Learning management in virtual classroom: A phenomenology

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Abstract

This study explored the online learning management experiences of college instructors during the COVID-19 crisis. This paper used a phenomenological research design and employed ~~the~~ Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as its data analysis method. A semi-structured interview was used to capture the lived experiences of the ten (10) college instructors from the selected schools in Central Visayas in the Philippines. After an intensive and careful analysis of the transcripts, three (3) significant themes from the teachers' perspectives emerged. They were: (a) the lows, (b) the highs, and (c) the gains from the online learning setup. The study revealed that learning management failure was due to poor grading bases since teachers were not sure whether the students were honest in answering their tasks. The informants also noticed abysmal participation and inappropriate behavior from the students. However, they highlighted that at some point, managing a classroom online was made easy because of the secure, accessible, and organized files that teachers could use in handling their classes. They have also gained some positive personal attributes, professional teaching insights, and practical financial benefits. This study could be of great help to teachers who have not embraced the use of virtual classrooms in managing students' learning. This is a timely research topic since the pandemic has just struck.

Keywords: Highs, learning management, lows, virtual classroom

Introduction

The pandemic changed the accustomed educational system that has been practiced by all schools all over the world. As a consequence, school leaders have forcibly steered their learning institutions to move to the online modality of learning. Online teaching has become a necessity in the educational system of any country (Joaquin et al., 2020). Virtual learning systems with free learning tools have emerged, such as Google Classroom, FB Messenger, and Zoom (Chua et al., 2020). Poorani and Bezhovski (2016) added that educational landscapes during the pandemic could also include gamification, personalized learning,

micro-learning, and blended learning. Online learning introduced everyone to different learning technologies, but it did not come with learning management rules and ways. These learning tools and platforms have been existing for years, but their importance surged and peaked when the need to continue learning has become the new trend due to the pandemic. They have become the new medium that teachers use in managing their virtual classrooms.

Learning management has taken a new face, for students and teachers no longer interact in a face-to-face mode. The old ways were reshaped, refined, and restructured into a new learning platform that not everyone was used to. However, the same tasks were to be carried out, but in a different matter, through the help of laptops, phones, and other technological learning tools (Soussi, 2020). The virtual setup had been introduced hastily but carefully to the teachers. In real scenarios, some teachers complained about the abrupt and sudden changes, but they saw no other choice but to adapt. As the adaptation stage continued, learning management became "cyberized" as schools adapted to digital culture and technology. Teachers had to shift their mindsets and attitudes to a new dimension from being so used to the traditional learning modality (Sener, 2014, as cited in Kentnor, 2015). The first few phases were challenging, but the acceptance of the college instructors towards the posed challenge was great. The usual way of teaching lessons, keeping order in the classroom, following daily routines and procedures, and doing other things had been turned upside down and put into a virtual environment and setting.

Even if teachers willingly accept the new challenges, online learning delivery has been found to have some disadvantages in learning management. The primary difficulties in an online learning modality were the college instructors' low digital literacy and inability to manage the classroom appropriately. It was discovered that some teachers were simply experimenting with ways and trying new skills just to deliver instruction. Some of their significant attempts were successful, while others were failures because the latest online learning management methods were only used to cope with changing times (Coman et al., 2020). They were only partially trained to steer aural classes online. In most cases, the pieces of training conducted were only meant to give a band-aid solution to emerging problems. They were not carefully planned since the pandemic came along unexpectedly, exposing the unreadiness of the teachers to carry out virtual learning management tasks (Alipio, 2020). Added to the problems were the students' poor participation and interaction. These shortcomings hinder the smooth classroom interaction flow in all aspects. Learning management also failed, especially since some students were less eager to work on their tasks. As a result, they quickly get discouraged when confronted with many tasks (Paygar, 2014; Sumalinog, 2022). Some of them weren't honest while completing the tasks.

