# UNDERSTANDING EXPERIENCES ON INSTRUCTIONAL CHANGES AMONG THE JUNIOR AND SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS OF RAMON MAGSAYSAY MEMORIAL COLLEGES: A SINGLE CASE STUDY

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**Abstract:**

This case study explores the experiences of five English teachers from Junior and Senior High School at Ramon Magsaysay Memorial Colleges-Integrated School during the COVID-19 pandemic, focusing on the instructional changes they implemented. Grounded in Albert Bandura's self-efficacy theory, the study examines how self-belief influences their behavior, motivation, and performance. It reveals how the teachers navigate online teaching, assess language skills, and adapt evaluation methods. Their journeys reflect a shift from initial excitement to emotional challenges, ultimately leading to resilience, adaptability, and a more positive work attitude. Positive outcomes include stronger collaboration and a forward-thinking mindset. However, the study also highlights the ongoing need for training in technology, innovative assessment strategies, and teacher well-being. This study contributes to the body of knowledge by exploring the lasting impact of professional development, essential tech skills for online instruction, and creative tools for language assessment in a post-pandemic educational landscape.

**Keywords:** English, instructional changes, senior and junior high school English teachers, case study, Philippines

## 1. Introduction

In the wake of the global upheaval caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, a profound research gap emerges in the specific domain of Filipino English teachers' experiences and

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responses to the abrupt transition to online distance learning. According to the World Bank, more than 28 million Filipino learners across academic levels have had to stay home and comply with the Philippine government's quarantine measures (Joaquin, 2020).

Pre-emptive measures have prompted educational institutions in the country to implement proactive policies for continuing education, including modified forms of online learning that aim to facilitate student learning activities. International literature has provided valuable insights into the broader challenges of remote education. However, the intricacies of the Filipino educational landscape, shaped by unique socio-cultural factors, still need to be explored.

While studies on online learning have been extensive, it remains to be seen how educators adapt to the sudden shift to online or remote learning, also known as distance education, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The need for a targeted examination of the challenges faced by Filipino English teachers becomes even more crucial considering the multifaceted issues inherent in the Philippine educational system. The digital literacy divide, exacerbated by limited access to technology and the internet in certain regions, presents a distinctive set of challenges that must be addressed in more technologically advanced settings. Moreover, resource constraints, particularly evident in public schools, add another layer of complexity, impacting the quality of instructional materials and overall educational experiences. Additionally, the most crucial concerns include comprehension of learning content, student engagement, and internet connectivity, which were likewise claimed by the participants as disadvantages of flexible learning (Tarrayo *et al.*, 2023).

Furthermore, the focus on sustaining student engagement in virtual classrooms within the Philippine context represents a critical aspect of the research gap. Understanding how Filipino English teachers navigate this intricate terrain is crucial for developing effective strategies, given the unique socio-cultural dynamics that influence student participation.

Despite the wealth of global research on remote education during the pandemic, there is a notable lack of empirical studies focusing on how Filipino English teachers, particularly those in private institutions outside urban centers, personally experienced and adapted to these challenges. Few studies examine the intersection of teacher self-efficacy, emotional resilience, and instructional innovation within the specific context of the Philippine private school system. This gap limits our understanding of how localized responses evolve and what institutional support structures prove most effective under crisis conditions. Without such contextual insights, broader educational reforms risk overlooking the nuanced realities teachers face on the ground.

By narrowing the focus to the experiences of English teachers at Ramon Magsaysay Memorial Colleges Integrated School, this research aims to fill the void in the current literature and provide context-specific insights. This study's findings are expected to inform localized strategies within the institution and offer broader implications for educational policymakers and practitioners in the Philippines and

beyond. Addressing this research gap is crucial for ensuring the development of inclusive, culturally sensitive, and effective educational practices in the rapidly evolving global education landscape.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Education in the New Normal
The COVID-19 pandemic triggered a remarkable transformation in the education sector, compelling a swift departure from traditional face-to-face classes to diverse learning modalities with a pronounced emphasis on distance learning. In response to the disruptions, educators worldwide proactively embraced modular and online distance learning to ensure the continuity of education. Studies have explored the lived experiences of educators during this transformative period, revealing crucial themes related to their preparation, the challenges they face, and the coping mechanisms they adopt. The findings underscore the urgency for teachers to equip themselves with the necessary skills and strategies for effective distance learning, marking a fundamental shift in the educational landscape (De Villa *et al.,* 2020).

However, the impact of the pandemic varied significantly across nations. While some countries successfully navigated the challenges posed by the virus, others faced significant disruptions, leading to substantial adjustments in academic institutions and schools. This dichotomy underscores the necessity for flexible and adaptable educational approaches that cater to diverse contexts and challenges, enabling the global education community to respond effectively to unforeseen disruptions and provide ongoing learning opportunities for students (Abbas, 2021; Cos *et al.*, 2021).

The education sector in the Philippines has demonstrated resilience and adaptability in response to the challenges posed by restrictions on face-to-face education. This resilience was exemplified through collaborative efforts among educational institutions, government agencies, and stakeholders to ensure that learning continued despite limitations. The Department of Education (DepEd) played a pivotal role in this transition, implementing DepEd Order No. 12, s. (2020), which outlined new learning delivery modalities as part of the Learning Continuity Plan (LCP). This initiative ensured that education remained accessible to Filipino students throughout the 2020-2021 school year and beyond (Dangle & Sumaoang, 2020; Department of Education, 2020; Guiamalon *et al.*, 2021).

To adapt to the new standard, various learning modalities were introduced, including online distance learning, blended learning, homeschooling, and modular distance learning in digital or printed formats. The implementation of these modalities highlights the dynamic shift in the educational system, showcasing the flexibility and adaptability of schools and educators. These strategies were designed to cater to the diverse needs of students across different socioeconomic backgrounds, ensuring that learning remained inclusive and effective despite the pandemic's constraints (Alvarez,

2020; Anzaldo, 2021; Castroverde & Acala, 2021; Guiamalon *et al.*, 2021; Kintanar *et al.*, 2021; Pascual, 2021).

As a result, teachers were among the most affected by this transition. The shift to online teaching, characterized by the absence of immediate and direct student feedback, exacerbated feelings of isolation and uncertainty among educators. Without the ability to assess students' understanding as effectively as in face-to-face interactions, teachers encountered emotional challenges, including stress, frustration, and burnout. This emotional strain highlighted the need for comprehensive support systems to address teachers' well-being and professional development. Studies have emphasized that these abrupt changes required teachers to develop new digital literacy skills, redesign curricula for online learning, and adopt new assessment strategies to ensure students' academic success (Diliberti & Kaufman, 2020; Reich *et al.*, 2020; Will, 2020).

Furthermore, teacher workload increased significantly due to the need for lesson preparation, grading, and online student engagement. It has explored how increased job demands, coupled with inadequate resources and ineffective classroom practices, contributed to teacher stress and burnout. In the Philippine context, teachers not only had to adjust to online learning but also faced additional challenges, such as unreliable internet access, low student participation, and limited access to digital tools, which further exacerbated their stress levels (Bottiani *et al.*, 2019).

A study examined crisis-driven changes in education, identifying distinct patterns compared to voluntary or pre-planned transitions. The study emphasized that crisis-driven changes, such as the shift to online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, were influenced more by individual faculty members' willingness to adopt technology and the reliability of institutional support structures. Unlike non-crisis contexts, where external factors such as cultural and social influences play a more significant role, crisis-driven changes depend heavily on institutional preparedness and faculty adaptability (Lee, 2021).

The findings suggest that higher education institutions must invest in faculty development programs that focus on digital literacy, technological innovation, and psychological well-being. Institutions must also establish policies that provide educators with adequate training, resources, and emotional support, ensuring that they are equipped to handle future crises effectively. Education systems must incorporate resilience-building strategies to prepare for similar disruptions, ensuring that learning remains uninterrupted regardless of the circumstances (Bozkurt *et al.*, 2020).

