

## **Phenomenological Study of Teachers in the Virtual Classroom During the PANDEMIC**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The study delved into modifications and adjustments that educators underwent in a virtual classroom. It analyzed fundamental practices, guidelines, supervision, and teaching-learning methodologies that were employed in a wired learning environment. It analyzed the phenomenology in a virtual learning platform during the pandemic that reshaped teachers' theoretical and practical views on education. The study used Cognitive Constructivism of Jean Piaget. Learning from this frame of reference is known as a self-regulating process of resolving inner conflict that often is apparent through pragmatic experience, collaborative discourse, and reflection (Brooks and Brooks, 1993). The study assessed the process of construction, deconstruction and reconstruction in education. The study used in-depth interviews and focus group discussions of selected faculty members of a private higher education institution in Manila which has fully adopted the online platform at the onset of the pandemic. Some results included deconstruction on authority i.e., teachers face some limitations in instilling discipline and principles normally applied in a face-to-face classroom interaction; reconstruction on active learning i.e., learners are not forced to join synchronous virtual discussions due to erratic internet connection so teachers find other means to provide new avenues to allow student participation; and construction on inclusion as the guiding philosophy in learning. Common narratives among teachers are casualties brought about by the pandemic, mental stability issues, the difficulty of communicating with learners, and the problems and possible improvements of virtual learning. The study's findings gave way to opportunities for improvements that may be used when revisiting institutional plans of actions, techniques, and educational schemes for virtual learning.

**Keywords:** online learning, constructivism, inclusion, pandemic, teachers, transformation

### **INTRODUCTION**

Learning through technologies has gained momentum in Asia in the past decade. Related to this is the increase in emphasis on how people learn (Bransford, Brown, and Cocking, 2000) which underpins how students learn through technologies. The learning sciences as a multi-disciplinary field studies how learning occurs in real-life situations, both within formal and informal settings (Looi, Hung and Tan, 2004).

The global pandemic stopped the face-to-face classroom teaching and learning abruptly, as early as February 2020 in other countries. The educational scenario in the Philippines immediately followed with the suspension of all classes by March 10, 2020.

All teachers were forced to adapt to the new normal quickly with a very limited period for preparation, and exploring new learning platforms like *Google Meet*, *Zoom*, *Google Hangouts*, *Facebook groups*, and *Schoology* among others. The various platforms allowed teachers to upload, to manage course

materials, and to evaluate student academic outputs and academic performances with the various functions and features available.

It is within this perspective that this study examined how these technologies are effectively integrated into online teaching and how teachers adapted. It considered the context of the teachers' engagements and focused on learning opportunities that were mediated by learning technologies.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The study examined online learning from the perspective of the source--examining policies and delivery of online teaching and learning from the perspective of the teachers. It asked, "How has online learning in a pandemic transformed teachers of their views and insights on education?"

This study is inspired by how teachers' self-regulating process of resolving inner conflict in educating learners adapted to online delivery of lessons. Specifically, (1) it explored changes and transformations experienced by teachers as educators in an online learning environment; (2) It asked how principles, standards, management, and delivery of learning possibly are modified in an online platform; and (3) It further sought to understand how online teaching and learning during pandemic transformed teachers views and insights on education.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Foreign Literature**

Current communication engaged man to utilize Information Communication Technologies (ICT) devices and equipment in fostering mobile connection with immediate access to data and social networking via mobile phones, internet, and computer, among others.

As a technological category, mobile media include everything from mobile phones to handheld video game platforms to music/video players to personal internet devices, digital cameras, and navigational (GPS) devices. Personal gaming devices like the *Sony PSP* had become increasingly powerful platforms for media of all forms, capable of displaying true 3D graphics, playing music and movies, and supporting an increasing range of broadband applications. Digital cameras now include GPS navigation receivers; mobile phones include cameras and are increasingly able to exchange data online. The state-of-the-art mobile phone features have enabled ease of access to information and personalization of learning: personalized communications and personalized libraries. Thousands of courses, tutorials, lectures, and materials are now freely available through *iTunes* and other podcasts (Squire, 2009, p.73). Thus, the advancement of information and communications technologies changed the way people learn, work, and socialize (Bonk & King, 1998). More and more people turned to Web technology for their learning needs due to the flexible delivery system that the Web offers. As many researchers have become interested in utilizing the advantages of the computer and internet medium to deliver individualized instruction online, and individuals' different learning styles have garnered attention accordingly (Chen & Paul, 2003). Research suggested that individuals have different preferences in e-learning (Hills, 2003); such individual differences also affect motivation in terms of the individual's need for achievement, focus of control, and anxiety (Pintrich & Schunk, 1996 cited in Kim, 2009, p.4). These are supported by several studies about online learner motivation which focused on online interaction. Several researchers argue that the learner's motivation can increase as an outcome of online interaction (Wagner, 1997).