The preceding paragraphs show that several research articles on the negative impact of online learning have been published. Yet, only a few mentioned the highs and lows of the new learning modality. In addition, there was only limited information about the instructors' learning management experiences, especially the best practices. There is a need to investigate so that the neophytes currently adopting the online setup may be guided. The teachers shall get ideas from the desirable practices of those who have been engaging in the online learning modality since the pandemic struck. Expectedly, the so-called "experimental stage" in managing the classroom in an online setup can be avoided since the study results will provide essential tips and information based on the informants' experiences (Sumalinog, 2020). In addition, this study aimed to contribute to the literature about the common scenarios experienced by schools that decided to shift from face-to-face to virtual modality.

Most importantly, it would inform schools of the possible highs and lows of virtual learning management and help them avoid them and have a smooth start. The pieces of literature above only proved that there was so much to unfold and discover in this new learning management setup so that if the present condition persisted for years, the new generation of

teachers would be able to benchmark from the highs and lows of this virtual learning management. This study's results would also greatly contribute to the body of knowledge that policymakers may craft for the positive and impactful future of the Philippine educational system.

Domain of inquiry

This study explored teachers' online learning management lived experiences in the online learning setup as dictated by the crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic.

Related literature and studies

A variety of tools that can be applied during online classes can be used to manage online courses (Cho et al., 2020) and Kuimova et al. (2015) believe online modalities could prepare students for the skills that 21st-century workplaces may require. Moreover, the online learning platform made the students' abilities in the classroom excellent and the real world. Peacock and Grande (2016) explain that remote learning benefits anyone, anywhere, and anytime. Integrating e-learning into teaching bears the vast potential of creating a lively and engaging learning setup not just for the current time but for future crises (Hofer et al., 2021). The virtual modality had more benefits than its challenges. In accordance, Paygar (2014) shared that the online learning setup has both advantages and challenges. It was more beneficial because students could carry out tasks at home and do other tasks as sons and daughters. Online learning transformed college instructors' roles, for students were encouraged to work individually at home. Some teachers commented that conducting online classes has led them to become flexible. They also got the chance to improve their technical, personal, and technical skills. Some teachers even (Khanna & Kareem, 2021). Consequently, the teachers' and students' coping mechanisms toward the teaching-learning tasks have significantly changed without denying that real problems were being confronted (Suresh et al., 2018).

The learner's dilemma during the pandemic was categorized into: domestic, individual, institutional, and communal (Baticulon et al., 2020). Other problems were being experienced. One, in particular, was the resources of both students and teachers. As online learning continued, the students and teachers agreed that they experienced sluggish internet access, and inevitable technical glitches, especially in mountainous areas. The electricity outages and limited access to learning areas because of virus contamination concerns (Coman et al., 2020). To keep the students away from the ongoing barriers, the complexity and bulk of the online class content must suit the student's learning styles and readiness (Bao, 2020). College instructors should improve their teaching methods to match students' learning preferences and skills, and problem-solving abilities in a new era (Loureiro & Bettencourt, 2014). In reality, students also have difficulty dealing with some students as difficulty adapting to instructors' teaching styles and difficulty coping with individual mental and physical health concerns. Domestic barriers were also present. These points to the inappropriateness of the learning environment caused by misunderstandings inside the house, financial problems, and lack of food supplies (Baticulon et al., 2020).

Despite the problems encountered, the physical attendance of the teachers during online classes greatly contributes to the success of the teaching-learning process because students' satisfaction is significantly related to the teacher's knowledge of the resources used (Coman et al., 2020). However, the importance of the teachers' presence could not guarantee good learning performance. Chua et al. (2020) stated that sometimes, even if teachers were also showing up, some of them could not effectively deliver because they lacked the needed skills in learning management manipulation and understanding of the student's learning styles

in an online environment. Some teachers were digital fugitives, while their learners were digital natives who knew the how and why of the learning technologies.

