

# How teachers view the need to develop self-mastery skills among teacher education students?

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**Abstract** –*The preparation of would-be teachers is vital in order to produce dynamic citizens that will honor the society. It is a common practice by Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) to redesign their teacher education programs from time to time to be more relevant in the needs of every school offering basic education. This study investigated the need to develop self-mastery skills among teacher education students at Batangas State University – College of Teacher Education. It dwelled on the concept of Morato [1] who enumerated the seven self-mastery skills namely, learning to think; learning to intuit; learning to feel; learning to do; learning to communicate; learning to lead; and learning to be. It was revealed that teachers acknowledge the need to develop the seven self-mastery skills among students. This study concluded with insights on how to improve teacher education practice in line with self-mastery.*

**Keywords** –*self-mastery, teacher education, student outcomes*

## INTRODUCTION

The role of educators in shaping the minds of the students towards a desired outcome is crucial both in basic and higher education. Educational institutions need to maintain a pool of quality teachers or those who possess the right competencies to properly guide the students' learning. Corollary to this requirement is the incumbent duty of institutions of higher learning offering teacher education programs to ensure that the graduates they produce have the right qualities that are befitting for a practitioner in the field.

The College of Teacher Education (CTE) of Batangas State University (BSU) aims to develop future elementary, secondary and technology teachers who are imbued with the idealism of the humanist, with a sense of respect for the advancement of Philippine life and culture, with a genuine desire to facilitate learning and be conveyors of knowledge and values in all disciplines. It offers both graduate and undergraduate programs in teacher education designed to provide theoretical, practical, basic to advanced knowledge and skills in teacher education practice. The goal is to become relevant and ensure quality offerings as per the standard of the national government. More importantly, BSU–CTE aims to produce education leaders who are not only outstanding practitioners but teachers who are

remarkable working toward improving education in and beyond their own classroom.

To achieve these, BSU is capitalizing on its faculty members who will provide instructions to future teachers. Musa, Jimba and Ogundele [2], and Nyerenda [3] are one in saying that teachers are important in effecting change and transforming the society by educating the learners. Similarly, Mundia [4] claimed that teacher effectiveness may translate to school effectiveness and ultimately, the overall quality of education in the country. Since teachers play significant roles in the society, the preparation and development of aspiring teachers in BSU are given considerable attention.

It is said that the academic performance of tertiary students in the Philippines is declining [5]. University and colleges particularly those offering teacher education programs must do something about the issue since they are the institutions who are producing teachers that will teach the young. Hattingh and De Kock [6] mentioned that students aspiring to become teachers often carry with them fixed images and beliefs about the roles they see themselves fulfilling in the teaching profession. That is why Cuenca [7] recommended that Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) ought to make intensive efforts to develop

cooperating teachers' skills and strategies in supporting pre-service teacher learning as a worthwhile policy.

Over the years, a lot has been said on what a teacher should possess. The qualities or features of effective teachers have been interesting focus of teacher-researchers worldwide. To be an effective teacher one must have mastery of the subject matter as proven by obtained degrees and licensure examination [4],[8]; work values and personality traits [9]; knowledge of the subject matter, enthusiasm and communication skills [10]; enthusiastic, excited about teaching, dynamic, and motivates students to learn [11]; friendly, young, enthusiastic, creative, and humorous [12]; gives emotional support [13]; advocates student centeredness, classroom and behavior manager, competent, ethical, professional and enthusiastic [14]; knowledgeable, adaptable, reflective, competent, morally responsible, and professional [15]. Understanding the qualities of an effective teacher can help ensure that pre-service teachers are placed in settings that will benefit and support them in their preparation and development.

Meanwhile, Morato [1] developed the concept of self-mastery and believed that the attainment of it by the students should be the end in mind of education. Self-mastery is said to be a point in life of a person where a full control of one's self has been attained particularly on what to think, believe and do. This may be seen in numerous successful persons in the world history. People who attained self-mastery are believed having effectively developed the seven important skills namely, learning to think; learning to intuit; learning to feel; learning to do; learning to communicate; learning to lead; and learning to be.

