

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHERS' LIVED EXPERIENCE OF  
TRANSITIONING FROM REMOTE LEARNING TO THE TRADITIONAL CLASSROOM  
SETTING: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

by

Shawn Eldot

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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### **Abstract**

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to describe the experiences of ESL teachers who transitioned from remote learning back to the traditional classroom setting post-Covid at community colleges in upstate New York. The theory that will be guiding and directing this study will be the constructivist theory. The focus will be on understanding how English as a second language teachers adapt from the distance learning setting implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic back to the brick-and-mortar classroom. In addition, the study will attempt to understand how the behavior of ESL teachers is reflected in the changing teaching environment. The constructivist theory of learning was developed by the educational theorist Jean Piaget and relates to the study in that, according to constructivists, a teacher should ensure online instruction includes activities where students can contextualize information and engage with the learners while completing online tasks. The central research question seeks to describe the lived experiences of ESL teachers when transitioning from remote learning to the traditional classroom. This study will employ a transcendental phenomenological approach and use individual interviews, a focus group, and journal prompts to gather data to address the research questions. Data will be analyzed utilizing Moustakas' (1994) phenomenological reduction with horizontalization in order to develop themes to represent the essence of the phenomenon. Three major themes emerged from the study: Challenges in Transitioning to the Online Environment, Improved Learning and Teaching Skills, and Challenges in Returning to Traditional Learning. Significant findings indicated that the online learning environment had influenced pedagogical strategies, with notable elements potentially enriching face-to-face instruction upon transition.

*Keywords:* Remote Learning, Traditional Classroom, ESL Teachers, Pandemic

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### **List of Abbreviations**

Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI)

Community of Inquiry (CoI)

Coronavirus Disease of 2019 (COVID-19)

Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT)

English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

Learning Management Systems (LMS)

National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)

## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

### **Overview**

The COVID-19 Pandemic had a wide-ranging impact on education in the United States. At the forefront was the requirement for classroom teachers to teach their classes online. In addition, there were special considerations for students in non-mainstream classes such as English as a Second Language. This study looked at the phenomenon of transitioning ESL teachers from the online environment back to the traditional classroom setting. This chapter includes the background of the problem, including the social and theoretical perspectives that will guide the research in the following chapters. This chapter also provides the study's problem, purpose, and significance. Finally, the chapter concludes with key definitions and a summary of the chapter.

### **Background**

The study's background is based on questions arising from the educational format implemented during the COVID-19 Pandemic and the experiences of ESL teachers and students using online learning for content and language acquisition. The historical, social, and theoretical background for this issue supplies a basis for conducting further research on the topic.

### **Historical Context**

Distance education was present and progressing long before the COVID-19 mandate that put all educational material online. As far back as the 1980s, corporations used computer-based classes to train new employees. Online education became popularized in 1991 by the University of Phoenix when they began offering online university classes and education programs (Hope, 2021). By the early 2000s, online classes were offered at colleges nationwide. By 2010, almost

5.5 million students were enrolled in online courses, and entire degree programs online were beginning in post-secondary institutions across the United States (Allen & Seaman, 2011).

Despite the plethora of online classes available, faculty adjustment to this format and the lack of support by many educators who felt online courses could not provide the same quality of education caused continuous controversy (Cohen et al., 2020). The online environment provided access to higher education to more people than brick-and-mortar classrooms. Also, it offered an option for those who could not attend classes in the traditional setting due to work schedules, childcare, illness, disability, etc. Little attention has been given to the need for different teaching strategies in the alternative environment. Initially, many professors simply posted their lecture notes from their traditional classes to the online classroom. They assumed the outcome would be the same despite the research indicating “that a well-designed, documented, and structured online course that facilitates active engagement with the students is essential for success” (Dykman & Davis, 2008, p. 283).

The use of computer-based learning for language acquisition in the United States can be dated back to as early as the 1960s and 1970s with Computer-Aided Language Instruction (CALI), which involved drill and practice lessons on a computer. This was mainly used to reinforce skills learned in a face-to-face environment. With the evolution of computer-based learning across subject areas, ESL classes have also evolved. As these “drill and practice” lessons moved onto online, interactive classes, they have often entirely replaced brick-and-mortar courses in ESL. Today’s online language acquisition classes take place in virtual learning environments. They often use interactive whiteboards, computer-based communication, learning language in virtual worlds, and interaction with other language learners across the globe. For the

language learner, online instruction opens the door to several learning experiences not available in the traditional classroom (Liu et al., 2002).

A 2016 study concluded that online lessons, Facebook, and internet blogs showed increased sustained motivation for ESL students (Pazilah et al., 2016). However, as many ESL teachers have recently transitioned to online teaching during the COVID-19 Pandemic, returning to a brick-and-mortar classroom can be problematic, particularly where students are experiencing more significant success in the online format (Cohen et al., 2020). In today's educational setting, this issue is arising. For the ESL instructor integrating the practical elements of online teaching into the traditional classroom could provide a blended environment that gives students what they need for success. The proposed research will address the challenges of this transition.

### **Social Context**

With online learning forced upon educators during the COVID-19 Pandemic, there have been many changes in daily life for both instructors and students. Teaching and learning from home have brought about unexpected pros and cons. It has allowed instructors to keep their jobs when many people have become unemployed and for students to continue their education despite the social restrictions the country was enduring.

On the other hand, the necessity of quickly adapting to the new format has created problems for teachers, such as working while children are at home, learning how to put course lessons into the school's online platform, and determining the best teaching strategies online (Cohen et al., 2020). Therefore, it is essential to establish the trajectory needed to investigate and address the problem.

The return to face-to-face instruction is essential for the country's educational systems to reinstate participation in the community and social interaction with others. In addition, based on

the drop in post-secondary student enrollment, it is probable that students will return at diverse levels, some needing remediation and others requiring acceleration in learning. In many cases, students have had positive experiences in the online format from home, and instructors must find a way to use a combination of the teaching strategies used before COVID-19 with those that brought success and increased student performance during the period of entirely online instruction (Cohen et al., 2020). The current study will provide much-needed data and updated information that can assist in developing the appropriate techniques needed for change in this area.

### **Theoretical Context**

According to the theory of behaviorism, the mind is a “black box,” and learning is an observable response to added information. Learning in the online environment is demonstrated through the learner’s behavior. According to the behaviorist’s perspective, online learning should provide the student with learning outcomes so they can self-monitor the achievement of outcomes, provide an assessment that demonstrates learning has taken place, and provide modeling of skills that demonstrate the behavior expected of students (Alzaghoul, 2012).

The behaviorist expects the instructor to present students with a review and assessment and repeat the practice. They also need feedback at strategic points in a lesson; this applies appropriately to ESL instruction and can easily be used in online ESL instruction. Regarding the teacher transitioning from the online environment back to a brick-and-mortar environment, these same teaching strategies can be used and supplemented by online review and practice to enhance face-to-face instruction and assist the student in the transition (Alzaghoul, 2012). The well-known behaviorist Skinner invented the Teaching Machine, which he described as:

Using the device, the student refers to a numbered item in a multiple-choice test. He presses the button corresponding to his first choice of answer. If he is correct, the device moves on to the next item; if he is wrong, the error is tallied, and he must continue to make choices until he is right. (Weegar & Pacis, 2012, p. 972)

The teaching technique here is like that of early computer-based language acquisition programs, which is at the basis of many of the more recent online ESL classes with additional complexities and interactive elements (Weegar & Pacis, 2012).

The constructivist learning theory has been defined as “an active construction of new knowledge based on a learner’s prior experience” (Weegar & Pacis, 2012). Research on online education agrees with this theory as it applies to internet learning because, as a format, the online classroom is a good fit (Dykman & Davis, 2008). In most constructivist pedagogies, the role of the teacher is to “observe and assess” while also engaging students. This can be achieved by thinking aloud and posing a pivotal question to encourage critical thinking and reasoning. In online learning, the student is active, and the teacher facilitates, encouraging students to come to their own conclusions (Standen, 2018). According to constructivists, a teacher should ensure online instruction includes activities where students can contextualize information. Teachers must engage with the learners while completing online tasks. They also stress that learning activities should be elevated to keep students active, involve applying skills, and practice conversation (Weegar & Pacis, 2012). Online learning can provide all these elements, and some can be lost in return to the traditional classroom, especially the teacher's role as a learning facilitator.

Overall, the proposed research will extend and refine the existing knowledge in online learning in the ESL classroom and the transition back to brick and mortar after COVID-19

Pandemic. This added information will be part of the contemporary body of research and add to a growing body of existing literature (Goeing, 2021). By understanding the direct implications, much of the benefit will be for a future implementation strategy. By recognizing and looking at the literature, there is an ability to increase awareness of the best strategies to implement. The existing knowledge regarding COVID-19 is vital in understanding the unexpected surgency of online learning and the impact of transitioning back to the traditional classroom.

Rhetorical studies and opportunities to investigate the best online learning strategies that can transition back into the brick-and-mortar ESL courses lend way to an inclusive pedagogy that can be expanded. Unexpected challenges exist as individuals continue to thrive within the online learning environment (Rheaume et al., 2018). Expanding upon these ideas and becoming aware of the implementation strategy for improving pedagogy can achieve the best of both learning formats. It can assist in increasing awareness and understanding of successful teaching strategies for online education and the relationship to the traditional classroom that could be proposed to individuals as they continue to move forward educationally. Significant areas of focus to be implemented across the study include looking at the philosophy of the study itself.

### **Problem Statement**

The problem is that ESL teachers have encountered academic difficulties transitioning from remote learning back to the traditional classroom. The current study will assist in determining the best way for ESL teachers to transition back to the brick-and-mortar classroom without losing the positive elements of the online format that ESL students have become accustomed to, enjoyed, and seen success. The population being researched comprises college-level ESL instructors in upstate New York. During the COVID-19 Pandemic, teachers at all levels experienced teaching entirely in an online classroom due to restrictions implemented for

the safety of teachers and students while the outbreak was spreading. However, based on elements of the online classroom, such as the “drill and practice,” lowered social pressures, video, visuals, etc., many online students had more success in the online classroom even though it was not a choice (Penrod et al., 2022). Now that many teachers have experience with the online classroom and have developed teaching strategies to be used in this context, entirely scraping this time of learning on returning to the classroom is unnecessary (Lupton & Hayes, 2021)

To best meet the ESL student's needs, a blended learning environment that includes elements of face-to-face teaching with aspects of online facilitating will be the best strategy for instructors as they return to the traditional classroom (Penrod, 2021). The idea is to the traditional classroom and the interactive online environment.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study is to describe the experiences of ESL teachers who transitioned from remote learning back to the traditional classroom setting post-Covid at community colleges in upstate New York. At this stage in the research, transitioning from remote learning to the traditional classroom will generally be defined as moving from an online learning environment to a physical brick-and-mortar school. The qualitative study will look at the impact of this phenomenon on community college ESL teachers in upstate New York. While learning actively through online lessons, teachers facilitate that learning by modeling the thought process, critical thinking, and reaching conclusions (Weegar & Pacis, 2012).

### **Significance of the Study**

The significance of the current study encompasses descriptions of the influences that the study makes on the field from a theoretical, empirical, and practical perspective.