Several research studies have also shown that the level of interaction with the medium (i.e., interactivity) is a key to motivating learners in online courses (Firdyiwiek, 1999; Plowman, 1996; Stoney & Wild, 1998). In particular, Rowe and Gregor (1999) found from a study of a Web-based learning system for teaching computing in undergraduate-level computing courses that interactive features (i.e.,

animated demonstrations) were the most motivating feature for students in an online course. In addition, several researchers also emphasize the role of learner control in motivation. Many factors may impact learner control but in e-learning settings, learner control typically involves control of pace, sequence, and access to learner support (Alessi & Trollip, 2001).

A person is said to be learning when he/she is in the process of acquiring knowledge or skill. It cannot be assumed that by pouring a person's head with information, he/she is said to be learning. Knowledge is acquired through interaction between individuals and the environment (Yahya, et.al., 2010). Many researchers and learners believe that learning by doing (Schank, 1995) is the best way of learning. Consequently, one computer application used in most schools is *Moodle*. It is an open-source courseware package for educators to create online learning communities and courses for students. Students and teachers share ideas online and use online activities, discussions, and interactions to study a topic. *Moodle* also enables teachers to differentiate learning opportunities for students. Online discussion and collaboration can operate independently as needed, thereby allowing for a more individualized approach to student learning. Educators can tap into a broad base of open materials that can enrich classroom instruction. Teachers can take advantage of materials provided by nonprofit organizations such as museums that upload digital images, videos, and audio materials to the Internet for use by the public (Martinez, 2010, p.2).

Moreover, with the advancement and deployment of ubiquitous computing technologies, the process of learning from the environment became easier. This is when the technology allowed the process of information sharing and communication to happen naturally, constantly, and continuously throughout the day. For instance, a student equipped with a mobile device can connect to any other device and access the network by using wireless communication technologies (Uemukai et al., 2004). In addition, it is also suggested that the computers used by the student would be able to supply students with information and relevant services when they need it, by automatically sensing the context data and generating what is required (Cheng & Marsic, 2002). A broader definition of ubiquitous learning (u-learning) is "anywhere and anytime learning". The definition is referring to an environment that allows any mobile learning devices to access the learning and teaching contents via wireless networks in any location at any time. Ubiquitous learning or u-learning is a new learning paradigm. It is said to be an expansion of previous learning paradigms from conventional learning to electronic-learning (e-learning) and from e-learning to mobile-learning (m-learning) and now to u-learning (Yahya, et al., 2010, p.3). The first attempt in proposing the u-learning characteristic was by Curtis (2002). Curtis listed characteristics that were based on three unique key affordances to handheld computing. The characteristics which include permanency, accessibility, and immediacy have been acknowledged by other researchers (Ogata & Yano, 2004; Chiù, 2008) to be the most prominent for u-learning. Hiroaki Ogata and Yoneo Yano (2004) expanded the characteristics by considering the learners' mobility within the embedded-computing environments. They manage to identify another two major characteristics of u-learning, which are interactivity and situating of instructional activities. With reference to Chen, et al. (2002) and Curtis, et al. (2002), the major characteristics of u-learning are permanency, accessibility, immediacy, interactivity, and situating of instructional activities. The characteristics are (1) Permanency: The information remains unless the learners purposely remove it. (2) Accessibility: The information is always available whenever the learners need to use it. (3) Immediacy: The information can be retrieved immediately by the learners. (4) Interactivity: The learners can interact with peers, teachers, and experts efficiently and effectively through different media. (5) Context-awareness: The environment can adapt to the learners' real situation to provide them adequate information (cited in Yahya, et al., 2010, p.6).

