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A TRACER STUDY ON ATEM-PLUS GRADUATES Part 1

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Part 1

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BACKGROUND

The Accelerated Teacher Education Model (ATEM), an alternative pre-service Teacher Education program, was launched by the College of Education at the start of second semester, SY 1998-1999. At the end of its sixth semester, the University turned out the first batch of ATEM graduates (n=30) in March 2002.

In June 2004, the University formed the second batch of ATEM class (n=26) after the approval of the ATEM revised curriculum which henceforth shall be called as ATEM-PLUS. The ATEM-PLUS program aims to produce graduates who:

1. have a competitive academic edge over other graduates with a bachelor's and Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) degrees in elementary education;
2. are equipped with advanced professional pedagogical orientation for research and instructional leadership among peers in elementary level teaching; and
3. may help fill the needs of faculty in the Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs).

The author acknowledges the assistance of Dr. Marilyn Balagtas (ATEM-PLUS Program Coordinator) and Prof. Gerry Areta (ATEM-PLUS alumnus) in the finalization, dissemination and retrieval of the research instruments.

The main difference between the two ATEM curricula is the inclusion in the ATEM-PLUS of a Master of Arts in Teaching degree. The ATEM-PLUS curriculum is a double-degree for completion in four and a half years, incorporating a three-year accelerated degree in Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEED) and a year and a half Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) degree (equivalent to two semesters and two summers) which must be taken right after finishing BEED.

The second batch of ATEM finished the BEED program in March 2007. They began the MAT program in Summer 2007.

This write-up covers the study on the ATEM-PLUS alumni using the graduate tracer study. This is a research to track the graduates by describing their biographical characteristics, employment status, retrospective evaluation of their courses and universities and assessment of their professional success (PNU Tracer Study Workshop, 2001).

Tracer studies are valuable investigations for any academic institution. For instance, as reasoned by the Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA), institutions *“have the duty to keep track of the performance of their graduates/trainees/grantees to determine accountability and whether or not their HRD programs have impacted on the individual, the institution, or the country* (http://www.searca.org/web/scholarship/projects/tracer_study.html). The SEARCA upholds the belief that the performance of the SEARCA fellows and UC grantees in their professional career and respective areas of expertise indicates institutional performance as well as the return-on-investment of SEARCA on capability-building in Southeast Asia.

This thrust is in keeping with PNU’s value-for-money philosophy and its overall mission of its existence as the National Center for Teacher Education (NCTE), particularly in *“optimizing*

the country's teaching force" and "with emphasis on innovations and alternative systems and their utilization and application to teacher training and development" (Republic Act No. 96471, July 28, 2008).

Moreover, the fact that graduate employability is a dimension of quality assurance of education is confirmed several times by various education experts (De Guzman, 2007, <http://www.ust.edu.ph/index.php/component/content/article/424.html>).

Surfing the worldwide web divulges more than half a million hits on tracer study topics and almost 3,000 of these sites are found in the Philippines. The enormous quantity of data highlights the diligent endeavors of various education institutions and even government agencies to assess the impact of their alumni employed in the community and how they fare in the work environment. A few examples of these are online tracer studies from government agencies and higher educational institutions in the Philippines. Brief rationales are included below, with most containing the tracer study results.

A. GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

1. TESDA

The conduct of a tracer study is to determine the impact of the assistance to project beneficiaries in terms of employment rate and skills utilization rate. Information to be generated include employment/absorption, competency and skills utilization rate, income levels, average length of jobs search, courses for which graduates have better chance of employment, type of employment in which graduates landed jobs, reasons for unemployment and not joining the labor force.

From the Women's Center, results of the tracer study indicated positive impact on employment, empowerment and confidence to TWC's graduates. An employment rate of 56% was reported not significantly different from the employment rate of 60% in the first tracer study conducted by Legaspi in 2001. (<http://twc.tesda.gov.ph/files/2006TWCAccomplishments.pdf>).

Community-based programs with technical-vocational content are also monitored and reported by TESDA field offices.

TESDA has set the employment rate of tech-voc graduates to 55% in 2008, up from the previous years' 4.7 % employment record.

A graduate tracer study in 2005 showed that graduates of tech-voc courses get jobs within six months to one year after finishing their training. (<http://74.125.153.132/search?q=cache:NctQGNy8P4oJ:www.pia.gov.ph/%3Fm%3D12%26fi%3Dp080226.htm%26no%3D57+tracer+study&cd=98&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=ph&client=firefox-a>).

2. *National Maritime Polytechnic Training Complex*

Completed in 2007, the study intended to ascertain the impact of NMP training on the employability of its graduates. In response to the need for the NMP to explore ways by which its performance outcomes could be determined, this study established the profile of NMP trainees as well as assessed the qualification-enhancing aspects of its training programs on graduates' employment outcomes.

This phase of the study aimed to (1) establish and compare the profile of NMP graduates, 2003 to 2006,

'before' and 'after' training at the NMP, (2) determine the employment, absorption and skills utilization rates of NMP graduates of the years 2003 to 2006, and (3) determine the NMP graduates' employment mobility in terms of progression in license and rank.

Findings on NMP graduates' employability measured in terms of employment, absorption and skills utilization rates were to be used as an important yardstick by which the agency's effectiveness, relevance and relative success in the provision of training services will be measured." Tracer Study of NMP Graduates, 2003-2006 (Phase 2) (<http://www.nmp.gov.ph/design/services.php#>).

