Journal for Educators, Teachers and Trainers
The PROFESIOLab electronic, peer-reviewed, open-access Magazine

ISSN 1989 – 9572

DOI: 10.47750/jett.2023.14.05.042

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Journal for Educators,Teachers and Trainers, Vol. 14 (5)

https://jett.labosfor.com/

Date of reception: 13 May 2023

Date of revision: 26 June 2023

Date of acceptance: 20 July 2023

Al Ryanne Gatcho , Cecille Marie Improgo ,Wendy Lynn Conejar (2023). Preservice Teachers as Extra Milers: Lived Experiences in Teaching Emergent Literacy and Numeracy in an Online Radio Program .*Journal for Educators, Teachers and Trainers*,Vol. 14(5). 490-502

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Preservice Teachers as Extra Milers: Lived Experiences in Teaching Emergent Literacy and Numeracy in an Online Radio Program

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ABSTRACT
The present study explored preservice teachers' lived experiences in teaching emergent literacy and numeracy in an online radio program of a Philippine elementary public school to fill a lacuna in online practicum experiences. Utilizing phenomenology as a methodological framework, preservice teachers' firsthand experiences as online radio teachers were explored to acquire a better grasp of what they went through in developing their learners' emergent literacy and numeracy skills. The finding of this study revealed three themes that underscored three stages of their practicum experiences: (1) Tuning In, (2) From AM to FM, and (3) Don't Switch the Channel. The essence of their lived experiences offered insights that they are extra milers suggesting that their online practicum journey is a fulfilling yet challenging accountability for personal, professional, and institutional growth. The study offers policy recommendations for strengthening technology integration in teacher education programs and institutionalization of teacher educators' techno-pedagogical knowledge and skills, redounding to knowledge and skills development of preservice teachers.

Keywords: Teacher education; Practicum; Emergent literacy and numeracy; Radio-based instruction; Phenomenology

1. INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath immensely impacted the education sector. Schools became innovative and resourceful to maintain access to quality, relevant, and inclusive education. Radio-based Instruction (RBI) has been regarded as an alternative teaching and learning modality that utilizes radio broadcast to reach students. The use of radio as an educational tool has been a center of attention of various scholars in recent years. A local college in Oman promoted participatory learning among undergraduate students through online radio (Ibrahim and Mishra, 2016). Likewise, a Canadian university developed students' multicultural and media literacy through live radio interactions (Todorova, 2015). Additionally, an American high school taught students to create primary source-based historical narratives through partnership with a public radio station (Gautam et al., 2015).

In the Philippines, through the Department of Education (DepEd) Order No. 12, s. 2020, also known as "Adoption of the Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan for School Year 2020-2021 in the Light of the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency," RBI is proffered as one distance learning modality. In effect, 196 schools in Palawan alone adopted RBI. However, its adoption posed challenges, thereby prompting Soria and Naparan (2021) to explore the plights and coping mechanisms of elementary school radio teachers.

The ever-changing educational landscape led stakeholders to adopt technology in the teaching-learning process. Technology also impacted preservice teachers' education and training. Since the pandemic started, there has been a striking shift of the focal point of investigation on preservice teachers' experiences in online practicum (Jin, 2022; Ozmantar, 2021). Additionally, Kidd and Murray (2020) accentuated that preservice teachers' exposure to technology is vital to enrich their repertoire of practice and pedagogic agility.

Congruent to the primordial goal of Education 4.0 that calls for schools to prepare students for a world where cyber-physical systems are pervasive throughout all sectors (Harkins, 2008), this paper argues that one should not overlook the exposure of preservice teachers to technological devices and apps, and how these are pivotal in grooming them to become educators of the future.

Even though RBI has been theoretically and practically explored in educational research prior to and during the pandemic, little is known on how radio, specifically that of broadcast in online platforms, has been integrated in the practicum experiences of preservice teachers. This also posits that today's view about preservice teacher education and training should not be limited to the four corners of a physical classroom. Therefore, this study

explored the actual experiences of preservice teachers as they engaged in online radio programs to teach emergent literacy and numeracy.

1.1. On Radio-Based Instruction (RBI)

Even before the pandemic, RBI has been regarded as an alternative distance modality for those who want more convenience and flexibility in learning. RBI, also known as Interactive Radio Instruction (IRI) purports active and participatory learning through radio programs without physically going to brick-and-mortar schools (Dock and Helwig, 1999). Turcano (2006) noted that RBI is interactive because it allows a teacher to practice varied instruction from a distance. Furthermore, Solomon and Sankey (2010) noted that audio recordings, MP3, lifeline radio sets, teachers' manuals, students' textbooks are needed to broadcast an educational radio program, Hence, RBI debunked the traditional view that radio is intended only for entertainment and information dissemination (Ugochukwu and Ezeah, 2020).

