

Lived Experiences of Teaching Interns in the Online Delivery of Instruction: A Psychological Study

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ABSTRACT

Certain facets of teaching and learning were changed because of the pandemic's impact on the educational setting. This allowed the Teacher Education Institutions to repack the teaching internship program's modalities. At the start of the pandemic, the physical conduct of the actual participation in the teaching internship was carried out virtually. Thus, this study provided a description of the teaching interns' online teaching internship experiences. Based on this premise, this study utilized the descriptive phenomenology of Edmund Husserl using Colizzi's Method of Data Analysis. There were four (4) themes derived from the formulated meanings as extracted from the significant statements of the informants' discourses namely: Online Modality, Instructional Materials, Classroom Management and Strategies of Teaching. The identified themes were very significant in claiming the teaching interns' experiences in the online delivery of instruction. This helped give an eye view for the improvement and creation of a successful online learning environment.

Keywords: lived experience; teaching interns; online delivery of instruction; descriptive phenomenology; Philippines

INTRODUCTION

Learning is changing. Although a challenging endeavor, teaching encouraged teachers to continuously strive to carry out diverse responsibilities that changed them into agents of transformation. The academic world is moved by teachers. People could see their crucial role as they observed them in their routine school activities. It is undeniable that teaching is a difficult career that cannot be compared to others because it requires a strong commitment from those who are eager to learn. Teachers are now so involved with technology due to the requirement for it in the current online teaching and learning environment.

Online delivery of instruction according to Borcoman (2012) refers to any formal educational process in which the instruction occurs when the learner and the instructor were not in the same place and only technology was utilized to provide a communication link among the instructor and the students. This kind of instructional delivery can be both observed during synchronous sessions where students and teachers communicated with each other using any platform just to hold live or online classes while asynchronous sessions, the students were given activities, exercises to answer at their own pace and meet at the given time for submission. In addition, students worked independently anywhere to interact and learn with instructors and other students (Singh & Thurman, 2019).

In this situation, lengthy debates were no longer typical. In online learning, students have consistently shifted their attention away from their coursework and toward their mobile devices (Manila Times, July 28, 2020). Without any official training, school instructors have been under constant pressure to hone their technical skills. They have also had to adjust to a new teaching medium and learn how to engage and manage their students—many of whom are very young and have little or no access to technology—on a virtual platform.

Teaching interns refer to the senior college students currently enrolled in the different degree programs in the College of Teacher Education who undergo teaching internship either be in the elementary or high school levels for a one-semester period. These teaching interns will first observe the Teaching Internship Mentors (TIM'S) participated in the teaching tasks and eventually begin to teach on their own under the guidance of the TIM'S. Teaching interns should be adequately prepared for actual teaching through teaching internship need to develop

insights on the teaching-learning situations and ways of evaluating them. According to Bird (2012), pointed out that in the last stages in the internship program, the teaching interns were not different from the neophyte teachers in terms of the preparation program. Nevertheless, these teachers and teaching interns were asked to assume similar responsibilities and are expected to attain successful results (Bartell 2005). Moreover, Bird added that the challenges of beginning or new teachers at the beginning years in the classrooms were no different from those that student interns experienced in their preparation to become licensed teachers. However, teaching interns in this trying time must learned to become tech-savvy and had to devise varied innovative methods to make online learning more interesting. The internet connectivity device which was to be used in online teaching and learning, knowledge, and skills in the use of technology were much to be taken into consideration on this new normal since this is the only modality used in the laboratory school where the research was conducted. Developing interest among students was a priority and teachers were putting in their best efforts to become tech smart. Many teachers were novice to this new mode of teaching and were on a learning spree along with being educators. It required grit and dedication. Though online teaching was not something new but doing it daily has made it a new normal. As noticed and observed, several teaching interns find online teaching the biggest challenge aside from lack of exposure, absence of internet connectivity at home, the use of gadgets but as well the knowledge in online delivery. Though several webinars were conducted but still the problem arose. Pre-recorded video on their teaching demonstration was recommended to address this concern. But one could not ignore the fact that the face-to-face experience was incomparable and can never be replaced by online teaching because it became more difficult to ensure students' engagement, interaction, and connectivity when teaching online (Agarwal 2020). It has forced everyone to shift from the traditional way which was the face-to-face encounter and accept the new change which is inevitable. This became a big challenge to the teaching interns faced in this new norm.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This looked into the various literature and studies to address the challenges of the online instruction delivery of student interns. It required a deeper understanding of their lived experiences.

