

FACE-TO-FACE TO ONLINE TEACHING: ENGLISH TEACHERS' LIVED EXPERIENCES

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Abstract

The study was conceptualized based on the research gaps, teachers' anxiety, the lack of digital and computer literacy, and challenges faced by English teachers during the pandemic. The transcendental phenomenological inquiry described the teachers' lived experiences from face-to-face to online teaching. Purposeful sampling was utilized to select the twelve English-teacher participants from a private school in Surallah, Philippines. Semi-structured interviews were implemented to obtain substantive data. Thru Thematic Analysis, the English teachers' lived experiences centered on four relevant themes like Online-class laborious preparations, Slow and intermittent internet connectivity, Online problems and students' demotivation, and Remarkable teachers' collaboration. The study recommends conducting qualitative studies on the context of public secondary or tertiary institutions, the experiences and insights of the teachers and students in other areas of specialization, and how the pandemic generally challenged the teaching and learning process.

Keywords: Face-to-face, Online Teaching, Lived Experiences, Teachers, Transcendental Phenomenology.

Introduction

The role of the teacher has changed dramatically because of the COVID-19 Pandemic. The four corners of the classroom lost their hierarchy as the usual learning venue. The internet has made online education possible, and many researchers and educators are interested in online teaching [18]. Online education has undergone substantial changes due to rapid improvements in information and communication technologies. Many institutions have transitioned from print-based to online delivery and utilized virtual learning environments and other web technologies. Microsoft Team, Google Classroom, Canvas, and Blackboard are examples of online distance learning approaches that offer numerous types of interaction between teachers and learners [4].

In the Philippines, the change from face-to-face (F2F) to online distance teaching and learning during the new normal brought about a real challenge. Teachers have undergone a transition of delivering educational instructions from real-time classrooms set up into virtual classrooms. Teachers have been urged to recognize the benefits of using technology for education continuation [24].

Literature on the shift from F2F to online teaching is scarce. Research only focuses on online teaching expectations and experiences [25], models on self-directed learning in teaching online [6], constructing e-portfolio online [17], teacher experiences on online professional development [5], comparing F2F to online teaching and learning [3]. Similarly, there is a lack of literature on teachers' experiences transitioning from F2F to online education. Literature is only limited to perspectives of the pedagogical transitions and conceptual considerations [22, 8, 13].

However, following the pandemic's shift, nearly 9 out of 10 teachers were extremely agitated

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and anxious. Furthermore, the survey data found that 81% of educators who responded to the poll worked more than 14 hours daily to complete their professional tasks [23]. Teachers are incapacitated on blended forms of learning. They are not equipped or educated to teach remotely. Therefore blended learning is not their preferred teaching platform, causing uncertainty and discontent among educators [10]. When using technology, teachers' anxiety levels increased, indicating that the new learning paradigm has shifted to online forms, making them more prone to stress. Many teachers who are not from the Millennials or Generation Z are more likely to be depressed [1].

Similarly, the same fate goes for teachers in a private school in Surallah, South Cotabato, Philippines. Teachers lack digital, media, and computer literacy. Their anxiety was evident, causing them to perform their teaching task ineffectively and inefficiently. The problems were aggravated by intermittent internet connectivity and unannounced power interruptions, which slowly damaged the mental and emotional behaviors of teachers and students.

Hence, the situation necessitates conducting an empirical investigation to provide rich and substantive descriptions of the high school teachers' lived experiences transitioning from F2F to online teaching in the new normal. It is hoped that the study result could provide informative insights on teachers' plights and, eventually, can indoctrinate teachers' resiliency for future teaching challenges and obtain relevant and effective teaching strategies in the new normal. The study's general research question was "What are the teachers' lived experiences on the transition from F2F to online teaching?"

Methodology

There was a need to understand and analyze the teachers' lived experiences transitioning into the new normal educational system. This study applied a transcendental phenomenological approach. It focuses on the commonality of lived experiences within a particular group [9, 20]. The study was implemented at a private school and a pioneering school in Surallah, South Cotabato, Philippines. Twelve English teachers voluntarily served as the study participants.

Further, to obtain data, the following procedure was applied. Approval was obtained from the principal, and the participants gave consent. F2F semi-structured interviews were conducted with twelve teacher-participants while observing health protocols. The interviews were recorded using an audio recorder and a smartphone. The recordings were then transcribed. The transcripts were referred

to the participants as proof of data validation. The study employed Thematic Analysis (TA) [7]. The TA began with familiarizing significant statements and noting down formulated meanings, generating initial themes, theme clustering, reviewing themes, and defining relevant themes [21].

Results and Discussions

Through procedural Thematic Analysis and interpretation of the English teachers' lived experiences from F2F to online teaching, four relevant themes were articulated, namely Online-class laborious preparations, Slow and intermittent internet connectivity, Online problems and students' demotivation, and Remarkable teachers' collaboration.