In modern times, radio is a popular choice to implement distance learning innovatively with the belief that many households own one (Potter and Naidoo, 2009). Given the limited access to television and computers in rural areas, teachers create and deliver their instructional materials through radio programs (Naiddo, 2002; Potter, 2007). Hence, throughout the years, Bakshi and Jha (2013) accounted the different instructional radio programs that made learning possible from a distance.

In the Philippines, many schools use RBI as a learning delivery mode to sustain Alternative Learning Systems (ALS) programs. The DepEd included RBI as one modality in its Blended Learning Framework because many radios are battery-operated and do not need electricity and internet connection to work (Ablir, 2020). Due to RBI presence in Philippine education, some studies determined its effectiveness as perceived by parents and learners (Arbutante, 2020; Yayen and Marensil, 2021), explored students' lived experiences in learning through educational radio programs (Rosete and Nool, 2022), and described the plights and coping mechanisms of teachers as modular and radio teachers (Soria and Naparan, 2021).

The COVID-19 pandemic emphasized the potentiality of technology in bringing education even at home. This prompted a shift of broadcasting educational programs online to cater to students, the digital natives (Prahmana et al., 2021). Today's version of RBI is an evidence of its evolution throughout the years, making it more accessible to learners. Educational radio programs, therefore, can be streamed live through various online platforms such as Facebook and YouTube and lessons are delivered synchronously or asynchronously. Thus, this phenomenon sparked the interest of the researchers to explore the impact of adopting the evolved RBI through the experiences of preservice teachers.

1.2. Online Teaching of Literacy and Numeracy in the Primary Years

Traditionally, teachers and preservice teachers should be physically present during their teaching engagements. Changes in education paved to the "digitization" of literacy education in the primary years (Armila et al., 2022; Kuusipalo and Alastalo, 2019; Armila, et al., 2022). Given the foundational nature of primary education, it is helpful to understand the concept of emergent literacy and numeracy. According to Kuusipalo and Alastalo (2019), emergent literacy is concerned with children developing a growing understanding of print and language as foundation for reading and writing. While the ability to recognize numbers, perform mathematical operations, and reason numerically characterize emergent numeracy (Rigney, 2010). Thus, emergent literacy and numeracy are viewed as precursors to develop into conventional literacy skills toward adulthood (Sulzby and Teale, 1991).

As a response to the digitization of education, studies conducted determined how technology impacted children's emergent literacy and numeracy skills. Children's phonological awareness and vocabulary knowledge easily prosper when they read e-books (Lopez-Escribano, 2021). Likewise, children who were exposed to reading via tablets may develop love for reading at a young age (Neumann and Neumann, 2017). While, kindergarten students who were immersed in mobile learning attained significant gains in their emergent numeracy skills such as counting, sequencing, and addition (Reeves et al., 2017).

On the other hand, some teachers struggle in adopting techno-pedagogical approaches because of unfamiliarity with different technological tools or apps (Belo et al., 2016) and limited resources to facilitate such conditions (Mupa and Chinooneka, 2015). Furthermore, limited access and resource to technology brought by socioeconomic status (Bautista and Gatcho, 2022; Harris et al., 2017), demotivation (Kyewski and Kramer, 2018; Nasrullah, 2022), feeling of isolation (Vaillancourt, 2021), and absence of physical space to support online learning (Alsubaie, 2022; Bautista and Gatcho, 2022) were the common challenges pinpointed. With these, teachers' and preservice teachers' technological knowledge and skills are paramount to designing, organizing, adopting, and implementing strategies and resources to cultivate a technology-rich literacy environment that meet individual needs of different learners.

The COVID-19 outbreak pushed schools to become technology-driven due to its far reach (Haleem et al., 2022). To wit, technology integration in education has been described as a complex system that comprises

practices that are informed by pedagogy (Scanlon et al., 2013). It is due to this intricate nature of technology that several studies channeled the focus to techno-pedagogical approaches and utilization of various technologies in developing emergent literacy and numeracy skills.