Several problems had arisen, but education experts believed that teachers could still cope. Teachers should maintain order in a classroom in all aspects. (Rufai et al., 2015). First, they must spot the problems and identify the parts they need to cover to develop the right strategies accompanied by stimulating activities (El-Seoud et al., 2015). They must aim for successful online learning, making a smooth transition despite the newness of the learning platform (Phan et al., 2019). They must aim at learning along with the learners' pace to maintain harmony between the learning and instruction (Chou & Chou, 2021). They should provide timely feedback so students can evaluate their progress (Bao, 2020). Lathifah et al. (2020) insisted a teacher must manage the class in the physical and online classrooms with strengthened compassion. According to Stewart (2008), teachers should remember that some features of the traditional learning delivery can still be applied in online learning management (Stewart, 2008). In the online learning setup, teachers must show responsiveness and openness to inquiries that students may make. As communication flows, teachers should lengthen their patience in case technical and technological limitations occur (Coman et al., 2020).

The learners were likewise anticipated to adapt to the changes being experienced. They should have well-organized and enthusiastic teachers who strive to provide the best learning environment possible (Tanis, 2020). The students currently enrolled in the online learning setup may consider adding some prompts, so they would be reminded to take breaks after spending long hours on their computers (Mangis, 2016). Between breaks, students must show the utmost cooperation, attention, and participation. They should be reminded about the responsibilities and obligations that they need to play inside the classroom in exchange for any incentives from the teachers (Loureiro & Bettencourt, 2014). Most importantly, students should be motivated to adapt to the new learning setup so that learning transitions may be well facilitated and learning would not be compromised (Daumiller et al., 2021). In the area of assessment, experts suggest that grades should be given appropriately (Baticulon et al., 2022). According to Sawchuk (2020), grades could highly motivate students to outperform themselves. Grades should not be used to compare students with their peers, but students should not forget the importance of getting good grades to determine their future college education. With this, grades should be based on the student's performance, especially during proctored exams. Proctored exams ensure a cheating-free assessment. With this, students need to go to a testing center when it's time to take the test. Teachers may also give timed quizzes and exams (eLearners, 2021). After careful assessment, teachers should consider the safe keeping of the files, especially the students' output.

The storage ways at the time of the pandemic could be done online. The most significant advantage of storing outputs online was its convenience since files can just be easily accessed and shared with the students (Bednar, 2019; Lynch, 2018). Files can be safely stored in clouds, which provides secure data storage (Lynch, 2018). Cloud storage allowed college instructors to edit and share content anywhere with a good internet connection, whether inside or outside the university (Hickey, 2018). By storing your data in clouds, you are enjoying the ease of not bringing the bulk of school stuff, for you can save your work efficiently in no time (Singh, 2016). In inevitable cases where computers and learning gadgets are bogged down, learning materials and students' outputs would not be damaged (Lynch, 2018). With a good internet connection, files saved online can be modified conveniently (Singh, 2020). The files are organized and placed in the correct folders (Educational Broadcasting Corporation, 2002). Consequently, learning can still be successful depending on the will of the teachers involved.

Methodology

Research design

This paper explored the lived experiences of the informants using a qualitative phenomenological research design. It revolved around interpreting relevant statements that reflected the lived experiences of the informants. In particular, it used the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). In this study, the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was most suited to be used because it provided clear steps and a stance in understanding and interpreting the lived experiences of the involved informants.

Research informants and environment

The study was conducted online with the help of informants from the selected private higher education in Central Visayas in the Philippines. The informants were the ten (10) college instructors who were chosen purposively. The instructors had conducted classes online for two consecutive semesters in any public or private higher education institution. The researchers believed that with the experiences of the identified teachers, they could be rich sources of information in terms of the learning management phenomenon in a virtual classroom. The teachers' age range was from 29–37 years old.

Research instruments

This study used a semi-structured interview guide with open-ended questions. The interview schedule went through a validation process by three (3) language and research experts who were education doctors from Cebu Normal University. The questions were centered on getting the lived experiences of the informants. Prompt questions were also included to facilitate a smooth transition from one question to the next.

