A QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY ON THE OBSTACLES THAT TITLE ONE

ELEMENTARY TEACHERS ENCOUNTERED WHILE DELIVERING ONLINE

INSTRUCTION DURING A PANDEMIC

by

Jennifer Leslie Cole

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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APPROVED BY:

Ellen R. Ziegler, Ed.D., Committee Chair

Jerry Woodbridge, Ph.D., Committee Member

Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to understand the obstacles that Title One

elementary teachers encountered while delivering online instruction during a pandemic. The

central question guiding this study was: How did converting to online instruction because of the

COVID-19 pandemic affect Title One elementary schools? The theory guiding this study was

Vygotsky's social constructivist theory in that individuals can learn from each other. The setting

for the qualitative case study was in three Title One elementary schools within Coral County,

West Virginia, and included 12 Title One elementary school teachers. The data collected

included questionnaires, interviews, and focus groups and was analyzed by identifying

keywords, phrases, specific obstacles, as well as themes that emerged from each set of data.

Keywords: obstacles, low-income, title one, internet services, technology devices

Copyright Page (Optional)

Dedication (Optional)

I dedicate this dissertation to God, my salvation, my redeemer, and my eternity. He has given me the strength to push past the loss of my dad and finish the program.

In memory of my dad who always pushed me to reach beyond what I thought was possible and to never give up. For always being there for me throughout my life and being my biggest supporter in everything I ever did.

To my mom who continues to say how proud of me she is, and how tough I am to have continued even though there were times she knew I wanted to quit. For always reminding me how proud daddy would be to see this accomplishment.

To my brother David who sat me down and told me to get back to work and finish what I had started.

To my supervisor, who has continued to provide guidance and support throughout my journey.

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I would like to first acknowledge God; without Him I would not have the knowledge and understanding required to complete this degree. "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:7, King James Bible Online, 1769/2021).

I would like to acknowledge my Dissertation Chair, Dr. Ellen Ziegler who worked tirelessly with me every step of the way and whose continued encouragement and support ensured the completion of my degree in a timely manner. I could not have done it without her!

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION
Overview

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to identify obstacles that Title One elementary school teachers encountered while delivering online instruction during a pandemic. By following the social constructivist perspective of Vygotsky (1978), research answered underlying questions concerning these obstacles. Initially, distant learning was organized to address the needs of adult learners who were unable to physically attend a traditional classroom setting (Lassoued et al., 2020). However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic that hit the United States in March of 2020, teachers in elementary and secondary schools across the country found themselves in the position of having to teach their classrooms remotely. By identifying obstacles that teachers encountered while delivering online instruction during a pandemic, future educators will be provided with an opportunity to better prepare themselves for online instruction in the event that the country must return to remote instruction.

Background

Historically, online instruction has been used in schools across the country for many years. However, online instruction is new mostly to elementary and secondary schools, as well as to those who teach and attend these schools. Historically, online instruction has been used in higher education in an effort to allow students who were unable to attend classes in person to access classes online (Lee, 2017). The social context that applies to online instruction is that it is easily accessible for students as they do not have to travel to attend classes. Online instruction that is easily accessible for students allows for flexibility in schedules as well as the ability to manage personal, work, and school responsibilities (Liu, 2004). However, many elementary and secondary students often miss out on the benefits of social engagement due to their not attending school in person. Not only this, but often these students do not have the devices or internet

access that is required to complete online instruction. Further, theoretically, the social constructivist theory of Vygotsky (1978) drives this qualitative case study due to individuals learning from each other. Even though online instruction is new to most elementary and secondary school teachers, they are able to learn from one another as they adjust to providing instruction online. By providing teachers with the support that is needed to navigate online instruction, they are able to better prepare themselves for online instruction and obstacles that they may face (OECD, 2020).

Historical Context

The concept of online instruction is nothing new within the realm of education, even though many may argue its origin. Historically, online learning began in the 1700s with a method called correspondence education, moving into the 1800s with shorthand taught by mail, and the 1900s saw an electronic revolution that delivered information to learners based on the latest information and technologies available (Abed, 2019). By the fall of 2004, more than 2.35 million students enrolled in online classes (Kim & Bonk, 2006).

Even so, this information is based on higher education statistics and does not account for elementary and secondary schools where online learning is not frequently used. Most elementary and secondary schools across the country continue to operate under the traditional classroom setting where students attend school and are able to communicate face-to-face with their teacher. By attending a traditional classroom setting, the student and teacher are able to pick up on physical cues as well as body language because they are able to see and hear each other. This research is important due in part to the fact that elementary and secondary schools across the country closed their doors to the traditional classroom setting and immediately incorporated

online learning because of the COVID-19 pandemic that reached the United States in March of 2020.

Social Context

Many obstacles were encountered with implementing online learning in elementary and secondary schools across the country. Low-income students did not have access to the devices or the internet services necessary for online learning, and in order for students to benefit from online learning, they must have the sources required of them to access online material (Yan et al., 2021). In the event that students did have the necessary device, they often did not have adequate internet services in the home to access online classes. In 2017, 14% of U.S. children ages six to 17 did not have the internet at home (Morgan, 2020). Not only this, but teachers were not prepared, nor were they trained in the methods of online learning, which caused many problems with online learning. With teachers having tasks and responsibilities that are often too difficult to switch from face-to-face instruction to online instruction that they have never used, problems can occur (Rasmitadila et al., 2020). Many teachers within elementary and secondary school settings are veteran teachers who simply do not deliver instruction using any type of device within the classroom setting. Not using an electronic device in class for instruction created obstacles for these veteran teachers who were unfamiliar with technological aspects of teaching and had no previous training for delivery via technology.

With the implementation of online learning, many students and teachers failed to notice the vanishing social connection that existed within the traditional classroom. During online learning, many students felt loneliness, stress, anxiety, and depression because of social distancing measures taken during COVID-19, especially low-income students (Gazmararian et al., 2020). Not only were students and teachers affected by school closures and the

implementation of online learning during a pandemic, but many parents were affected by school closures, which forced their children to remain home, which left them to deal with the social impact on their children. How parents reacted to and coped with their children's responses to online learning impacted their social response to online learning (Wang et al., 2021).

Theoretical Context

The theoretical context driving this qualitative case research was the social constructivist theory of Vygotsky (1978), in that individuals learn from each other. By following a social constructivist theory, Isought to discover meaning from Title One teachers' experiences and views on obstacles that they encountered while delivering online instruction during a pandemic. The social constructivist theory of Vygotsky (1978) is that knowledge is co-constructed by individuals because they are able to learn from each other and are engaged in the learning process. Further research concerning teacher experiences and views on the obstacles that they encountered while delivering online instruction allows for a better understanding of similarities that existed among Title One elementary teachers and how they learned from each other during the pandemic. Additionally, being able to understand the obstacles that teachers faced now allows for better preparation for the future in the event that the country faces another pandemic and must close schools once again. Researchers have argued that prior planning should have taken place in preparation for such an event (Hartshorne et al., 2020).

By conducting this research, educators across the country can now benefit from the knowledge gained, because responses and understanding can now be used as a learning tool for future use within classrooms. Teachers will have to create innovative solutions to ensure that learning objectives are met, and best practices are implemented (Bailey & Lee, 2020). Also, new information will clarify specific obstacles that Title One elementary teachers encountered while

teaching online, thus adding to the existing literature on the subject. Ultimately, gaining insight from the interactions of teachers and their lived experiences during the pandemic provided answers not only to the obstacles they faced but how they overcame those obstacles.

Problem Statement

The problem is that Title One elementary school teachers encountered obstacles while delivering online instruction to K-5 students during a pandemic. The number of students whose education was restricted approached nearly 300 million in March 2020 (Hebebci et al., 2020). Educators and families were concerned that the effects of remote learning due to school closures would hinder families in low-income communities more than financially stable communities (Quezada et al., 2020). Many students from low-income families did not have the devices necessary to complete remote learning, and if they did have access to a device, they may not have had access to the internet required or may have had limited internet services. The focus of this research was to understand obstacles that Title One elementary teachers encountered while delivering online instruction, including how to provide instruction to low-income students who did not have access to devices or internet services in order to participate in remote learning.

Title One schools house a large percentage of low-income students, and the purpose of Title One is to provide an equal and fair opportunity for low-income and disadvantaged students to access a high-quality education. Title One schools are federally funded, and schools with children from low-income families of at least 40% more of the enrollment are eligible for Title One funding (U.S. Department of Education, 2018).

Research from Bubb and Jones (2020) reported that one of the major obstacles teachers encountered with remote teaching was that low-income students did not have the devices or internet services needed to complete remote learning. Children from the poorest families were

the least likely to have the devices and internet services that they needed to participate in remote learning (Bubb & Jones, 2020). Research also reported that many teachers became overwhelmed by the sudden shift from classroom teaching to online teaching. The sudden change in teaching forced teachers into using different tools and platforms for teaching that they were unfamiliar with, not prepared to use, or trained in the use of (Khlaif et al., 2020).

By conducting a qualitative case study research, the problem concerning obstacles that Title One elementary teachers encountered during online instruction was identified. By identifying the obstacles that teachers encountered during the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers offered insight into how progress was made in delivering instruction effectively. Even though many teachers expressed positive attitudes and readiness to transition to distant learning, they still lacked the preparation and support that was needed in the use of technology (Lepp et al., 2021). By identifying and learning from these obstacles, administrators can now create professional development opportunities in the training and preparation of teachers for remote instruction. Teachers have been driven to use different tools and platforms for teaching that they were not prepared nor trained to use (Khlaif et al., 2020).

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to identify obstacles that Title One elementary school teachers encountered while delivering online instruction during a pandemic. By following the social constructivist perspective of Vygotsky (1978), research can answer underlying questions concerning these obstacles. Obstacles are defined as difficulties in accessing online learning, and the inability to reach students during online learning. The theory guiding this study was the social constructivist theory of Vygotsky (1978), where learners gain additional knowledge from what they already know.

Significance of the Study

The empirical significance of this qualitative case study was to fill a gap in the current research on the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects on schools and remote instruction. Remote instruction involved the ability of individuals to connect to online instruction via the internet with the use of a computer device for participation in educational instruction (Kamble et al., 2021). Further, the theoretical significance of this study followed Vygotsky's (1978) theory of social constructivism. Teachers have the knowledge to provide instruction online and are able to gain further knowledge from colleagues to create strategies that improved online instruction that connects with students (Gacs et al., 2020). The practical significance of this qualitative case study was important for the three Title One elementary schools and teachers within the county who were involved because it identified obstacles that teachers encountered during the pandemic and showed commonalities that existed among the schools.

Theoretical Significance

The theoretical significance of this study followed the theory of social constructivism, in that knowledge already exists (Vygotsky, 1978). Therefore, it is important to build on the existing knowledge that is needed to gain a better understanding of teaching and learning. Teachers had the knowledge needed to teach within their traditional classroom; however, they needed to build upon that knowledge to teach within an online classroom that may have been new to them. Online education allowed interactions between the learner and the facilitator in real-time via ordinary interaction (Doyumgac et al., 2020). Approaching online teaching using a backward design improved teachers' abilities to connect with students (Gacs et al., 2020).

Empirical Significance

The empirical significance of this study was to fill a gap in the current research on the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects on schools and remote instruction. Bhamani et al. (2020) reported that the number of students affected by school closures accounted for a disruption in the lives of 1,576,021,818 learners in 188 countries. Online learning was defined as accessing the learning experience through the use of technology (Alawamleh et al., 2020). Further, the online learning environment involved internet connectivity, technology, infrastructure for sessions, and the participation of learners and teachers (Kamble et al., 2021). Even though online learning was not new to the realm of education, it was new to elementary and secondary schools, as most schools operated in a traditional classroom setting. Even though many elementary and secondary schools used a device for part or all of their content delivery within the classroom, they had not received instruction via a remote classroom setting. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, students had remained in the classroom with a teacher in a traditional educational setting, even though they may have been using a device for instruction rather than books, pencils, and paper.

Practical Significance

While this case study was significant to the three Title One elementary schools within the county that were selected other Title One schools may find the results significant as well. It was significant because it identified obstacles that they encountered and showed any commonalities across the county if they existed. The study showed how teachers' lives were affected by online instruction during a pandemic, as well as teacher engagement and their ability to cope with remote instruction (Jelinska & Paradowski, 2021). The information that was learned about the lives of these teachers may help future teachers in the event of another pandemic. By preparing teachers for online instruction, they will be ready to provide online instruction to students in the event that schools are closed in the future (Trust & Whalen, 2020). Not only this but providing

teachers with professional development classes to prepare them with best practice strategies for online instruction (Hartshorne et al., 2020) will enhance online instruction. Teachers worked together to implement strategies that engaged students in daily activities and encouraged active learning for success during remote learning.

Research Questions

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to identify obstacles that Title One elementary school teachers encountered while delivering online instruction during a pandemic. By following the social constructivist perspective of Vygotsky (1978), research would answer underlying questions concerning these obstacles. The central question, along with each sub question, allowed the researcher to identify obstacles, transitions, strategies, and steps taken by teachers to adapt to online instruction because of school closures due to COVID-19.

Central Research Question

How did converting to online instruction because of the COVID-19 pandemic affect Title One elementary schools?

Sub Question One:

In what ways did teachers work together to prepare for online instruction?

Sub Question Two:

How were instructional strategies changed to transition to online instruction?

Sub Question Three:

How did teachers prepare themselves to overcome the obstacles encountered while delivering online instruction during the pandemic?

Definitions

1. *Communication* – the ability to transfer information from one individual to another (Alawamleh, 2020).

2. *Communication Barriers* – the negative dimensions that limit communicating effectively (Bishop-Monroe, 2020).

3. *Device* – hardware such as a computer, tablet, or mobile phone that can be used to access the internet for distant communication (Armstrong-Mensah et al., 2020).

4. *Distant Education* – form of education that allows for distance between the student and the facilitator (Doyumgac et al., 2021).

5. *Low-Income* – poorest families with the lowest amount of income and household resources (Moffitt & Ribar, 2018).

6. *Obstacles* – difficulties in accessing online learning, or the inability to reach students during online learning (Fahmalatif, 2021).

7. *Online Learning* – the process of learning as an active participant by using various electronic-based devices (Zalat et al., 2021).

8. *Online Teaching* – careful design and planning for instruction given online (Hodges et al., 2020).

Summary

In March of 2020, schools across the country closed their doors and immediately began online instruction due to COVID-19. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to identify obstacles that Title One elementary school teachers encountered while delivering online instruction during a pandemic. By following the social constructivist perspective of Vygotsky (1978), research would answer underlying questions concerning these obstacles. Many teachers

were not trained, nor were they prepared for teaching online classes (Trust & Whalen, 2020). Also, students from low-income families did not have the devices or the internet services required to participate in online learning (Morgan, 2020). It was important to identify the obstacles that Title One elementary teachers encountered while delivering online instruction during a pandemic in order to understand these obstacles and the solutions that were found in order to move forward with online instruction. By gaining an understanding of the measures that were taken to deliver online instruction during a pandemic, preventive measures can be put into place in the event the country faces a similar event.

It is important that teachers receive proper training in all areas of education and how to properly present material and content to their students, whether it is traditional face-to-face classroom teaching or in a remote setting (Gillis & Krull, 2020). It is also important that all students, regardless of their socio-economic status, receive the best possible education available. Students from low-income families must have access to their classroom even in the event that it is a remote classroom (Lai & Widmar, 2020). Many teachers faced obstacles while delivering online instruction during the pandemic, and the measures taken to overcome these obstacles were important to the education system and online instruction. Identifying the obstacles along with how teachers overcame these obstacles to meet the needs of their students was imperative to understanding the success of online instruction during the pandemic. Not only this, but identifying measures taken in an effort to provide online instruction can now provide future teachers with information that can be used in the event that schools are once again forced into remote classrooms.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

This qualitative case study took a comprehensive look at Title One elementary schools and the obstacles that teachers encountered while delivering online instruction during a pandemic. In the spring of 2020, schools across the country were forced to close their doors because of the disease known as COVID-19 that caused the virus known as (SARS-CoV-2) severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (WHO, 2021). Previously schools across the country had never been faced with a pandemic that forced them to close their doors and resort to classroom instruction other than the traditional form of face-to-face. With mandatory school closures across the country, schools were left scrambling with the preparation of online instruction without the proper preparation or training of school personnel. Many Title One elementary school teachers encountered obstacles while delivering online instruction during this pandemic. Despite the fact that research had been conducted concerning COVID-19 best practices, social distancing, and medical concerns, there were limited studies concerning the best practices of teachers in Title One elementary schools and the obstacles that they encountered while delivering online instruction during the pandemic.

This was a single instrumental qualitative case study that focused on one issue (Creswell & Poth, 2018) concerning obstacles that Title One elementary teachers encountered while delivering online instruction during a pandemic. Even though there had been many studies concerning school closures since the pandemic first hit in the spring of 2020, there remained a need to find answers concerning the obstacles of the Title One elementary teachers during online instruction. One major concern was that of low-income students and their inability to access adequate devices or internet services in order to participate in online instruction. Bubb and

Jones's (2020) research held that many students did not have access to adequate devices or internet services and lacked the support and guidance from family members to complete daily assignments. The significance of this study was to fill the gap in the current research on the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on Title One elementary school teachers with online instruction. This review of literature provided a theoretical framework, provided related literature that analyzed online instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic, and ended with a summary that wrapped up the organization and structure of the chapter.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical context that effectively guided this qualitative case study was the worldview theory of social constructivism of Vygotsky (1978), in that individuals are able to learn from each other. Vygotsky (1978) is viewed as the father of social constructivism, and his belief is knowledge is constructed through dialogue and interaction with others. Vygotsky claimed that knowledge is co-constructed in a social environment and that through the process of social interactions individuals are able to use language as a tool to construct meaning (Churcher et al., 2014). He also asserted that language between individuals within an environment as an "*inter*psychological" tool is vital to social constructivist thought within the learning process (Churcher et al., 2014).