The fight against the threats of COVID -19 pandemic had profoundly impacted almost all sectors of mankind. The field of education is a deeply affected strata, with closures of educational institutions and emergency distance-learning plans turning the teachers' routines and student interactions totally upside down. Conducting online classes has resulted into a psychological baggage for all educators (Beeram 2020). According to 2007 data gathered by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), 75% of distance learning courses were offered online, resulting in the terms "distance learning" and "online learning" becoming synonymous. NCES data from 2017 shows the number of students enrolled in distance education courses at public, private non-profit, and private for-profit institutions. Of the total responding private non-profit institutions, there were 4,106,477 enrolled students. Of those students, 71.3 percent were not enrolled in any distance education courses. Of the remaining students, 9.5 % were enrolled in at least one course, with 19.2% enrolled in exclusively distance education courses (Gibbs 2020). The transition from traditional teaching to the online platform due to the coronavirus pandemic has brought a huge impact among teachers particularly the beginning teachers. The sudden change of the teaching platform may have affected the field experience of the student interns.

Based on the study of De Gagne and Walters (2010), phenomenology was used to unearth the lived experience of the online educator and pointed out that online teaching provided rewards, flexibility, and convenience for the teacher that they desired to balance work and family. Furthermore, in the study of Conceicao (2006), it was discovered that teaching online increased length and depth of engagement when preparing and teaching their online lessons. Conceicao asserts that this increase in workload centered around the need to recompense the lack of physical interaction which could include increased time in creating and preparing materials, as well as increased time participating with students in the class.

Choi and Park (2006) studied the perspectives of teachers towards online courses to find out whether the online teaching experience was truly a problem as previous research indicated. It was revealed in their study that online teaching was a burden for the new teachers. It was difficult for the new teacher to motivate online students and efficiently organize communication in the online setting. Regarding this, they recommended supporting

teachers in the form of training, instructional design, and development to make new online teachers succeed in their teaching.

As stated, there were lots of literature and studies which mentioned on the lived experiences in the online delivery of instruction. Although there were several reasons affecting their online delivery but still student interns able to perform their responsibilities in as much as it is a requirement in the student internship program. The present study had some relevant to the mentioned since it is a phenomenological design where it disclosed lived experiences of student interns in their online delivery of instruction and is considered real in the sense that they were made to describe their experience in the real online classes.

Research Objective

The study provided a Husserlian phenomenological understanding of the lived experiences of the teaching interns in the online instruction delivery.

Research Question

What is the lived experience of teaching interns in online instruction delivery?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The descriptive phenomenology of Edmund Husserl was used in this study. According to Scott (2003), descriptive phenomenology is a descriptive investigation of the essence of pure consciousness. Phenomenology was employed in this study to explore, analyze, and characterize the phenomenon of the teaching interns' online instruction delivery as well as to grasp the significance of the teaching interns' lived experiences.

Research Environment

The in-depth interview was conducted via an online platform using Zoom App. or any social media platform which was accessible by the informants. Only one informant at a time was given access or link to the Zoom meeting or any online platform as mutually agreed-upon schedule for interview. Both the researcher and the informant were asked to turn on their video camera if possible, during the interview to observe the interaction between them.

Research Informants

The informants of this study were six (4) selected teaching interns in the Bachelor of Elementary Education majors in General Education, Special Education and Early Childhood Education. They were selected through purposive sampling. All informants met the following inclusion criteria; was currently enrolled in the Teaching Internship for School Year 2020-2021, has taught at least five times synchronous classes in online instruction delivery which has a time allotment of one hour per subject; willing to participate in the study, and able to narrate, describe, and explain their lived experiences in the online instruction delivery.