Data gathering procedures

Preliminary procedure stage

Before the actual gathering stage, the proposal for this study was accessed and examined by the CNU-ERC Ethics Review Panel of Cebu Normal University to ensure that the survey would adhere to the ethical considerations expected of the research. A permission letter (Informed Consent Letter) was also sent to the informants via email or Facebook Messenger. The possible benefits and risks of the informant's participation were also presented. The individuals and preferred times of the informants were asked for their convenience. The informants were the ones who decided on the type of application they preferred to use during the interview, be it Google Meet, Skype, Facebook Messenger, etc.

Interview process stage

The interview started with a short orientation reminding the informants of their voluntary participation and their right to decline if they wished to, even in the middle of the interview. They were also assured verbally that their information would be kept confidential and would not risk their participation. It was mentioned once again that the interview would be recorded for accurate collection and transcription of the data during the analysis stage. The interview lasted anywhere ~~from~~ 60 to 90 minutes until data saturation was reached. The informants were then told that tokens would be sent to them via courier in three to five days.

Data management stage

The data was kept confidential, but it would be accessed from time to time to validate the accuracy of the transcribed data. They would only be deleted and discarded after the paper has been published.

Data analysis

The five steps of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) presented by Smith et al. (1999) were discussed in this section. Step 1: Looking for Themes in Each Case. In this step, the transcript about the college instructors' lived experiences was read and re-read several times. The researchers immersed themselves in the data to gain familiarity with the informants' responses. Besides, the transcript was a margin where anything significant, engaging, and striking stated by the informants was noted down. The comments were attempts to summarize, find associations and connections, and maybe provide preliminary interpretations. Step 2: Looking for Connections. At this stage, the emerging themes from the significant lived experiences were listed on the right. They were clustered based on their connections. The clustered emerging themes were referred back to the transcript to ensure all other connected words were included. Step 3: A Table of Themes. This stage displayed all the themes, which were clustered and labeled coherently according to connections. This process was done carefully, making sure that the themes would be represented in the verbatim transcript and not by the biased choices of the one conducting the research. Step 4: A Master List of Themes for the Group. As the analysis progressed following the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), a final list of themes was revealed. Step 5: Write Up. This step concerned writing reports for publication using the master list of themes. The themes were translated into narrative accounts. As the writing continues, verbatim transcripts of the informants' responses would be incorporated to affirm the analysts' interpretation.

Findings and discussion

After an intensive and careful analysis of the transcripts, three significant themes from the teachers' perspectives emerged. They were: a) The Lows, b) The Highs, and c) The Gains of Online Learning.

Theme 1: The lows

Paygar (2014) shared that managing a classroom in an online learning setup also has some disadvantages. While the need to conduct classes virtually became a trend, the informants have noted some lows in online learning management. Lows refer to the unsuccessful or wrong attempts of the teachers in establishing the desired rules and procedures. As the informants vented, they mentioned that they hardly get a good grading basis since the teachers could not monitor how the students accomplished their tasks and ensure they were performing them. When students attended their classes with their tasks fully completed, they still had difficulty answering the questions from the teachers, thus running the class flow. Poor participation has also emerged as one of the hurdles, along with poor online behavior during online classes.

Poor grading basis

In the area of assessment, experts suggested that grades should be given appropriately. According to Sawchuk (2020), grades were intended to motivate students to outperform

themselves. However, the informants stated that they struggled to provide the students with a holistic mark because of the poor grading basis. Students could answer their written task assignments, but they could not answer when asked in person. So, the class flow, which the teacher envisioned to go smoothly, met a sudden halt. Noticing the lapses, teachers started to doubt the honesty of the students. However, teachers had not established a monitoring system to check whether the students' outputs were accomplished by themselves or by somebody else. Hence, teachers had no way of validating their confusion. They could not also rely on the students' honesty during examinations since they could not be with them while they were answering. Ani and Rose said:

> *"I am not sure if my students were honestly answering the tasks and the tests."*
> *"They might be opening their notes during tests. Who knows?"*