## 2.2 Instructional Changes

The shift to distance learning has significantly altered instructional delivery, creating challenges for educators accustomed to traditional teaching methods. Pedagogical approaches such as inquiry-based learning, hands-on experiences, social interaction, and constructivist strategies, which are effective in face-to-face settings, are difficult to replicate in virtual environments. Teachers, especially those unfamiliar with online teaching, often struggle with the technical aspects, time management, and pedagogical

adjustments required for effective remote instruction. This transition calls for not only a shift in instructional strategies but also strong institutional support to help educators navigate the demands of digital learning (Lichoro, 2015).

Moreover, the reliance on technology in distance education underscores the need for digital literacy among teachers. While digital competence is increasingly recognized as essential for professional growth, educators still face challenges such as high technology costs, accessibility issues, and insufficient training in utilizing digital tools. These factors contribute to the digital divide, making it crucial for institutions to provide comprehensive training and resources to ensure teachers are equipped to integrate technology effectively into their teaching practices (Nilson *et al.*, 2018).

In addition, research has highlighted the benefits of integrating Learning Management Systems (LMS) into classrooms, transforming instructor-student interactions beyond traditional settings. LMS platforms enable more flexible communication and resource sharing, thereby reducing dependence on in-person interactions. However, the effectiveness of LMS integration largely depends on an institution's infrastructure. While widely adopted in developed countries with strong digital support, implementation in resource-limited settings remains a challenge. Despite these obstacles, studies indicate that LMS platforms provide significant advantages to both students and educators by improving course organization and accessibility (Alenezi & Al Azwani, 2020; Alghamdi *et al.*, 2016).

One primary concern is that one of the most pressing challenges in online teaching is the increased time commitment required for lesson preparation. Teachers must develop digital materials, including PowerPoint presentations, instructional videos, and online activities, which demand more time compared to traditional classroom teaching. However, while the initial workload is substantial, research suggests that the long-term benefits outweigh the challenges, as these materials can be reused in future courses, reducing preparation time over subsequent semesters. Recognizing the enduring value of well-prepared digital content is essential in enhancing teaching efficiency and sustainability (Gurung, 2021).

Equally important, student engagement remains a significant concern in online education. Many students struggle with active learning and critical thinking, skills that traditional educational systems have not always prioritized. In face-to-face settings, teachers can encourage participation through direct interaction, but replicating this dynamic in online classes has proven difficult. Research shows that students often cite technical issues, work commitments, or home distractions as reasons for their lack of participation. While some of these challenges are legitimate, others serve as excuses to disengage from the learning process. To address this, educators must adopt proactive strategies, such as recording lectures for flexible access, providing supplementary materials, and designing interactive activities that foster engagement (Coman *et al.*, 2020).

Consequently, the sudden transition to online learning required educators, many of whom were trained in traditional methods, to adapt to new instructional approaches quickly. The urgency of the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated this shift, forcing teachers

to develop strategies that ensured continuous education delivery. Educational leaders emphasized the need for teachers to be flexible and innovative in response to these challenges. Despite the difficulties, studies show that teachers generally maintained a positive attitude toward online teaching. However, concerns about limited resources, technology training, and increased workloads persisted (Alahmari, A., & Kyei-Blankson, 2016; Awadhiya, & Miglani, 2016; Danjou, 2020; Farmer and West, 2019; Lapada *et al.*, 2020; Santi *et al.*, 2020; Talidong & Toquero, 2020; Tria, 2020).

Furthermore, higher education institutions, particularly in fields such as health sciences, have adopted blended learning models that combine synchronous and asynchronous activities. Online tutorials, simulation-based e-learning, moderated discussions, and self-directed learning activities became common. While these strategies required adjustments from both students and teachers, they also highlighted the need for stronger technological support and new teaching methodologies that emphasize active participation (Alsoufi *et al.*, 2020; Dost *et al.*, 2020; Jowsey *et al.*, 2020; Liu, 2016 and Sandhu, 2020).

More broadly, the impact of this transition extends beyond student engagement, influencing the way students perceive and apply their learning in real-world settings. This raises concerns about how online education affects the development of practical skills and professional readiness, emphasizing the need for further research into the long-term implications of these changes.

Notably, among the challenges faced by teachers, time commitment remains a significant issue. A study found that English teachers, in particular, spend twice as much time preparing for online classes as they do for face-to-face courses. The need to create lesson plans, develop instructional materials, and design digital exercises adds to their workload. Internet connectivity issues further complicate the teaching process, placing an additional financial burden on both teachers and students, who must maintain stable connections for effective learning (Bingco *et al.*, 2022).

In contrast, the shift to online learning also altered the traditional dynamics between teachers and students. In physical classrooms, informal interactions, such as casual conversations before and after class, enable teachers to gain a deeper understanding of their students and foster a sense of rapport. However, in virtual settings, these moments of connection are often lost. Teachers, constrained by time and workload, find it challenging to replicate the same level of engagement. Unlike in face-to-face settings, where students can approach teachers after class for additional support or informal discussions, online learning limits these opportunities, making it harder to foster strong teacher-student relationships.

To address these issues, the transition to online learning has introduced various instructional challenges, including digital literacy gaps, increased workloads, reduced student engagement, and changes in teacher-student interactions. However, research also suggests strategies that can help mitigate these difficulties. Professional development programs should focus on equipping teachers with digital literacy skills and effective online teaching strategies. Institutions should also invest in technological

infrastructure to ensure that educators and students can fully utilize digital platforms for learning. Additionally, finding ways to recreate informal teacher-student interactions in virtual settings, such as discussion forums or scheduled consultations, may help strengthen relationships and improve overall learning experiences.

## 2.3 Adapting to the New Normal of Teaching

Initially, it was observed that faculty, regardless of their prior online teaching experience, demonstrated a remarkable ability to adopt online teaching approaches swiftly and effectively, showcasing resilience and resourcefulness. The agility demonstrated by educators in adjusting assignments, exams, and grading policies underscored their adaptability within the rapidly changing educational landscape. This resilience was not confined to the U.S. context. Despite initial resistance to incorporating technology into teaching, these educators evolved their practices, recognizing the transformative value of technology in instruction, assessment, and student engagement (Johnson *et al.*, 2020).

Similarly, international studies have supported the global trend of educators embracing online teaching, highlighting various factors facilitating this transition. These factors include the role of robust communication, technology infrastructure, and support systems in New Zealand following seismic events, the smooth transition during emergencies in Saudi Arabia, and the diversification of instructional resources in Japan as educators gain more online teaching experience (Ayebi-Arthur, 2017; Almaghaslah & Alsyari, 2020; Jung *et al.*, 2021).

In terms of emotional adjustment, the emotional journey of teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic has been complex, initially characterized by curiosity and anxiety, later exacerbated by physical and mental health challenges due to increased workloads and limited student interaction. Over time, professional support and growing familiarity with online teaching methods have led to positive adaptations, helping teachers navigate and eventually master the intricacies of online education (Nguyen, 2023; Pan *et al.*, 2021). Furthermore, assessments of distance education during the COVID-19 pandemic have revealed significant issues related to educational access and socioeconomic disparities, mainly affecting low-income families. These studies advocate for a transition to online education that addresses pedagogical needs, tackles digital disparities, and ensures technological readiness for a more inclusive and effective learning environment (Owuso-Fordjour *et al.*, 2020; Basilaia *et al.*, 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic has been crucial, with virtual and immersive learning solutions playing a pivotal role in this context. These studies underscore the urgent need to expedite technology integration across various educational levels to effectively address the challenges posed by the pandemic and enhance the learning experience (Toto & Limone, 2021).

