

# Why Teach? Perceived Mission of a Teacher of Teacher-Interns in a Local College

**Marvin C. Punsalan**

*City College of Angeles*

## **Abstract**

Teacher training is rigorous. It is because of the premise that teachers play a very vital role in the society. Hence, teachers must be service-oriented. This can be developed in the interconnection of theoretical, conceptual, and practical lessons. In the closing phase of teacher education journey or the pre-service training, teacher education students are deployed as interns expected to deliver actual teaching in the classroom. Thus, teacher-interns. This study aims to determine the perceived mission of a teacher of teacher-interns in a local college. The significance of this study is to provide lessons to teacher education institutions (TEIs) about the sense of service of their products given the training they provide. As a qualitative study, a focus group discussion (fgd) was conducted. Themes were generated to present the key finding of the study. Generally, it was concluded that the participants have developed a sense of service as evident in their perceived mission of a teacher – that of providing positive change among students, the educational system, and the society at large.

**Keywords:** *teacher education, teacher development, teaching as a mission*

## **Introduction**

Teachers are significant members of the society. Teaching, as both service and product-oriented profession, affects lives. It does not only implicate one aspect of an individual's life but the entire and the holistic well-being of a person (Garcia, 2005). It involves the goals of developing every learner's cognitive, psychomotor, and affective domains and making them productive members of the society. Hence, teachers can be considered as catalysts of change. And the workforce of tomorrow can partly be attributed to the teachers. Considering the complex mandate of teachers, necessary knowledge, skills, and attitude related to their line of work are imperatives.

For the longest time, experts have been pointing out the roles of a teacher. According to Johansen (1996), a teacher has three roles, (1) an instructional expert, (2) a manager, and (3) a counselor. A teacher who is an instructional expert emphasizes the knowledge and skills on different teaching approaches, methods, strategies, and techniques, assessment strategies, and learning styles. As a manager, a teacher is expected to be skillful in maintaining discipline, order, and supervision on his or her class as this role highly affects time management and learning. Sometimes, learners face emotional, social, and other personal problems, a teacher is also there as a listener, adviser, and a confidant. Therefore, a teacher acts as a counselor.

Salandanan (2012) stated that teachers are expected to mold learners through providing relevant knowledge, skills, and attitudes (KSA). This can be achieved through meticulous planning and organizing of tasks. Further, Stronge (2012) provided the qualities of an effective teacher. A teacher shall be a pedagogical and content expert. Expertise in teaching methods and the subject-matter complements. In this aspect that

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teaching is an art and a science converge. On the attitudinal side, a teacher is expected to be caring, friendly, fair, and optimistic. These are positive attitudes that create a conducive atmosphere for learning. Lastly, being reflective is also considered an essential characteristic of a teacher. Reflecting teaching is a form of learning and developing one's self.

Aside from looking into the highly methodical nature of teaching, it is also equally important to consider its philosophical dimension. Teachers are as diverse as the learners. Every teacher is unique in a wide range of characteristics. Two teachers teaching the same subject-matter may deliver the material differently. Aside from this is provided by the provision on academic freedom, teachers, as unique persons, may view teaching and learning differently. Thus, teachers may develop distinct perspective about the mission of a teacher as a result of various factors such as personal experiences and different worldviews. A teaching perspective can be considered a multi-dimensional facet of teaching. It can pertain to determining a teaching strategy, relevant subject-matter, assessment strategy, and valuing of the lesson. Moreover, a teaching perspective may refer to how a teacher identifies his or her mission as teacher. Vague as it may sound, teaching is also referred as a mission. As early as the pre-service training of teachers, their mission is already inculcated to them. That is for them to develop their appreciation on the nobility of the teaching profession and to prepare them on the actual duties and responsibilities of a teacher.