The verbatims from the informants implied that they were uncertain about grading their students' performance. In one of the studies, it was suggested that teachers should do a proctored exam to ensure a cheating-free assessment. With this, students needed to go to a testing center when it was time to take the test. However, in the Philippines, this kind of practice had not been started, so teachers could not help but feel reluctant. Their doubts were even magnified when they found out that some of their students answered their tasks using some information that was directly lifted from the different websites. In addition, they have personally observed that the student's grades are solely based on their outputs, quizzes, and projects. Due to time limitations and connectivity problems, they had difficulty grading the students' oral recitation and communication skills since such activities could not possibly be done during online classes. Ben and Gerry expressed:

> *"It's too hard to grade the students' oral recitation skills."*
> *"Very difficult to grade their speaking skills because some had no internet connectivity. Not everyone can speak because of time limitations."*

The informants believed that they had a poor basis in grading their students since they could not individually engage with them in a speaking activity. They tried, but it was unsuccessful due to the internet connectivity problem that could consume their time in vain. As a result, their ideal online classroom management expectations, which should have included an oral engagement, failed to be materialized. Even if most of the teachers seemed to agree, experts believed that teachers might give timed speaking activities and exams (eLearners, 2021). In this way, they could grade the students' ability to express their thoughts even with the few lines they delivered in response to the posted questions.

Poor participation

Unlike the noisy face-to-face classes back then, classes held in an online learning environment seldom get loud and full of life. In many instances, students become less participative and unresponsive. So, even if teachers were too skilled in classroom management, it would still not go a long way since students' cooperation was challenging to capture. On the bright side, the informants have uncovered the common reasons for the student's poor participation. Some students fell asleep, and some of them were doing other things while listening to the lectures. Having observed them being less participative, teachers would be forced to call them individually to know if they were still seated beside their devices. Sometimes, teachers were surprised to learn that students' devices were still connected to the learning platform, but they were unresponsive when called. Some of the students were even working just to support their

studies. Baticulon et al. (2020) agreed that financial struggles had been a problem, pushing the students to work and earn extra to meet their daily needs. Anne, Fe, and Alex remarked:

> *"Students' names still appeared online, but they do not respond when called."*
> *"Names can be seen connecting and disconnecting. How can they participate?"*
> *"There are students who do not attend classes, and I learned that they were working."*

Other reasons that affected the students' class participation were their slow internet connectivity and a sudden power outage. Their students knew that their internet connection would cause them to cut on and off while talking, and such an incident would just delay the flow of the discussion. Coman et al. (2020) agreed that students experienced technical dilemmas, including a sluggish connection. On the other hand, the informants insisted that their students did not have high-end devices suitable for online learning. In accordance, students lack the needed gadgets, especially students in mountainous places. Unfortunately, community barriers such as electric interruptions affected the teachers' online learning management (Baticulon et al., 2020). According to Rey and Amy:

> *"My students always make their internet connection and electricity supply as their alibi."*
> *"Some students are only using their phones. Only a few have laptops."*

Despite the poor participation of their students, the informants understood that most of their reasons were inevitable. The same instances could happen over and over again, no matter how hard the students would try. However, teachers needed to make the class engaging. The integration of e-learning into teaching bears the huge potential of creating a lively and engaging learning setup not just for the current time but for the crises that the future may face (Hofer et al., 2021). As long as the poor participation continued to persist, learning management would also continue to fail.

Poor online behavior

Effective learning management also includes sets of proper online learning practices. However, the informants of this study commented that their students displayed some undesirable online behavior that hindered the smooth flow and transitions of classes. The teachers observed that some students still came to their online classes late with their cameras turned off and in an inappropriate dress code. The informants were aware that with turned-on cameras, the internet connectivity might weaken. The teachers had received valid explanations from the students, but most of them were reluctant to believe the students' alibis. They were not fully convinced, and they still considered having a conversation without seeing one another rude behavior. Angel and Ani shared:

> *"Students do not need to travel, but they still come late. When they entered, they didn't open their cameras.*
> *"Not turning on the camera and coming late is a no-no to me."*

Besides the verbatims, which were directly quoted from the informants, it was also noted that the teachers have complained about the students' lack of netiquette and respect.

