

An Investigation on the Remarkable Practices of Social Science Educators in A State University: Training Inputs for Social Science Educators

CATHERINE G. DANGANAN¹

Abstract

This study investigates the remarkable practices implemented by social science educators to enhance student engagement, foster critical thinking, and cultivate a comprehensive understanding of the social sciences. It utilized the multi-case studies as its research design, wherein seven cases of social science educators in a state university were identified and selected. Through the use of cross-case analysis, three overarching themes were developed. First, are the remarkable practices of the social science educators which were the innovative and interactive teaching strategies used by the teachers, using clear and fair assessment, and fostering inclusive learning environment. Second are the challenges faced by social science educators in implementing their remarkable practices, and these are the diversity of learners and accessibility to technology. And lastly, are the strategies for overcoming the challenges, and these are tailoring teaching to diverse learner backgrounds, empowering and motivating students, and technology integration for enhanced understanding. Based from the findings of this study, training inputs for social science educators were also conceptualized.

Keywords: *Social Science Educators, Social Science, Remarkable Practices.*

INTRODUCTION

As a developing country, Malaysia has achieved tremendous progress in socioeconomic growth. Rapid Social science education within higher education institutions is instrumental in shaping well-informed and engaged citizens. It encompasses a diverse range of subjects, including history, politics, civics, sociology, and geography. Social science educators in college play a vital role in not only conveying factual information but also in nurturing critical thinking skills, civic consciousness, and societal challenges. Their contributions are relevant in preparing students for the complexities of global society. This research embarks on an exploration into the noteworthy practices of Social Science educators recognizing that the quality of education is intrinsically linked to the methods employed by the teachers in the classroom. By looking into the remarkable practices of social science educators, the researcher aims to unravel the different areas that contribute to the success of social science instruction, which may enhance the quality of education provided to students. The researcher opted to investigate the remarkable practices and not the best practices of the social science educators. These are characterized to bring significant improvement, and yield positive outcomes. These practices are not bound by rigid guidelines but are adaptable to the specific needs. In contrast, best practices are more widely accepted and recognized. The significance of this inquiry lies not only in its potential to refine the teaching of social sciences.

Best Practices in Teaching Social Sciences

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) contends that exemplary practices share four key traits: innovation, impactful outcomes, sustainability, and the potential for replication as well as serving as a model for inspiring initiatives in other contexts (Boven & Morohashi, 2002; Icard, 2014). Best practices in education are characterized by a commitment to exploring new methodologies, technologies, and pedagogical approaches. Innovations in teaching and learning not only engage students but also cater to diverse learning styles, fostering a dynamic and inclusive educational environment. The key to delivering authentic social science lesson lies in a thorough understanding of students, the subject matter, and the specific goals of each subject. Educators also actively seek ongoing professional development to deepen their knowledge of the subject and embrace research-based pedagogies in social studies. This commitment is

¹ College of Education- Bacolor Campus, Don Honorio Ventura State University, Email: cgdanganan@dhvsu.edu.ph, (Corresponding Author)

crucial for effectively building on the foundational elements that support meaningful teaching and learning experiences in social science classrooms (National Council for the Social Studies, 2023).

The pedagogical approaches used by social science educators marked best practice in higher education. These approaches encompass a wide range of teaching methods and strategies aimed at bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application. Social science educators' endeavour to stimulate students to critically analyze historical events, societal structures, and contemporary issues. The choice of pedagogical approaches often reflects the unique demands of social science education at the college level (Barton & Avery, 2016). The core of achieving curriculum goals depends on the pedagogical methods employed in the classroom. The careful choice of content in alignment with the objectives, as well as how it is organized, holds significant importance in the classroom's pedagogical processes. As stated by Kwegyiriba et al (2023), the curriculum revolves around fundamental concepts like democracy, justice, rights and responsibilities, identity, and diversity. Educators employ current and relevant political and social issues as vehicles to make the content more engaging and relatable. According to Savage (2019), once the instructors have successfully acquired a deep understanding of the subject matter, the teaching methods specific to that subject, and the curriculum itself, they become well-prepared to deliver effective instruction. Teachers make informed choices about how to teach, ultimately influencing student learning outcomes within the classroom. To support social science teachers, Chauchan (2023) has identified pedagogical approaches as guiding principles and strategies that encompass a variety of practices employed by educators in the field of social science education. These approaches are: the constructivist approach, which gives emphasis on the experiences, interactions and reflections, the collaborative approach, where students are group together and share their knowledge and perspectives (Zevin, 2015); the reflective approach, in this approach students tend to examine their own insights, experiences and own reflections; integrative approach, students analyze complicated situations and link diverse viewpoints, and the inquiry-based approach, where students were taught how to become researchers or problem solvers. While in the study of Beck & Eno (2012), the signature pedagogies of social science education were based from two instructional models, the direct-instruction and inquiry-based student-centered learning. Both of these approaches can be supported through the use of technology but it was also emphasized that the true potential of teaching the subject was based from facilitating student-centered learning.