Teaching students how to think is a universal goal of higher education. The ability to think will enable students to be rational, logical, creative and systematic in dealing with challenges in life. To teach thinking skills, educators may utilize the De Bono's six thinking hats model [16] and conducting innovation camps [17].

Equally important in developing self-mastery is the ability to learn how to intuit. Nadel [18] defined intuition as to know something spontaneously, without the conscious use or reasoning. In the past, there has been a great debate whether intuition can be taught. Studies conducted by Seligman and Kahana [19]; Panbanlame, Sangaroon and Inprasitha [20] proved that intuition can be taught and learned by students.

Another aspect of self-mastery is 'learning to feel.' It is about having Emotional Intelligence (EI). The first step towards gaining EI is self-awareness. This is

followed by mastering adverse emotions of rage, fear, shame, grief and despair. The third step is to improve one's adversity quotient which is the attribute of successful people of coping with adversities in life and struggling to achieve their ultimate goal in life. Other steps are achieving emotional maturation, learning to empathize and sympathize as well as learning to manage relationships and emotions. Joshith [21] cited that there is a positive relationship between EI and teaching competency. Therefore, it is important to enhance social and emotional competencies of prospective teachers while in their pre-service training.

Similarly, 'learning to do' is another component of self-mastery. An intelligent person may have superior mental ability but a better person is the one who can initiate development by translating his bright ideas to actions. In preparing would-be teachers to real world teaching, both doing and learning about inquiry are important [22]. It is a great belief that a student must learn the systematic way of doing things to be successful in life and career.

Likewise, communication skill is deemed a prime competency that a prospective teacher and even all disciplines must possess. While effective communication is a factor to both individual and organizational success, Tan et. al. [23] revealed in their study that communication skill is lacking among graduates. There is a need to intensify the teaching of this skill since learning to communicate is important in maintaining positive working environment. One way to develop students' willingness to communicate is through immersion [24].

In addition, learning to lead is another important facet of self-mastery. Kempster and Cope [25] mentioned that leadership learning is a complex naturalistic process. West [26] argued that learning to lead cannot be accomplished in the usual classroom setting but should focus on practice and reflection. Leadership on the part of the students can be nurtured by encouraging them to participate in extra-curricular activities like student government and community outreach projects.

Last but not the least, 'learning to be' is considered also as a component of self-mastery. Morato [1] explained that learning to be is about experiencing wonderment in the things that a person does, having a world view and a way of spirit, obtaining wisdom from experiences, and having the will to live. Knowing its benefits, it has been the focus of educational policy in British Columbia, Canada [27].

Perception-based evaluation based on experiences and observation of teachers in assessing the needs of teacher education students is a conventional practice done by most educational researchers. Different issues and challenges that are needed to be addressed can be identified by teachers, since they are the one who are always in front and guide the students in their learning growth and development. Thus, classroom teachers are trusted to give honest views and opinions concerning their professional practice.

In the Philippines, most academic programs are guided by their respective CHED Memorandum Order (CMO). The CMO for a particular program contains the policies and standards needed to be complied by a Higher Education Institution (HEI). Also found in CMOs for engineering and computing programs are Student Outcomes (SOs). These are specific statements which describe the expected competencies of the students by the time they completed a specific program. SOs may be a product of research and/or a result of consultations among stakeholders of a particular program.

While there have been a lot of studies focusing on how to improve teacher education programs, only few have been said specifically on how teachers view the need to develop self-mastery skills among students. At Batangas State University, particularly in the College of Teacher Education, no study has been conducted to ascertain what should be developed among teacher education students in order for them to be successful in their chosen field of profession. Likewise, no study was conducted to assess the need of developing self-mastery skills among teacher education students. In this light, the authors find the necessity to conduct a study pertaining to self-mastery at the BSU-CTE. The result of the study may be used as input in the formulation of student outcomes for the undergraduate programs of the Batangas State University – College of Teacher Education. Furthermore, addresses the dearth of literature in line with the topic of self-mastery.

#### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

This study intends to determine the view of BSU-CTE faculty members on the need to develop self-mastery skills among teacher education students. Specifically, it aims to assess the need of developing self-mastery skills among teacher education students along the dimensions namely, ability to think; ability to intuit; ability to feel; ability to do; ability to communicate; ability to lead; and ability to be. It is also

the goal of the study to estimate the strength of correlation of the dimensions of self-mastery to one another.

#### **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The target respondents of this study were the 40 faculty members under the College of Teacher Education of Batangas State University. Faculty members already acquired a certain achievement in their life and since they are selected by the University as mentors of future teachers, they have insights on what should be developed on the part of the students to become effective teachers in the future. For this reason, they are believed the best source of data for the study.

Data gathering was done with the use of a researcher-made questionnaire. The questionnaire deals with the seven areas of self-mastery as identified by Morato [1]. Each area has a number of sub-items as follows: Ability to think (8), Ability to intuit (2), Ability to feel (4), Ability to do (5), Ability to communicate (8), Ability to lead (4) and Ability to be (6). Faculty members were instructed to express their views with use of a 4-point scale (4-Very Much Needed, 3-Needed, 2-Not Needed, 1-Totally Not Needed) on the need to develop self-mastery skills among teacher education students. There were asked to give their perceptions based on their experiences and observation as classroom teachers. It is the goal of the study to assess whether teachers feel the need to develop self-mastery skills among students by the time before graduation.

After the development of the first draft questionnaire, it was submitted for validation to two experts. Both experts are doctorate degree holders in the field of education and have been teaching for more than 10 years. Their suggestions were considered in the second draft questionnaire. The second draft questionnaire was fielded to 20 faculty members from other colleges as try-out to validate its reliability. Each dimension must obtain a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.7 or greater to be classified as reliable. Data collected from the try-out was analyzed using statistical software. All dimensions of the questionnaire were found to be reliable as shown in Table 1.

Of the 40 target respondents, a total of 32 completed responses were obtained. The responses in the questionnaires were tallied accordingly and statistical tools namely, Average Weighted Mean (AWM); Standard Deviation (SD); and Pearson-r were employed.

**Table 1. Test of Questionnaire's Reliability**

Dimensions	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
Ability to Think	0.844	8
Ability to Intuit	0.743	2
Ability to Feel	0.811	4
Ability to Do	0.871	5
Ability to Communicate	0.901	8
Ability to Lead	0.787	4
Ability to Be	0.802	6

AWM was used to summarize the responses of the teachers on how they view self-mastery skills. SD was computed to provide indication of how far the responses to a statement vary with respect from the mean. Pearson-r was employed to determine the strength of correlation of the seven dimensions of self-mastery to one another.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 2 shows the summarized accounts of teachers on the need to develop self-mastery skills among teacher education students.

As shown in Table 2, most of the skills are assessed as 'Needed' and two skills are gauged as 'Very much needed' by the teacher education students of the BSU-CTE. The 'Ability to Think' which comprises of eight sub-items dealing with orderly, sequential, logical, critical, associative, systematic, creative and integrative thinking obtains the highest AWM of 3.60 and interpreted as 'Very much needed' among the seven areas of self-mastery. These skills are believed to make prospective teachers to become orderly, sequential, logical and critical thinkers which are important to being professionally knowledgeable, critical and systemic. Employing classroom debates as a strategy in teaching helped improve students' critical thinking skills [28]. Associative thinking makes a teacher education student capable of becoming an active information processor in the classroom while creative thinking allows a student to develop a repertoire of methods and skills to successfully carry out various aspects of work. A teacher who employs creative teaching strategies may enable students to gain functional understanding and become responsible for one's own learning [29]. Integrative thinking makes a prospective teacher capable of transforming knowledge into learning activities that motivate students' learning. Benson and Dresdow [30] noted that it is vital to

integrative thinkers to look for how the different factors in the issue fit together and influence one another.

