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# EVALUATING PRESERVICE TEACHERS' PERFORMANCE IN A BLENDED FIELD EXPERIENCE COURSE DURING THE QUARANTINE OF COVID-19

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## ABSTRACT

*This paper aims to evaluate the preservice teachers' teaching performance in a blended field experience during the quarantine of COVID-19. An exploratory sequential mixed method approach was adopted using Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis as a qualitative tool and quantitative data collected using a teacher evaluation rubric that merged the INTASC standards in the Danielson domains. The results show that using SWOT analysis positively impacts teachers' performance: they understand how to use the external environment (seizing opportunities and avoiding threats) to control the internal environment (enhancing strengths and removing weaknesses).*

**Keywords** *SWOT analysis, feedback, teaching performance, blended learning, preservice teachers, mentoring, field experience*

## INTRODUCTION

The reform of the United Arab Emirates' (UAE's) current education system and its teaching methods is one of the main aims of the country's National Agenda (UAE, 2021). Enhancing the quality of preservice teachers' skills, strategies, and performance is the cornerstone of transforming the education system. One of the key performance indicators of the UAE's vision is the large percentage of high-quality teachers in UAE schools. In the UAE's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Federal Competitiveness and Statistics Authority, 2017), a goal mapped with the national agenda is to focus on high-quality education. Accordingly, attention has been paid to the teacher education program in a Federal University in the UAE where this study is conducted.

The college of education aspires to be the leader in developing innovative bilingual professionals dedicated to the advancement of national and international communities. The college has a field experience model with four levels (Practicum I, II, III, and Internship) in addition to the theoretical

and practical courses in the teacher education program in early childhood education. Preservice teachers study a combination of practical and theoretical courses related to human development, early childhood development, early childhood program models, parents as educators, classroom management, integrated curriculum, people with special needs, inclusive classrooms, learning English in schools, the learner, the teacher, curriculum design, early childhood math and science, assessment and evaluation, learning technologies, and literacy and English language. The program is a total number of 128 credit hours.

The norm of education in the UAE is face-to-face schooling supported by elearning platforms, flipped classrooms, and distance learning. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, schools and universities had to shift to distance learning. This happened after spending almost half of the Spring 2020 semester in schools on campus. The regulatory bodies in education began setting up more transformative approaches to develop innovative solutions in order to change systems proactively

(Dubai Future Foundation, 2020).

Similar to other institutes around the globe, our study's university shifted to an online platform, and field experience students were affected by this transition. It is very well known that teacher training programs in all fields have a critical role in training qualified teachers for the next generations' education. Hence, the training of preservice teachers is extremely complicated. It has many facets to be considered, from teaching them the required theoretical knowledge to giving them the field experience they need. In addition, they need to be trained on how to teach online during such a crisis. Therefore, field experience, including school practicum, is an indispensable part of teacher training programs (Gürkan, 2018). The highlights below explain and give a clearer view of the field experience structure adopted at our institute.

#### *Field Experience Program*

The field experience program in the college of education in our study's institute provides the practicum courses and students' placement in schools. The field experience model has four essential phases: Practicum I, Practicum II, Practicum III, and Internship. Each of the four levels is covered in one full semester starting either Fall or Spring Semester. In the first practicum course, preservice teachers observe early childhood students in a variety of classroom settings. Preservice teachers are placed for several mornings in early years classrooms in both private and government schools. During the second practicum course, preservice teachers complete several full-day placements in early years classrooms to observe the class teacher and teaching practices in a classroom setting. They observe, assist, teach minilessons, and conduct a read-aloud. In the third Practicum course, there is an emphasis on preservice teachers' instructional planning and teaching. They complete ten full-day placements in early years classrooms to assist their mentor teachers, teach minilessons, and begin to teach whole-class lessons, in addition to receiving guidance, coaching, and feedback from their mentors. The final phase is Internship, where preservice teachers are placed in early years classrooms to conduct whole-class teaching. During this phase, preservice teachers are expected to have a significant teaching role and conduct an impact study. This should be accomplished over several consecutive weeks to demonstrate readiness to graduate

and join the teaching profession. Mentor teachers play a big role in coaching preservice teachers by guiding, evaluating, and providing constructive feedback to them at throughout the program.

The preservice teachers who participated in this study were enrolled in Practicum courses. They attended two weeks of orientation on campus, followed by five weeks in schools where they developed their pedagogical content knowledge. After the lockdown because of COVID-19, preservice teachers were placed virtually in governmental schools. They were required to teach one full lesson for five consecutive weeks online where they developed their technological pedagogical knowledge. This was followed by two weeks of online reflection with their instructors.

#### *Purpose of the Study*

The study's main purpose is to investigate the impact of using SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis on the preservice teachers' teaching performance in the blended field experience during the quarantine of COVID-19. In addition, the SWOT model was used to provide preservice teachers with feedback during their practicum. The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

1. What is the impact of using SWOT analysis on the preservice teachers' teaching performance on a blended field experience course during the COVID-19 quarantine?
2. What are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats identified in the preservice teachers' performance?

#### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The following sections provide a brief literature review related to the social constructivism theoretical framework of the study, feedback, effective use of SWOT analysis, and teachers' performances.

#### *Theoretical Framework*

Education programs play a pivotal role in improving the quality of education by training and supervising preservice teachers to use practical teaching skills and strategies. During field experience courses, preservice teachers can perform well due to the support of a more knowledgeable peer or the supervision offered by an experienced person. This is in line with Vygotsky's social constructivist view, which emphasized the Zone of

Proximal Development in enhancing students' learning (Vygotsky, 1978). Social Constructivism is a learning theory that emphasized the role of social interaction in constructing knowledge where human development is socially positioned. McKinley (2015) used social constructivist theory to assert that "people's ideas coincide with their experiences and that writers build on their socio-cultural awareness, a key point in identity construction" (p. 2).

Social constructivism is used as a backbone of the conceptual framework of this study, in which university supervisors and preservice teachers were engaged in a dialogue of feedback and reflection through the use of SWOT analysis to improve teaching performances in four areas: planning and preparation, classroom environment, instruction, and professional responsibilities. The university uses the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium integrated with the Danielson Framework as an evaluation tool for preservice and in-service teachers. The university supervisors noticed that the incorporated evaluation tool was not enough to tackle the gaps in preservice teachers' performances. Preservice teachers need to understand how to use their strengths and opportunities to overcome the weaknesses and threats in their teaching performances. Accordingly, SWOT is used to provide in-depth analysis in order to tackle the gaps in preservice teachers' performances. The courses observed in this study were the practicum and internship courses in the early childhood education program in the College of Education.

### *Feedback*

Moreover, many researchers have mentioned that high-quality learning by preservice teachers is based on the constructive feedback they receive in a positive learning environment (Putnam & Borko, 2000). The importance of school-based feedback has been emphasized by researchers and educationists (Fawzi & Alldabous, 2019; Gürkan, 2018; Lombard, 2015). It is essential to note that preservice teachers benefit from feedback and practical advice, particularly on developing their teaching skills. In addition, Gibson and Musti-Rao (2016) emphasized the importance of effective and efficient feedback to improve preservice teachers' performance.