3. *DOST*

Bersales (2004) conducted the first Tracer Study for DOST-SEI Scholar-Graduate. The study is the initial systematic effort to track the professional development and career progress of DOST-SEI scholars after they have graduated (http://stednet.sei.dost.gov.ph/st_hrd.htm).

4. *DOLE*

The report Tracer Survey of Basic Occupational Safety and Health (BOSH) Participants from August 1998 to August 2000 presented the results of the survey conducted to determine the impact of the BOSH course on its participants, specifically in terms of the extent to which they applied the knowledge and practices they gained from the training program to improve safety and health conditions in their own companies or organizations. It also aimed at determining facilitating and hindering factors which affected the extent of application of such learning.

The findings revealed that the BOSH course was largely applied in the areas of administration and management. Utilization was lower in industrial health and work environment management concerns. Success of application was due to strong support of superiors and co-workers while a major hindering factor was the priority placed by the participants' organizations to areas other than OSH. Respondents belonging to government/regulatory departments reported higher utilization than respondents from the other departments. Likewise, the rating of the success of the BOSH course was significantly associated with the application of the BOSH inputs. Respondents who gave the training course higher ratings were also more likely to make use of the BOSH inputs in their own work settings (<http://www.oshc.dole.gov.ph/page.php?pid=123&PHPSESSID=06b4ffcb37d5d7d0bbdfcdd43885d124>).

B. HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

1. *De La Salle University – College of St. Benilde*

The college was able to prove the effectiveness of its curriculum in helping its graduates gain employment in as short as a month after applying for a job.

In its latest "graduate tracer study," St. Benilde found that 78.99% of its graduates from 2000 to 2004 were employed. Of the 18% unemployed, around eight percent (8%) were engaged in advanced studies, while four percent (4%) reported lack of job opportunities.

"For the graduates, the important factor that is needed for employment is personality. The graduates have assessed that the curriculum is relevant to their first job," the tracer study noted (<http://www.gmanews.tv/story/94175/Catching-up-to-the-skills-need>).

2. *Bukidnon State College*

This tracer study of the Master of Arts in Mathematics Education and Mathematics Teaching graduates of Bukidnon State College assessed the employment profile of the graduates and determined if their teaching competence and abilities after obtaining their master's degree at Bukidnon State College improved. Fifty-two (52) graduates of Master of Arts in Mathematics Education and Mathematics Teaching in SY 2000-2001 to SY 2004-2005 were the subjects/respondents of the study. This descriptive study used descriptive statistics. Findings revealed that most of the graduates were from Region X followed by those who came from Region XI, Region XIII. ARMM and CARAGA had the least number. Majority of the graduates have salaries between Php10,000 to Php15,000 which is not adequate for their family needs. As to the level of competencies developed during their master's degree program, they were very satisfactory in planning the lesson, motivating and sustaining student interest in math, preparing and using teaching strategies and appropriate visual aids, making decisions, constructing tests, and evaluating learning outcomes. They only had satisfactory level in research competencies (http://www.bsc.edu.ph/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=174&Itemid=182).

3. *Jose Rizal Memorial State College*

As the only state college in Zamboanga del Norte, JRMSC serves as the primary intellectual resource in providing quality higher education in different disciplines especially in Education and consistently produces board passers and highest employment percentage among the graduates, the graduate tracer study conducted by the JRMSC Research Center in 2006 revealed (www.eskwelahan.net/news/?p=708).

4. *Mapua Institute of Technology*

Dedicated to its mission to develop, impart and share knowledge to discover and create effective solution to local, national and international problems, issues and concerns, the School of CE-EnSE endeavors to keep its curricular offerings relevant and responsive to the needs of the industry. In these times of global competitiveness its concern does not only focus on industry needs but also on personal and professional growth of its graduates.

A tracer study is one of the reasonable and significant modes of evaluating a curriculum. With the other modes of evaluation, the tracer study can strengthen the curricular offerings of the School of CE-EnSE by the recommendations that will be formulated from the series analyses on the data/information gathered from the alumni. Likewise, improvement of our methods of instruction may be influenced by the findings that would be generated (<http://ce-ense.mapua.edu.ph/Alumni>).

5. *Bulacan Polytechnic College*

The findings of this study were beneficial to both the institution and its graduates. With this study, the institution could determine and show its effectiveness in molding highly competent graduates as an answer to the increasing technological competition. Likewise, this study could help assure that the school's services do not end on the students' graduation day, but until they are given a better chance to land on a good job.

This study presented only 660 respondents out of 712 graduates in 2007. The other 52 graduates were declared "un-located." During the retrieval of census forms, the following reasons justified why some graduates could

not be located: Some of the graduates 1) transferred to another place without leaving forwarding address; 2) just rented the place while in college; 3) indicated a wrong address; and 4) were house helpers and they went back to their respective provinces.

The general summary shows the employability rates of 2007 graduates. Seventy-one percent (71.14%) were employed, 7.30% were “un-located,” 16.57% were unemployed, and 4.93% got married and opted not to work and are still studying (www.bulacan.gov.ph).

6. *Ateneo de Naga University*

All colleges are committed to conduct tracer studies and assessment of delivery systems (www.adnu.edu.ph).

In the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) evaluation criteria, a college/university must conduct a tracer study to qualify as a center of excellence (COE) or a center of development (COD) in the country. This is contained in CHED Memorandum Order No. 7, Series of 2006. Hence, this study is valuable for the University, not only to maintain its position as COE in teacher education in the NCR but also to ensure quality education for guaranteed employment of its graduates.