Social science teachers may have remarkable practices based on several parameters. As Moore et. al. (2014) stated that they have the ability to foster critical thinking skills and promote inquiry-based learning in order for them to analyze information effectively. Social science teachers also embrace diversity and let the students value different cultures which also promotes their commitment in promoting inclusive learning environment (National Council for the Social Studies, 2017). In addition to this, Goddard et. al. (2012) cited that social science teachers use innovative teaching strategies. such as project based learning and experiential learning strategies to encourage students engage and become more active in learning innovative teaching strategies. Furthermore, VanSledright & Grant (2014) added that they are also dedicated in pursuing research for professional development and also ensures that they are staying abreast with the new trends in their instructional strategies.

Teachers in Social Science Education

Teachers use a variety of teaching methods and strategies to strive and stimulate students to critically analyze historical events, societal structures, and contemporary issues. In their pursuit, these educators often encounter challenges, which they address effectively. De Loreto et.al (2019), mentioned that social science educators act as responsible citizens, assume a crucial role in imparting the core values of society through the utilization of effective teaching strategies. As a result, the teaching methods employed in this domain tend to exhibit a diverse and sometimes innovative character, reflecting the unique demands of social studies education at the college level. Garcia (2021), also noted that social studies teachers always execute lessons to help the students acquire knowledge and enhance understanding where their socio-cultural sensitivity and collaboration skills are developed in a social studies classroom.

In contrast with, Meziobe, et. al. (2012), found out that teachers were not exposed in reforms and have not involve students in the inquiry process and relied more on expository method which encourage passivity in the classroom. It was also stated that teachers are not ICT skilled but have the interest and motivation to learn, since it was also mentioned that ICT skills may widen the resources of the teachers. Moreover, Bayram (2021), cited that there were social studies teachers who were inexperienced or had ambiguous perspectives regarding the need for establishing a foundation when expressing their opinions on scientific matters. Their limited understanding of the significance of establishing a basis in scientific endeavors posed challenges for both conducting scientific research and effectively conveying the importance of foundational principles to students within the research process. Aside from this, since social studies also deals with contemporary or recent social issues or problems, teachers also experienced the difficulty in finding course books (Kece, 2014). While in the study of Alanazi & McCloughlin (2018), students viewed that teachers do not used varied teaching methods and teaching materials in teaching history and geography.

Teaching Social Science in Higher Education

Teaching in higher education encompasses a role that extends beyond classroom instruction. Educators at this level are responsible for delivering high-quality, up-to-date content in their respective fields while fostering an environment that encourages critical thinking, intellectual curiosity, and independent learning. They design and implement engaging courses, assess student performance, and provide constructive feedback. According to Mastrokourkou et. al. (2022), teaching at the university level can be characterized as an academic endeavour demanding a significant set of professional competencies, along with a profound level of expertise within a specific discipline and an understanding of the broader educational context. Social science educators encourage students to be critical on historical and global issues in order for them to acquire the skills needed. As cited in National Council for Social Studies (2023), engaging teaching and learning experiences is the most effective approach in offering meaningful experience to the students. Furthermore, in any social science courses, students are often required to engage in research activities. These research activities are presented in the class prompting collaborative discussion inside the class.

Theoretical Underpinning

This study is anchored on the Social Constructivism theory. This theory explains the relevance of building knowledge through social interaction which is being done on the different practices of the teachers within the classroom. The teacher can used different learning activities that may encourage diverse perspectives and students may eventually create new knowledge (Saleem, et.al. 2021).

Statement of the Problem

The researcher aims to unravel the remarkable practices of social science educators in a state university. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

How do college teachers in social science education describe their best practices?

What challenges do college teachers face in implementing best practices in teaching social science?

How do college teachers handle challenges in implementing best practices in teaching social science?

What training inputs can be framed based from the findings of the study?

