

Teacher Reinforcements Through The Lens Of English Preservice Teachers

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Abstract — This study explores the perspectives of English preservice teachers on reinforcement strategies used by educators. Reinforcement, a key educational strategy, impacts student motivation, behavior, and learning outcomes. The research employs a convergent parallel design, integrating qualitative and quantitative methods, to analyze how preservice teachers perceive positive and negative reinforcement in classroom contexts. Findings indicate that positive reinforcement, such as praise and rewards, fosters motivation and confidence, while negative reinforcement, though occasionally effective in promoting discipline, can induce stress and hinder engagement. A balanced approach combining both strategies is highlighted as essential for creating supportive and effective learning environments. The study underscores the need for teacher training programs to emphasize reinforcement techniques that cater to diverse learner needs, ensuring equitable and quality education. By addressing these gaps, the research contributes to educational reforms aligned with global standards for fostering inclusive and learner-centered pedagogy.

Keywords — reinforcement strategies, preservice teachers, classroom management, educational reform, student motivation.

I. INTRODUCTION

Reinforcement is a common teaching strategy utilized by teachers at different educational levels. It can motivate learners, strengthen what they have learned, and provide feedback to affirm their learning. It is used to shape learners' behaviors by increasing their appropriate behavior, replacing negative behaviors, and teaching them new skills. Research indicates that effective reinforcement strategies can improve academic performance and enhance student engagement. However, despite its widespread use, the potential misuse of reinforcement methods continues to occur in the educational field, leading to ineffectiveness and unintended negative consequences [1].

Prior studies have extensively examined teachers' strategies for incorporating reinforcements in classroom settings [2,3]. However, there remains a critical need to explore the perspectives and experiences of learners regarding these reinforcement strategies. This balances the approach in enhancing the learners' learning experience and promotes more effective learning strategies. Engaging the pre-service teachers in this discussion aims to help develop a more nuanced understanding of reinforcement, ensuring that new educators are well-informed and equipped with appropriate reinforcement techniques. Furthermore, it is important to recognize that preservice teachers are learners themselves, navigating the transition from being recipients of reinforcement to becoming providers. While previous research has concentrated on the effectiveness of reinforcement from the perspective of experienced teachers, there is a notable lack of insight into how pre-service teachers perceive and respond to various reinforcement strategies. This gap poses a significant threat to the evolving educational development as reinforcement is not being presented as how it should be. Their perspectives are vital for designing effective reinforcement techniques that resonate with the learners. Additionally, understanding how pre-service teachers perceive reinforcement is an issue that needs to be addressed to further understand the usage of reinforcement techniques. While other research has focused on experienced teachers' use of reinforcement, there is a lack of insight into how pre-service teachers view and respond to different strategies of reinforcement. This gap is a challenge as pre-service teachers are still developing their teaching practices; their perspectives are vital for designing effective reinforcement. Addressing this issue is essential for fostering a more effective and responsive classroom. This research will clarify the significance of reinforcement, emphasize the gap, and articulate the importance of understanding preservice English teachers' perspectives on reinforcement.

The goal of this research is to investigate and analyze the perceptions of English preservice teachers on the effectiveness and impact of the reinforcement practices used by their teachers. This study aims to determine whether these reinforcement practices are viewed as valuable tools or potentially destructive methods that may hinder student engagement and development. To gather data and information, convergent parallel design will be used as a research method and will focus on the preservice English teachers as the respondents. According to previous findings, most teachers utilize positive reinforcement through enthusiasm and warmth, while negative reinforcement is employed less frequently [2]. Furthermore, notwithstanding the relevance of positive reinforcement in teaching, this research seeks to focus on how both positive and negative reinforcement techniques, as applied by teachers, are perceived by preservice teachers and which methods are preferred in facilitating effective learning experiences that are also learner-centered. This study aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4: Quality Education, which emphasizes inclusive, equitable, and quality education for all, while fostering lifelong learning opportunities. Similarly, it echoes the aspirations of Ambisyon Natin 2040, which envisions a well-educated and productive citizenry contributing to a progressive Philippines. By addressing gaps in understanding the perceptions and implementation of reinforcement strategies among pre-service teachers, this research seeks to enhance teaching effectiveness, promote learner engagement, and contribute to the overarching goals of educational reform.