Feedback can change preservice teachers' views, perspectives, and habits of mind as they are

provided with the reasons for why a response is correct or incorrect. Lombard (2015) argued that feedback can be considered successful only when the information about the gap in learning is used to change the shortcoming. Feedback is also classified in terms of quality, quantity, and timing. A study conducted by Gürkan (2018) indicated that giving immediate feedback to preservice teachers helped them to "be effective users of teaching strategies such as class management, body language, voice levels, use of intonation and stress, [and] so forth" (p. 1084). In another study conducted by White (2007), he stated that "specific, spoken feedback was the most consistently given and useful mode of feedback" (p. 2).

A study conducted in Bahrain by Fawzi and Alldabous (2019) indicated that preservice teachers had a good understanding of the role of feedback in their professional development. However, their findings also indicated that preservice teachers wanted feedback that focused more on what they should have done differently, or what they could have added to their teaching. Preservice teachers thought that focusing only on the negative aspects did not help them in improving their performance.

### *SWOT Analysis*

SWOT analysis as a concept stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats, and it is usually used as a framework in the business field. SWOT was first mentioned by the Stanford Research Institute in a research project conducted between 1960 and 1970 and funded by 500 companies to find out the problems in their systems while planning to create new systems to manage change (Gürel & Tat, 2017). Dyson (2004) described SWOT as an analysis methodology to help construct any developing strategy that helps to enhance the strengths and eliminate the weaknesses. Harris (2018) extended the description of SWOT analysis by stating that it is concerned with analyzing the internal and external environment of a company or an organization to detect the strengths to take advantage of its opportunities and avoid any threats while addressing its weaknesses.

It is significant for preservice teachers to understand how to enhance their strengths, removing weaknesses, seizing opportunities, and avoiding threats (Abdel-Basset et al., 2018). Thomas et al. (2014) stated that SWOT could be used as a strategic method to develop learning. Likewise, Kowalik

and Klimecka-Tatar (2017) clearly described the S and W and O and T as the internal and the external environment when analyzing SWOT. The S and W are the internal environment that occurs from the individual, while the O and T are the external environment and the outside factors that affect the learners' performance.

Thomas et al. (2014) indicated that when the supervisor works on the strengths of the feedback, it can help develop and improve the achievements to fulfill opportunities. On the other hand, when the supervisor works on the weaknesses and makes them clear to the candidates, it helps them discover the threats and avoid them ( ).

Galea and Sammut-Bonnici (2015) reported that the primary purpose of SWOT analysis is using the knowledge and the information an organization has about its environments to frame its strategy. In addition, Helms and Nixon (2010) indicated that SWOT analysis could be used by different people from different careers, such as consultants, trainers, and educators; it is not customized only for the business career. Nevertheless, SWOT analysis can also be practically used and applied outside of the business field, such as using it to analyze classroom activities or give preservice teachers feedback. It is effective in assessing and guiding the outcomes of the classroom environment.

Ezeudu et al. (2015) asserted that a teacher can implement SWOT analysis to drive a force for change for an education program. Alsharari (2018) discussed an implication of the SWOT analysis in the education field to evaluate the higher education system's internationalization. Furthermore, Odeh et al. (2015) proved that demonstrating SWOT analysis can help make any decision for any education community.

### *Teaching Performance*

The Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) is a set of international teaching standards developed in Washington, DC. The INTASC standards enable educators to control and evaluate their own progress and recognize their professional learning to be suitable for their teaching context (Block et al., 2019). These standards have been used to evaluate most of the education programs for teachers. It was created in 1987 with a mission to enhance teachers' education and to offer licensing to teachers who meet the

organization's standards and professional development as well (Kuo, 2018). To fulfill this mission, the organization provides a platform for all nations to work collaboratively to formulate a model that will result in teachers' preparation reformation and to create strategies that will evaluate the performance of teachers in classrooms. The organization is based on one premise, which states that effective and efficient teachers must be able to incorporate content information with pedagogical understandings to ensure that all students gain knowledge and skills that help them perform highly (Lang et al., 2018). The core standards presented by INTASC are principles each teacher has to showcase at any grade level and in whatever subject they teach.

INTASC came up with various principles that set the standards which teachers must meet. First, a teacher should understand the tools of inquiry, central concepts, and discipline structures of what they are teaching to create experiences that make the subject matter meaningful to students. Second, teachers should understand development and learning in students to promote intellectual, personal, and social development by providing learning opportunities. According to Block et al. (2019), the third principle focuses on teachers understanding about the diversity of learners and knowing how to ensure they care for the diverse needs of the students. Fourth, teachers should know how to plan instructions on the basis of the goals of the students, curriculum, and community. Additionally, the organization requires teachers to be efficient communicators who can foster classroom interaction. Teachers are also expected to reflect on professional development and create assessment tools that ensure learners develop (Gillespie et al., 2016). These principles help new teachers by ensuring they are well-equipped to improve learning in schools. The principals (The learner and learning, content, instructional practice, and professional responsibility) and the standards are as shown in Table 1.

Clark and Paulsen (2016) discussed that when teachers use all the INTASC standards, they could help in developing their students' content knowledge, communication and cognitive skills, understanding the central concept of the curriculum, solving problems, and dealing with instructions (Moss & Lee, 2010). Like Kentucky Department of Education (2020), the university adopted a teaching framework that merges the



Table 1. The INTASC Standards Categorized into Four Main Domains

<b>I. The Learner and Learning</b>	
Standard 1—Learner Development	how learners grow and develop across the cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, and physical areas
Standard 2—Learning Differences	understanding individual differences and diverse cultures and communities
Standard 3—Learning Environments	creating environments that support individual and collaborative learning, encourage positive social interaction, active engagement, and self-motivation
<b>II. Content</b>	
Standard 4—Content Knowledge	the teacher understands the central concepts of the subject, structures of the disciplines, and the tools of inquiry
Standard 5—Application of Content	how to connect concepts and use differing perspectives to engage learners and develop their higher order thinking skills
<b>III. Instructional Practice</b>	
Standard 6—Assessment	how to use multiple methods to assess students' understanding and to monitor their progress
Standard 7—Planning for Instruction	the teachers plan instruction that supports each student and meeting the learning goals
Standard 8—Instructional Strategies	using a variety of instructional strategies to develop deep understanding of the content areas
<b>IV. Professional Responsibility</b>	
Standard 9—Professional Learning and Ethical Practice	teachers engage in ongoing professional learning and use evidence to continually evaluate their practice.
Standard 10—Leadership and Collaboration	teachers seek appropriate leadership roles and opportunities to take responsibility for students' learning.

INTASC standards and the Danielson Framework. The framework includes a set of instructional components grounded in a constructivist view of learning and teaching. Dubisky (2020) used the Danielson Framework to measure the effectiveness of coaching services provided to teachers. The findings indicated that the Danielson Framework positively impacts creating a common language of effective classroom instruction. The teaching framework is a complex teaching activity that is distributed into multiple standards that are categorized into four main domains: planning and preparation, classroom management, instruction, and professional responsibilities.

### PLANNING AND PREPARATION

Planning and Preparation focuses on the strategies used by the teacher to plan for instruction. The main emphasis for this domain is the lesson plan. There are several components in this domain: demonstrating knowledge of content and pedagogy, students, and resources; selecting instructional outcomes; and designing content instruction and student assessment. Lesson plans are considered an essential component in preservice teachers' teaching process. The Danielson Framework's six components are the planning and preparation domain to guide teachers to prepare their lessons properly.

### CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

The second domain is Classroom Management. Here the teacher demonstrates the ability to control the class and keep discipline. There are five areas in this component: the teacher must (a) create an environment of respect and rapport, (b) establish a culture for learning, (c) manage classroom procedures, (d) manage student behavior, and (e) organize the physical space. Preservice teachers often feel challenged during their first few years of teaching, and these years have a tremendous effect on their personal and professional life. There are two main challenges preservice teachers must learn and practice during their early months and years: learning to regulate complex classroom situations and learning to regulate their own emotional resources (Voss et al., 2017). The two main concerns predicted by preservice teachers are classroom management and the transition into practice that results from high levels of stress and emotional exhaustion (McCarthy et al., 2015).

### INSTRUCTION

The third domain is Instruction, with five components based on proper communication with students: teachers need to (a) create meaningful questions, (b) engage students in in-depth discussions, (c) make lessons engaging by getting students to participate, (d) frequently check

students' learning, and finally (e) cater to the needs of the students so they grasp the content. Johnson and Semmelroth (2014) argued that the Danielson Framework has an instructional domain that uses a constructivist approach to teaching and learning. Creating meaningful questions is at the core of effective communication, discussions, and student participation. Teachers' questions allow students to connect what they know with what they need to know in order to examine and reflect on their learning to reach the higher-order thinking level (Fisher, 1998). Questioning is also used to encourage students to engage in in-depth discussions, motivate them, and evaluate their learning (Petty, 2009). Chin (2007) stated that teachers should have flexibility when using the questioning needed for students and adjust questions to accommodate students' contributions and respond to their thinking in a neutral manner rather than an evaluative manner.

### PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Finally, Professional Responsibilities includes six components: teachers must (a) reflect on their teaching performance, (b) keep accurate records of their students' achievement, (c) engage and keep in touch with parents and notify them of their children's progress, (d) be professional, (e) be part of the community, and finally (f) be respectful.

Professionalism is conceptualized as the conjunction between the levels of autonomy and internal regulation demonstrated by employees in a specific field (Evans, 2008). The professional responsibility of the teaching profession is considered one of the main aspects of educational reform United Nations Children's Fund (2007). Several research studies have focused on developing reflection in preservice teachers (Kaplan et al., 2007; Schon, 1983). There are some challenges associated with the encouragement and development of the preservice teachers' reflection, such as time, opportunities, reflective thinking habits, and feelings of vulnerability (Kaplan et al., 2007). Teachers' engagement is brought about through planned effort, persistence, development of aspirations, and leadership, where they are considered indicators of a teacher's job-related motivation. In addition, self-management is another critical factor that identifies the ability to set goals for professional learning, manage time and effort, engage with parents, etc. (Manasia et al., 2020).

### METHODS

This research was implemented over the full Spring 2020 semester to investigate the impact of using SWOT analysis as a tool for feedback to improve preservice teachers' teaching performance in a blended field experience course in Dubai and Abu Dhabi, UAE. An exploratory mixed method approach was used to collect the data qualitatively first, followed by quantitative data collected at the end of the semester. The purpose of the first phase was to understand the strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities in the practices of preservice teachers' mentors through online observation. The second phase was the preservice teachers' evaluation using the university rubric to confirm the results of the first phase. In between both phases, a university supervisor gave feedback to preservice teachers' teaching performance using SWOT and asked students to reflect on the coaching and mentoring they received.

#### *Participants*

All the participants of the study were Emirati female students in the college of education. The sample selected for the study was 42 participants from both campuses in Dubai and Abu Dhabi. The target population was  $N = 108$  and the sample selected nonrandomly by convenience sampling where  $n = 42$ . The convenience sampling included people who were available and willing to participate in the research study. The tools used in providing feedback were to be part of the practicum course, so the participants' choice to take part in the study would not change the instructional materials used and did not affect the preservice teachers. The participants were aware of the study's purpose through the informed consent form sent to them before conducting the study and were provided with a fair explanation of the research procedures and purpose. The participants had the choice to join in the study and had the right to withdraw at any time. All instruments were anonymous.

#### *Instruments*

Two instruments were used in this study: SWOT analysis and a teachers' evaluation rubric filled out by the students' mentors. The SWOT analysis was used as a tool to observe teachers and provide them with proper feedback. During the online and in-class observations, the observers recorded the strengths and weaknesses found

in the teaching practices and noted opportunities that could be used to improve the teaching practices and threats that limited the teacher's ability.

The other instrument used was a teacher evaluation rubric that is used by the university. It is adapted from the INTASC standards to use the Danielson Framework's four main domains of planning and preparation, classroom environment, instruction, and professional responsibilities in the observations. The rubric included five main grades: 4–Exemplary (90–100), 3–Accomplished (80–89), 2–Developing (70–79), 1–Beginning (60–69), and 0–Unsatisfactory (0–59). The rubric was used by the mentor teachers who were assigned to mentor the preservice teachers during their practicum course. It was used to confirm the results that occurred from the observation. The data of the teachers' evaluation were collected at the end of the Spring 2020 semester by their mentors.

#### *Procedure*

The first phase of the study was the fieldnote observations done by the observers (university supervisors) for preservice teachers in class and online. The SWOT analysis was used as a tool to fill the observation notes coded into the categories of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to address the research questions of the study for each domain. After the university supervisor observed the lesson, constructive feedback was given using the domains of SWOT.

The second phase of the study was the preservice teachers' evaluation, which was done by their mentors. The mentors were in-service teachers working in schools where preservice teachers were placed. They accompanied and supported preservice teachers in their early teaching years. The data from the mentors was used to confirm the results of the data collected in the first phase and to validate the feedback given to preservice teachers by their supervisors. Descriptive statistics were used to report the percentages of preservice teachers' evaluations. The qualitative and quantitative data were interpreted separately and then compared and integrated with the discussion.

According to Christensen et al. (2014), the determination of the validity in mixed methods is referred to as "legitimation," which includes several aspects of validity considered in this study. The integration of the qualitative and quantitative results and the switch between the lens of both

methods decrease the weaknesses and increase each method's strengths. The inference of the conclusion based on the integration of qualitative and quantitative data is the meta-inferences validity considered in the study.

#### **RESULTS**

The results address the two research questions that guided the study:

1. What is the impact of using SWOT analysis on the preservice teachers' teaching performance on a blended field experience course during the COVID-19 quarantine?
2. What are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats identified in the preservice teachers' performance?