METHODS

Research Design

This research is qualitative research specifically employed the multiple case studies method. It is an approach within qualitative research methodology that focuses on examining and understanding small-scale, detailed elements or phenomena within a larger context. It involves a deep and systematic exploration of individual components, actions, interactions, or specific aspects of a given topic. This study adopted this design because it seeks to comprehensively explore the diverse pedagogical approaches employed by college teachers in the field of social science education.

Participants of the Study

In a case study investigating the remarkable practices of social science educators in higher education, the number of participants is not predetermined but is determined through an iterative process guided by specific criteria. The study typically involves the use of purposive sampling. Participants are selected based from the following criteria: college instructors who have taught subjects under the social sciences; teachers who were identified or recognized as effective social science educators (this recognition can come from awards, peer/supervisor reviews, or other forms of acknowledgment within the academic community) and have an experience teaching the subject for more than three years. These criteria were established to capture range of perspectives and experiences. The number of participants in the study were seven social science teachers in a state university. The participants were name using pseudonyms to secure their identities.

Research Instrument

A semi-structured questionnaire used in this study. The interview questions were developed based on the research questions to be reviewed by other researchers with varied experiences in qualitative and social science research.

Data Collection

Conducting semi-structured or open-ended interviews with social science educators allows for a rich exploration of their experiences, perspectives, and practices. The iterative nature of case study permits adjustments to interview questions.

Data Analysis

Cross case analysis was utilized to identify recurring themes and patterns in the qualitative data. Cross-referencing data from interviews and observations provided a holistic understanding of the teaching practices of the college teachers in social science education. In conducting cross-case analysis in multiple case studies, the processes are the following: First, familiarization of each individual case by reviewing the collected data. Second is to distinguish the patterns by means of coding from each case. Third, themes were labelled to categorize and label the data based on these patterns. Fourth is to make comparisons by identifying the similarities and differences between the cases. Then fifth is the interpretation of the findings. The synthesized findings are then used to draw overarching conclusions and generate new insights (Yin, 2018: Miles, et.al, 2019).

Ethical Considerations

Investigating the remarkable practices of the college instructors, ethical considerations shall be strictly followed. It must adhere to the ethical standards to ensure that the welfare, rights and identities of the participants. Participants were brief and informed about the objective of this study. Informed consent and other strict measures such as data confidentiality were guaranteed. The principle of respecting participants' autonomy gives them freedom to participate, decline, or withdraw from the study without any form of undue pressure. Ethical integrity is upheld through transparency.

Establishing Trustworthiness and Rigour

Collection of data through the use of interviews and classroom observations were used to cross-verify the information and determine the accuracy of findings. Member checking was also utilized to confirm the accuracy and of the data provided. Throughout the whole research process, the researcher kept all the data in order to allow external reviewers to evaluate the research rigor. Furthermore, the researcher also works hard to remain fair and objective, avoiding personal biases that could affect the findings of the study. Finally, peer debriefing is undertaken, involving discussions with colleagues and experts in the field to gain alternative perspectives and refine data analysis and interpretations.

Findings and Discussion

Case Description: Case 1- Hazel

Background: Hazel is a social science instructor with 4 years of experience teaching "Understanding the Self" at the college level. She used interactive learning, real-world application, critical thinking emphasis, and a student-centered approach. She pointed out that addressing challenges associated with diverse student backgrounds requires the adaptation of teaching methods to accommodate varying academic, cultural, and experiential perspectives. Hazel also recognizes the need for a proactive and inclusive approach which may foster the culture of respect and encourage diverse perspectives. Her teaching experience in Porac campus, where she described her Aeta students, often shy and timid, are encouraged to express their opinions. She gave emphasis on respect Based from classroom observation, active learning is promoted in her class discussions and also group work were provided. These strategies encourage active participation, critical thinking, and the application of concepts on situational cases. She also used multimedia resources, online discussions, and virtual simulations to enhance the learning experience and expose students to diverse perspectives. She also mentioned that structured group activities, such as projects and case studies, are assigned to promote collaboration and ensure productive teamwork. Traditional methods like exams and essays are complemented by innovative approaches such as projects, presentations, and collaborative assignments. Adjustments are made based on student feedback. Critical thinking is fostered through inquiry-based research projects, debates on controversial issues, reflective journals, and open-ended discussions.

