitment, especially during challenging times. A clear sense of purpose enables individuals to interpret struggles not as obstacles but

as opportunities for growth and skill development. When individuals understand the reason behind their efforts, they are more likely to persevere. For others, their sense of purpose is rooted in their determination to complete their degree, despite the numerous challenges they encounter. For some, their purpose may be rooted in the desire to bring joy and pride to their families—an aspiration that makes enduring hardships worthwhile.

P5 expressed that pre-service teachers (PSTs) demonstrate resilience through their unwavering determination, despite the many challenges they face from the beginning of their academic journey. She had to take on multiple part-time jobs to support herself and afford her education. She worked as a saleslady in a shopping mall and as a hotel housekeeper to settle her remaining financial obligations. Her determination to complete her degree was her guiding purpose and motivation to persevere. Similarly, P8 shared that the loss of both of her parents had a profound emotional impact on her. Due to financial constraints, she and her siblings were separated, as they could not afford to attend school together. These combined experiences served as her motivation to strive harder and stay resilient.

"We are resilient because even if we experienced many challenges since the first year to the fourth year, we did not give up. During my first year, we had online classes due to the pandemic, and I could not continue my second year because of financial problems. I could not pay the remaining balance in school, so I had to stop schooling. I worked in Shopper's Plaza for about 5 or 6 months, and then I worked in Royal Garden to pay my remaining balance. Then, TES came so that I could enroll in the second year. Through TES, I was able to pay my tuition. Luckily, I did not become an irregular student despite all of those... even if I stumble and fall, I will still rise and stand firm to overcome the challenges that I have experienced." (P3)

"Sadly, I lost my father when I was in high school, and I lost my mom during the pandemic. My father was an OFW for 10 years and rarely comes home. He only comes home every 3 years and spends around 3 weeks with us when he is here. I did not have many moments spent with my father. He died during the pandemic, and sadly, we were not able to hold a proper burial for him. On the other hand, my mother died just last year. My siblings and I had no choice but to be separated because we could not afford to study together for financial reasons. My aunt lives in Leyte and volunteered to bring my brother and sister to support their schooling. When I look back and remember these experiences, I am motivated to stay resilient despite all odds." (P8)

P8, Photo 17: Purpose Fuels Resilience

A sense of purpose provides individuals with a clear direction and long-term goal and strengthens their motivation to persevere through challenges. This is especially important for pre-service teachers (PSTs), who are often at risk of becoming demotivated due to the academic and emotional demands of their training. Cultivating a strong sense of purpose allows them to remain focused and committed despite difficulties. Most importantly, purpose is a foundation for building resilience and perseverance.

Sharma and Yukhymenko-Lescroart (2024) conceptualized purpose as people's underlying intention to achieve their life's most important goals that, when fulfilled, might not only actualize a positive change in their life through achieving self-growth, happiness, success, family harmony, and so on, but also advance a positive change in their communities. In addition, having supportive others appears valuable for developing a purpose, at least during adolescence and young adulthood (Weston et al., 2020).

Challenges are a normal part of life, especially for pre-service teachers navigating one of the most crucial stages of their education. They anchored their resilience in relationships and intrinsic motivation to overcome these

challenges. Intrinsic motivation arises when an individual engages in an activity not out of obligation, but out of genuine interest or personal satisfaction.

P6 credited her resilience to intrinsic motivation—specifically, her strong desire to graduate—as this accomplishment carries significant meaning for herself and her family. This inner drive pushed her to persevere through the hardships of her teaching internship, knowing that her success would bring pride and fulfillment to her loved ones. Her commitment to this goal kept her grounded, even in the most challenging moments, reminding her of the deeper purpose behind her efforts.

"Other than being positive, I think what we can do to stay resilient is always to choose to persist. In my case, I have no choice but to hold on because I think this is not just about my dream. It is the dream of my family, too. They look forward to seeing me graduate, so I must muster all my courage and persist. Others may choose not to continue if they want to, but that is not the case for me. I am not just thinking about myself. I am also thinking about the people who have put high hopes in me." (P6)

P6, Photo 18: Our Shared Dream

The emotional well-being of individuals is largely dependent on the quality of their social relationships, as acknowledged by self-determination theory and the belongingness hypothesis (Hagenauer et al., 2024). Motivation, which influences human behavior, plays a significant role in shaping teachers' instructional practices. More specifically, intrinsic motivation involves people doing an activity because they find it interesting and derive satisfaction from it (Kula, 2022). Additionally, intrinsic motivation to achieve goals corresponds to the satisfaction of creating or perfecting an action (Mercader-Rubio et al., 2023).