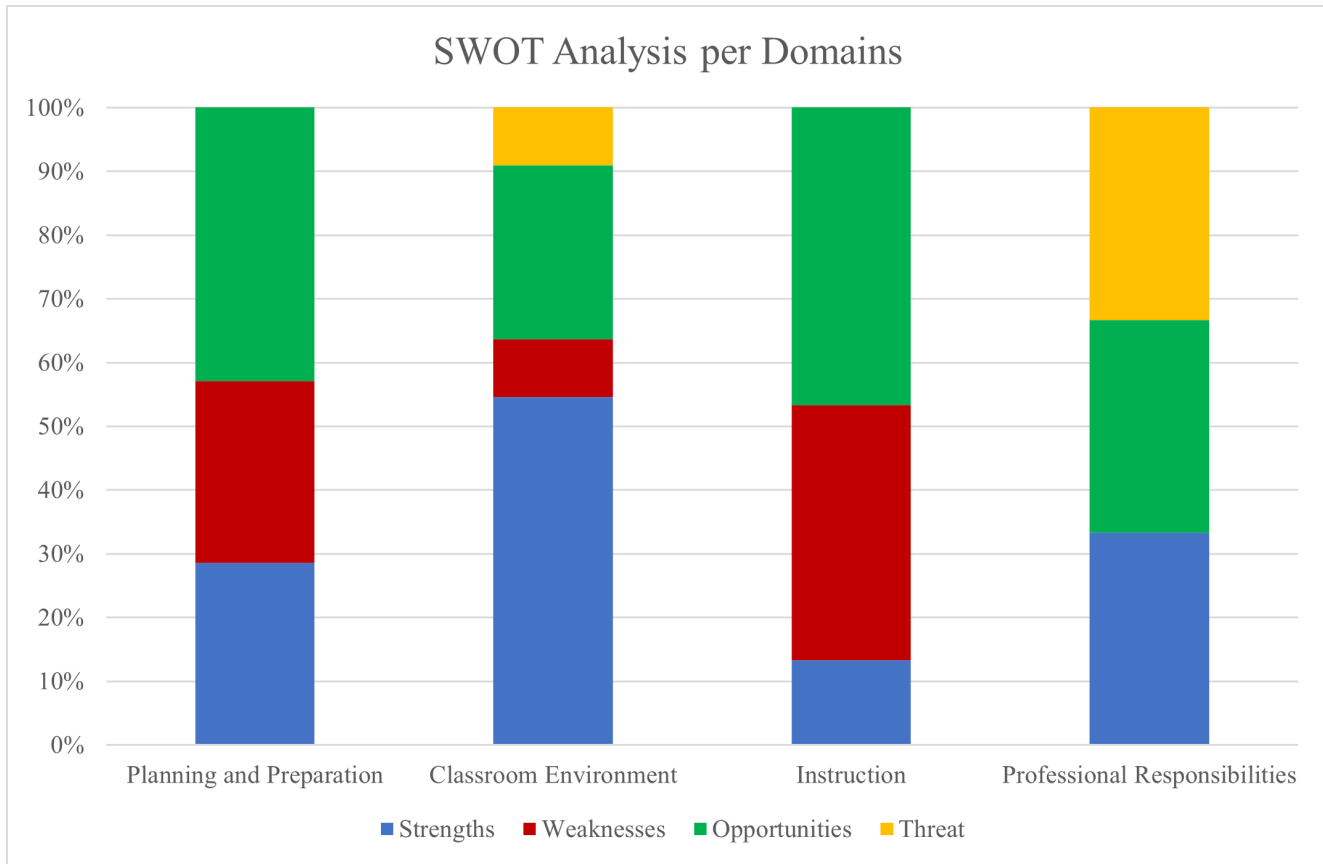
#### *SWOT Analysis Qualitative Results*

Figure 1 summarizes the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats analysis used as a framework in observing preservice teachers and providing them with appropriate feedback. We found that many strengths were observed in the classroom environment, while the instructions needed more attention to minimize the weaknesses that occurred. Regarding planning and preparation, there were many opportunities preservice teachers can use to improve the implementation of their planning. Professional responsibilities were strengths when observing preservice teachers, and there were also opportunities for further improvement. Table 2 represents the qualitative data where each domain is categorized based on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats found.



Figure 1. Summary of the Domains Observed Based on the SWOT Analysis

demonstrating knowledge of appropriate resources



### Teachers' Evaluation Quantitative Results

The teachers' evaluation rubric was used to confirm the results of the SWOT analysis. This is the official evaluation by the university, and it is adapted from the INTASC standards. The rubric is categorized into four categories: planning and preparation, classroom environment, instruction, and professional responsibilities. In this section, the teachers' evaluation results are represented in the same categories to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the preservice teachers.

#### PLANNING AND PREPARATION

Figure 2 shows the results of the preservice teachers in the domain of planning and preparation. The results showed that 41.30% of preservice teachers were exemplary, and 41.30% were accomplished in planning the lessons with appropriate instructional outcomes, value, sequence, alignment, clarity, balance, and suitability for diverse learners. The preservice teachers scored 41.30% exemplary and 45.65% accomplished in

for the classroom.

On the other hand, we found that 63.04% of preservice teachers were marked as accomplished in designing developmentally appropriate instruction, learning activities, instructional materials and resources, instructional groups, lessons, and unit structures. Figure 2 shows that 56.52% of preservice teachers scored as accomplished in the standard related to students: child development, the learning process, special needs, and student skills, knowledge, proficiency, interests, and cultural heritage.

We found that 50.0% of preservice teachers were evaluated as accomplished in the standard related to demonstrating pedagogy knowledge, content knowledge, prerequisite relationships, and content pedagogy. Also, 48.89% of preservice teachers scored as accomplished in the standard of designing student assessments, congruence with outcomes, criteria and standards, and formative assessment use for planning.

Table 2. Summary of Qualitative Data

Planning and Preparation			
Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<p>Preservice teachers provide a wide variety of resources that were used. The way preservice teachers differentiate learning for their students inside the class.</p>	<p>Preservice teachers need to focus on the learning objectives and the flow of the lesson, where some teachers teach certain content for the first time and need to rehearse before teaching to predict the common problems that might occur. Preservice teachers showed one-way instruction through online teaching. They need to develop the engagement of students in the online learning process.</p>	<p>There were opportunities for teachers to better plan and prepared for their lessons. Connecting their learning to the students' real-life instead of focusing on content knowledge, modeling and lower-level activities. Create engaging activities, such as a puppet show, play, etc. Create different learning centers around the class and use the many resources provided. Engage parents by involving them in the activities needed for online teaching.</p>	<p>Their mentors' interference in choosing activities and resources that restricted their creativity. The unexpected outcomes of students' learning and progression in the distance learning.</p>
Classroom Management			
Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<p>Preservice teachers used a range of classroom management techniques that helped them to control students in the class. They were able to build a good rapport with their students. Preservice teachers used praising words as rewards to reinforce positive behaviors and scaffolding to guide students who needed support. Some of the activities promoted students' engagement, where they were developmentally appropriate to their ages and content. Students' interests and preferences were considered during the activities.</p>	<p>Time management, where some activities require a longer time than expected. Few long videos were used, which caused some students to lose focus on their learning.</p>	<p>Raising expectations about students' ability. Using some costumes to create a positive environment that relates to the theme taught. Using some of the time management strategies to move students from one activity to another.</p>	<p>Leaving students without work and becoming bored, which caused the teachers to embed overwhelming activities.</p>
Instructions			
Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<p>Preservice teachers used guided questions to engage students in the learning process, where some of the questions were open-ended and develop higher-order thinking. Although providing students with constructive feedback was needed, some teachers provided only positive feedback.</p>	<p>There were some weaknesses found in the instructions that need more attention, especially during the distance learning.</p>	<p>Preservice teachers need to provide opportunities for engaging students in critical thinking activities and challenging work, assessing and checking students' understanding through formative assessments, shortening the videos used, and reducing the number of activities but going into more depth.</p>	