It is interesting to note how Lau (2000) cited Peyton's nine elements of a successful distributed learning program, namely: (1) The program has a clear plan, (2) The delivery of platform enables the implementation of the course goals and structure, (3)The equipment and infrastructure are reliable and robust, (4)When problems do occur, tech support is immediate, (5) The instructors are dedicated to the concept of distributed learning and versed in distributed learning pedagogy, (6) The instructors are comfortable with the technology, (7) The instructional model incorporates a variety of techniques, (8) Local personnel assists with on-site facilitating and support, and (9) The program is constantly

monitored and evaluated for effectiveness. These nine elements of a successful distributed learning program lead us to understand what are some difficulties in integrating Information and Communication (ICT) in education. Anderson and Garrison (1998) enumerate the following difficulties: (1) inducing teaching staff and students to examine the core values and intended outcomes of the teaching-learning process, (2) a culture that emphasizes individual accomplishments and independence, (3) a reliance on input measures and unstandardized evaluation criteria to measure teaching impacts (cited in Evans & Nation, 2000, p. 31).

As ICT is very important in education, all these factors should be considered in ICT adoption and integration to schools. In addition, White, Shimoda, and Frederiksen (cited in Jossey- Bass Reader on Technology, 2000) listed five central functions that technology can perform to help link assessment with education reform: (1) Support students' work in extended, authentic learning activities, (2) Create portable, accessible copies of performances and replay performances in multiple media, (3) provide libraries of examples and interpretive tools, (4) Expand the community of assessment participants, and (5) Publish selected student work and thus recognize accomplishments.

Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) has the most to offer in terms of knowledge sharing and knowledge construction. Salmon (2000) in his book "e-moderating" online discussions, recommended guidelines for facilitating CMC in his five-step model: (1) Access and motivation, (2) Online satisfaction, (3) Information exchange, (4) Knowledge construction, and (5) Development. Each stage includes: Stage one (Access and motivation) involves rendering technical support to participants. Stage two (Online socialization) involves establishing participants' online identities and finding others with whom to interact. At stage three (Information exchange), giving information relevant to the course to each other. At stage four (Knowledge construction), discussions occur, and the interaction becomes more collaborative. At stage five (Development), looking for more benefits from the system to help participants achieve their personal goals (cited in Khine, 2006, p.181).

What are the possible uses of mobile wireless technology for teaching and learning? ICT tools can be classified into four broad categories: (a) informative tool, (b) communicative tool, (c) constructive tool, and (d) situating tool. Informative tools provide vast amounts of information in various formats such as text, sound, graphics, or video. Communicative tools can help to exchange information between the teacher and students or among students beyond the physical barrier of the classroom. Constructive tools can be used for manipulating information, constructing knowledge, or visualizing understanding. Situating tools are most likely to be used in a learning environment where students may explore the context and happenings (Khine, 2006, p. 286).

In the study of Beqiri and Bishka (2010), they investigated potential factors impacting students' satisfaction with online course delivery using business students as participants. The findings suggest that the student who would be more satisfied with the delivery of online courses fits the following profile: graduate, married, resides more than one mile away from campus, and male. Other factors found to influence student satisfaction include the appropriateness of the course being offered online and the degree of familiarity with it. Lastly, the study provides insights into students' attitudes toward the blended course delivery mode. This study provides some insights into factors that impact students' satisfaction with online courses. The research results demonstrate that online courses might be better received when offered at the graduate level (involving adult populations) than undergraduate level. Furthermore, degrees and certain courses that attract more male (than female) students would be potential candidates for online delivery. As course familiarity seems to play a significant role in a student's satisfaction, the authors advise that core and prerequisite courses not be offered online; on the other hand, elective courses may be offered online. Lastly, they recommend that schools and universities lean toward a blended course-delivery mode (with some face-to-face component) versus 100 percent online delivery (p.7).

The study of Freeze, Alshare, Lane and Wen (2010) utilized the Information Systems Success (ISS) model in examining e-learning systems success. The study was built on the premise that system quality (SQ) and information quality (IQ) influence system use and user satisfaction, which in turn impact system success. The study revealed that both system quality and information quality had a significant

positive impact on user satisfaction and system use. Additionally, the results showed that user satisfaction, compared to system use, had a stronger impact on system success (p.1). On the other hand, the system quality is the individual perception of a system's performance. From an e-learning perspective, the system quality is measured in terms of both the hardware available to the user and the various software applications designed for their intended use and needs. While the user is not aware of the network requirements of an ELS, e-learning often requires network-to-network communication that necessitates Internet access. High-quality ELSs demonstrate the following characteristics: availability, usability, the realization of user expectations, ease of learning, and response time (Halawi, McCarthy and Aronson, 2008; Guimaraes, Armstrong and Jones, 2009 cited in Freeze, et. Al, 2010, p. 10).

