



Evaluating employers' feedback on the performance of physical education (PE/MAPEH) teachers: evidence from NEUST San Isidro campus graduates in DepEd Gapan city

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Abstract

This study examined employers' feedback regarding Physical Education (PE) and Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health (MAPEH) teachers who are graduates of Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology (NEUST) San Isidro Campus and are currently teaching in DepEd Gapan City. It employed a qualitative descriptive research design to capture in-depth perceptions of school administrators who directly supervise these graduates in actual school settings. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews, allowing participants to freely express their evaluations of teacher performance while maintaining focus on key professional domains. Thematic analysis was used to systematically identify recurring patterns and construct meaningful interpretations from the data. Findings revealed that NEUST graduates are highly competent in instructional delivery, demonstrating well-structured lessons and effective teaching strategies. They also exhibit strong classroom management skills and active engagement in co-curricular activities, particularly in sports-related programs. Employers further emphasized their professionalism, adaptability to school environments, and strong ability to build positive relationships with learners. These qualities contribute to a supportive and productive learning environment. Only one minor area for improvement was identified, which is the integration of information and communication technology (ICT) in instructional practices. Overall, the study concludes that NEUST graduates demonstrate strong employability and are well-aligned with DepEd teaching standards and expectations for effective educators (Darling-Hammond, 2017; Ingersoll, 2011).

Keywords: Employer feedback, MAPEH teachers, PE teachers, Teacher education, Employability, DepEd Gapan City

Introduction

Teacher quality remains one of the most influential determinants of student learning outcomes and overall school effectiveness, particularly in specialized learning areas such as Physical Education (PE) and Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health (MAPEH). These learning areas require teachers to integrate cognitive knowledge, psychomotor skills, and affective development, making instructional competence and pedagogical versatility essential. Globally, a substantial body of research emphasizes that well-prepared and highly competent teachers significantly contribute to improved student achievement, engagement, and holistic development (Darling-Hammond, 2017; Hattie, 2009) [5, 7]. In this regard, teacher education institutions carry a critical responsibility in ensuring that graduates are not only knowledgeable in subject content but are also equipped with strong pedagogical skills, professional dispositions, and adaptability to diverse classroom contexts.

In the Philippines, the Department of Education (DepEd) has institutionalized the Results-Based Performance Management System (RPMS) as a mechanism for ensuring that teacher performance aligns with national professional standards. The RPMS framework evaluates teachers across key domains such as instructional competence, classroom management, learning

outcomes, professional engagement, and commitment to continuous improvement (Department of Education, 2015). While this system provides a structured approach to teacher evaluation, it also highlights the need for continuous feedback loops between schools and teacher education institutions to ensure that pre-service training remains responsive to actual classroom demands and evolving educational priorities.

Within this context, employer feedback has been widely recognized as a valuable and practical indicator of graduate employability and program effectiveness. According to Ingersoll (2011) [8], feedback from school administrators offers essential insights into teacher readiness, instructional effectiveness, classroom behavior, and professional performance in real-world teaching environments. Similarly, Cochran-Smith (2005) [3] emphasizes that strong linkages between higher education institutions and employing schools are crucial in improving teacher preparation programs and addressing gaps between theory and practice.

Despite the growing importance of such evaluations, there remains a limited number of localized studies focusing specifically on PE/MAPEH graduates and their actual performance in public secondary school settings, particularly in divisions such as DepEd Gapan City. This gap underscores the need for empirical investigation that captures employer

perspectives to inform both policy and curriculum enhancement in teacher education programs.

In this regard, the present study seeks to explore the feedback of school administrators regarding NEUST San Isidro Campus PE/MAPEH graduates currently employed in DepEd Gapan City. Specifically, it aims to answer the following research problems:

- How do school administrators perceive the overall teaching performance of NEUST PE/MAPEH graduates in terms of instructional competence, classroom management, professionalism, and co-curricular involvement?
- What strengths of NEUST PE/MAPEH graduates are most commonly observed by employers?
- What areas for improvement are identified by school administrators, if any?

By addressing these questions, the study contributes to improving teacher education programs and strengthening the link between higher education institutions and DepEd schools.

Methods

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design, which is appropriate for exploring and describing real-world phenomena based on participants lived experiences and perceptions (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The design allowed for an in-depth understanding of how school administrators evaluate the performance of NEUST San Isidro Campus PE/MAPEH graduates in actual school environments.