Most of the time, the informants could receive chats and text messages from students even in the middle of the night, during rest hours, and even at dawn. Despite the teachers' complaints, most of them were still forced to reply, especially for class-related concerns and clarifications. Based on the teachers' reactions, the informants' full practice resilience and utmost consideration. Dwelling on the same idea, teachers must show responsiveness and openness to inquiries that students may make. As communication flows, teachers should lengthen their patience in case technical and technological limitations occur (Coman et al., 2020). In terms of giving feedback, teachers should observe giving feedback so students can track their learning (Bao, 2020). As long as the teachers kept their cool, the students wouldn't have to be respectful of their own space.

Theme 2: The Highs

The highs in an online learning modality referred to the successful and favorable experiences that the informants had experienced first-hand. Paygar (2014) expressed that a class done online has many advantages. It was more advantageous because students could accomplish their school tasks while tending to their chores at home as sons and daughters. Looking at the phenomenon from the informants' perspectives, they have directly commented that online learning had more benefits than challenges. The informants, who were teachers in an online classroom, highly favored the new educational setup, for it offered secure file storage where files could still be available even after several semesters and school years. They could be accessed easily using your devices as long as the user had stable internet connectivity. They were in awe of how their LMS and other learning tools organized their files. With these positive experiences, teachers could build a well-managed classroom since the learning materials intended for the students have become readily available.

Secure file storage

Teachers should consider the safe-keeping of their files, such as the students' output and teaching paraphernalia. A classroom could be managed effectively when all the academic equipment is properly kept since accessing them would not take much time. So, a smooth submission and retrieval became possible. Fortunately, the online learning setup had features where teachers would not need to carry bulks of paper, learning materials, lesson paraphernalia, writing boards and pens, flashcards, and other class-related stuff. The hassle of lifting heavy materials and the worries associated with losing records were no longer ~~the~~ concerns of the online storage that the teachers could enjoy. The most significant advantage of storing files online was their accessibility from anywhere with the use of good internet connectivity (Bednar, 2019; Lynch, 2018). Despite the newness of the online storage system, the informants got full excitement knowing that they could be well-kept on clouds. With this, submitted outputs, as well as their dates of submission, could be traced back. Therefore, teachers could give feedback on the papers passed on to them. Rose, Ben, Gerry, and Anne commented:

> *"I no longer worry about losing my files."*
> *"No need to look for enough spaces and large storage cabinets for outputs of my students."*
> *"Space was my problem during face-to-face classes. I always have a headache finding a secure place for the quizzes and outputs."*
> *"My files can be kept and retrieved. I now have huge storage space."*

The informants' responses represented their joy, knowing that everything in the new normal was paperless. The problem that they once had difficulty solving suddenly overturned into a very convenient and favorable solution. As a result, the teachers had peace of mind. They learned to save their data on their computers and on clouds where files could be safely stored for future use. In accordance, by keeping your data in the cloud, you are enjoying the ease of not bringing the bulk of school stuff, for you can save your work efficiently in no time (Singh, 2016). In inevitable cases where computers and learning gadgets are bogged down, learning materials and students' outputs would not be damaged (Lynch, 2018). The matching of the results and the ideas of experts only proved that online storage had been a vast innovation and helped in the case of the teachers.

Ease of access

Besides the online learning setup's ability to store large files securely, it also innovatively made way for easy access to files. Based on the analysis of the transcripts gathered, the informants were thankful for the easy access to their files anywhere in the world with the use of the internet. Since the files were already converted into electronic copies, the printed copies of their materials, students' projects, scholarly outputs of their students, and other academic papers were no longer needed. They also highlighted that they could access their files even without using the laptops that they usually used. They were free to use their other devices as long as they memorized their Google Classrooms and other LMSs' log-in credentials since the files were already stored online. Their responses coincided with the results of previous studies. In cases where computers and tablets are bogged down, the learning materials would not be damaged (Lynch, 2018).