Professional Responsibilities			
Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<p>Preservice teachers were reflecting on their teaching practices.</p> <p>They used the feedback received from their mentors and instructors to improve their teaching practices.</p> <p>Teachers showed improvement in using their content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge through the observations conducted over a semester.</p>		<p>Improve their language skills and through utilizing their mentors as assistants in the classrooms.</p>	<p>They were anxious about leading and guiding students, which might cause setting borders for students' learning.</p> <p>To keep students busy as much as possible, it might sometimes result in students being unable to finish their work and having some questions that were not answered.</p>

Figure 2. Analysis of Teachers' Evaluation in Planning and Preparation

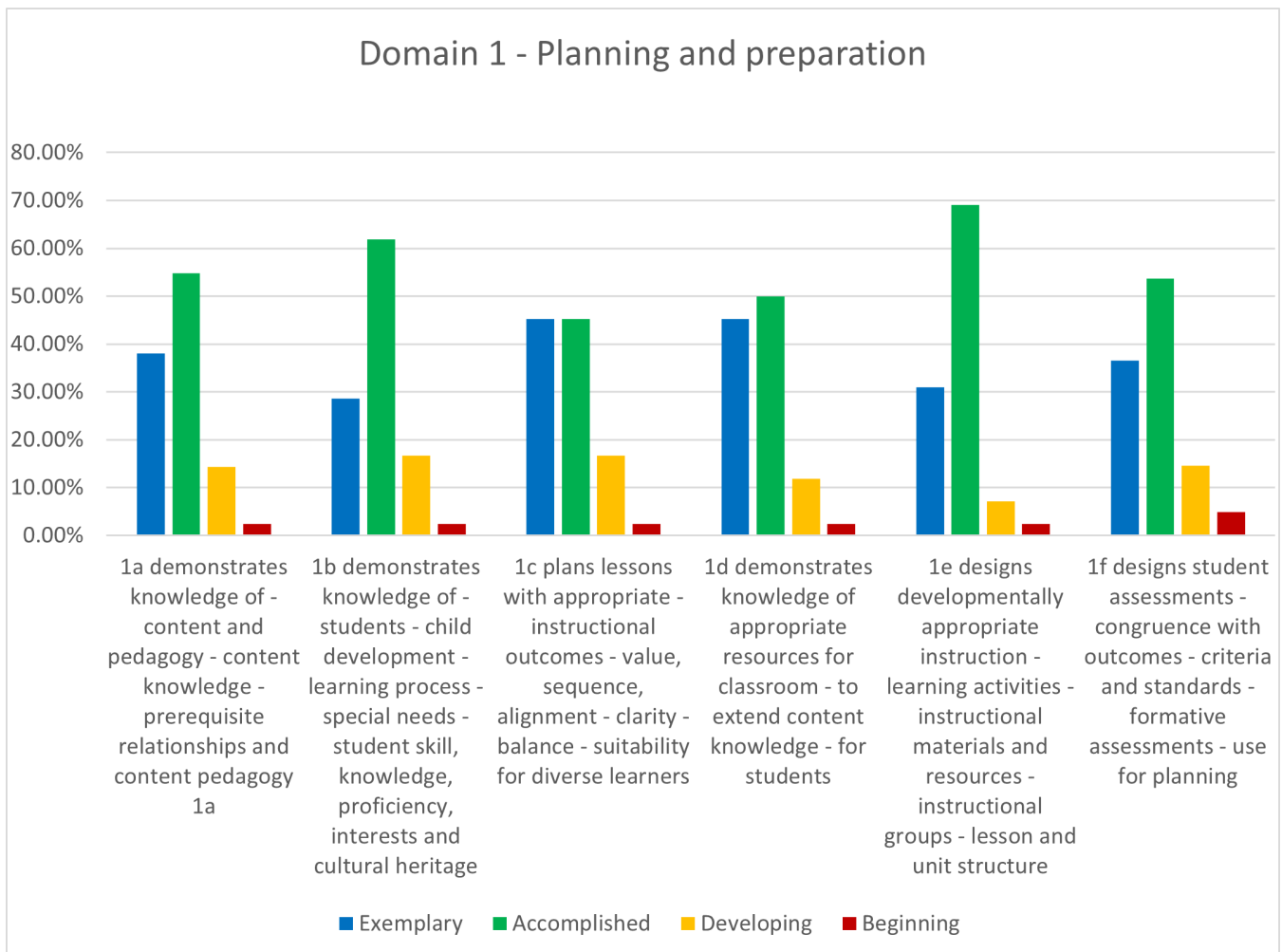
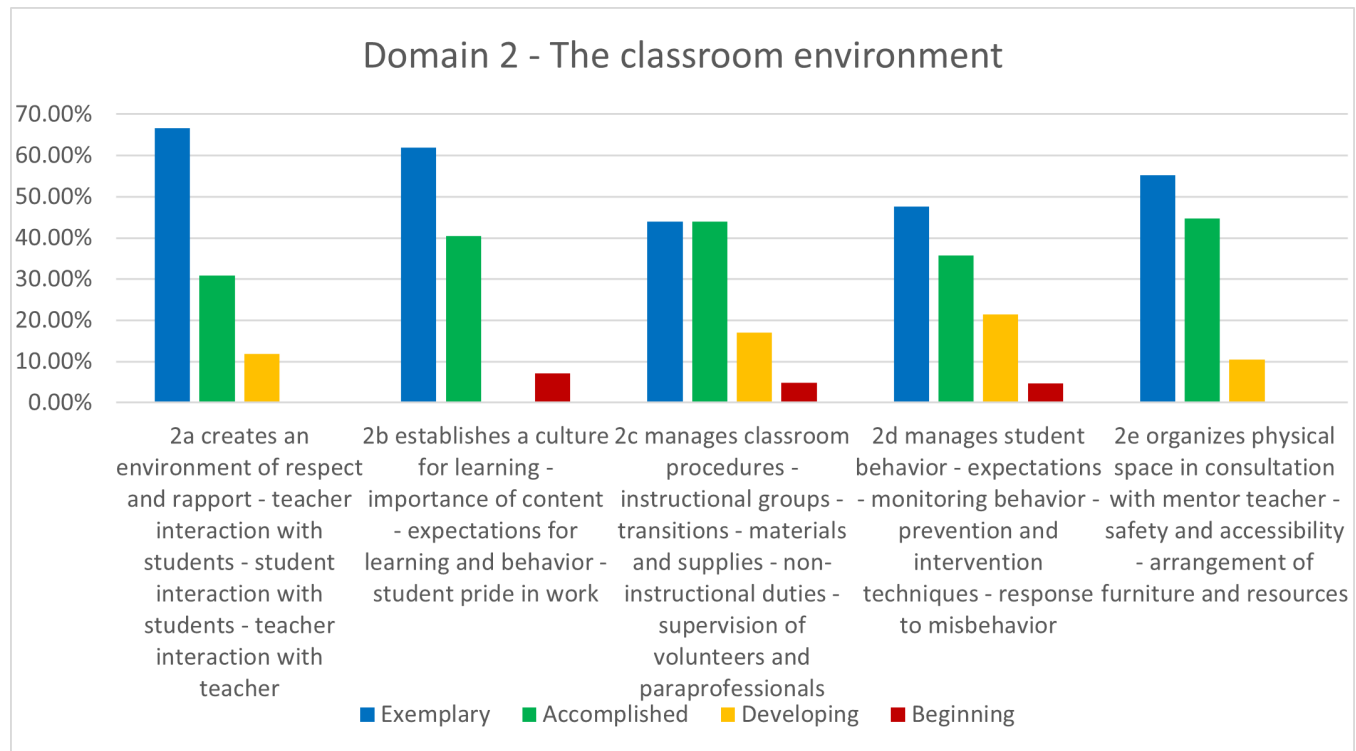