Resilience is not solely a personal trait but also a skill that can be cultivated through consistent self-care practices, effective time management, strategic task organization, reframing challenges as opportunities for growth, and drawing strength from supportive relationships with family, peers, and mentors. This suggests that resilience is not innate but a dynamic capability that develops over time. Several factors influence the formation and sustainability of resilience, including an individual's mindset, perspective, and surrounding environment. Pre-service teachers (PSTs) resilience was shaped by purposeful strategies rooted in their personal goals and aspirations. Moreover, the support provided by their immediate community played a critical role in strengthening their ability to persevere amid adversity.

The third objective focused on how mentorship and peer support help foster resilience among pre-service teachers. It encompassed themes such as acknowledging mentorship as a catalyst for growth and professional identity and recognizing peer relationships as pillars of emotional resilience.

E. Acknowledging Mentorship as a Catalyst for Growth and Professional Identity

Mentorship is defined as the collaboration between the experienced (cooperating teacher) and the less experienced teacher (pre-service teacher). The cooperating teacher provides guidance, support, assessment, and encouragement to the PSTs. This partnership occurs during the last phases of teacher education - the teaching internship. CTs play a fundamental role during this educational phase, for their involvement helps PSTs develop practical skills, techniques in managing classrooms, and pedagogical knowledge that they will need in navigating the complexities of the teaching profession. In essence, CTs bridge the gap between the theoretical knowledge acquired by the PSTs from their program and the practical application of this learning in real life. Their constructive feedback and real-time classroom insights not only refine the teaching practices of PSTs but also boost their confidence and readiness for the profession.

P3 shared that the major factor that helped her develop confidence in her capabilities as a future educator was the constant guidance she received from her cooperating teacher. In a similar manner, P6 and P7 recalled an identical experience wherein the unyielding support and constructive feedback they received from their cooperating teachers provided them with a sense of acknowledgement and validation in terms of their professional endeavours.

"Because of the guidance of my CT, every mark and comment I had received in my lesson plans and during my teaching demonstrations transformed my doubts into valuable experiences. I am positive these experiences will help mold me into an educator confident in her capabilities and thoughtful actions and decisions." P3

P3, Photo 19: Turning Every Marks to Milestones

"I am really grateful to my cooperating teachers. Without their support, comments, and feedback, I think I would not progress and improve. What really helped me in my teaching journey was the thought that no matter how challenging my internship will be, I am not alone because I have my CT behind me. Their constructive criticisms help me take the first step of becoming the educator I aspire to be." (P6).

"Of the comments I received from my critic teacher and my students, there is this one that I could not forget and that was "You are good at teaching." I cannot really forget that because I felt validated in a way. I felt like all my sleepless nights and stresses have paid off because I was able to deliver an excellent job." (P7)

P1 compared her experience with her cooperating teacher to a bright light, emphasizing that her consistent guidance and support accompanied her throughout the journey and contributed to her growth. Similarly, P4, P6, and P10 shared how their cooperating teachers continuously guided, supported, and encouraged them, which significantly boosted their confidence and fostered noticeable improvement from the first day of their deployment on campus.

"The bright light above represents my cooperating teacher's constant guidance and support. In my opinion, this is not just a mere light; it symbolizes the guiding light through the presence of my cooperating teacher. She was always there to help me improve, and her presence was my lifeline during those challenging days. Without my cooperating teacher, I would have been lost in the darkness." (P1)

P1, Photo 20: Mentors Illuminating the Way to Success

"With the time I have spent with my critic teacher, I am empowered because I have seen her passion and drive to really guide me as her pre-service teacher. What I appreciate about my cooperating teacher is that she never lets me settle for less. She makes sure that I widen my perspective by going beyond my limitations. Her guidance motivates me and allows me to see my potential amidst the lapses I had during my teaching internship." (P4)

Mentoring received from cooperating teachers is a vital phase of teacher education. Through mentoring, PSTs identify the areas where they need to improve and highlight their innate strengths. Knowing these allows them to leverage their strengths in the field. The guidance and presence of cooperating teachers are essential in shaping PSTs into competent and confident educators who are prepared to face real-world teaching challenges.