So, whatever the teachers had started working on and had stored online could be pulled up and modified anytime and anywhere, even with computers at cafes. The majority of them appreciated the easy accessibility of their files. They also emphasized that handling classes online could be done in any location the teacher wished, for students only needed to be present virtually. Alex, Rey, Amy, and Angel mentioned:

> *"I can hold classes and access my files without bringing anything but my laptop only."*
> *"Even during emergencies, there's no way that I will miss my classes. I can meet my students and monitor their outputs' progress."*
> *"I do not worry anymore about not bringing, lifting, and carrying heavy files because I can still access them using my devices."*
> *"In terms of accessibility, only laptops and log-ins are all I need."*

The accessibility feature of online learning gave so much ease and comfort to the informants, who were also teachers at the same time. Most informants took advantage of this feature, for they were knowledgeable about saving files on the cloud. Cloud storage allowed college instructors to edit and share content anywhere with the aid of a good internet connection, be it inside or outside the university (Hickey, 2018). Moreover, files and classes can be accessed from your data anywhere worldwide (Singh, 2016). From the results of the previous studies and the present research endeavor, teachers seemed agreeable and thankful for the accessibility that online learning tools have provided them. So, an ideal classroom could be expected since teachers' access to the materials could not delay the time spent on learning.

Organized file locations

Students needed to have high-spirited and organized instructors (Tanis, 2020). Fortunately, many of the informants agreed that organizing their files before the pandemic was tiring and time-consuming. Back then, they would need to create labels and secure file dividers to easily identify their books, students' outputs, learning materials, etc. Though they had been using their laptops before, they would still resort to printing them. They needed to present them to the students. However, after semesters of exposure to the online learning setup, the informants were thankful that organizing files had been made easy at their fingertips. These organizational skills did not come instantly but after a long time of usage and trials. Admittedly, they also received training and webinars about handling and managing their classrooms. Still, the informants insisted on attributing their learned skills to the day-to-day learning management duties. Ani, Rose, and Ben boldly shared:

> *"This online learning setup made me organize my files in my computer without hassle."*
> *"Organizing my files now is easier than before."*
> *"Before files are physically organized, now you can just drag them with your fingertips."*

The responses showed how different the informants' experiences were before and during the online learning regarding file organization. They all emphasized the convenience of being able to keep their files without physically lifting the bulk of them. A study on the benefits of online learning mentioned that with cyberized education, files are now easy to organize and place in the right folders (Educational Broadcasting Corporation, 2002). The files organized and fed to computers, especially to online storage, could still be accessed even when the users' devices failed to work (Lynch, 2018). Consequently, the skills learned could go a long way, for online education could be the future direction of the times.

Theme 3: The gains

From the informants' responses, it was revealed that they had professionally and financially gained from experience. The informants had some desirable characteristics and attributes. As to their professional gains, the informants learned new strategies, methodologies, techniques, and other skills necessary to carry out their duties and responsibilities. Added to their perks are the financial gains or the monetary savings kept for staying and working at home.

Personal gains

Though there were disadvantages that the informants experienced, they also spotted personal gains and benefits that they could use as they socialized and dealt with not just their students but with the people in their communities. They had developed their creativity and flexibility in finding solutions, especially when working with technology got tough. Their adaptability had let them cross the line from knowing only a few computer operations to developing their skills as effective and responsible technology users. When coping with the technological trends had been high, the informants stayed optimistic that they could learn the new set of skills by and by, one after the other. According to Daumiller et al. (2021), teachers should have motivated attitudes and become equipped with vital personal attributes to prepare them for unexpected challenges. According to Gerry, Anne, and Fe:

"I did not have these skills back then. I only became creative, flexible, and adaptive to technological operations when classes went online."
"I was already creative and positive, but not with technology. But now that my world just revolves around them, I have eventually embraced them."
I am proud of my flexibility and creativity now."

The informants sincerely shared that they had engaged with technology before but had not thought of becoming flexible, positive, creative, and adaptable regarding technology usage skills. Back then, technology was only integrated into the teaching and learning process, unlike nowadays, when everything is reliant on it. On the other hand, the informants had developed a deeper and more intimate relationship with the people they lived with at home, whether their immediate family members or relatives. With the "work from home" system being practiced by the different industries, including the learning institutions, the informants got to spend a longer time with them. Rey, Amy, and Angel happily shared:

"It's only during this pandemic that I get to spend longer time with my family."
"More time with the family is the one best this present time gave me."
"I am with my family all the time. I don't need to race against time."