Data Gathering Procedure

Before the in-depth interview with the individual informant, written consent was sought first from the informants in accordance with the ethical considerations in conducting research. Permission from the participant to record the interview was sought as well as the use of notetaking by the researchers while the interview was on-going. Each informant was interviewed via an online platform. The main question for the unstructured interview would be "Can you please tell me your experience as teaching intern in the online instruction delivery?" Probing questions were deemed necessary to elicit further descriptions of their experiences. Such questions would be "Can you please tell me more about that?" or "Please tell me what you mean by that?" The in-depth interview with each informant lasted for 30-45 minutes.

The researcher would continue to conduct an interview with another informant until data saturation was obtained. This was done by adding one or two informants being interviewed to ensure the rigor of the study. The expected data at this point of interview were not revealed any more themes. Thus, the study would now be closed to these additional informants.

Data Analysis

Prior to transcribing the narratives, the researcher listened to the recordings of each in-depth interview two to three times after it was completed. The analysis used in the study followed Colaizzi's (1978) analytic approach, which was in line with Husserl's descriptive phenomenology. This process entails the following seven steps:

1. To get a sense of each subject, read the protocol descriptions for each one.
2. returned to each protocol's transcript to pick out key phrases.
3. Create definitions. This was accomplished by explicitly stating the significance of each important remark.
4. Create a cluster of themes out of the defined meanings.
 - a. To verify these clusters, refer them back to the original protocols.
 - b. Avoid the temptation to ignore evidence that does not fit by noting differences within or between the different clusters.
5. Include the findings in a thorough explanation of the subject under study.
6. Create a thorough description of the phenomenon under research with the most clear-cut identification of its underlying structure.
7. Ask each subject again as a final validation step how they feel about the results.

The transcriptions were used to extract all significant statements. These important utterances led to the creation of meanings. Following that, themes would be created from the formulated meanings.

The researcher went back to the informants to confirm the theme clusters and requested them to verify the veracity of the descriptive results (exhaustive descriptions) using their actual experience. This was done to validate the findings using Colaizzi's method of data analysis. A copy of the descriptive results was given to these informants for reading. They were questioned about if the in-depth descriptions adequately captured their experiences and whether they had any further information.

Ethical Considerations

It is essential to talk about and comprehend ethical problems in the context of the research process. The analysis takes into account the moral requirements for this research project, including among others beneficence, informed consent, legality, honesty, quality, integrity, secrecy, anonymity, incentives, or recompense.

Honesty, quality, legality, and integrity. To achieve the highest level of integrity and consistency, this research study would be carefully designed, reviewed, and carried out. Honest reporting of study procedures and findings would be made. Any false information, such as overgeneralizing results, shall be avoided, as well as any actions that can be seen as an attempt to deceive the reader. When working with others to carry out this study, the researcher always complies with all agreements and behaves honestly. This study will ensure that it complies with all applicable laws and rules governing this research work.

Informed consent. This will guarantee that the study's informants are fully informed about the research being done. The purpose of the study, how the data will be used, whether there may be negative consequences on the environment, and who will have access to the information and findings must all be explained to research participants. The ability of research participants to make an educated choice regarding participation in the study is the main objective of informed consent. Additionally, information will be provided if a subject exhibits any signs of distress while participating.

Voluntary participation. This will ensure that the research participants are not subjected to coercion. Informants will be allowed to revoke their consent at any moment without it having a negative influence on their ability to participate in future studies or their relationships with specific researchers or the research organization. The informant will have the ability to withdraw at any moment, so those who decide not to continue the study where no more explanation is also required won't be burdened

Beneficence. To prevent any injury or threat, the researcher shall guarantee the safety and security of the research participants. Damage may be physical, psychological, or take the form of tension, discomfort, anxiety, lowered

self-esteem, or invasion of privacy. It is crucial that the research method does not in any way hurt (intentional or not) the research informants.

Confidentiality, anonymity, and privacy. This will attest that no one other than the researcher themselves will have access to or use any personal information. The identification of specifics will likewise be left out of any records or papers thanks to this research. Even though identities won't be used, it will take into account how discussions are organized to ensure that there won't be any chance for the informants to be identified. Everything that is submitted in confidence will be respected. It will adhere to tight criteria for the protection of private data, such as informants' academic records, even though they are not necessary for the research. Additionally, since the informants identify will be revealed, it will adhere to a stricter type of privacy than anonymity.