The cooperating teacher plays an important role in the student teacher's capstone experience (Nesbitt & Barry, 2022). Mentoring in the context of teacher education has been acknowledged as a valuable process and a cost-effective strategy in achieving educational reform (Calamlam & Mokshein, 2019). The relationship pre-service teachers (student - teachers) have with cooperating teachers—also referred to as mentors or associate teachers—is essential to their accomplishment during school deployment (Gallchóir & Hinchion, 2018). Moreover, the success of the practicum depends mainly on the quality of the mentor-mentee relationship (Caupayan, 2025). Therefore, pre-service teachers must receive motivation from their mentors and see them as their role models in the field.

Cooperating teachers are key contributors to pre-service teachers' education, play a crucial role in student teachers' professional development (Levi-Keren & Efrati-Virtzer, 2022).) Additionally, the quality of the relationship between the CT and the PST significantly influences pre-service teachers' well-being and capacity to flourish during the field experience (Dreer, 2021). For that reason, the cooperating teacher not only serves as a guide for pre-service teachers (PSTs) during their internship but also acts as a source of motivation, encouraging them to pursue and remain committed to their chosen career path.

F. Recognizing Peer Relationships as Pillars of Emotional Resilience

Along with mentorship, peer support helps foster resilience among pre-service teachers, and peer relationships can serve as pillars of emotional resilience. For PSTs to build strength and sustain resilience during their internship, they anchor on emotional support through friendships and shared experiences, providing them a sense of belonging.

P2 highlighted that pre-service teachers (PSTs) can gain peer empowerment and support, likening her friendships to shadows—ever-present, even if not always seen. Likewise, P5 described herself as an unfinished bridge, symbolizing her ongoing professional growth that is gradually being built through her internship experience, strengthened by the encouragement and assistance of her peers. Lastly, P9 emphasized the value of peer collaboration, stressing that offering and receiving constructive feedback is instrumental in improving teaching practice, and during challenging times, seeking support from fellow PSTs can ease the burden and foster resilience.

"In this photo, you can see a silhouette or shadow of me and my friends. I chose this picture to symbolize the support I received from my peers. Just like the shadow, although we cannot always see it, we know that it is always around, behind our backs. Like my friends, we may not meet often, but I know they support me in any way they can." (P2)

P2, Photo 21: Silhouettes of Friendship and Resilience

"I am reminded of my pre-service teacher journey by this picture. I'm still learning and developing, piece by piece, just like the bridge. Despite the challenges I face, I continue

to go forward with the support of my friends and my self-belief. " (P5)

P5, Photo 22: Friends: Pillars of Strength

"In moments of difficulty, others would probably isolate themselves. But for me, it is not effective. Instead, we should reach out and ask for help from the people around us, like our cooperating teachers and co-preservice teachers. Internship will be more fun and meaningful if we share resources, talk about challenges, and offer constructive feedback afterwards." (P9)

Aside from mentors, PSTs also derive significant support from their peers. Being surrounded by individuals of the same age and undergoing similar experiences creates a safe space where they can openly express their thoughts and concerns without fear of judgment. Engaging in discussions about shared experiences not only alleviates stress but also fosters a sense of camaraderie, strengthens emotional connections, and ultimately contributes to resilience. In conclusion, the presence of peers during the challenging journey of the teaching internship plays a crucial role in helping pre-service teachers (PSTs) develop and sustain resilience throughout their internship and in the future stages of their careers as educators.

Social support has been described as "support accessible to an individual through social ties to other individua s, groups, and the larger community" (Li et al., 2021) Generally, perceived social support can come from a variety of sources, including, but not limited to, family, friends, romantic partners, pets, community ties, and coworkers (Ding et al., 2021). Humans are born with an innate need to connect with others, and when this need is unfulfilled, they will experience loneliness (Liu et al., 2024). Peer support is crucial because it may help students feel supported emotionally at school, foster friendships among their peers, and help them empathize with others' difficulties by expressing their own emotional and psychological hardships (Rini & Astuti, 2023).