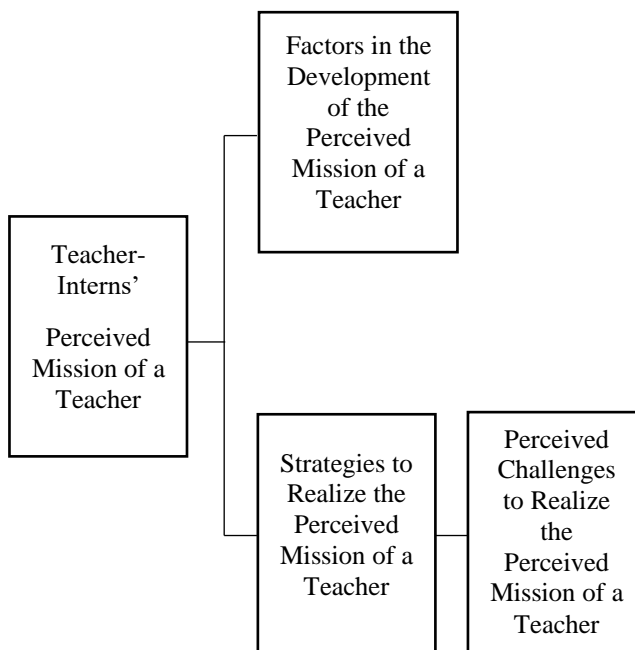
Often times, teaching as a mission is defined as something that is the broadest impact of a teacher – that is societal. The Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (2017) stipulated that teachers are mandated to produce holistic learners equipped with values and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills that they may use as tool to stimulate the country's development and progress. In the global context, teachers are enjoined to contribute in the dynamism of globalization through integrating global concepts, skills, and values to work in an interconnected world (Poole and Ruselle, 2013). Tamayo (2013) asserted that teachers do not only teach learners to develop their cognitive faculty but to help them realize their full human potentials either through formal or informal instruction. All of these collectively reflect in the report of Delors (2001) to the United Nations, Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) containing the four (4) pillars of education. These are the 1) learning to know, 2) learning to do, 3) learning to be, and 4) learning to live together. Extracting the very essence of these, learning to know is the teaching the students to be lifelong learners by acquiring metacognitive skills. Learning to do is training students to acquire competencies relevant to the demands of the society. Learning to be is instilling values among students targeting their personal development. The last one, learning to live together is promoting tolerance and living in harmony amidst diversity. In a nutshell, it can categorically be affirmed that teachers' mission transcends from classroom to the society.

In the different professional education courses, teacher education students receive glimpse and in-depth engagement on these noble missions of a teacher. Their acquired knowledge and developed realizations are assumed to start being manifested in their internship phase. According to Erfe, et al. (2020), teaching internship intends to test the knowledge, skills, and values of teacher education students as they are immersed in the actual teaching and learning setting. In the same study, four dimensions of practice teaching were formed namely, 1) I-need-to-be-ready-for-this, 2) so-this-is-how-things-are-done, 3) I-know-I-can, and 4) come-to-think-of-it. I-need-to-be-ready-for-this is the awareness of the teacher-interns on their needed knowledge, skills, and attitude towards teaching their particular field. So-this-is-how-things-are-done pertains to the knowledge and skills of teacher-interns on the different rudiments of teaching. The third one, I-know-I-can, talks about the confidence and self-esteem of teacher-interns as they conduct themselves in class. Lastly, come-to-think-of-it is the need for reflective practices in teaching.

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Teacher-interns, although still in their pre-service career, are expected to enter the real world of the teaching profession right after the graduation. In a few months after the graduation, they would be considered neophytes in the field. Abulon (2014) stated that there have been a number of studies conducted looking at the reasons why teachers teach ranging from different career stages but only a few for new teachers. In this regard, the researcher finds it important to explore on the perception of teacher-interns on the mission of a teacher. As early as pre-service teaching phase, teachers-to-be need to have a clear picture of what teaching is all about. This is to ensure that before they engage to their in-service teaching career, they are already equipped with needed knowledge, skills, values, and principles about the teaching profession. The purpose of the study is to explore the perceived mission of a teacher of teacher-interns in a local college. This is an important undertaking to understand how their perception about teaching have been developed after more than three years of teacher training. The information that will be revealed in the study can be used as a basis to continuously improved teacher training in Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) to serve their purpose of producing competent teachers.

**Figure 1**  
*Paradigm of the study*



Teacher perception is influenced by different factors. Teacher perception influences behavior (Lakshmi and Ashole, 2017). The paradigm of the study shows the phase where the factors that influenced the perceived missions of the participants is determined. It also presents that the participants are asked about their projection on how they could actually realize the identified missions of a teacher and the possible challenges that may be encountered. All of these relevant aspects of the research study significantly contribute to the full understanding of the research topic.

This research study generally aims to determine the perceived mission of a teacher of teacher-interns in a local college. It specifically aims to:

1. Determine the factors that contributed in the identification of the perceived mission of a teacher of the participants;
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2. Describe the strategies in which the participants can realize the identified perceived mission;
3. Identify the perceived challenges to realize the perceived mission of a teacher of the participants; and
4. Discuss the implication of the study to teacher education training.

## Methodology

This study employed qualitative research approach. Creswell (2014) described this approach as organizing, describing, explaining, interpreting, and presenting data in a form of narratives. It is considered the appropriate approach in this study to understand the views of the participants through the aforementioned processes.