Theme 1: Online-class Laborious Preparations

This theme focuses on the teachers' laborious preparations before online classes. It demonstrates how significant and obvious the differences between F2F and online classrooms that private teachers must deal with to provide quality education to their students. The teachers have to learn new software and applications. Participant 8 (P8) said, "It was difficult to use the technology. During F2F classes, I never explored these, for example, the recorder, and Microsoft PowerPoint, because I seldom use them in my English classes. I have a very little idea of using it fully and other gadgets." P11 added, "You have many to prepare in an online class. It is like triple preparations. It would help if you prepared a PowerPoint presentation for your learning kits. Aside from that, you need also to make videos about your lesson. So, since I teach elementary pupils, it is not advisable to get videos on YouTube always. So there are subjects that we need to study. Watch many other videos before making your own because many people can watch your videos, ensuring that the information we deliver is accurate and inclined to the subject. Moreover, of course, we make sure that they will learn through the videos."

Online teachers may require additional training in various areas to serve their students fully and sustain student engagement. Effective instructional practices may differ between F2F and online teaching scenarios. Teachers perform a crucial role in student assistance. Because online student involvement is linked to student outcomes, online learning programs should consider including it in the professional development options available to teachers [11, 16].

Theme 2: Slow and Intermittent Internet Connectivity

Theme 2 depicts the ultimate problem that teachers face when conducting online classes. The internet connectivity in rural communities differs from urban areas. If the connectivity is poor, it will significantly impact the learners' learning since they may miss essential aspects of their lessons. Teachers teaching online courses have this obstacle. However, they can still provide meaningful teaching and learning despite these issues.

The participants constantly mentioned that internet connectivity plays a vital role in online classes. For P7, "Of course, in online classes, there are many to consider. First of all, the signal, there should be a strong internet connectivity if you are into online distance learning." Similarly, P4 and P6 shared, "The poor internet connectivity is the second challenge for me as an English teacher and an online teacher. The internet connectivity in our place is not so good. There are times that the instruction becomes poor. It is difficult because of the signal glitches." In incorporating integrated learning, limited internet connectivity is a big challenge. When dealing with poor internet connectivity in the classroom, teachers and students have similar viewpoints. For example, instead of a standard F2F meeting in class, assigning projects as homework allows students to do them when they have more steady connectivity outside of the classroom [12]. Because offering more reliable connectivity at the school would be impossible, most participants opt for this way. Students, thankfully, were more conscious of the issue and offered their mobile hotspot. To allow students with limited internet connectivity to access the assignment and materials, teachers do not upload media that requires additional bandwidth like videos and images [15].

Theme 3: Online Problems and Students' Demotivation

This theme centers on the inevitable students' reactions and responses. Student responses are crucial in the online teaching and learning process. Teachers have to confirm students' learning of the lessons. The participants shared the difficulty of giving instructions, implementing rules and online etiquette, students' negative expressions, and passivity.

In a F2F setting, the real-time reaction of a student to the lesson can indicate that the lesson is absorbed and delivered effectively. However, online classes were problematic. P11 shared, "I hope that F2F will come soon because it is good to see the students' reactions. I cannot see students'

reactions online." For P1, "Students can become extremely passive with online lectures in online teaching. It is like spoon-feeding..."

Students' personality, age, or cognitive learning styles, the type of media (real-time or asynchronous), the support and timely feedback, the sense of belonging in the learning community, and students' perceptions of their learning experiences, including how well or how much they have learned, all influence the concept of interaction in online learning [19].

Theme 4: Remarkable Teachers' Collaboration

Theme 4 tells about teachers' collaborations. They assist one another in coping with the changes and challenges of introducing technology into the classroom. Teachers' rapport and relationships were strengthened by helping those with limited knowledge of technology. For P2, "With the help of my co-teachers who are good in technology, they taught us how to use this and improve the presentation. So, it is collaboration because we talk about how to improve our language teaching." P3 also said, "I think I cope with those uprising challenges with the help of my colleagues because since my colleagues are younger and I am not that young myself, they know a lot about technology, so they helped me on those things that I do not know."

Likewise, in a study, 70 teachers discussed how to help educators provide online courses. They indicated that more regular and different training sessions are needed. They suggest focusing on the professional development and training needs of remote online adjuncts, adding to the body of knowledge about the challenges of online teaching [2]. By exchanging knowledge and reflecting on similar experiences, the faculty members learn from one another. College professors are like K-12 teachers. They form learning communities to improve pedagogy and become more effective [14].

Conclusion

The English teachers spent twice as much time preparing for online classes as they did for F2F courses. To enhance the students' learning, they frequently created lesson plans, instructional materials, PowerPoint presentations, and certain exercises. Internet connectivity was a factor in conducting online classes; thus, it was also a challenge for teachers and students to pay for an internet subscription.

A sudden shift in educational medium significantly impacted students, parents, and, most importantly, teachers. Hence, the tables have turned. The Millennials or Generation Z teachers were coaching older teachers on holding online discussions, using

educational software and applications, and managing computers. It also demonstrated how teachers assist one another in filling each other's weaknesses.

The relationship between teachers and students in F2F classes was no longer visible. Teachers also wanted to learn more about their students, but they could not stay at the computer all day to get to know the students due to inadequate time and heavy workloads. Unlike in F2F classes, students can go to their teachers during free time or after class, converse for a while, tell them their experiences, crack jokes, or give them life lessons.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest in the conduct of this research.

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