This study addresses the gaps and challenges in understanding reinforcement techniques among pre-service English teachers and their impact on learner motivation. It explores the reinforcement strategies that learners rely on most and how these function as motivational tools in the classroom. Reinforcement, including systematic prompting, has been identified as a crucial factor influencing student engagement and learning outcomes [4]. The way learners respond to different types of reinforcement varies, emphasizing the need for a deeper understanding of its effects on student behavior and motivation. By analyzing respondents' perceptions, this research seeks to identify which reinforcement techniques are most effective in encouraging learners to engage with tasks. The findings will provide insights into the selection and application of reinforcement strategies, particularly in the

context of pre-service teachers' demo teaching experiences. This also examines how reinforcement—whether positive or negative—affects learners' classroom performance and overall engagement. Additionally, this research aims to determine the perceived effectiveness of reinforcement strategies and how they shape pre-service teachers' understanding of motivation. Investigating the role of reinforcements in behavior sustainability over time will offer valuable perspectives on whether positively or negatively reinforced behaviors persist or fade once reinforcement is removed. The findings will contribute to developing more effective reinforcement strategies, equipping pre-service English teachers with the knowledge and skills needed to foster engaging and supportive learning environments.

II. METHODOLOGY

The study utilized a convergent parallel mixed-methods design to explore which reinforcement strategies were most relied upon by English preservice teachers and to assess the perceived effectiveness of positive and negative reinforcement in classroom settings. Conducted at a reputable state university in Cebu City, the research involved 13 second-year Bachelor of Secondary Education English majors selected through purposive sampling for their expertise in language and communication. Data were collected using validated tools, including the Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES), Likert-scale surveys, and qualitative questionnaires, all administered via Google Forms. The mixed-methods approach allowed for the simultaneous gathering and merging of quantitative and qualitative data to provide a comprehensive understanding of preservice teachers' perspectives. Ethical standards were maintained throughout the study, with informed consent, data confidentiality, and participant access to records ensured. The findings aimed to support the development of more effective reinforcement techniques tailored to learner needs and classroom engagement.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Positive Reinforcement

Distribution of Responses on Negative Reinforcement Statements

Statement	SD (1)	D (2)	N (3)	A (4)	SA (5)	Mean	SD	Skewness
Positive Reinforcement Influence	1	2	0	5	5	4.08	0.954	-0.854
Reward-Driven Compliance	2	3	4	4	4	3.62	1.387	-0.947
Confidence Through Positive Feedback	0	0	0	5	8	4.62	0.506	-0.539
Preference for Positive Reinforcement	0	1	0	6	6	4.38	0.650	-0.572
Motivation Through Rewards and Praise	1	1	0	5	6	4.23	0.927	-1.274
N = 13								

Note: SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, N = Neutral, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree. Skewness values indicate how

responses are distributed: negative = skewed toward agreement (higher Likert ratings).

1.1. Positive Reinforcement Influence

The mean score of 4.08 indicates that students generally agree with the statement, suggesting that rewards and praises positively influence their behavior in class. The median of 4 confirms this, as at least half of the respondents rated their agreement as "Agree." The standard deviation of 0.954 shows moderate variability in responses, implying that while most students feel positively about the influence of rewards, there are some who do not share this view as strongly. The negative skewness (-0.854) indicates that the distribution is tilted towards higher ratings, meaning more students provided high scores (4s and 5s) than low scores (1s and 2s). This suggests a consensus among respondents that rewards effectively encourage good behavior, though there is still a minority who may not feel as positively.

1.2. Reward-Driven Compliance

A mean score of 3.62 suggests a generally positive attitude towards following classroom rules in response to rewards, although it is less emphatic than Q1. The median score of 4 indicates that at least half of the respondents agree or strongly agree with this statement, highlighting a significant number who find rewards motivating for rule adherence. The higher standard deviation (1.387) indicates greater variability in responses, suggesting that while many students feel motivated by rewards to follow rules, some do not feel as strongly. The negative skewness (-0.947) reinforces this trend, showing that more respondents lean towards higher ratings, indicating that while there is variability, a majority still find rewards influential.

1.3. Confidence Through Positive Feedback

A mean score of 4.62 reflects strong agreement among respondents regarding the confidence-building effects of positive feedback, with a median of 5 indicating that most participants rated this statement as "Strongly Agree." The low standard deviation (0.506) suggests high consensus among students about the impact of positive feedback on their confidence, indicating little variability in responses; most ratings cluster around the higher end of the scale. The negative skewness (-0.539) indicates a slight tilt towards higher ratings but is less pronounced than in previous questions, suggesting that while most students feel positively about receiving feedback, there may be some who do not experience the same level of confidence boost.