Consequently, an emphasis on educators' digital competence underscores their critical role in shaping school policies and procedures, particularly in the integration of technology. Comprehensive planning and tailored training programs are recommended to equip teachers with the necessary skills to effectively integrate technology into their

classrooms, underscoring the importance of investing in professional development initiatives (Toto & Limone, 2021).

In the Philippine context, profound transformations in the education sector prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic have led to the implementation of various measures to uphold the delivery of quality education, with online instruction emerging as a notable modality. However, challenges stemming from the country's technological and internet landscape pose significant hurdles for stakeholders, including teachers and students. Understanding the readiness and attitudes of these stakeholders is paramount in formulating policies that ensure the seamless continuation of education (Salayo *et al.*, 2020a).

Despite these challenges, while respondents' profiles do not display significant differences in readiness and attitudes, the overarching findings underscore Filipino teachers' and learners' flexibility, resilience, and preparedness in confronting challenges. Addressing technological constraints, such as poor internet connections and limited access to learning aids, becomes crucial. These insights serve as invaluable references for policymakers, offering a nuanced understanding of the challenges educators and students face. By leveraging this knowledge, policymakers can develop strategies tailored to the unique needs of the education community, ensuring a more effective and inclusive approach to continuing education amidst the evolving landscape shaped by the pandemic (Salayo *et al.*, 2020b)

## 2.4 Teaching English Online

The critical role of educators' digital competence in adapting to the challenges posed by the sudden transition to online learning has been widely acknowledged. Specific obstacles encountered by EFL learners, such as technical difficulties and language communication barriers, necessitate targeted interventions to ensure practical learning experiences (Mahyoob, 2020).

To facilitate successful online instruction, systemic changes are essential. A holistic approach to digital education must address the diverse challenges educators and learners face. The immediate challenges teachers encountered during the shift to remote teaching highlight the nuanced nature of these obstacles and the varying levels of support required across different career stages. Furthermore, the widening educational inequities exacerbated by the pandemic emphasize the urgent need for targeted interventions to bridge the digital divide and ensure equitable access to education for all learners (Toto & Limone, 2021; Kraft *et al.*, 2020).

To address these challenges, comprehensive support systems play a crucial role in helping educators navigate future disruptions in the education sector. Ongoing professional development for instructors, alongside collaborative efforts among educators, instructional designers, and technology specialists, is crucial for creating resilient and inclusive learning environments that cater to the diverse needs of both students and teachers (Trammell & LaForge, 2017).

Over the past year, the pandemic has served as a significant learning experience for teachers, pushing them to adapt to online learning as the primary mode of instruction. Despite challenges such as limited training opportunities, educators have actively sought and utilized numerous free online resources to enhance their virtual teaching capabilities. Many dedicated teachers have taken additional steps to support students by visiting them at home and adhering to health protocols (Situmorang, 2021a).

Consequently, teachers have evolved their instructional strategies to meet the demands of online education. These adjustments include facilitating group discussions, providing extended deadlines for tasks, and offering fewer but more challenging assignments. Some educators have adopted innovative approaches, such as discovery learning, where students are tasked with identifying real-world cases related to the topic and devising solutions (Situmorang, 2021b).

Moreover, this transformative process extends beyond teachers' professional growth, as it reshapes classrooms and influences student engagement. Effective communication, varied platform usage, online collaboration, and increased assignment flexibility have become crucial elements of this shift. Educators now focus not only on achieving lesson objectives but also on fostering active student participation (Situmorang, 2021c).

In addition, teachers have developed new approaches to providing feedback. Rather than solely emphasizing academic performance, they prioritize student engagement and offer more personalized feedback. Studies highlight instances where teachers provide positive reinforcement and maintain availability in online groups to address student queries. This shift reflects a holistic approach to student development, acknowledging both academic accomplishments and individual progress (Situmorang, 2021d).

Significantly, one key insight from the research is that teachers perceived the integration of Information Technology (IT) into education during the pandemic-driven shift to online learning as a catalyst for enhancing their professional development. Many educators experienced increased creativity and innovation, pushing themselves beyond traditional face-to-face teaching methods. This finding highlights the importance of educators maintaining an open-minded approach and continually exploring and adopting new teaching strategies, particularly those that incorporate technology into their pedagogical practices (Subekti, 2022a).

Nevertheless, research also highlights the challenges faced by educators during the pandemic. Many teachers encountered more failures than successes, highlighting the inherent challenges of teaching, particularly in an unprecedented crisis like COVID-19. This underscores the need for educators to set realistic learning goals, recognizing the constraints of the circumstances while ensuring that students continue to learn and progress. A balanced perspective is essential, acknowledging the complexities of teaching during extraordinary times while emphasizing resilience and adaptability in the educational landscape (Subekti, 2022b).

Despite these challenges, language education during the COVID-19 pandemic also fostered learning and advancement. Teachers, trainers, administrators, and students demonstrated remarkable determination, adaptability, and resilience in adjusting to novel teaching methods. As the pandemic's immediate impact lessens, face-to-face instruction is expected to regain prominence in language education. However, the lessons learned from this crisis should not be forgotten. Instead, they should serve as a foundation for reevaluating and reimagining language teaching, learning, and assessment (Mavridi, 2022).

Looking ahead, studies suggest that online and blended learning will continue beyond the pandemic. However, assumptions about the effectiveness of emergency remote teaching for online instruction should be reconsidered. To achieve high-quality online education, it is necessary to transition away from improvised emergency practices and develop well-informed and sustainable approaches, referred to as Sustainable Online Language Education (SOLE) (Gacs *et al.*, 2020).

Finally, as the world enters a new era where pandemics continue to pose a persistent threat, education systems must be prepared for future crises. Scientists emphasize that climate change may directly influence environmental conditions conducive to virus proliferation. Addressing environmental issues is crucial for planetary preservation and for mitigating the risk of future pandemics. Therefore, language education must establish solid foundations to ensure an effective response to potential crises (Beyer *et al.*, 2021; Moore, 2021).

## 3. Methodology

This study employed a qualitative single-case study research design to examine the instructional changes implemented by Junior and Senior High School English teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic. This approach was chosen to allow an in-depth exploration of a bounded, real-life situation involving a specific group of educators operating within a shared context. The single-case study method allowed me to focus on a unique, time-bound event—the global health crisis and its impact on English instruction—making it a compelling and appropriate choice for examining how teachers responded to rapid educational disruptions (Yin, 2018).

The case was bounded both temporally and contextually. Temporally, it focused on the school years most affected by the pandemic, when remote and hybrid learning modalities were in place. Contextually, it was limited to the Philippine secondary education sector, specifically English language instruction. This well-defined scope enabled me to investigate a complex phenomenon in its real-world setting, offering a lens through which I could examine instructional transformation, professional adaptation, and teacher agency under extraordinary conditions (Gustafsson & Hagström, 2017; Creswell, 2017).

I selected the single-case design over other qualitative approaches because it allowed for both depth and flexibility in exploring individual and collective teacher

experiences within the same bounded system. While phenomenological or narrative studies could have captured personal meanings, the single-case design enabled me to uncover how those personal experiences related to institutional practices, technological shifts, and systemic pressures. It also allowed me to analyze multiple embedded units within the case, such as grade-level distinctions and school types, while maintaining the cohesion of one central, unified study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Yin, 2018).

A qualitative research approach was best suited to investigating how teachers made sense of their instructional adjustments, how they responded to shifting expectations, and how they navigated emerging challenges in their professional practice. Rather than quantifying change, I sought to explore the meanings behind it. This approach enabled a deeper understanding of the participants' lived experiences, as qualitative research emphasizes depth, context, and the subjective meanings individuals assign to events (Mohajan, 2018).

