



TRANSCENDING THE UNKNOWN: AN INTERPRETIVE PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS (IPA) STUDY ON THE DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION (DEVCOM) GRADUATES AS ENGLISH TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT

Teachers, as key sources of student information, must excel in their profession, particularly in pedagogical content knowledge. This presents challenges for those without education degrees, who may struggle to translate their expertise into effective classroom strategies. This study explored the lived experiences of Development Communication graduates teaching English in Davao Oriental public secondary schools, using Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to understand their transition into teaching. Eight graduates from Mati City and Davao Oriental Division schools participated in in-depth interviews. The analysis revealed themes related to their experiences: importance of modifying their teaching strategies to accommodate the varied learning capabilities and styles, teaching journey led them to develop a sense of fulfillment, the challenges faced with students struggling due to weak foundational, strong desire for content-specific training to enhance their skills, particularly in grammar and pedagogy relied on creativity, innovation, and personal resilience to overcome their struggles and improve their teaching practices, and emotional struggles such as self-doubt, exhaustion, and anxiety became a source of growth and motivation. Participants' experiences reflected challenges, opportunities, and growth associated with this career shift. The findings indicate that transitioning to English teaching is a multifaceted experience involving ongoing challenges and the pursuit of professional and personal growth. Participants emphasized continuous learning for adaptation and meeting diverse student needs, aligning with contemporary educational theories that advocate lifelong learning to enhance instruction and prevent burnout. The study highlights the need for targeted professional development for teachers from non-education backgrounds to support their success and student achievement.

KEYWORDS: English Teachers, Development Communication Graduates, English Lessons, Qualitative Study, Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis, Davao Oriental, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

Teachers are a student's first and most important source of information, thus it is imperative that they excel in their professions, and they possess vast pedagogical content knowledge in the areas they are teaching. Furthermore, teachers with non-education backgrounds often face the additional hurdle of adapting their expertise to the specific needs and learning styles of their students. While they may possess extensive knowledge in their respective fields, they must also acquire the necessary skills to effectively communicate and engage with diverse learners. (Darling-Hammond, et al, 2020; OECD, 2023).

In the United States, in order to effectively engage students, teachers must possess a thorough understanding of the subjects they teach. Teachers who have in-depth subject knowledge perform better than their counterparts in comparison to those who do not. These teachers feel more effective, more confident in their command of the material, better able to assist underperforming students, and typically achieve better results (Howard & Milner

2021). In Indonesia, the prerequisites for applying as a teacher are having a baccalaureate's degree with no specified specialization and articulate in English. Meanwhile in Thailand, the challenges faced by non-education graduate teachers were problems with classroom management, followed by difficulty with instructional media, preparing lesson plans, challenges, and student evaluation. In other words, the participants admitted that they could not always control the classroom, manage the students' behavior, or focus the students' attention to the lecture (Ketchumpol, 2021).

Numerous high schools in the Philippines, in particular, the Division of Romblon, were permitted to offer senior high with certain tracks or fields of concentration. Teachers without a license or a degree in education have been employed by these high schools. Although some of the teachers completed 18 units required in professional education and passed the Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET), others want to be reassured of their competence to carry out the role of a teacher in an effective and efficient manner. Results revealed that senior high teachers



who are education graduates have a tendency to acquire enhanced instruction proficiency thus retains optimistic mindset to the teaching career compared to non-education graduates. However, this does not diminish the capability of those who are not graduates in education to instruct, as others are competent to do so despite having yet to earn any education units. (Wong, 2020).

Moreover, within the local context of Davao Oriental, a phenomenon was observed where Development Communication graduates, known as development communicators, embark on teaching careers. This intriguing observation was supplemented by firsthand experiences of these educators facing considerable challenges throughout their roles as English teachers. Development Communication graduates are prepared to promote knowledge exchange and generate agreement to bring about positive change in development activities. It uses empirical research, two-way communication, and stakeholder discussion to convey knowledge (Calub-Bautista, 2020). On the other hand, English teachers in public schools are prepared to teach English subjects covering the four macro-skills in English such as listening, speaking reading, and writing.