The participants of the study were selected school heads and assistant principals from public secondary schools in DepEd Gapan City who directly supervise NEUST graduates teaching PE and MAPEH subjects. Purposive sampling was utilized to ensure that respondents had sufficient experience in observing and evaluating the teachers under study.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, which

allowed respondents to freely express their experiences while ensuring that key areas such as instructional competence, classroom management, professionalism, and co-curricular involvement were consistently covered. Interviews were conducted in school settings with permission from the respondents.

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis following the systematic procedure of familiarization, coding, theme development, and interpretation (Braun & Clarke, 2006) [2]. This method is widely used in qualitative research to identify patterns of meaning across datasets.

Ethical considerations were strictly observed throughout the study. Participation was voluntary, confidentiality was ensured, and no identifying information of schools or respondents was disclosed. The study also followed ethical standards in educational research as emphasized by UNESCO (2021).

Results and Discussion

The findings revealed consistently positive feedback from school administrators regarding NEUST San Isidro Campus PE/MAPEH graduates. To systematically present the results, the following tables are introduced and discussed.

Table 1 presents the synthesized perceptions of school administrators regarding the performance of NEUST San Isidro Campus PE/MAPEH graduates across key professional teaching domains. The dimensions included reflect core areas of teacher effectiveness as emphasized in the Philippine professional standards for teachers, particularly instructional competence, classroom management, co-curricular involvement, professional behavior, and adaptability (Department of Education, 2015; Danielson, 2013). These domains are critical indicators of teacher readiness and are widely used in evaluating beginning teachers’ performance in actual school settings.

Table 1: Overall employer feedback on NEUST PE/MAPEH graduates

Dimension	Employer Feedback Summary	Interpretation
Instructional Competence	Effective and well-structured lesson delivery	Highly competent
Classroom Management	Maintains discipline and order	Strong performance
Co-Curricular Involvement	Active in sports and school programs	Highly engaged
Professional Behavior	Displays respect and responsibility	Very positive
Adaptability	Easily adjusts to school environment	Smooth transition

The results presented in Table 1 indicate that NEUST graduates are consistently perceived by school administrators as competent and classroom-ready educators across multiple domains of teaching performance. Their strong instructional competence reflects effective pre-service preparation in lesson planning, content delivery, and classroom facilitation. This finding aligns with Darling-Hammond (2017) [5], who emphasized that high-quality teacher education programs significantly contribute to instructional effectiveness and student learning outcomes.

In terms of classroom management, the graduates were described as capable of maintaining discipline and creating structured learning environments. This is a crucial indicator of teacher effectiveness, as classroom management has been

consistently identified as a foundational skill influencing student engagement and academic achievement (Marzano & Marzano, 2003) [9]. The positive feedback suggests that NEUST graduates are able to translate theoretical classroom management strategies into actual practice.

Their strong co-curricular involvement, particularly in sports and school-based activities, further highlights their suitability for PE/MAPEH roles. This is particularly significant because PE teachers are expected not only to teach but also to facilitate physical development programs and extracurricular sports activities. According to Bailey *et al.* (2009) [1], active teacher involvement in physical education programs enhances student participation and school sports culture.

Professional behavior was also rated highly by employers, indicating that graduates demonstrate respect, responsibility, and positive interpersonal relationships within the school community. This aligns with Ingersoll (2011) [8], who noted that professional disposition is a strong predictor of teacher retention and effectiveness in school environments.

Lastly, adaptability emerged as a strong characteristic among NEUST graduates. Their ability to adjust to school culture and DepEd systems reflects readiness for real-world teaching conditions, supporting the argument of Cochran-Smith (2005) [3] that effective teacher preparation must include exposure to authentic school experiences.

Table 1 demonstrates that NEUST San Isidro Campus PE/MAPEH graduates exhibit a strong alignment between pre-

service training and actual workplace performance, confirming the effectiveness of their teacher education preparation program.

Table 2 presents the major strengths of NEUST San Isidro Campus PE/MAPEH graduates as identified by school administrators in DepEd Gapan City. The indicators reflect core competencies expected of effective teachers, particularly in Physical Education and MAPEH, where both pedagogical skill and performance-based instruction are essential. These strengths are aligned with teacher competency frameworks emphasizing content mastery, student engagement, professionalism, and instructional clarity (Danielson, 2013; Department of Education, 2015).