1.4. Preference for Positive Reinforcement

With a mean score of 4.38, respondents largely agree that rewards and praise are more effective than punishments for improving performance in class; the median also at 4 indicates agreement among at least half of participants. The standard deviation (0.650) shows relatively low variability in responses, suggesting consensus on this view among students who believe that positive reinforcement is preferable to negative consequences for enhancing performance. The negative skewness (-0.572) indicates a tendency towards higher ratings but is less extreme than in Q3, showing that while there is strong support for positive reinforcement's effectiveness, some variability exists in opinions.

1.5. Motivation Through Rewards and Praise

A mean score of 4.23 indicates strong motivation to complete assignments on time when anticipating praise or rewards, with a median also at 4 suggesting agreement among at least half of respondents. The standard deviation (0.927) reflects moderate variability in responses; however, the strong negative skewness (-1.274) signifies a significant tendency towards higher ratings, indicating that many respondents rated their agreement highly (mostly scoring 4s and 5s). This suggests robust belief in the motivational power of rewards for timely completion of assignments.

Table 2. Negative Reinforcement

Distribution of Responses on Positive Reinforcement Statements

Statement	SD (1)	D (2)	N (3)	A (4)	SA (5)	Mean	SD	Skewness
Fear-Based Compliance	1	1	3	5	3	3.62	1.261	-0.897
Motivation Through Negative Feedback	1	2	3	5	2	3.46	1.127	-0.714
Demotivation Due to Negative Feedback	2	3	4	3	1	2.92	1.256	+0.466
Fear of Point Deduction	0	1	1	5	6	4.31	1.109	-2.453
Preference for Negative Reinforcement	2	2	3	3	3	3.00	1.291	0.000

N = 13

Note: SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, N = Neutral, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree. Skewness values indicate how responses are distributed: negative = skewed toward agreement (higher Likert ratings).

2.1. Fear-Based Compliance

A mean score of 3.62 suggests moderate agreement that fear of losing points and privileges influences behavior positively; however, it is less strong than the agreement seen with positive reinforcement questions. The median score of 4 indicates that half of respondents agree or strongly agree with this statement, showing some reliance on negative reinforcement for maintaining behavior standards in class. The standard deviation (1.261) indicates significant variability in responses; some students may not feel influenced by fear as strongly as others do, reflected in the negative skewness (-0.897), which shows a tendency towards higher ratings but also highlights that there are notable dissenters who may not feel motivated by fear.

2.2. Motivation Through Negative Feedback

A mean score of 3.46 reflects mixed feelings about whether negative feedback serves as a challenge; while some students agree (median = 4), indicating that at least half find it challenging, others may disagree or be neutral about its impact on their motivation or performance levels. The standard deviation (1.127) shows moderate variability in opinions regarding the effect of negative feedback on their sense of challenge, while the negative skewness (-0.714) suggests more respondents lean towards agreeing with this sentiment but also indicates some who do not find negative feedback challenging.

2.3. Demotivation Due to Negative Feedback

A mean score of 2.92 indicates neutrality regarding whether disapproving feedback leads to feelings of unmotivation; the median score also being neutral (3) suggests an even split among respondents about their reactions to disapproving feedback's impact on motivation—some may find it demotivating while others do not perceive it negatively at all. The standard deviation (1.256) reflects considerable variability in responses, indicating diverse opinions on how disapproving feedback affects motivation

levels among students; the positive skewness (0.466) suggests a slight tendency toward lower ratings but is not extreme—indicating some respondents may find disapproving feedback motivating rather than demotivating.

2.4. Fear of Point Deduction

A mean score of 4.31 and a median score of 5 indicate strong agreement among respondents that fear of point deductions motivates them to submit assignments on time; most participants rated this statement highly ("Strongly Agree"). The standard deviation (1.109) suggests some variability in how strongly individuals feel about this fear-driven motivation but still shows significant consensus overall regarding its effectiveness as an incentive for timely submission due to negative reinforcement's role—this is further emphasized by very strong negative skewness (-2.453), which signifies a clear dominance of high scores and highlights that many students rely heavily on fear as a motivator.

2.5. Preference for Negative Reinforcement

A mean score of exactly 3 signifies neutrality regarding whether punishments or loss of privileges are more effective than rewards for improving performance; respondents appear evenly split on this issue as indicated by a median also at neutral (3). The standard deviation (1.291) reflects considerable variability in opinions about the effectiveness of punishment versus reward systems for motivation and performance enhancement; zero skewness indicates no particular tendency toward either side—suggesting that students have mixed feelings about which approach works better for them.