To gather rich and contextually grounded data, I employed a semi-structured interview method for data collection. This instrument provided insight into the instructional shifts that teachers enacted. Additionally, this approach also allowed me to examine both the internal reflections and external manifestations of instructional change (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Hunziker & Blankenagel, 2021).

Participants were selected through purposeful sampling, targeting English teachers who had actively taught during the height of the pandemic and who had been directly involved in implementing alternative instructional strategies. This sampling strategy ensured that the data collected would be information-rich and directly relevant to the central research questions. By focusing on individuals with relevant experiences, the study gained insight into the depth and variation of instructional responses (Creswell, 2017; Vannoni, 2014).

I analyzed the collected data through thematic analysis, identifying patterns, categories, and emergent themes across the participants' narratives and reflections. This iterative process involved coding, categorizing, and continuously revisiting the data to refine my interpretations. The goal was not only to identify what changes were made but also to understand the reasoning, emotions, and contextual factors that influenced those changes (Yin, 2018).

Ethical considerations were central to the conduct of this study. I ensured that informed consent was obtained from all participants, maintained confidentiality, and provided participants with the option to withdraw from the study at any point. Given the emotional and professional stress many teachers experienced during the pandemic, I approached data collection with empathy and sensitivity, maintaining a respectful and ethical research environment (Shenton, 2004; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

## 3.1 Role of the Researcher

As the researcher, I was the key instrument in this qualitative study. My role involved collecting data by examining relevant documents, observing behavior, and interpreting

participants' responses. Additionally, I took on multiple responsibilities, including inquirer, interviewer, advocate, transcriber, encoder, and analyst (Levitt, 2014).

- **Planner.** I was responsible for planning the study, which included defining my research questions, selecting the methodology, determining the sample size, and outlining data collection and analysis techniques. During this phase, I worked closely with my research adviser to refine the framework and ensure alignment with academic standards. I also developed research questionnaires and had them validated to enhance reliability and credibility. Furthermore, I secured approval from the ethics committee and consulted relevant authorities to obtain the necessary permissions. To facilitate clear communication with participants, I provided informed consent forms and agreement documents, which I translated into their dialect when necessary. These preparations ensured ethical and practical data collection and analysis (Sutton & Austin, 2015).

- **Interviewer.** To collect the necessary data, I conducted interviews, administered surveys, reviewed records, and observed the research subjects. I embedded myself within the research environment to gain a deeper understanding of teachers' experiences. Establishing rapport with participants was crucial to building trust and encouraging them to share their perspectives openly. I also ensured that I explained the purpose and objectives of the research in their dialect to ensure clarity and comprehension.

- **Recorder.** I accurately documented the data while maintaining participants' privacy. To achieve this, I used a recorder, which facilitated precise transcription. I then had participants verify their transcriptions to ensure credibility and resonance with their experiences. This process minimized the risk of misinterpretation and strengthened the authenticity of their narratives.

- **Advocate.** I took on the role of advocating for the English teachers who took part in the study. By documenting and analyzing their narratives, I highlighted both their challenges and successes. My goal was to use my findings to inform and improve educational practices and policies, ensuring that teachers' voices were heard and acknowledged in discussions about instructional change (Ledford & Gast, 2018; Riley-Tilman *et al.*, 2020; Sutton & Austin, 2015; Tincani & Travers, 2018).

- **Transcriber and Encoder**. As the transcriber and encoder, I meticulously documented participants' responses and ensured that all raw data were analyzed accurately. I collaborated with my research adviser to interpret the findings, allowing me to generate valuable insights for improving instructional strategies and professional development. I also sought participant's verification to ensure that the data truly represented their experiences.

- **Analyst.** Analyzing data was a crucial part of my research responsibilities. Together with a data analysis expert and my adviser, I rigorously examined and categorized the data, identifying patterns and themes that emerged. To maintain objectivity, I carefully avoided bias and employed data triangulation to enhance

the reliability of my findings. My goal was to present my findings clearly and meaningfully, ensuring they could inform educational practice, policy, and theory.

- Throughout the data analysis phase, I worked closely with my thesis adviser to ensure accuracy and reliability. This collaboration not only enhanced the quality of my analysis but also provided valuable mentorship, helping me develop a deeper understanding of qualitative research methodologies.

For participant selection, I used a purposeful sampling approach, employing homogeneous sampling as a type of purposive sampling. To achieve a uniform group, I applied specific criteria to select eligible participants. The study focused on Junior and Senior High School English teachers at Ramon Magsaysay Memorial Colleges-Integrated School in General Santos City. The five participants included three Senior High School teachers and two Junior High School teachers, all of whom had at least three years of teaching experience in their respective departments.

To ensure consistency and relevance, I established clear inclusion criteria for all participants. First, they had to be full-time English teachers employed at Ramon Magsaysay Memorial Colleges-Integrated School in either the Junior High School or Senior High School department. Second, they needed to have been actively teaching English for at least three years, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. Finally, while professional experience was a requirement, factors such as sex, age, civil status, or the degree earned did not affect eligibility.

By carefully selecting participants through purposive sampling, I was able to focus on individuals whose experiences were most relevant to my research. This approach ensured that my findings were rich, meaningful, and reflective of the shared experiences of English teachers as they navigated instructional changes during the pandemic.

The study included junior and senior high school teachers from Ramon Magsaysay Memorial Colleges who experienced instructional changes during the pandemic. Participants were required to have actively taught during the transition to online teaching to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and adaptations involved. Teachers with experience in both online and face-to-face instruction during this period were considered to provide a well-rounded perspective. The study included teachers willing to share their experiences, coping mechanisms, and perspectives on instructional changes and their impact on teaching and learning.

Additionally, the study excluded individuals who were not junior or senior high school teachers at Ramon Magsaysay Memorial Colleges during the pandemic. Teachers who had not experienced a transition from face-to-face to online teaching were omitted, as they would not provide relevant insights into instructional changes. Additionally, participants who were unable or unwilling to communicate their experiences in the study's chosen language or those who refused to provide informed consent were excluded from the study. Teachers who held administrative positions before or during the pandemic were also excluded, as their experiences and perspectives might not align with the study's focus on instructional changes from a teaching perspective. This exclusion ensured that the data collected remained relevant to the study's objectives.

Lastly, participants had the right to withdraw from the study at any time without providing a reason. If a participant experienced discomfort, emotional distress, or any form of harm during or after participation, they could withdraw their consent, and the data would no longer be used. Participants who failed to adhere to the study's ethical guidelines, including maintaining confidentiality and providing truthful information, may be removed from the study. Additionally, if a participant no longer met the inclusion criteria, they were subject to withdrawal from the study.

In terms of data collection, I utilized the following steps: for the participant, I generated approval request letters. I addressed them to the College President of Ramon Magsaysay Memorial Colleges, seeking approval for the study and access to the research site. I also sent similar copies of the letter to the Executive Director for Academic Affairs and the Program Director of the Basic Education Department for the same purpose. Additionally, I distributed another letter along with the Consent Form to the participants, ensuring their voluntary participation in the study. Once I secured approval from the Academic Administrators and obtained consent from the participants, I implemented the following data collection strategies:

To begin, I prepared logistical requirements, including the venue and an audio/voice recorder for the interviews. During my initial visit with the participants, I determined the venue and schedule for the interviews. Then, before conducting the interviews, I provided each participant with a copy of the consent form for their signature. This form outlined the study's objectives, methodology, confidentiality measures, benefits, and contact information for any clarifications. Lastly, after retrieving the Consent Forms, I also had participants sign a Participant Agreement Form, which documented our agreement regarding the interview and transcription process, including the use of pseudonyms and other relevant details.