While related studies touch upon similar concepts, as mentioned by Bugwak (2021) that if the teachers are subject matter experts, they will thoroughly comprehend the material and be able to explain it in more precise and correct terms. They must therefore arm themselves with extensive knowledge of the subjects they teach. Thus, it was observable that a notable gap exists in the literature regarding the interpretive phenomenological analysis of the lived experiences of Development Communication graduates functioning as English teachers in secondary schools. This research gap serves as the impetus for this study, aiming to illuminate and explore the unique journey and challenges faced by these educators.

This study holds strong social relevance since it was crucial to address the rising problems in education. Non-education graduates must undergo training and professional development to enhance their knowledge and mastery of the subject matter. It was urgent to conduct this inquiry to address the challenges confronted by these teachers in the field and then understand the underlying reasons. This study sheds light on the challenges development communication graduates face who choose to pursue a career in secondary school English teaching.

The rolling out of this study would meaningfully contribute to the Schools Division of the City of Mati and the Division of Davao Oriental. This study will contribute to the realignment, creation, focus, and prioritization of programs that would benefit the teachers and students in the locality. Pursuing this study was essential, for it would yield significant findings to the people in the same area of concentration, future researchers, academic institutions, and public and private institutions related to education. Thus, this interpretive phenomenological analysis would explore and make meaning of the experiences of Development Communication graduates as English teachers.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this interpretive phenomenological analysis was to explore and make-meaning of the experiences of the Development Communication graduates who are presently teaching English in public secondary schools in Davao Oriental.

At this stage in research, the phenomenon of the lived experiences of development communication graduates as English teachers will be generally defined as teachers who graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Development Communication and are now teaching English.

Research Questions

1. What are the experiences of the development communication graduates as English teachers?
2. How do the Development Communication Graduates make sense of their experiences in teaching English subjects?

METHOD

Research Participants

The research participants were the eight Development Communication graduates teaching English in the Public Secondary Schools in the province of Davao Oriental. These schools are specifically in the City of Mati Division and Davao Oriental Division.

According to the IPA technique guidelines, unlike other qualitative research methodologies, 10 participants is substantial to conduct an extensive comprehension, lived story sharing, and awareness of a given issues (Smith, et. al 2009 as cited in Dos Santos, 2019). Participants were selected through purposive sampling since it was the best method in order to identify primary participants particularly when the researcher's purpose was to seek for those who have had experience relating to the phenomenon to be investigated and when the researcher wanted to concentrate on explicit features of a populace that was of interest, which will best qualify to respond to the research questions (Etikan and Alkassim, 2016).

The researcher identified and selected the participants of this study using the inclusion criteria: (a.) Secondary school English teachers from Davao Oriental who are Development Communication graduates; (b.) Secondary school English teachers who are at least 1 year in service; and (c.) Secondary school teachers who are teaching English subjects. Moreover, the exclusion criteria of this study are: (a.) English teachers in the tertiary level are excluded in this study; (b.) Development communication graduates who are new or have less than a year in service as English teachers; and (c.) Development communication graduates teaching English outside the Davao Oriental region.

Data Analysis

To analyze the interview data, the researcher employed the interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA), which was described by Smith & Nizza (2022) as an approach to qualitative analysis with a particular psychological interest in how people



make sense of their experiences. IPA was a phenomenologically based analysis method that involves gathering detailed, reflective, firsthand interpretations from research participants. The overall aim of using IPA was to "give voice" and "make sense" by evaluating the significance of the accounts of the research participants and providing interpretations illuminating their experiences.

Building on that, Smith et al. (2009) outline the necessary procedures in conducting IPA data analysis. The initial step of IPA data analysis encompasses the researcher engrossing in the collected data which was labeled as data immersion. In this study, the researcher closely examined the first transcripts produced and an extensive review of the audio recordings of the individual interviews. Thereafter, the researcher noted initial observations which involves exploring how do participants express and communicate their thoughts, perceptions, and ideas about issues addressed in the study.

After noting observations, the researcher had a comprehensive review and identification of emergent themes within all of the accumulated data collected in the study. From there, the researcher was tasked with organizing the themes gleaned during

the process. Additionally, the researcher connected the emergent themes that engages on examining how the themes connect using diagrams, word clouds, or outlines. In this study, ideas and expressions connect across the data collected (i.e., interviews and notes). Superordinate themes was identified and developed from the emergent themes. This process of abstraction involves discovering patterns connecting emergent themes, which can evolve into superordinate themes.