Within social constructivism Vygotsky (1978), held that individuals are able to learn from each other. The qualitative researcher sought to understand the world and the meaning of certain objects or things (Creswell & Poth, 2018). It is the belief that learners are enculturated within their learning community and knowledge of what is understood from the interactions with their current learning environment (Liu & Matthews, 2005). Initially, the research on school closures identified the chaos of moving from the traditional face-to-face

classroom to remote instruction (Serhan, 2020). This chaos stemmed from the fact that many elementary and secondary teachers having never taught in a remote setting and finding that they were in the position of having to teach in the remote setting were simply lost and unsure of how to proceed.

Research concerning this topic provided information that can be used if the country is forced to close schools once again in the future. Educational institutions across the country were not prepared for closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic that reached the United States in the spring of 2020. Moreover, elementary and secondary school systems were not prepared to conduct online instruction. Gaining an understanding of the obstacles that Title One elementary school teachers encountered while delivering online instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic provided insight as well as preparation tools necessary for online instruction methods if future events necessitate this form of instruction.

The purpose of Title One schools is to provide equal fair opportunities for low-income and disadvantaged students. Title One schools are federally funded schools with children from low-income families of at least 40% or more of the enrollment being eligible for Title One funding (U.S. Department of Education, 2018). Sparks (2019) reports that 15.4 billion dollars of federal money is spent on Title One Schools, and that 70% of public school across that country report being a Title One School, with only half of the students eligible to receive education funding from Title One Funding actually receiving this aid.

Even though research had been conducted concerning online instruction, there still existed a gap in the literature concerning Title One elementary schools. Research from Hartshorne et al. (2020), argued that prior planning for online instruction in elementary and secondary schools should have taken place in preparation for such an event. Limited research

existed concerning preparation for shifting from face-to-face instruction to online instruction in elementary and secondary schools in the event that schools were ever forced to close because of an emergency.

Related Literature

The related literature for this literature review includes the historical background of online instruction, emergency online instruction, and teacher concerns with online instruction, followed by the effects on low-income students, parental involvement, and the digital divide. It is important to provide information about the related information to have a clear understanding of the material that reinforces the topic. This is in no way all of the material that covers these issues, but this material is informative and provides information concerning school closures due in part to COVID-19.

Historical Background of Online Instruction

Remote instruction was not new to the realm of education even though it was predominantly new to elementary and secondary schools. There are sources that trace online instruction as beginning in the 1700's with a method called correspondence education, moving into the 1800's with shorthand that was taught by mail, and the 1900's moving into the electronic revolution (The Evolution of Distance Learning, 2019). By the fall of 2004, more than 2.35 million students enrolled in online classes (Kim & Bonk, 2006). By 2012, free online classes were offered (Thompson, 2021) and prior to COVID-19 remote instruction was steadily growing.

In 2018, 34.7% of college students were enrolled in at least one online course (The Evolution of Distance Education in 2020, 2020). However, with the surge of the COVID-19 pandemic that hit the United States in the spring of 2020, Thompson (2021) reported that nearly every school system across the country was forced to close their doors and commit to online

instruction in order to provide students with educational instruction. All students in grades K-12 had a right to free and equal education opportunities in the United States (ACLU, 2021). Research from Sayer and Braun (2020) reported that 55 million K-12 students were affected by the change from traditional face-to-face instruction to remote learning.

As this form of instruction was new to some or most elementary and secondary schools, it came with challenges that were not often seen in the traditional face-to-face classroom. By attending a traditional face-to-face classroom setting, the student and teacher are able to pick up on physical cues as well as body language because they can see and hear each other and recognize cues that are not often seen during online instruction. Bao (2020) suggests that body language, facial expressions, and teacher voice are important aspects within the traditional classroom setting. Bao (2020) also suggested that online instruction meant that these cues would no longer be available or would be difficult to capture through screens with online instruction.

Even though there were many advantages to online instruction, elementary and secondary school teachers often relied on body language, as well as the facial expressions of their students in order to determine if their students were in fact grasping the material that was being taught at any given time. Aziz et al. (2020) suggested that the lack of eye contact, human feelings, and physical interaction among teachers and students was seen as a major concern of online instruction, and despite research showing its success, Hodges et al. (2020) held that online instruction carried a stigma of being of lower quality than that of the traditional face-to-face classroom instruction.

While elementary and secondary schools began the process of shifting from face-to-face instruction to online instruction, research stated that there were arguments associated with the

concept of online instruction, which was often referred to as e-learning (Dhawan, 2020). Online instruction came with many challenges, and Dhawan (2020) reported that accessibility, affordability, flexibility, and online pedagogy were just a few of the challenges that administrators, teachers, and students faced. Further, the COVID-19 crisis forced schools to move from face-to-face instruction to online instruction even though they had previously been reluctant to move to this more modern form of education. Now online instruction and the use of technology could no longer be avoided (Dhawan, 2020). There was, however, limited research that suggests that state superintendents from elementary and secondary schools were planning to implement any form of online instruction with any specific type of technology program for students who attended these schools.

Emergency Online Instruction

Emergency online instruction was used in the event that schools had to be closed due to unforeseen occurrences that prevented staff and/or students from attending school in person. Schools across the country were closed in March of 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic, however, this was not the first time that schools had been closed because of an illness associated with cold and flu symptoms. Dooyema et al. (2013) reported that in the fall of 2009 many schools across the country experienced closures during the H1N1 influenza pandemic with the state of Michigan reporting 567 closures. Moving forward during the spring of 2020, schools closed because of the pandemic known as COVID-19. The pandemic had a serious impact across the country on all educational organizations such as K-12 schools, colleges, and universities were forced to close campuses in an effort for students and faculty members to follow social distancing measures (Adnan & Anwar, 2020).

Online instruction became a necessity for elementary and secondary classroom instruction across the country (Dhawan, 2020). Most colleges and universities had previous experience with remote instruction, however elementary and secondary schools met challenges with this new form of instruction. Also, because of the lack of experience in elementary and secondary schools, this caused many problems for teachers across the country who were left scrambling to find ways to prepare for online instruction. Even so, Bahar et al. (2020) held that online instruction was inadequate for quality learning when compared to face-to-face instruction.

Badiozaman (2021) explored online readiness and found that the rapid shift to online instruction presented barriers for teachers because many lacked technological competencies that were required for online instruction causing them to focus more on the aspect of technology rather than ensuring that students were receiving the education that they needed. Transforming the daily traditional practices of education from face-to-face to an online environment caused the quality of learning to become inadequate during the pandemic (Badiozaman, 2021). Even so, there remained a need to find answers to the obstacles that Title One elementary school teachers encountered while delivering online instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Concerns existed over the organization of instructional resources in a format that would be suitable for students learning at individual levels as well as the evaluation methods of student achievement that would be used (Mubarak et al., 2014). Research by Jelinska and Paradowski (2021) suggested that many teachers were faced with limited time to prepare for remote teaching, and Blagg et al. (2020) stated that teachers were faced with serving the needs of students remotely even though many of them lacked specific training in online instruction. Even though online instruction was not new to the realm of education, with the outbreak of COVID-19, research from Trust and Whalen (2020) stated that many teachers were

left with determining ways to change their pedagogy to an emergency form of online instruction that would reach all students. Despite teachers having to modify their pedagogy to an emergency form of online instruction, teachers in Title One elementary schools were faced with even greater obstacles in reaching low-income students in their schools.

Lack of teacher preparation and the fact that teachers were driven immediately into online instruction left many teachers uncertain of how to proceed with online instruction. Not only did this cause concerns for the students they taught, but many personal concerns emerged which caused an overwhelming amount of strain and stress on classroom teachers who were forced to teach their content online. Research from Adnan and Anwar (2020) reported that there existed a concern over the teacher's capacity to successfully teach content digitally based on goals, instruction, and priorities. Hodges et al., (2020) warned that the immediate and rapid transition to online instruction might weaken the quality of content being delivered.

While Preez and Grange (2020) held the belief that online instruction also threatened formal and epistemological access, and that disadvantaged student suffered from this sudden and rapid change. Furthermore, research from Mishra et al., (2020) reported that online teaching became a massive challenge that teachers were faced with due in part to their having to immediately shift to remote instruction even though they were not technologically competent enough to embrace online instruction as they shifted from the traditional classroom setting.

The quick and sudden shift to remote instruction presented classroom teachers with complex issues including infrastructure and integrity concerns related to assessments (Badiozaman, 2021). The rapid shift to remote instruction from the traditional classroom was unique and classified as an emergency transition with remote instruction serving as a measure to manage a crisis (Badiozaman, 2021). Many teachers were unprepared for remote instruction, and

many struggled to adopt technological competencies to meet the needs of students that included strategies for the integrity of content assessments. Gamage et al., (2020) reported that there was uncertainty about administering benchmark tests because these tests required strict monitoring to ensure the integrity of the test scores. With students being absent from the classroom, teachers were unable to monitor students while taking these tests and a true and accurate score would not be possible in the event of student deception when taking the test (Gamage et al., 2020).

Gamage et al. (2020) reported that periodical assessments and evaluations could be possible in the form of take-home tests, but these tests would have to be mailed home and returned to the school which still created a problem in addition to academic integrity. Also, in some cases, it posed academic integrity where students might plagiarize written assignments. Possible plagiarism will pose an issue for teachers which causes them to take on the role of investigator rather than mentor (Gamage et al., 2020). With many questions concerning assessments left unanswered, many schools elected to discontinue assessments until students returned to the traditional classroom setting.

With many schools electing to opt-out of assessments during remote instruction, concerns evolved about students' progress during the year. Daniel (2020) reported that even though there were concerns over assessments during remote instruction, it was still important to administer some form of assessment throughout the lockdown in order to determine if students were grasping the concepts that they were receiving during remote instruction. Many school districts did not administer assessments while students were on remote instruction but did administer end-of-year assessments when students returned to the classroom in the spring (Daniel, 2020).

Teacher Concerns with Online Instruction

Major concerns existed for teachers when schools closed, and online instruction began in the spring of 2020. With the shift happening so quickly with little to no time for preparation, many were left blindsided and unsure of where to begin. Research from Wyse et al. (2020) held that one major concern for teachers was covering skills from the spring of 2020, in addition to covering the 2020-2021 school year, which was seen as not feasible, possible, or even necessary. Teachers were then left with identifying which skills they viewed as necessary for students to know as well as determining which of these skills would be taught as they approached the transition to online instruction. Many teachers were instructed to give fewer assignments, adopt a pass/fail policy, and follow a rule that grades could only go up from when the pandemic started (Malkus & Christensen, 2020). Teachers were provided with these instructions to prevent overwhelming students with online instruction during the pandemic.

Further research from Istenic (2021) reported that teachers argued for personalized learning that required feedback during different times of the learning process. This personalized learning would provide specific feedback to students about their progress and improvement during the school year in order to guide student engagement in the learning process. Istenic (2021) held that teachers needed to provide feedback to students because it was imperative to students being successful during remote instruction, in part because students needed the same form of feedback that they were used to receiving in the traditional classroom setting.

Karakaya (2020) reported that it was important for teachers to create a student-centered design where empathy toward students would reflect student needs as well as support the online learning environment. Karakaya (2020) called this approach to online instruction s human-centered design that was based on humanizing pedagogy in order to adapt to online instruction

and meet the needs of all students. By using a human-centered design pedagogy, teachers were able to provide feedback in a timely manner that encouraged active participation and student learning (Karakaya, 2020).

Despite practices taken to alleviate students from being overwhelmed during online instruction, limited research identified how teachers were able to use the skills adopted for online instruction and reach low-income Title One elementary students. Marshall et al. (2020) reported that because teachers and students are overwhelmed with the new form of instruction and learning, school leaders suggested that teachers prioritize needs during this time. Establishing short- and long-term priorities was important as well as being flexible with policies, practices, and academic expectations during the lock down (Marshall et al., 2020). Teachers were instructed to give fewer assignments in order to keep students focused, as well as collaborating during the online instruction times that were established. Was this enough when it came to students' willingness to participate in online instruction? Many students were still not logging in during class time and were not completing assignments.

Even so, with the implementation of online instruction, teachers were driven to use different tools and platforms that they were not prepared to use nor were they trained to use (Khlaif et al., 2020). Many teachers simply rejected the idea of online instruction and were skeptical about online instruction due to online classes being time consuming in comparison to traditional methods of teaching (Adarkwah, 2020). Designing content curricula for online instruction was more challenging and time consuming for teachers (Preez & Grange, 2020). Many teachers rejected the idea of online instruction, and many were inclined to figure out ways to reach students academically as well as create ways to actively engage students in their learning.

Marshall et al. (2020) reported that the grading procedures were lowered in many school districts to show that students could not earn lower than the grade that they held before the closure of schools which left many teachers with the belief that they were unable to hold students accountable for any work that was assigned. Not only this but frequently learning procedures and assessments (Borup et al., 2019) were often planned ahead of time and could not easily be changed to fit the needs of individual students in regard to online instruction. Many students lacked the ability to self-regulate and successfully learn online so failure rates increased because of online instruction (Borup et al., 2019). Even so, there was limited research that identified how Title One elementary school teachers were able to actively engage low-income students who were required to participate in online instruction but did not have adequate devices or internet services for online instruction in their schools during the pandemic.

With the transition from face-to-face instruction to online instruction on such short notice, many teachers believed the task of converting to online instruction was daunting and required higher proficiency levels in technology (Marek et al., 2021). Research also identified isolation and the inability to interact with students in-person as problematic for teachers when designing online instruction (Marek et al., 2021). Kim and Asbury (2020) reported that many teachers felt confusion and stress with the abruptness of school closures due to the uncertainty of how long schools would in fact be closed. Not only this, but many teachers were unfamiliar with remote instruction and experienced unpleasant job-related emotions that included pupils' unpredictable levels of online experience (Kim and Asbury, 2020). There still existed limited research concerning the measures taken to identify issues concerning isolation and the inability to interact with students as being an issue when designing online instruction content for Title One elementary school students.

It was the belief of Gacs et al. (2020) that even though online instruction was not planned, many teachers approached online instruction using a backward design in an effort to improve their abilities to connect with students. Even though using a backward design allowed teachers an opportunity to establish learning goals and develop strategies for reaching these goals, if students did not have the tools necessary for participating in online instruction, any approach to online instruction that was established by teachers would not work. Sayer and Braun (2020) believed that it was imperative that teachers immediately establish a reliable form of communication with students in order to move forward with online instruction.

Despite using a backward design approach in preparing for online instruction, as well as efforts in establishing a reliable form of communication with students, there were many teachers who were unfamiliar with technology, and had varying levels of confidence in the use of technology for teaching (Leech et al., 2020) and struggled with the concept of online instruction. Despite a lack of research on how Title One elementary school teachers changed their lessons to online instruction and reached low-income students, research from Aziz et al. (2020) suggested that the paradigm shift from face-to-face instruction was not a simple shift, that it was a process that took time to achieve and that those teachers who struggled with the concept of online instruction often took longer to achieve this shift. Teachers were not confident in their digital competencies or their habits in using information technology (Lepp et al., 2021). Many teachers had never used any form of technology in their classroom and were unfamiliar with a basic understanding of its use in classroom instruction.

According to Moser et al. (2020), PreK-12 teachers and those with limited or no prior knowledge of online instruction were the least confident that their instructional goals were met even though they reported having well-designed courses. These teachers made numerous

adjustments to their policies and procedures as well as their expectations while engaged in online instruction (Moser et al., 2020) and expressed concerns over student outcomes. These issues caused added concerns for Title One elementary school teachers who instructed low-income students. A transfer in how the curriculum was taught was implemented overnight which left teachers across the country concerned with reaching students from low-income families. Despite the lack of research, many Title One elementary schools' low-income students did not have access to adequate devices or access to the internet services that were required for them to participate in online instruction which left them unable to access their classroom remotely.

Research from Flores and Gago (2020) reported that teachers identified their main concerns as students lacking adequate equipment, lack of time, lack of training with remote instruction, pupils not being involved with their learning process, and lack of support from parents. Flores and Gago (2020) also reported that many teachers had to use their own technological devices in order to teach remotely and that time spent teaching remotely increased when compared to face-to-face instruction, but student participation decreased. The amount of time spent teaching during remote instruction increased due to the limited amount of time for each class and the amount of material that each teacher needed to cover in accordance with content standards (Flores & Gago, 2020). However, student participation decreased due in part to students' lack of equipment or their lack of concern with participating in their learning process (Flores & Gago, 2020).

Despite teachers having to prepare for online instruction within hours of schools closing, they received very little guidance as to the procedures that they were to use to reach students. Professional development courses which could help teachers (Trikoilis & Papanastasiou, 2020) was limited, unavailable, or not provided which left teachers with

determining ways to create interesting lessons that would reach their students as well as keep their student's attention during the hours of their online classes. Teacher voice as well as delivery of their content into smaller pieces was important as well as their delivery method of online instruction (Lauret & Bayram-Jacobs, 2021). It was also important for teachers to be flexible in their delivery methods as well as the assignments and the materials that they attached to their online assignments (Lauret & Bayram-Jacobs, 2021).

Research from Keengwe and Kidd. (2010), reported that even though the use of traditional faculty members was viewed as a quick and easy solution for teacher involvement in remote learning, teachers needed to understand the challenges of online teaching. Konig et al. (2020) reported that teachers having an understanding of the challenges to online teaching would also require them to have a level of confidence in their ability to teach online in order to provide successful instruction to students during this time. Even so, there existed a lack of research on the type of professional development classes if any that teachers in Title One elementary schools received in order to help with the preparation and providing of effective online instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Teacher Stress and Anxiety

One area of concern during online instruction was the stress and anxiety levels of teachers who were teaching online without having previous experiences, training, and/or guidance from school or district personnel. Many teachers believed that they were thrown into teaching online instantaneously without regard to training or preparation which led to many feeling stressed over meeting the needs of their students. Not only this, but teachers were concerned about the COVID-19 virus and the possibility of contracting the virus and the effects that it would have on them and their families (Pressley, 2021).