#### **Theoretical Perspective**

The description of the study's contributions to the theoretical underpinnings will assist and enhance the knowledge base or discipline based on analyzing the specific opportunities for looking at strategy implementation. The strategy implementation is transitioning from the online environment to the traditional classroom. These opportunities are critical for understanding the macro approach towards transitioning back into the learning environment and a high-level empirical-based system (Akyeampong, 2017). These opportunities help define both the quantifiable practices and the strategic opportunities for understanding the possibility of transitioning to a blended classroom with online learning. The brief description of the study's practical significance is not only based on looking at the direct evidence and innovative approaches within the field of pedagogy but analyzing the research studies (Standen, 2018). The behaviorist expects the instructor to present students with a review, assessment, and repeat practice. The constructivist learning theory is constructing new knowledge based on the prior experience of the learner (Weegar & Pacis, 2012). Research on online education agrees with this theory as it applies to internet learning because, as a format, the online classroom is a good fit (Dykman & Davis, 2008). The theories that will be applied to this strategy are constructivism and behaviorism, as online learning falls within each of these theories (Alzaghoul, 2012). The focus will be on understanding how English as second language teachers will best adapt from the distance learning setting to a more traditional face-to-face classroom with a blended learning environment (Savignon et al., 2019). There will also be an emphasis on understanding how the

environment reflects behavior and how the experiences of education of second language teachers have changed their pedagogy. Behaviorism will support the unique marriage between the study, the function, environmental adaptation, and the review of information given via the online education environment (Weegar & Pacis, 2012). Overall, the theory will support the value of technology within the classroom and allow individuals learning English as a second language to be effective in their learning experiences. These theories will be further developed and explored in the current study to better understand the problem.

### **Empirical Perspective**

Past research can give insight into the impact on stakeholders such as students, professors, organizational personnel, and financial directors at the affected schools (Hammel et al., 2017). Some studies described how computer-based and online learning was an excellent motivator for ESL students (Kentor, 2015). Another looked at how students reacted to learning new strategies and how their experiences affected teaching methods upon returning to the face-to-face setting (Kentor, 2015; Hope, 2016). The current study will add to the existing literature in that the focus will be on the experiences that ESL teachers encountered when returning to traditional face-to-face learning after the pandemic forced many to the remote learning modality by surveying the issue from the perspective of the ESL teacher.

### **Practical Perspective**

In theory, online learning offers students an alternative means to a traditional school setting, providing the option of post-secondary education to many who otherwise could not obtain it. Due to conflicts such as work, childcare, and disability, many people in the United States wish to further their education but have difficulty due to such barriers (Dykman & Davis, 2008). In addition, using online coursework in ESL education provides learning options that

result in tremendous success in language acquisition. This is the basis for retaining some of the online coursework in the ESL classroom upon returning to the traditional classroom, creating a “best of both worlds” learning situation (Kentnor, 2015). These two formats require different teaching styles and strategies, so instructors' recent acquisition of these skills during the COVID-19 Pandemic can be effectively used along with prior traditional teaching practices. This study will extend the theories of motivating and inspiring success with students in ESL classrooms by analyzing the situation from the perspective of the ESL teacher, their experiences with online teaching, and how to hold on to the strategies that work when returning to the classroom (CTS, 2021; Hope, 2016).

In 2020, teachers across America were forced to move from a traditional classroom into a fully online teaching environment. In doing this, they gained skills they may not have otherwise acquired. Research has shown that some aspects of online learners succeed in acquiring a new language in the ESL classroom. Thus, transferring these skills into the traditional classroom is practical and pedagogically essential, combining them with previously acquired teaching strategies in a brick-and-mortar setting (Dykman & Davis, 2008). By advocating for these changes, there are unique possibilities for understanding implementation and inclusion opportunities (Tshuma, 2020). Stakeholders, such as students, administration, and other content area teachers, will be affected by changes in the transition back to the traditional classroom and the choices various teachers, including ESL teachers, make to integrate what they experienced during distance learning. If ESL teachers form a blended learning environment that relies on online learning as a significant part of the course, other teachers may feel pressured to do the same. Based on past literature, students should be positively impacted by such a change, and the

administration may have difficulty funding necessary technology and supplies. Still, it should gain attention from their school for being initiative-taking and progressive.

### **Research Questions**

The proposed research questions are based on the collection of empirical information and evidence relevant to the field of study. There will also be a focus on how teachers of English as a second language can return from the distance learning environment to face-to-face and traditional instruction (Goldstein, 2021). The focus is not only based on how teachers have on avoiding the same teaching methodologies that they applied within the online paradigm but also on the return to the traditional classroom and the impact it has on the reflection, urgency, and the opportunities to provide qualitative instruction (Harris et al., 2018). These concepts are essential for understanding the quality of instructional development and the functional, representative, and qualitative process opportunities that may be there (Lumani, 2019).

#### **Central Research Question**

What are the lived experiences of ELS teachers when transitioning from remote learning back to the traditional classroom post-Covid?

#### **Sub-Question One**

What teaching methodologies applied within the online paradigm have been most effective?

#### **Sub-Question Two**

What challenges did ESL teachers encounter when transitioning from remote learning to traditional learning?

#### **Sub-Question Three**

How do the participants describe their overall experiences teaching online utilizing a

flipped learning modality?

### **Definitions**

Terms pertinent to the current study are listed below.

1. *Covid-19* – Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. COVID-19 may be severe, resulting in millions of deaths worldwide, even causing long-term health problems in some individuals who survived the infection (Cohen et al., 2020).
2. *Pandemic* – A pandemic occurs when a disease affects the global population. Pandemics are typically caused by new infectious agents, like bacteria or viruses, that spread quickly (Cohen et al., 2020).
3. *ESL* – English as a Second Language (ESL). Teaching English to people who speak a different language and live in areas where English is the primary language spoken (Pazilah et al., 2019).
4. *Remote Learning* – Remote learning is the practice of moving a formerly in-person learning process online—usually temporarily. Simply put, it is where the student and the educator are not physically present in a traditional classroom environment (Allen & Seaman, 2011).
5. *Flipped Learning* – A approach to learning where teachers prioritize active learning during class time by assigning students lecture materials and presentations to be viewed online or outside the classroom (FLN, 2014).

## Summary

This research study analyzes learning theories as they apply to the ESL student and investigates the process of transitioning back to a traditional classroom after a year of online courses. The problem is that ESL teachers have encountered academic difficulties transitioning from remote learning back to the traditional classroom. The purpose of this phenomenological study is to describe the experiences of ESL teachers who transitioned from remote learning back to the traditional classroom setting post-Covid at colleges in New York. The review of teacher behavior as it applies to this issue is applied to the return to the traditional classroom, and the impact it has on the reflection, urgency, and opportunities to provide qualitative instruction is central to the plan (Harris et al., 2018). These concepts are fundamental for understanding the quality of instructional development from online teaching strategies (Mico, 2019). For the research questions, there will be a focus on how ESL teachers adapted to distance learning and how some of the strategies they have been able to implement should be included in the transition back to the traditional classroom (Savignon et al., 2019). The research question will also recognize the strategic implementation within the traditional classroom (Makoelle et al., 2019).

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Overview**

This transcendental phenomenological study aims to describe the experiences of ESL teachers who transitioned from remote learning back to the traditional classroom setting post-Covid at community colleges in upstate New York. The central phenomenon being explored is ESL teachers' experiences who have taught in an online learning environment for two school semesters during the 2020-2021 school year. The theory will be critical in the value of the study, and it will be evaluated from the constructivist perspective. The focus will be on understanding how English as a second language teachers are impacted by student success while using online teaching methods when teaching remote classes during the COVID-19 Pandemic and how to best adapt to the traditional courses when in-person classes resume. This chapter will offer the theoretical framework and a systematic review of the literature on the lived experience of ESL teachers transitioning to face-to-face instruction after remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. The chapter will conclude with a summary that identifies a gap in the literature that presents a need for the present study.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This chapter introduces and explains the theoretical framework that will guide this study. First, the crucial facts and prior research related to teaching and students concerning the benefits and challenges of online classes are covered (Allen & Seaman, 2011; Kentor, 2015). Also, information and research connecting these facts to the ESL classroom will be discussed (Liu et al., 2002; Lawes et al., 2021). In addition, a summary of relevant research that connects the experiences of ESL teachers and ESL students in online courses and blended courses to the phenomenon created by the COVID-19 restrictions that resulted in such teachers and students

being required to resort ultimately to distance learning through the format of online courses (Cohen et al., 2020). This information will provide background for the current research on what the new ESL classroom should look like when teachers and students return to the brick-and-mortar classroom.

### **Constructivism**

The study's first theoretical framework is based on the constructivist theory of learning, developed by educational theorist Jean Piaget. Constructivism can be traced back to educational psychology in the work of Jean Piaget (1896–1980). It may be identified with Piaget's theory of cognitive development in that Piaget fixated on how humans make meaning in relation to the interaction between their experiences and their ideas (Waite-Stupiansky, 2017). The constructivist theory has been defined as “an active construction of new knowledge based on a learner’s prior experience” (Weegar & Pacis, 2012, p. 6). Research on online education agrees with this theory as it applies to internet learning because, as a format, the online classroom is a good fit. In most constructivist pedagogies, the role of the teacher is to “observe and assess” while also engaging students by thinking aloud and posing pivotal questions to encourage critical thinking and reasoning. Online coursework is designed so that the student is active, and the role of the teacher is that of a facilitator (Standen, 2018). The instructor's facilitation plays a significant role, but the student does the actual learning as they think through a problem or acquire a skill. Language learning adapts to this format because of the extensive information acquired and applied. The presence of a teacher in the classroom and other students provides the perfect transition from practice with language to application with discussion in real-time.

According to constructivists, a teacher should ensure online instruction includes activities where students can contextualize information. Instructors should engage with the learners while

completing online tasks. They also stress that learning activities should be elevated, keep students active, involve applying skills, and practice conversation (Weegar & Pacis, 2012). Online learning can provide all these elements, and some can be lost with the return to the traditional classroom, especially the teacher's role as the learning facilitator. In addition, a relationship is associated with how looking at the online environment is connected to an essential collaboration between interpretation, connection, and instructional development (Festle, 2020). Learning support is also based on the need and objective design systems for creating better schedules, instructions, procedures, and announcements, allowing learning strategy to become much more influential. ESL learners and educators can integrate what was learned during the pandemic into the face-to-face classroom environment.

### **Behaviorism**

The theory of behaviorism will also be used to analyze the marriage between the study, the function, environmental adaptation, and the review of information given via the online education paradigm. Behaviorism was officially established with a publication in 1913 of John B. Watson's paper entitled *Psychology as the Behaviorist Views*. Watson is frequently regarded as the father of behaviorism. Overall, the theory supports the value of technology within the classroom and allows individuals learning English as a second language to be successful in their learning experiences (Watson, 1913). Prior research has shown online classes to be both preferred by and successful with ESL students for several reasons (Johnson & Aragon, 2003). These include a format that they find more exciting and lowered inhibitions when working on computers in the early levels of language learning. In addition, many ESL teachers have recently been exposed to online teaching, the best practices for teaching in this format during the COVID-19 Pandemic, and how they found success (Johnson & Aragon, 2003). These instructors are now

returning to the brick-and-mortar classroom. Many wish to include the prospect of incorporating online teaching practices into the traditional classroom.