The COVID-19 pandemic sealed the status of using technology as fundamental element of teaching emergent literacy and numeracy (Jin, 2022). The post pandemic era is a turning point as technology use has gone far beyond its basic tenets: 'check the PPT,' 'listen to the podcast,' and 'watch a video.' Despite the multitude educational technological tools and apps available, there is still a dearth of studies that investigate how teachers, regardless whether they are professional, volunteer, and preservice, teach emergent literacy and numeracy through a combination of two modalities. In effect, the researchers saw the need to unpack the experiences of preservice teachers as they engage in technology utilization to (de/re)construct their pedagogical practices in emergent literacy and numeracy.

1.3. Online Practicum of Preservice Teachers

Practicum is an important facet of every teacher education program as it exposes preservice teachers to the realities of the teaching profession, enabling them to apply theories and concepts in actual practice within a classroom setting (White and Forgasz, 2016; Yuan 2014). Practicum also allows preservice teachers to be mentored by experienced teachers, learning from observations and constructive feedback (Cherry, 2015). Teacher education programs embedded technology in the curricula and preparation of teachers as a response to the notion that children of today are digital natives (Cao et al., 2021; Dong et al., 2020). Thus, preservice teachers are encouraged to demonstrate familiarity and proficiency in technology enhanced learning (Gozum and Demir, 2021; Pourdavood and Song, 2021).

Mohebi and Meda (2021) claimed that online practicum is a milestone for preservice teachers since they experienced something different from how they were traditionally taught by their teachers. Yet, several studies confirmed that online practicum has drawbacks that invite preservice teachers to address these with urgency. Kinkead-Clark (2022) noted that preservice teachers' development of affective skills are compromised due to the absence of physical intimacy. Jin (2022) added that preservice teachers grappled to engage students since they cannot monitor every learner in an online environment. Also, they juggled with their unfamiliarity of techno-pedagogical approaches (Mohebi and Meda, 2021) and tended to feel isolated and alone in their journey (Callaway-Cole and Kimble, 2021).

On the other hand, online practicum also offered benefits and opportunities. Jin (2022) punctuated that preservice teachers unleashed their creativity and resilience to hurdle techno-pedagogical challenges (Kim, 2020; Moyo, 2020) and demonstrated a reflective stance to address these challenges (Callaway-Cole and Kimble, 2021). Despite these opportunities, Moyo (2020) expressed that teacher educational institutions (TEIs) need to maintain a curriculum that is introspective and inclusive of changes in the profession.

This study asserts that preservice teachers should be capable of embracing, adjusting, and learning technological advancements to keep up with constant educational evolution. Atkinson (2004) noted that teachers developed their identities as professionals because they and others need to know who they are as teachers. De Ruyter and Conroy (2002) added that identity exists
as a nexus of what people think of themselves and what they have experienced in life. Congruent to this, the practicum of preservice teachers is deemed as a starting point in the creation of their
identities as teachers (Dam and Blom, 2006). The researchers presume that understanding what preservice teachers went through as online radio teachers may shed better understanding of how their practicum experiences shaped their identities as future educators.

In this regard, the researchers addressed this objective: Describe the lived experiences of preservice teachers in developing the literacy and numeracy skills of primary students via online radio program.

2. METHOD AND DESIGN

This study utilized a qualitative-phenomenological procedure congruent with the perspectives of Huberman and Miles (2002) to underscore a comprehensive and collective essence of the lived experiences of preservice teachers in developing young learners' emergent numeracy and literacy skills through an online radio program. As noted by Reiners (2012), phenomenology is a process of exploring the essence that individuals associate on their daily experiences and that Creswell (2013) forwarded it as the act of finding the common patterns to the experienced phenomenon of all the participants. Van Manen (1990) pointed that the primary goal of a phenomenological study is to delimit the single experiences of the participants to have "a grasp of the very nature of the thing" (p.177). To ensure a richer perspective on the lived experiences of the participants, both actual (firsthand) and vicarious (secondhand) experiences were accounted.

2.1 Research Context

The study was conducted in a public elementary school in Tacurong City, Philippines. The school primarily

caters to high-poverty communities. With the COVID-19 pandemic, enrollment decreased and struggling reader incidence was high. Maximizing the financial support coming from the stakeholders, parents and community partners, the school took two initiatives: the development and implementation of learning modules and organization and management of an online educational radio program, the Radyo Tangguyob (Radio Tannguyob).

Radyo Tangguyob is a joint project of the school with a public high school from the same city, since majority of classes in the Philippines shifted online during the pandemic. The radio program was aired live on schooldays from 7:30 AM to 6:00 PM and was streamed online via Facebook and Youtube.