The second part (Part 2) of the evaluation of the ATEM-PLUS alumni includes data from their respective academic performance in the BEED and in MAT degrees as well as their teaching work performance as provided by their school principals.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

As underscored during the PNU Tracer Study Workshop in 2001 by the officials of the Center for Research on Higher

Education and Work, University of Kassel, Germany, the rationalization of state institutions in higher education is a perpetual challenge. Conducting a tracer study is a systematic procedure to highlight the relevance of the educational programs in showing how graduates meet the much-needed manpower for regional and national development. Moreover, a tracer study can ascertain the relationship of higher education to employment.

This study aimed to gather data from the respondents in terms of their current profile, employment status, and retrospective evaluation of the ATEM-PLUS program.

METHODOLOGY

This study used the descriptive survey method. The main instrument utilized was an adapted form of the tool introduced during the PNU tracer study workshop in 2001. The parts of the instrument included the following:

1. personal profile
2. profile of respondents according to employment data
3. profile of respondents according to employment preparation
4. profile of respondents according to employment status
5. extent of usefulness of skills essential to respondents at work that were supposedly acquired during the BEED training
6. retrospective evaluation on the ATEM-PLUS Program
 - i. as an undergraduate student
 - ii. as a MAT student

The respondents were the 26 PNU ATEM-PLUS graduates who finished their BEED degree in March 2007. The gathering of personal and employment data was done in the first semester of SY 2009-2010 through the questionnaire adapted from the tracer

study workshop and approved by the Center for Research and Development in Education (CREDE). The questionnaire was either emailed or personally delivered to the respondents. Out of the 26 original ATEM-PLUS graduates, 25 (96%) took part in the study.

FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION

A. Personal Profile

Almost all (92%) of the respondents were single (Table 1) and only a fourth (24%) were male (Table 2).

Table 1. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Respondents according to Civil Status

Civil Status	f	%
Single	23	92
Married	2	8
Total	25	100

Table 2. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Respondents according to Gender

Gender	f	%
Male	6	24
Female	19	76
Total	25	100

Table 3 displays that majority of the respondents were in their early twenties, the youngest at 20 and the oldest at 36 years old, with mean age of 22.16 years old.

Table 3. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Respondents according to Age

Age	f	%
20	1	4
21	11	44
22	9	36
23	3	12
36	1	4
Total	25	100

With a passing score of 75%, the respondents garnered high scores in the Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET) as shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Respondents according to LET Rating

LET Rating	f	%
82.60	1	4
83.40	1	4
84.40	1	4
85.00	1	4
86.00	3	12
87.00	3	12
87.20	2	8
87.40	1	4
87.60	2	8
88.20	1	4
88.80	1	4
89.00	2	8
89.20	1	4
89.40	1	4
89.60	1	4
89.80	1	4
No Answer	2	8
Total	25	100

Close to 70% of the respondents (17 out of 25) were in the Top 20 of the successful examinees who took the LET. Two (2) got First Place while five (5) more managed to belong to the Top Five. The licensure performance of the ATEM-PLUS respondents has been extremely laudable and affirming of the ATEM-PLUS program to produce high caliber BEED graduates in three (3) years.

Table 5. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Respondents according to LET Rank

LET Rank	f	%
First	2	8
Second	1	4
Third	2	8
Fourth	1	4
Fifth	1	4
Sixth	1	4
Ninth	1	4
Twelfth	1	4
Thirteenth	1	4
Fourteenth	2	8
Fifteenth	2	8
Twentieth	2	8
No Answer	8	32
Total	25	100

B. Profile of Respondents according to Employment Data

Tables 6 to 11 give a picture of the respondents according to employment data. Up to the time this data was given (August 2009), 24 out of 25 (96%) of the respondents were employed in teaching jobs, all in full-time status. One was a full-time volunteer at a non-traditional teacher's organization. One-third were in the NCR, and 24% were in Region IV. Majority (56%) attained permanent status. Two-thirds (64%) were working in the private

sector. Among those who indicated their monthly income, 3 out of 25 (12%) received less than Php10,000.00, 20% had a salary range of Php10,000.00 to Php15,000.00, 36% were paid Php15,001.00 to Php20,000.00, and two (2) of those employed had a take-home pay of more than Php20,000.00. Those working in the private sector were not necessarily compensated more. Analyzing the data, the respondents in private schools had salaries ranging from Php9,000.00 to Php26,000.00. Those employed in government schools receive wages between Php12,000.00 to Php16,000.00 a month. Location (region) and type of school (private or government) did not influence the range of salary. Some who were employed outside the NCR have monthly salaries above Php15,000.00, while there are those working in the NCR who receive less.