Case Description: Case 2- Luwy

Background: Luwy is a seasoned social science instructor with 10 years of experience teaching "Readings in Philippines History". She sees to it that her teaching practices are tailored to the diverse backgrounds and learning styles of students. She also used Real-world application by giving situational scenarios allowing the students to be, critical thinkers. Student-centered approach is the focus of her instructional strategy. Group activities and motivation are key elements in her teaching approach. Challenges arise from the diverse nature of learners. Techniques may be effective in one section but not in another, requiring flexibility in teaching practices. Observing and connecting with learners, especially in extreme sections, is crucial to address these challenges effectively. She provided examples based on the interest of students and also is being flexible and observant to the student's needs. An effective teaching experience is highlighted through a successful quiz where students performed well. Positive feedback from students serves as confirmation of the effectiveness of instructional materials and strategies. The instructor also promotes higher order thinking skills by asking questions that engage students in discussions. The integration of technology is considered crucial for enhancing understanding, especially for complex concepts that require visual aids. Technology, including pictures and descriptions, is used to help students visualize and comprehend abstract concepts. Structured group activities, projects, case studies, and discussions are assigned to facilitate collaboration among students.

Case Description: Case 3- Jenelyn

Background: She is an instructor with five years of experience teaching "Rizal's Life, Works and Writings". Her remarkable practices include encouraging students to explore places outside the classroom, where she aims to foster a connection between academic learning and hands-on experiences. She also let her students do short films, portfolios, and performances that mirror real-life scenarios. The primary challenges she encountered include ensuring the safety of students outside the classroom, adhering to guidelines, and obtaining permissions from parents and the university. Additionally, monitoring students who may not follow safety guidelines poses a common obstacle. To address challenges, she allows students to explore within the campus and nearby areas under strict guidelines and supervision. The success of her teaching approach is reflected in the enjoyment of students during learning activities with improved grades. Output-based and performance-based activities also made that students not only gain knowledge but also apply it in the

community. Based from classroom observation, the instructor also provided the students with the freedom to explore. This approach fosters student engagement as they become active participants in the learning process. Technology is deemed essential, especially in the current context of shifting to online classes. Assessment methods focus on output and performance-based assessments. Critical thinking skills are fostered through activities such as creating original short films, individual performances, and portfolios. She also gives assignments to her students.

Case Description: Case 4-Ana

Background: She is an instructor with three years of experience teaching "Readings in Philippine History" and with a very satisfactory performance in her recent evaluation. She used critical thinking activities, real-scenarios as examples, and integrate technology her teaching. Her teaching practices are centered around in promoting critical thinking skills by connecting topics to current real-world issues. She utilized multimedia elements, thought-provoking questions, and research projects to enhance student engagement. She also used videos, and images to illustrate concepts. Based from classroom observation, open-ended questions are posed during discussions to promote class participation, critical thinking, and assessment of students' understanding. Her greatest challenge is to match the intelligence level of her students. Moreover, she also mentioned that there were limited resources. To overcome these challenges, she adopted flexible teaching style that caters to students' interests and needs. Strategies include supplementing learning materials, and implementing differentiated instructions. Group assignments with specific roles facilitate meaningful collaboration. Formative assessments, including essays, quizzes, and assignments, are employed to gauge the level of understanding among students. Adjustments are made based on student feedback. Integration of real-time examples, current news, and relevant scenarios is increased to connect course content with current events. The use of inclusive language that respects diverse identities and experiences further contributes to a positive teacher-student relationship.

Case Description: Case 5-Liz

Background: This case features an experienced instructor with 23 years of teaching in various social science subjects, including Philippine Government, General Psychology, Sociology, Work Ethics, Ethics, Rizal Life, Works, and Writings, Readings in Philippine History, and Developmental Psychology. The instructor finds teaching somewhat challenging, particularly when handling subjects for the first time without current references. She emphasized the use of democratic principles and an experiential approach in every subject she taught. Among the challenges she encountered were student resistance in collaborative activities, time constraints and availability of materials or learning resources. To address these, she continuously provided collaborative activities and also search for locally available materials. She also made use of debates, role-plays which she believed that these strategies increase student engagement. She also used different assessment methods such giving quizzes, long test, recitation and situational analysis.