Incentive or compensation. It must be made clear that research is independent of any institution or organization where the researcher currently holds a position. Additionally, there will be no monetary compensation given to the research informants; instead, meals will be supplied in exchange for their participation in the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data were taken from the important statements made by the informants about their own experiences. These would serve as the building blocks for the development of themes and meanings. Four topics emerged: Classroom Management, Instructional Materials/Online Resources, Online Teaching Strategies, and Online Modality of Teaching. Pseudonyms were used to ensure the results' confidentiality.

Theme 1: Online Modality of Teaching

Online modality refers to the instructional delivery that took place in the online environment. Synchronous and asynchronous meetings or a combination of both are parts of online modality. One of the potential aspects of the online learning mode was the use of synchronous and asynchronous classes. Synchronous sessions described the real time communication between the students and the teacher and it is supported in an online set-up with several features such as audio, video, interactive whiteboards, different applications, instant polling, and even breakout rooms while asynchronous session is when the students and teachers did not meet at the same time and activities were given for the students to work anytime of the day for as long as the time slot given is followed. Also, the learning environment was unstructured. In addition to the traditional methods, the teachers used a variety of materials during the teaching and learning process. This entails looking for tools and pursuits that can supplement or perhaps take the place of conventional educational tools like textbooks. Employing both synchronous and asynchronous sessions was one of the significant features in the online modality of instruction as it was shared by the teaching intern (TI2) during the interview, "So far, I was happy of having these sessions because I liked the features since there was lesser time for the synchronous and asynchronous classes because it happened only once a week and I actually have more time to prepare." Teachers really had more time in the preparation of lesson designs and other things needed in the demonstration teaching as well as the checking of the activities given to the students. Another teaching intern (TI4) added that, "The time frame for synchronous class is only 50 minutes and not enough for us to tackle the topics given to us by the mentors". It was of great difference with the face-to-face wherein there was an interaction between students and teachers. As uttered by the teaching intern (TI3) was that "In online, I really could feel and tell if my students really have understood my discussion and for me, that was the most difficult part".

Although technology has been part in today's generation of learning, Wadell (2015) asserted that its use for teaching and learning remains a challenge. The use of various online learning applications in training students to actively participate in the learning process helps with the delivery of instruction on the online platform. One of the most popular forms of technology used to support instruction is the internet or web-based apps. In addition, (Chai et al., 2010) claimed that even though technology has a positive impact to learners, there are still many challenges that need to be addressed and these have been cited by different authors (Shan Fu, 2013); low teacher expectations and a lack of clear goals technology use in schools (Al-Bataineh et al, 2008), lack of teacher collaboration and pedagogical support, as well as a lack of experience among cooperating teachers (Ertmer and Ottenbreit-Leftwich, 2010) and insufficient time to master a new software or integrate technology during a class

period (Almekhlafi and Almeqdadi, 2010). Teaching intern (TI3) shared that “Teaching online and face to face is different because in face-to-face modality there is physical touch or proximity established between the teacher and the students”. Moreover, the same teaching intern said that:

There are really things that I like in online which are not doable in the face-to-face like allowing my students to answer many times in a single test until they reach the passing score as they are expected to achieve using the google form or google docs.