The participants were selected through purposive sampling. Six (6) participants were involved who are fourth year education students coming from different areas of specialization. These students are currently in their internship program assigned to perform the actual duties of a teacher. An informed consent was given, the nature and objectives of the research were discussed, and the rights of the participants were presented before the conduct of data gathering. The table shows the profile of the participants.

**Table 1**  
*Profile of the Participants*

No.	Participant	Specialization
1	A	English Language Education
2	B	Technical Vocational Education
3	C	Physical Education
4	D	Technical Vocational Education
5	E	Physical Education
6	F	Physical Education

The locale of the study was a local college in the City of Angeles, the alma mater of the participants. This local college caters diverse curricular programs. One of its pride and glory is its teacher education program as evident in the licensure examination for professional teachers' performance.

A focus group discussion (FGD) using an online platform *google meet* was conducted among the participants. This was deemed appropriate to engage the participants in provoking conversation, especially considering that the participants come from similar background relative to the research topic.

The FGD was recorded as permitted by the participants. The recorded session was used as a supplemental material in the coding phase. Significant responses were initially and selectively noted. The researcher benchmarked the data analysis to the following steps as suggested by Creswell (2014):

1. Organize the data through transcribing of the interviews and focus group discussions;
  2. Preview the organized data to identify peculiar responses;
  3. Code the data according to similarities and relevance;
  4. Develop themes based on the codes and categories made vis-à-vis research objectives; and finally
  5. Elaborate and interpret the data to provide the implication of the study to various aspect of the research topic.
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Member checking was also done to ensure the credibility of data before arriving at the central themes of the results of the study.

## **Results**

This portion reveals the results of the study in relation to its objectives. Central themes are presented with selected actual responses from the participants.

### **Perceived Mission of Teacher-Interns in a Local College**

#### *Catalyst of Change*

All participants cited that the mission of a teachers is to bring change in different dimensions of the educational system and of the society in general. Varying in scope and dimensions, change is the common keyword that is considered as the primary mandate of teachers. The following are the specific dimensions of education where change has to happen according to the participants.

#### *Holistic Development of Students*

The students are considered the core of the teaching and learning process. Significant changes in their behavior, which is synonymous to learning, is the main target of instruction. Developing the intellect, skills, and values of the students are the specific dimensions to consider. Adding to this, participants mentioned that transcending the theoretical lessons from the classroom to real-life context is essential. This results to holistic development. By saying this, it is important to note that teachers need to know who the students are in terms of prior knowledge and other important characteristics in a way that teachers can effectively and efficiently plan the instruction (Lucariello, 2015). This requisite in instruction was mentioned by the participants.

*“I have to bring change to students by instilling values and exposing them about the realities in the society.”*  
– Participant A

*“I will help students to succeed by providing holistic development. I also need to understand my students. I have to listen to their stories.”* - Participant E

*“I have to nurture students’ intellect and values.”* – Participant D

#### *Correcting Malpractices in Teaching*

Coming from sentiments brought about by personal experiences, participants cited that there are wrong practices committed by teachers, particularly with regards to their teaching practices. Thus, being corrective of one’s and others’ teaching practices is considered a role of a teacher. This can be considered under reflective teaching practices. In reflective teaching, teachers deliberately look into their classroom practices and look for ways to improve them (Poorvu Center for Teaching and Learning). Being reflective and corrective can be attributed to continuous attainment of excellence and competence. Noting that the clientele of teachers are human persons that are in their phase of being molded to be productive individuals, providing the best instructional interventions is the least contributions teachers can offer.

*“I want to change pedagogical practices through influencing my co-teachers.”* – Participant C

*“I want to correct malpractices of teachers, especially those who are out-field teachers.”* – Participant F

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### *Students Valuing Education*

Sullivan (2015) stated that students would value their education if their parents show high regard towards it. In reality, this is not the universal case. Participants pointed out that teachers need to intervene in motivating students to value their education. It is undisputable that education is really the gateway to more opportunities in the lives of the students. And for academic success, motivation has to be present to sustain academic performance. But because of diverse problems that students may encounter at any point of their lives, their motivation can be affected. Thus, their academic performance is compromised. Justina (2015) recommended that extrinsic and intrinsic motivation must be provided to students, in which teachers can significantly contribute.

*“Students must develop their intrinsic motivation for them to value their education.”* – Participant B

*“They (students) must value the subject and the subject-matter.”* – Participant C

### *Improve the Society*

There is a cliché that says teachers’ effect is eternity. It is not contained in the four corners of the classroom.