According to the Academic Resilience Theory by Martin and Marsh (2006), there are five key components— referred to as the 5Cs—that foster academic resilience in students, or in this case, pre-service teachers (PSTs). These are: confidence (self-efficacy), coordination (planning), control, composure (low anxiety), and commitment (persistence). The PSTs maintained composure amidst the unforeseen challenges, such as technological barriers and insufficient digital equipment. Developing belief in their capabilities emerged due to the unyielding guidance and insightful feedback from their cooperating teachers and peers.

The PSTs' field experiences cultivated their ability to develop coordination and control. Coordination involves proactive planning, self-regulation, and setting clear goals— skills that enable PSTs to manage their time effectively and stay aligned with their responsibilities. Control refers to their capacity to exert effort and apply effective strategies with the awareness that these contribute to their professional growth. Finally, the defining trait that emerged among the PSTs is commitment. Their resolve to reach their aspirations made them persevere amidst the taxing nature of the teaching internship.

The Self-Determination Theory (SDT) by Deci and Ryan (1985) provides a framework for understanding human motivation and emotion. According to SDT, individuals possess three basic psychological needs that foster intrinsic motivation: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Autonomy refers to the capacity to act with a sense of volition and self-endorsement, feeling confident in one's actions and emotions without external pressure or the need for validation. Among p e-service teachers (PSTs), this autonomy was supported by their internal drive and the encouragement they received from family, peers, and

cooperating teachers. Competence pertains to one's ability to effectively perform tasks and feel capable in fulfilling responsibilities—something the PSTs developed through consistent practice, feedback, and mentorship. Lastly, relatedness is the need to feel emotionally connected to others. This was reflected in how PSTs valued their relationships with mentors, peers, and family members, who were key pillars of emotional support and professional growth throughout their internship experience.

Resilience is not developed in isolation but nurtured by supportive family, friends, mentors, and peers. Additionally, cooperating teachers are role models for PSTs, helping them envision their future careers and reflect on effective strategies to navigate various classroom challenges. Establishing a collaborative learning environment with peers—such as through buddy systems or learning circles—fosters resilience and cultivates meaningful relationships. These collaborative spaces allow PSTs to exchange insights, offer mutual encouragement, and develop problem-solving skills. In turn, this shared growth strengthens emotional well-being and prepares students for the dynamic realities of the teaching profession.

IV. SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Summary

This study explored the resilience among English major pre-service teachers in an evolving academic environment through photovoice. The following research questions were used: 1) What are the lived experiences of English major pre-service teachers in dealing with stress in an evolving academic environment, specifically in navigating a digital-centric classroom and managing the class with diverse student behavior? 2) What are the resilience strategies employed by English major pre-service teachers in navigating the evolving academic environment? And 3) How do mentorship and peer support help in fostering resilience among pre-service teachers?

The study utilized the qualitative approach and the photovoice research methodology. It was conducted in one of the private higher institutions in Ozamiz City, Misamis Occidental. Ten (10) English major pre-service teachers were the study participants, and they were selected through a purposive sampling technique. An interview guide was used to gather pertinent data and information. Before conducting the study, the researcher obtained approval from the institution's ethics board, the Dean of the Graduate School, and the Dean of the College of Education—where the research was to be carried out. This study adhered to the phases of photovoice by Wang and Burris (1997) to facilitate data analysis.

B. Findings

➢ The Following are the Findings of this Study:

• The lived experiences of English major pre-service teachers in dealing with stress within an evolving academic environment, specifically in navigating a digital-centric classroom and managing the class with diverse student behavior, including navigating technological barriers in digital-centric classrooms and embracing and managing student diversity. The PSTs developed adaptive practices and personalized coping strategies to alleviate the stress experienced from insufficient and malfunctioning technological tools. Moreover, the PSTs acknowledged student diversity and took the initiative to promote inclusivity in the classroom. These efforts were employed to embrace and manage student diversity in the evolving academic environment.

• The resilience strategies pre-service teachers employ in navigating the evolving academic environment are cultivating inner balance through personalized coping mechanisms and drawing strength from purpose and support systems, self-care as a foundational strategy, and intentional time management and organization-specific coping mechanisms employed by PSTs. Furthermore, reframing struggles into growth opportunities, anchoring resilience in relationships, and internal motivation are other resilience strategies the participants utilize.