Anxiety and stress levels increased with concerns over online instruction and the concern over the virus itself which (Pressley 2021) led to teacher burnout across the country. Stress and anxiety levels also increased due in part to teachers having to work from home which was new to most teachers (Ozamiz-Etxebarria et al., 2021). Working from home caused many teachers to experience levels of sleep disturbances and depression, raising their levels of stress and anxiety because they were now working from home with increased workloads because of online instruction (Ozamiz-Etxebarria et al., 2021). Areas of concern also existed if teachers worked from home when they were performing other roles such as parent, and/or caregiver, partner, and teacher (Prado-Gasco et al., 2020).

The abruptness of school closures, teachers being unfamiliar with remote instruction, and the uncertainty of how long schools would be closed immediately caused stress and anxiety for teachers across the country (Kim and Asbury 2020). Kim and Asbury (2020), also reported that prior to the closure of schools, most job stressors for teachers included workload and behavior management. With the change in job stressors, many teachers were left unable to cope because many of the stress factors were out of their control (Kim and Asbury (2020). When schools were first closed the uncertainty left many teachers rushed and panicked to figure out how to begin online instructions. This in turn caused many teachers to reach higher levels of stress due in part to the lack of guidance that they received from higher up (Kim and Asbury, 2020).

Even though teaching was viewed as an incredibly stressful job, research from Sokal et al. (2020) stated that remote instruction due to COVID-19 increased teachers' levels of stress and anxiety. Often because of the higher levels of stress and anxiety various teachers experienced because of online instruction (Sokal et al., 2020), a few of the examples of the effects of the stress and anxiety included but were not limited to lower quality instruction, lower qualities of

teacher well-being, and often teacher attrition and burn out. Parte and Herrador-Alcaide's (2021) research showed that teacher burnout consisted of three dimensions which included emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a feeling that there was no accomplishment or personal efficacy. However, there was little research that had been conducted concerning the amount of teacher burnout associated with Title One elementary teachers. (Sokal et al., 2020) reported that stress was often the result of the mismatch between what the job demanded and the resources that were available. Many teachers were also burdened with the expectations of parents, along with their workload and the balance of their home life (Sokal et al., 2020).

Teacher stress and anxiety levels also increased due to the fact that many teachers were also parents, (Ozamiz-Etxebarria et al., 2021) and were suddenly thrown into having to prepare for online instruction as well ensuring that their school-aged children were also completing their online courses. These stress and anxiety levels were often met with symptoms of depression and sleep disturbances (Ozamiz-Etxebarria et al., 2021) which caused adverse effects on confidence levels with online instruction. Also, for teachers who had school-aged children, multitasking two platforms of online instruction increased stress and anxiety (Ozamiz-Etxebarria et al., 2021) because as a parent they were monitoring the success of their children's online courses as well as teaching.

Countless teachers felt the anxiety and stress over the concerns of online instruction because of the inability to contact students during scheduled times for instruction. Many teachers felt stress and anxiety over moving immediately to online instruction (MacIntyre et al., 2020) with very little or no training, and many were left feeling that they were to simply carry on as if nothing had changed even though the country was in the middle of a pandemic. Also, many teachers' stress and anxiety increased because they were expected to adapt, adjust, and carry on

(MacIntyre et al., 2020) while continuing to aim for effective communication with their students even though classrooms were now remote.

Many teachers reached a higher level of stress due in part to not knowing what to tell their students, how to tell them, or the inability to tell them. With schools across the country closed, many teachers were unable to connect with students which left a stress barrier due to a lack of communication with students (Kim & Asbury, 2020) and this inability to communicate with students increased stress or caused initial stress for many teachers. Not only this, but many teachers' stress levels increased due in part to the knowledge that they had concerning students' poverty levels and the lack of meals in the home (Kim & Asbury, 2020).

Teachers' understanding of student's poverty levels was something that they had previous knowledge of because they were aware of their student's situation while in school (Kim and Asbury 2020), due in part to the knowledge of meals and snacks often being sent home on the weekends in order for these students to have food until their return to school on Mondays. Now since schools were closed because of the pandemic, many teachers' stress levels increased because of their concerns over their students not having food to eat (Kim & Asbury, 2020). Many teachers worried and had a genuine concern for their students beyond the classroom and the content that they taught. The not knowing triggered higher levels of stress and anxiety for many teachers across the country (Kim & Asbury, 2020).

Effects On Low-Income Students

With the closure of schools because of the COVID-19 pandemic, students across the country were affected in several ways. Many low-income students were affected because of the inability to access online instruction due to the lack of internet services, and/or a computing device in the household. Research from Beaunoyer et al., (2020) reported that low-income

households with less well-equipped devices both in numbers and quality also suffered from long-term economic consequences of COVID-19.

With the immediate shift in how students received instruction raised questions and equity concerns (Means & Neisler, 2021) especially for low-income students who lacked computing devices and internet services. Students from low-income families often struggled with remote instruction simply because they did not have the devices, or the internet required to complete assignments, therefore, they could not access school remotely (Quezada et al., 2020). Many students struggled because they came from low-income families and could not afford the items that were needed to work remotely from home.

Students may not have had the appropriate device or may have had weak or limited internet services (Aijaz, 2020). Working remotely required students to log onto a computer, laptop, cell phone or some other type of device, and some students simply were unable to do this because they did not own these items. Further, internet services were required for remote learning and many families were unable to purchase broadband internet services, even minimum or unlimited data packages that were available in their area. In the event that students had a device, they may not have had the internet services required to access school remotely (Quezada et al, 2020). Means and Neisler (2021) reported that more than one in six students experienced internet issues and/or hardware and software problems that were severe enough that it interfered with the students' ability to continue with their schoolwork. This left many students in search of devices and/or internet services that could be accessed from friends or family members to complete daily assignments.

When schools across the country closed their doors, students found themselves having to access school remotely and many were left unable to do so because they did not have

the devices that they needed and/or access to the internet to actively participate in online instruction. Children from the poorest families were often the least likely of all students to have access to the devices and internet that was needed (Bubb & Jones, 2020). If low-income students were able to access the internet, they often did not have adequate internet services which were needed due in part to unpaid bills in the 12 months prior, or devices that were too slow or insufficient for their needs for online instruction (Katz et al., 2021).

The process that school leaders were accustomed to following in a traditional classroom setting was no longer available to students in low-income families, and this created barriers to their learning environment. Many students fell behind because they were not able to engage in the delivery of online instruction (Adarkwah, 2020). The inability to access online instruction and engage in daily instructional activities often led to frustrations among low-income students who then contributed to students' complete disconnection from school. Limited access to devices and internet services discouraged low-income students with online instruction (Domina et al., 2021). Often, students may have had access to the internet but were unable to access the classes that they needed because of a bad internet connection or because they were unable to download the appropriate browser due to connectivity issues (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2020). In the event that students were able to access the internet, trying to download the correct browser took up most of their data plan if not all due to the amount of time required to download the browser.

Many students from low-income families in Title One elementary schools lived in poverty so, there was a direct connection to their inability of having access to a device or internet services to complete online instruction (Blagg et al., 2020). Students from low-income families often lived in crowded conditions with single parents in economically vulnerable sectors of a

community. Even though single parenting is always challenging, it posed an even more unique challenge during a time when students were required to learn from home (Blagg et al., 2020). Students in this situation relied on their schools to print hard copies of the work to be delivered via mail or picked up by family members for them to complete the work at home. When students had to wait for hard copies to be delivered to their homes, this slowed their education even more. When students had to complete hard copies of their work, this became a major concern because of the lack of instruction, guidance, or clarification from their teacher that was often needed. Proper interaction with teachers was a major concern associated with remote learning (Adnan & Anwar, 2020).

Curriculum Instruction

A transfer in how the curriculum would be taught was implemented overnight which left Title One elementary school teachers across the country concerned with reaching students from low-income families. Despite the lack of research, many Title One elementary schools had low-income students who did not have access to adequate devices or the internet services required to participate in online instruction leaving them unable to access their classroom remotely. Lai and Widmar's (2020) research showed that lacking the devices necessary or having fewer devices necessary within a household as well as the lack of internet or unreliable internet services left low-income students falling behind during the pandemic.

Research from Borup et al. (2019) showed that the student failure rate with online courses was a complex issue due to their inability to understand and self-regulate the online learning process as well as the ability to understand how to be successful when it came to online learning. Even so, Borup et al. (2019) showed that teachers were able to provide a prominent level of support to students that created loving and caring relationships with their students.

However, even though teachers were unable to provide all students with the timely support that was needed, student perceptions of their teacher's care and concern for them proved invaluable to their online learning (Borup et al., 2019).

Even so, low-income students often lived without everyday items that they needed, and devices and internet services were not provisions that were top priorities for their parents. These students were unable to attend school which left teachers in search of finding alternative methods for delivery of classroom materials to reach all students during the pandemic. It was imperative for students to have access to a device and the internet for all students to benefit from online learning during the pandemic (Morgan, 2020). Research from Borup et al. (2019) reported that K-12 online teachers were able to develop strong relationships with students even though they often took longer to develop due to requiring students to actively participate in remote instruction. Dorn et al. (2020) reported that those who were affected the greatest by the loss of learning due to school closures were students who come from low-income families, were black, and were Hispanic.

Dorn et al. (2020) stated that low-income students lacked access to high-quality devices and the internet necessary for remote learning as well as quiet spaces with little or no distractions, along with parental supervision. Dorn et al. (2020) also reported that only 60 percent of low-income students were logging in during remote instruction time while 60 to 70 percent of Hispanic and black students were logging in during a regular remote instruction time with these variations accounting for a greater learning loss for these students.

Online Instruction Challenges

With different students, there were diverse needs and diverse needs were to be met, and according to Daniel (2020), students' "normal" changed overnight leaving them with

uncertainties of their future. For teachers, many were able to prepare lessons ahead of time and post these lessons online for students to view at a later date. Many teachers were able to make appointments with students in order to be in contact with them and conduct a check for understanding and answer any questions that students might have concerning assignments (Daniel, 2020). However, there were many students who did not participate or were unable to participate leaving them unaware of content lessons, and teachers unable to make contact. Often, in the event that students did participate, many teachers had concerns over the integrity of the assignment, or assessments that were taken (Badiozaman, 2021).

Lindner et al., (2020) reported that many students lost valuable instruction time due to the fact that they did not manage their time wisely and did not work independently. Online instruction required students to work independently, and many students were not used to working on their own without teacher supervision, and in order to be successful they needed this reinforcement (Lindner et al., 2020). Not only this, but students did not know how to manage their time and therefore they did not complete assignments in a timely manner if at (Lindner et al., 2020).

Another concern that existed during the lock-down which forced schools to transition from face-to-face instruction to online instruction was teachers' ability to reach students with disabilities (Tremmel et al., 2020). Concerns came about as to how the curriculum would be modified to reach students with disabilities and if it would be possible to modify remote instruction to reach all students including those with disabilities. It was imperative that open lines of communication were implemented with parents of children with disabilities (Tremmel et al., 2020), because often times many of the students with disabilities came from low-income families who needed additional services. Not only did teachers show concern for students with

disabilities (Lindner et al., 2020) but they also showed concern for students who had IEPs and ELL students as well. Distance education was often a concern for these students because they do not receive the monitoring or additional one-on-one help that was needed in order to be productive and successful (Lindner et al., 2020).

Further, if students were unable to access the internet or did not have adequate devices then many school districts mailed learning packets home, but the turnaround time for teachers to receive the packets, grade, and provide feedback became problematic (Tremmel et al., 2020). This created additional problems for students who already had learning, emotional and behavioral disabilities because they were not receiving the hands-on instruction that they needed to be successful (Tremmel et al., 2020). Also, students were lacking skill development through hands-on experimental learning opportunities because of online learning due in part because they were not provided with follow-through opportunities that hands-on skills provided (Lindner et al., 2020).

Many students were unable to complete the packets because they did not have the direct instruction that they needed in order to understand and work through each set of curricula content that they received (Tremmel et al., 2020). Simply put, students needed direct instruction from their teachers to be successful (Tremmel et al., 2020). Even so, there was lack of research concerning students with disabilities, curriculum strategies that were used to reach them, and the overall type of instruction they received during online instruction. There was also an overall lack of research concerning low-income Title One elementary school students and their ability to access online instruction.

Parental Involvement

Regardless of the way that instruction was being delivered to students across the country, it was imperative that parents were involved with their student's education. Parental involvement had been previously defined in research as anything from guidance with assignments, provision of required devices or internet services, as well as the support given with each completed assignment to ensure accomplishments of academic programs (Lawrencea & Fakuadeb, 2021). Many students simply did not have a support system at home as many low-income students were in homes where both parents worked, were being raised by single parents, and/or had parents who worked evenings. Often, if this were the case, these parents were too tired to help or struggled to help because they did not know how to do the work even if they tried. Students who have parents who are involved with their education and aid with schoolwork have parents who reported spending an average of two hours a day working on schoolwork with their child during the pandemic (Henderson, 2021).

When online instruction began, many parents found themselves in the role of teacher and struggled with this concept due to inexperience or knowledge of the content that was being delivered. Spinelli et al. (2020) suggested that chaos within households reached higher levels due to parents' stress associated with their children's online instruction activities along with the constraints of being on lockdown. Further, Spinelli et al., (2020) suggested that parents who were overly stressed were less involved in the activities of their children which caused a decrease in their effective emotional support during the lockdown. This stress increased during the pandemic which left parents on lockdown at home with their children with many having very little if any interaction with teachers (Spinelli et al., 2020). Further research from Morelli et al. (2020) reported that many parents were left feeling overwhelmed and stressed due to school

closures and children remaining at home.

Henderson (2021) reported that students appeared to have had less interaction with their teachers, with the parents of 19% of students reporting individual contact with teachers by video or phone several times a week, and the parents of 40% of students having no contact with teachers. However, a lack of research on Title One elementary schools' low-income students and parents stress levels along with concerns over one-on-one contact with teachers during the pandemic continues to exist. Parents who remained stressed during the lockdown were unable to provide support for their children which in turn left many students stressed and unable to complete online instruction throughout the lockdown.

In research from Sonnenschein (2021), many parents became overly anxious and stressed because of the subject area that they were trying to help their children complete. Parents were more confident in helping their children work on literature-based assignments but were not confident when it came to working on mathematical assignments (Sonnenschein, 2021). Stress levels increased for parents when they were anxious about a subject that they had difficulty with, which often led to their children having a higher level of anxiety toward the same subject (Sonnenschein, 2021). Parents also showed concern about teacher readiness (Bhamani et al., 2020) with online instruction and how it would affect their children which also led to many parents becoming more overwhelmed and anxious with the concept of online instruction.

Many students were able to see the anxiety and stress that their parents felt over online instruction and when parents became overwhelmed with online instruction this often led to children becoming overwhelmed and anxious with the process of online instruction (Sonnebschein, 2021). Many parents experienced mental health distress (Davie et al., 2020) due in part to remote learning because their children had difficulty maneuvering through

the aspects of online classes and they were unable to help them. Also, because of the uncertainty of how long online learning would be in effect (Davis et al., 2020), parents would continue to experience long-term and continued emotional stressors that would last for extended amounts of time.

Social isolation and the uncertainty that came with online instruction caused social disruption (Janssens et al., 2021) which heightened parents' stress levels and in turn affected the relationship that they had with their children. Parents were in search of new ways to balance work, family, and daily routines along with ensuring the safety of their family members which increased and led to heightened stress and anxiety levels (Janssens et al., 2021).

A number of parents reported higher levels of stress (Lau et al., 2021) because of online instruction and their inability to support their child's learning. Prior to the lockdown parents believed that they were able to support their children with their schoolwork (Lau et al., 2021) more than they were during online learning. Lau et al. (2021) stated that many parents of elementary-aged students found online learning more challenging and reported increased levels of stress because they were not trained nor were they prepared for online learning and that they simply preferred face-to-face instruction. Many parents also had children of different academic levels and therefore found it even more difficult to keep up with the daily assignments and activities, especially in the event that a child's ability for independent learning was low (Lau et al., 2021).

Based on findings from Pek and Mee (2020), parental involvement had a substantial influence on a child's achievement in school, however, many parents did not get actively involved in their child's education at home. Further, Pek and Mee (2020) suggested that parental

involvement was essential to a child's education as it enhanced their social relationships and promoted self-esteem and self-efficacy. However, many parents believed that face-to-face instruction with teachers provided their children with scheduling and routines that were needed to prepare for future work habits (Bahamani et al., 2020). Parents feared that their children were not receiving the appropriate education that came with the physical presence of a teacher that was needed along with social interactions with peers (Bahamani et al., 2020).

Nevertheless, parents were seen as one of the most important parts of online education for their children, however, they were not able to provide the social interactions that their children needed which could cause mental health issues for the child (Misirli & Erglec, 2021). Even though most secondary-aged students were able to maneuver through online instruction, elementary-aged students often required parent support. Providing social and emotional support (Misirli & Erglec, 2021) became an important aspect of parents' responsibility during the lockdown because the only interaction that children had during this time was during scheduled class time when the focus was on online learning. Also, in the event that children did not have access to the internet the isolation from peers and teachers became greater and caused further mental and emotional health concerns for children (Misirli & Erlec, 2021).

Research suggested that children needed social interaction with their peers and the isolation that was caused by the lockdown was detrimental to their health as well as the mental health of their parents due to their parents' inability to help with the struggles of social isolation, fear of infection, along with frustration and boredom among other things (Misirli & Erglec, 2021) children needed to have an active exchange of knowledge through participation with peers, friends, classmates, and teachers in order to scaffold their learning process (Vygotsky, 1978).