The researcher then proceeded to the next case that entails repeating steps for each research participant in the study. In this study, the researcher will explore emerging themes associated with each participant by examining the data gleaned from the individual interviews. To wrap up the analysis, the researcher proceeded with connecting patterns across cases. This involved identifying interrelated patterns connecting the themes and perspectives gleaned from the participants throughout the inquiry process. In this study, this process involved comparing how Development Communication English teachers made sense of their experiences or their shared experiences. This was also accomplished by charting and mapping the patterns to be explored across the data collected for the participants.

RESULTS

Report of the Participants Findings

DevCom Graduate 1: Personal Experiential Theme

- Adapting teaching strategies to suit diverse learning styles
- Developing comprehensive lesson plans to address different competencies
- Using real-life scenarios to make topics relatable and engaging
- Balancing diverse student learning capabilities within limited class time
- Advocating for reading as a tool for knowledge acquisition and self-improvement
- Finding joy in seeing students develop personal growth and understanding
- Investing time in reading and research to deliver well-prepared lessons
- Introducing real-time examples and interactive strategies to spark interest

DevCom Graduate 2: Personal Experiential Theme

- Experiencing initial pressure and difficulty in meeting expectations as an English teacher
- Feeling immense pressure to meet societal expectations for English teachers' fluency and proficiency
- Managing diverse behaviors and attitudes in large classrooms
- Attending general training sessions focused on teaching strategies rather than English content
- Prioritizing readiness by thoroughly studying lesson topics before entering the classroom
- Learning to handle curriculum changes and spiral progression of lessons across grade levels
- Finding joy in seeing students' growth, both academically and personally

DevCom Graduate 3: Personal Experiential Theme

- Experiencing pressure and fear of not meeting expectations as an English teacher
- Addressing knowledge gaps caused by the pandemic and weak elementary preparation
- Viewing struggles as opportunities to improve teaching methods and knowledge
- Using creative strategies and communication expertise to engage learners effectively
- Expressing frustration with systemic gaps and insufficient institutional responses to teacher needs
- Innovating methods to ensure students' understanding without violating institutional policies
- Viewing teaching as a calling and a responsibility to inspire and support learners effectively



DevCom Graduate 4: Personal Experiential Theme

- Navigating the mismatch between undergraduate specialization and teaching assignments
- Simplifying lessons to ensure content is understandable and relatable to students
- Battling feelings of disinterest and reluctance toward teaching English as a subject
- Finding fulfillment when students show progress in writing and understanding lessons
- Advocating for more relevant and prioritized professional development opportunities
- Adapting strategies to bridge language barriers without violating institutional policies
- Viewing the teaching journey as a continuous process of learning and self-development

DevCom Graduate 5: Personal Experiential Theme

- Feeling unprepared due to the lack of formal education in English teaching
- Adjusting teaching strategies based on students' readiness and willingness to learn
- Turning emotional struggles into motivation for continuous improvement
- Feeling validated when students show progress through interventions
- Advocating for additional training to enhance skills and knowledge
- Prioritizing flexibility in lesson delivery to match students' levels and engagement
- Encountering challenges in maintaining student engagement during afternoon classes
- Using innovative and accessible tools to bridge gaps in teaching competencies

DevCom Graduate 6: Personal Experiential Theme

- Recognizing the challenge of balancing fast learners' progress with additional support for slow learners
- Experiencing emotional exhaustion when students struggle with lessons
- Facing significant challenges with multiple teaching preparations across grade levels
- Feeling disadvantaged compared to education graduates who have studied technical subjects relevant to English teaching
- Recognizing the critical need for content-focused and grammar-based training
- Struggling with language barriers where students have difficulty understanding English
- Recognizing the need to innovate teaching approaches
- Acknowledging that continuous learning is a necessary step to bridge knowledge gaps.