Figure 3. Analysis of Teachers' Evaluation in the Classroom Environment



### CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

Figure 3 shows the results in the classroom environment domain. The highest percentage of preservice teachers were shown to be in the first standard of creating an environment of respect and rapport, teacher interaction with students, student interaction with students, and teacher interaction with other teachers, where 60.87% of them were scored as exemplary. The other standard shows a high score, where 56.52% of preservice teachers scored as exemplary, establishes a culture for learning, the importance of content, expectations for learning and behavior, and students' pride in work. In addition, 50.00% of preservice teachers evaluated as exemplary in the standard related to organizing physical space in consultation with their mentor teacher, safety and accessibility, the furniture arrangement, and resources. Furthermore, 43.48% of preservice teachers were scored as exemplary, and 32.61% scored as accomplished, in the standard of managing student behavior, expectations, monitoring behavior, prevention and intervention techniques, and response to misbehavior.

The percentage of the preservice teachers in managing classroom procedures, instructional

groups, transitions, materials and supplies, and noninstructional duties was 40% scored as accomplished and 40% scored as exemplary.

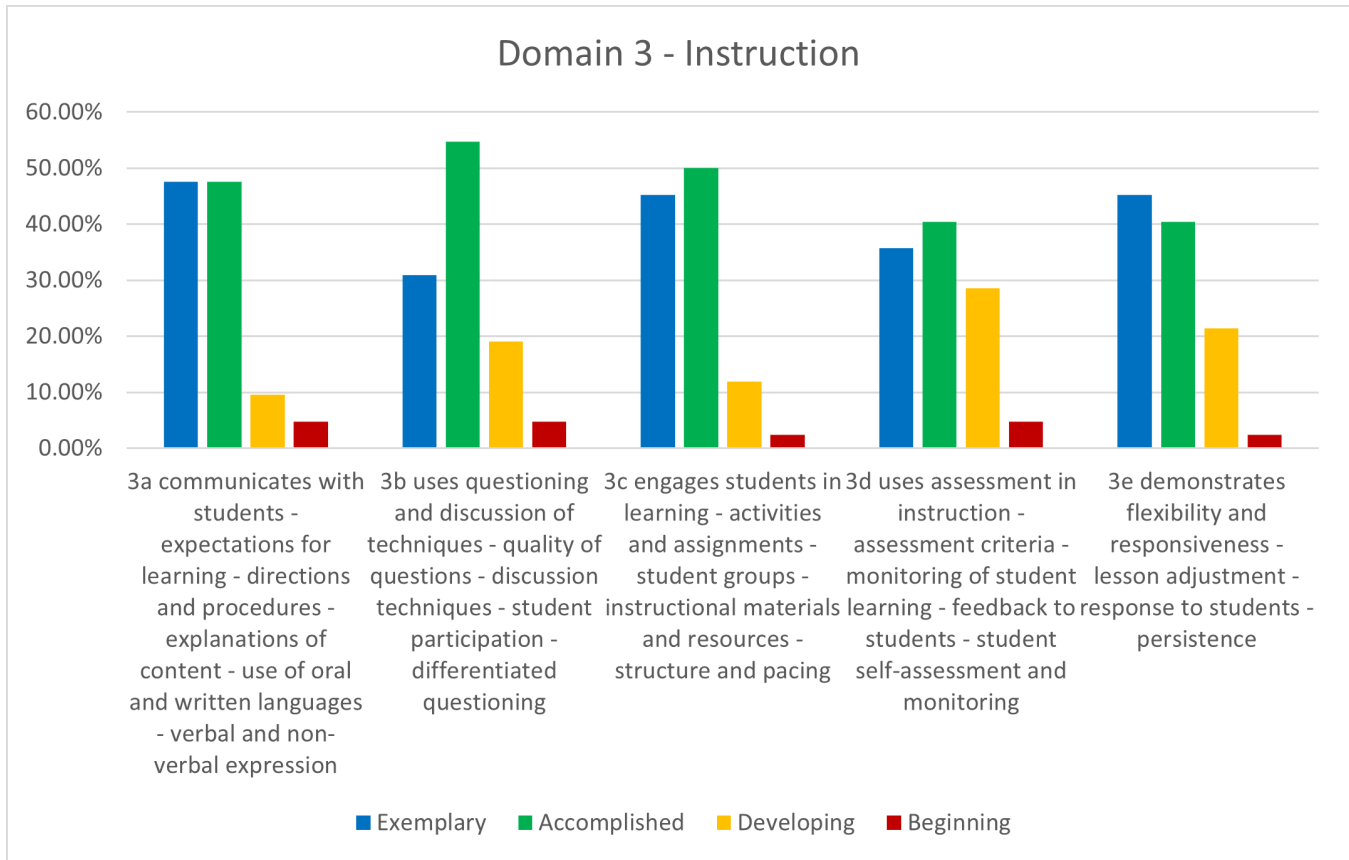
### INSTRUCTION

Figure 4 shows the results of the preservice teachers in the domain of Instruction. The results show that those in the first standard scored equally as exemplary and accomplished, with 43.48% in each. Many preservice teachers were evaluated as exemplary (41.30%), while 36.96% were scored as accomplished, in the standard of demonstrating flexibility and responsiveness, lesson adjustment, response to students, and persistence.

In the second standard, 50.00% of preservice teachers scored as accomplished. In comparison, 28.26% were evaluated as exemplary in using questioning and discussion of techniques, quality of questions, discussion techniques, student participation, and differentiated questioning. Also, 45.65% of preservice teachers were evaluated as accomplished and 41.30% scored as exemplary in the standard of engaging students in learning activities and assignments, student groups, instructional materials and resources, and structure and pacing. Finally, 36.96% of preservice teachers scored as accomplished, and 32.61% of them scored as



Figure 4. Analysis of Teachers' Evaluation in Instruction



exemplary in using assessment in instruction, assessment criteria, monitoring of student learning, feedback to students, student self-assessment, and monitoring.

### PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Figure 5 shows the results for the preservice teachers in the domain of professional responsibilities. The highest percentage at which teachers scored as exemplary was 71.74% in the standard of communicating with their mentor teacher and university supervisor about the instructional program and individual students. The second highest percentage was that 60% of preservice teachers scored as exemplary in the standard of professional responsibilities, shows professionalism, integrity/ethical conduct, service to students' advocacy, and decision-making. Also, 55.26% of preservice teachers were scored as exemplary in participating in school activities, participating in morning assembly, and special activities (e.g., national day, school trips, etc.). Furthermore, 45.65% of preservice teachers scored as exemplary in the first standard

about reflecting on teaching, accuracy, and considering reflections in future teaching. On the other hand, 47.83% of teachers scored as accomplished in growing and developing professionally, enhancing the content knowledge and pedagogical skill, and service to the profession.