2.2 Co-researchers' Selection and Participation

Five preservice teachers from a Philippine public elementary school served as the participants/co-researchers in this study. According to Moustakas (1994), participants in phenomenological research are considered as co-researchers because "the essence of the phenomena is derived from participants' perceptions and experiences, regardless of the interpretation of the researcher" (p. 21). Furthermore, Patton (1990) noted that in a qualitative research, the goal of the researcher is to account rich data given the limited number of participants. The five preservice teachers provided the actual (firsthand) experiences attributed to developing the numeracy and literacy skills of young learners through an online radio program. To capture their vicarious (secondhand) experiences, the researchers accounted the testimonies of their supervising teachers through their observation notes in the form of progress reports. The preservice teachers were chosen using purposive sampling, with the criteria: (1) had enrolled or accomplished a teacher education program, (2) completed the practicum requirement of the teacher education program, and (3) was delegated by the supervising teachers to teach emergent literacy and numeracy via Radyo Tangguyob.

2.3 Instruments

The researchers observed triangulation through focus group discussion (FGD) and observation notes, which captured the preservice teachers' lived experiences. Questions enabled the
researchers to observe bracketing, removing any bias toward the phenomena being investigated. Both their cognition and feelings toward what they experienced were considered.

On the other hand, the observation notes of the supervising teachers were analyzed for the researchers to obtain a "collective" perspective on the lived experiences of their co-researchers. The data obtained from the observations notes served as supporting data.

2.4. Data Analysis

The phenomenological perspective of Huberman and Miles (2002), led the researchers to utilize these steps in making sense of the obtained data:

1. Read and re-read all the descriptions given by the participants about the phenomenon to have a grasp of their experiences.
2. Identified and extracted striking statements that connect to the phenomenon investigated.
3. Wove together the striking statements into descriptions of signification of meaning and affirmed consistency between the participants' narrations and evolving discoveries without submitting to the vulnerability of neglecting data that do not fit. In this phase, the researchers narrated the lived experiences of the participants by colliding the textural description (what occurred) and a structural description (how it occurred).
4. Combined the findings into a comprehensive account of the investigated phenomenon. Consolidated the significant concepts obtained to create an integrative story that describes the "collective lived experiences" of the participants.
5. Validated the findings through member checking in order to determine if the themes were congruent to what they really experienced.
6. Applied any revisions that the participants suggested into the concluding descriptions of the phenomenon.

2.5. Ethical Considerations

The researchers sought permission to conduct the study from the authorities of the participating school. After

securing the clearance, consent forms were distributed to the participants. The researchers oriented them on the nature and purpose of the study and ensured that their participation was voluntary. To ensure anonymity, confidentiality, and data privacy, participants were assigned pseudonyms. Only the researchers had access to the data of the participants.

4. RESULTS

Three themes emerged from the lived experiences of the participants, underscoring three stages of their practicum experiences via online radio program: (1) Before Practicum: Tuning In; (2) During Practicum: From AM to FM; and (3) After Practicum: Don't Switch the Channel.

4.1. Before Practicum: Tuning In

With DepEd's online radio-based instruction, the preservice teachers grappled to teach in the radio and online platforms. Their narratives illustrate their experiences as they tuned in to online RBI in developing the emergent literacy and numeracy skills of their students. Under this theme are three sub-themes: (1) Finding the Dial, (2) Aligning the Frequency, and, (3) Finally Tuning In.

4.1.1. Sub-theme: Finding the Dial

As the pre-service teachers were deployed to an unfamiliar and challenging teaching experience, part of the struggles of the participants were their own emotions. They were nervous, dubious, and shy as online radio teachers. They were attempting at finding the dial so that they could connect the theories with the actual teaching of emergent reading and mathematics.

Isko was nervous that he had to speak in Tagalog which was not his mother tongue. Isko shared, "…[difficulty] especially in Tagalog because in Visayas our Tagalog is very hard …hard time how to make my speech work…"

His supervising teacher (ST) affirmed this, noting that Isko was apprehensive because of his regional accent: "Nervous, and his voice trembles, will frequently ask me if his accent sounds great."

Isko's concerns were multifaceted, thinking about how he would project himself to be visually appealing and presentable, exuding both friendliness and authority. He had to ensure correctness of concepts, exhibiting his expertise as a reading teacher. He mentioned: "I'm nervous because I might commit a mistake by saying the wrong thing... anxious… so the words came out rarely…were carefully chosen…" Likewise, Hiraya felt the same: "It wasn't easy …first I felt nervous in my math class… that I might make mistakes… The first time I experienced online RBI, I had a dread feeling."