For this study, I conducted one-on-one interviews consisting of two parts: the first part gathered background information. In contrast, the second part explored participants' experiences with instructional changes and coping mechanisms during the COVID-19 pandemic at Ramon Magsaysay Memorial College. These interviews were scheduled at a convenient time and location for each participant. I utilized a digital recorder and Zoom video recording to ensure accuracy. I transcribed the interviews verbatim while maintaining confidentiality.

To validate the accuracy of the data, I employed member checking, where participants reviewed and confirmed the transcripts. I also took field notes during the interviews to capture non-verbal cues, following Wilson *et al.*'s (1991) single-case approach, which emphasizes collaboration between the researcher and participants.

After completing the interviews, I transcribed the audio recordings and used member checking to ensure accuracy. Participants reviewed the transcripts and signed them to confirm the accuracy of the contents. I identified the point of interview saturation when responses exhibited a consistent flow of thought, reflecting similar experiences.

I initiated the data collection process by identifying the research problem, clarifying my research objectives, and gathering participants' lived experiences regarding

the instructional changes during the COVID-19 pandemic. To ensure ethical compliance, I submitted a Protocol Application to the Ethics Review Committee. Upon receiving the Ethics Review Committee Certification, I communicated my research intent to the Graduate School Dean. I then presented the goals of my study through a formal letter addressed to the school head and key informants (see Appendix F). At the beginning of each interview, I explained the study's purpose and provided participants with the Informed Consent Form (see Appendix I). To ensure clarity, I translated these documents into their local dialect when necessary. Before proceeding, I asked potential participants to sign a Participant Agreement Form (see Appendix J) to confirm their understanding of the terms and conditions of their participation.

Then, following these preparations, I employed various data-gathering methods. I employed a single-case study approach, integrating multiple data sources to develop a comprehensive understanding of the teacher's perspective. I collected data through document analysis, observations, interviews, and demographic surveys (Yin, 2018; Hancock *et al.*, 2021).

Moreover, the semi-structured interviews with key informants served as a primary data source. I developed my questionnaire (see Appendix B) with guidance from a research consultant, ensuring its validity through expert review (see Appendix D). To facilitate accurate data collection and preservation, I prepared the necessary equipment, including a tape recorder and writing materials. I conducted interviews at locations and times convenient for participants, allowing them to express their ideas, behaviors, and experiences freely.

Next, to ensure data accuracy, I employed participant verification by securing a Participant Verification Form (see Appendix K). This method enabled key informants to validate the accuracy of descriptions, themes, and interpretations derived from observations and transcriptions, thereby enhancing the study's validity and reliability. I also applied data source triangulation by comparing semi-structured interview findings with observations and reviewed documents to identify areas of agreement and divergence (Natow, 2020).

Subsequently, for data analysis, I followed qualitative frameworks developed by Colaizzi (1978) and Moustakas (1994), focusing on textural and structural descriptions to uncover the essence of participants' experiences. First, I transcribed responses and meticulously encoded the data to identify significant statements. I then reviewed textual content iteratively, extracting unique statements and categorizing them into meaning units. These meaning units were subsequently grouped into thematic clusters based on different frames of reference. I used textual descriptions to capture participants' direct experiences and structural descriptions to explore the contextual conditions that influenced those experiences.

Finally, by synthesizing textural and structural descriptions, I identified emergent themes that encapsulated participants' instructional changes and coping mechanisms. These themes provided a deeper understanding of the research, forming the basis for discussions, recommendations, and conclusions. Through the application of robust

qualitative methodologies, I ensured that my findings contributed meaningful insights into participants' lived experiences, offering valuable implications for educational practices.

- **Trustworthiness**

I ensured trustworthiness throughout my study to establish rigor and enhance the validity and reliability of my research. I employed various trustworthiness strategies, including credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability.

- **Credibility**

To establish credibility, I accurately identified and described participants to ensure reliable data collection. To further validate the credibility of the data gathered from documents, observations, and interviews, I meticulously scrutinized all information (Stahl & King, 2020).

- **Dependability**

I also addressed dependability, which refers to the stability of data over time and under different conditions. I clearly stated the principles and criteria I used to select participants, as well as their main characteristics. This transparency allowed others to assess the potential transferability of my results to different contexts (Stenfors *et al.*, 2020a).

- **Confirmability**

Regarding confirmability, I ensured that the data accurately reflected the information provided by participants, thereby minimizing the risk of researcher bias. I paid attention to latent content, such as silence, sighs, laughter, and posture, while also analyzing manifest content. To avoid over-interpretation, I collaborated with another analyst to enhance comprehensiveness and provide a sound interpretation of the data. Furthermore, I ensured that my conclusions were based on participants' actual responses rather than personal biases or interests (Stenfors *et al.*, 2020b).

By applying these rigorous qualitative research methods, I maintained the integrity of my study. I provided meaningful and reliable insights into the experiences of English teachers navigating instructional changes during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## 3.2 Ethical Consideration

A primary ethical consideration had distinct implications for this qualitative research. These issues and concerns may have arisen primarily from the methodology employed in this study. The ethical challenges in this research concerned the proper operation of the study, confidentiality, and anonymity. The study followed the standards of the RMMC Ethics and Review Committee for the guidelines of ethical consideration, particularly in addressing the population and data, such as, but not limited to:

- **Voluntary Participation**

The participants were allowed to participate without fear of repercussion, reparation, or loss of benefits. Therefore, after the study's purpose and benefits were explained to the participating person, the participant's rights to provide the body of knowledge were carefully protected, and their foresight was acknowledged. In this

study, participants were not required to participate. They could withdraw their participation when they felt uncomfortable during the study.

- **Privacy and Confidentiality**

Participants had the right to privacy that should not have been violated without informed consent to conform to the existing R.A. 10173 or Data Privacy Act 2012, an act protecting the fundamental human right of privacy. One way to observe privacy and confidentiality in this qualitative research was to provide participants with the option of not including their names on the survey questionnaire. Additionally, confidentiality and privacy were maintained by not publishing the demographic data of the informants, including their age, gender, occupation, employment status, and any relevant medical conditions. Hence, their identity was kept confidential for safety purposes.

- **Informed Consent Process**

The prospective research participants were fully informed about the research's objectives, methods, and benefits as comprehensively as possible within the framework of the study. The participants' consent was obtained, indicating that their participation was voluntary. The audio recording was used to convey the essential details to be disclosed to the participants and to outline the interview's conduct. The participants were asked to affix their signatures on the informed consent form confirming that they had voluntarily agreed to participate in the interview. The names of the participants were not disclosed, and their answers were kept confidential. Participants were fully aware that they could withdraw from the study at any time. Furthermore, any data I gathered was protected, and the release of any information would follow a strict informed consent process.

- **Recruitment**

The participants were informed about the reasons for their selection for the study. Then, to help the participants understand the study's purpose, I explained the study's objectives so that they could further infer its essence. Apart from the letter, I gave the rationale for the study and its significance.

- **Risks**

The research was conducted because there was an acceptable favorable benefit-to-risk ratio. In this study, protecting the participants from significant harm was equally essential. Therefore, the study prioritized the welfare of the participants. Furthermore, the participants were not harmed, as their identities were confidential. Their security and safety were of the utmost concern. There was a need to ensure that the participants were physically, emotionally, and socially ready. In answering the survey questionnaire, I ensured that the participants did not feel discomfort or awkwardness.

- **Benefits**

This study contributes to society by highlighting the instructional and emotional challenges teachers experienced during the sudden shift to online learning. These insights are crucial for improving educational practices and supporting teachers more effectively during future disruptions. Specifically, the findings can assist policymakers, school leaders, and curriculum developers in crafting well-informed programs and

interventions that enhance teacher readiness, promote professional development, and ensure the continuity of learning under challenging conditions.