Also rated as 'Very much needed,' is the 'Ability to Lead' which obtains the second highest AWM of 3.59. Respondents believe that there is a need to develop leadership qualities among students which include the ability to earn respect, cultivate loyalty, encourage support and elicit commitment from other people. A teacher who possesses leadership skill can enhance students' participation in a class, elicit ideas from peers and encourage participation of parents and other community stakeholders for the betterment of the school. This will make a teacher to become an effective agent of change. Cardona and Andres [31] noted that leadership skill is reasonably being well-provided by TEIs in the Philippines.

On the other hand, the 'Ability to Intuit' has an AWM of 3.20. Among the seven self-mastery skills, it got the lowest AWM but still, the respondents see it as 'Needed' to be developed. To know something without the use of logic and what is yet to happen based on a gut feeling instead of observable premises constitute the 'Ability to Intuit.'

Similarly, the 'Ability to Feel' gets an AWM of 3.46 which means it is 'Needed' to be developed among teacher education students. Under this skill are sub-skills namely, mastering adverse emotions; emotional self-awareness; empathy; and sympathy. Respondents agree that students must have the ability to feel good about himself and the people he will work with. Guérin, Arcand and Durand-Bush [32] suggested a feel-based intervention can help students to focus in what they can do, to feel the way they want and derive more meaning from their academic experiences. By learning to feel, students will be able to empathize with or understand the feelings of the learners [31].

**Table 2. Teachers' View on Self-mastery Skills**

Self-mastery skills	AWM	SD	VI
Ability to Think	3.60	0.39	VMN
Ability to Intuit	3.20	0.55	N
Ability to Feel	3.46	0.39	N
Ability to Do	3.50	0.40	N
Ability to Communicate	3.49	0.42	N
Ability to Lead	3.59	0.40	VMN
Ability to Be	3.45	0.38	N
<b>Overall Weighted Mean</b>	<b>3.47</b>	<b>0.13</b>	<b>Needed</b>

AWM equivalent: 1.00 – 1.50 Totally not needed (TNN); 1.51 – 2.50 Not needed (NN); 2.51 – 3.50 Needed (N); 3.51 – 4.00 Very much needed (VMN)

In addition, the ‘Ability to Do’ obtains an AWM of 3.50 which means it is ‘Needed’ to be developed among teacher education students. This supports the idea of Syeret. al. [22] who emphasized that both doing and learning about inquiry are important in preparation for teaching. ‘Ability to Do’ has the following sub-skills namely, planning; hypothesizing; conceptualizing; designing; simulating; monitoring; assessing; evaluating; and performance enhancement. By ‘learning to do,’ the student will develop the ability to prepare before doing things, evaluate and improve their practices or performance.

The ‘Ability to Communicate’ has an AWM of 3.49 and interpreted also as ‘Needed’ to be developed among prospective teachers. This means that the respondents recognize the need to develop among students the ability to have logical reasoning in what they communicate, establish integrity, competency and emotional rapport with the receivers, receive messages accurately, pay attention to messages that instruct him/her to do something, be mindful and aware of the purpose of listening to a speaker, manage thoughts being received and to allow the speaker to articulate and ventilate and figure out where he/she is coming from and his/her major concerns.

Lastly, the Ability to Be acquires an AWM of 3.45 which also means it is “Needed” to be developed among teacher education students. Respondents believe that students should develop the ability to have a desire to know the unknown, to have a philosophical perspective of what the life and the world is, to be tolerant in accepting the ways of other people, to continuously accommodate new experiences and create new insights, to fully understand and live universal values that define humanity and to determine one’s strength and weakness for further improvement which all supported the views of Morato [1]. Likewise, Learning to Be with a specific focus on social-emotional competencies has been

adopted as educational policy in British Columbia, Canada [27].