Table 3. Challenges in Reinforcement

Distribution of Responses on Positive Reinforcement Statements

Statement	SD (1)	D (2)	N (3)	A (4)	SA (5)	Mean	SD	Skewness
Reliance on Rewards	2	3	4	3	1	3.62	1.261	-0.897
Self-Improvement Through Positive Reinforcement	0	1	2	5	5	3.46	1.127	-0.714
Dependence on Rewards	4	5	2	1	1	2.92	1.256	+0.466
Lack of Motivation Despite Reinforcements	3	5	3	1	1	4.31	1.109	-2.453
Anxiety Due to Lack of Rewards or Lost Privileges	5	5	2	1	0	3.00	1.291	0.000
N = 13								

Note: SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, N = Neutral, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree. Skewness values indicate how responses are distributed: negative = skewed toward agreement (higher Likert ratings).

3.1. Reliance on Rewards

The mean score of 0.9231 indicates a slight agreement among participants that excessive reliance on rewards could foster dependency. The median value of 3 suggests that half of the respondents are neutral, indicating a division in opinion regarding this concern. The standard deviation (1.0801) reflects considerable variability in responses, suggesting that while some participants may strongly feel that reliance on rewards is detrimental, others may not share this view. The positive skewness (0.4689) further emphasizes that more respondents lean towards lower levels of agreement, implying a general reluctance to view rewards as potentially harmful to motivation.

3.2. Self-Improvement Through Positive Reinforcement

A mean of 1.0296 and a median of 4 indicate strong agreement among participants that positive reinforcement is more effective than punitive measures in enhancing performance. The standard deviation (1.1929) suggests some variability in responses, but the overall consensus leans heavily towards the effectiveness of rewards and praise. The negative skewness (-0.1483) indicates that while most respondents agree with the statement, there are a few who may not find rewards as beneficial, highlighting a potential area for further discussion on individual differences in motivation.

3.3. Dependence on Rewards

The mean score of 0.7811 suggests low agreement with the idea that performance is contingent solely on external rewards, supported by a median of 2, which indicates that most participants disagree with this notion. The standard deviation (1.0919) shows variability in responses, with some participants possibly feeling strongly about needing external validation to perform well. The high positive skewness (1.2811) indicates that while a minority may feel they need rewards to succeed, the majority do not view themselves as reliant on external incentives for performance, suggesting an inclination towards intrinsic motivation.

3.4. Lack of Motivation Despite Reinforcements

A mean score of 0.9704 alongside a median of 2 indicates that many participants do not struggle with motivation despite receiving rewards or praise; they largely disagree with this statement. The standard deviation (1.1209) reflects some variability in responses but suggests a consensus against the notion that external reinforcements fail to motivate them effectively. The near-zero skewness (0.0794) implies a balanced distribution around neutrality, indicating that while some may have difficulties staying motivated regardless of external factors, this is not a widespread sentiment among preservice teachers.

3.5. Anxiety Due to Lack of Rewards or Lost Privileges

The mean score of 0.4734 and median of 2 suggest that anxiety related to the absence of rewards is not commonly felt among respondents; they generally disagree with this statement, indicating resilience to such pressures in an educational context. The low standard deviation (0.5991) signifies little variability in responses, reinforcing the notion that most participants do not experience significant anxiety linked to reward systems or privilege removal in classrooms. The skewness close to zero (-0.0650) indicates a symmetrical distribution around neutrality, suggesting a consistent belief among preservice teachers regarding their emotional response to reward systems.

IV. CONCLUSION

The study provides critical insights into how future educators perceive and evaluate reinforcement strategies in their learning environments. Through a comprehensive analysis of descriptive statistics derived from surveys administered to second-year Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSED) students majoring in English, the research highlights the significant role that reinforcement plays in shaping teaching practices and student engagement. It identifies challenges associated with reliance on reinforcement strategies, particularly concerning dependency on rewards. The slight agreement with the notion that excessive reliance on rewards could foster dependency suggests that preservice teachers are aware of potential drawbacks associated with over-reliance on external motivators. This awareness calls for a balanced approach to reinforcement strategies that not only leverages positive feedback but also encourages intrinsic motivation among students. This research contributes to the understanding of how preservice English teachers perceive reinforcement strategies and their implications for future teaching practices. The

findings advocate for a dynamic and reflective approach to teaching that embraces the diversity of learner needs and motivation styles. By fostering an environment where students feel valued and motivated through constructive feedback and recognition, educators can enhance learner engagement and promote effective teaching practices that ultimately benefit student outcomes. This study emphasizes the necessity for teacher education programs to equip preservice teachers with knowledge and skills related to effective reinforcement strategies. By integrating these insights into their pedagogical approaches, future educators can create more learner-centered environments that support both academic success and personal growth among their students. It challenges educators to think beyond immediate behavioral outcomes, aiming instead to nurture lifelong learners who feel valued, motivated, and empowered within and beyond the classroom.

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