- **Plagiarism**

The study showed no evidence of misinterpretation of someone else's work. The study was subjected to plagiarism detectors like Grammarly. As a researcher, there was a need for positive character and integrity, which were associated with moral virtues and values. I needed to have a better understanding of the plagiarism paradigm to produce a credible research paper.

- **Fabrication**

The study had no indication or cue of purposive misinterpretation of what had been done. There was no manipulation of data or results, nor was there any purposeful distortion of conclusions that were not accurate. Instead, I employed and integrated theories related to the information and other inferential concepts.

- **Falsification**

The study showed no evidence of purposefully misrepresenting the work to fit a model or theoretical expectation, and there was no indication of overclaiming or exaggeration. Additionally, this study did not adhere to the principles of data manipulation, which involves formulating statements, disregarding important details, or maneuvering materials, tools, or methodologies that could mislead others.

- **Conflict of Interest (COI)**

The study had no conflict of interest, for example, the disclosure of COI, a set of conditions in which professional judgment concerning primary interest is required. However, participants' welfare or the validity of the research tends to be influenced by secondary interests, such as financial or academic gains or recognition. Furthermore, I had no control or influence over the participants who were required to participate in the study.

- **Deceit**

The study did not indicate that it misled participants about any potential danger. There must be substantial protection of the rights of participants in any study, especially since they have attained higher education, and balanced and appropriate principles must be followed.

- **Permission from the Organization/Location**

As to this ethical consideration, I followed the protocols. Upon receiving the signal from the panelists, the adviser, and the RMMC-ERC, I sought the school's approval for conducting the study through a formal letter. After this, I wrote a formal letter to the school president. The RMMC employees who participated in the study were oriented prior to the interview.

- **Authorship**

As the researcher of the study, I was enrolled in the RMMC Graduate School. I underwent a series of revisions based on the suggestions and recommendations made by the research adviser, who guided the completion of this paper. The refinement of the paper was made possible through the guidance of his adviser and the panel. I also

followed the guidelines of the RMMC Ethics Review Committee for ethical considerations.

## 4. Results

The study involved five English teachers from the Junior and Senior High School departments of Ramon Magsaysay Memorial Colleges-Integrated School, selected for in-depth interviews. Participants included "Louis," a passionate oral communication teacher; "Celine," a literature specialist with a calm approach; "Hermes," a versatile educator also leading the school publication; "Kate," known for her expertise in grammar and research; and "Dior," who brought optimism and creativity to both her classes and the school's broadcasting club. All had between four and six and a half years of teaching experience and were purposefully chosen based on set criteria. Their demographic profiles supported a diverse yet representative sample that added credibility to the findings.

### 4.1 Analysis of Themes
The analysis revealed themes around instructional changes, emotional responses, and the overall impact on teachers' lives during the pandemic. Teachers struggled with lesson preparation, digital tools, and student engagement while adapting to online platforms. Emotionally, they experienced stress, anxiety, and exhaustion, yet showed resilience and growth through collaboration and innovation. Despite the challenges, they gained digital competence and a deeper empathy for students. Teachers emphasized the need for ongoing support, mental health resources, and professional development to sustain the progress made. These insights offer a meaningful understanding of how English teachers navigated unprecedented changes in education.

## 5. Louise's Story

The first participant is a 28-year-old Senior High School teacher at Ramon Magsaysay Memorial Colleges-Integrated School, coded as "Louis," inspired by the luxury brand Louis Vuitton. He carries an air of charisma and confidence that mirrors the brand's iconic presence. His vibrant teaching style and commanding classroom presence make him a well-loved figure among both students and colleagues. With a specialization in Oral Communication, Louis has spent six and a half years shaping the voices of young learners.

When the pandemic shifted education to the digital world, Louis had to adapt quickly. While initially intrigued by the opportunity to use new platforms and teaching strategies, he soon found himself overwhelmed. The transition required not only mastering unfamiliar tools but also restructuring his lessons from interactive, face-to-face sessions to flat and screen-based deliveries. His experience echoed the time-consuming nature of the transition.

*"It was very time-consuming. You can't just copy-paste your lesson plan."*

The online setup brought a host of new issues that made conducting classes complex. Louis found it difficult to sustain student engagement and struggled with irregular attendance. Classroom dynamics, which he once controlled with ease, now depended on unstable internet connections and varying student participation. The lack of physical presence made it harder to gauge reactions, adapt on the fly, or build the energy that typically fueled his lessons.

*"There are students who would just turn off their cameras or disappear from class."*

This shift also led to difficulty in learning assessment. Louis recounted that some students copied answers from classmates or AI-powered tools, while others did not submit at all. Traditional quizzes and recitations were hard to execute online, and meaningful feedback became a challenge.

*"You don't know if they understood the lesson or if they just got answers from somewhere."*

Although he tried to stay optimistic, Louis's feelings wavered. At times, he experienced evoking excitement, especially when exploring creative online content. He enjoyed experimenting with visual aids, games, and online discussions to keep his students engaged.

*"It was fun at first, like discovering something new."*

However, the novelty soon wore off, replaced by feelings of being burdened. He missed classroom interaction and felt like he was teaching into a void. The joy of teaching seemed to fade as students grew less responsive and screen fatigue set in.

*"It felt like talking to myself sometimes."*

Still, Louis was anxious yet persevering. Determined not to let the situation compromise his students' learning, he reworked lesson plans repeatedly, adjusted activities, and found new ways to assess participation. Even when discouraged, he showed a sense of duty and hope that things would improve.

*"I just had to keep going because the students still needed to learn."*

This persistence came with internal torment. Louis often questioned if he was doing enough or if his students were falling behind. The blurred line between work and rest wore him down emotionally.

*"I felt guilty when I rested, like I was wasting time."*

Over time, Louis cultivated resilience and consideration. He became more patient and understanding of students' struggles—unstable internet, family responsibilities, and emotional distress. He relaxed strict deadlines and offered alternatives for those who needed help.

*"You have to adjust because not all students have the same resources."*

Ultimately, he reached a stage of positive realization. Louis came to see that teaching is not just about delivering content but about responding to context with compassion and creativity. The experience helped him grow not only as a teacher but also as a person.

*"This made me a better teacher, and maybe a better person, too."*

Louis's story illustrates how educators like him rose to the challenge, not without struggle, but with a quiet courage that redefined their craft.

## 6. Celine's Story

Celine is a 26-year-old Senior High School English teacher at Ramon Magsaysay Memorial Colleges-Integrated School with six years of teaching experience. Known for her thoughtful personality and passion for language, she brings creativity and empathy into her classroom. As the SHS Grade 12 Coordinator, Celine is well-versed in managing both instructional and leadership responsibilities. However, when the pandemic forced a sudden shift to online learning, Celine's steady rhythm was disrupted, leading to a rollercoaster of emotions and realizations.

At first, Celine met the new mode of teaching with excitement. The opportunity to explore digital tools like Quipper and create content that resonated with students online intrigued her. But that excitement was short-lived. As the reality of remote teaching set in, so did the overwhelming weight of its demands. Lessons that once took hours to plan now stretched into days. Assessment checking, feedback, and student consultations consumed most of her time beyond class hours. The joy of teaching slowly gave way to fatigue and stress. For Celine, the transition was undeniably time-consuming.

*"Mas nadugangan gyud ang akoa time sa pagprepare. Kay dapat dali masabtan online, dapat creative."*

One of the most challenging aspects was conducting classes. Teaching felt heavier and more complicated online. Without the structure of a physical classroom, distractions at home made it hard to maintain student focus. The absence of real-time supervision and

immediate feedback meant she had to rethink how to deliver lessons and how to know whether students were really learning. These challenges made conducting classes complex and emotionally exhausting.