Table 3 shows the correlation analyses result of the seven self-mastery dimensions. It can be seen on Table 2 that the seven dimensions have slight to high relationships with each other. The ‘Ability to Think’ vs. ‘Ability to Intuit’ shows the lowest correlation of 0.37 among the dimensions but still, interpreted as ‘slight relationship.’ The highest correlation score of 0.82 is obtained by the dimensions ‘Ability to Lead’ vs. ‘Ability to Communicate.’ This coincides with the studies of Almazrouei and Zacca [33], Arklan [34] and Linton and Farrell [35] in which they found out that communication ability is one of the factors required to be successful in leading an organization. Overall, the results reveal that the dimensions identified by Morato [1] are correlated to one another and may influence the self-mastery of an individual.

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The primary conclusion to be drawn from the results of this study is that self-mastery skills are viewed by teachers as truly needed to be developed among teacher education students. Specifically, the seven abilities/dimensions namely, to think; to intuit; to communicate; to lead; to feel; to do; and to be, are considered vital for the holistic pre-service training of would-be teachers. Correlation scores vary from slight to high relationships among the seven dimensions of self-mastery.

In this study, teachers believe that self-mastery skills are needed to be developed among students. Hence, they should introduce techniques that will foster these skills in their day-to-day encounter with the students. Examples of techniques which can be used are provocation, movement, disproving and idea-generating tools. Furthermore, teachers may integrate the mentioned strategies in the introduction part of this paper.

**Table 3. Correlation Analyses**

<b>Self-Mastery Dimensions</b>	<b>AT</b>	<b>AI</b>	<b>AF</b>	<b>AD</b>	<b>AC</b>	<b>AL</b>	<b>AB</b>
Ability to Think (AT)	1	0.37	0.38	0.47	0.76	0.71	0.46
Ability to Intuit (AI)		1	0.55	0.56	0.53	0.48	0.60
Ability to Feel (AF)			1	0.70	0.49	0.43	0.56
Ability to Do (AD)				1	0.61	0.52	0.50
Ability to Communicate (AC)					1	0.82	0.72
Ability to Lead (AL)						1	0.59
Ability to Be (AB)							1

*Legend: ±0.00 to ±0.20 – negligible relationship; ±0.21 to ±0.40 – slight relationship; ±0.41 to ±0.70 – substantial relationship; ±0.71 to ±0.90 – high relationship; ±0.91 to ±1.00 – very high relationship*

Also, the insights that are revealed in this study can be used as inputs in the formulation of student outcomes for undergraduate teacher education programs. In particular, the seven abilities namely, to think; to intuit; to communicate; to lead; to feel; to do; and to be, may serve as graduate attributes of teacher education programs.

To reflect the self-mastery concept as explained in this paper, TEIs may adopt the following student outcomes in their Bachelor of Elementary Education and Bachelor of Secondary Education programs: (1) demonstrate a strong academic background in all/specific subject areas with competencies on the use of technology in teaching (AT); (2) ability to take informed risks in trying out alternative and innovative approaches in teaching (AI) (AD); (3) recognition of professional, social and ethical responsibility (AF); (4) ability to facilitate learning of diverse types of learners using a wide range of teaching strategies and techniques (AF) (AD); (5) ability to use effective and appropriate verbal, nonverbal, written and media communication techniques (AC); (6) ability to function effectively as an individual and as a member or leader of an academic team (AL) (AD); (7) ability to engage in life-long learning (AB). These student outcomes may be subjected to academic and stakeholders deliberations for enrichment.

The study also has limitations which may serve as basis for future research. Since the study concentrated only in one college, replication of this kind of study is strongly encouraged taking the whole population of teachers in a university.

Future researchers are also advised to further explore the relationship particularly in the dimension 'learning to intuit' which obtained the lowest correlation score among the seven dimensions of self-mastery.

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