Digital Divide

Teachers of Title One elementary schools faced previous obstacles while teaching face to face in the classroom, yet when the COVID-19 pandemic closed schools across the country and required classes to be taught remotely, an existing issue was brought to light. Many did not concern themselves with, were not aware of, or simply did not bother with trying to understand the digital divide. A digital divide exists when there is a gap between individuals in a society who do not have access to the internet and those who do.

At one time access to the internet in one's home was seen as a luxury, and now it was creating a digital divide (Pagan et al., 2018) between those who did and did not have access to the use of internet services in their homes. The lifestyle, social status, and economic status of individuals contributed to the digital divide that existed today (Pagan et al., 2018). According to research from Roberts (2020), the ability to access computers and the internet had become increasingly important for individuals to completely immerse themselves in the economic, political, and social aspects of the world. Even so, the digital divide continued to grow at an alarming rate of 29% between higher and lower-income homes that did not have access to the internet in the home.

Further research from Roberts (2020) reported that the digital divide in elementary and secondary school-aged students continued to increase due in part to an increase in underprivileged members of society in poor, rural areas. Lai and Widmar (2020) reported that even though homes may have had internet services, there was often only one internet provider available in the immediate area which forced consumers to accept limited or insufficient internet offerings which increased or reinforced the digital divide. Having only one internet provider in

an area limited consumers' ability to determine which internet services best fit their budget and often left them without the inability to afford the internet in their homes.

Teachers, students, and parents encountered many obstacles during the COVID-19 pandemic, which caused an increase in the digital divide within most Title One elementary schools. Students from low-income families fell within the digital divide due in part to their parent's inability to purchase devices and/or internet services. Research from Vogel et al. (2020) reported that as students across the country turned to the internet to access online instruction, the debate concerning the gap between those who could and could not access technology emerged. Also, those concerns were more common among parents with lower incomes (Vogel et al., 2020). Further, compared to more affluent peers, a larger gap existed between urban and rural areas with children from the poorest families being more likely to drop out of school due to their inability to access online instruction (Azubuike et al., 2021). Studies (Azubuike et al., (2021) also reported a relationship between the socioeconomic status of students and the digital divide in students' abilities to access remote learning opportunities during the pandemic.

Based on findings from Saha et al. (2021), the outbreak of COVID-19 imposed challenges on schools shifting from traditional learning to online learning and the association with the digital divide among technological inefficiencies among teachers and students. Also, the digital divide (Saha et al., 2021) was often linked to region, financial class, gender, and so forth which increased challenges with completing online instruction effectively. When students were unable to access online instruction, they fell further behind in their academic progress. If they were unable to access online instruction because of the digital divide that existed, then this circumstance was considered beyond their control.

Seymour et al.'s (2020) studies reported digital learning requires resource packages that

have computers, along with internet connections with appropriate bandwidth for online instruction. Further, young people self-report (Seymour et al., 2020) the digital inequality that existed within their homes. Even so, further research from Vassilakopoulou and Hustad (2021) stated that the digital divide also related to inequalities related to economic and social resources due in part to inequalities that affected individuals' ability to adequately use digital resources that exist. These inequalities existed due to inexperience and unequal access, and show that the access gap is closing within marginalized population groups (Vassilakopoulou & Hustad 2021), and includes motivation, personality traits, and technological skills. Even though research has been conducted concerning the digital divide that existed for students within schools across the country, further research is needed to understand the digital divide that exists for low-income students in Title One elementary schools during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Summary

In summary, when schools across the country were closed in the spring of 2020 because of the pandemic that hit the United States, teachers were left scrambling to find ways to deliver online instruction. Many teachers found that they were not prepared for remote instruction as delivering online instruction during the pandemic, yet based on the constructivist theory, these teachers were able to move forward using the current knowledge that they held as well as the new knowledge gained from fellow teachers while working together during the pandemic. Transitioning to online instruction, reaching low-income students who did not have the devices or internet services necessary for online instruction as well as working with parents of low-income students were major concerns for teachers. Gaining a clear understanding of the obstacles that Title One elementary school teachers faced while delivering online instruction

during the pandemic allows for better preparation in the event that the country is faced with a similar event in the future.

Research suggested that teachers encountered obstacles during the transition to online instruction, yet further research was needed to provide information concerning the obstacles that Title One elementary school teachers encountered while delivering instruction to low-income students during the COVID-19 pandemic. There was limited research providing insight into how teachers achieved instruction to low-income students. Chapter three provides details of the qualitative research study including the design, research questions, setting, participants and procedures, as well as the data collection methods and analysis, along with the ethical considerations of the research.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to identify obstacles that Title One elementary school teachers encountered while delivering online instruction during a pandemic. By following the social constructivist perspective of Vygotsky (1978), research answered underlying questions concerning these obstacles. The procedures for conducting this research included gaining IRB consent to begin data collection, collecting signed consent forms from all participants, and conducting interviews, questionnaires, and focus group sessions. The study included three Title One elementary schools within Coral County schools, West Virginia (pseudonym), and pseudonyms were used for school names along with all participants in order to protect their identity (Mukungu, 2017). There existed a gap (Ridder, 2017) in the current literature concerning obstacles that Title One elementary teachers encountered while delivering online instruction during a pandemic. Chapter three includes a description of the design of the study along with research questions. The setting and rationale are clearly defined, the research sites are provided, and the method of selection for research participants is included. The procedures are presented in detail, the researcher's role is defined, and data collection and types are explained. Data analysis, trustworthiness, ethical considerations, and a chapter summary conclude this chapter.

Research Design

A qualitative case research study was conducted because there were questions concerning the obstacles that Title One elementary school teachers encountered while delivering online instruction during a pandemic. Interviews, questionnaires, and focus groups were conducted with Title One elementary teachers in an effort to find answers concerning the obstacles teachers

encountered while delivering online instruction during a pandemic. In order for a teacher to be classified as Title One, they must meet the guidelines prescribed in the state and federal guidelines for Coral County Schools, West Virginia (pseudonym), as a highly qualified teacher (West Virginia Department of Education, 2018). I understand that the participants hold answers to the questions, not the answers that I bring to the study (McLeod, 2019). I sought to understand the perspective of the participants and how they were able to offer insight concerning the study as well as provide beneficial information for others and future events.

The reason for selecting a case study as the approach for this research is because a case study begins with identifying a specific case that can be described and analyzed, as well as the ability to define and describe the meaning of the study within certain parameters (Creswell & Poth, 2018). A case study identifies themes, issues, and specific situations that can be studied. This case study included four teachers from each of the three Title One elementary schools affected by obstacles encountered while teaching online during a pandemic. The teachers who participated in this study were able to provide specific information pertaining to obstacles that were encountered from a professional standpoint because they were directly involved in the remote learning process.

This was a single instrumental case study involving collecting data through questionnaires, interviews and focus groups concerning the obstacles teachers encountered while providing online instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic that hit the United States in March of 2020. Zviedrite et al. (2021) reported that 49% of the 50 states and Washington DC had school closures as of March 16, 2020, with the remaining states reporting school closures the week of March 22-18. Data collection types included questionnaires, interviews, and focus groups. This qualitative case study explored the obstacles that teachers encountered while

delivering instruction during a pandemic. This study sought to understand the obstacles teachers within Title One elementary schools encountered and how they reacted to and addressed these obstacles. Many teachers within Title One elementary schools encountered the same obstacles while teaching remotely during the pandemic (Abel V, 2020). A case study involves a detailed examination of a specific case or cases that exist within a real-world context (Yin, 2014), therefore using a case study for this research identified and answered questions concerning the real-life obstacles that existed during a pandemic.

Research Questions

Central Question:

How did converting to online instruction because of the COVID-19 pandemic affect Title One elementary schools?

Sub Question One:

In what ways did teachers work together to prepare for online instruction?

Sub Question Two:

How were instructional strategies changed to transition to online instruction?

Sub Question Three:

How did teachers prepare themselves to overcome the obstacles encountered while delivering online instruction during the pandemic?

Setting and Participants

The setting of this qualitative case study took place in three Title One elementary schools consisting of 12 participants that included teachers who were affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and teaching classes remotely. These schools were in a rural county within the state with a total population of 73,361 people which has decreased by approximately 1,000 individuals

in the last year. There are a total of nine Title One schools in the county, and a total of 30% of schools with Title One status.

Setting

The setting for this qualitative case study was in a rural community within Coral County, West Virginia (pseudonym) that covers an area of approximately 605.4 square miles and has a population of 73,361 (Census Reporter, 2019). Three Title One Schools within the county were selected for this research study and include Oak Elementary, Elm Elementary, and Maple Elementary (pseudonyms). Title One elementary schools were selected because the research focuses on the obstacles that Title One elementary teachers encountered while delivering online instruction during a pandemic. There are ten Title One elementary schools within the county, and even though all ten schools are considered to house low-income students, the three selected for this research were in the poorest areas of the county. It is the belief that collecting data from the three poorest Title One elementary schools within the county provided more accurate data for this qualitative case study.

All three Title One elementary schools chosen for this qualitative research are public PK-5 schools. Oak Elementary School (pseudonym) had a student/teacher ratio of 12:6, 355 students, 77.8% of students receiving free or discounted lunches. and an expenditure of $12,672 per student (Beckley Elementary, 2021). Elm Elementary School (pseudonym) had a student/teacher ratio of 11:1, 243 students, 71.5% of students receiving free or discounted lunches, and an expenditure of $15,273 per student (Stratton Elementary, 2021). Maple Elementary School (pseudonym) had a student/teacher ratio of 12:2, 247 students, 55.6% of students receiving free or discounted lunches, and an expenditure of $13,898 per student (Cranberry-Prosperity Elementary, 2021). Each school had a Special Education Department that

assisted students with Learning disabilities and received services due to an IEP or a 504 plan. The goal of administrators in Coral County School District included showing growth in math and reading through high-quality instruction, increasing student engagement by integrating a curriculum that challenges all students, promoting and sustaining continuous individual improvement, and promoting positive relationships within each building that supports and promotes student learning (Raleigh County Schools, 2021).

Participants

Once Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was gained, 12 participants were selected and identified. All participants were assigned a pseudonym in order to protect their identities and responses to data collection throughout the research study. Participants for this qualitative case study were selected by sending a questionnaire to teachers asking for volunteers to participate in the study. Questionnaires were created to be friendly and non-threatening (Yin, 2014) in hopes of having several volunteers for the research study. Next, purposeful sampling was conducted based on the criteria of teachers who instructed low-income students in the Title One elementary schools where data was being collected (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Three Title One elementary schools were used to collect research for this study; therefore, four teachers from each school were asked to participate in the data collection process.

All participants were over the age of 18 and had signed an informed consent form (See Appendix C) that provided them with information pertaining to the research being conducted as well as their decision to participate voluntarily in the research and their ability to withdraw from the research at any time if they no longer wished to participate (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Twelve participants were involved in this qualitative case study (Forero et al., 2018). Teachers were interviewed using open-ended questions in semi-structured interviews (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

All information that was collected was coded for themes and patterns that were seen throughout the data collection process (Yin, 2014).

Researcher Positionality

The motivation that drove this qualitative case study was a social constructivist view (Vygotsky, 1978) in that knowledge is co-constructed, and individuals learn from each other. Working with teachers from Title One elementary schools who encountered obstacles while delivering online instruction during the pandemic allowed the researcher to gain knowledge from these teachers. By conducting this case study research, I was able to evaluate the data and construct information for future educators in the event that remote instruction is once again launched within schools across the country.

Interpretive Framework

The interpretive framework that was driving this qualitative case study was that of social constructivism in that the researcher sought to understand the obstacles that Title One elementary teachers encountered while delivering online instruction. By interacting with Title One teachers through interviews and focus groups, I was able to construct meaning from patterns that came about throughout the data collection process. Social constructivism relies on the participants' views of the situation that is being researched (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In this case, I relied on the views of Title One teachers who participate in the study to provide insight into the obstacles that they encountered during the delivery of online instruction during a pandemic.

Philosophical Assumptions

The philosophical assumptions of this qualitative case study included ontological assumptions in that different perspectives emerged as themes developed from data that was collected (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Epistemological assumptions in that participants were

relied upon for their responses (Creswell & Poth, 2018) to research questions as well as time spent with participants and the development of an understanding of each participant and their experiences, and axiological assumptions of the obstacles of the researcher during online instruction and the relationship to the participants and obstacles they faced during online instruction.

Ontological Assumptions

The ontological assumption that existed within this qualitative case study was the assumption that Title One elementary school teachers encountered similar obstacles while delivering online instruction during a pandemic. Even so, the reality of these similarities was seen through data collections from several teachers within Title One elementary schools, not just one. Even though many teachers encountered similar obstacles during remote instruction, data collections showed different views of these obstacles. In qualitative research, ontological assumptions are concerned with the reality of nature and what can be known about the nature of reality (Ahmed, 2008). Because teachers were forced to transition to remote instruction so quickly, obstacles emerged in elementary and secondary schools. Many obstacles were similar in nature due in part to teachers working in close proximity, teaching the same content, and teaching the same grade level. As a middle school language arts teacher, I faced many obstacles when switching to remote instruction. Many students did not have access to the internet, and I was unable to connect with them, which left me having to print out packets to mail to their homes. In other instances, students would not log on to the classes at the specified times, if at all, and many times I never saw any students for the length of time that classes were remote. I believed that in reality, people allowed things in life around them to affect their lives and change their behavior based on fear. I believed that because of the COVID-19 pandemic many

individuals allowed themselves to create greater obstacles than there would have been had they not allowed fear of the unknown to control their lives. God provided security to those who believed in Him and had faith in Him. I did not allow fear of the pandemic to control my life during this time. I aced each challenge and task with confidence through trial and error knowing that God would provide the answers that I need to get through.

Epistemological Assumption

The epistemological assumptions that existed in the qualitative case study were the assumptions that Title One elementary school teachers encountered similar obstacles while delivering online instruction during a pandemic. I believed that many teachers encountered similar obstacles while delivering online instruction during the pandemic, and the research provided data that proved this belief. Many of the obstacles that teachers encountered were similar due to teachers working in close proximity, teaching the same content, and teaching the same grade level. It was my hope that contributions from this research can be made to the reality that there are similarities in the obstacles that teachers faced during remote instruction during the pandemic and that these contributions will promote and enhance future remote instruction classes if and when required.

Axiological Assumption

The axiological assumptions that drove this qualitative case research study were the belief that students deserve the opportunity to receive an education regardless of where they are physically. An axiological assumption makes known the values of the researcher within a qualitative study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I believe that education is important for our youth and that many students did not value education and often took it for granted. I believed that the value of an education should be instilled in our youth and importance should once again be

placed on the importance of education, and that accountability and responsibility should be placed on students. I was taught the value of education, and I tried to instill this in all of the students in my classroom. Even though teachers had been forced to teach classes remotely, and students had been forced to receive their education through online instruction, it was necessary that the education of students was not hindered. Neither teachers nor students were prepared for the sudden shift in the learning environment, yet provisions were required to ensure that the needs of both teachers and students were being met.

The Researcher's Role

My role as the human instrument was to report the analyses of the findings from the data collected throughout this study. As there were multiple forms of data collected, it was my responsibility to report my findings in a manner that others found useful (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Teachers were randomly selected from the three Title One elementary school buildings selected for this research. The schools were selected due to being the poorest Title One elementary schools within the district; the teachers who participated in this study were randomly selected. I did not personally know any of the participants, even though I worked in the same school district. I did not come into contact with elementary or high school teachers, administrators, or parents of students who attended these schools. I have had no previous interactions with any of the participants in this study.

<div align="center">

Procedures

</div>

In order to begin procedures for data collection, I obtained permission to conduct this qualitative case study (Creswell & Poth, 2018) from each principal of the selected Title One elementary schools within Coral County (pseudonym) in West Virginia. It was imperative that permission be gained for conducting data collection within the county and schools selected prior

to submitting IRB forms to ensure that time was not wasted if not provided with permission to research in the selected schools. In the event that permission was not granted, the IRB paperwork would have to be resubmitted once approval was gained in another area.

Permissions

Once permission was gained for the research study within the county, I obtained IRB approval (See Appendix A) for this qualitative case study (Creswell & Poth, 2018) prior to beginning any data collection. Site approvals (See Appendix B) were gained once IRB approval was granted, and consent forms (see Appendix D) were sent to all participants of this study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). All teachers signed individual informed consent forms. All participants were informed of their ability to withdraw from participation in the study at any time (Creswell & Poth, 2018). All participants were at least 18 and were faculty members who worked within the county.

Recruitment Plan

In an effort to recruit participants for this qualitative case study, I sent out a questionnaire to teachers of the three Title One elementary schools. The initial questionnaire was to recruit participants. The questionnaires invited teachers to participate in the research to identify the obstacles that Title One elementary teachers encountered while delivering online instruction during a pandemic. This questionnaire provided information concerning the type of research study being conducted and asked their willingness to participate in the study. Those willing to participate in the study were asked to return the form to begin the data collection process. I emailed those who agreed to participate in the study a recruitment letter that informed them what the study was about and its requirements. If they still agreed to participate in the study, I then arranged a time to meet with them via teams or in person, whichever was more convenient for

them in order to begin the data collection process.

Recruitment Questionnaire for Teachers

Screening questionnaires were sent to teachers in three Title One elementary schools within Coral County, West Virginia. This questionnaire (See Appendix C for the Recruitment Questionnaire) was used to find a population of teachers who were able to participate in the qualitative case study research (McLeod, 2018).

Data Collection Plan

The data collection for this research study included questionnaires, interviews, and focus groups. Questionnaires were intended to collect basic information from the participants in order to generalize information concerning online instruction during COVID-19. Individual interviews allowed the researcher to gain insight into specific individual information and make connections between participants. The focus groups allowed participants to expand on previous information that had been collected and added any information that they believed was important to the study. These data collections were conducted once IRB approval was gained and informed consent forms were signed and collected (Lincoln & Guba, 2006).