Table 6. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Respondents according to Current Employment Status

Responses	f	%
Yes, employed	24	96
Not employed	1	4
Total	25	100

Table 7. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Respondents according to Employment Status

Responses	f	%
Full-time Status	24	96
Part-time Status	0	0
No Answer	1	4
Total	25	100

Table 8. Frequency and Percentage Distribution
of Respondents according to Employment Regional Location

Responses	f	%
NCR	9	36
Region III	1	4
Region IV	6	24
No Answer	8	32
Total	25	100

Table 9. Frequency and Percentage Distribution
of Respondents according to Employment Tenure

Responses	f	%
Permanent Status	14	56
Temporary Status	10	40
No Answer	1	4
Total	25	100

Table 10. Frequency and Percentage Distribution
of Respondents according to Type of Employment

Responses	f	%
Government Sector	8	32
Private Sector	16	64
No Answer	1	4
Total	25	100

Table 11. Frequency and Percentage Distribution
of Respondents according to Monthly Income

Responses	f	%
Below Php10,000.00	3	12
Php10,000.00 to Php15,000.00	5	20
Php15,001.00 – Php20,000.00	9	36
Above Php20,000.00	2	8
No Answer	6	24
Total	25	100

There was no dearth of employment for elementary teachers. All the respondents were employed. More laudable was the fact that they were employed in schools which keeps the mission and vision of PNU. Almost one-third were hired outside NCR which may imply that these respondents were employed near their place of residence. In several student profile studies, at least one-third of PNU's student population come from regions near the NCR. That the students chose to return to their region is likewise noteworthy.

Among those in the government sector (8 out of 25 respondents), five (5) gained permanent status in just a year of employment. Nine (9) out of 16 respondents who were teaching in private schools had likewise gained permanent status. This was an achievement considering that the respondents were relatively neophytes in their workplace.

C. Profile of Respondents according to Employment Preparation

In the estimation of these ATEM-PLUS respondents, they were prepared *very adequately* for employment. Table 12 illustrates this fact. This result is an encouragement and support to seriously offer the ATEM-PLUS program as an official alternative in finishing a BEED degree despite the seemingly hectic, compressed curriculum completed in just three (3) years. To date, the ATEM-PLUS program has only two batches since its onset in 1999.

Table 12. Extent of Adequacy of Educational Preparation from PNU

Responses	f	%
Very Inadequate	0	0
Inadequate	0	0
Adequate	12	48
Very Adequate	13	52
Total	25	100

In Table 13, 92% (23 out of 25) of the respondents decided that their first job must be degree-related (elementary teaching). Again, this is one of the major goals of the ATEM-PLUS program and thus this response is reflective of the respondents' wholehearted support of the thrust of PNU to provide teachers for the nation. However, almost half (48%) of the respondents likewise opined that in choosing their first job, any would do as long as the salary is sufficient. The danger in not teaching is inevitable and highly probable for these respondents especially when economic conditions adversely affect themselves and their families dictate their choice of employment. Fortunately, all those who were those employed were teaching, as hoped for.

Table 13. Considerations in Choosing First Employment

Responses	f	%
Job must be degree-related.	23	92
Any job as long as it is near where I live.	3	12
Any job as long as the salary can meet my needs.	12	48
Others	2	8

Note: multiple-response table

The ATEM-PLUS program, as earlier mentioned, was designed so that after three years in finishing the BEED degree, the respondents would immediately move on to take their Master of Arts in Teaching in PNU in 18 months. Table 14 shows that majority (19 out of 25) quickly applied for a job after college graduation and while pursuing graduate studies.

Table 14. Time Table in Looking for a Job

Responses	f	%
While taking my MA units	15	60
Immediately after college graduation	4	16
I did not look for a job. A job was offered to me.	4	16
After my contract with my MA program	2	8
Total	25	100

In less than a month, 44% who applied for a job were hired and 8 (32%) out of 25 were employed within 90 days (Table 15). Successful hiring came with the help of friends and family/relatives (Table 16).

Table 15. Length of Time in Looking for a Job

Responses	f	%
Less than a month	11	44
Within 90 days	8	32
More than three (3) months	4	16
Others	1	4
No Answer	1	4
Total	25	100

Table 16. Conditions in Successful First Employment

Responses	f	%
Through a friend	7	28
Through family/relatives	6	24
Through my professor's recommendation	3	12
Through newspaper ads	2	8
Through political sponsorship	1	4
Through a job fair	1	4
Through an employment agency	0	0
Others	7	28

Note: multiple-response table

More than half (56%) did not encounter any difficulty in looking for employment (Table 17). Those who did, revealed that *inadequate work experience* (20%), *missing documents* (16%), and *too many applicants for the same job* (16%) were factors that hampered instant hiring.

Table 17. Difficulties Encountered in Looking for a Job

Responses	f	%
No difficulty encountered	14	56
Inadequate work experience	5	20
Missing paper/document requirements	4	16
Few job vacancies/ too many applicants for the same job	4	16
Personality-related factors	1	4
No “backer”	1	4
Mismatch with educational qualifications	0	0
Others	1	4

Note: multiple-response table

To adjust to difficulties met in looking for a job, 36% (9 out of 25) simply persevered while eight percent (8%) looked for the “right connections” (Table 18). Others (24%) did not use any coping mechanism to assist them in employment application difficulties. Apparently, the respondents were resilient and confident.

Table 18. Coping Mechanisms Used to Adjust to Difficulties in Looking for a Job

Responses	f	%
Persevered	9	36
None	6	24
No Answer	5	20
Looked for the “right connections”	2	8
Others	2	8
Attended relevant training workshops / seminars	1	4
Total	25	100

In their job application efforts, the respondents acknowledged the top three (3) factors which ensured successful hiring: college degree, scholastic standing and PNU reputation (Table 19). Indeed, to apply as an elementary teacher, the aforementioned factors were always cited by PNU graduates as their “assets” in applying for jobs. That personality-related factors

garnered 72% rating in expediting job acquisition is an indication that the respondents were holistically molded by the University. Not only were the graduates academically ready but also they bloomed into better persons.