DevCom Graduate 7: Personal Experiential Theme

- Transitioning from development communication to English teaching
- Developing contentment and professional fulfillment
- Creating activities that align with objectives
- Discovering a deeper appreciation for the subject while teaching
- Balancing professional responsibilities with personal life
- Overcoming challenges through self-directed learning and time management
- Finding purpose and motivation in teaching

DevCom Graduate 8: Personal Experiential Theme

- Encountering struggles with adapting to the demands of teaching English
- Highlighting the importance of lifelong learning in enhancing skills
- Developing study guides to structure lessons
- Building strong connections with colleagues and students
- Struggling with self-doubting teaching ability and lesson delivery adequacy
- Maintaining strong communication with colleagues to stay motivated
- Advocating for equitable training opportunities
- Finding purpose in teaching by focusing on improving student outcomes



Table 2
Participants Making Sense of Their Experiences

| Code | Making Sense of Their Experience | How The Participant Makes Sense of The Experience |
|-------------------|--|--|
| DevCom Graduate 1 | Adapting teaching strategies | The participant notices that some students understand quickly while others struggle. Because of this, teaching is seen as something that must change depending on how learners respond. The participant believed that teaching strategies should be adjusted during the lesson when students appear confused or bored. Flexibility grows from daily classroom encounters. The participant emphasizes the value of careful preparation and adaptability of students in fostering student achievement. |
| | Developing comprehensive lesson | The participant explains that careful planning is needed because learners have different abilities. Without preparation, it becomes hard to respond when students do not understand. Preparing ahead gives confidence in front of the class. Planning is therefore linked to feeling secure as a teacher. |
| | Finding joy in student's development | The participant feels rewarded when students show even small improvements. These moments make the long hours of preparation feel worthwhile. Seeing learners understand lessons becomes the main source of motivation. Student growth is remembered more than exhaustion. |
| DevCom Graduate 2 | Experiencing initial pressure and difficulty in expectations | The participant remembers feeling nervous at the beginning, especially because English teachers are expected to be fluent. There is fear of making mistakes in front of students. Over time, this fear becomes part of everyday teaching life. Teaching slowly becomes less frightening. |
| | Feeling immense pressure in meeting societal expectations | The participant feels that people expect perfect English from teachers. Mistakes feel embarrassing and damaging to credibility. This pressure leads to studying lessons carefully before class. Prior to entering the classroom, she realized the need of being emotionally and psychologically prepared. Pressure is turned into motivation to prepare more. |
| | Managing diverse behaviors and attitudes | The participant finds large classes hard to manage because students behave differently. Some are cooperative while others show little interest. Classroom control becomes something that must be learned. Discipline is treated as necessary for learning to happen. |
| DevCom Graduate 3 | Pressure and fear of not meeting expectations. | The participant feels the pressure especially in meeting the expectations. With this, the participant understands that learning new teaching strategies is necessary even at times if feels overwhelming. This creates doubt and anxiety during observations of superiors. Fear is present whenever lessons become complex. Confidence is often shaken especially during the first year of service as a teacher. |
| | Viewing struggles as opportunities | The participant believes that difficult lessons are treated as chances to improve. When something does not work, reflection follows for improvement. Mistakes are not seen as failures but as lessons for the students to grow and succeed. |
| DevCom Graduate 4 | Navigating the mismatch on specialization | The participant feels uncomfortable teaching English because it is not the field of specialization. There is a sense of being out of place. This feeling becomes part of everyday teaching life. Adjustment is seen as unavoidable however it emphasizes how dedicated and emotionally invested educators are in their field, despite feelings of inadequacy. |
| | Finding fulfillment in students' progress | The participant feels satisfied when students improve in writing or comprehension. These moments stand out more than failures. The progress of the students makes the effort of the teacher worthwhile. The participant finds fulfillment and it grows slowly as progress of students is seen. |
| DevCom Graduate 5 | Feeling unprepared | The participant admits feeling insecure because of limited formal training. Teaching English feels intimidating at times especially coming to school unprepared. Instead of quitting, the participant chooses to keep learning. Teaching becomes a personal challenge. |
| | Adjusting teaching strategies | The participant notices that student engagement changes from class to class. Though this, the participant emphasized that lessons should be adjusted depending on how students respond. There is no fixed way of teaching and learning. Flexibility becomes necessary especially in the field of teaching. |