Internet connectivity was another concern in the online modality of teaching. Each one knew that this could not be controlled by anyone else in the organization because it would happen anytime of the day. Intermittent to no internet connectivity at all was another source of challenge during this present time for both teachers and students as it brings discomfort in the process of teaching and learning. In this kind of platform, internet connectivity was needed for one to be fully engaged in the class discussion. Teaching intern claim on this regard (TI1) “I had experience of having an intermittent connectivity during my demonstrations and I feel bad about it since I really have prepared everything I need”. Teacher’s incompetence in the use of technology was another factor to consider in the teaching and learning process as it includes the lack of training and the necessary skills which were supposedly be learned to be able to integrate technology in the delivery of instruction. This is evident as what the teaching intern (TI1) shared that “I was not that tech-savvy yet because I still have a lot to learn when it comes to online distance learning.” And supported by the teaching intern (TI2), “I was a little confused on what to teach even before the start of the online class because I don’t know how to do it.” Teaching Intern (TI3) added that, “My confusion revolved around the fact that whatever we were going to teach to our children, we were going to deliver it digitally.” The low level of computer literacy of teachers and the absence of technology integration in the curriculum have been identified as a significant hindrance to the effective utilization of technology in education (Morales, 2015). Based on the study of De Gagne and Walters (2010), phenomenology was used to unearth the lived experience of the online educator and pointed out that online teaching provided rewards, flexibility, and convenience for the teacher that they desired to balance work and family. The global education industry has changed and adopted the online mode of delivery for teaching and learning, which is a completely new kind of setup for everyone, in the current circumstances. Additionally, because they were given adequate time to study independently, it encourages the pupils to become independent learners.

Theme 2: Instructional Materials

The tools, resources, and other web applications utilized in teaching and learning are known as instructional materials. Teachers are expected to have sufficient knowledge of the many online resources and tools, including the usage of video clips, YouTube, Jam Board, Podcasts, and similar tools. In the process, teachers utilized several resources aside from the traditional ones just to meet needs of the present. According to Cullata (2011), multimedia tools were used to improve instruction and increase student engagement. As uttered by teaching intern (TI1) “I tried to learn more on the apps. to prepare myself to become equipped on how to do this new thing.” Moreover, teaching intern (TI2) shared that “It was advantageous on my part, since my students were already adept to technology and an opportunity for me to teach on my own this time.” Technology played a vital role in education at present time and its impact can be seen in each and everyone’s life. According to Egbert (2009), the students of today were surrounded by technology where access to a vast collection of information was only a fingertip away. Matulac (2013) also pointed out that technology is at least one unavoidable reality twenty years after the introduction of personal computers. According to (Hakverdi-Can et.al.,2012), some reasons for teachers to use technology in classroom instruction were to promote student agreement, to teach 21st century skills, to stay current, to have hands on interactive learning, to vary instructional methods, to conduct research, and to communicate. Craig and Patten (2007) noted that digital resources have been shown to support learners in developing their verbal interaction skills, increasing their vocabulary, and improving their reading comprehension. Furthermore, access to the Internet and social media develops students’ intercultural skills and promotes global awareness.

Theme 3: Classroom Management

Classroom management covers the variety of skills and techniques that teachers use to keep students organized, orderly, focused. According to Kratochwill, DeRoos, & Blair (2018) that classroom management is the process by which teachers encouraged and maintain appropriate behaviour of students in classroom settings. There are reportedly difficulties managing the classroom due to the lack of face-to-face interaction. Online instruction differs from face-to-face instruction in that there is no physical presence to observe the students' actual interactions. Teaching interns discussed the difficulties they had instructing their classes. Teaching intern (TI1) said that:

As to classroom management, it was difficult because I could not see the children on what they we're doing during my class" In addition teaching intern (TI2) uttered: "I really could not tell whether the students were there or not. These things were out of my control.

Also, teaching intern (TI3) shared "Unlike in the physical classroom wherein I could really call their attention whenever they got distracted or out of focus." All these have been observed by the teaching interns during their online classes. According to Ryan and Tilbury (2013), institutions must build flexible systems that provide students with choices in their learning, as well as maintaining the frameworks that ensure a quality learning experience.

Theme 4: Strategies of Teaching

Strategies of teaching are the procedures and methods used in handling classes. From teacher to teacher, it differs. They based their decision on the needs and learning styles of their students. However, since the present way of learning necessitates a different approach, teachers could not just continue to apply the same kind of methods and directives that they did in the past. As the General Community Quarantine was being put into place in the Philippines due to the pandemic, lessons were abruptly suspended. There were no clear policies for how to continue learning at the time, thus all classes were cancelled. As most of the research informants stated, this type of situation caused discomfort in the teaching and learning process on an online learning platform. However, having an internet provider or connection was important for one to be completely engaged. This also covers the preparation before, during and after the teaching demonstration and the art of questioning which is a very essential to make teaching and learning effective. The pedagogy of teaching centres on the child rather than the teacher. Teachers need to be conversant with numerous teaching strategies and that take recognition of the magnitude of the complexity of concepts to be covered (Adunola, 2011). According to teaching intern (TI3),

Every time I see my students online, I would always try my very best to be understood by them and that gave me the opportunity to hone my own teaching skills, our pedagogical skills".
Teaching intern (TI4) added that "I became more creative on the ways as to how to do best in my online teaching demo".