Information quality captures e-learning content issues. Providing students with learning information is the basic goal of a course website (Bhatti, Bouch and Kuchinsky, 2000). Deciding what content to place on a website is extremely important. Lin and Lu (2000) addressed the issue of how user acceptance is affected by features and accurate information. Huizingh (2000) distinguished content from design and operationalizes both concepts by using objective and subjective measures to capture features as well as perceptions. Perkowitz and Etzioni (1999) explored the importance of updated information with the notion of adaptive websites. Student satisfaction is also affected by the feedback received in a course (Rossin, et al., 2008), and the feedback can be viewed as an element of information quality (cited in Freeze, et.al, 2010, p. 5).

### **Local Literature**

The challenges and excitement in communication education are affected by changes in the overall education sector. New information and communications technology continue to change the landscape of the university. In many schools throughout the world, lessons are being delivered through a combination of CD- ROM and internet/ video conferencing. Students meet with their teachers in cyberspace. "Schools on the net" has been initiated in a number of countries. It utilizes multimedia applications and access to telecommunications networks linking schools all over the world. Communication systems such as modems, telephones, fax, and dialers have been integrated into existing networks (Medado, 1997 cited in CHED Centennial Congress in Higher Education, 1998).

Moreover, Bro. Andrew Gonzalez, then President of De La Salle University, had foreseen schooling as interspersed with exposure to the world of work and to actual practicum rendering the traditional arrangement of school calendars and scheduling of classes obsolete (Gonzales, 1997 cited in CHED Centennial Congress in Higher Education, 1998). The idea of online class is first perceived locally through Open Universities and distance education as not only popular but accepted as a regular course of providing access to education. Bro. Andrew added that Open universities will be like service stations for learning. These will continue in re-tooling and re-certification of new knowledge and skills. This will be facilitated by the entry of more information technologies Among the pioneer institutions in distance education includes the Open University of the Philippines, Polytechnic University of the Philippines, St. Louie University, Visayas State College of Agriculture, and College Assurance Plan (CAP) (CHED Centennial Congress in Higher Education, 1998).

It was only during the early 90s when the concept of open or distance learning became acceptable in the Philippines. Early initiatives in the late eighties include the CAP College Open Learning Program which started as a correspondence course utilized multimedia in its college degree and graduate courses. The Asian Institute of Distance Education (AIDE) also started about the same time by offering continuing education courses primarily for workers in government and factories. The most ambitious program is that of the University of the Philippines' Open University which offers both degree and non-degree courses for students in the country and overseas workers. The Polytechnic University of the Philippines Distance Education program also extended to various campuses like that of the University of the Philippines. Other initiatives included that of the Philippine Women's University which has established a consortium with a network of state and private universities and Technological University of the Philippines. The Meralco Foundation Institute and the Don Bosco Technical College have also started their continuing education program. The Asian Institute of Journalism and Communication

complements these initiatives through teacher training in the development of learning modules. A new institute, the Wizard Academy, embarked on the production of computer courseware. At least two networks, the Association of Non- Traditional Education (ANTEP) and the Foundation for Continuing Education (FORCE) provide the catalyst in mobilizing and sustaining these initiatives (Braid & Tuazon, 1998).

At the UP Open University, actual course development started with the organization of course teams. These course teams included, in addition to the writer as subject matter expert, an instructional designer, a media specialist, an editor for language, and a reader who is another subject matter expert. The course delivery with student support component provided both administrative support and learning support to the students by helping them become more self-reliant and better able to manage their own personal, educational, and vocational development. Support is provided along with the three major phases of distance education: entry, integration, and exit. The third component is composed of the media and technology used to develop the materials and deliver the courses to the learners. Tony Bates identified the five most important media in education: human media, text or print, audio, television, and computer networks. Bates suggested the following criteria in choosing which media and technology to use: Access, costs, teaching and learning, interactivity and user-friendliness, organizational issues, and novelty (Padolina cited in CHED Centennial Congress in Higher Education, 1998).