From a behaviorist point of view, there are also obvious benefits for the second language learner. Although most of today's educational ideology focuses on critical thinking and sways away from rote memorization, a certain amount of memorization and the behavioral outcome is necessary before applying the new language. That being the case, behaviorism is a critical theory as it applies to English language learners. Behavioristic-oriented instruction for computer and online learning must provide learners with the necessary opportunities to gain experience and demonstrate the expected behaviors preset by teacher objectives. Lessons and drills in words, idioms, communication language, etc., are essential in building vocabulary (Johnson & Aragon, 2003). Although second language students and teachers may be reluctant to try something new, the requirement of remote online learning in place of traditional classroom learning during the COVID-19 pandemic created an atmosphere for teachers to learn the benefits of internet courses with their students for those learning a second language.

### **Related Literature**

The following sections review existing literature about online learning. The goal of this section is to link this existing knowledge to the current study on the transition of ESOL teachers to the online learning platform. This review of literature will explore the challenges of online learning, strategies for online learning, as well as strategies to enhance virtual classrooms.

### **Challenges to Online Learning**

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has created a tremendous opportunity for traditional educators to move into a strategic and learning-driven paradigm primarily based on learning and teaching. Educators are at the forefront of analyzing the COVID-19 pandemic

impact because of the influence that it has had on teaching and learning. The ideological focus area in the possibilities for becoming better learners incorporates the need of secondary English students. This means being highly connective, interactive, and rising to the challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic (Huang et al., 2019). This also means that there has been a focus on introducing learning as a connection between cognitive and qualitative approaches.

Technology has always been a fundamental opportunity value, especially when understanding and developing better learning opportunities. One of the most important ways that have been advantageous for English secondary learners in the online environment is based on course management systems, the possibilities for better technology implementation, and streaming videos and audio text (Holland, 2018). This means an influence was associated with how English learners have incorporated technology as part of their learning parameters. However, another critical concept is creating a higher level of influence in moving away from the institution and long-term objective Learning patterns. Individuals have used technology in the online learning platform by implementing a course management system and highly effective video chats (Huang et al., 2019). These are important for creating a higher level of value in terms of incorporation and how to address the needs and specific requirements of students as they continue to move forward. These are some of the most critical focus areas, especially when understanding the streaming value and incorporation of long-term directive practice. The ideological balance and the need for individuals to think about the systems as part of this long-term objective quality for institutional, qualitative, and applied value applies where the focus and the impact of technology have been in terms of looking at learning and creating a delicate balance between technological and systematic improvement (Hudson, 2021).

Challenges also exist when teaching in the online environment; the most important is that

many teachers attempt to use the same teaching strategies used in the brick-and-mortar classroom rather than adjusting to remote, online teaching (Lawes, 2021). One of the most important disadvantages and challenges is a lower quality of communication and development. Qualitative communication is vital for understanding and establishing the expectations for learning strategy. It is also part of institutionalizing what will create a positive relationship between educators in the non-traditional learning environment and the transitioning process. There is also a higher demand for self-discipline and a lack of practice, making learning strategy a negative response. The ideological needs and disadvantages are often based on eight lack of cultural learning parameters. Fundamentally, investing in technology is one of the critical areas of focus regarding how organizations can impact and create better advantages. A lack of technological aptitude and adaptation is one of the primary focus areas, especially for large-scale movements in migration into the online platform. This means that there was a lack of focus in terms of what will institutionalize this area and, at the same time, how individuals will become capable of overcoming these areas by understanding the processes of better engagement in learning style (Huang et al., 2019).

Several essential focus areas, especially within the learning style, are based on the online environment's strategies. Fundamentally, success cannot simply be based on the opportunities to interact and develop a better plan within learning styles and learning environments. Instead, it is about becoming interpretive regarding the influence between learning, online teaching, course development, and the expectation for better quantifiable development systems (Lotherington, 2020). To define success in the learning environment, some of the most critical areas of focus that can still be found are based on these implementation strategies in terms of subjective learning arrangements. Some of the vital areas of focus are how technology can help influence

learning style and become extraordinarily interpreted in terms of the policies and engagement of these systems. The physical learning environment is an essential component in terms of the systems. However, with the transition back into the online learning environment because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the way to introduce these opportunities is not always influential or value-driven (Leendert, 2020). It is about understanding the relationship learning style has on learning outcomes and how various comprehensive and functional relationships can measure success. Physical learning environments influence understanding the subject realities of learning objects and long-term goals. However, the relationship must be connected to how these implementation and functional strategies can help better cognitive development, especially as it is interpreted within the course and relationship outcomes (Lotherington, 2020). Ideally, some of the most important focus areas must also be based on course design. Course design is critical for interpreting these ideas while understanding the physical learning environment, incredibly subjective, and cognitive relationship strategies.

### **Strategies for Online Learning**

Failure in the online learning environment is often a strategic and challenging area focus because ESL learners' traditional online learning platform has always been based on a face-to-face educational strategy (Makoelle et al., 2019). However, some key focus areas regarding why these strategies are found are the fact that there was a failure to invest time and a lack of efficiency in terms of the significant resources found in academic development. Frequently, being able to do this is problematic when looking at these specific strategies. It also means that there was a lack of fundamental appeal between how the systems are incorporated in what type of personal information can allow online platforms to become an effective way for learning (Makoelle et al., 2019) required materials, losing motivation, and not being able to think about

the possibilities of better support resources contribute to the lack of awareness and effectiveness within the online learning environment (Ma et al., 2018). Therefore, it also questions the strategies for better learning outcomes, especially within students' cognitive capabilities and English as a second language teaching philosophy. Ideally, some of the most critical focus areas in this type of comprehension are based on how these systems are incorporated, especially when managing technical services and the importance of learning (Madden, 2020). Some of the most influential theories within learning education are based on the behavioral theory of online learning.

The learning parameters of the 2020-2021 school year have been challenging for teachers, students, parents, and administrators alike due to the restrictions necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Becoming successful within these parameters has been extremely important. It is also vital to ensure that new methods and strategies adopted by teachers and new formats that bring success to students are not thrown entirely out upon returning to the traditional classroom. The best possible outcome lies in blending traditional classroom teaching practices with the best online ones. This study will demonstrate this by identifying the positive aspects of both teaching environments and successful strategies in each domain. Connecting teacher reactions to questions concerning this issue with prior research on the positive aspects of online and blended learning will bring us closer to a curriculum for ESL courses that includes the best of both worlds in terms of language acquisition for students and the need and expectations for individuals to become successful within their learning parameters. The systems are essential for using technology to improve learning strategy and become aware of how to think about implementing better technology (McLaren, 2018). Technology should be used to an end and, at the same time for being able to be included in an impulsive functional learning series (Robinson,

2020). These systems are essential for thinking about the processes and implications of learning to implement synchronous tools together. This type of synchronization is vital for future learning strategies and thinking about the policies that will continue to become part of the learning approach (McLelland, 2021). The ideological balances found within long-time learning are based on the implementation of success, the transition, and the ultimate strategies that may be applied. Learning strategic development and the qualities that are there also influence learning capabilities. This means thinking about the dramatic transition back into face-to-face learning and the transactions that must be institutional for a better qualitative approach (Sabitzer et al., 2019).

The main strategies that have been influential in terms of learning capabilities and development are being able to institute technology, reconceptualize face-to-face teaching material for the online environment, and think closely about the expectations of the systems in a more dramatic and qualitative practice. These opportunities have and will consistently become part of looking at the dramatic appeal for individuals in the learning strategy. Another important concept that should be considered as a strategy is to be present in almost every way possible within the learning. This means there was a focus on isolating how individuals can communicate closely with student development and think as active partners within the learning strategy (Schaller et al., 2021). By having this type of practice and thinking about the reflection of these capabilities, there was an opportunity to seize the pavement for future and formal qualitative development (Schaller et al., 2021). Ideally, through this interaction between learning and face-to-face technology, some key areas have historically allowed individuals to become preceptors of the learning environment. Seizing this type of opportunity is a process of implementing the strategy itself and part of looking at this system's long-term and short-term impacts. There is also

a residual that can be implemented within learning capabilities, and these will often become part of the strategy that allows individuals to become dynamic solution-makers (Schaller et al., 2021). These are part of becoming a quantifiable process of evolving systematic development, process improvement, and the institution that will allow individuals to think closely about evolving learning quality (Seifried et al., 2021).

The long-term impact of teaching philosophy and the transition to the practice that must be found within the learning primer is based on thinking about the transaction's policies for future development. In other words, it is about becoming aware of how individuals can communicate effectively and the policy and encouragement for better cognitive development in the learning parameter (Tjabane, 2021). Ideally, the most critical focus areas, especially within the systems and application of evolving learning strategies, are thinking about the future. This means thinking about how individuals can communicate effectively and how long-term objective systems can become increasingly important for learning better techniques. Ideally, some of the most critical focus areas, especially when understanding the resistance to learning strategies in the online environment, apply them to a more cognitive approach. This means looking at how students can learn effectively, the resistance to learning development, and how these opportunities often distract policy improvement. Ideally, one of the most critical areas of focus that has and will continue to become an essential outcome for individuals is how resistance is formed (Tolwinska, 2019). Resistant development, cognitive capabilities, and opportunities to become aware of the systems have been influential. They are part of becoming aware of how individuals can effectively think about the future of the system and the institutional processes that will create better improvement. The ideological difference between individual design systems and the policies that have historically not allowed for better cognitive development

means a lack of precept and perceptive design (Tshuma, 2020). Ideally, these systems are essential for the future of personal information and how to think effectively about the long-term effects of learning strategy.

The short-term quantifiable value from the movement towards the non-traditional learning environment and the online practice means that there is a capability for understanding how many of the systems are implemented together (Fabrizz, 2021). The learning parameters of the 2020-2021 school year have been challenging for teachers, students, parents, and administrators alike due to the restrictions necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic (Huck, 2021). Becoming successful within these parameters has been extremely important. It is also vital to ensure that new methods and strategies adopted by teachers and new formats that bring success to students are not thrown entirely out upon returning to the traditional classroom. The best possible outcome lies in blending traditional classroom teaching practices with the best online ones. This study will demonstrate this by identifying the positive aspects of both teaching environments and successful strategies in each domain. Connecting teacher reactions to questions concerning this issue with prior research on the positive aspects of online and blended learning will bring us closer to a curriculum for ESL courses that includes the best of both worlds in terms of language acquisition for students and the need and expectations for individuals to become successful within their learning parameters (Huck, 2021).

Some of the most influential theories found within learning education are based on the transition of theory for online learning (Appana, 2008). One of the most important ones is becoming open for instruction in English secondary learning teachers as a new field of influence for remote teaching solutions. The school year has been extraordinarily impactful in providing technical and information support and having a more institutional departmental focus on

individuals' needs and expectations to succeed within their learning parameters. According to a 2008 study for the *International Journal of E-Learning*, teaching modes that make use of video, audio, and the internet. There are potential benefits to investing in online learning (Diaz-Infante et al., 2022). Examples include expanded access, enhanced learning quality, improved training of students for a knowledge-based society, lifelong learning prospects, and profit-making.

However, limitations are also evident in this popular learning environment. (Appana, 2008).

Research has also demonstrated that computers have accelerated the rate of language acquisition for k-12 students in the United States. In addition, ESL teachers have broadened their toolbox of strategies and the innovative contributions technology can make in helping students successfully learn a new language (Ushida, 2003). Based on the learning needs of ESL students, many of these benefits are particularly important.