• Mentorship and peer support helped foster resilience among pre-service teachers by acknowledging mentorship as a catalyst for growth and professional identity, and having peer relationships as pillars of emotional resilience. Specifically, cooperating teachers served as role models for PSTs and provided constructive feedback, positive reinforcement, and motivation. Furthermore, the shared experiences from peers and friendship served as an emotional anchor and a source of strength to the PSTs.

C. Conclusions

➢ Based on the findings of the study, the following are the conclusions drawn:

• The findings suggest that the problematic experiences of pre-service teachers in connection with technology and diversity in students are not only sources of stress, but they are also significant experiences of learning that lead to the development of a certain degree of adaptability, resourcefulness, and reflection. These stressors are part of developing vital professional habits needed to keep our heads above water, let alone be successful in today's evolving academic environment.

• Pre-service teachers' strategies to maintain inner balance and draw strength from their values and relationships show that resilience is an intentional, learned capacity rather than an inherent trait. This highlights the importance of equipping future educators with tools for emotional regulation and purpose-driven reflection, which are central to sustaining long-term commitment to teaching.

• The role of mentorship and peer support in building resilience reveals that teaching is fundamentally a relational profession where growth is fostered through connection, shared experiences, and guided reflection. This underscores the need for teacher education programs to intentionally embed mentoring and

collaborative structures that normalize vulnerability and reinforce professional identity.

D. Recommendations

➢ *Based on the Findings and Conclusions of the Study, the Following are the Recommendations:*

- School administrators should ensure that each classroom has functional, latest smart TVs and stable internet access, ideally 25-50 Mbps. This can be done by allocating funds for technology upgrades and conducting periodic equipment maintenance checks, ensuring that pre-service teachers and teachers can implement digital instruction effectively.
- Cooperating teachers mentor pre-service teachers in differentiated instruction and classroom management by scheduling and institutionalizing feedback sessions and modelling inclusive teaching practices during internship placements.
- Teacher education institutions embed resilience training into the internship curriculum by organizing workshops on time management, self-care, and emotional regulation, supported by guided reflection activities.
- Department of Education reduces classroom sizes and alleviates excessive paperwork for teachers and pre-service teachers by establishing clear guidelines for optimal student-teacher ratios and streamlining administrative tasks. This may be achieved through collaborative dialogues among relevant stakeholders, fostering discussions leading to meaningful policy reforms. There may be school-level coordination that prioritizes instructional quality over clerical workload, enabling more personalized teaching and compelling practicum experiences.
- Future researchers should conduct longitudinal studies that track pre-service teachers from internship through their early teaching years to explore the long-term impact of practicum experiences on professional identity formation.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW GUIDE

➢ *Introduction*

- Introduce self.
- Discuss the purpose of the study.
- Provide the informed consent.
- Explain the photovoice research method
- Ask if they have any questions.
- Test audio recording equipment.
- Ask participants their demographic profile (age, sex, year, program, and specialization)

Using the SHOWED Framework to guide your photography and reflection process, think about the following questions when documenting your experience.

➢ *Capture Images that Represent the Following:*

- What are the challenges of navigating digital-centric classrooms (e.g., online teaching tools, technology struggles)?
- What are the your moments of handling diverse student behaviors and teaching practice's emotional highs and lows (e.g., classroom management strategies, moments of exhaustion, frustration, or perseverance)?
- How do you approach overcoming stress in your life as a pre-service teacher (e.g., self-care activities, organization tools, lesson planning)?
- Can you identify any symbols or metaphors that represent resilience in your journey?
- In what ways did your mentors, cooperating teachers, and peers support you in this journey (e.g.,guidance received, feedback moments, lesson planning together, teamwork)?
- What were the inspirational or motivational moments that helped you stay resilient?

➢ *For Each Photo, Please Explain your Experiences in an in-Depth Interview, using the following questions as a guide:*

- S – What do you See here? (Describe what is happening in the image.)
- H – What is really Happening here? (Explain the deeper meaning or context behind the image.)
- – How does this relate to Our lives? (Connect it to your personal experiences as a pre-service teacher.)
- W – Why does this problem or strength exist? (Discuss the factors contributing to the challenge or resilience shown.)
- E – How can you be Empowered? (What lessons can be learned from this experience?)
- D – What can be Do about this? (Suggest possible actions or solutions.)