Questionnaire for Teachers Data Collection Approach

Social interactions with participants during questionnaires allowed the researcher the opportunity to collect data from participants who had first-hand knowledge of the research topic (Creswell & Poth, 2018). All participants were presented with the questionnaires and provided with the opportunity to answer the questionnaires on a Likert Scale answering each as an (a, b, or c) option. However, there were also open-ended questions within the questionnaire that allowed for participants to expand on their selection based on the choice they made. The questionnaire sessions took place in a neutral location within each building in order to provide a distraction-

free environment (Yin, 2014).

Questionnaire for Teachers

1. How well do you believe that you were prepared for online teaching? CRQ

   a. not at all   b. somewhat   c. very

2. How much experience with online instruction did you have prior to school closures due to COVID-19? CRQ

   a. none   b. little   c. well trained

3. How many obstacles do you believe you encountered while delivering online instruction during the pandemic? CRQ

   a. none   b. few   c. many

   Can you please name one obstacle that you encountered while delivering online instruction during the pandemic and explain the steps that you took to work through this Obstacle.

4. Do you believe teachers worked together to overcome obstacles during the pandemic? SQ1

   a. yes   b. no

   Can you explain how teachers worked together to overcome any obstacles that they encountered during the pandemic.

5. How many professional development hours were provided for online instruction? SQ1

   a. none   b. 1 – 5   c. 5 +

6. How much did you change your daily instruction strategies to fit an online instruction platform? SQ2

   a. little   b. somewhat   c.very

Please provide one example of a daily instructional strategy that you changed in order to fit an online instruction platform?

7. How prepared for online instruction do you believe you are if schools are forced to return to remote instruction? SQ2

   a. little   b. somewhat   c. very

Please explain why you believe that you are better prepared for online instruction because of the pandemic that forced schools to teach classes remotely.

8. How much confidence do you have in teaching online instruction after COVID-19? SQ3

   a. little   b. somewhat   c. well trained

The intent of question one was to find out how prepared for online teaching that teachers believed that they were when schools closed because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Even though there were teachers who had experience with teaching classes online, many teachers reported learning remote teaching strategies while teaching online classes (Trust & Whalen, 2020).

Question two allowed teachers to provide information concerning how well prepared they believed that they were when school initially closed because of COVID-19. Many teachers had previous experience with online instruction, while many teachers never experienced online instruction, so they struggled with its concept. Ma et al., (2021) reported that many teachers lacked experience with online teaching and the confidence to go with it.

Question three allowed teachers the opportunity to simply answer if they encountered any obstacles while delivering online instruction without divulging any specific details to these obstacles. The intent of the question was to allow teachers to simply answer if they

believed that they had no, few, or many obstacles because many teachers faced obstacles such as racial, economic and resource differences (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2020).

Question four allowed teachers to state openly if they worked together with colleagues to overcome obstacles that they encountered while delivering online instruction. The specifics were identified when teachers were interviewed at a later date. Research from Sadler et a., (2020) suggested that teachers collaborated through project-based learning through video conferencing in an effort to design COVID related instructional materials.

Question five is asked to determine if teachers were offered professional development classes to help with transitioning to online instruction. Many teachers had no experience with online instruction and needed professional development classes. Findings from Trust and Whalen (2021) showed that teachers required additional support in professional development learning opportunities dealing with aspects of social, emotional, and behavioral teaching in order to recover from an event that has drastically changed the way schools operated.

Question six was intended to see if teachers changed their daily instruction methods in order to fit an online method of instruction in order to be successful with daily online instruction methods. Tafazoli (2021) reported the need for teachers to create sources and activities as well as the ability to apply the proper technology-based content to teach and evaluate online lessons for the success of students during online instruction.

Question seven was intended to allow teachers to express their readiness for online instruction if they were ever forced to return to an online instruction platform. Even though many teachers went into online instruction with little or no experience, now many teachers may have confidence in their abilities to teach their content classes online.

Teachers had to overcome many obstacles in order to actively teach lessons online and research from Anoba and Cahapay (2020) reported that many teachers believed themselves to be prepared for online instruction because they had baseline skills established.

Question eight allowed teachers to expand on the level of confidence that they now had after online instruction. Now that teachers had experience with online instruction, many believed themselves to be more confident in their abilities to instruct online classes in the future. Research from Trust and Whalen (2021) reported teachers shifting themselves from the sole expert in the classroom to a co-learner with students to progress with online instruction and the success of its platform during the COVID-19 lockdown.

Individual Questionnaire Data Analysis Plan

These questionnaires were analyzed by looking for similarities in answers from teachers to the questions concerning readiness to begin online instruction. Questions that teachers were being asked to answer were weighed on an a, b, c and a, b answer and therefore responses were calculated and recorded. The questionnaires for teachers who participated in the research project were arranged in a series of eight questions on a Likert scale in order to get a general response to how teachers rated themselves going forward with online instruction when the lockdown due to COVID-19 first began. Responses were averaged and documented to determine how participants approached online instruction. In order to analyze the open-ended questions, I categorized individual responses and organized responses into categories. I coded themes (Saldana, 2021) and looked for connections that existed within the data. By doing this, I was able to determine themes that presented themselves from the open-ended questions.

Interviews

Social interactions with participants during interviews and focus groups allowed the

researcher the opportunity to collect data from participants who had first-hand knowledge of the research topic (Creswell & Poth, 2018). All participants were interviewed using open-ended questions and interviews were conducted in each of the individual Title One elementary schools with the participants selected for the research case study. During interviews, the researcher attempted to understand the participants' points of view concerning the research study (Peredaryenko & Krauss, 2013). Interviews and focus groups took place in a neutral location within each building in order to provide a distraction-free environment (Yin, 2014). All interview questions and focus group questions were generated from the literature that supported the research study (Yin, 2014). Interviews were recorded and transcribed using a MacBook, and member checking was conducted to ensure accuracy and credibility of all transcriptions (Candela, 2019).

Open-Ended Interview Questions for teachers

1. What is the main obstacle you encountered while teaching online during a pandemic? CRQ

2. What obstacles did you encounter when working with students from low-income families during the pandemic? CRQ

3. What frustration did you find that you had in common with colleagues as you began online instruction? CRQ

4. How did teachers work together to ensure a smooth transition to online instruction? SQ:1

5. What professional development classes were offered to help teachers transition from face-to-face teaching to online instruction? SQ:1

6. What strategies for effective instruction did teachers share to transition to online instruction during COVID-19? SQ:1

7. What was most helpful to you as you transitioned from face-to-face teaching to online instruction? SQ:2

8. What was the most difficult part of transitioning from face-to-face instruction to online instruction during the pandemic? SQ:2

9. What instructional strategies did you use to overcome the difficulty of transitioning to online instruction? SQ:2

10. Please describe your experiences while teaching during COVID-19? SQ:3

11. If you could change one thing about your experience of teaching during COVID-19, what would it be? SQ:3

12. What is one thing that has made you a better teacher since you have experienced remote teaching during a pandemic? SQ:3

Question one was intended for teachers to state the main obstacle they encountered while delivering online instruction during the pandemic. Research from Huang, J (20201) indicated that one of the biggest obstacles teachers encountered was adjusting to internet-based technologies and online teaching tools.

Question two was designed to establish an understanding of how teachers engaged with parents of low-income students (Aguilar et al., 2020). This question was intended to understand participants' communication practices with parents during remote instruction and the obstacles they encountered. Student participation and successful engagement depended upon active support from parents, especially students who struggled with learning and needed additional help (Garbe et al., 2020).

Question three was designed to gain insight into individual frustrations along with the perspective that participants encountered at the onset of remote learning during the pandemic

(Patton, 2002). This question was intended to identify the participants' frustration with remote learning during a pandemic. This question allowed the researcher to establish rapport with the participants as the question was geared toward understanding the participants' individual experience and frustration of remote learning. Many teachers experienced high levels of stress, lowered confidence, and decreased productivity while teaching during COVID-19 (Ozamiz-Etxebarria et al., 2020).

Question four provided participants with the opportunity to provide information concerning courses that were provided to them for professional engagement and success, as well as reflect on courses that were provided (Virella & Cobb, 2020). This question allowed teachers to provide information concerning training they received for remote teaching. Many teachers were not ready for remote teaching and were not trained in remote teaching (Salman et al., 2021).

Question five allowed teachers the opportunity to provide insight into how they approached the transition from teaching in a traditional classroom to teaching remotely (Marshall et al., 2020). Many teachers found themselves teaching remote classes immediately without any training; therefore, it was important to determine if they had one thing that helped transition into remote teaching (Parthasarathy & Murugesan, 2020).

Question six was used to identify strategies that teachers used to implement effective instruction during remote teaching. Many teachers did not follow the traditional classroom lecture and homework style of teaching but used classroom activities such as pre-recorded lectures or short videos to teach remote classes (Lapitan et al., 2021).

Question seven was designed to give teachers the opportunity to provide the researcher with things they found to be helpful as they transitioned from the traditional face to face

classroom setting to remote teaching. This question was intended to gain an insight into what helped teachers transition to remote instruction even though, in most cases, many teachers had no experience with remote instruction (Lapada et al., 2020).

Question eight was asked in order to determine what teachers believed the most difficult part of transitioning to remote instruction was during the pandemic. Many teachers had never taught remote classes prior to the pandemic, and they were forced to acquire skills quickly for the task (Cutri et al., 2020). Teachers adopted new ways to deliver instruction including selecting methods the most suitable for engaging student learners (Amir Rad et al., 2021).

Question nine offered teachers the opportunity to provide information pertaining to instructional strategies that were used to overcome difficulties that were encountered while transitioning to online instruction. It was important for teachers to focus on personalized distance, scope, and teaching and learning strategies during online instruction (Nuraini et al., 2020).

Questions ten and eleven were asked in order to connect with teachers by letting them know that their experiences during COVID-19 were important, and others wanted to know about their experiences. Teachers were accustomed to face-to-face teaching; therefore, their experiences with restructuring their instruction to remote teaching were vital (Romero-Ivanova et al., 2020).

Questions twelve was designed to provide participants an opportunity to interpret, clarify and identify individual instructional growth (Dolighan & Owen, 2021). This question allowed the researcher to explore individual teacher experience and growth during online instruction (Roberts, 2020). This question also reflected individual participant growth and how it was defined individually (Patton, 2002).

Individual Interview Data Analysis Plan

In order to analyze the data that was collected from individual interviews, each interview was read initially in search of keywords, phrases, and specific obstacles that were stated. These words, phrases, and specific obstacles were organized in a spreadsheet and listed in chronological order (Yin, 2014). All interviews were individually color-coded for recurring themes that emerged within each set of the interview questions. Notes were taken within the margins of each individual set of interview questions. Each set of interview questions were read several times, color-coded in the same manner, and notes taken in the margin to indicate where patterns emerged within each set of interview questions (Yin, 2014). These notes were reviewed several times in order to identify themes that overlapped, and these themes were thoroughly documented.

Inductive and interpretive reasoning was used to understand the obstacles that teachers encountered while delivering online instruction during a pandemic. Field notes that were taken during interviews were reviewed and color-coded for emergent themes (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The data was analyzed, and the color codes represented patterns that existed. A thematic analysis was used to determine common themes within the answers that teachers provided. This analysis provided an in-depth description and interpretation from teachers of the research topic (Vaismoradi et al., 2016).

Focus Groups

Focus groups were conducted in order to interact with multiple participants in one setting to provide an opportunity for participants to clarify and expand on responses that had been collected during interviews and questionnaires. The intent of the focus group was to define the topic and gather continued information as well as opinions from the members of the group

(Flynn et al., 2018). Focus group questions allowed for teachers to provide opinions openly along with adding any further comments about remote instruction during a pandemic.

Focus Group Questions

1. What were your expectations of remote instruction? CRQ

2. How did working with peer's help alleviate obstacles during remote instruction? SQ1

3. What professional development classes will offer further guidance for remote instruction in the event a similar occurrence happens? SQ2

4. What obstacles did you think you might encounter as you began remote instruction? SQ3

5. In what ways do you believe that remote instruction was successful during COVID-19? SQ3

Question one provided teachers with the opportunity to share their expectations of remote instruction. Did teachers have the same expectations for remote instruction as they had in their traditional face-to-face classroom? Many teachers felt disconnected from students as they taught remote classes (Jelinska & Paradowski, 2021).

Question two allowed teachers the opportunity to expand on how working with other teachers helped them to alleviate the burden of obstacles that they encountered as they began remote instruction. This question gave teachers the opportunity to provide feedback on how working with peers helped them overcome obstacles that may have prevented them from being successful during remote instruction as well as how working with peers allowed them to learn from each other (Vygotsky, 1962).

Question three provided teachers the opportunity to share their opinion on professional

development classes that should have been provided in the event that a similar transition to remote instruction takes place in the future. Many teachers reported needing additional support with shifting their practices from face-to-face instruction to online instruction, as well as needing assistance from professional learning networks (Trust & Whalen, 2020).

Question four provided teachers the chance to state any obstacles they thought would happen that did not happen, or obstacles that they thought would happen that did happen. Many teachers faced obstacles during normal face-to-face instruction and viewed obstacles during remote instruction as something familiar (Marshall et al., 2020).

Question five provided teachers with the opportunity to express their opinion on the success of remote instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic. Many teachers viewed remote instruction as unsuccessful due to low student engagement, lack of available resources, and lack of technology (Kraft et al., 2020).

Focus Group Data Analysis Plan

Data from the focus group sessions was analyzed by hand by first reading and interpreting participants' responses to questions. Comparisons were documented over chronological time (Yin, 2014) while reading through each answer several times in order to separate answers into developing themes. New themes that developed from the focus groups were classified, and interpretations were assessed (Creswell & Poth, 2018) by summarizing responses from each individual to ensure accuracy and understanding while asking for further comment or follow up questions from participants in order to account for the complete findings of the data.

Data Synthesis

The data analysis of this qualitative case study research followed working the data

from the ground up method of Yin (2014). Data were closely examined for themes that emerged

from the questionnaires, interviews, and focus groups that were conducted throughout the data

collection process. Interview transcripts were uploaded to a transcribing service to manage the

findings of common codes and themes throughout the interviews. ATLAS.ti coding software was

used to analyze the qualitative data (QDAS). The coding software supported my efforts to

process substantial amounts of data that were collected as well as arrangement and management

of my data to determine connections that existed among participants' experiences. Transcripts of

interviews were read over several times to become immersed within the data before separating it

into parts. Notes, memos, and field notes were explored for themes that emerged within the

documentation. Themes that were classified and interpretations assessed (Yin, 2014). The

interpretations of the themes were used to represent and make an account of the complete

findings of the data. All data that was collected was documented in charts by themes that

emerged throughout the collection process. I created individual codes from the data collections

and presented individual themes that emerged (Saldana, 2021).

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness was imperative when conducting any manner of the research.

Credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability of this study were each

independently important to the qualitative research, as well as a vital indication of each

participant(s) reliability concerning the importance of the subject and how others were affected

(Amankwaa, 2016). Trustworthiness was essential in all aspects of this study because it was the

foundation of collecting, analyzing, and reporting all data collected during the research study and

ensuring autonomy for all participants (Lincoln & Guba, 2006). The trustworthiness of the

participants is seen in their behavior in that they were consistent and dependable (Morrow,

2005). These qualities personified the participants' reliability in the research and how others can be able to gain insight from them.

Member checks, peer debriefings, and triangulation were conducted to ensure The trustworthiness of the research. Member checks provided feedback and validation of the research being conducted by sharing findings of the research from participants. Member checks allowed participants to confirm or deny the interpretation of the data collected from the researcher (Candela, 2019). Peer debriefings allowed the researcher to focus on the interpretation of the data collected while guarding against researcher bias. Conducting peer debriefings also allowed new ideas concerning the research to emerge, as well as provided an opportunity for reflection upon data collected through discussion (Lincoln & Guba, 2006). Triangulation provided an understanding of the case that existed and ensured the validity of the research through the convergence of information from different participants (Lemon & Hayes, 2020).

Credibility

Responses from teachers who participated in the research were analyzed for credibility as they were the ones who were determined to be credible sources with their responses to remote teaching during a pandemic. Credibility was based on responses that gave sound reasoning to the obstacles that Title One elementary school teachers encountered while delivering online instruction. When determining the credibility of research data, it was imperative that I develop familiarity with participants, conduct random sampling, and triangulate methods of data collection (Shenton, 2004).

Furthermore, I encouraged participants to speak openly and honestly concerning the study and illicit interactive questioning in an effort to return to previous discussions that may

have extracted further data by rephrasing questions (Shenton, 2004). The integrity of the researcher was crucial in that the researcher was the person who was the major instrument in the collection and analysis of data (Komic et al., 2015). Not only this, but member checks and a detailed description of the case study was vital to providing credibility of situations during the data collection process (Shenton, 2004). I also took the opportunity to have the research data scrutinized by colleagues and peers while accepting feedback that enhanced the research study. All documentation was collected and secured in a locked file cabinet. The chain of evidence shows how all data is collected, transferred, and analyzed during this qualitative research study in order to have confidence and reliability of my study (Yin, 2014) as well as ensure that all of my findings are consistent and can be repeated.

Transferability

It was essential to analyze the data collected to determine if it can transfer across settings within Title One elementary school teachers across the county. I addressed my individual personal biases that I may have brought into the study, along with an analysis of how any bias might have influenced my perception as well as shaped the decisions that I made throughout the process of the research study. My understanding and interpretation of the study determined how the research can be imitated and transferred in similar projects using the same research methods yet carried out in a different environment (Shenton, 2004). Naturalistic generalizations can be formed from analyzing the data that is collected, and generalizations can be made for future studies of similar contexts (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Dependability

It is imperative to determine if the data that was collected is dependable. By analyzing the data of each participant and determining connections that exist, dependability was placed on

the data collected to confirm it was accurate. The overall dependability of the research shows that if the study is repeated in the same context, comparable results will be obtained using the same methods and same participants (Shenton, 2004). A thorough and rich description of the process taken for each set of data collection will provide the dependability of the research study. Also, by analyzing and showing consistency within the data, future research and repetition of this case study can be conducted.