Schlossberg's transition theory helps people cope with life changes and difficulties by developing a systematic structure to better understand the steps and direction needed to cope with expected and non-expected life events (Tonseth, 2018). A lot changed during the 2020-21 pandemic years, including how education was offered. Most activities paused by the coronavirus pandemic were regular schooling and the structures of jobs (Kaden, 2020). For students, lectures and in-person classes stopped as students were forced home. Therefore, schools shifted their learning platform from a classroom teacher position to online learning. For many students and teachers, this meant changing the overall psychological perception of knowledge and adapting to a new learning system using Schlossberg's theory.

The COVID-19 pandemic was an unanticipated life transition that disrupted education normalcy among students and teachers. Schlossberg's theory enables us to learn mechanisms and strategies to cope with shifts in life. COVID-19 was challenging to adapt to psychologically and

physically as this life-changing event affected students and teachers like no other previous event. Students were forced into a new online learning environment dissimilar to norms for the first time. Schlossberg's transition theory identifies the significant factors influencing people's ability to cope with a transition. Transitioning from classroom learning to undertaking a new online learning environment was unanticipated. The research shows that using Schlossberg's factors like situation, self, support, and strategies helped many students and teachers cope with these events (Powers, 2010).

The long-term impact of teaching philosophy and the transition to the practice that must be found within the learning primer is based on thinking about the transaction's policies for future development. In other words, it is about becoming aware of how individuals can communicate effectively and the policy and encouragement for better cognitive development in the learning parameter (Tjabane, 2021). Ideally, the most critical focus areas, especially within the systems and application of evolving learning strategies, are thinking about the future. This means thinking about how individuals can communicate effectively and how long-term objective plans can become increasingly important for learning better techniques. Ideally, some of the most critical focus areas, especially when understanding the resistance to learning strategies in the online environment, apply them to a more cognitive approach. This means looking at how students can learn effectively, the resistance to learning development, and how these opportunities often distract policy improvement. Ideally, one of the significant areas of focus that has and will continue to become an essential outcome for individuals is how resistance is formed (Tolwinska, 2019).

Resistant development, cognitive capabilities, and opportunities to become aware of the systems have been influential. They are part of becoming aware of how individuals can

effectively think about the future of the system and the institutional processes that will create better improvement. The ideological difference between individual design systems and the policies that have historically not allowed for better cognitive development means a lack of precept and perceptive design (Tshuma, 2020). Ideally, these systems are essential for the future of personal information and how to think effectively about the long-term effects of learning strategy.

The short-term quantifiable value from the movement towards the non-traditional learning environment and the online practice means that there is a capability for understanding how many of the systems are implemented together (Fabrizz, 2021). Ideally, the most important short-term transaction in the process is that there may not be any cooperation between long-term subjective value in the strategy for technology as a way of moving forward into the future. This shows how individuals can think about long-term learning strategies in the processes that have historically created better approaches, which means that the long-term capabilities may overshadow the short-term gain (Persky & Robinson, 2017). However, long-term capabilities are essential for the future of organizational development and how to think about the emotional need of students, especially within the educational environment (Moldoveanu & Narayandas, 2021). Education development, qualitative approach systems, and the possibilities for thinking about these policies in the future mean understanding the personal information offered (Suter, 2012). It also means thinking about the feasibility of these systems, especially when trying to understand the correlation between value, expectation, and the lateral support that may be there (Suter, 2012). These are crucial elements that help improve short-term development while increasing the long-term capabilities of students moving forward into transitioning back across the learning strategy.

The recent pandemic of COVID-19 has closed schools across the continent and sent teachers and staff home to work remotely. By April 2020, it was evident that this disruption would not be short, threatening the current school year and likely affecting the start in September and beyond. Therefore, COVID-19 significantly influenced virtual classrooms. The virtual classroom is online learning that enables live teaching and collaboration between teachers and students (Racheva, 2018). The most conventional tools in a virtual classroom include video conferencing, online whiteboards, instant messaging, and breakout rooms. Instead of viewing the situation as an obstacle to learning, teachers should view virtual classrooms as an opportunity to gain experience. Thus, in-person learning can utilize the many advantages of combined methodologies (Bernard et al., 2014; Means et al., 2013).

Students generally found that most online class experiences were unengaging. The same survey indicated that more than a quarter of students question about returning to their current institution for the Fall 2020 term as they consider their recent emergency remote. The crucial to improving things moving forward is to use learning management systems (LMSs) more efficiently alongside virtual classrooms, which enhances learning opportunities, including activities that increase participation and motivation (Racheva, 2018). The pedagogical success of a virtual classroom with post- secondary students can be enhanced by applying four approaches: straightforward and lean structure, digital storytelling, an enhanced community of learners, and open educational resources.

### **Strategies to Enhance Virtual Classrooms**

Activities connecting learners' interests with realistic experiences are the substance of learning (Kilpatrick, 1918). Digital storytelling is a pedagogical approach that engages students in the subconscious via intense learning (Smeda et al., 2014). The technique can integrate

instructional messages with learning activities to create engaging learning (Saritepeci, 2020; Smeda et al., 2014). This approach develops emotional interest and cognitive attention and reflects consistent and dependable knowledge transfer. Technology facilitates learning. A virtual classroom utilizing a clear and lean structure enhances interactions and knowledge experiences by reducing the cognitive load (Saritepeci, 2020; Smeda et al., 2014). As with traditional classroom teaching, in virtual sessions, the learning path needs to be communicated to assist learners in staying on task and managing time. An example of a Virtual Classroom Session Plan (developed by McMaster University's s Continuing Education - Educational Development Team) is included in the appendix. Focusing on small chunks of information when preparing teaching materials is essential because concise and organized content invites students to reexamine the material and find critical information. Instructional content is, therefore, more engaging when supported by audio and visual supports (Fenesi et al., 2014) of less than ten minutes (Slemmons et al., 2018).

Genuine engagement in virtual classrooms happens when each learner becomes invested. All students have unique skills, practices, and experiences that enrich the learning journey (Vigotsky, 1978). Project-based group work can be set up within a breakout room in most videoconferencing tools. Professors may need to demonstrate the use of these tools, but they are well within the learning curve of all postsecondary students. Additionally, these tools provide a platform for collaboration and community building in other areas (Deloitte Access Economics, 2017). While the four strategies described can serve as a basis for those unfamiliar with virtual classrooms, they are not the only possibilities. The piloting and the evaluation of the many virtual strategies postsecondary school professors can use are strongly recommended and can undoubtedly lead to opportunities for further research. Developing communicative competence is

an all-encompassing learning objective and is recognized as a vital element of effective teaching and second language learning (Council of Europe, 2001). However, poor communication and interaction, excessive lectures, and somewhat fatiguing test-based teaching methods still repress student communicative competence. With years of training, many English as a foreign language (EFL) learners find it challenging to master English oral skills, and many are hesitant when speaking English aloud.

Flipped learning is a substitute approach that mixes technology into language learning and contributes to student learning (Chen Hsieh, et al 2016; Hung, 2015; McLaughlin et al., 2014; Overmyer, 2012). For example, in a traditional class, new knowledge is introduced via lecture, and students prepare using the knowledge at home via homework. Flipped learning reverses this paradigm. Flipped learning is an educational technique that consists of two essential components: (1) computer technologies and (2) interactive learning activities (Bishop and Verleger, 2013). Information is introduced before class using technology which allows more advanced learning activities in the classroom. Thus, students have more chances to participate in profound, appealing activities that augment learning (Boucher, et al., 2013).

Studies prove that flipped learning boosts student learning (Chen et al., 2016; Deslauriers & Wieman, 2011; Hung, 2015; McLaughlin et al., 2014; Sahin, Cavlazoglu & Zeytuncu, 2015), student engagement (Chen, et al., 2016; Jamaluddin & Osman, 2014), and generates improved learning outcomes (Chen, Hsieh, Wu, & Marek, 2016; Baepler, et al., 2014; Moravec, et al., 2010). In addition, flipped learning cultivates student autonomy. It provokes awareness (Yang, 2013) by allowing students to "proceed at their own pace, assess their learning gains, by working at a pace that suits their needs" (McLaughlin et al., 2013). Also, flipped instruction provides independent supportive learning settings that adopt students' different perspectives, thoughts, and

supports (Reeve, 2009). Thus, the core of flipped learning is to deliver a learning community that develops knowledge through formative learning experiences, peer interaction, and collaboration. An interactive online learning community permits students to develop strong relationships with others (Murdock & Williams, 2011), providing them with occasions to meet regularly for collaborative creation and enhanced knowledge on specific topics. The literature suggests that online learning communities promote students' sharing and construction of knowledge (Ke & Hoadley, 2009). Online learning also positively enhances critical thinking, active learning, and the classroom, compared to traditional classrooms (Gazi, 2009).

The Community of Inquiry (CoI) framework is a widely used model which examines and evaluates specific learning communities (Garrison, Cleveland-Innes, & Fung, 2010). CoI focuses on deliberate community development emphasizing instructional conversations that lead to epistemological engagement (Shea & Bidjerano, 2010). CoI includes three interdependent components that enable meaningful online learning: teaching, social, and cognitive presence. The teaching component refers to the structured sequencing of learning activities while facilitating learning (Koh, Herring, & Hew, 2010). It also consists of design, direction, and support for activities that enhance the learning experience (Rubin, Fernandes, & Avgerinou, 2013). The social component effectively supports online learning social and interpersonal communication (Lowenthal & Dunlap, 2010). Including responses and expression, transparent communication, and cohesive replies (Díaz, Swan, Ice, & Kopczynski, 2010; Rubin, Fernandes, & Avgerinou, 2013). The cognitive component is developing critical thinking skills (Scherer Bassani, 2011), engaging with course concepts, creating meaning out of ideas, designing and building competence via discussion, and reflecting and applying new definitions (Rubin et al., 2013). Finally, the cognitive component is based on constructivist learning, where students share related

skills via critical thinking to achieve a shared interpretation (Burgess, Slate, Rojas-LeBouef, & LaPrairie, 2010; Garrison et al., 2001; Yang, Qadir, Chen, & Miao, 2016). The research finds that most students thought that, compared with the traditional lecture-based instruction, which typically started with unidirectional and instructive lectures, the flipped instruction more effectively and efficiently enhanced oral performance.

The COVID-19 pandemic has clarified that English Learners (ELs) experience inequities in U.S. schools. Many of the nation's 5 million ESL students attend low-income, under-resourced schools, which often struggle—despite legal requirements—to provide high-quality instruction and necessary academic support. The forced remote learning in March 2020, caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, resulted in a vastly uneven response by states and educational institutions, which resulted in the expansion of already significant achievement and opportunity gaps. Despite the immense efforts of educators to provide continuity of learning during the pandemic through remote learning, these endeavors fell short for many ESL students. A recent study shows that the most enrolled ESL students at many school systems were estimated to have less than half of the students logged in to online remote classes (Sayer & Braun, 2020). Among the most significant barriers to ESL participation were: a lack of access to broadband internet and digital devices and the limited capacity to support home learning. These students also lack adequate remote learning resources and teacher training (Sayer & Braun, 2020).

Understanding the impact of COVID-19 on community colleges is crucial, as they enroll nearly half of all students of color attending public institutions. In addition, community colleges serve as an essential gateway to four-year colleges and universities. Community colleges are a crucial part of the postsecondary education system in the state of New York. In New York,

nearly half of all students attending a four-year institution formerly attended a community college (Bullman & Fairlie, 2022).

The impact of COVID-19 on community college registration is hypothetically uncertain when compared to the implications of the pandemic on four-year colleges. Community colleges transitioned to remote instruction, which reduced enrollment relative to their four-year college peers, given their emphasis on firsthand technical training in many vocational programs.