The informants' responses may be proper to all, for everyone would surely want to be with their family together, not just during special occasions but each time a chance comes along. In reality, teachers only spend time longer with the people who matter to them during vacations and holidays. None of them had anticipated that these monumental moments with their family would be possible.

Professional gains

College instructors must change their teaching approaches to respond to the learners' needs in the new era (Loureiro & Bettencourt, 2014). Because of the need to fill the present educational demand, the informants had no option. So, they worked with technology, from learning material preparation to instructional delivery. The tasks they faced were all new to them, but their desire to deliver what was expected of them rose above the problematic situations. They carried on. As a result, the informants noted that they had learned new teaching strategies, methods, and techniques using technology with some online learning tools. Their limited knowledge of manipulating a learning management system had increased and expanded. They applied gamification as one of the online activities that students loved to engage in. All these came to be, for, in the first place, they had developed their computer skills. The informants also enhanced their ability to be manipulative by exploring the unique features of their devices just to come up with online learning activities. Anne and Alex mentioned:

"I am happy that my strategies now are updated with the aid of advanced learning technology."
"Technology is fundamental, so I used them as much as I could. Luckily I have discovered some teaching methods that I can use online."

The informants have professionally developed themselves all because they tried harder to cope with the demands of the present time. Noticeably, the informants' responses above were broad and non-specific; however, towards the end, the details of their gains unfolded. Their strategies were only the results of the little things that they had interwoven. They proudly manifested that they had learned some basic editing skills, tried making short

video clips, created pre-recorded lectures, used some video and audio applications, and explored the wonders of videography, in general, using the available devices they had at home. The new accomplishments of the teachers were timely and relevant. According to Chou & Chou (2021), teachers should make sure that shifting from traditional teaching to the online learning modality should attain success. They should be observant of the students' pace. They need to acquire new perspectives and practices (Kong, 2020).

Financial gains

The online learning setup resulted in a work-from-home arrangement between the teachers and their higher learning institutions. Despite the crisis, it contributed to the teachers' economic gains. Similarly, Arkorful & Abaidoo (2014) revealed that learning online has led to significant financial gains. According to the informants, they had saved financially because they did not need to travel long distances and spend on food at their workplaces. In addition, the informants were thankful for the internet allowance before the pandemic. They were already paying for their internet bills. Though there was an increase in electricity consumption, they only considered it a minute change in their monthly expenses. Rey and Angel merrily shared:

> *"I am starting to like online learning because spending is very minimal."*
> *"With online teaching, I can save money."*

The financial benefits that the informants enjoyed were not large amounts of money, but these amounts were of great help to them since they were in a crisis. The informants loved staying at home because they get to earn and spend less. In accordance, there are free platforms that can be used to carry out teaching tasks of teachers, such as Google Classroom, Facebook Messenger, and Zoom (Chua et al., 2020). So teachers would not need to spend their resources to attend their classes.

Conclusion

The sudden shift from face-to-face learning delivery to an online learning setup came with a series of highs and lows. Some of the teachers' lows or unsuccessful attempts to manage their classes were unavoidable and could occur at any time because teachers had not yet established clear rules and routines. The situation was completely understandable because the schools were not fully ready for the new system. However, teachers were also successful in managing their virtual classrooms because they had learned to organize and secure their files. Good things could happen with the advantages and disadvantages that they had been through. The teachers had gained some skills that they could use for life, whether personally or professionally. So, learning management done online could go wrong or go a long way depending on the resourcefulness and perspectives of the teachers.

Recommendations

1. The Commission on Higher Education may establish clear rules to prevent teachers from experimenting.
2. Higher education institutions may share their best practices, especially those universities that have delivered online classes before the pandemic.
3. Administrators can keep an eye on their teachers all the time so that any problems that need immediate attention can be taken care of right away.

Acknowledgments

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