Confirmability

Confirmability presented my objectivity along with the re-emphasis in the role of triangulation to reduce any effect of researcher bias (Connelly, 2016). It was also important that I discuss any and all preliminary themes that did not emerge from the research study. The data that was collected must be shaped by the participants rather than any bias that I may have had concerning the research study in order to establish confirmability. Confirmability was established by checking and rechecking all data as well as establishing triangulation methods to ensure the accuracy of all data collections.

Ethical Considerations

When conducting qualitative research, the researcher faced many ethical issues (Creswell & Poth, 2018). It was imperative that while conducting this qualitative case study research, I took all necessary precautions, as well as considered and addressed any and all anticipated and emergent ethical issues (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The researcher followed all guidelines concerning ethical considerations provided during the CITI Program Training Courses in Social & Behavioral Research (The CITI Program, 2017). All hand-written data that were collected is stored in a locked filing cabinet, along with all backup electronic files being stored in a locked file cabinet and all electronic data stored on a password-protected device.

The name of the site(s) used within the county, and all participants' names are protected via pseudonyms. It was imperative that all data collected during the research process be processed ethically in an effort to protect all participants and materials (Ngozwana, 2018). Any potential ethical situation that might have occurred during the process of the research study was addressed immediately and, if required, was reported to the appropriate overseer of the study (Connor et al., 2017). It was imperative that any issues concerning ethics that took place during the research study be reported immediately in an effort to protect any and all data collected and the integrity of the research (Johnson et al., 2020). All data collections and materials used in this research are being kept in a locked file cabinet for a minimum of three years and destroyed thereafter.

Summary

Chapter three discussed the procedures followed for conducting this qualitative case study. The chapter included a description of the study's design, along with the research questions, the setting, and the rationale for the study. The participants, along with the demographics, are included as well as the data collection process including questionnaires, interviews, and focus groups. Questionnaires used for sampling procedures are included as well as interview questions with documentation supporting each question and focus group questions with documentation. Chapter three also included a trustworthiness section that addressed credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. This chapter also addressed ethical considerations. It is my expectation naturalistic generalizations can be used from this research in future studies that are similar in nature, to better prepare teachers when schools encounter another pandemic requiring online instruction in the future.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to understand the obstacles that teachers at Title One elementary schools encountered while delivering online instruction during a pandemic. The theory guiding this study was the social constructivist theory of Vygotsky (1978), where learners gain additional knowledge from what they already know. This chapter includes a description of the participants, the data are presented in narrative themes and charts as well as research question responses before providing a summary of the chapter.

Participants

Participants for this qualitative case research study were randomly selected using a selection questionnaire that teachers from the participating title one elementary schools emailed back to me. The total number of participants in this study was twelve Title One elementary school teachers from three Title One elementary schools within Coral County, West Virginia. Pseudonyms were used for the county that was used for the research as well as each participant in the study. Pseudonyms were used to protect the confidentiality of the participants as well as the location where they worked.

Table 1

Teacher Participants

Teacher Participant	Years Taught	Degree	Grade Level
Bryan	4	Bachelors	4
Sherry	9	Title One	5
Amy	11	Special Education	3

Chad	15	Masters of Education	4
Elizabeth	14	Bachelors	2
Sam	12	Bachelors	4
Tony	7	Bachelors	1
Martin	32	Master in SPED	1-5
Timothy	27	Master's in Education	3
Alex	18	Master's in Education	4
Steve	7	Bachelors	1
Charlene	12	Bachelors	5

Note *Pseudonyms

Bryan

Bryan is a 4th-grade teacher who is in his fourth year of teaching and began teaching as a second career choice. Bryan has struggled with teaching as he has only had one year of what he calls "ordinary" teaching. Bryan began teaching in 2019 and in the spring of 2020 the pandemic hit which plummeted him directly into online teaching. Bryan states, "I was not prepared to teach online, I was barely prepared to teach let alone move directly into teaching a group of kids online." Bryan went into teaching so that he could be closer to his family, but he said, ". . . the strains of the pandemic have really left me wondering if I made the right choice about going into teaching."

Sherry

Sherry has been teaching for nine years and teaches fifth grade. Sherry believes that she was ready for online teaching as she had previously taught an online class but was not prepared

to teach fifth graders in certain areas of content. "I just wasn't ready to teach every subject that I am required to teach in fifth grade. The pandemic hit, and I found myself teaching online and really wasn't sure where to begin."

Amy

Amy has been teaching for eleven years and teaches third grade. Amy had never taught online classes even though she used technology in her classroom quite regularly. Even though Amy felt comfortable with technology, she looked at teaching online classes entirely differently. "I use technology, but I was not ready to teach my entire class remotely. I had a lot of preparation to do in order to be ready to teach third graders."

Chad

Chad is a 38-year-old who has been teaching for fifteen years and teaches fourth grade. Chad was not ready to teach online and believed that professional development classes should have been offered to teachers in an effort to help them transition to remote instruction. "I felt frustrated that I was just thrown into online instruction without any guidance. I have taken a few online classes but did not feel prepared to teach them."

Elizabeth

Elizabeth has been teaching for fourteen years and teaches second grade. Elizabeth is currently working on her master's degree and taking all her classes online. She believed that because she takes her classes online that she was somewhat prepared to teach her classes remotely. "My only concern with teaching remotely was the fact that my kids are so young, and some of them were not ready to actually do work on computers even though they were familiar with technology." Even though students these days are familiar with technology, Elizabeth had concerns about their ability to do quality work that she would see in the classroom.

Sam

Sam has been teaching for twelve years and teaches fourth grade. Sam is rethinking his career in education even though he has been teaching for twelve years. He was not ready for remote teaching and the upset that it caused in education. "Education has changed, and even though they say we will go back to normal, I just don't see things going back to normal anytime soon because many kids do not even look at school as important anymore." Sam has taught in elementary school for the entirety of his career and does not see things changing. "Kids and parents continue to try to use COVID as an excuse for why they miss school or why they don't get work finished. It is frustrating because we need to get back to normal."

Tony

Tony has been teaching for seven years and teaches first grade. Tony implements technology in his classroom when he can but is limited with the type of work his students can complete due to their age. "I try to use technology, but some students cannot type or maneuver on the computer yet because of their age." Students in first grade are still learning how to type and learn the basics of computers, so they often are not familiar with how to communicate and participate in daily assignments that are given remotely. "Many of my students did not know how to type, and some of the assignments did not specifically require typing, but they did require basic understanding of a computer, which many did not yet understand." Tony stated that he had to come up with assignments that were easy for students to understand and required few, if any, adult interactions so that parents were not required to assist. "Many students did not have parental involvement, and this hurt students' ability to complete assignments"

Martin

Martin has been teaching for twenty-nine years and works in special education. When

schools closed, Martin found that it was difficult to reach his students because many of them did not have access to the internet. "I would call their parents and try to help them, but it was hard trying to talk on the phone and get the full picture of what the student needed." With many students not having access to the internet, communication was a huge problem during remote instruction. "Many students did not have access to the internet, so I was trying to drop off or mail paper copies, and that became a nightmare."

Timothy

Timothy has been teaching for twenty-seven years and teaches third grade. Timothy has a master's in education and believed that he was somewhat prepared to teach online due to his taking the majority of his master's classes online. Timothy was quick to point out that he did, in fact, believe there is a big difference between online and remote classes. "I think that many people thought online classes was the same as remote, and it really isn't. Online classes you pretty much do on your own, while remote classes you are online with your teacher." Online classes are seen as classes that are taken with very little interaction with an instructor, while remote classes are classes that have a set time for meeting with an instructor to meet for classroom instruction. "I think that many kids did not think they had to meet with their teachers, and this caused a lot of problems for kids and the year of instruction. They just didn't show up for class."

Alex

Alex has been teaching for eighteen years and teaches fourth grade. Alex was concerned when schools closed and moved to remote teaching because he did not believe that students would take remote learning seriously. "We moved to remote learning so quickly that many students looked at it as school being out for the summer. I had several students who I never saw

again, for the rest of the year."

Steve

Steve has been teaching for seven years and teaches first grade. The change happened so quickly, from being in the classroom one day to moving to remote, that there was no time to prepare. "We were called to the cafeteria and told to make copies for two weeks, that schools were being closed, and to have them ready by the next day. Now 36 teachers were using three copiers to make copies."

Charlene

Charlene has been teaching for twelve years and teaches fifth grade. Charlene was not ready to move to remote learning and did not believe teachers received adequate time to prepare for instruction. "I was in my classroom teaching face-to-face one day, and the next day I was given a Schoology account to teach classes online. I was frustrated because I had no clue how to even use the program."

Results

The results of this qualitative case study include the obstacles that Title One elementary school teachers encountered while delivering online instruction during a pandemic. The participants completed a questionnaire, took part in interviews, and participated in focus group discussions. The first set of data collected was in the form of a questionnaire arranged in a series of eight questions on a Likert Scale in order to gain a general response to how participants rated themselves going forward with online instruction once the lockdown began due to COVID-19. There were open-ended questions within the questionnaire for participants to expand upon some of the questions within the questionnaire. These questions were analyzed by categorizing individual responses, decoding them according to Saldana's (2021) coding methods, and using

ATLAS.ti. These responses were analyzed by looking for patterns that were repetitive, regular, or consistent and appeared more than twice. These codes were then developed into themes included with the list of themes from the data collected from the interviews and focus group sessions. There were four themes and three sub-themes that emerged through triangulation data sources, and these themes and sub-themes are listed in Table 2 below.

Likert Scale Analysis

Analysis of the data from the open-ended questions on the questionnaire revealed that participants held the belief that the major obstacle that they agreed upon as the most significant throughout remote instruction during the pandemic was student attendance and accountability. Elizabeth, Sam, and Amy agreed that student attendance became an instant issue when schools closed. Amy stated, "I sometimes look back and think that because it was March that kids thought they were out of school for the year." She went on to say, "Kids just did not log in and participate in classes. There were some kids that I never saw or heard from again." Sam added to what both Elizabeth and Amy had said by adding, "I thought it was strange that the parents did not make their kids log in to their classes even though they knew that classes were being held remotely." These participants all agreed that because attendance was an issue with students that this coincided with accountability. "How were we supposed to hold kids accountable if we weren't even able to get them to log in to participate in class." Accountability went along with student attendance because students were not logging in to their classes and there was no way that teachers could hold them accountable for their work. Elizabeth stated, "It had gotten so bad that we were told to give them the grade that they had when schools closed, and if they were failing to make sure they were passing." She went on to say, "Once kids knew that they were

going to be passed, several made no attempt to participate in class. It was a sad situation because most of these kids needed to participate because these kids were falling further behind."

Participants were also asked how they worked together during the pandemic to overcome any obstacles they encountered. Timothy, Alex, and Martin shared that within their school, teachers were able to share strategies and resources. Alex said, "Many of us found that if there was a teacher in the building who had more knowledge of remote teaching than others, that we would find them and bounce ideas off of them and it helped." Alex went on to say, "Having teachers in the building who knew strategies for remote instruction was really helpful because those of us who had no idea about teaching remote classes were able to gain an understanding from what other teachers knew, and it helped." Martin agreed that having teachers in the building who had some knowledge of remote teaching was helpful when it came to answering questions that he had concerning his own classes. "I knew that if I had a question that I could go to other teachers who had the knowledge and know how to help me with my concerns, and they were more than happy to help. It really eased my mind." It was important for teachers to be able to have a point of contact in the building that they were able to go to if they had questions. Timothy stated, "Being able to learn and gain knowledge from someone who knew how to work through the process of remote instruction made my job so much easier, even if I did still have to work through the actual process."

Table 2

Primary Themes and Sub-Themes

Themes	Sub-Themes
Attendance & Accountability	
Internet & Internet Connectivity	

Student Participation & Workload

Working Together

Training for Teachers

Teacher Frustration

Attendance and Accountability

Teachers who participated in the research study shared in their response that student attendance was one of the major obstacles that they encountered while delivering online instruction during the pandemic. Students simply did not log on, and teachers had no way of getting in touch with them to ensure they would log in to participate in the daily remote instruction time. Martin stated, "Kids just wouldn't show up for class, and some of them I never saw again once we went remote." Martin was not the only one who felt this way. Steve said, "I would log in five minutes early for class, and I might see three or four kids a day, and some days I would only see one or two." Attendance was a big concern for teachers because once classes went remote, some students were never seen or heard from again. Attendance was key for students in elementary school as the material that is taught is the building blocks for middle school.

With the concern over attendance came the concern of accountability because if students were not logging in to take part in remote learning, then there was no accountability on their part. Most teachers in this study agreed that when students did not log in to participate or even view the daily assignments, they were not actively engaging in the learning process. The materials were being provided daily to students, yet the students were not participating and in turn, there was no accountability on their part for their learning. Charlene, who teaches 5th grade stated, "I

felt frustrated that I was working so hard to learn new strategies for remote instruction, yet there was no accountability on the part of the student." She went on to state, "Teachers were being pushed so hard every day to ensure that we were doing our part with little or no guidance, yet shoulders were shrugged when we asked why students were not made to log in and do work." Accountability of students was a major concern for teachers who participated in the study because those students who did not participate in remote instruction were not held back but were promoted to the next grade level yet missed vital information needed for the next grade level. Material that was needed to build upon and knowledge needed to progress from year to year, such as math and reading skills, are necessary for elementary school, and many students lost out on these necessities. Simply put, these skills were not gained, yet the students moved on, and some were lost due to their lack of participation in remote learning during the pandemic.

Internet and Internet Connectivity

Many students did not have access to the internet in their homes due in part to the fact that they come from low-income homes. Because these students did not have access to the internet, they were not able to access their classes, and therefore they fell behind in their classes. Many of these students were in homes where one parent worked and paying for the internet was not a top priority like paying for food and necessities such as power and water. One of the last things that parents expected was for schools to close and their needing the internet in the home, and many parents simply could not stretch their money far enough to pay for the internet. Tony said, Tony said, Tony said, "Many parents expressed concern over the fact that schools closed immediately without any warning and classes went immediately to remote instruction." Tony went on to say, "Parents weren't prepared for their kids to be home, and they did not have the internet, and it wasn't in their budget, and many were trying to use their cell phones as a hot spot

for their kids." Using cell phones as a hot spot caused many low-income parents' financial burdens because they were left with high cell phone bills that they were not able to pay, and the longer the pandemic went on, the harder it was to pay their bills, which left many parents losing access to their cell phones altogether.

Several participants report having to make paper copies for students that had to be mailed to students and the turnaround time was longer than expected due to having to mail paper copies home and then wait for students to return them to the school. Amy, Sam, and Elizabeth shared experiences of having to wait for students to return packets to school and often not receiving the packets at all. Amy said, "Even though I would copy the packet and mail it out, I often did not get the packet back for weeks. By the time I did get the packet back, I had already mailed two maybe three more packets" Amy went on to say, "This was so frustrating because these kids got so behind, and I was trying to provide feedback to them, and sometimes they just gave up and didn't return anything." Elizabeth shared some of these concerns, "I would mail packets with instructions, and I got these back when I was already on a new lesson, I found myself trying to teach two and three different lessons at the same time." She continued, "I found myself trying to teach one or two lessons by writing notes or providing feedback for students in writing, and this just did not work." Sam agreed stating, "We had to provide work for these kids, and we would mail work, but they got so far behind that they gave up; it was really sad that these kids were in this position, and we just couldn't help them."

Several of the participants reported that many of the students had issues with internet connectivity due to bandwidth because they come from low-income homes and simply did not have the proper amount of bandwidth to stay connected for any given amount of time. When students were responsible for attending several different class times throughout the day,

bandwidth became an issue for many families. Some students were not able to remain in classes for the duration of the class because they would use up most if not all of their internet usage for the month throughout the day or week. Participants found that students who did log in did not remain in the class for the remainder of the class but would log in for attendance purposes and log out immediately or log in and get their daily assignment and then log out. Steve stated, "Students were not remaining in class and were missing vital information that they would need for an assignment." He went on to say, "Some of the students who come from low-income families also struggle with the daily work because they do not have parents at home who can help them, and this caused them to fall further behind with the daily assignments."

Even though the county provided the devices that the students needed in order to complete their work, not having the ability to remain connected during class time caused many students to fall further behind. Martin expressed concern,

> It's a tough situation that many people just do not understand. Most students from low-income families need additional services such as a 504 plan or an IEP in order to provide them with the help that they need to be successful in the classroom. When these kids can't stay connected to the class during a remote classroom, they aren't getting the material, but they also can't receive any additional help that they may need either. This causes these students to fall even further behind and they may never catch up.

Many participants expressed concerns for students who have a 504 plan or an IEP citing that these students may not have a parent at home who can help them with their work because often these parents either quit school or are high school graduates with no higher education. "Kids needed to be able to access the internet, and kids from low-income homes either could not access the internet or couldn't remain logged in."

Student Participation and Workload

Another concern for those who participated in this study was student participation. Throughout remote instruction, several students would log in but did not participate and remained disengaged throughout the set time for class sessions. Some participants found that students would log in and turn their cameras off, and even when directly asked a question, they would not respond. Amy said, "I think that some of these kids would log in, and then they walked away from their device, but they wanted us to think they were in the class. I would ask students a question, and some would never answer." Amy went on to say, "It only made it worse when we were told that we couldn't make them turn their camera on."

Participation was key to the success of remote instruction, and when students did not participate in remote instruction, they lost out on valuable material needed for their success. Even though students were logging in, participants found that they would not participate in the discussion, or answer questions when directly asked. Timothy stated, "I would go through my lesson, and some students would participate, but others would not, so I would ask questions randomly to students, and it was silent." Many participants stated that students would log in for attendance, and then the numbers would slowly start going down as they began logging off. Amy said, "I would see students logging in and would think that I was going to be able to have a great lesson, but then five minutes in, I would see the numbers dropping. It was so frustrating."