It is on this part in teaching where one's creativity was observed as to the ways in dealing with the students in terms of teaching techniques and approaches. One teaching intern (TI4) expressed "I prepared pre-recorded video every time I have my demo teaching for me to check if I am doing in the right manner". The same teaching intern added that "Another preparation that we also had was to check how Google Meet worked as well as how Google Classroom worked". This was how the teachers were doing in this online instruction. How to prepare for online classes was one of the factors to consider for an efficient instructional delivery. The teachers found it easier to prepare the materials they would need for online instruction by having asynchronous sessions.

In asking questions, one must make sure that it should be made clear and understood by the students. It has been a practice that teachers oftentimes used the simple recall questions instead of having or using the Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS). This promotes understanding and readiness to make students cope of whatever comes along the way.

There is no such best teaching strategy to be used but on how it was being defined, demarcated, categorized, used and the like. Every effort that the teacher takes to have a fruitful time with the students by exposing the contents,

employing methods, strategies, the pupil interaction with the environment, resources available and even the evaluation process sums up to instructional delivery (Mezieobi, 2009).

EXHAUSTIVE DESCRIPTION

The impact of online instruction on the teaching interns' actual experiences varies depending on the individual. It can be a struggle as well as a chance to gain knowledge from one's past.

Several teaching interns were delighted with the opportunities despite the difficulties encountered along the way in their teaching demonstrations. Many acknowledged that they have limited know-how as to the use of technology, media, and insufficient knowledge in terms of the new teaching modality. Aside from what was mentioned, intermittent connectivity was considered the biggest challenge where no one could ever tell the stability of the internet connection, and this did not limit the teaching interns to continually strive hard to do better. Knowing beforehand that in the online modality, instructional materials were also taken into consideration however, there were a few teaching interns whose abilities and skills in the utilization of some online applications were not fully grasped though all these were readily available for use in the instruction still this considered as one of the challenged areas. Classroom management and pedagogical skills bear significant meaning on the lived experience of the teaching interns where they came to realize the essence of teaching online.

Many people voiced the opinion that this new modality needs to prepare itself for the incorporation of technology in instruction. It was also important to note how the teaching interns had gained a positive viewpoint by being adaptable in their interactions with the students, most likely because of how they had tailored their approach. Even though it seems difficult, there is always more to learn and unlearn.

CONCLUSION

The COVID-19 epidemic has had a significant negative influence on practically all facets of society. The sphere of education was severely impacted, with emergency distance learning programs and school cancellations completely upending teachers' routines and student interactions. All educators now carry psychological baggage as a result of teaching online (Beeram 2020). Due to the coronavirus epidemic, traditional classrooms have been replaced with online learning environments, which has had a significant influence on instructors in general and teaching interns in particular. The teaching interns' scope of experience may have been impacted by the abrupt change in the teaching platform. Furthermore, in the study of Conceicao (2006), uncovered that teaching online increased length and depth of engagement when preparing and teaching their online lessons. Conceicao asserts that this increase in workload centered around the need to recompense the lack of physical interaction which could include increased time in creating and preparing materials, as well as increased time participating with students in the class. It was difficult for the new teacher to motivate online students and efficiently organize communication in the online setting. Regarding this, they recommended supporting teachers in the form of training, instructional design, and development to make new online teachers succeed in their teaching. Although there were a number of factors that affected how they delivered their education online, student interns were still able to complete their duties to the extent that it was necessary for the teaching internship program. Since this study's phenomenological design disclosed the actual lived experiences of student interns who participated in online education, it is thought to be real in the sense that the participants were asked to describe their participation in actual online classes.

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