Additionally, community colleges serve different student populations, like ESL students (Sayer & Braun, 2020). Nationally, at the start of the pandemic, data disclose a decline of 10 percent in c two-year college enrollment from Fall 2019 to Fall 2020 (National Student Clearinghouse 2021) and a 12 percent decrease in initial public two-year enrollment for the 2020 high school cohort relative to the prior cohort (Howell et al. 2021). For comparison, four-year enrollment slightly increased in fall 2020 (0.2 percent), while primary enrollments declined by less than 3 percent for the 2020 high school cohort. More lately, however, public two-year and four-year college enrollment dropped by 3 percent from Fall 2020 to Fall 2021.

The effects of COVID-19 remote learning on academic outcomes, pass rates, and grades among community college students are also academically ambiguous (Sayer & Braun, 2020). It is possible that students struggled with online learning given the lack of structure, a requirement for more self-discipline, and other technological interruptions. On the other hand, teachers may perhaps have been more lenient in grading. The study results show that students were less distracted by social events, had limited job opportunities, the federal government provided COVID-19 monetary relief aid, and options for pass/no pass increased. As a result, outcomes, including GPAs, might have improved instead of worsened during the pandemic. However, empirical evidence is mixed—some students, including many ESL students, were more likely to

withdraw from classes (Aucejo et al., 2020). In contrast, although many students reported challenges with online learning at community colleges in New York, overall, among non-ESL students, GPAs were higher, and credits earned during the spring semester were unaffected (Rodríguez-Planas 2020, 2021).

A new virus was first detected at the end of 2019 and began to spread swiftly during the early months of 2020. On February 11, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) labeled the newly identified virus COVID-19. By March 11, COVID-19 has declared a pandemic (Doctors without Borders, n.d.). While some colleges quickly closed to protect teachers and students, others transitioned to remote teaching using numerous internet-based resources. The challenges associated with moving instruction to an online format forced many teachers and students to grapple with learning remotely along with additional problems such as how to stay healthy, manage lower incomes, and deal with shortages of basic supplies and food while managing mental and emotional health. In addition, March 2020 was filled with fear and panic in society. Although these challenges pervaded most educational situations for domestic students, research shows that ESL students' difficulties may intensify as they face unique linguistic and academic challenges (Robinson et. al., 2022). There are estimated to be one million ESL students in the U.S. at the onset of COVID-19.

Furthermore, many lower English proficiency students may have had trouble fully understanding what was occurring and may have labored to communicate their requirements or concerns. With the abrupt spread of COVID-19, this study wanted to understand the effects of the pandemic on ESL students and teachers as they continued to engage in the learning and teaching of ESL in the U.S. during COVID-19. Although many studies have examined several characteristics of stress and anxiety in a variety of ESL teaching and learning environments,

many of these analyses have focused on individual students (Halimi et al., 2019; Jayanth & Soundiraraj, 2016; Lin et al., 2019; Lumley et al., 2018; Shi, 2017).

A research study conducted in late 2020 (Hartshorn & Benjamin) used quantitative and qualitative methods to find the effects COVID-19 had on ESL students and teachers. Quantitative methods were used for scaled surveys and included variance and linear regression analysis. The qualitative data utilized a phenomenological approach. Phenomenology looks at the entire process and describes the phenomenon by delineating units of meaning and clustering units of meaning into subjects (Hycner, 1999). Lauer (1958) said the need to set aside bias to understand the observed phenomenon. In other words, researchers try to minimize their personal views, preconceptions, opinions, and preferences to understand the participants' assessments better (Rodríguez-Planas 2020, 2021). Delineating units of meaning involves isolating, extracting, or marking critical arguments or expressions that illustrate the phenomenon (Groenewald, 2004). In this study, data was placed in a spreadsheet looking for responses that identified essential phrases. Finally, units of meaning were clustered—delineation phase into themes (Hartshorn & Benjamin, 2020). For example, if one remembers saying, "there are many considerations that generate distractions." The other unit was "online classes are challenging to take from home with no distraction," the theme might be "confusion." Clustering involves innovative insight and sensible interpretation of the delineated units of meaning while maintaining limits of preconceptions. Researchers clustered the previously delineated units in two phases. First, researchers decided on 15 clustered themes for teachers and 17 for students; scrutiny of these clusters caused some to be combined, resulting in six salient themes for students and five for teachers (Hartshorn & Benjamin, 2020).

In this research study, ESL teachers replied to the following prompt: Please share the most problematic issue for you during the COVID-19 pandemic and why it is challenging. With only very few differences, the five themes identified by the data analysis were similar to those of the students, including family, social and mental health, student well-being, switch to online instruction, employment, and finances (Maison et al., 2021). However, physical health and schoolwork were not widespread in the responses. However, many teachers were anxious about bodily health, and a small number of student teachers were worried about schoolwork. In addition, teachers reported concerns for their students' well-being were among the most challenging things they dealt with.

Moreover, the study shows that teachers were worried about the educational well-being of their students while attempting to switch to online classes. Creating a positive learning experience with remote learning was a primary concern for teachers, as was ensuring ESL students progressed in English proficiency (Mendoza & Wu, 2022). For example, one teacher noted, "A lot is lost with online classes. They may be effective. They may function. They may be purposeful but do not replace live collaboration, language immersion, or social interaction, which are necessary for language acquisition." Teachers' concern over students' emotional or mental well-being centered around how self-isolation might affect them (Mendoza & Wu, 2022). The lack of face-to-face collaboration with classmates may adversely impact social and emotional health. One teacher noted concern that students were experiencing isolation and fear about COVID-19 because they were alone and far from their own country. These students showed signs of depression which affected their performance (Mendoza & Wu, 2022). Teachers were concerned about the physical health of their students. They worried that students might not

have food or might get sick. One teacher noted, "Mental, physical, and emotional health has taken a toll on the students" (Hartshorn & Benjamin, 2020).

In the responses, teachers expressed concern for their families as well. Some were anxious about elderly parents and family members that do not live locally. One admitted, "I am concerned about my family's health, especially my father, who needs surgery, and my grandparents." Moreover, one teacher described "concern with family members losing their jobs" (Hartshorn & Benjamin, 2020). Another spoke of family members, saying, "My largest concern has been to ensure everyone was on board with isolation" (Hartshorn & Benjamin, 2020). Others found it highly complicated to teach from home, especially since their children are at home rather than in school (Robinson et al., 2022). One teacher noted, "I guess the hardest thing has been helping my children get through this" (Hartshorn & Benjamin, 2020). Another responding teacher indicated, "For me, the most challenging is balancing time for my students and my family's online learning and work needs" while fretting about "emotional health" (Hartshorn & Benjamin, 2020).

Like students, the teachers found self-isolation challenging and felt a strong need to keep themselves mentally and socially healthy. One teacher admitted, "I miss people and, in reality, being with my students! The problem is that it is hard to sit in front of a computer all day, preparing for and teaching classes" (Hartshorn & Benjamin, 2020). Another admitted, "I miss socializing with friends and family. I do not see much of anyone anymore" (Hartshorn & Benjamin, 2020). Another teacher concluded, "In-person socialization is crucial. Not being able to go out and about with friends and family is tough" (Hartshorn & Benjamin, 2020). Although most teachers did not express difficulty with online teaching, several mentioned that the initial

transition was challenging. One noted, "the initial transfer to remote learning is by far the most difficult thing to achieving synchronous instruction" (Hartshorn & Benjamin, 2020).

Likewise, many teachers were worried about the students' transition. One teacher said the pandemic was challenging as it required "switching over to the whole thing online and relying on technology, despite the differences in student access"(Hartshorn & Benjamin, 2020). Another teacher reported, "Being able to transition to online teaching has been problematic. Online teaching brings new hurdles such as technological issues, facilitating interactive activities, and monitoring student participation" (Hartshorn & Benjamin, 2020). Initially, several teachers doubted their ability to teach online when classes first changed from face-to-face to remote. However, none mentioned that teaching remotely online was problematic when they responded to the survey six weeks after the transition. One teacher observed, "I was concerned about my ability to teach remotely, but thanks to many others who provided support, I did it!" (Hartshorn & Benjamin, 2020). The responses from teachers showed a common theme: learning to teach remotely, entirely online, at a rushed pace, was one of the most significant accomplishments of their teaching career thus far.

The results of this study show that the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic increased stress for students and teachers across an array of contexts (Maison et al., 2021). Though still relatively significant, the level of priority for teaching and learning decreased for practitioners and their students during the pandemic compared to before its onset (Robinson et al., 2022). However, one teacher who felt a keen responsibility to students reported a greater sense of priority precisely because of the effects of the pandemic on his students (Hartshorn & Benjamin, 2020). However, most teachers expressed a little reduced sense of importance due to the many other challenges they faced. On the other hand, 17 (11%) students reported that learning English

had taken on a more significant priority since the outset of the pandemic. Responses suggest that some students felt they had taken their opportunity to learn English in the U.S. for granted and were now attempting to be more diligent since the future was uncertain (Robinson et al., 2022). As a result, they might not be able to continue to study English in the U.S. Although many of the findings were similar for both the practitioners and the students, this was not true for the transition to online teaching and learning. On average, the negative effect of transitioning to online teaching and learning was nearly negligible for teachers, but it was perceived much more severely by students. Despite frustrations, some teachers perceived the technological resources allowing them to teach online as a benefit that helped them continue instruction (Robinson et al., 2022). However, many students and some teachers saw the online approach to teaching and learning as a hindrance that undermined student language development and created additional stress.

Other countries are not immune to the challenges faced by ESL students and teachers. For example, globally, the term Emergency Remote Teaching has been operationalized since 2020 as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic. China, the first country to experience the COVID-19 outbreak in January 2020, the government introduced the policy of suspending classes without stopping learning (Zhang et al., 2020). This policy aims to support the transition to online teaching by providing rich and high-quality teaching materials and resources. To improve the practice of ERT, the government implemented approaches such as integrating national resources and planning at the top-level, training teachers and enabling local authorities and schools to carry out online teaching in line with local conditions (Zhang et al., 2020). Under the guideline of this policy, most schools and universities have conducted ERT since the spring semester of 2020 in February, offering 24,000 online courses through 22 platforms (Sun et

al., 2020), with more than 100 million students registered in online courses (Wang, Zhao, 2020). Opting for distance learning during the pandemic allows time and location flexibility for teachers and students. However, this type of teaching differs from quality online education because teachers may not be adequately trained to teach online courses in addition to standard online courses. In typical online courses, interactions among students, learners, and teachers are the most critical features of technology-based learning (Edom et al., 2006; Kou et al., 2014). Other research studies have examined the potential impact of ERT on student academic achievement and the significant issues in implementing ERT. For example, a research study examined the pandemic's impact on the performance of Grade 12 students in Zambia (Sintema, 2020). The results suggest a lack of distance learning opportunities. Students had difficulty connecting and interacting with teachers or peers due to unstable or inadequate networks overload of instructional platforms caused by teacher inability to upload altered versions of instructional content that would lessen the burden on the networks and technology. Pace et al. (2020) offered suggestions for teachers. For example, teachers can improve student learning outcomes by building rapport with students by answering student questions promptly, providing immediate feedback, and engaging them in online discussions.