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|-------------------|--|---|
| DevCom6 | Challenges of balancing fast and slow learners. | The participant finds it tiring to teach students with very different abilities. Some understand quickly while others need repeated explanation. This situation causes exhaustion. Balancing these differences becomes part of everyday struggle as a teacher. |
| DevCom Graduate 6 | Feeling disadvantaged compared to education graduates | The participant feels less prepared than teachers who studied education. The participant thinks that grammar and technical topics are difficult. There is a sense of being behind. Learning is seen as something that must continue to improve oneself. |
| | Critical need for content-focused and grammar-based training | The participant believes that grammar training is necessary. Without it, teaching feels incomplete. There is frustration when such training is unavailable. Improvement is linked to access to training and acknowledges that the lack of the technical disciplines that education students study puts her at a drawback. |
| DevCom Graduate 7 | Transition from Development Communication to English teaching | The participant describes the shift to English teaching as challenging. This indicates a skills gap that required adaptability and independent learning. The participant feels that professional identity has to change. Teaching becomes a new stage in life and growth happens through experience. |
| | Overcoming challenges through self-directed learning and time management | The participant studies independently to cope with teaching demands. Time should be managed carefully to cope with the challenges in teaching. The participant believes that learning continues after class and that discipline supports progress. |
| | Finding purpose and motivation | The participant feels motivated when lessons go well. Teaching is seen as meaningful and purposeful. The participant believes that student engagement gives energy and that the teacher's purpose grows over time. |
| DevCom Graduate 8 | Struggles with adapting to the teaching demands | The participant feels overwhelmed by teaching responsibilities. There is frequent doubt about teaching ability. Lessons sometimes feel inadequate due to the difficulties of adjusting to an unfamiliar teaching job. Adjustment becomes ongoing and is part of the participant's journey through uncertainty and pressure. |
| | The importance of lifelong learning in enhancing skills | The participant believes learning never ends. Continuous study is treated as responsibility of the teacher to improve teaching skills. Teaching improves through effort and discipline. The participant also emphasized that growth is self-driven. |
| | Strong connections with colleagues and students | The participant relies on colleagues for personal and professional support. Conversations with peers' help reduce stress and anxiety. The participant believes that relationships provide strong support. Teaching is not done alone and support from colleagues is necessary. |

DevCom Graduate 1. The participant sees the experience in teaching English is shaped by adjustment and preparation. The fulfillment of being a teacher can be drawn from the progress of the students. Entering the classroom and practicing the role an English teacher without a formal English teaching background may cause to uncertainty and doubt. However, these uncertainties can transition into confidence through time. The participant reflects as to how teaching is learned and improved in the classroom rather than through training alone.

DevCom Graduate 2. The participant views teaching English as an emotionally demanding experience. The experience is molded by fear of failure, social expectations, and the challenge of handling large classes. The participant repeatedly reflects on how pressure becomes part of daily professional life and how

confidence slowly develops through preparation and perseverance.

DevCom Graduate 3. The participant describes teaching English as a journey with pressure and creativity. The pressure stems from not meeting expectations as a teacher while creativity rooted from inadequacy of foundation skills and pandemic effect among students. The participant often frames challenges as lessons that shape professional growth rather than as signs of inadequacy.

DevCom Graduate 4. The participant views teaching English as a demanding role. It can be due to subject mismatch, emotional struggle, and gradual adjustment. The participant frames professional growth as something learned through everyday practice.



DevCom Graduate 5. The participant sees teaching English as a personal challenge. Such challenge is formed by insecurity due to lack of formal education and training. Flexibility in adjusting strategies is demonstrated by the participant as she navigates in the teaching process. The participant feels validated when learner progress is reflected.

DevCom Graduate 6. The participant experiences teaching as emotionally demanding due to learner diversity in the classroom, in which there is necessity for teachers to ensure that other learners are equally prioritized regardless of their learning pace. Content gaps in emphasizing skills and knowledge in handling the technical aspects of English subject is limited so as training opportunities.

DevCom Graduate 7. The participant views that being a non-education graduate who transition into teaching English is a transformative experience. Discipline in time management and adaptation conquers challenges in teaching. The participant's sense of purpose and enthusiasm in teaching motivates students to strive for learning.

DevCom Graduate 8. The participant sees teaching English as emotionally challenging but meaningful. Feelings of doubt and inadequacy are present, yet these are balanced by continuous learning, collegial relationships, and advocacy for student success.

Report of All Participant Findings

Upon completion of thematic analysis and interpretation of results, five super-ordinate themes emerged. These super-ordinate themes can be linked to the research questions of the study and can be connected to the literature about the experiences of Development Communication graduates who are presently teaching English in public secondary schools.