## **Factors in the Development of Perceived Mission of a Teacher**

### *Observations from Previous Teachers*

All participants cited their experiences as students observing their teachers from elementary to tertiary level as their source of ideas as for the mission of a teacher. Participants have been practicing observing their teachers as they regard them as worthy to emulate. This constitutes how influential teachers are. Part of hidden curriculum, teachers overall teaching practices from its methodical principles to personal styles, subject-matter to contextualized learning, students tend to put attention to them. It can be noted, based on this finding, that students put attention on the general conduct of teachers. And all of these could result to learning beyond the targets of the written curriculum. With this, the study of Jackson (2018) can be linked as it stated that teachers also improve students’ non-cognitive skills such as motivation, self-regulation, and adaptation to diverse situations. These skills and other behaviors and covert attitudes of students can be considered as latent effects of teaching that teachers may fail to realize. An implication of this finding among teachers is the posed challenge to be competent in all aspects of teaching. Lee (2018) stated that high-performing and highly qualified teachers tend to produce students who would aim to pursue higher studies and educational success.

*“I realized my mission as a future teacher from my 2<sup>nd</sup> year high school teacher. I saw how passionate she was for us to learn.”* – Participant F

*“My previous teachers inspired me to become a teacher through their passionate teaching and positive feedback.”* – Participant C

### *Self-satisfaction*

To be technical, satisfaction is the overall feelings about life (Ackerman, 2018). The participants mentioned that teaching provides satisfaction as a result of performing their functions. The feeling of self-satisfaction gives them the sense of validity of their perceived mission. To be exact, satisfaction, as cited by the participants, comes from the positive feedback they could get from their students, the positive changes in the behavior of the students, and evident learning as a result teaching. It was also mentioned that for this to

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be achieved, competence, dedication, and passion need to be present. Coming from this perspective of the participants, this satisfaction can be associated to the bottom-up theory of satisfaction. The bottom-up theory of satisfaction is described as a satisfaction as a result of certain domains in life such as work (Ackerman, 2018).

*“Teaching gives self-satisfaction. For me, when I feel satisfied, I feel proud and happy that I was able to do my best.” – Participant B*

*“I want to teach because it’s my passion. There is self-satisfaction, too, when I am in front of my students teaching them.” – Participant C*

### *Pre-Service Teaching Experiences*

Teaching, as a profession, requires rigorous and formal training. Typically, four years in teacher training, teachers-to-be are provided with theoretical and practical knowledge, skills, and values about the teaching profession. As a culminating phase of teacher training, student-teachers are required to render teaching services to apply what they have learn in the classroom (Ulla, 2016). However, Haigh, Pinder, and McDonald (2006) recognized that this called “practice teaching” poses challenges. Thus, guidance and supervision play pivotal roles (Starkey and Rawlins, 2012).

Participants agree that the pre-service phase have molded their perspective towards the teaching profession. College instructors, cooperating teachers, practicum teachers, students, and the overall authentic experience of executing lessons in an actual class were the cited factors that helped in the development of the perceived mission of the participants.

*“I developed my mission of teaching from my experiences as a student of teacher education and lessons from my teachers.” – Participant E*

*“I learned a lot from my cooperating teacher.” – Participant A*

*“I usually reflect from my personal experiences as a teacher education student.” – Participant F*

### **Strategies to Realize the Perceived Mission**

#### *Integration to the Instruction*

Instruction, as an academic undertaking, has always been perceived as subject-focused. It has been a perennial practice to contain instruction on what is only reflected in books from lessons to learning activities. Thus, concept attainment approach. In the recent development in pedagogy, instruction needs to be linked to the lives of the students and on the realities of life. Generally pertaining to values, self and social development, the perceived mission of the participants, according to them, can be realized through infusing it in instruction. This can be considered contextualized learning. Contextualized learning helps student determine the importance of the lesson (Osika, MacMahon, Lodge, and Carroll, 2022). In this regard, learning transcends from concepts to contexts that are known and familiar to the students. They can then eventually have the realization that classroom learning is important in their lives outside of the school.

*“I want to infuse my mission as a teacher in my instruction.” – Participant A*

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*“The values that my students need to develop must be modeled in my teaching practices.”* – Participant B

*“I can attain it through demonstration method of teaching.”* – Participant F

### *Parent-Teacher Collaboration*

Parents are educational stakeholders. It is an imperative that they take part in school matters especially those that highly concern their children. The key player that links the parents and the school is the teachers. In fact, parents and teachers are expected to be partners to achieve the maximum learning of students. This was cited by the participants as a strategy to actualize the aforementioned mission of teachers. In creating a learning community, parent-teacher collaboration influences how students are reared, especially when parents and teachers have shared goals vis-à-vis student development (Curwin, 2012).