Her ST attested on this unease, noting, "She would stare at me as if asking for help when she was teaching decimal numbers."

Furthermore, Hiraya echoed the feelings of Isko about content or subject matter, noting that there are lessons which needed deeper study because of its complexity. Especially in mathematics, delivering the lesson meant possessing an in-depth knowledge to make it easily understandable for the students:

"Primarily, It was difficult because there are things in math… that need more attention."

With more complex subject matter, the preservice teachers had to prepare more to simplify lessons for the students. Mutya enumerated the struggles she faced, resulting from the nervousness and fear she felt in her reading class:

"Based on the comment I got from Sir, I lack the ability to express the lesson, I need to adjust my voice...more experience. Also…my classmates said I need to improve my facial expression and look at the camera, not on the printed text."

Congruent to Mutya's experiences, her ST observed that she seemed uncomfortable that there were cameras in front of her. Her ST observed, "Avoid looking at your printed script most of the time! Look at the teleprompter, please." .

Rosario shared the same feeling of nervousness at the start of her engagement in the modality. Her words, "At first, I really felt nervous teaching reading" is a manifestation of first-time nerves, adding:

"I was too nervous. I have to focus because I can see my face on the screen and then there's a microphone, and when I'm nervous, negative thoughts come in."

Unfamiliarity with the new environment brought high filters, resulting to entertaining unhelpful thoughts. These lead to possible blunders during the online lesson. Rosario outlined how she felt differently between the two platforms. She hinted at having a more difficulty as a reading teacher on sole radio platform with her words, "So that's it for the teaching of letters and sounds on radio. I'm shy because kids can't see what you're teaching unlike in Facebook live."

It is evident that the two platforms are different and Rosario needed to exert more effort in delivering her lessons in the radio platform. Rosario insinuated that developing phonological awareness of her students could be better facilitated through visual presentations.

Aside from struggles dealing with the self, the participants also met resource and technical difficulties which affected their on-air schedules. Isko said:

"We also encountered some difficulties…problems with computers. There are delays due to slow repair. After they are repaired, we were able to do our best to teach them."

Suprisingly, Mutya's ST recorded such struggle. He accounted, "Our internet connection was on and off for 15 minutes. My student teacher and I thought we can't go live."

4.1.2. Sub-theme: Aligning the Frequency

Despite the odds, the preservice teachers found instances that alleviated their hardships. Their STs' support encouraged them to persevere, aligning the frequency of theories learned in the classroom to the frequency of application in the field. Isko said, "I was nervous, but thanks to my ST, she guided us to make it simple."

The presence of the STs is a confidence-booster to the preservice teachers. Isko shared that this support let him gain insights on how he can effectively delivery his vocabulary lessons through nonverbal cues. He shared:

"She stayed outside the radio room…communicated…through sign language…guided in my vocabulary lessons…so I can focus on speaking on the radio."

His ST confirmed this so he could become acquainted in using radio devices paramount to the reading fluency lessons. She said, "...Provided assistance to him. I gave him tips to operate radio tools and look at the camera to model what a fluent reader is."

Similarly, Mutya narrated that her ST shared some appropriate teaching strategies to develop her students' prosody, a very important element of reading fluency. She mentioned, "My ST gave me strategies... an instruction to read and act while in a live broadcast so I can be expressive."

Meanwhile, Hiraya's source of confidence was on the holistic benefit that the students can gain through the platform: "I'm excited because despite the pandemic, and hardships, children are still being taught to read."

4.1.3. Sub-theme: Finally Tuning In

The preservice teachers' experiences were gradual steps that developed their subject mastery and techno-pedagogical skills. They developed their self-confidence in the new platform, finally tuning in to the real teaching scenario. He claimed:

"There are techniques to entice the children who are listening to read. I act, sing, dance…to show…that reading is fun! I felt crazy, yet I felt that it was a fun way to motivate students to read."

He gained confidence to teach reading via online radio, and thought of fostering a reading habit among his students:

"I told myself, I can do it! I will make my students love reading so my school someday can see me as an asset. That's what I thought to overcome my fears and finally learn operating radio tools and teaching online."

It can be further observed that Isko was an autonomous learner, observing how others taught reading in the two platforms. He proudly narrated:

"I got an idea of how to teach the pupils to read through radio when I saw someone doing the whole process… I heard from others that they also used the same technique, especially in Cotabato."