Super-ordinate Themes

1. Upon reflecting on their experiences, the participants highlighted the importance of modifying their teaching strategies to accommodate the varied learning capabilities and styles
2. Upon reflecting on their experiences, the participants expressed that their teaching journey led them to develop a sense of fulfillment.
3. Upon reflecting on their experiences, the participants emphasized the challenges they faced with students struggling due to weak foundational skills
4. Upon reflecting on their experiences, the participants expressed a strong desire for content-specific training to enhance their skills, particularly in grammar and pedagogy relied on creativity, innovation, and personal resilience to overcome their struggles and improve their teaching practices
5. Upon reflecting on their experiences, the participants described how emotional struggles such as self-doubt, exhaustion, and anxiety became a source of growth and motivation

DISCUSSIONS

This chapter presents the discussions and conclusions drawn from the results of the study, focusing on the experiences of development communication graduates as English teachers within the Schools Division of Mati City and Schools Division of Davao Oriental. There are five super-ordinate themes revealed in this study. These are: upon reflecting on their experiences, the participants highlighted the importance of modifying their teaching strategies to accommodate the varied learning capabilities and styles; upon reflecting on their experiences, the participants expressed that their teaching journey led them to develop a sense of fulfillment; upon reflecting on their experiences, the participants emphasized the challenges they faced with students struggling due to weak foundational skills; upon reflecting on their experiences, the participants expressed a strong desire for content-specific training to enhance their skills, particularly in grammar and pedagogy relied on creativity, innovation, and personal resilience to overcome their struggles and improve their teaching practices; and upon reflecting on their experiences, the participants described how emotional struggles such as self-doubt, exhaustion, and anxiety became a source of growth and motivation.

The findings of this study reveal that Development Communication graduates teaching English experience their professional journey as a process of continuous adjustment, learning, and identity reconstruction. Entering the teaching profession without formal training in English education placed participants in situations marked by uncertainty, self-doubt, and emotional pressure. Teaching was initially experienced as unfamiliar and demanding, requiring participants to relearn how to communicate content, manage classrooms, and respond to diverse learner needs. Despite these challenges, participants demonstrated adaptability by modifying teaching strategies based on students' capabilities and classroom realities. Another key finding highlights the central role of continuous self-directed learning and emotional resilience in sustaining teaching effectiveness. Participants relied heavily on self-study, peer support, and repeated preparation to address gaps in grammar, pedagogy, and instructional confidence, often extending their workload beyond formal teaching hours. These efforts were intensified by students' weak foundational skills in English, which required remediation, slower pacing, and added emotional labor. While these challenges initially led to exhaustion and anxiety, they eventually became sources of motivation and growth. Fulfillment emerged as participants observed student progress, built meaningful relationships, and gained confidence in their teaching roles. Overall, the findings show that Development Communication graduates' experiences in English teaching are shaped by resilience, reflective practice, and a strong sense of responsibility, with professional fulfillment rooted in perceived impact on learners rather than external rewards.

Implications for Teaching Practice

The findings of this study highlight the lived experiences of Development Communication (DevCom) graduates who are



currently teaching English in public secondary schools. These experiences point to both the strengths that DevCom graduates bring to the classroom and the specific areas where targeted support is necessary. To improve the teaching and learning practices of DevCom graduates, coordinated and concrete interventions must be implemented at various levels of the education system.

At the institutional level, the Department of Education may consider implementing a DevCom-to-English Bridge Program designed specifically for non-education graduates teaching English. This program may include modular in-service training focusing on (a) English pedagogy, (b) classroom management, and (c) technical language skills. In particular, grammar-focused trainings may be structured around common problem areas identified in classrooms, such as subject-verb agreement, verb tenses, sentence construction, and error correction strategies. For example, workshops may train teachers to use contextualized grammar instruction through sentence-combining activities, guided error analysis, and communicative grammar tasks embedded in reading and writing lessons rather than isolated drills.