The feasibility of television teaching for higher education and for people has been fully demonstrated by the Discovery Channel and the Learning Channel. More teachers were able to integrate curriculum and homework with telecasts. Content discussions for subjects like history, arts and humanities and government and civics were effectively done through the multiple media approach. These became more and more evident in higher university courses, particularly in those in which expertise is limited. An expert then can give a televised lecture (which can be made available in a videotape, CD, or laserdisc) to a wider audience. Television teaching led to a more varied array of subjects in the curriculum. Through broadcast TV, gifted teachers reached a wider audience (Ibe, 1995 cited in CHED Centennial Congress in Higher Education, 1998).

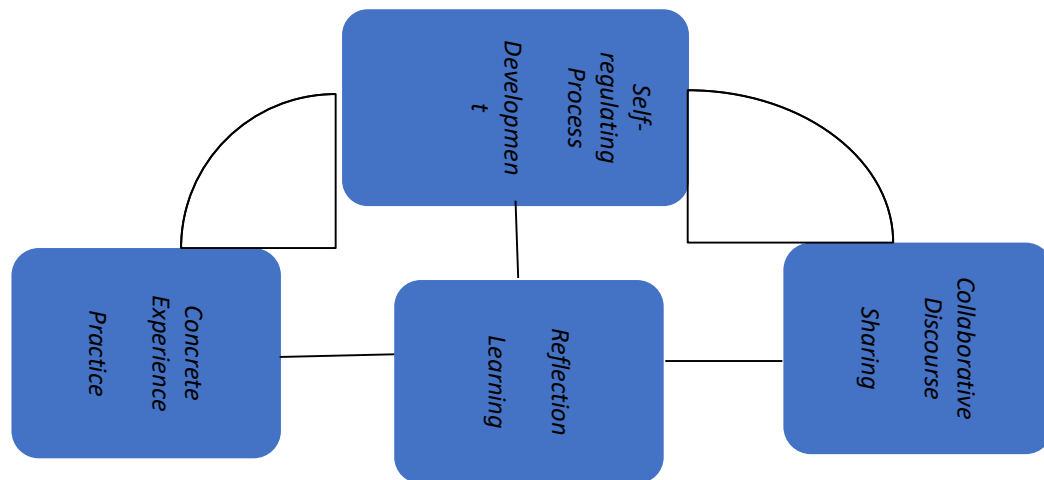
With this information, the utilization of ICT in education is dependent on up-to-date technology, a deregulated telecommunication industry, a receptive policy environment, and competent, sophisticated, and creative content providers. This underscores the need for: (1) a policy environment that motivates the private sector to make affordable, quality, and value-added computers and other forms of interactive technology; (2) a telecommunication industry that is deregulated and expanded to include major industry players and independent enterprises; and (3) competent content providers with a working knowledge of how information communication technology can be integrated into the learning environment (Braid, 1998).

## **METHODOLOGY**

Guided by the Cognitive Constructivism of Jean Piaget that learning from this perspective is understood as a self-regulating process of resolving inner conflict that often is apparent through concrete experience, collaborative discourse, and reflection (Brooks and Brooks, 1993), this study examined the process of construction, deconstruction, and reconstruction in learning.

Constructivism defines knowledge as temporary, developmental, social and culturally mediated. There are two major strands of the constructivist perspective: Cognitive constructivism and social constructivism. Cognitive constructivism is a theory of development that describes development of cognitive abilities while social constructivism emphasizes the importance of culture and context in understanding what occurs in society and constructing knowledge based on this understanding (Gao, 2005). Piaget's theory of cognitive development suggests that humans cannot be "given" information which they automatically understand and use; they must construct their own knowledge. They have to build their knowledge through experience. (Fosnot, 1996 cited in Khine, 2006, p. 24).

Lerman (1989) provided two assertions of cognitive constructivism: (1) knowledge is actively created by the knower instead of passively received in an unmodified form from the environment, (2) the process of knowing and learning does not reveal an increasingly accurate, objective, or true understanding of an independent, pre-existing world outside the mind of the knower. Therefore, learning itself is the development rather than the result of the development (Fosnot, Nelson, Hammerman, 1996).