Isko further exemplified,"When I say, "Good, kids!" it has to be delivered like I am happy while talking. That's what I've heard on the radio which I emulated."

Isko explained that imagining his students to be physically present in front of him helped him deliver his lesson like he was really interacting with them:

"In an online radio, you can't see the children. I just imagined that they are physically there. It helped me to be in character."

Hiraya and Mutya shared the same experience. They found the platform challenging. They taught with as much detail as possible in their class:

"The greatest challenge is I cannot see my learners. I could not witness their experience…could not hear their answers. So, I will give the question, pause and I give the answer. This allowed my students to think in my math class." (Hiraya)

"I looked at camera and read mathematical problems. I stop so my students who are watching my live broadcasts in social media can think of answers. Silence, then I say very good class! I say this because I imagine them in front of me telling me the right answer." (Mutya)

Mutya's imagining the presence of her students emanated from her ST's advice as the latter noted: "...told her many times to think of her students in front of her. Great! She followed me."

On the other hand, Rosario emphasized her concern for her "on-radio learners". She utilized kinetics to make her students understand her lessons in mathematics as they listen and watch her live broadcasts.

"Since students listen, I accompany each number with claps. That way, those who are listening in the radio would know that number 2 has corresponding two claps. That's how I teach them math."
Mutya was aware of the limitations of modular modality. She initiated in orienting her learners on how they can maximize the teaching-learning processes that the school offers. She said, "We sent modules in our Facebook's group chat. We encourage children to read their modules and watch us during live broadcasts."
Despite the predicament experienced by the preservice teachers at the onset of their practicums, Rosario indicated that she metamorphosed into a zealous preservice teacher who savors her experience in online RBI. She said,"At first, I really felt nervous… eventually, I love the experience."
Finally, the pre-service teachers have found their dial, aligned with the frequency, and tuned in to online RBI, ready to live up to to the metamorphosis that has commenced at this stage of their practicum.

4.2. During Practicum: From AM to FM
Getting acquainted with how teaching is done in the online radio-based modality, the preservice teachers now focused on facing the challenges head-on. Their efforts were on improving their skills, shifting from an antiquated mode (AM) to a fresh mode (FM) of developing the reading and numeracy skills of their young learners. This phase has the sub-themes: (1) Manipulating the Mixer and (2) Teaching in Two-Way Broadcast.

4.2.1. Sub-theme: Manipulating the Mixer
The techno-pedagogical skills of the preservice teachers adapted to the online RBI modality. From the mechanical and basic utilization of presentation application, they improved their skills to cover manipulating broadcasting tools for better appeal to learners. Rosario and Isko specified the enhancements they did from the usual presentation they do in classes, incorporating animations and colors in reading texts.
"The PowerPoint should be colorful so that the pupils will appreciate the stories and will at least listen." (Rosario)
"She had PowerPoint presentations from previous years. I enhanced them, added some animations to attract pupils in my reading class" (Isko)
A more drastic change was an emphasis on the double tasks for each single lesson, catering to the various needs of their learners on the different platforms. Isko's ST shared, "It is now clear to him that he needs to exert more effort as an online radio teacher."
Rosario narrated how she had to learn to manipulate the tools for online streaming, as well as for on-air broadcasting; hence, getting familiar with mixers.
"Some used radio, others Facebook. In the studio, I operate the computer. I must know how to manipulate the computer and sound system." (Rosario)
In addition, preparing for the lessons was doubled, preparing for both platforms for his reading class.
"My ST had a collection of PPTs. I used them in online and radio reading classes. I make a copy of the file for both modalities."

4.2.2. Sub-theme: Teaching in Two-Way Broadcast
The preservice teachers exerted effort on enhancing their technical and teaching skills along the varying platform characteristics, triggering self-improvement.
"The voice should be loud and clear. In my reading and math classes, I ensure saying the words correctly… my voice is crystal clear." (Isko)
Such technique came from her ST's observation notes, "I told her to pay attention on voice modulation especially in her reading class. Make sure to say every word loud and clear." Rosario highlighted how online RBI differed from other modalities, such as in-person or modular: "In RBI, you answer your own question, this is what makes RBI different from other modalities." Likewise, Isko echoed:
"After telling the story, we ask questions, then we answer, but we have techniques, acting as if we were listening to them. That's how my confidence developed."
Isko shared about how he made his lessons appealing through voice acting. Isko narrated: "I act using voice in online RBI. I can sound like a child or a witch. That's how I read stories aloud."