Table 19. Factors Which Enabled to Acquire First Job

Responses	f	%
College degree	22	88
Scholastic standing	20	80
PNU reputation	20	80
LET passer	19	76
Personality-related factors	18	72
Others	5	20

Note: multiple-response table

D. Profile of Respondents according to Employment Status

As shown in Table 20, two-thirds of the respondents were still employed in their first job. Thirty-two percent (32%) left their first employment and transferred to another teaching job after a school year. Only eight percent (8%) stayed on for less than six (6) months.

Table 20. Length of Stay in First Job

Responses	f	%
I am still employed in my first job	15	60
Just one school year	8	32
Less than six (6) months	2	8
Six to eleven months	0	0
Total	25	100

Table 21 reveals that the respondents were satisfied with their first job experience. As indicated in Table 22, *great working conditions* and a *supportive employer* ranked highest among the reasons for satisfaction as specified by the 64% of the

respondents. These findings are similar to other job satisfaction surveys worldwide wherein the traditional reference to salary which is oftentimes regarded as top reason for a satisfying job experience is continually being demystified. Receiving adequate salary only placed fifth among the reasons chosen by the respondents. That work is near home (Rank 3) indicates that this comfort was significantly considered by the respondents. Respondents likewise enjoyed relations with work colleagues (Rank 4). Moreover, 44% had already been promised of job security which ranked fifth among their job satisfaction reasons. This implies that the employers of these respondents were likewise mutually satisfied with their performance so that job tenure was offered.

Looking deeper into the data, those working in government schools had a mean satisfaction rating of 3.00. The private school respondents had a mean satisfaction rating of 3.06. All were satisfied with their first job experience.

The satisfaction experienced during their first job stint was a good reflection of the academic preparation the PNU had provided the respondents. This fact is confirmed in Tables 27 and 31 where the respondents rated their overall experience in PNU, both in the undergraduate and graduate levels, as satisfactory. Consequentially, this begot the promise of gratifying employment.

Table 21. Extent of Satisfaction with First Job

Responses	f	%
Very Dissatisfied	0	0
Dissatisfied	5	20
Satisfied	15	60
Very Satisfied	5	20
Total	25	100

Table 22. Reasons for Satisfaction with First Job

Responses	f	%	Rank
Great working conditions	16	64	1.5
Supportive employer	16	64	1.5
Accessible work place from home	15	60	3
Smooth office camaraderie	13	52	4
Adequate salary	12	48	5
Promise of job security	11	44	6
Others	1	4	7

Note: multiple-response table

As noted in Table 21, 5 (20%) out of 25 of the respondents expressed dissatisfaction with their first job. The causes, as shown in Table 23, were “poor working conditions” followed by “low salary,” “poor office camaraderie” and “difficult employer.” Of these five (5) respondents, three (3) were working in private schools, one (1) in government and one (1) did not indicate any type of employment.

Table 23. Reasons for Dissatisfaction with First Job

Responses	f	%	Rank
Poor working conditions	4	16	1
Low salary	2	8	3
Poor office camaraderie	2	8	3
Difficult employer	2	8	3
Too far from home	1	4	5.5
No job security	1	4	5.5

Legend: multiple-response table

Extent of Usefulness of Skills Which Were Supposedly Acquired during BEED Training

This section presents the results of the evaluation of the respondents on the extent of the usefulness of skills supposedly acquired in finishing the BEED degree in three (3) years. The data concerns the measures to which the graduates established

the relationship between studies and employment. The significance of this endeavor is to evaluate the academic program experienced by the respondents in terms of adequacy and applicability and to determine the degree of the academic program to the development of appropriate competencies required in the respondents' current job. These skills were taken from the output of the PNU Tracer Study Workshop in 2001. The scale used was:

1.00 – 1.50	Not Useful At All
1.51 – 2.50	Not So Useful
2.51 – 3.50	Useful
3.51 – 4.00	Very Useful

These skills are defined based on professional websites and book references.

1. **Communication** is the skillful expression, transmission, and interpretation of knowledge and ideas. Some specific communication skills are speaking effectively, writing concisely, persuading, describing feelings, and listening attentively (<http://www.nextstudentadvisor.com/PreparingForCollege/PreparingContent/Pages/Skill-Set.aspx>).
2. **Critical thinking** is "reasonably and reflectively deciding what to believe or do." Critical thinking means making reasoned judgments. Basically, it is using criteria to judge the quality of something, from cooking to a conclusion of a research paper. In essence, critical thinking is a disciplined manner of thought that a person uses to assess the validity of something: a statement, news story, argument, research, etc (<http://www.asa3.org/ASA/education/think/critical.htm#i>).

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3. **Questioning skills.** *“Good learning starts with questions, not answers.”* (quoted from Guy Claxton, Professor in Education and Director of CLIO Development, University of Bristol). Questioning enables teachers to check learners' understanding. It also benefits learners as it encourages engagement and focuses their thinking on key concepts and ideas.

Questioning skills need to inspire gifted and talented learners to embrace cognitive thought at a higher level and is easier to achieve when using open questions (<http://teachertools.londongt.org/?page=classroomQuestioningSkills>).