Similarly, Zayapragassarazan (2020) proposed flexible learning strategies to improve student engagement in times of crisis. They offered a learner-centered approach where flexible learning options are provided to students concerning higher education. Some suggestions for a smooth transition to online learning are based on observations of online classes during an ERT. Such as creating contingency plans in advance, breaking content into smaller sections, slowing down voice output to help students understand, and working with teaching assistants to help with activities.

## Summary

Despite the existing literature on the impact of ERT on students' academic performance and insights into online learning, there are few empirical studies examining ESL students' and teachers' experiences at community colleges in the United States during the COVID-19 pandemic. English is an introductory course in many countries globally. The impact COVID-19 had on English learners in the world and the United States shows the vital role ESL teachers have when overcoming the challenging working conditions caused by the forced closure of schools. Personal challenges created havoc for teachers as they scrambled to meet the needs of their families and students. Technology limitations challenged the use of new tools that required continuous adjustment. The need to develop and use a teacher-centered approach online vs. a traditional student-centered approach was a pedagogical challenge that needed more time to solve than was available.

The residual for the learning environment, especially concerning the capacity and influences of learning capability, is based on the long-term strategy for educational stations. English secondary learning teachers have been at the forefront of developing this institutional capacity and have been increasingly important, especially when understanding the dramatic move towards new learning policies. Ideally, teachers have been influential in addressing resistance found within the learning environment and how to think about the clear connection between quality, expectation, and the immediate need for learning strategy. Although various associations may be offered to individuals, the most important one is based on understanding the quality, the expectations, and the viable systems that have historically been at the forefront of understanding personal change. Teachers must also consider isolating learning strategies that can ultimately influence long-term subjective needs. Ideally, as individuals continue to grow and

there is a focus on the isolation between these systems, it is possible that it must be institutional for future and connective design. Again, these systems have been historically isolating the practices of learning strategy while moving into a new and changing dynamic and learning process. Another unique system found within the learning strategy is this movement towards a new and hybrid learning method. Frequently, learning technique is vital in looking at the responsibility between loading approaches. However, it is also part of becoming cognitive of the relationship between the systems and becoming aware of how these possibilities influence the long-term production of learning styles. Therefore, this has allowed for a new and hybrid approach to learning strategy that has not only been important in looking at the strategic balance offered. It is also part of understanding how these systems are incorporated by looking at the policies, arrangements, and functional relationships provided. Ideally, some of the most critical systems have and will continue to allow individuals to become aware of these relationships by understanding the references for connection, development, and the changes offered within the learning strategy.

Assessment plays a vital role in language learning. It is a teacher's responsibility to know all aspects of evaluation as it can be beneficial and harmful simultaneously for students. Therefore, knowing what to assess and mastering assessment tools for a specific purpose is essential for ESL teachers. The current study is based on classroom-based assessment because it deals with all instructing and guidance processes. The present study investigates CBA's effectiveness in improving teaching strategies and techniques from teachers' perspectives. The study is designed on a quantitative method and follows an experimental research design. The study's findings showed that if Classroom-based assessment is applied in educational institutes and proper training in assessment techniques is provided to the teacher, it can be the most

practical assessment for both teachers and students. It will assess not only students' performance and progress but also the success of teachers, teaching strategies, and methods, contributing to the betterment of the educational system.

Transitioning back into the learning environment does not necessarily mean moving away from the need for transition theory or having a one size fits all approach. Instead, it is about becoming aware of the precepts that have continuously been foundational players and learning strategies. COVID-19 has disrupted education for all stakeholders. Classes once held in brick-and-mortar classrooms have now moved to virtual environments. When we return to physical classrooms, we should not simply return to the teaching and learning practices we used before the pandemic. Instead, in our post- pandemic world, postsecondary school instructors ' tool kits should include added resources and strategies. Professional development should be sustained so teachers will be better prepared for teaching in virtual classrooms in the case of future disruptions.

The researchers offer the following practice recommendations based on the literature review, findings, and subsequent discussions of several studies.

- Flipped learning could be successfully applied to language teaching and learning in an EFL context. Furthermore, such an instructional design allowed student motivation and engagement in learning activities, thus assisting English teaching and enhancing learning outcomes.
- The mobile-assisted online learning community using LINE adopted in this literature review is an appropriate instructional design, as it provides an authentic setting for genuine interaction among students. The teaching, social, and cognitive presence could be significantly

enhanced as students engage in language exchanges with their peers in the online learning community.

- Students' responsibility for performing the flipped learning activities outside of class is essential. To ensure students complete required learning tasks before instructional meetings, teachers must monitor students' progress throughout the process.

It is hoped that the results of the online learning community yielded in several studies open the way for further research and integration of innovative instructional designs in an EFL setting.

For example, future studies might focus on how learners of different proficiency levels benefit from an online learning community or flipped instruction or scrutinize the dynamic interaction in an online learning community.

## **CHAPTER THREE: METHODS**

### **Overview**

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study is to describe the experiences of ESL teachers who transitioned from remote learning back to the traditional classroom setting post-Covid at community colleges in upstate New York. This chapter thoroughly discusses the research design, research questions, setting, participants, procedures, the role of the researcher, data collection methods, and the data analysis measures. The chapter concludes with a discussion of this research study's trustworthiness and ethical considerations, followed by an overall chapter summary. The focus will be on understanding how teachers of English as a second language can adapt from the distance learning setting to a more traditional face-to-face classroom. The aim is to understand how teachers of English as a second language are impacted by student success while using online teaching methods when teaching remote classes during the COVID-19 pandemic and how to best adapt to the traditional courses when in-person classes resume.

### **Research Design**

This study uses qualitative research to study and understand the motivations and behaviors of ESL teachers when transitioning from remote learning to the traditional classroom. Qualitative research is appropriate for this study since it is based on non-numerical data and uses symbols, meanings, and characterizations instead (Patton, 2005). The study required more exploratory research rather than causation findings. Since this study focuses on human activities, variables will never remain constant and cannot be controlled. Qualitative research also enables the research questions to be answered within a larger social setting while isolated from social processes. A qualitative design is applicable because it begins with expectations and utilizes a specific procedure to study research problems (Creswell & Poth, 2018) to understand how

individuals or groups construct meaning (Patton, 2015).

The research design is a phenomenological study, which means the researcher wishes to know the participants' experiences on the subject of the lived experiences of ELS teachers when transitioning from remote learning back to the traditional classroom post-Covid. In other words, phenomenological research is a qualitative research approach that seeks to understand and describe the universal essence of a phenomenon (Emiliussen et al., 2021). The approach investigates the everyday experiences of human beings while suspending the researchers' preconceived assumptions about the phenomenon. A phenomenological design is most appropriate for this study because it aims to explore how individuals experience what they experience concerning a specific common phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). The phenomenological study design enables participants to provide precise explanations of real-world experiences about the study's topic. Thus, phenomenology helps the researcher to understand the meaning of the ESL teacher's lived experience.

Transcendental phenomenology works well for this study as this methodology provides logical, systematic, and coherent design elements that lead to an essential description of the experience. Transcendental phenomenology's benefit is its unbiased description of raw data (Behnke, 2009). Having unbiased data means that the research design will be objective, leading to logical decisions. Transcendental phenomenology helps clarify assumptions upon which our understandings are based or grounded because it is a rigorous design type. Rather than interpreting experiences using preconceived notions and explanations, transcendental phenomenology shifts the focus to the participants' experiences. Hence this is important as it tends to focus on the participant's beliefs and experiences rather than the researcher's experiences. Finally, it allows findings to emerge rather than being imposed by an investigator.

The phenomenological provides a detailed and complete description of human experiences and meanings. Moreover, transcendental phenomenology seeks to explore the essence and meaning of a phenomenon by combining textural and structural narratives to create a complete account of the lived experience of the given phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994).

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions will guide the current study based on collecting empirical information and evidence relevant to the field of study. There will also be a focus on how teachers of English as a second language can return from the distance learning environment to face-to-face and traditional instruction (Goldstein, 2021). The focus is not only based on how teachers have on avoiding the same teaching methodologies that they applied within the online paradigm but also on the return to the traditional classroom and the impact it has on the reflection, urgency, and opportunities to provide qualitative instruction (Harris et al., 2018). These concepts are essential for understanding the quality of instructional development and the functional, representative, and qualitative process opportunities that may be there (Lumani, 2019).

#### **Central Research Question**

What are the lived experiences of ESL instructors when transitioning from remote learning back to the traditional classroom post-Covid?

#### **Sub-Question One**

What teaching methodologies applied within the online paradigm have been most effective?

#### **Sub-Question Two**

What challenges did ESL teachers encounter when transitioning from remote learning to traditional learning?

### **Sub-Question Three**

How do the participants describe their overall experiences teaching online utilizing a flipped learning modality?

### **Setting and Participants**

There are no significant conditions for selecting potential participants or sites in a given study; however, all participants in this study must experience the same phenomenon (Moustakas 1994). Creswell and Poth (2018) explain that the site selection must relate directly to the selected research design. It is essential to use participants from different colleges in New York to establish that all participants experienced the phenomenon of transitioning back into the classroom similarly.

### **Setting**

The location sites for the study are community colleges in New York. The leadership structure for these types of institutions is comprised of a senior administrator or president, vice presidents for student affairs, college relations, academic affairs, communications, administration and finance, and admissions, financial aid, and enrollment; chief of staff, deans, and directors of subsidiary departments, including the academic departments, interdisciplinary studies, engineering, advising, health professions, information technology services, athletics, and the library. These various sites are chosen for this study because most are committed to integrating inclusive excellence into all aspects of the curriculum, including ESL courses.

### **Participants**

The participants within the focus of this research will be ten to fifteen individuals who

are within the education of English as a second language learning concept (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Overall, these participants' demographic information will be male and female with varying ethnicities and ages represented. Participants have experienced remote learning during the Covid-19 pandemic. The sample size is based on convenience; the decision is supported by an interactive approach and system with the entire community group of teachers. Overall, these principles and practices have become increasingly important, especially regarding the connection between the procedures and highlighting them in a contemporary pandemic environment. All participants must experience the phenomenon and understand the meaning since this phenomenological study explores the descriptions of how participants experience transitioning back into the classroom after teaching remotely during the Covid-19 pandemic (Moustakas, 1994).

### **Researcher Positionality**

I am the human instrument within the study. The goal of this research will be gathering data and ensuring that there is a non-biased assumption reference to the experiences of individuals themselves. Ultimately, the idea is not to fit into a new path but rather to understand this standard's critical complex and ideological ideas. The systems are increasingly important for understanding the relevance between the procedures, recognizing these systems, and having a proper appeal between how these policies can be implemented. Overall, this consideration is extraordinarily important because it also considers the overarching elements associated with direct and functional impairment. Considering the chosen methodology and application, the human element has a tremendous impact on understanding and finding appropriate value within the systems. These are important for looking at the implications in their analysis and the conduct of the data that is being offered. These systems help impact the direction of the research process

and the data allocation method.

### **Interpretive Framework**

Previous studies and opportunities to investigate the best online learning strategies that can transition back into the brick-and-mortar ESL courses lend way to an inclusive pedagogy that can be expanded upon. As individuals continue to thrive within the online learning environment, unexpected challenges exist (Rheume et al., 2018). Expanding upon these ideas and becoming aware of the implementation strategy for improving pedagogy can achieve the best of both learning formats in increasing awareness and understanding of successful teaching strategies for online education and the relationship to the traditional classroom that could be proposed to individuals as they continue to move forward educationally. Significant areas of focus to be implemented across the study include looking at the philosophy of the study itself. Social constructivism is the interpretive framework of this study. The purpose of exploration in social constructivism is to concentrate on participants' views of a specific phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Within the lens of this study, I will seek to describe the experiences of ESL teachers transitioning from remote to face-to-face learning.