4.3. After Practicum: Don't Switch the Channel
The preservice teachers claimed that RBI prepared them to become more responsive to the ever-changing educational landscape. Clinging to the fresh mode of teaching students, they express to continuously use online RBI as teachers. They intend not to switching to the antiquated channel of teaching. From this point, one can see how the preservice teachers openly shared their experiences with online RBI to influence their fellow preservice or other teachers to incorporate the said approach in their own pedagogical practices. Theme 3 is better understood by looking at these two subthemes: (1) On Air by Myself and (2) Sharing the Spotlight to Others.

4.3.1. Sub-theme 3.1. On Air by Myself

Overcoming challenges as online radio teachers, the preservice teachers believe that it made them more confident and flexible. Claiming their familiarity and confidence in online RBI, they punctuated that they can be on air alone, independent enough to use the modality even without assistance. Isko noted:

"My supervising no longer accompanied me in going to the radio station. I was so motivated that I am excited to do it alone."

Isko's growth as a preservice teacher was supported by his ST's observation, accounting, "Proud to mentor someone like him. I've seen him improving so much and I can see him being a good reading teacher someday."

Isko also shared that he can confidently help his students with parents' scaffold. Interestingly, he thought about an online RBI as a potential avenue to encourage parent involvement in their children's study:

"This RBI experience had prepared us so well…boosted my confidence. I think I can help my students now. It gives me the opportunity to encourage parents to be part of the children's reading journey…telling this in an online radio program is a good start."

Additionally, preservice teachers consider their practicum experiences as beneficial during the post-pandemic era, where a convergence of the two teaching and learning modalities exists. Aside from using an online radio program, Isko also expresses his intention of using other instructional approaches to support the reading development of his students:

"Even with the absence of a face-to-face, through the RBI we can still teach them how to read, with modules as guide. I must use various ways to teach students and hopefully I can influence other schools here to follow me."

4.3.2. Sub-theme: Sharing the Spotlight to Others

Having positive experience with RBI, the preservice teachers showed an impetus to influence others to have a positive impression about it; thus, sharing the spotlight to others.

Rosario believed that technology is indispensable in her career which led her to share this to others:

"RBI helped me. I shared RBI to fellow interns…My friends had no idea about RBI and told them my experience. I am a better teacher since I can use technology. Teachers should always use technology."

On the other hand, Isko, now a private school teacher, enthusiastically shared his practicum experiences and how RBI developed his technical skills. His intention of sharing his spotlight to his co-teachers is to convince them to integrate online RBI in their praxes:

"Some of my co-teachers ask me about how I taught my students during the pandemic. I shared to them about RBI and how it is live-streamed. I tell my success stories in helping my students read remotely… and how it enhanced my technological skills."

5. DISCUSSION

5.1. Extra-Miler Preservice Teachers: A Fulfilling yet Challenging Accountability for Personal, Professional, and Institutional Growth

Practicum is an important aspect of every teacher education program because it provides an opportunity for preservice teachers to experience how to be actual teachers. As noted by Yuan (2014), practicum is a "wake up call" for preservice teachers as the experience immerses them on the teaching realities.

The preservice teachers' lived experiences in developing the emergent literacy and numeracy skills in an online radio program show the different stages of their exposure to the new teaching-learning modality, representing three phases of their internship: before, during, and after practicum. The essence of their lived experiences centers on being the extra milers, going beyond the typical teaching tasks normally expected of them, engaging themselves at the same time in the intricacies of their tasks as online radio teachers of emergent literacy and numeracy, such as voice

acting, improvisation of sounds through kinetics, audience rapport, and becoming adept at operating online streaming applications and radio broadcasting devices. As extra milers, preservice teachers considered their roles being fulfilling yet challenging accountability for personal, professional, and institutional growth.

Personal growth is an independently-driven change and self-fulfillment. The preservice teachers achieved self-fulfillment through discovering something new and mastering what they have learned (Vitterso, 2014). Their self-fulfillment also stemmed from seeing their students learn despite the shift in the learning modality. At first, the preservice teachers had cynical thoughts and feelings as they were introduced to a new techno-pedagogical approach (Mohebi and Meda, 2021).

They even thought that developing their students' emergent literacy and numeracy skills was impossible because they were primarily trained to teach in a physical classroom. However, realizing that the impossible can be possible, they thought about these experiences as learning milestones (Mohebi and Meda, 2021).