4. **Human relations** describe the use of interpersonal skills for resolving conflict and helping people. Some detailed skills are listening, motivation, counseling, conveying feelings, and representing others (<http://www.nextstudentadvisor.com/PreparingForCollege/PreparingContent/Pages/Skill-Set.aspx>).
5. **Writing Skills** - Writing skills include formal and informal style, resumes, cover letters, and other business documents, essays and free lesson plans. (http://esl.about.com/od/writinginenglish/English_Writing_Skills_Letters_Resumes_and_Writing_Style.htm)
6. **Problem solving** is converting an actual current situation (the NOW-state) into a desired future situation (the GOAL-state) (<http://www.asa3.org/ASA/education/think/methods.htm>)
7. **Pedagogical Skills** – refer to how the basic principles and strategies of a subject are best acquired and retained. (Elliot, et al, 1996)

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8. **Classroom Management Skills** – refer to the use of rules and procedures to maintain order so that learning may result. (Elliot, et al, 1996)
 9. Organization, **leadership**, and management skills describe the ability to supervise, direct, and guide groups of individuals in the completion of tasks and in the fulfillment of goals. Specific managerial-type skills are initiating new ideas, delegating responsibility, promoting change, handling details, and managing conflict (<http://www.nextstudentadvisor.com/PreparingForCollege/PreparingContent/Pages/Skill-Set.aspx>).
 10. **Technical Skills** – this cover knowledge and proficiencies required in the accomplishment of engineering, scientific, or any specific task. (<http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/technical-skills.html>)
 11. **Research and planning** describes the search for specific knowledge and the ability to conceptualize needs, as well as their solutions. Specific research and planning skills are creating ideas, forecasting, gathering information, setting goals, analyzing, and developing strategies (<http://www.nextstudentadvisor.com/PreparingForCollege/PreparingContent/Pages/Skill-Set.aspx>).
 12. **Knowledge-based skills** are those learned from experiences. These may include educational attainment, additional training, seminars attended, and other practices that you have studied to enhance your expertise.

Knowledge-based skills include computer and communication skills, marketing or managerial knowledge, product development, and many more. These skills vary depending on the field of industry of each job candidate

(<http://www.eslteachersboard.com/cgi-bin/employment-tips/index.pl?page=2;read=263>).

Knowledge-based skills describe work-specific information or technical knowledge required, to carry out a procedure or perform a specific task (<http://www.nextstudentadvisor.com/PreparingForCollege/PreparingContent/Pages/Skill-Set.aspx>).

Below is the summary of the obtained mean ratings on the extent of usefulness arranged according to highest mean scores:

<u>Skills</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Interpretation</u>
a. Communication Skills	3.76	Very Useful
b. Critical Thinking Skills	3.72	Very Useful
c. Questioning Skills	3.68	Very Useful
d. Human Relations Skills	3.64	Very Useful
e. Writing Skills	3.60	Very Useful
f. Problem-Solving Skills	3.60	Very Useful
g. Pedagogical Skills	3.52	Very Useful
h. Classroom Management Skills	3.48	Useful
i. Leadership Skills	3.44	Useful
j. Technical Skills	3.40	Useful
k. Research Skills	3.24	Useful
l. Knowledge-Based Skills	2.8	Useful

Taking note above that skills acquired during their college years were rated useful in their current work, Table 24 provides information on how the respondents rated their overall performance in their first job. The overall mean 2.2 signifies that the respondents had a very satisfactory perception on their first job performance. A mean of 2.5 was obtained from those respondents working in government schools and 2.0 from those in private schools. Both mean ratings, again, represented a very satisfactory job performance.

Table 24. Overall Performance Rating in First Job

Type of Employment	Mean	Interpretation
Government	2.50	Very Satisfactory
Private	2.00	Very Satisfactory
Not indicated	3.00	Satisfactory
Total	2.20	Very Satisfactory

Scale: 1.00-1.50 Outstanding
1.51-2.50 Very Satisfactory
2.51-3.50 Satisfactory
3.51-4.00 Fair

During the PNU Tracer Study Workshop in 2001, certain subjective indicators of professional success were cited, to wit:

1. Overall satisfaction with professional situation
2. Satisfaction with different characteristics of employment and work (e.g. work autonomy/content, income and career opportunities)
3. Appropriateness of position to level of education
4. Extent of use of acquired knowledge and skills

Apparently, the result of this study has proven the above indicators as relevant gauges in professional satisfaction that can most probably enrich the respondents' professional success.

E. Retrospective Evaluation on the ATEM-PLUS Program

E1. As an Undergraduate Student

Table 25 presents the results of the evaluation of the respondents on the study provisions and conditions experienced in PNU as undergraduate students. These provisions and conditions were likewise taken from the PNU tracer study workshop. Questions concerning the satisfaction

with studies from a retrospective point of view can possibly assess professional success.

Table 25. Evaluation of Respondents on the Study Provisions and Conditions Experienced in PNU

Study Provisions and Conditions	Mean	Interpretation
a. Teaching quality of PNU faculty	3.48	Good
b. Structure of ATEM-PLUS program	3.40	Good
c. Length of study in PNU	3.16	Good
d. Chance to participate in research projects	3.00	Good
e. Opportunity for specialization	3.00	Good
f. Contact with fellow students	2.92	Good
g. Possibility of individual structuring of studies	2.84	Good
h. Chance for students to have an influence on school policies	2.60	Good
i. Chance to participate in extension projects	2.52	Good

Legend:

1.00 – 1.50 Not Bad

1.51 – 2.50 Bad

2.51 – 3.50 Good

3.51 – 4.00 Very Good

All the study provisions and conditions experienced in PNU by the respondents during their college years were rated *good*. Topping the list is the teaching quality of PNU faculty who handled their classes. Despite the hectic schedule and limitations of the ATEM-PLUS program, its structure and length were likewise evaluated *good* by the respondents. Least rated among the study provisions and conditions was the chance to participate in the extension projects. Given the time frame of courses, the respondents may not have been able to find ample opportunities to involve themselves in extension work.