Withing the paradigm of social constructivism, the second language student often faces social problems that are barriers to becoming part of the school community and receiving the best education. During the period of acquiring fluency in the English language, they might be the target of stereotyping and discrimination, leading to social isolation. Being in a new country and adapting to cultural differences as encountering people who do not understand their culture is a difficult transition. In addition, there is the possibility of having unqualified teachers and limited learning environments, making it imperative that they figure out how to learn without the assistance of a classroom teacher (Thomas et al., 2020). I believe all students have the right to

and deserve a place to learn. As an educator, my goal is to provide second-language students with the most success possible through the best use of teaching strategies and formats

### **Philosophical Assumptions**

The philosophical assumptions can confuse emerging scholars, but they need not be. Unlike research paradigms or interpretive frameworks, philosophical assumptions tend to be consistent throughout a scholar's life because of these center on values and belief systems within individuals. Articulating your positionality on the philosophical assumptions aids the reader in understanding the lens through which you view the world and, as such, how you approach your research. This section will address three philosophical assumptions: *ontological*, *epistemological*, and *axiological*.

#### ***Ontological Assumption***

Qualitative researchers understand the importance of beliefs and theories that inform their work and actively write about them in their research. Creswell and Poth (2016) describe these assumptions and frame them into interpretive frameworks so we can understand their significance to our research. My ontological assumption is that I believe that interpretive frameworks can be considered a basic set of beliefs that guide action. I recognize that teaching was vastly different during the COVID-19 pandemic, but I also believe that changes to curriculum and teaching methods may improve future teaching practices. Moustakas (1994) explains that the researcher must cluster multiple perspectives into themes that later are used to create textural descriptions of the given phenomenon.

#### ***Epistemological Assumption***

The research will focus on specific expectations and impacts of learning and teaching in the foundations that would be fine between the two. Overall, understanding these expectations

and becoming aware of the impact of the relationships not only the relevancy of the systems but also the quality and the opportunities offered amongst the research perimeters. My epistemological assumption understands that relationship-building between researcher and participant promotes an understanding of their reality. As a researcher, I aim to get as close as possible to the studied participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Subjective evidence is assembled based on personal views from research conducted in the field. My research uses a social constructivism approach better to understand the role of ESL teachers and students. The research looks to develop multiple meanings while seeking complex viewpoints.

### ***Axiological Assumption***

The researcher's values to the study are their axiological assumptions (Creswell & Poth, 2018). It is crucial that the values and biases of the researcher, as well as the role they play in the collection of data and its analysis, are evident (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I will bracket my presumptions and set aside any biased knowledge about the phenomenon in order to effectively describe individual participants' experiences (Moustakas, 1994). The axiological assumption here is that objectivity is good, and subjectivity is bad. In contrast, the researcher reports their values and biases they bring to the study as well as the value-laden nature of data they gather in qualitative research (Creswell & Poth, 2018). When undertaking this qualitative study, the researcher agrees that there exist underlying philosophical assumptions that may shape the direction of the research. In ontological research multiple realities are explored and multiple forms of evidence from different perspectives and experiences are embraced. In axiological studies researchers make their values known and actively report those values and biases as well as the value laden nature of information gathered from the data.

### **Researcher's Role**

In this study, my role is as the human instrument. While I do not have any authority over the participants, nor have any affiliation with the sites of the study, I do work as an instructor and understand the importance of bracketing my own experiences, bias, and assumptions. I was an educator during the Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, I must ensure that there is a non-biased assumption reference to the experiences of individuals themselves. Considering the chosen methodology and application, the human element has a tremendous impact on understanding and finding appropriate value within the systems. These are important for looking at the implications in their analysis and the conduct of the data being offered. These systems help impact the direction of the research process and the data allocation method. Bias is defined as any tendency which prevents unprejudiced consideration of a question. In research, bias occurs when a systematic error is introduced into sampling or testing by selecting or encouraging one outcome or answer over others (Simundić, 2013). Bias can occur at any phase of research, including study design or data collection, as well as in the process of data analysis and publication.

### **Procedures**

The following section discusses the permissions needed to secure Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval as well as recruiting participants. Qualitative recruiting is the process of finding, screening, and scheduling suitable candidates to participate in qualitative market research studies. Adequate participant recruitment is critical for any qualitative research project.

### **Permissions**

Before any data is collected, a completed IRB review will be obtained before studying human subjects (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Once I obtain IRB approval at Liberty University (Appendix A), I will begin to recruit my participants for the current study.

### **Recruitment Plan**

The research participants will be based on a survey of ten to fifteen individuals in the education of English as a second language learning concept. The site for the research is community colleges located in New York. The study will use purposeful sampling as it is appropriate for identifying and selecting information cases related to a phenomenon of interest such as this. Qualitative research typically uses nonprobability purposeful sampling approaches. The sampling size will be based on convenience in the decision is supported by having an interactive approach and system with the entire community group of teachers. The participants for this research will be selected through purposeful criterion sampling due to their experiences of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). Participants will be ESL teachers who had to teach remotely during the Covid-19 pandemic. I will send out informed consent forms (Appendix B) to those ESL teachers who are selected to participate in the study. It intends that human participants can enter research freely (voluntarily) with complete information about what it means to participate and that they offer consent before entering the study. Consent should be attained before the participant joins the investigation, and there must be no undue influence on participants to comply (Patton, 2015).

### **Data Collection Plan**

The qualitative data collected from the recorded interviews will be transcribed and analyzed. Then, using deductive analysis, predetermined categories of the information the study focuses on will be used to analyze trends and themes to help determine any connections. Information gathered will reveal the experiences that ESL teachers who transitioned from remote learning back to the traditional classroom setting post-COVID at colleges in New York. The current study will use a transcendental phenomenological approach to examine ESL teachers' experience transitioning from remote learning back into the traditional classroom. Patton (2015)

found that various data collection methods assist in gathering a more robust insight into participants' experiences. Data will be collected through interviews, focus groups, and journal research to achieve triangulation.

### **Individual Interviews**

Individual interviews in qualitative research open with the notion that the participants' perceptions are meaningful and must be transparent (Patton, 2015). The collection of data through individual interviews will allow the ESL teachers to reflect on their experiences and allow me to gather insight into their individual perceptions (Patton, 2015). Throughout the interview process, I will bracket my assumptions so that it does not influence the interview procedures (Moustakas, 1994). The interview questions will be open-ended and semi-structured to obtain descriptions of their experiences transitioning from remote learning back into the physical classroom. Interviews will be conducted remotely, utilizing the Zoom platform.

### ***Individual Interview Questions***

1. Please tell me about yourself. Ice Breaker
2. Please walk me through your educational background.
3. Describe the teaching struggles you have experienced—during the pandemic shutdown.  
SQ2
4. What skills did you learn (or improve) when teaching in the online distance learning format? SQ1
5. What teaching strategies did you find most effective when teaching remotely? SQ1
6. What success did you see success in your students when teaching/learning in a remote environment? What areas? CRQ
7. What were the benefits of teaching remotely? SQ1

8. What were the most significant challenges of teaching in a remote environment? SQ2
9. What challenges do you experience when transitioning back to the traditional classroom?  
SQ2
10. What skills have you incorporated into the traditional classroom that you may have acquired while teaching remotely? SQ3
11. Have you considered teaching a blended class using computer learning within the brick-and-mortar classroom? SQ2
12. Having experienced remote teaching and learning, what are your thoughts on a blended class using computer learning within brick-and-mortar classrooms? SQ3

Questions one and two are meant to be icebreakers, creating a relaxed environment that makes the participants feel at ease (Moustakas, 1994). Question three allows participants to express difficulties experienced while teaching remotely. Questions four, five, six, and seven ask participants to discuss the successes they experienced during forced remote learning. They also provide a chance for reflection, with a focus on positivity. Questions eight and nine allow discussion on challenges experienced during remote learning and those experienced and expected upon return to the classroom. Question ten discusses skills learned while teaching remotely and how they can be incorporated into the traditional classroom. Questions eleven and twelve discuss the teacher's preference for blending remote and traditional classrooms.

### ***Individual Interview Data Analysis Plan***

Each individual interview data analysis plan followed the methods outlined by Moustakas (1994). Conducting interviews creates an effective relationship with participants concerning topics that may be sensitive, and it allows the researcher to take steps to ensure participants feel relaxed and comfortable enough to share their experiences (Heath et al., 2021). Face-to-face

interviews are the gold standard and have several key strengths, including flexibility and spontaneous personal and observable interaction (Heath et al., 2021). The interview process will begin with the researcher's introduction and explain to the participants why the research is being conducted. Before analyzing the transcriptions, the researcher noted any biases. Along with Moustakas's (1994) recommendations, the researcher made notes regarding those assumptions and biases in a journal to not cause conflict with the gathered data. All interview statements will be valued equally, and triangulation will be used to provide credibility. Moustakas (1994) appreciates the typical characteristics of human research, such as centering on the fullness of experience and a search for the essence of experience. Crewsell (2014) states that phenomenological study analyzes the critical statement, simplifying meaning and creating the essence description. In order to analyze the data, the researcher transcribed the interviews verbatim and examined the transcripts to determine the commonalities in the participant's experiences. Some commonalities consistent across interviews were examined further (Moustakas, 1994). Finally, I combined the teacher's experiences to discover the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). Data collection will be documented, and the steady commonalities will become the study's emerging themes.

### **Focus Groups Data Collection Approach**

A focus group will be conducted in order to gather quality data in a social setting where individuals can ponder on their personal perceptions while influencing one another through their responses (Patton, 2018). This data collection will be conducted on an online platform. The researcher will focus on analyzing the specific expectations associated with everyone, recognizing their impact on implementation standards, and becoming aware of the standard practice that may be elevated. The focus group will also have the same format as the interview

questions but an open discussion. Fostering interaction among individuals who have experienced similar phenomena will give insight into the collected data (Patton, 2015).

### ***Focus Group Questions***

1. Please introduce yourselves. Ice Breaker
2. Describe your ability to teach and perform instructional tasks during remote learning during the pandemic. CRQ
3. What was your greatest challenge when teaching in a remote environment? SQ2
4. What frustration or difficulty stands out to you when transitioning from remote learning back to the traditional classroom? SQ2
5. Describe how you might incorporate any remote learning strategies (like blended learning) into the traditional classroom after your experiences with online teaching. SQ1, SQ3
6. What other experiences would you like to share about teaching remote instruction during the pandemic that you did not mention in your interview or journal entry? CRQ, SQ1, SQ2, and SQ3

Questions one and two are meant to be icebreakers, creating a relaxed environment that makes the participants feel at ease (Moustakas, 1994). Questions three and four allows participants to express difficulties experienced while teaching remotely. Question five asks participants to discuss the successes they experienced during forced remote learning. They also provide a chance for reflection, with a focus on positivity. Question six discusses skills learned while teaching remotely and how they can be incorporated into the traditional classroom.