Amid the challenges, the preservice teachers needed to be resilient and flexible (Jin, 2022) so they can groomed themselves to be better reading and math teachers in the primary level. Thus, professional growth entails a reflective stance to improve pedagogical practices (Callaway-Cole and Kimble, 2021). The preservice teachers considered their challenges as opportunities to grow professionally by mastering the intricacies of online RBI in

teaching emergent literacy and numeracy congruent to the demands of today's educational landscape and the future beyond. Their autonomy to learn the ins and outs of online RBI propelled them to stand on their own and enabled them to affirm who they are as future reading and math teachers (De Ruyter and Conroy, 2002). Furthermore, the camaraderie that they had with their supervising teachers and fellow preservice teachers may be taken as baby steps in the creation of their professional networks.

One can find essentials for institutional growth from the preservice teachers' experiences. Institutional growth suggests how preservice teachers regarded themselves as catalysts of an educational institution's progress, thinking of how they can be an asset to their schools and demonstrating an alacrity to share how online RBI prepared them to be better reading and math teachers. For preservice teachers, vocalizing their personal experiences is an avenue for educational institutions to adapt techno-pedagogocal approaches (Moyo, 2020) to teach emergent literacy and numeracy skills in a flexible learning environment. Considering that the preservice teachers think about institutional growth furthered their image as extra milers.

It should be noted that no role of preservice teachers was aligned solidly and singly to either personal or institutional reason alone; instead, these reasons were always combined with professional reason. For instance, mastering the basics of online RBI began from a personal reason; however, it eventually became a personal reason. On the other hand, sharing the potentialities of online RBI in teaching emergent literacy and numeracy skills to others could be due to both institutional and professional reasons.

Being a preservice teacher who had experienced teaching emergent literacy and numeracy in an online radio-based program implies that the journey begins from a personal reason, peaking with performing most of the roles for professional reasons, but finally reaching the institutional reason as the ultimate goal. Hence, Lao Tzu's admonition, "the journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step," could be related to the odyssey of preservice teachers as online radio reading and math teachers: a personal reason is a single step to begin a journey; the thousand miles depict the professional reasons; and, institutional reason is the end of the journey. Existing literature expounded that preservice teachers learned the ropes of integrating technology in their practices as means to survive online practicum (Cherry, 2015; Gozum and Demir, 2021; Pourdavood and Song, 2021; White and Forgasz, 2016; Yuan 2014), limiting their growth on a personal level. However, findings of this study suggest that preservice teachers tended to be extra milers as they completed their practicum in teaching in an online radio-based environment, with a commitment for institutional growth needing support and assistance, but first evolving from a personally-motivated reason and transforming the roles into professional reasons.

6. CONCLUSION

The lived experiences of the emergent literacy and numeracy preservice teachers in this study offer an idea that along with the paradigm shifts in education come the changes in their practicum experiences. Their experiences as preservice teachers enticed them to reflective practices,

making them re-frame their perceptions of adversities encountered in teaching emergent literacy and numeracy into growth opportunities, embodying their image as extra milers.

TEIs may learn from the lived experiences of these preservice teachers to recalibrate teacher education programs and retool their teachers on responsive techno-pedagogical approaches.

Their preparation to teach emergent literacy and numeracy skills at present has to focus on various aspects of their well-being such as physical, mental, social, and emotional.

For cooperating schools, they should strengthen their orientation and induction programs of preservice teachers prior to their actual teaching of emergent literacy and numeracy. During the orientation, supervising teachers and preservice teachers should revisit the protocols for practicum. Induction programs, on the other hand, should warrant a practice session facilitated by supervising teachers so that preservice teachers will acquire firsthand experiences before assuming the roles of teachers in an online radio program.

Government agencies mandated to oversee higher education and consortium of TEIs may consider the results of this study as a baseline for formulating, strengthening, or amending existing policies related to technology integration in teacher education program. Also, institutionalization of technology integration should be strengthened to ensure that teacher educators are serving as role models to warrant that they 'walk the talk'. Consequently, this may have a domino effect to inspire preservice teachers to follow the footsteps of their mentors toward innovation.

Since this study is qualitative in nature and only five emergent literacy and numeracy preservice teachers participated, it should be noted that the results are not generalizable. Thus, it is recommended that more studies be conducted about the lived experiences of other stakeholders as regards to online radio-based instruction on developing other forms of literacies beyond functional literacy covering other stages of literacy development of learners. Future researchers may explore further the identified themes in the study to facilitate testing of assumptions related to the lived experiences of the participants. Since the study took place in a Philippine school, cultural factors may have influenced preservice teachers' lived experiences. Therefore, this study may be replicated by others in other geographical contexts for a more encompassing result.

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