Table 26 illustrates how the respondents rated their overall experience during their undergraduate studies. With a mean of 3.32, the respondents had a *good* three-year stint in finishing their BEED degree.

Table 26. Overall Experience in PNU College Years

Responses	f	%
Very Bad	0	0
Bad	0	0
Good	13	52
Very Good	11	44
No Answer	1	4
Total	25	100

The respondents were asked on what they consider as the main strength of the BEED program. Table 27 enumerates the responses given. Just as it was so revealed in Table 26 which cited the teaching quality of the undergraduate faculty as the most satisfying in its list of study conditions, the top main strength of the BEED program chosen once more by 36% of the respondents was the excellence of most faculty members. This was followed by the appreciation of the respondents on the quality education received, specifically in essential educational foundation, theories, classroom management, strategies and what the respondents perceived as relevant ATEM-PLUS curriculum.

Table 27. Main Strengths of BEED Program

Responses	f	%
Excellent quality of most faculty	9	36
Focus in essential educational foundation, theories, classroom management, strategies	6	24
Relevant curriculum and courses	6	24
Very useful concentration courses	2	8

Note: multiple-response table

Ironically though, in the first ATEM-PLUS monitoring report (Mancao and Balagtas, 2008) which was administered two months before their college graduation, 38% of the same respondents (or presumably a different one-third of the same class) suggested that the faculty lineup be improved. In the first ATEM batch final monitoring survey, the same cry to carefully select those who would handle ATEM classes was commented on by the respondents (Mancao, 2002). It seems that the importance of assigning quality faculty to handle the undergraduate ATEM-PLUS curriculum was repeatedly underscored.

As to the weaknesses of the BEED program, the respondents had the following responses as shown in Table 29.

Table 28. Main Weaknesses of BEED Program

Responses	f	%
Hectic schedule/Too limited time	8	32
ATEM+ policies	6	24
Inadequate preparation to handle real-life classroom situations	6	24
None at all	4	16
Student Teaching procedures	3	12
Faculty incompetence	1	4

Note: multiple-response table

Once more, in the first monitoring report of ATEM-PLUS (Mancao and Balagtas, 2008) and in all monitoring reports of the original ATEM class, the hectic class schedule was cited as problem as experienced by more than half of the class. The ATEM-PLUS class schedule which was usually on a quarterly-basis time frame compelled a student to be in school for at least 10 hours during class days. Free periods were minimal.

To clarify why ATEM-PLUS policies were deemed as one of the main weaknesses of the BEED program, the first evaluation study on the ATEM-PLUS Program (Mancao and Balagtas, 2008)

reported that certain policies were stressful to the students: maintaining a general grade average of 88% per quarter/semester, no grade below 85% in the professional education courses, no grade below 80% in the general and concentration courses, and the imminent academic setback if an ATEM-PLUS student failed to comply with ATEM-PLUS policies would be transferred to the regular BEED program.

E2. As a MAT Student

Immediately after their college graduation, the ATEM-PLUS students proceeded to take their MAT in 18 months.

Table 29 provides the details in the evaluation of the respondents on the Study Provisions and Conditions experienced in PNU as a graduate student in the MAT program. These were the same provisions and conditions utilized in the undergraduate program evaluation. The scale used was:

Study Provisions and Conditions	Mean	Interpretation
a. Opportunity for specialization	3.35	Good
b. Teaching quality of PNU faculty	3.22	Good
c. Chance to participate in research projects	3.12	Good
d. Possibility of individual structuring of studies	3.00	Good
e. Structure of ATEM+ program	2.87	Good
f. Length of study in PNU	2.83	Good
g. Contact with fellow students	2.78	Good
h. Chance to participate in extension projects	2.50	Good
i. Chance for students to have an influence on school policies	2.45	Bad

1.00 – 1.50 Not Bad
 1.51 – 2.50 Bad
 2.51 – 3.50 Good
 3.51 – 4.00 Very Good

In Table 30, the overall experience of the ATEM-PLUS respondents in the PNU graduate school scored a mean of 2.83 (Good). This mean is lower than the rating the respondents had evaluated their undergraduate studies at 3.32 (Good) as shown in Table 26. The differences in mean scores may be understood in the light of the responses displayed in Table 33 (Main Weakness of the ATEM-PLUS MAT program) where program policies and seeming inability to appreciate higher studies due to inexperience and age were mentioned as aversive factors.

Table 30. Overall Experience in PNU Graduate School

Responses	f	%
Very Bad	0	0
Bad	7	28
Good	13	52
Very Good	3	12
No Answer	2	8
Total	25	100

Mean: 2.83 (Good)

The respondents, though, appreciated the full-time status as MAT students (Table 31). One-fifth agreed that their classes were handled by excellent graduate college faculty.

Table 31. Main Strengths of the ATEM-PLUS MA Program

Responses	f	%
Being full-time MAT students	10	40
Excellent quality of most faculty	6	24
None	4	16
Given the choice for Specialization	4	16
Relevant MAT courses	2	8

Table 32. Main Weaknesses of the ATEM-PLUS MA Program

Responses	f	%
Program policies (inadequate planning, implementation, coordination among offices; forced to take the program)	8	32
None	4	16
Young age & inexperience did not make some us fully appreciate MAT	4	16
Absentee faculty	3	12
Same faculty	2	8

Toward the end of the tracer study questionnaire, the respondents were asked of two questions:

Question 1: Will you recommend the ATEM-PLUS Program to be offered anew in PNU?