> *"Kung face-to-face makabalo man ko sa reaction nila. Pero sa online, kulang kaayo og response. Mura kog wala'y kaistorya."*

Celine also faced difficulty in learning assessment. She found it hard to track whether students truly grasped the lessons. Many learners submitted late or gave minimal responses, which left her questioning not just the students' performance but her own effectiveness as a teacher. The lack of visible engagement and clarity deepened her doubts.

> *"Lisod kaayo i-check kung nagtuon ba gyud sila. Usahay duha ra ka sentence ilang itubag, or dugay kaayo mag-submit."*

Despite these difficulties, Celine remained resilient. She described herself as anxious yet persevering. Even when unsure of her own effectiveness, she continued to find creative ways to adapt her teaching. She integrated videos, comics, and interactive tasks into her lessons. She offered flexible deadlines and multiple formats for submissions to accommodate different student needs. Her willingness to meet students where they were, even under pressure, reflected her strong sense of compassion and determination.

> *"Sa sugod murag di gyud ko kabalo. Pero gidawat nako nga kinahanglan ko magtuon og lain. Ginagamitan nako og humor para malingaw sila."*

While burdened by the emotional toll of disconnected teaching, Celine also experienced moments of evoking excitement. She felt a sense of accomplishment when she mastered new platforms and found joy in seeing students respond to her efforts, even if only in small ways. These small victories gave her hope and reaffirmed her commitment to her profession.

> *"Nalingaw ko katong nakita nako nga ni-participate sila sa akong gamay nga activity, bisan simple ra."*

The experience brought about intense internal torment. There were moments when she questioned her identity and role as an educator. She worried that she was merely delivering content instead of nurturing students. But these moments of self-doubt did not defeat her.

> *"Feeling nako murag content delivery na lang ko. Dili na pareho sauna nga naa'y connection."*

Instead, they pushed her toward resilience and consideration. Celine learned to let go of perfection and embrace the importance of empathy, especially during a time when everyone—including her students—was struggling in their own ways.

> *"Nag-adjust gyud ko. Kung malate sila, akong ginahatagan og chance. Dili tanan pareho og sitwasyon."*

Eventually, Celine arrived at a place of positive realization. She recognized that her work still mattered deeply, even if it looked different than before. She understood that flexibility and emotional support were just as important as academic content. She realized that adaptability, reflection, and a positive mindset were essential not just for survival, but for true growth.

> *"Na-realize nako nga bisan unsa kalisod, naa gihapon koy mahimo nga impact. Kinahanglan lang ko mag-usab og style."*

Celine's journey through online teaching reveals how hardship can become a source of transformation. In her own words, she did not just endure the change—she evolved through it.

## 7. Hermes' Story

The third participant, a 32-year-old Senior High School English teacher, is referred to as "Hermes," reflecting the elegant and adaptive quality of the luxury brand. Like the brand's timeless appeal, Hermes carries with it a sense of calm resolve and thoughtful presence. He has served the institution for eight years and has become known for his methodical teaching approach and capacity for empathy. When the pandemic forced a shift to online learning, Hermes encountered unexpected shifts in both pedagogy and personal perspective.

The transition highlighted the time-consuming nature of online instruction. Lesson planning that used to take an hour or two now extended into days, especially as he had to convert printed materials into interactive digital formats. He found himself exhausted after spending long hours preparing content and checking student outputs.

> *"Instead of printing and distributing modules, I had to spend the whole day creating visuals, uploading, and responding to students."*

These difficulties bled into conducting classes, where virtual sessions felt chaotic compared to the structured environment of a physical classroom. Hermes struggled with maintaining attention, and technical issues disrupted the flow of teaching.

*"You couldn't tell if students were even listening. Sometimes I was just staring at blank screens."*

One of his biggest concerns was difficulty in learning assessment. As an educator who values feedback and growth, Hermes found it troubling when students submitted copied work or turned in assignments inconsistently. He had to rethink what learning truly meant in such conditions.

*"You start to ask yourself—did they learn it, or did someone just send them the answers?"*

Despite these obstacles, Hermes initially approached the online setup with evoking excitement. He enjoyed discovering tools like Google Forms and Jamboard, which allowed him to be more creative than ever before.

*"It was refreshing in a way—I got to try things I'd never used in a regular classroom."*

Yet, the excitement eventually gave way to being burdened. The lack of genuine interaction left him disheartened. He missed the energy of his students and the rhythm of face-to-face discussions.

*"Even when I tried to make the class lively, there was silence. It was draining."*

Still, Hermes showed he was anxious yet persevering. He didn't give up, even when most students stopped showing up or participating. Instead, he continued to reach out, revise his content, and make learning easier for them.

*"There were days I almost wanted to give up, but I kept thinking, maybe they just need one more chance."*

These efforts took a toll, leading to internal torment. He doubted his ability to make an impact and questioned whether he was doing enough. The emotional weight of wanting to be effective amid limited results weighed heavily on him.

*"I felt like I was failing them. Like I couldn't reach them, no matter what I did."*

Eventually, Hermes adopted a mindset of resilience and consideration. He stopped focusing solely on deadlines and shifted toward listening to his students' situations. He started offering individualized support and made himself available for consultations beyond class hours.

*"I told them, just talk to me. If you can't do it now, I understand. Just let me know."*

In the end, he experienced a positive realization. The ordeal redefined how he viewed his purpose. Teaching wasn't just about content—it was about presence, patience, and connection.

*"It made me realize, I'm not just here to teach. I'm here to care, even from behind a screen."*

Hermes's story is a quiet testament to endurance. His narrative echoes the experience of countless educators who learned to stretch not only their time and energy but their capacity to lead with grace under pressure.

## 8. Kate's Story

The second participant is a 30-year-old Senior High School teacher from Ramon Magsaysay Memorial Colleges-Integrated School, referred to here as "Kate," symbolizing grace and strength. A passionate educator of English for eight years, she is known for her resourcefulness and creativity.

When the shift to online teaching began, Kate found herself needing to overhaul her teaching approach. She described how time-consuming it became. Preparing modules, uploading materials, and handling student inquiries stretched well beyond her normal working hours. Teaching was no longer confined to a schedule—it spilled into her personal time.

*"Checking their modules took longer because you had to verify if they really answered it themselves."*

The online environment also introduced a new layer of complexity in conducting classes. Kate found it difficult to keep students focused and involved, especially with limited monitoring capabilities. Her teaching style, once interactive and student-centered, had to be recalibrated to meet the demands of virtual platforms.

*"Most students were distracted; some didn't even turn in their cameras."*

This led to a difficulty in learning assessment. Without immediate feedback or in-person clarification, evaluating true comprehension became a guessing game. Asynchronous submissions further complicated timely evaluation.

*"I couldn't really tell if they understood or if they just copied from a classmate."*

Despite these hurdles, Kate initially felt a wave of evoking excitement. She explored digital platforms and relished the chance to innovate her lessons. Her enthusiasm sparked a new sense of professional challenge.

*"I was really excited to use Quipper and Google Meet. It felt like a fresh start."*

However, as the novelty wore off, she felt increasingly burdened. The reduced student interaction and increased workload made her feel isolated. The absence of real-time connections weighed heavily on her morale.

*"I felt like I was just a robot—post, check, repeat."*

Still, she remained anxious yet persevering. Despite her worries about student performance and personal burnout, she adapted. Her grit helped her push through the uncertainty.

*"I was nervous all the time, but I tried to make the lessons more engaging. That kept me going."*

Internally, Kate wrestled with internal torment. She often second-guessed her effectiveness and felt the weight of emotional exhaustion. The blurred boundaries between work and rest left her drained.

*"Sometimes, I cried after classes because I felt like I wasn't enough for them."*

Nevertheless, she cultivated resilience and consideration. She adjusted deadlines, reached out to struggling students, and adapted her approach. Her empathy became a core part of her online teaching strategy.