Case Description: College Social Science Instructor - Jennifer

Background: This case features Jennifer, with 6 years of teaching experience in the subject of Philippine Popular Culture. She describes teaching as both challenging and fulfilling, having ventured into a course outside their field of specialization. She emphasized the importance of colleagues who guided them personally and professionally, expanding their horizon in the Social Sciences field. She also employs the learning by doing principle, facilitating experiential learning. Authentic assessments are used to help students appreciate and holistically learn the lessons beyond textbooks or modules. Challenges she encountered include preparing diverse assessments for a large number of students, considering the diversity of learners. Common obstacles involve lack of student involvement, miscommunication in group work, and time constraints. To address challenges, she remains vigilant, observing student participation, seeking help from leaders in group tasks, clarifying instructions to prevent miscommunication, and providing sufficient time for task preparation. Regular updates and assistance are offered to keep students on track. She finds student evaluations reflect effectiveness in entertaining, informing, and convincing students. Based from classroom observation, she

promoted learning through methods like the Socratic method, performances, debates, and role-plays, enhancing student engagement beyond pen and paper assessments. PowerPoint presentations are highlighted as helpful tools, especially in online classes. She also used rubrics to assess individual or group performances. Critical thinking is encouraged through regular questioning during discussions,

Case Description: College Social Science Instructor - Val

Background: He is instructor with 10 years of teaching experience in social science subjects, specifically Contemporary World and Readings in Philippine History. The instructor describes teaching these subjects as memorable due to the easy connection to real-life situations. He emphasizes the importance of making lessons relatable to real-life situations and sharing stories about social events. The goal is to actively engage students and make them appreciate the relevance of the topics being discussed. He also engaged students in role-playing activities where they wear costumes and perform assigned roles. He also utilized film reviews as a teaching method, providing guide questions for students to answer after watching a movie. The challenges he met include getting students interest and convincing them to watch old films. To address this, he employed convincing words on the benefits students can gain. Connecting lessons to real-life situations and ensuring students appreciate the relevance of the topics are considered his best practices. He also provided group tasks as an active learning strategy, encouraging collaboration among students. He also viewed that student collaboration is seen as vital, helping weaker students overcome challenges through the assistance of intellectually capable groupmates. He used different assessment methods include quizzes, recitations, role-playing, and film reviews. Critical thinking is fostered by making students analyze events and situations. He also values diverse viewpoints.

Based from the provided cases, a cross case analysis was conducted to gained in-depth information about the remarkable practices of the social science educators. Three overarching themes were identified in this study. First are the remarkable teaching practices in social science educations, second is the challenges faced by social science educators in implementing these remarkable practices and lastly the strategies used by the social science educators to overcome the cited challenges.

Remarkable Teaching Practices in Social Science Education

This overarching theme pertains to the teaching practices of educators which were considered noteworthy in teaching the different disciplines in social science. Remarkable teaching practices in social science education have demonstrated positive outcomes in terms of student performance and engagement in a social science class. These remarkable practices were highlighted on the teaching strategies used by social science teachers.

Theme 1: Innovative and Interactive Teaching Strategies

Social science educators used different approaches, strategies and methods in teaching. In the traditional setting, teachers usually utilized the lecture-based method, which consistently perceived as the cause of lack of engagement of students. However, in this study, the participants in the different cases identified approaches and strategies which are student-centric.

Subtheme 1. Interactive and Real-World Application

Hazel, Luwy, Ana, Liz and Val gave emphasis on interactive learning and real-world application According to Maker et. al (2015), incorporating interactive learning activities, such as group discussions and problem-solving tasks, allows students to actively engage with the material and apply it to real-world situations. This approach promotes critical thinking skills and deepens students' understanding of the subject matter. In the of study by Urquidi-Martín et al. (2019), it was found that using real-world examples and scenarios into lessons helps students connect theoretical concepts to practical situations. The importance of connecting lessons to real-life situations, current events, and contemporary society make topics relevant and relatable. As stated in Mebert et.al. (2018), to foster student engagement and critical thinking, teachers should integrate

current events and real-life examples into the curriculum. This approach helps students understand the relevance of the subject matter and its effect on the world around them.

Luwy- "I incorporate various interactive teaching methods such as class discussions, group activities, and case studies to promote active participation. This not only helps students grasp theoretical concepts but also encourages them to apply these ideas to real-world scenarios."

Liz- "My teaching practices are designed to encourage students to think critically and relate our topics to current real-world issues."

Subtheme 2. Use of Technology- Based Instruction

Hazel, Luwy, Liz and Jennifer also made the use of technology in teaching. They utilized multimedia resources, online discussions, virtual simulations, interactive presentations, and PowerPoint tools. Serrano et. al. (2019) cited that incorporating technology in the classroom enhances student engagement, promotes active learning, and improves information retention. This approach allows students to interact with the content in various ways, leading to a deeper understanding of the subject matter in social science subject. Moreover, Heafner (2004) mentioned that the use of technology instruction in social science helps to motivate the students. It is further noted that the use of technology is one of usual practices of teachers to keep abreast with the changing society. Utilizing multimedia resources, and various interactive tools can stimulate students' interest to learn and maintain their concentration on learning.