As participants worked through remote instruction many report finding that toward the end of the pandemic they did not add as much work to the overall workload that they had when the pandemic first started. When the pandemic first closed schools and teachers began teaching remotely, many teachers report that they tried to maintain the exact workload that they did while in a face-to-face setting. Alex said, "I wanted my classes to be as normal as possible, so I gave

the same number of assignments that I did when students were in the classroom, but I learned through the pandemic that they couldn't handle it." Participants agreed that the overall belief was that students became overwhelmed with assignments. It did not help that students were not in the classroom and could not receive one on one help that they were used to, and as a result, many of the students simply shut down. Chad stated, "It wasn't easy getting the few kids who were still logging in to keep up with the work. Sometimes I felt like they needed a break simply because there had been kids who had quit." He added, "These kids had worked so hard throughout the pandemic and the workload had been intense, and many of us decided to concentrate on fewer assignments because we felt it would help keep kids on track."

Several participants explained that administrators placed emphasis on getting kids to participate by giving fewer assignments. Charlene stated, "If the workload for kids became too much, lowering the number of assignments that we gave each day might keep kids engaged and more inclined to participate rather than being overwhelmed with so much and quitting."
 It was essential that children participate in remote instruction, and if they were overwhelmed by too great a workload then they may not participate at all. Charlene added, "If kids were provided with small chunks of work that they could work through and were able to see success, then they were more likely to participate." She went on to say, "I realized that I had to prepare lessons that kids could work on without becoming overwhelmed with too many topics at once. I would concentrate on math one day and then English, and so on, and found that it really worked." Overall, participants found that working on one subject at a time during a given lesson worked better with their students rather than trying to work on several subjects in one setting.

Working Together

The majority of all of the responses from the participants' experiences during remote instruction were not positive, to say the least. However, one commonality that participants agreed upon was that teachers worked together to make the best of the situation. Throughout the pandemic and all of the changes made during remote instruction, teachers would try to work together to find ways to best fit the needs of the students. Steve said, "At times, it was difficult to find ways to engage some students, so teachers would meet during planning and share ideas and how to implement these ideas into our own curriculum." There were a few participants who had some knowledge about teaching classes online, so they shared their knowledge with co-workers in order to plan and implement best practices. Amy added, "It was difficult transitioning from face-to-face instruction, so having a co-worker who had knowledge of online instruction really helped."

Many participants reported building a support system within their building so that they were able to bounce ideas off of each other and share ideas that did not work so that they could work on ideas that did work. Timothy said, "Teachers were willing to assist each other as well as students when it came to online expectations." Sam said, "Co-planning and communication were key to the success of remote instruction because some of us had never worked with any type of remote teaching, and it really helped to be able to meet with co-workers and work through things." Martin also commented, "We helped each other set up our digital classrooms so that we were similar with how we were teaching our remote classes, we did this so that our kids saw consistency across their classes. I really think this helped kids." Overall, participants agreed that working together and giving each other tips for working in the digital classroom had helped them through remote instruction. "An added bonus was having a staff

member who knew things about remote instruction who we could learn from and build on our knowledge."

Training for Teachers

Many participants expressed concerns over not receiving adequate training that they needed in order to teach remote classes. Many teachers felt that they were thrown into teaching classes remotely and simply did not have the training they needed to teach effectively. Even though there were a few classes that were offered online, there was not much instructional time provided with these online classes, which left teachers feeling as if they were, in fact, teaching themselves. Also, while teachers were trying to navigate through an online class, they found themselves teaching remote classes to their students with little or no experience of how to teach remotely. Bryan said, "I just felt like teachers were thrown into teaching classes online without any training, and we were expected to be professionals at it." He went on to say, "I believe that district should have had in-person classes, yes at a distant, but in-person classes so that we had someone we could actually ask questions and get immediate feedback from." Bryan was not the only participant who felt that way many participants were trying to take online classes to learn the new platform that the county had purchased for them to use with their students while trying to teach students remotely. Sherry said, "I felt like I was taking a section of an online class one day and trying to implement it the very next day to my students without any practice, or any real understanding of what I was doing."

An online platform was pushed to the schools across the county and many participants believed that they were expected to learn the platform on their own. Charlene stated, "I was told that it was a great online tool for us to use to teach remote classes, but I didn't receive much training on it." The county sent out the program and online training classes as a step-by-step

learning guide for teachers to learn the program. Amy added, "The online classes were very informative, but I felt like I was teaching myself and then going online to teach students. There was little or no time to properly prepare for teaching kids, but somehow, we made it work." She went on to say, "I think that it made it easier because we all knew that we were in the same boat, and we were learning together, and we knew we had to make it work, and it got easier as we went along." While most participants said they received at least five hours of training on remote instruction, they did not agree that it was enough to adequately prepare and train them to properly teach remote classes. Sam said, "I just don't think that five hours of training was enough training to adequately prepare us for teach our classes remotely; we basically had to learn on our own."

Teacher Frustration

Several participants expressed frustration during the pandemic and having to teach remote classes due partly to the fact that they were thrown into teaching remotely in what felt like an overnight situation. Chad shared, "We were at school teaching in the classroom one day, and the next day we were setting up classrooms in folders online." Chad was not the only one who felt frustration during this time. During many of the interviews, many participants expressed their frustrations about setting up remote classrooms in what seemed to them an "overnight" scenario without any guidance. Even though there were classes offered to them online, they were still trying to set up classes as well as take online classes themselves in order to prepare themselves better to teach remotely. Alex said, "I just felt like I was trying to navigate through a mud bog myself, and then I tried to explain things to my kids and felt like I wasn't getting through." He went on to say, "Kids this age need hands-on one-on-one instruction and guidance, and when you can't give them that, you just feel lost, and boy did I feel lost."

Teachers felt frustrated over the fact that they were not able to work with their kids one-on-one. Many teachers expressed concern that many parents simply do not work with their children, not because they do not want to, but maybe they simply cannot. Many of these students are already academically behind when they come to school and being in school is a necessity for many children. Being out of school did not benefit these children because they were not getting any additional help at home that elementary-aged school children need. By being remote, teachers believed that their students would suffer even more due mostly in part to the fact that they would not receive the hands-on one-on-one services they needed and that they received in the elementary classroom. Tony stated, "These are poor children who simply may not receive the additional help that they need because they may come from homes where parents simply do not have the tools needed to help them."

Research Question Responses

This qualitative case research study was guided by one central research question and three sub-questions. The research question sought to answer how converting to online instruction because of the COVID-19 pandemic affected Title One elementary schools. The themes identified through data collection include attendance and accountability, internet and internet connectivity, student participation, training for teachers, and teacher frustration. Sub-themes include working together, parent communication, parent support, and student workload.

Table 3

Research Questions Thematic Alignment

Themes	Sub-Themes	Research Question
Attendance & Accountability		CQ
Internet & Connectivity		CQ
Student Participation & Workload		CQ
Working Together		SQ1
	Training for Teachers	SQ2
	Teacher Frustration	SQ3

Central Research Question

The central research question for this research study was, how did converting to online instruction because of the COVID-19 pandemic affect Title One elementary schools? Data analysis provided three themes that the participants experienced that aligned with the central research question. The themes that participants experienced that aligned with the central research question included attendance and accountability, internet and connectivity, and student participation and workload.

The theme of attendance and accountability was a concern for many participants because many students did not log in during remote instruction time, and there was no accountability for these students. Timothy said, "We were told to take attendance, then we were told not to; it was

so frustrating because we could not hold students accountable for being in class, and there were

kids I never saw or heard from again." The theme of internet and internet connectivity was of

concern to participants because many students came from low-income families. These students

were unable to access the internet or had limited internet connectivity during remote instruction

time. Alex added, "I felt really bad for students from low-income families because these students

really needed help, and they often do not have access to the internet or have very limited internet

services."

Many students from low-income families are unable to participate in remote instruction

because they do not have access to the internet and/or have very limited internet connectivity.

Often if they were able to log in, they were limited to the times that they could access the classes

and the number of days in the week they were able to log in for class. Alex continued, "These

kids often need services such as a 504 or IEP, and when we can't reach these kids because they

don't have the internet, or they can't stay connected to the internet, then they fall further behind

in their education."

Further, the theme of student participation was of concern for participants because they

were often unable to motivate students and get them to participate in classes. Even though

participants are responsible for all subjects in the elementary school setting, many participants

found that students may participate in one subject for part of a lesson but fail to log in for any

other class session. Chad said, "I sometimes thought that some of my kids might have only

logged in to one of my class sessions because maybe they liked that subject, and then they never

logged in to another class." He went on to say, "I would try calling home and speaking to

parents, but often all I heard was that they didn't know what to do because they were at work and

couldn't monitor them." This became an issue for several participants because many parents worked and were not home when classes were held, so there was no parental supervision.

Sub-Question One

In what ways did teachers work together to prepare for online instruction? The first sub-question identified one theme that participants shared: the theme of working together. When the lockdown first began, several participants had mixed feelings about teaching classes remotely. Even though they may have been familiar with technology, they were not familiar with providing instruction via the use of technology. Working together made the transition easier, and many participants felt relief if they found that there was someone in the building who had experience with remote teaching. Steve stated, "We were fortunate because several teachers had some sort of classes that they had taken remotely so they were able to maneuver around the platform and then they helped the rest of us." Creating a support system among teachers helped these participants in gaining a better understanding of how to adjust their lessons and fit them to remote instruction. Participants also explained that it got easier as time moved on once they got used to working with remote classes.

Participants were able to meet during planning and go over online instructional practices that they were then able to implement into their online classroom. Many participants expressed their gratitude for having someone in the building who could guide them through the process of remote instruction. Steve added, "It was a challenging process in the beginning, however once we began meeting and going over the process of remote instruction and sharing what worked or did not work in our classroom. He added, "We were able to gain a better understanding from each other of how to approach remote instruction in order for our classes to be successful."

Sub-Question Two

Sub-question two asked, how were instructional strategies changed to transition to online instruction? Data analysis identifies themes that participants experienced during remote instruction, and these were training for teachers and student workloads. While most participants report receiving at least five hours of training on remote instruction, many reported only receiving programs to use to keep students engaged. Timothy said, "Some of the training was very useful and it pointed us in the right direction, but I just don't believe it was enough." Martin agreed with Timothy when he said, "We received a few hours of online training that got us started, but a lot of us ended up working together to muddle through the programs and figure things out." Charlene commented, "It wasn't all bad, we were introduced to some great programs that we could use to keep students engaged such as Flipgrid and iMovie. They were great, because it is tough keeping younger kids engaged." Even though there were limited hours of training, participants explained that the tools were there provided for them, and they worked together to make the best of a bad situation and get through the year.

Also, the theme of student workload emerged, and participants shared their thoughts concerning the workload through the pandemic. Amy stated, "When we first closed, I tried to maintain the same workload as I did when we were in the classroom. I soon learned that I wasn't going to be able to keep that up." Amy continued, "Some students never logged in and some students were overwhelmed with remote instruction so I had to change the amount of work that I assigned, I changed things up so that I could keep kids engaged, and logging in." Elementary teachers are responsible for teaching all subjects, and participants found that students often became overwhelmed when they tried to complete several different subjects throughout the day. Bryan said, "Often the problem was that some students didn't have a parent at home to supervise

them so they would complete one assignment and not another, so I started mixing things up so that they would get all subjects." He continued, "Students had no one at home to keep them logged in for class, so I made sure to hit on a different subject each day rather than all subjects every day." Participants were focused on keeping kids engaged, and by changing their workload most participants found that they were able to do this, Sherry added, "I didn't quit teaching, I just made sure that my students were getting the main parts of each set of content that they needed."

Sub-Question Three

How did teachers prepare themselves to overcome the obstacles encountered while delivering online instruction during the pandemic was the third sub-question, and the data analysis identified one sub-theme: teacher frustration. All participants felt frustration at some point during remote instruction. With schools being shut down and classrooms being transferred to a remote platform, frustration surmounted within schools, and participants were immediately left with concern about the unknown.

Participants agreed that it was important to focus on what they knew, and that was their content. Even though they were unfamiliar with teaching remote classes, it was important that they work together and develop a plan that would work. Chad said, "We would meet during our planning times so that we could bounce ideas off of each other and see what was working or not working and go from there." If the participants were fortunate enough to have someone in the building who had some experience or knowledge of remote instruction, they worked together to overcome the obstacles that they encountered. Steve said, "We were lucky to have someone in the building who had taken classes online and knew a little about maneuvering an online instruction platform. We learned from her and built upon what she knew to help us."

Summary

This chapter provides the findings of the obstacles that Title One elementary school teachers encountered while delivering online instruction during a pandemic. The theory that guided this study was the social constructivist theory of Vygotsky (1978), where learners gain additional knowledge from what they already know. The themes that emerged from the analysis of the data included four main themes: attendance and accountability, internet and internet connectivity, student participation, and working together. The analysis of the data also revealed three sub-themes: training for teachers, student workload, and teacher frustration. Participants provided a plethora of information to support the themes by participating in a questionnaire, an interview session, and a focus group. Many participants experienced similar obstacles, which led to the overall connection during the lockdown due to the COVID-19 virus that closed schools across the country in the spring of 2020. This chapter provided details on how participants prepared for remote instruction and how they overcame any obstacles that they encountered. Participants shared many experiences throughout the lockdown, and the overall consensus was that remote instruction was not successful and further training was needed in order to be prepared in the event that schools were forced to resume remote instruction.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Overview

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to identify obstacles that teachers at Title One elementary schools encounter while delivering online instruction during a pandemic. The theory guiding this study was the social constructivist theory of Vygotsky (1978), where learners gain additional knowledge from what they already know. Chapter five consists of the interpretation of the findings, the implications for policy and practice, theoretical and empirical implications, limitations and delimitations, and recommendations for future research concerning the study. The chapter concludes with an overall summary.

Discussion

This qualitative case study explored obstacles that Title One elementary school teachers encountered while delivering online instruction during a pandemic. The study explored the experiences of twelve Title One elementary school teachers from three title one elementary schools within Coral County, West Virginia. Through triangulation, the participants shared experiences were categorized into the following themes: attendance and accountability, internet and internet and internet connectivity, student participation and workload, and working together. Sub-themes include training for teachers and teacher frustration. This section will discuss the findings and provide support for the themes, along with evidence from those who participated in the study. The discussion also includes an interpretation of the findings, the implication for policy and procedures, theoretical and empirical implications, limitations and delimitations, and recommendations for future research.

Interpretation of Findings

The participants in this study shared obstacles they encountered while delivering

online instruction during a pandemic. This section provides a summary of the thematic findings

from the research study. A selection letter was emailed to teachers who work in the three schools

that were selected to participate in the study after IRB permission was granted, and school

principals provided permission for the study to take place in their buildings. There were twelve

participants in this study, and they were recruited by sending out a selection letter via

email. These participants returned the selection letter to the researcher agreeing to participate in

the research study. The data were collected and analyzed using the coding methods of

Saldana (2021) and ATLAS.ti. These codes were then used to develop themes that emerged from

the analysis of the data.

Summary of Thematic Findings

The purpose of this study was to identify the obstacles that Title One elementary school

teachers encountered while delivering online instruction during a pandemic. There were twelve

participants in this study who participated in a questionnaire, an interview, and a focus group

study. A total of four themes emerged: attendance and accountability, internet and internet

connectivity, student participation and workload, and working together. Two sub-themes

emerged: training for teachers and teacher frustration.

Attendance and Accountability.

The theme of attendance and accountability quickly emerged and was predominant across

participants' responses. Collectively, the participants were seeing a lack of attendance in their

remote classes, and there was no student accountability. Many participants report that students

did not log in for class, and several students were not seen for the rest of the year. Charlene said,

"In the beginning, I had most of my students logging in, but as the year progressed, students just

didn't log in; it was like they just quit." Many participants expressed concern over their inability

to hold students accountable. Alex stated, "I honestly just got so frustrated over not being able to hold my kids accountable. I took roll at the beginning, but then I was told I couldn't count kids absent because they might not have internet." He continued, "I think that once kids knew we weren't taking roll, that some of them just didn't log in anymore." There was an issue with students' attendance during remote instruction because students would not log in and participate. Many students simply believed that they were not responsible for logging in since they were not in the school building. Also, once students knew that teachers were not taking attendance and that they would not fail, there was no accountability on the part of the students during remote instruction.

Internet and Internet Connectivity.

This research study was conducted in Title One elementary schools, where a large number of students are from low-income homes and do not have internet in their homes. Many participants expressed concern over low-income students' inability to log on to classes during remote instruction time due to not having the internet in their homes. Elizabeth said, "Several of my students don't have the internet in their home, so they weren't able to access classes, and these kids fell further behind because of it." Not only was lack of internet in the home an issue, but several participants stated that many students had limited internet connectivity which caused them to miss out on class time. Tony said, "Some of my kids didn't have enough bandwidth to stay connected the whole time we were in class; these kids missed out on valuable class time, which kind of put them in the same situation as kids without internet." Many students in the school came from low-income homes and did not have access to the internet. Not only this, but several students had limited or slow bandwidth which caused their internet connectivity to be

limited. These issues resulted in students not being able to log on, being kicked off, or having a limited number of times they could log in during class times during the pandemic.

Student Participation and Workload.

Student participation and engagement were of concern because students would log in during class time but not participate. Many participants explained that students would log on to class but would not participate when asked questions about the lessons; they did not respond, so participants were not sure if they were actually in class. Alex said, "I would randomly ask different student questions but never get a response. They didn't have their camera on, so I couldn't tell if they were even in class. I sometimes wondered if they logged in and walked off." Participants agreed that student participation was increasingly an issue once students were aware of their not being counted absent if they did not attend class time. Steve added, "We were told that we could not count them absent. News travels fast, so when kids knew they weren't being counted absent, there were kids I never saw again."