*"I told them they could message me anytime if they needed help or an extension."*

Ultimately, Kate reached a positive realization. She recognized that flexibility and compassion mattered more than perfection. Her journey reflects growth through adversity.

*"This experience taught me that being a teacher isn't about sticking to plans—it's about understanding and adapting."*

Kate's story is a testament to the emotional and instructional challenges teachers faced during the pandemic. Through struggle, she found strength, proving that even in uncertainty, a teacher's heart remains steady.

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Kate's story is a testament to the emotional and instructional challenges teachers faced during the pandemic. Through struggle, she found strength, proving that even in uncertainty, a teacher's heart remains steady.

## 10. Conclusion

### 10.1 Time-Consuming Preparation

Teachers invested substantial time adapting traditional materials into digital formats, resulting in physical and mental exhaustion (Cutri & Mena, 2020; Gurung, 2021; Hodges *et al.*, 2020). While digital resources could later be reused, the initial workload was overwhelming. Less tech-savvy educators (e.g., Celine) faced steeper learning curves, underscoring the need for institutional support and professional development (Cutri & Mena, 2020; Hodges *et al.*, 2020).

- **Complexity of Conducting Classes**

The absence of face-to-face interaction made engagement difficult. Students are often disengaged, affecting classroom dynamics (Baber, 2021; Bao, 2020). Teachers adopted breakout rooms, gamified tasks, and polls, but struggled to build motivation and community (Martin *et al.*, 2021; Pelikan *et al.*, 2021). Asynchronous learning further encouraged passive participation, suggesting the need for more interactive and student-centered online designs (Pelikan *et al.*, 2021; Bao, 2020).

- **Difficulty in Learning Assessment**

Ensuring academic integrity online was difficult, with concerns about plagiarism and authenticity (Farrah, 2020; Mahyoob, 2020; Timmis *et al.*, 2016; Utami *et al.*, 2023). Oral assessments and standardized tests were less effective, prompting a shift toward project-based and open-ended tasks. However, these required more time and subjective grading, highlighting the need for better online assessment strategies (Timmis *et al.*, 2016; Mahyoob, 2020).

- **Evoking Excitement**

Initial enthusiasm stemmed from the chance to innovate with digital tools (Jung *et al.*, 2021; Rapanta *et al.*, 2020). Teachers experimented with gamified learning and virtual simulations. However, ongoing technical issues and a lack of structured training reduced motivation. To sustain innovation, long-term support in digital pedagogy is essential (Nguyen, 2023; Trust & Whalen, 2020).

- **Feeling Burdened**

The workload associated with online teaching led to significant emotional fatigue (Diliberti & Kaufman, 2020; Reich *et al.*, 2020). Teachers faced technological challenges and blurred work-life boundaries. Many institutions lacked sufficient training programs, leaving educators unsupported (Carrillo & Flores, 2020; Pressley, 2021). Social-emotional tolls also emerged from the isolation of online teaching (Schleicher, 2020).

- **Anxious Yet Persevering**

Educators experienced anxiety due to unfamiliar platforms and blurred boundaries (Reeve, 2015; Kim & Asbury, 2020). Nevertheless, they showed resilience by seeking solutions, collaborating with peers, and building support networks (Bottiani *et al.*, 2019; Herman *et al.*, 2020; Sokal *et al.*, 2020). These findings point to the need for mental health and coping support programs for teachers.

- **Internal Torment**

Teachers grappled with emotional and professional struggles due to the loss of in-person dynamics and lack of digital fluency (MacIntyre *et al.*, 2020; Schleicher, 2020). Feelings of inadequacy and exhaustion were common, prompting self-doubt and professional identity crises. Structured training and psychological support were deemed crucial (Alan, 2021; Duran, 2021).

- **Resilience and Consideration**

Teachers remained empathetic and flexible, adjusting expectations to support students' well-being (Mercer & Gregersen, 2020; Josefsson & Menhem, 2022). They adopted digital tools creatively and prioritized students' emotional and academic needs, showing strong teacher agency and adaptability (Luthar *et al.*, 2020; Moser *et al.*, 2021; Chiu, 2021).

- **Positive Realization**

Teachers experienced personal and professional growth, redefining their roles with more empathy and purpose (Corcuera *et al.*, 2021; Bozkurt & Sharma, 2021; König *et al.*, 2020). They developed a deeper appreciation for teaching and embraced a more holistic approach. This aligns with "pandemic pedagogy," which emphasizes care, adaptability, and emotional support (Carrillo & Flores, 2020; Hodges *et al.*, 2020; Trust & Whalen, 2020; König & Rothland, 2022).

## 10.2 Implications for Practice

- **Professional Development and Technological Proficiency**

Filipino teachers need enhanced training to integrate technology effectively. Continuous, targeted professional development can equip them to navigate online platforms and design engaging lessons.

- **Innovative Assessment Practices**

Traditional assessments, especially of language skills, were inadequate online. Teachers need tools for performance-based, project-based, and authentic assessments to measure real competencies.

- **Teacher Well-being and Mental Health Support**

Teachers experienced burnout and isolation. Addressing emotional well-being through mental health programs, counseling, reduced workloads, and protected planning time is essential.

- **Collaboration and Professional Learning Communities**

Peer support and collaboration boosted teacher growth and innovation. Platforms that encourage the sharing of best practices and collective problem-solving should be institutionalized.

- **Recognition and Motivation**

Formal recognition through incentives, awards, and public acknowledgement increases morale and inspires excellence.

- **Policy Grounding**

These practices align with the Philippine Constitution and the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013, advancing reform and equity.

## 10.3 Implications for Future Research

Based on the findings of this study, several key implications for future research emerge that could further enhance the understanding of the challenges and opportunities within online teaching in the Philippine context. Firstly, research should explore the long-term effects of online teaching on teacher well-being and mental health. While this study

highlights the emotional and physical toll of the transition to digital learning, further investigations could focus on the sustainability of teacher resilience and the efficacy of mental health interventions over time. Understanding how teachers cope with continued stressors in the online teaching environment and identifying factors that contribute to sustained resilience could provide valuable insights for improving teacher support systems.

Secondly, future research may delve deeper into the impact of innovative assessment methods in online education, particularly in language learning.

Given the challenges teachers face in assessing students' language skills online, there is a need to explore alternative forms of assessment that go beyond traditional exams and quizzes. Studies could examine the effectiveness of project-based assessments, performance evaluations, and digital portfolios in capturing a student's comprehensive language abilities. Research could also investigate how these assessment methods contribute to student engagement and learning outcomes in virtual classrooms, providing educators with evidence-based strategies to improve assessment practices.

Furthermore, as the study showed, teachers faced a steep learning curve in adapting to technology, highlighting the need for specialized training programs. Future studies could investigate the effectiveness of different types of professional development, such as online workshops, peer mentoring, and self-paced courses, in enhancing teachers' technological proficiency and pedagogical strategies. This research could help identify the most impactful methods of professional development and inform the design of future teacher training initiatives.

Additionally, exploring the role of collaboration among educators in overcoming the challenges of online teaching is another important area for future research. The findings suggest that collaborative communities can facilitate the sharing of resources and strategies for effective teaching among teachers. Future studies could examine the impact of teacher collaboration on pedagogical innovation and student learning outcomes. Research could also investigate how institutional support for collaborative networks, both within and across schools, contributes to teachers' professional growth and the overall success of online learning initiatives.

Ultimately, there is a need for research that examines the broader societal and systemic factors influencing the challenges faced by teachers in online education. Understanding these external factors could help inform policy recommendations that address the structural challenges faced by educators, particularly in under-resourced schools, and ensure more equitable access to quality education for all students.

**Conflict of Interest Statement**
The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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