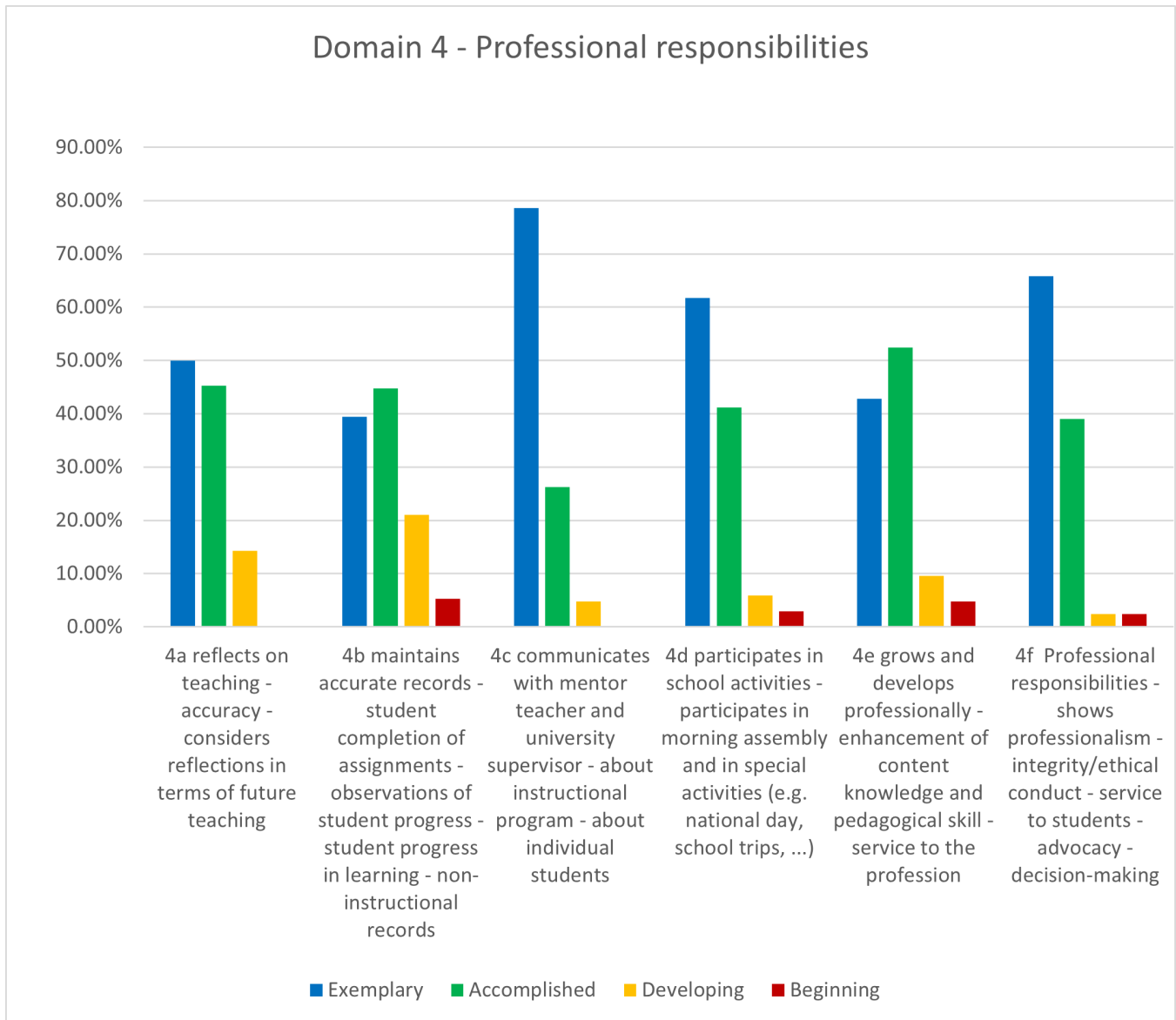
### DISCUSSION

This section discusses the impact of using SWOT analysis as a form of feedback tool and highlights each domain's main performance indicator.

#### *Impact of Using SWOT Analysis*

The use of SWOT analysis allowed preservice teachers to develop their metacognition regulations. They reflected on their practices and were keen to receive feedback from their mentors and supervisors. They were able to set future goals to be achieved by understanding how to seize opportunities and avoid threats to control their weaknesses and enhance their strengths. This is detailed in the next section, where each area of SWOT analysis is discussed. This result agrees with Evans (2008),

Figure 5. Analysis of Teachers' Evaluation in Professional Responsibilities



who emphasized the conjunction between the levels of autonomy and internal regulations.

### Strengths

#### PLANNING AND PREPARATION

The majority of preservice teachers were able to design developmentally appropriate instructions, learning activities, instructional materials and resources, instructional groups, and unit structures. This planning is considered one of the essential aspects of successful teaching, as mentioned by Süral (2019). Preservice teachers were guided by the university supervisors about utilizing the rich

resources they could provide in creating a meaningful learning environment that targets all the diverse needs of students, such as learning centers, puppet shows, plays, etc. Some of the preservice teachers focused on child development, learning process, special needs, and students' skills, knowledge, proficiency, interests, and cultural heritage. This aligns with Kelting-Gibson (2003), who emphasized that it is essential for teachers to include several areas, such as emotional, cognitive, social domains, interests, cultural characteristics, and preferred learning approaches.

## **CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT**

The strengths shown were creating an environment of respect and rapport, teacher interaction with students, student interaction with students, and teacher interaction with other teachers. Preservice teachers were able to organize the physical space in consultation with their mentor teacher, establish safety and accessibility, and arrange the furniture and other resources. Through the classroom observations, it was evident that preservice teachers used many of the successful classroom management techniques that helped them manage students. This has been viewed as the cognitive personal characteristic that enabled the teachers to predict and plan to prevent misbehavior (Voss et al., 2017). It was observed that the activities used promoted students' engagement and were developmentally appropriate to their ages and content.

During the observation, preservice teachers used praising words as rewards to reinforce positive behaviors and scaffolding to guide students who needed support. The majority of teachers were able to manage students' behavior, have expectations of their work and behavior, use prevention and intervention techniques, and respond to misbehavior. In addition, managing classroom procedures, instructional groups, the use of materials and supplies, noninstructional duties, and supervision of volunteers and paraprofessionals are strengths found in preservice teachers' evaluation.

## **INSTRUCTION**

Preservice teachers scored high in using engaging open-ended questions at the beginning of the lessons, creating engaging activities, providing instructional materials and resources, and facilitating student participation. They were able to engage students in an in-depth discussion at the beginning of the lessons using high-quality, guided questions. This aligns with Petty (2009), who stated that questioning is used to encourage students to engage in in-depth discussions.