Liz- Technology integration. Make interactive, visually appealing presentations that will make them interested. Incorporate videos, images, and graphics that might catch their attention, such as memes, latest trends, etc.

Subtheme 3. Experiential Learning

Jenelyn stands out for implementing practices that go beyond traditional classroom settings, allowing students to explore real-world opportunities, create short films, and engage in experiential learning. Role-playing, film reviews, debates, and other engaging activities are also used by Liz, Jennifer and Val to actively involve students and make learning enjoyable. As stated in Uzun and Uygun (2022), students actively participate in the lessons, they will observe the world, discover more, gain new experiences and transfer their knowledge to their daily life. Experiential learning enhances students' understanding of social science concepts by providing them with hands-on experiences and opportunities to apply theoretical knowledge to practical situations. This approach fosters critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and a deeper understanding of social issues. In addition to this, by letting the students be exposed in realistic scenarios and assuming different roles, teachers can enhance student engagement and foster essential skills needed by the students. Experiential learning is a valuable approach which also helps the students to apply their knowledge and reflect on their experiences that beyond the classroom.

Jenelyn-One of the effective strategies in teaching is that learning should be personalized; hence, I let them specify resources that they can find in their houses or surroundings since one of our topics is the Asia's Natural Resources. The more that they are involved, the more they learn.

Liz- I also usually require my students to do research and readings to explore information on our topics.

Subtheme 4. Use of Inquiry-Based Learning

Hazel, Jenelyn, Ana and Jennifer emphasize inquiry-based learning through research projects, debates, reflective journals, open-ended discussions, Socratic methods, and questioning during discussions. Blessinger & Carfora (2014) stated that inquiry-based learning is focus on the learners and actively engages them in the learning process. It promotes deep learning through inquiry, which is driven by the learner themselves. Moreover, it gives them the responsibility to explore and identify issues and gather resources to address the questions that will be raised from the issues. The use of this approach can be considered as a remarkable practice for social science teachers as it allows students to engage students in authentic scenarios, which promotes a deeper understanding of the subject matter.

Jennifer-Pose open-ended questions that promote class participation, discussion, or even a debate. This also allows students to think critically, and through this, you can assess their level of knowledge and understanding of a certain topic. I usually asked the students a series of questions during discussions, I let them analyze situations or statements.

Subtheme 5. Use of Creative Expression Activities

Jenelyn, Ana, Liz and Jennifer encourage creative expression through activities such as creating short films, portfolios, performances, role-plays, and debates. Using these activities helps the students to express their ideas, opinions, as mentioned by Sherrin (2016), helps students make sense of ideas like power, identity, choices and relationships. It also helps the students strive to experience the perspectives of others even though they do not agree with their ideas. As these activities help them to build empathy, cooperation and mastery. These also give chance to students to convey their viewpoints and voice their beliefs.

Ana- We make short films, portfolios, we do performances which we see in real life

Liz- I usually incorporate multimedia elements, such as videos, images, and graphics, to illustrate concepts. I also pose thought-provoking questions to encourage class participation. I integrate and connect current events and trends into our lectures to demonstrate the relevance of the concepts and to make our discussion relatable

Subtheme 6. Promotion of Student Collaboration

Collaboration is viewed as crucial by Hazel, Luwy, Ana, Liz and Jennifer, with structured group activities, projects, case studies, and discussions assigned to promote teamwork and shared knowledge. Forslund-Frykedal & Hammar-Chiriac (2018) cited that group work addresses the academic and social outcomes of students, in the promotion of fostering inclusion which may also enhance each student's participation on classroom and outside activities. Moreover, teachers act as facilitators who must promote effective interaction and allowing students to work more independently.

Luwy- "Class discussions encourage active participation, allowing students to express their opinions, ask questions, and engage with diverse perspectives. This fosters critical thinking, communication skills, and a sense of community within the class. Group work promotes teamwork, communication, and problem-solving skills. It allows students to apply theoretical concepts to real-world scenarios and encourages peer learning."