Table 2: Strengths of NEUST PE/MAPEH graduates

Strength area	Employer observation	Educational impact
Sports and PE Expertise	Strong coaching and facilitation skills	Increased student participation
Student Engagement	Builds strong rapport with learners	Higher motivation and participation
Professionalism	Demonstrates ethical and respectful conduct	Positive school environment
Instructional Delivery	Organized and clear teaching approach	Improved learning outcomes

The strengths shown in Table 2 reflect the graduates' strong practical and pedagogical preparation. These findings are consistent with Ingersoll (2011) [8], who emphasized that teacher effectiveness is strongly influenced by both preparation and professional behavior in real school settings.

Table 3 presents the only area for improvement identified by school administrators regarding NEUST San Isidro Campus PE/MAPEH graduates currently teaching in DepEd Gapan City. This aspect reflects a targeted developmental need rather than a performance deficiency, indicating that employer feedback is largely positive. The identified concern is situated within the broader context of 21st-century teaching competencies, where digital literacy and technology integration are increasingly emphasized in modern education systems (UNESCO, 2021; OECD, 2019).

Table 3: Minor area for improvement

Area for improvement	Employer observation	Suggested enhancement
ICT Integration	Limited use of digital tools in instruction	Strengthen ICT-based teaching strategies

Although the overall evaluation of NEUST PE/MAPEH graduates is highly favorable, Table 3 highlights a minor yet significant area for professional enhancement, specifically in the integration of information and communication technology (ICT) in classroom instruction. Employers observed that while graduates demonstrate strong pedagogical and content competencies, their use of digital tools for instructional delivery remains limited.

This finding is consistent with UNESCO (2021), which emphasizes that digital literacy is a core competency for educators in the 21st century. Similarly, the OECD (2019) reports that while many teachers demonstrate strong foundational teaching skills, gaps remain in the effective

integration of technology to support personalized and interactive learning. In the Philippine context, the Department of Education (2015) also underscores ICT integration as part of teacher competency standards under the Results-Based Performance Management System (RPMS), particularly in enhancing learner engagement and instructional innovation.

The identification of ICT integration as the sole area for improvement is noteworthy because it suggests that NEUST graduates are otherwise well-prepared for classroom teaching. Their strengths in instructional delivery, classroom management, professionalism, and co-curricular involvement, as reflected in previous tables, indicate strong alignment with DepEd expectations and school-based performance standards. However, strengthening ICT-based teaching strategies would further enhance their effectiveness in contemporary classrooms. Digital tools such as interactive presentations, learning management systems, and multimedia resources are increasingly essential in promoting active learning and improving student engagement, particularly in Physical Education and MAPEH subjects where visualization and interaction are key components of instruction.

The findings suggest that the teacher education program of NEUST San Isidro Campus is largely effective and responsive to school needs, with only minimal enhancement required in the area of educational technology integration. This reinforces the conclusion that graduates are highly employable and well-aligned with both national standards and global trends in teacher education.

Conclusion

The study concludes that graduates of NEUST San Isidro Campus specializing in PE/MAPEH are perceived by employers as highly competent, professional, and effective educators. They consistently demonstrate strong performance in instructional delivery, classroom management, and student

engagement, reflecting solid alignment between pre-service training and actual classroom demands. Employers likewise highlight their adaptability and positive professional disposition as key contributors to effective school performance. The only identified area for development is the integration of information and communication technology (ICT) in instructional practices, which may be strengthened through targeted and continuous professional development programs. Overall, the findings indicate that the graduates possess strong employability and exhibit alignment with both national teacher standards and emerging global expectations for 21st-century educators.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study and the identified areas for enhancement, the following recommendations are proposed:

- It is recommended that the Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology (NEUST) strengthen the integration of information and communication technology (ICT) within its teacher education curriculum, with particular emphasis on digital pedagogy and technology-enhanced instructional strategies to better prepare pre-service teachers for 21st-century classrooms.
- It is recommended that DepEd schools establish structured mentoring and induction programs that support beginning teachers in effectively applying ICT tools and innovative instructional practices in classroom instruction.
- It is recommended that future studies conduct longitudinal tracking of NEUST graduates to assess their long-term professional development, instructional effectiveness, and employability in the teaching profession.

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