## **PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

This domain is considered to reveal strengths in teachers' evaluations and observations. The preservice teachers scored high in communicating with their mentor and university supervisor about the instructional program and individual students. They were reflecting on their teaching practices and used the feedback received from their mentors

and instructors to improve their work. Kaplan et al. (2007) emphasized that the preservice teachers' habits of reflection and feelings of vulnerability are challenges associated with their encouragement and development.

## *Weaknesses*

## **PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

Almost half of the participants do not have enough content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, prerequisite relationships, and content pedagogy. This has been viewed as a weakness in their planning, where the learning objectives were not targeting students' diverse needs. Also, they were not able to design age-appropriate assessments that are aligned to the learning outcomes.

## **CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT**

Although students' interests and preferences were considered during their activities, time management was considered a weakness in teachers' practices, where some activities required a longer time than anticipated.

## **INSTRUCTION**

The use of age-appropriate assessment, assessment instructions, and monitoring students' learning need more attention. Petty (2009) emphasized the important role of using questioning in evaluating students' learning, especially in early childhood.

## *Opportunities*

## **PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

Preservice teachers need to know about the subject content, be able to differentiate instructions, and discern the most common mistakes made by students in certain areas. This was also emphasized by Shulman (1987), who stated that knowledge of content and pedagogy is vital in enabling preservice teachers to plan their activities in a meaningful learning environment where they understand what they teach and how to deliver content. Furthermore, preservice teachers were planning for one-way teaching with no expectation of students learning progression and outcomes, especially in online settings. In order to ensure successful planning, teachers need to consider aligning the assessment, the learning outcomes, and instructional activities through the use of a backward design (Wiggins & McTighe, 2011).

## **CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT**

It was observed that preservice teachers still have further opportunities to enhance the classroom environment, such as raising expectations about students' abilities and keeping them on task. Teachers could also wear costumes during the reading time to create a positive learning environment and manage the time wisely, especially during the transition from one activity to another.

## **INSTRUCTION**

Preservice teachers need to focus more on probing follow-up questions that extend students' learning to higher-level thinking. They also need to think of ways to develop students' critical thinking, give them challenging work, and assess and check their understanding during the lesson. Gibson and Musti-Rao (2016) emphasized that creating meaningful questions is at the core of effective communication, discussions, and student participation, which will reduce the expectation of students drifting off topic. One of the important guidance notes they received from the observers is using questioning during teaching as checking points for students' understanding. Orlich et al. (2012) emphasized that teaching is an art in which teachers need to know when, what, and how to follow a specific strategy, and it is a science in which teachers have to go through a systematic process, experiment with specific strategies, collect data, observe students, and reflect on their practices. Furthermore, most teachers need to provide their students with opportunities to reflect on their learning and give them constructive feedback, especially in distance learning. It has been emphasized that students need to be provided with opportunities for reflection in order to reach the higher-order thinking level (Fisher, 1998).

## **PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

Although the preservice teachers need to use both Arabic and English in the governmental schools, they also need to improve their English language skills. Furthermore, they need to utilize their mentors as assistants in the classrooms.

### *Threats*

## **PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

There were no threats found in teachers' planning and preparation; however, there are many opportunities where they can enhance their

preparation.

## **CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT**

Preservice teachers believed that keeping students busy will improve classroom management, which caused them to embed too many overwhelming activities. Poor classroom management is considered emotional exhaustion (nongenerative personal characteristics); it is the main reason behind teacher stress and for teachers to quit their jobs, and it prevents them from being reflective (Voss et al., 2017).

## **PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

The threats that occurred in the observation and that need to be eliminated were the teachers' anxiety about leading and managing students' and their content and pedagogical knowledge.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of using SWOT analysis as a feedback tool for improving preservice teachers' performance in a blended learning environment. SWOT analysis has proved to be efficient in providing proper constructive feedback to preservice teachers. Teachers can make accurate decisions by enhancing the strengths of their practices, identifying and removing weaknesses, seizing opportunities, and avoiding threats to them. This agrees with a previous study that emphasized the importance of using SWOT analysis as a robust methodology (Abdel-Basset et al., 2018). Similar to a study of Kowalik and Klimecka-Tatar (2017), university supervisors used the external environment (seizing opportunities and avoiding threats) to control the internal environment (enhancing strengths and removing weakness) of the preservice teachers. Mentor teacher's evaluation at the end of the Spring 2020 semester emphasized the efficiency of using SWOT as a feedback framework, given that preservice teachers took into consideration the comments and remarks and their performance improved.

By the end of the Spring 2020 semester, some of the preservice teachers showed that they had changed their perspectives in their reflective practices. The teacher evaluation tool was efficient in tackling all the teaching profession aspects as it helped them monitor their practices. However, preservice teachers need proper orientation about the framework used by the university that merges the



INTASC standards and the Danielson Framework. The concept of distance learning, blended learning, and online teaching should be considered in the evaluation framework. Although the evaluation instrument is clear about what teacher practice looks like and sounds like, it can be applied differently, especially in online settings. Therefore, to measure and provide actionable feedback for teacher development and improved student outcomes, the observer must be accurate and reliable (Griesbach, 2019).

Preservice teachers need to understand the art of teaching by identifying the end product and knowing when and how to choose specific strategies either online or in classrooms. They also need to understand the science of teaching in using a systematic process of teaching, planning, experimenting with monitoring and observing students, collecting data, and reflecting on their practices. Furthermore, they need to pay attention to the students' engagement and parents' involvement, especially in distance learning. Consequently, they will understand how to integrate critical thinking, innovation, and creativity into their teaching practices.

Some practices needed more attention during the preservice teachers' program, such as the questioning techniques, providing constructive feedback, and choosing age-appropriate assessments. Furthermore, a constructive systematic approach for storytelling, using structure, research-based steps in teaching phonics and embedding many microteaching activities online and on campus are essential aspects to highlight for them as the best practices to be used.

It is highly recommended that university supervisors continue using the SWOT analysis to provide constructive feedback to preservice teachers. However, they must differentiate between the four elements of SWOT, where strengths and weaknesses are related to the student teacher's teaching style and internal characteristics and personality. Simultaneously, opportunities and threats are related to external factors to ensure that they benefit from the feedback. In addition, university supervisors must have a teaching background and experience in order for them to give constructive feedback and be able to benchmark and evaluate teaching performances.

For future research, it is highly recommended

to examine preservice teachers' pedagogical content knowledge and their use of technology. A similar study by the Mohebi (2018) emphasized that preservice teachers should be taught content knowledge and digital pedagogical skills due to their influence on the acquisition of students' knowledge and skills. It is also recommended to evaluate and analyze the quality of preservice teachers' reflection. The impact of the factors that transform teachers' perspectives and mindsets could be another aspect of the investigation. Another important investigation would be about using online teaching application for early childhood education during a critical crisis such as COVID-19.

#### *Limitations*

One of the limitations of this study was the need to conduct focus group discussions or interviews with the preservice teachers to understand their perceptions of using the SWOT analysis. The sequential mixed method approach required that one way followed the other where the challenge was for us to determine the point of interference at which the first phase's results become the focus of the investigation in the second phase. Another limitation was not getting the mentor teachers' feedback as it might add a critical perspective to the study. They could have served as a good monitor to the feedback given and could have tracked the changes in performance through observation.

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