A high eighty per cent (80%) of the respondents said yes. Primarily, they believed that the ATEM-PLUS program was an inspiring, excellent BEED program (Table 33). However, there was a call by a fourth of the class to review the MAT procedures and faculty selection.

Table 33. Profile of Reasons

Responses	f	%
An inspiring, excellent BEED program	15	60
Yes, but review MAT procedures, faculty selection	6	24
Finish BEED in just three years	3	12
No answer	2	8

Question 2: Will you study in PNU again?

Majority (84%) answered in the affirmative. Despite the aforementioned weaknesses, the respondents (64%) believed that the University provides high standard of teaching (Table 34).

Table 34. Profile of Reasons

Responses	f	%
High standard of teaching	16	64
No answer	4	16
I do not have plans yet to pursue graduate school.	3	12
I want to expand my horizons by enrolling in other universities.	2	8

SUMMARY

Out of 26 ATEM-PLUS graduates, 25 respondents participated in this tracer study.

- Majority were female and single.
- The mean age was 22.16 years old.
- Of the 23 respondents who gave out their LET rating, the lowest was 82.60 and the highest was 89.80.
- Nine (9) respondents made it to the Top Ten in the LET, with two (2) ranking First Place. The rest of the 14 respondents were in the 11th to the 20th place.
- Except for one respondent who did a volunteer work in an educational institution, the rest were elementary teachers, all in full-time status.
- Respondents worked in the NCR and in Regions III and IV.
- More than half were on a permanent status.
- Two-thirds were employed in private schools.
- The lowest salary received was Php9,000.00, while the highest was Php26,000.00.

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- Respondents rated themselves *adequately* to *very adequately* prepared for employment based on their estimation on the extent of adequacy of educational preparation in PNU.
 - Ninety-two percent (92%) decided that their first job must be degree-related which is elementary teaching.
 - Majority looked for a job right after college graduation, and 76% were hired in less than three (3) months.
 - Finding employment was made easy primarily through friends and family/relatives.
 - No difficulty was encountered by 56% of the respondents in looking for a job.
 - For those who were delayed in getting a job, 36% coped with a persevering attitude.
 - One's college degree, scholastic standing, and PNU's reputation were the top reasons which enabled the respondents to acquire their first job.
 - Two-thirds of the respondents were still employed in their first job. The rest moved on to another teaching job.
 - With a mean of 3.2 (4.0 is Very Satisfied), the respondents are *satisfied* with their first job.
 - Job satisfaction, based on the two top-ranked responses, was *due to "great working conditions"* and *"supportive employer."*
 - *"Poor working conditions"* was the chief reason for dissatisfaction in one's first job, followed by *"low salary," "poor office camaraderie"* and *"difficult employer."*
 - The top three (3) skills which were supposedly acquired during ones' college years in order to assist them when

employed were: communication skills, critical thinking skills and questioning skills.

- Knowledge-based skills ranked last among these 12 skills acquired during their undergraduate studies which were intended to facilitate work performance.
- The respondents, whether employed in public or private schools, appraised their first job performance as *very satisfactory*.
- In retrospect, the respondents evaluated the reviewed study provisions and conditions experienced during their undergraduate studies. Out of nine (9) items, the *“teaching quality of PNU faculty”* ranked first with a mean of 3.48 (4.0 was the highest).
- The *“chance to participate in extension projects”* was last among the items, with a mean of 2.52.
- The overall experience in PNU as a college student showed an evaluation mean score of 3.32 (Interpretation: good).
- One-third of the respondents cited the excellence of most faculty members as the main strength of the program. Also one-third of them identified the hectic schedule/too limited time experienced as the main weakness.
- As a MAT graduate student, the same study provisions and conditions were evaluated in retrospect. The *“opportunity for specialization”* topped the items, while the *“chance for students to have an influence on school policies”* came in last.
- The overall experience in PNU as a MAT graduate student was rated good, with a mean of 2.83.

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- *“Being a full-time MAT student”* was considered as the primary strength of an ATEM-PLUS MAT student, while *“program policies”* were deemed weakest.
 - Majority of the respondents (60%) advocated the offering of the ATEM program as an alternative for acquiring BEED degree. Twenty-four percent (24%) called for a review in the program policies and faculty selection.
 - Majority of the respondents (64%) likewise confirmed they would choose to study again in PNU.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

As mentioned in the first evaluation of the ATEM-PLUS (Mancao and Balagtas, 2008), one of the concerns in offering this curricular program which entailed more than a million pesos for scholarship and stipend, notwithstanding the experience of a hectic, harassed school life, was to make certain that ATEM-PLUS graduates get employed as elementary teachers as envisioned. This tracer study provides data that assuage the academic community that the ATEM-PLUS program has been worth the resources extended to bring to fruition its goals and mission. Several factors are praiseworthy: that the graduates passed and most of them were in the top ten in the Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET); that they are in the teaching profession; that majority of them are in a full-time, permanent status; and that they are satisfied with their first job.

Given these results, the ATEM-PLUS program can unquestionably be offered as an official alternative BEED degree, subject to the consideration and implementation of the various recommendations already stated in several ATEM-PLUS monitoring reports.

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