**Figure 1:** Research Framework

Qualitative research requires a collection of experiences of people pertaining to the subject being investigated. The study made use of qualitative design to examine the lived experience of teachers in an online platform. In-depth interviews and focus group discussion were used as tools.

The purposive selection of subjects identifies those individuals who can provide rich information through their experiences. These individuals are those who can give relevant descriptions and interpretations as they primarily have first-hand experience of the topic under study. Subjects were chosen based on their ability and willingness to share their experiences. Multiple participants were also selected to provide various perspectives. By looking at these various accounts and perspectives, the researchers identified important areas of variations across perspectives. The participants of the study were selected teachers representing the different areas of a private higher education institution in Manila. These include nine (9) participants representing the areas of English, Natural Science, Math, Social Science, and Theology/Philosophy,

The focused group discussion (FGD) was conducted on June 18, 2021, via Zoom. In-depth interviews were conducted prior to the FGD to explore concerns of teachers in full online learning. Guide questions were presented on powerpoint slides to the participants, and they were asked to spontaneously answer in a narrative way their thoughts about each question which includes:

1. How has the shift to online changed your principles, approaches, and strategies to teaching and learning?
2. What challenges and difficulties have you encountered in online teaching?
3. What do you see as the main problem/ concern of online learning?
4. What policies (if any) have been made by your institution to adapt to online learning? Do you see these policies as necessary and effective?
5. What learning principles have been modified and changed in the shift to online learning?
6. Do you see online learning replacing face-to-face classroom learning? Why? Why not?
7. What do you want to improve in the current system of online learning?
8. What stories of other people resonate with you?

Simultaneously, as one participant is sharing his thoughts, the others are requested to engage via chat by providing information about:

1. three facts of online learning based on your experiences;
2. three values of teaching in an online environment; and
3. three consequences of online learning.

Open and axial coding were used to examine concepts and processes based on the participants' experiences. Themes were generated based on the axial codes.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The first part of the discussion summarized the dominant codes from the FGD. The open codes are shown using a mind map, and the axial codes are summarized in a table.

### A. Open Codes



Figure 2: Mind Map of Open Codes



<b>Summary of Axial Codes</b>
Teachers have somewhat lost authority in instilling discipline and other values in students.
Online policies in undergraduate should be adapted from policies in Graduate School i.e., number of students in a class, number of subjects enrolled.
Online evaluation should be modified and developed to ensure learning and honesty.
Technology has made learning fast, immediate, flexible, and mobile.
Main problems on connectivity often become reasons/ factors of non-engagement and delayed submission of requirements.
Activities and responsibilities at home distract and prevent students from focusing on their studies.
Stories of death, mental breakdown, uncertainties, and disconnection are common among students and teachers.
Mental health is often used as a reason/ factor for late submission and requests for make-up works.
Students often have no boundaries in sending messages to teachers.
Teachers are overwhelmed with the ubiquity of technology.
Teachers should be given the discretion on the frequency of synchronous sessions and the use of programs/ applications for grading.
Online may stay but will not replace face-to face learning.
Online teaching does not fully transcend the heart and passion of teachers to connect to their students.
Students display independent learning.
Online learning prevents learner-centered approach i.e., learning often becomes one way from the teacher (source) to students (receiver).
There is a split opinion on online replacing face-to-face. Some are optimistic; others are not.
Teachers should be given more training in the use of technology and be provided support by the management.
Teaching online makes the connection with students less personal.
Management should consider the plight of teachers as much as it considers those of the students.
Students expect their teachers to show compassion and understanding but somehow display actions lacking the same values towards their peers.
Online learning allows teachers to experiment and explore various approaches in teaching and learning.
Motivation to learn is one difficulty in online learning in a pandemic.
Online learning is inclusive given that internet connection is available for all.

**Table 1:** Summary of Axial Codes

The summary shows how principles, standards, management, and delivery of learning possibly are modified in an online platform. All teachers who participated in this study agreed that their teaching methods and principles abruptly changed upon the change in teaching learning modality. Teachers felt that they have lost authority in instilling discipline. The policies that ease academic requirements and deadlines, and directives to accommodate most of the requests of students in this online learning environment added to this feeling of loss of authority. One area that was common among teachers was improvement and review of policies. Some of these policies are on allowing teachers to decide and be flexible on the number of synchronous and asynchronous sessions instead of the 50 percent synchronous and 50 percent asynchronous set-up; reducing the class size to 20-30 students instead of 40, which affects the assessment and evaluation as the number of students in the online class is relatively big. Moreover, stories that resonate among teachers are deaths, mental breakdowns, and uncertainties. These stories are common in the context of the pandemic that required academic institutions to shift to online.