At the beginning of the lockdown, when remote instruction first began, participants agreed that they tried to maintain the same level of remote instruction as they had while in the classroom with their students. However, as the lockdown remained in effect and remote instruction continued, participants realized that many students were not attending class, were not participating, and were not completing assignments as they should. Many participants expressed their concern over being able to keep students engaged in classes. Chad said, "I could see a change in students who would attend class. Some stopped coming to class every day, and some didn't complete assignments. I think they were burnt out, so I changed the workload to keep them focused." Several participants report having also changed the workload as time progressed in an effort to keep students engaged so they would continue to attend remote classes.

Working Together.

The theme of working together emerged from the data collection, and many participants believed that they were able to get through the process of remote instruction because they worked together. At the beginning of the lockdown, many participants felt like they were thrown into remote instruction with little to no training, and they were not prepared to teach classes online. Amy stated, "It was difficult at first, but after we started planning together, we were able to make adjustments to our instructional strategies and learn from mistakes and move forward." Participants agreed that by working together, they were able to overcome the difficulties of remote instruction and see some success within their instructional strategies. Alex said, "I know that I learned that it was much easier to lean on co-workers and work together rather than trying to get through it by myself. It was just a hard time for everyone, and we knew we needed to work together to get through it."

Working Together Sub-Themes

Training for Teachers.

Many participants expressed concerns over the lack of training for teachers when schools were closed because of the pandemic. Even though five hours of online training was offered for teachers to go along with the platform for remote instruction, many participants did not believe that five hours was enough training to satisfy the needs of those who had little or no knowledge of remote instruction. Martin said, "Many of us were just confused with remote instruction and could have used more hours of training. We made it work by working together, but in the beginning, there was a lot of confusion."

Teacher Frustration.

When schools closed their doors in the spring of 2020 and the remote instruction became how schools were running, participants agreed that frustrations were at an all-time high. With no forewarning, little preparation time, and a limited number of professional development hours offered, participants believed their frustrations were higher than in previous years of teaching. Alex said, "It was frustrating that we were just thrown into remote instruction and expected to immediately know what to do. Things got easier along the way."

Implications for Policy or Practice

I utilized the findings from the study to discuss practice and policy implications and these findings may assist teachers with remote instruction. The findings of this study provide evidence of obstacles that were encountered while delivering online instruction and may assist teachers in the future in the event that schools close due to similar events and must resort to remote instruction. Understanding obstacles that Title One elementary teachers encounter may provide information for teachers who teach remote classes and how best to avoid and overcome these obstacles.

Implications for Policy

The findings from this study of the obstacles that Title One elementary teachers encountered provide implications for policies to be established at state and district levels. State and district levels now have an opportunity to implement training for teachers to help provide them with best practices for remote instruction. Shrestha et al. (2021) reported that teachers were not prepared for the transition to remote instruction and faced barriers such as lack of knowledge, skills, and time, as well as policy level weaknesses that affected the integration of remote instruction. Knowing what teachers encountered during the COVID-19 pandemic allows for policies to be established that will prepare teachers for remote instruction if schools close their

doors in the future because of a similar event. Many of the participants in this study withstood many obstacles that left them frustrated, discouraged, and burnt out. Even though there were online classes provided that were meant to assist teachers with remote instruction, many teachers felt that they were dropped into a remote classroom without specific guidance that they believed was required and/or needed for them to be successful.

Policies can now be established that will provide teachers with one-on-one assistance, hands-on training, and professional development classes that are needed. Knowing now things that will aid with online instruction is essential to the overall success of students and their learning. Remote instruction was never before seen as something important, and therefore, there was never a level of importance placed on this type of instruction. Now that schools have participated in remote instruction, emphasis must still be placed on remote instruction. Therefore, policies must be implemented that will encourage continued training on remote instruction.

Implications for Practice

The findings in this study are associated with Title One elementary school teachers and the obstacles they encountered while delivering online instruction during a pandemic. Many teachers encountered issues with attendance and accountability, which left them questioning ways to get their students involved in their learning. Many participants also encountered issues with students who had internet and internet connectivity issues. Many of the participants' students come from low-income homes which led to their inability to access the internet; Also, some of their students had limited internet services. A study by Ahmed and Opoku (2021) reported that overcoming challenges such as slow internet connections and interruptions during the Covid-19 pandemic will help create new opportunities for blended learning approaches to

meet the needs of delivery of online classes in the future. Another obstacle was teacher frustration which was caused due to the immediate transition to remote instruction without warning.

These are just a few of the findings from the study that implications for practice can explore in helping teachers within title one elementary schools overcome in the event that schools must close their doors in the future due to unforeseen situations. These obstacles were encountered and were overcome by these participants through hard work and dedication to the field of education. By implementing the practice of remote instruction across the field of elementary education, future obstacles may be overcome more quickly in the event that schools are closed once more.

Theoretical and Empirical Implications

The theoretical significance of this study followed the theory of social constructivism, in that knowledge already exists (Vygotsky, 1978). Many teachers had previous experience with online instruction and therefore were able to work together; however, in the event that there were teachers within the title one elementary schools who had no previous knowledge of online instruction, they were able to learn from the knowledge of those who had previous knowledge of online instruction, proving Vygotsky's (1978) theory of social constructivism in that knowledge can be gained from what is already known.

The empirical significance of this study was to fill a gap in the current research on the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects on schools and remote instruction. Even though there have been reports concerning remote instruction during the pandemic, further research can explore the obstacles teachers within secondary schools encounter. This study provides obstacles encountered and how teachers worked together to overcome these obstacles. This study offers

information concerning the obstacles that Title One elementary school teachers encountered and provides information concerning some of the obstacles encountered during the lockdown. This study provides information that can be used in the future in the event that schools close once again and are forced to online instruction. It was important that teachers worked together, and research from Aguliera and Nightengale-Lee (2020) reported that it was imperative that during this time of crisis, teachers committed to making their best attempt at upholding pedagogies, humanizing relationships, and upholding reflective practice.

Limitations and Delimitations

Limitations to this qualitative case study included the ability to find available participants due in part to the end of the 2021-2022 school year. School ended in May 2022, and teachers were released for the summer. Therefore, it was difficult to find teachers from each of the three participating title one schools willing to participate in the study during their time off for the summer. Many teachers were unwilling to participate due to the beginning of the summer break and their unwillingness to give up time during their break to discuss things related to and dealing with school. Delimitations to this qualitative case study included the aspect of teachers having to be teachers who worked in a Title One elementary school and worked in one of the three elementary schools selected for the participation of the case study. This was a single instrumental qualitative case study that focused on one issue (Creswell & Poth, 2018) concerning obstacles that Title One elementary teachers encountered while delivering online instruction during a pandemic.

Recommendations for Future Research

In consideration of the study findings, limitations, and the delimitations placed on the study, it is my recommendation that future research should include more than three Title One

elementary schools along with more than twelve Title One elementary school teachers. Not only this but a study should be conducted within the middle and high school arena. With time permitting, finding more than twelve Title One elementary school teachers to participate in the study would allow for more evidence to produce a broad array of obstacles teachers encountered while delivering online instruction during a pandemic.

I believe that the questionnaires, interviews, and focus groups that were used to collect data for this research study were the best way to collect data due in part to the fact that the pandemic is over and any other form of data collection such as observations would not yield the appropriate data collection. If this study is replicated, these data collection types should be used. They produced the appropriate data needed to explain the obstacles that Title One elementary school teachers encountered while delivering online instruction during a pandemic. This study should also be replicated in the middle and high school arena because all levels of public and schools were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic that caused school closures in the spring of 2020.

It is also important to research why schools are not preparing for remote instruction before an emergency lockdown situation. After the Covid-19 pandemic, a study from Camlibel-Acar and Eveyik-Aydin (2022) reported that The World Health Organization is calling for mandatory preparedness for future pandemics as a necessity for the benefits and challenges for everyone involved to be well-planned and prepared. Schools across the country need to prepare for emergency closures prior to their having to close schools. Preparing for the unexpected will ensure a smooth transition to a remote classroom. Taking what has been learned from the experiences of the lockdown because of Covid-19 in March 2020 has established the groundwork for structuring remote instruction that can work. Even though the pandemic is over,

remote instruction practice needs to continue in order to be prepared if a similar incident takes place in the future.

Conclusion

This qualitative case study provides information concerning obstacles that Title One elementary teachers encountered while delivering online instruction during a pandemic. The study included twelve participants who shared their experiences and the obstacles they encountered. There are four themes and two sub-themes that emerged through the data analysis. Implications for policies and procedures are included, limitations and delimitations are included, along with recommendations for future studies. The most important takeaways from the results of this research were teacher frustration and working together. Even though the pandemic immediately disrupted the lives of everyone in the school system, teachers were left with figuring out ways to deliver instruction online. Frustration was a huge obstacle due partly to many having never taught online classes prior to the pandemic. Working together, participants were able to overcome the frustrations that they encountered and come up with ways to deliver online instruction that worked. Even though many teachers had never taught remotely prior to the pandemic, they have now gained knowledge of remote instruction because they transitioned so quickly to that platform for instruction. Prior planning and preparation for working together are essential in the event that schools close their doors once more to a similar event.

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APPENDIX A

IRB APPROVAL

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

April 29, 2022

Jennifer Cole

████████

Re: IRB Exemption - IRB-FY21-22-868 A QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY ON THE OBSTACLES THAT TITLE ONE ELEMENTARY TEACHERS ENCOUNTERED WHILE DELIVERING ONLINE INSTRUCTION DURING A PANDEMIC

Dear Jennifer Cole, ████████

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under the following exemption category, which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:104(d):

Category 2.(iii). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met:
The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects can readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and an IRB conducts a limited IRB review to make the determination required by §46.111(a)(7).

Your stamped consent form(s) and final versions of your study documents can be found under the Attachments tab within the Submission Details section of your study on Cayuse IRB. Your stamped consent form(s) should be copied and used to gain the consent of your research participants. If you plan to provide your consent information electronically, the

contents of the attached consent document(s) should be made available without alteration.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any modifications to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible modifications to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,
G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP
Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
Research Ethics Office

APPENDIX B

SITE APPROVAL FORM

A QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY IDENTIFYING OBSTACLES TITLE ONE
ELEMENTARY TEACHERS ENCOUNTERED WHILE DELIVERING ONLINE
INSTRUCTION DURING A PANDEMIC

Dear

As a graduate student at Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia in the School of Education, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for an educational doctorate degree. The title of my research is A Qualitative Case Study on the Obstacles that Title One elementary teachers Encountered while delivering Online Instruction during a Pandemic. The purpose of my study is to identify commonalities in obstacles across elementary schools within the county that Title One elementary teachers encountered when schools across the country were forced to remote instruction due to COVID-19 in March 2020.

I am writing to request that your school participate in my study and that I may send a questionnaire to your teachers to identify those who would be willing to participate in the study and share their experiences with remote learning during COVID-19. After potential teachers are identified I ask that I be allowed to arrange a time to meet with them in your building to begin the process of collecting information from them about their experiences.
No identifiable information will be used concerning your school or the names of your teachers in this study. All participants' identities will be protected and may withdraw from participating in the study at any time they choose.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter and I hope that you will grant permission for me to conduct my study in your school. If you choose to allow permission for my study to take place in your school, I ask that you please respond by email to ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮

Sincerely,

Jennifer L. Cole

APPENDIX C
Recruitment Letter

Dear

As a graduate student in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for an educational doctorate degree. The purpose of my research is to understand obstacles that title one elementary school teachers encountered while delivering online instruction during the pandemic, and I am writing to invite eligible participants to join my study.

Participants must be title one elementary school teachers. Participants, if willing, will be asked to complete a questionnaire (20 minutes), participate in an in-person or remote interview (30 minutes), review their interview transcript to confirm its accuracy, and participate in a focus group session (35 minutes). Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but participant identities will not be disclosed.

To participate in this research study, please fill out the attached survey and return it to me by email at ███████████████   For more information or to schedule a time to speak with me concerning this research study, please contact me at ██████████   or email me at ████████████

A consent document will be emailed to you if you meet the study criteria. The consent document contains additional information about my research. If you choose to participate, you will need to sign the consent document and return it to me by email.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Leslie Cole
████████████

Screening Questionnaire

Please highlight your answers!

Question 1: What is your highest degree?

      A: Bachelor's degree   B: Bachelor's degree in education   C: Master's degree

Question 2: How long have you been teaching?

      A: Less than five years.   B: Five to ten years.   C: More than ten years

Question 3: Had you taught online classes prior to the COVID-19 pandemic?

      Yes   or   No

Question 4: Did you encounter obstacles while teaching online during the pandemic?

      Yes   or   No

Question 5: Rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statement.

      I was prepared to teach online during the pandemic.

      A: strongly agree   B: somewhat agree   C: somewhat disagree   D: strongly disagree

Question 6: Rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statement.

      I was not prepared to teach online during the pandemic.

      A: strongly agree   B: somewhat agree   C: somewhat disagree   D: strongly disagree

Question 7: Are you willing to participate in a research study concerning obstacles that teachers encountered while delivering online instruction during the pandemic?

      Yes   or   No

If you answered yes to the question above, please provide your name and contact information so that you may be contacted to participate in this research project.

Name: _____

Contact Information: _____

APPENDIX D

Consent

Title of the Project: A QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY ON THE OBSTACLES THAT TITLE ONE ELEMENTARY TEACHERS ENCOUNTERED WHILE DELIVERING ONLINE INSTRUCTION DURING A PANDEMIC

Principal Investigator: Jennifer Leslie Cole, a graduate student at Liberty University

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be a title one elementary school teacher. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research.

What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of the study is to identify obstacles that title one elementary school teachers encountered while delivering online instruction during the pandemic.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following things:
1. Complete a questionnaire that should take about 20 minutes.
2. Participate in a remote or in-person interview that should take 30-35 minutes.
3. Potentially participate in a focus group that should take 35 minutes. Two participants from each school will be asked to be part of the focus group.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

Risks for participation in this study are minimum in that they are no more than everyday risks that you may encounter in everyday life.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private and only the researcher will have access to the records. Data collected from you may be shared for use in future research studies or with other

researchers. If data collected from you is shared, any information that could identify you, if applicable, will be removed before the data is shared.

- Participants' responses will be kept confidential by replacing names with pseudonyms. All interviews will be conducted in a location where responses cannot be easily overheard.
- All data will be stored in a password-protected computer that only the researcher has access to, and after three years, all electronic records will be deleted. All audio recordings will be kept in a locked file cabinet, and only the researcher will have access to this cabinet
- The interviews and focus group recordings will be transcribed on a password-locked and protected computer that only the researcher has access to, and all material will be deleted after three years.
- Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in focus group settings; however, members will be discouraged from sharing what has been discussed with persons outside of the focus group setting.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you apart from focus group data will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study. Focus group data will not be destroyed, but your contributions to the focus group will not be included in the study if you choose to withdraw.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Jennifer Leslie Cole. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact her at ████████████ and/or ████████████ You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, ████████ at ████████████.

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher you are encouraged to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.

Your Consent

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

The researcher has my permission to audio-record me as part of my participation in this study.

_____

Printed Subject Name

_____

Signature & Date

APPENDIX E

Questionnaire for Teachers

1. How well do you believe that you were prepared for online teaching? CQ

a. not at all   b. somewhat   c. very

2. How much experience with online instruction did you have prior to school closures due

    to COVID-19? CQ

a. none   b. little   c. well trained

3. How many obstacles do you believe you encountered while delivering online instruction

    during the pandemic?

    CQ

a. none   b. few   c. many

Can you please name one obstacle that you encountered while delivering online

instruction during the pandemic and explain the steps that you took to work through this

Obstacle.

4. Do you believe teachers worked together to overcome obstacles during the

    pandemic? SQ1

a. yes   b. no

    Can you explain how teachers worked together to overcome any obstacles that they

     encountered during the pandemic.

5. How many professional development hours were provided for online instruction? SQ1

a. none   b. 1 – 5   c. 5 +

6. How much did you change your daily instruction strategies to fit an online instruction

    platform? SQ2

a. little   b. somewhat   c. very

   Please provide one example of a daily instructional strategy that you changed in order to

   fit an online instruction platform?

7. How prepared for online instruction do you believe you are if schools are forced to

   return to remote instruction? SQ2

a. little   b. somewhat   c. very

   Please explain why you believe that you are better prepared for online instruction

   because of the pandemic that forced schools to teach classes remotely.

8. How much confidence do you have in teaching online instruction after COVID-19? SQ3

a. little   b. somewhat   c. well trained

APPENDIX F

Standardized Open-Ended Interview Questions for teachers

1. What is the main obstacle you encountered while teaching online during a pandemic? CRQ

2. What obstacles did you encounter when working with students from low-income families during the pandemic? CRQ

3. What frustration did you find that you had in common with colleagues as you began online instruction? CRQ

4. How did teachers work together to ensure a smooth transition to online instruction? SQ:1

5. What professional development classes were offered to help teachers transition from face-to-face teaching to online instruction? SQ:1

6. What strategies for effective instruction did teachers share to transition to online instruction during COVID-19? SQ:1

7. What was most helpful to you as you transitioned from face-to-face teaching to online instruction? SQ:2

8. What was the most difficult part of transitioning from face-to-face instruction to online instruction during the pandemic? SQ:2

9. What instructional strategies did you use to overcome the difficulty of transitioning to online instruction? SQ:2

10. Please describe your experiences while teaching during COVID-19? SQ:3

11. If you could change one thing about your experience of teaching during COVID-19, what would it be? SQ:3

12. What is one thing that has made you a better teacher since you have experienced remote teaching during a pandemic? SQ:3

APPENDIX G

Focus Group Questions

1. What were your expectations of remote instruction? CRQ

2. How did working with peers help alleviate obstacles during remote

instruction? SQ1

3. What professional development classes will offer further guidance for

remote instruction in the event a similar occurrence happens? SQ2

4. What obstacles did you think you might encounter as you began remote instruction?

SQ3

5. In what ways do you believe that remote instruction was successful during

COVID-19? SQ3