*“I can seek help from parents to form collaboration.”* – Participant D

## **Perceived Challenges**

### *Status Quo in the Educational System*

The participants cited a number of perennial cases in the educational system that they consider hindrances in the realization of their perceived mission of teachers. These are the following.

#### *Curriculum*

The curriculum, as perceived by the participants, is ambitious in a sense that it is too congested with lessons with limited time frame to achieve all the learning competencies. In the recent report of Rappler (2022), one of the key issues that the educational system of the Philippines that needs to be addressed is the inclusion of subject-matters that response to the demands of time. Thus, curriculum review.

Particularly citing time constraint as a problem in realizing the mission of teachers, the participants are challenged on how to contextualize and transcend lessons to life-like scenarios putting into consideration the allotted for each lesson.

*“I think the curriculum has too much of content and have limited time to achieve them.”* – Participant C

#### *Teaching Practices*

As mentioned by the participants based on their experiences and observations, many teaching practices in the Philippines are obsolete or at least do not address the demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> century education. This pertains to teacher-centered approach in teaching. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century education, students are being trained to be future ready. Hence, the focus of the teaching and learning process must be centered to the students. To be future ready, students are expected to be adaptive with highly functional and developed 21<sup>st</sup> century skills such as creativity, critical thinking, communication, and collaboration (Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning).

*“The teaching approach must recognize the learners and their diversity.”* – Participant D

*“With the diversity of students, teachers must be able to provide appropriate instruction.”* – Participant E

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### *Teachers*

In relation to obsolete teaching practices, teachers, particularly seasoned teachers, were identified as an impeding concern according to the participants. Seasoned teachers are generally referred to as experienced teachers who are considered experts and adept in their subject-matter and in the teaching profession. However, as perceived by the participants, most of these teachers have not been able to adapt to current trends in education making their practices problematic. It was also mentioned that some of these seasoned teachers are hardly open to new learning opportunities.

It can be concluded that the participants consider seasoned teachers as concerns in the aspect that their mindset towards the mission of teachers are not in alignment.

*“Seasoned teachers are close-minded when it comes to embracing new learnings.”* – Participant B

*“Seasoned teachers do not recognize that students have diverse needs.”* – Participant C

### **Discussion**

The teaching profession is considered as the noblest profession in the world. Its nature of being service and product-oriented is seen on the quality of students, educational system, and society it creates. With the very critical roles of teachers in the society in general, teacher training needs to be rigid and value-laden. This research undertaking targeted to determine how teacher-interns perceived the mission of a teacher. As the culmination of learning, teaching-internship showcases the conceptual and theoretical learnings of teacher education students. In this regard, it is important that they also manifest certain extent of their personal touch in teaching. And this partly lies on their perceived mission of a teacher. By knowing their perception, teacher education institutions (TEIs) can extract ideas that can implicate their training programs for future teachers especially in the aspect of developing teachers' sense of service.

With the developed themes, participants agreed that the mission of a teacher is generally bringing change in various extent such as self-development of the students, continuous improvement of teaching and practices, and the advancement of the society at large. Teachers nowadays do not simply impart knowledge to students. They teach and ready the students for the society. Teachers provide the students with necessary knowledge, skills, and values for them to use as tools in performing their roles in the society. That is why, it can be said that the future of the society also lies in the hands of teachers (Digital Class, 2022). Thus, teachers are catalysts for change. And as catalysts for change, constant improvement has to be a priority. This was cited by the participants as their tool to perform their role and realize their mission. To improve one's self, teachers also need to utilize data to have an empirical evidence of their performance (Harrison and Killion, 2007). Data may be coming from students' performances as manifestation of the effectiveness of the teacher.

As teachers whose clientele are students, human beings who are in the phase of acquiring essential knowledge, skills, and values for the demanding world, it is natural to face challenges. Planning and having the correct mindset are just few ways to be proactive (Merrill and Gonser, 2022). Sticking to the mission attached to the teaching profession is a tool to perform the duties of a teacher.

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## Conclusion

After the thorough analysis of the responses of the participants, the following conclusion were formulated.

1. The teacher-interns in the local college where the study was conducted have developed a sense of service to humanity as evident in their perceived mission of a teacher.
2. Positive change in the lives of the students, the educational system, and the society are the primary mission of a teacher.
3. Through infusion in teaching practices and establishing productive parent-teacher relationship, the mission of a teacher can be achieved.
4. The current situation in the educational system such as teaching practices is problematic making it an obstacle to perform the mission of a teacher.

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