The second part is on themes generated from the axial codes.

### **Themes**

The lived experience of teachers in an online learning environment raised many pressing conditions about online education. It definitely requires educators to understand how online teaching and learning during pandemic transformed teachers' views and insights on education.

As the new teaching modality made teachers feel that as students are given much priority, this priority at times leads to compromise in teacher's authority in shaping values and delivering quality education. Also evident is the academic ease in online learning during the pandemic may lead to a dichotomy in learning. Academic ease allows students to balance studies and mental health, or academic ease defeats the very purpose of learning i.e., instilling diligence, responsibility, punctuality, discipline, commitment, hard work.

Moreover, online learning may be here to stay even with an obvious preference towards face-to-face learning, and with the many limitations of online learning. The benefits somehow outweigh the limitations of online learning. This flexibility in the teachers' choice and use of other learning platforms is necessary so that teachers will be able to experiment and explore various approaches in teaching and learning.

Furthermore, the freedom to use other platforms may also enable teachers to be more creative in lesson delivery, assessment, and evaluation. Policies on online learning should balance the tripartite relationship of students, teachers, and learning environment to achieve successful learning in a pandemic. At the moment, there is much favor given to students, but lacking in teachers and learning environment. School administrators should consider the plight of teachers as subsidies for technology and connectivity requirements of online teaching in a work-from-home setting have become a concern.

Retooling on a learner-centered approach using the online platform is necessary as the primary concern among teachers is connecting and engaging students in a virtual classroom. Finally, there should be a series of training that would reinforce teachers' knowledge about learner-centered teaching methodology in an online learning setting as online teaching styles (in asynchronous and synchronous classes) often are teacher-centered.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study's main finding concludes that online learning has transformed teachers to become more open, understanding, and patient. Trying to navigate the online platform and managing the pandemic, teachers have developed a higher level of empathy and compassion towards students than before the pandemic. With connectivity as a primary problem for many, student and teachers' engagements somewhat have become limited. With a lack of personal connection, it has become difficult for teachers to instill discipline, diligence, respect, and courtesy among students. Schools need to sustain student enrollment with concern about keeping a reasonable number of students in each online class.

Moreover, new online teaching and learning policies favor students' satisfaction, sometimes leading to abuse of academic ease. The learner-centered approach needs to be reconstructed in online learning. Activities, strategies, methodologies in adopting learner-centeredness should be explored more, balancing the approach with limited resources, pandemic restrictions, and call for academic ease. Independent learning and active learning as principles have become the main features of the present online class learner-centeredness. The success of online teaching is attributed to how effective the Learning Management System (LMS) is used by an institution as much as the ability of teachers to navigate the online platform. Online teaching requires technological efficacy; content expertise somewhat becomes secondary. Mental health is a reality among teachers and students and is considered an important factor in policies and programs in online learning.

The study showed principles of cognitive constructivism at work. One, learning is the development rather than the result of the development (Fosnot, Nelson, Hammerman, 1996). It is in the process and the journey of online teaching that teachers are able to improve and innovate. It is in the practice, sharing, and reflection that teachers are able to understand the process and develop as individuals, as groups and as an institution. Second, learning from reflection is at the core of constructivism. This is

when cognitive and social factors merged, practice and sharing translated to processes resulting in learning.

In the light of the findings and conclusion of this study, it is highly recommended that; 1)The curriculum and syllabi development should include value formation, health, and crisis management and new media communication; 2)The retooling in learner-centered approach in teaching be made via series of training, particularly in designing activities for online classes; 3) A parallel study about the lived experience of students in an online environment be made. The result of this similar study would be used to create more fitting design programs and approaches that would adopt learner-centeredness in an online environment; 4) A similar study be made across educational level K-12; and 5) Conduct phenomenology studies for other professions and working-class, namely: medical health workers, media, and employed professional turned work from home (WFH) engagements as everyone adapt to this new work modality.

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