The aforementioned instructional strategies can also be used in different subject areas, their distinctiveness becomes evident on how the teachers used these in teaching social science subjects. Since their focus more in using these strategies were on human behavior and cultural dynamics. Active engagement, critical and creative expression activities provided by the participants were found to be dominant in facilitating learning. It is also important to note that these really may enhance the social interaction among the students and promote social consciousness in them. Moreover, the cultivation of empathetic skills, cultural competence and civic engagement were also considered among the practices of the participants. These skills are profoundly cultivated by letting their students experience, experiential and inquiry-based learning.

Theme 2: Use of Clear and Fair Assessment

Another remarkable practice of social science educators in this study is the use of clear and fair assessment. These were considered as remarkable practice of the participants because it enables them to cater varied learning styles and preferences, ensuring that students with different strengths and preferences can engage effectively.

Subtheme 1. Diverse Assessment Methods

In all cases, a variety of assessment methods are employed, including traditional exams and essays, as well as innovative approaches such as projects, presentations, group assignments, and situational analyses. O'Neill &

Padden (2021), stated that a range of assessment techniques can subdue the risk of unequal treatment for any particular group of students, which also allows them also to express what they have learned in different ways.

Luwy- I use a variety of assessment methods to cater to diverse learning styles and skills. This includes traditional methods like exams and essays, as well as more innovative approaches such as projects, presentations, and collaborative assignments. Students expressed different learning preferences and strengths. To accommodate this diversity, I diversified assessment formats, including traditional exams, research projects, presentations, and reflective essays. This allows students to showcase their understanding in ways that align with their individual skills.

Subtheme 2. Feedback and Adjustments

All participants on the stated cases stated that they do regular adjustments based on student feedback. Educators can use student feedback to improve their way of teaching. As stated by Mandouit (2018), feedback from the students helped teachers to assess their efficacy and also pinpoints areas which needs to be addressed. This shows that all participants in this study are receptive and willing to embrace constructive feedback from their students, and apparently this resulted that all of them have received higher marks in their performance rating.

Hazel- “Regular feedback sessions provide opportunities for students to voice concerns and suggestions, fostering a sense of ownership in their learning journey. By acknowledging and celebrating the uniqueness of each student, I aim to create an atmosphere where everyone feels valued and supported.”

Subtheme 3 Establishing Clear Expectations

Instructors across all cases prioritize establishing clear expectations for respectful communication, structuring collaborative activities, and providing regular feedback sessions. According to Smith (2016), building rapport and positive communication to all students regardless of their ethnicity, religion, belief or any difference in diversity help them to connect and understand each other. Developing proper communication means establishing clear expectations which encourage them to an open, respectful and honest communication.

Luwy- Set clear expectations for respectful communication and create ground rules for class discussions. Emphasize the importance of listening to and valuing diverse opinions, even when there are disagreements. Foster an environment where students feel safe expressing themselves.

Theme 3: Fostering Inclusive Learning Environment

This theme was also considered as a remarkable practice since all participants in this study, acknowledge and appreciate the diverse backgrounds and perspectives of the learners. Recognizing their diversity helps the teachers to provide support and modified their instructional support.

Luwy- I had students from different cultural backgrounds, such as the Aetas and Muslims. I see to it that they will feel safe and their opinions are welcome and appreciated. Since they also provided answers, where I also learned new things from their culture.

Val- I have diverse learners with different cultural backgrounds, what matters most is to give value and respect their individualities and perspectives.

Challenges Faced by Social Science Educators in Implementing their Remarkable Practices

In this study, remarkable practices of the social science educators were identified, however, it is also quite a challenge for the participants to implement these practices.

Theme 1. Diversity of Learners

Hazel, Luwy, Jenelyn and Liz highlighted the challenges arising from diverse learner backgrounds, requiring instructors to tailor teaching methods to accommodate varying academic, cultural, and experiential

perspectives. Sultana (2023) stated that meeting the individual needs of students with different learning styles and abilities is one of the most significant challenges that an educator may encounter. Cultural norms and values can differ significantly and educators must avoid biases and discrimination when dealing with students with different backgrounds. Teaching diverse students also have an effect on their engagement and interest in learning.

Hazel- Students often come from diverse academic, cultural, and experiential backgrounds. Tailoring teaching methods to accommodate this diversity and ensuring that all students feel included can be a challenge.

Jenelyn -In my experienced in teaching social sciences, I can say that learners are really diverse. There are some instances that these techniques are effective in a certain section but not in the other one so you need to be flexible in handling different types of students.

Theme 2. Accessibility to Technology

Almost all cases recognize the importance of technology integration for enhancing understanding, especially for complex concepts requiring visual aids. Challenges include adapting to changing educational trends and ensuring accessibility. Johnson, et.al (2016) stated that technology is constantly evolving and keeping up with the latest advancement can be challenging for teachers. Teachers need support and resources to effectively integrate technology into their instructional practices.