School heads and administrators also play a critical role in supporting DevCom graduates. School-based interventions such as mentoring programs, peer coaching, and Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions may be strengthened to focus on communication-based English teaching strategies. LAC sessions may include demonstration teaching on grammar instruction, collaborative lesson planning, and post-observation reflection sessions that allow DevCom teachers to refine their pedagogical practices in a non-threatening environment. Such support systems can encourage professional growth while reducing anxiety associated with teaching outside one's specialization. At the classroom level, DevCom graduates teaching English may capitalize on their strengths in communication by integrating authentic and real-life language activities. Grammar instruction may be contextualized through news writing, interviews, speech writing, role-playing, and advocacy campaigns where grammatical accuracy is taught alongside meaning and purpose. These approaches allow grammar to be learned as a functional tool for communication rather than as a set of abstract rules. By combining their communication background with improved technical language skills, DevCom graduates can create engaging and learner-centered English classrooms. For the DevCom graduates themselves, the findings suggest a strong need for self-directed professional development and reflective practice. Teachers are encouraged to actively seek training opportunities, consult grammar references, and engage in peer discussions to strengthen their competence in language instruction. Developing emotional resilience through time management, peer support, and reflective journaling may also help sustain motivation and prevent burnout as they navigate the dual challenge of teaching English and adjusting to a new professional identity.

Recommendations for Future Research

The findings of this study suggest several directions for future research that may further deepen the understanding of Development Communication graduates teaching English. One possible area for future inquiry is a longitudinal examination of DevCom graduates who remain in the teaching profession over time. Such studies may explore how their teaching competencies, confidence in English instruction, and professional identities evolve after several years of classroom experience. Understanding these long-term trajectories may provide insights into whether initial challenges diminish with experience and how sustained exposure to teaching influences professional growth. Future research may also focus on the students' perspectives regarding English teachers who are Development Communication graduates. Exploring how learners perceive their teachers' communication style, grammar instruction, classroom engagement, and approachability may help determine the effectiveness of DevCom-informed teaching practices from the learners' point of view. Including students' voices may offer a more holistic understanding of the teaching-learning process and reveal how communication-oriented strategies impact student motivation and participation. Another possible direction for future research is a comparative study between Development Communication graduates and education graduates teaching English. Such research may identify similarities and differences in teaching strategies, classroom management practices, and approaches to grammar and literature instruction. Comparative findings may help clarify which competencies are transferable across disciplines and which require targeted training or institutional support. Future studies may also examine contextual differences, such as teaching experiences in urban versus rural schools or well-resourced versus under-resourced environments. Investigating how contextual factors influence teaching practices, stress levels, and professional satisfaction may help policymakers and school leaders design interventions that are responsive to local realities. Expanding the scope of participants to include other non-education graduates teaching English may further enrich the understanding of out-of-field teaching in the Philippine education system.

Concluding Remarks

This study explored the lived experiences of Development Communication graduates who are teaching English in public secondary schools, focusing on how they navigate their professional roles despite not being formally trained as English educators. The findings reveal that while these teachers encounter challenges related to grammar instruction, pedagogical confidence, and technical aspects of English teaching, they also bring distinctive strengths rooted in their background in communication. These strengths include effective interpersonal communication, audience awareness, and the ability to contextualize lessons in meaningful and relatable ways.

The narratives of the participants highlight teaching as a process of continuous learning and adaptation. Many of the DevCom graduates demonstrated a willingness to improve their teaching



practices by seeking additional resources, reflecting on their classroom experiences, and embracing professional growth. Their experiences suggest that effective English teaching is not solely defined by specialization but is shaped by commitment, reflection, and openness to learning. This insight challenges traditional notions of teacher qualification and underscores the value of supporting non-education graduates who serve in the classroom.

Moreover, the study emphasized the importance of institutional support in enabling DevCom graduates to succeed as English teachers. Support mechanisms such as mentoring, in-service training, and collaborative learning environments play a crucial role in helping teachers manage instructional demands and sustain motivation. When schools foster a culture of support rather than judgment, teachers are more likely to experiment with new strategies, refine their skills, and develop confidence in their professional roles.

In conclusion, the experiences of Development Communication graduates teaching English demonstrate that teaching is both a challenging and transformative profession. With appropriate support, targeted training, and opportunities for reflection, DevCom graduates can effectively bridge the gap between their academic background and the demands of English instruction. Their journeys affirm that teaching competence develops over time and that educators from diverse academic backgrounds can make meaningful contributions to learners' growth. This study ultimately highlights the need to recognize, support, and empower teachers whose pathways into the profession may be non-traditional but whose commitment to education remains strong.

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