Jenelyn- “Without technology, I will be having a hard time in making them understand especially the concepts which really require pictures in order for them to really see and feel the concepts”

Strategies for Overcoming Challenges in Implementing Remarkable Practices in Social Science Education

Theme 1. Tailoring Teaching to Diverse Learner Backgrounds

Hazel, Luwy, and Liz consistently address challenges related to diverse student backgrounds, emphasizing the need for adaptive teaching methods. Cases 1, 3, 4, and 5 show consistent efforts to diversify assessment methods to cater to various learning styles and challenges. In the study of Awang-Hashim et. al. (2019), inclusive or differentiated assessment can provide equal opportunity to the students. Furthermore, it is also found that students were found to be diverse in their learning goals, thus it is imperative to have a variety of motivational strategies by providing them a clear rationale to address differences. Tailoring teaching to diverse learner backgrounds involves recognizing and embracing the unique qualities of each student.

Luwy- In Porac campus, we have many Aeta students. Common to them is that they are always shy and timid in expressing their opinions. They feel they are inferior and don't feel free to show who they really are. Setting a culture of respect in the classroom really helps. I always tell them that everyone's opinion must be respected, and everybody's ideas and feelings are valid.

Theme 2. Empowering and Motivating Students

Hazel, Luwy, Jenelyn, Ana and Jennifer stated that it is also important to captivate the interest of the students in learning their subjects. As stated by Kanchana (2019), to foster greater engagement, learners should be empowered to take control of their own learning journey. This can be achieved if teachers use innovative methods and self-directing learning individual or group activities.

Jenelyn- Even though my students are already grown-up teens, I always include motivation in my daily lesson which I find unique and effective since they are hooked and they become interested in the topics.

Luwy- Emphasize the importance of different perspectives in understanding social phenomena. Encourage students to share their unique experiences and perspectives, fostering a sense of inclusivity.

Ana- I always let them join me in deciding some of our activities, I allow them to choose what they want.

Theme 3. Technology Integration for Enhanced Understanding

Hazel, Luwy, Ana, Jennifer and Val recognize technology's importance, using multimedia, online tools, and presentations for effective teaching. Chacon-Prado (2022) cited that to enhance the appeal of lectures by colorful slides shall be used, making the learning experience more engaging. The integration of audio-visual aids can also facilitate effective connections between teachers and students.

Val- The integration of technology is really important especially in this day and age, that students are digital natives and we have to give what is needed by the time, and so I always make sure to partner my instructions in the advent of technology especially when there are online classes

Training Inputs for Social Science Educators Based from the Findings

This study can contribute on the development and improvement of training programs for social science educators. These findings can be the content of the training programs to inform other social science educators to develop a diverse repertoire of teaching strategies that may engage learners.

Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

The study stresses the remarkable teaching practices of social science teachers in higher education. The participants of the study adopted student-centric approaches, the use of technology, experiential and inquiry-based learning, and creative and collaborative activities, to promote effective and engaging learning environments. Diverse assessment methods and student feedback are also found as crucial factors in aligning to different learning styles and preferences of the students. However, implementing these practices presents challenges. These were addressing learner diversity and ensuring technology accessibility. The coping strategies to overcome these challenges include tailoring teaching to diverse backgrounds, motivating students, and integrating technology into instruction.

In conclusion, the study emphasizes the remarkable teaching practices in social science education. The findings can be the source of topics or themes for the proposed training or seminars to teachers teaching social science subjects. The findings were considered remarkable practices, since the participants of the study were found to be commendable teachers aside from their selection criteria but also based from the participation of their students on their classes.

Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations are proposed. Social science educators both in secondary and tertiary, are encouraged to explore and implement remarkable teaching practices to improve student outcomes. Additionally, continuous professional development and support programs such as trainings and seminars focused on the findings of the study should be provided to social science educators to enhance teaching skills and have strong foundation on the basic knowledge of social science education.

Limitations of the Study

The investigation on the remarkable practices of social science educators in a State University, with a multi-case study design with seven social science teachers as its participants, is also subjected to certain limitations. This qualitative study only provided a limited number of cases which may hinder the generalizability of the remarkable practices of all social science teachers. Moreover, the participants were only chosen in a state university. Though its findings can draw definitive conclusions in promoting training programs for social science teachers in the state university setting.

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