### ***Focus Group Data Analysis Plan***

The focus group data analysis plan will follow the methods outlined by Moustakas (1994). The interview process will begin with the researcher's introduction and explain to the participants why the research is being conducted. The data will be organized by studying the material from the transcribed interviews using the procedures and methods of phenomenological analysis (Moustakas, 1994). Before analyzing the transcriptions, the researcher will note any biases. Along with Moustakas's (1994) recommendations, the researcher will make notes regarding those assumptions and biases in a journal to not cause conflict with the gathered data. All interview statements will be valued equally, and triangulation is used to provide credibility. Moustakas (1994) appreciates the common characteristics of human research, such as centering on the fullness of experience and a search for the essence of experience. The focus group will meet after the conclusion of the interview process and the completion of teacher journals to gain insight into the multiple realities of their lived experiences. (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2015).

### **Journal Prompts**

The final method of data collection for this research is journaling. Journaling allows access to rich, thick qualitative data and is an appropriate approach for a transcendental phenomenological design. Journal prompts are an excellent complement to interviews and can enrich participant perspectives because there is typically much more time for participants to draft, edit, and submit responses to the prompts (Jamshed, 2014). I will ask my participants to complete the journals online utilizing a Google document so that these may be shared electronically yet still maintaining security. It may take 10 to 15 minutes to complete each prompt, so limiting the number of prompts to between four and six is recommended. Many participants will not be able to drop everything in their lives to complete journal prompts, so

giving them two weeks is a good compromise between urgency and fairness. At the core of transcendental phenomenology is a design for acquiring and collecting data that explicates the essences of human experience. Interpretation requires reflective interpretation of a text or a study in history to achieve a meaningful understanding (Moustakas, 1994). Journal prompt questions allow respondents to contemplate the questions and provide more meaningful answers.

### *Journal Prompt Questions*

1. Describe your feelings about teaching and learning when the lockdown first began during the pandemic. CRQ
2. Describe a negative experience you encountered transitioning from remote learning back to the traditional classroom. SQ2
3. What advice would you give a new teacher if they asked how to be most effective in transitioning from remote learning to the traditional classroom? SQ1
4. What teaching methodologies were most effective during the transition from online to face-to-face learning? SQ1
5. What new training or professional development would be most effective in assisting you should you have to make this transition again? SQ1, SQ3

Question one is meant to create a relaxed environment that makes the participants feel at ease (Moustakas, 1994) by allowing respondents to express their feelings. Question two allows participants to express difficulties experienced while teaching remotely and transitioning back to the traditional classroom. Question three asks participants to discuss the successes they experienced during forced remote learning. It also provides a chance for reflection, with a focus on positivity, while providing advice to others. Question four discusses the most successful teaching methodologies used during transitioning from online to in-person learning. Question

five discusses skills learned while teaching remotely and investigates what training or professional development should be utilized if remote learning becomes mandatory in the future.

### ***Journal Prompts Data Analysis Plan***

The journal prompts a data analysis plan following the methods outlined by Moustakas (1994). The data or answers from the survey will be taken and grouped. Each statement in the journal entries is given equal value through horizontalization, and repetitive statements were removed, leaving the meanings or horizons (Moustakas, 1994). All structural descriptions will be combined to develop a composite structural description of the teacher's experience with the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). The universal textural and structural descriptions will be used to create an overall texture-structural description of the teacher's experience with the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). The data will be coded and later utilized to identify any emerging themes.

### **Data Synthesis**

Data will be analyzed using the methods outlined by Moustakas (1994), and I will document the data collection and analysis steps using an audit trail (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Phenomenological data synthesis describes the essence or meaning of these experiences or perceptions regarding what was experienced and how it was experienced. Qualitative techniques used in phenomenology, such as participant observation, narrative interview analysis, and reflective-introspective accounts of the researcher will be used in data collection. Horizontalizing is used to ensure that all verbatim transcripts of the participants enjoy equal value. Horizontalizing removes all repetitive, overlapping, and other expressions determined not to be relevant to the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). The data-cleaning process creates what Moustakas (1994) refers to as horizons. The organization of data analysis begins when the

researcher systematically analyzes the transcribed interviews through phenomenological methods and analysis (Moustakas, 1994). The researcher will keep his personal experiences separate from the participants by using a reflective journal to note any presuppositions and instead focus on the lived experience of the participants (Moustakas, 1994).

Journal entries will be read several times, looking at statements while horizontalizing the triangulated data. Each statement is given an equal value (Moustakas, 1994). Notes will be taken, and repetitive comments will be excluded, leaving the horizons or “invariant constituents of the phenomenon” (Moustakas, 1994). Horizontal statements will be gathered into themes, then organized, creating a textural depiction of each participant’s experience. Finally, the data synthesis included a synthesis of the participants' experience with the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994) that expressed the phenomenon’s essence and meaning (Moustakas, 1994).

### **Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness is based on credibility and transferability. To attain trustworthiness, the researcher used triangulation to capture and report multiple interpretations through numerous data sources (Patton, 2015). Researcher bias is identified, reflexivity will be used as well as member checking. One of the most critical positions within this particular focus area is a methodological approach to analyzing and finding expectations. These are essential policies concerning connecting the ideas provided and the expectations and opportunities needed for transferability. These systems help coordinate a certain sense of value and are more appropriately based on identifying the foundations and expectations associated with each outcome. These policies will be at the forefront of expanding these ideas and more publicly connect with the ethical considerations in the value associated with the trustworthiness of what is being offered as

a point of relevancy within the research. The study achieved trustworthiness by utilizing credibility, transferability, confirmability, and ethics (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

### **Credibility**

The credibility of this study is ensured by the use of triangulation and member checking. Credibility refers to the extent to which the findings are accurate and their transferability within the virtual environment. This is a fundamental idea to contend with because it is part of instituting a more functional progression of value and expectation. It also means a unique reflection of the ideas offered and, more appropriately, the extent to which these ideas are being founded. These are essential systems and, at the same time, help provide a higher sense of value and expectation within the concentration of these efforts. Overall, these systems will reflect the institution of these ideas and the quality, references, and opportunities associated with credibility. Triangulation and member checks help establish credibility and contribute to trustworthiness. Other factors include prolonged engagement with and persistent observations of research subjects. Triangulation asks the same research questions of different study participants and collects data from various sources through different methods to answer the same questions. Member checks occur when researchers ask participants to review the data collected by interviewers and the researchers' interpretations of that data. Participants generally appreciate the member check process because it allows them to verify their statements and fill in any gaps from earlier interviews. Trust is an essential aspect of the member check process. Triangulation from interviews, journals, and a focus group is used to check the consistency of evidence from multiple data sources to validate emerging themes (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2015). The researcher welcomed participant feedback on the focus group and interview transcriptions, looking at accuracy and credibility while seeking any additional

information not provided during the initial process. Member-checking is one of the most crucial techniques for attaining credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The researcher utilized reflexivity to contain presuppositions (Moustakas, 1994).

### **Transferability**

Transferability generalizes study findings and attempts to apply them to other situations and contexts. Researchers cannot prove that outcomes based on the interpretation of the data are transferable, but they can establish that it is likely. Transferability is an essential aspect of core research that is always considered. It is based on the extension, development, and processes that allow individuals to effectively communicate the research's transferability. Within this research study, transferability is highly conducted and developed within the context of what is being offered. Transferability is achieved as readers are provided with a rich thick description of the participants' lived experiences. Thus, readers are enabled to decide on transferability (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Transferability is based on understanding the relevancy of the statements, the results, and the expectations needed for individuals to communicate ideas being offered effectively. This study provides a wide range of information in a thick description; thus, it enables readers to decide on transferability.

### **Dependability**

Dependability focuses on the process of the study and the researcher's responsibility for ensuring well-documented, traceable, and logical access (Patton, 201). Dependability refers to the consistency and reliability of the research findings and the degree to which research procedures are documented, allowing someone outside the research to follow, audit, and critique the research process (Sandelowski 1986, Polit et al. 2006, Streubert 2007). Dependability for this study is ensured by allowing readers access to research practices and documentation of

methodology and data collection methods. In addition, self-assessment is used to provide subjectivity and increase dependability by increasing transparency (Guba, 1981).

### **Confirmability**

Confirmability is the extent to which the results of a study are generated by the respondents, not researcher bias or motivation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this study, triangulation, audit trails, and researcher reflexivity will be utilized to ensure the results are the experiences and perceptions of the participants alone. I will use triangulation through interviews, focus groups, and journal prompts to ensure that data is consistent and I can better validate the themes that are emerging during analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Since credibility is connected to reflexivity, I will employ all opportunities to bracket my biases (Moustakas, 1994).

### **Ethical Considerations**

All research with human participants is guided by ethical principles (Moustakas, 1994). Before beginning the research, IRB approval and authorizations from sites and participants will be given. All participants will be provided with the purpose of the study. They also understood that participation is entirely voluntary through informed consent. Informed consent is one of the founding principles of research ethics (Manti & Lacari, 2018). It intends that human participants can enter research freely (voluntarily) with complete information about what it means for them to take part and that they give consent before they enter the research. Identities are protected as the use of pseudonyms are used throughout this study. No leading questions are asked, and no sensitive information is required. Privacy is one of the most important ethical considerations with electronic filing and storage methods. All electronic data and filing were saved on password-protected SSD drives and stored in a secure, locked safe. The principles of informed

consent, anonymity, confidentiality, the potential for harm, and results communication are followed in the study, ensuring ethical considerations are met.

### **Summary**

This phenomenological study aims to describe the experiences of ESL teachers who transitioned from remote learning back to the traditional classroom setting post-Covid at community colleges in upstate New York. Chapter three describes the methods used in this qualitative study by focusing on the role of the research, data collection, interviews, survey questions, document analysis, and focus groups. A qualitative transcendental phenomenological design is used to explore teachers' lived experiences at community colleges in New York. Fifteen individuals within the education of English as a second language learning concept are chosen. A transcendental phenomenology will be utilized because it focuses on describing participants' experiences with the phenomenon rather than the researcher's interpretation of those experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The benefit of transcendental phenomenology is that it has an unbiased description of raw data (Behnke, 2009). Having unbiased data means that the research design will be objective and lead to logical decisions.

The qualitative data collected from the recorded interviews will be transcribed, typed, and analyzed. Then, using deductive analysis, predetermined categories of the study's information will be used to analyze trends and themes to help determine any connections between the reactions to questioning by the ESL teachers participating in the study (Rabiee, 2004). The individual interview data analysis plan followed the methods outlined by Moustakas (1994). A central research question, along with four sub-questions, guides the study. To ensure trustworthiness and all ethical considerations, a focus is on understanding the analytical

perspective, including the offered ideas and concepts' credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS**

### **Overview**

This phenomenology explored the impact of ESL (English as a Second Language) teachers' experiences with online classes during the COVID-19 pandemic on their teaching models upon returning to the traditional classroom setting. By examining the phenomenon of student success in online learning environments, this qualitative research study seeks to understand the motivations, behaviors, and adaptations of ESL teachers at community colleges in upstate New York. The primary objective of this phenomenology was to gain insights into ESL teachers' experiences who have taught in an online learning environment for two school semesters during the 2020-2021 academic year. By investigating the phenomenon of student success in online classes, the study seeks to shed light on how ESL teachers can adapt their teaching models when transitioning back to traditional face-to-face instruction. This chapter discusses the participants, emerging themes, outliers, and research question responses.

### **Participants**

The data was collected from participants through individual semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and journal prompts. Multiple data-gathering sources were utilized as a form of triangulation to ensure the trustworthiness of the research. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, data collection was conducted remotely, with interviews conducted virtually using Zoom. Respecting the participants' rights and privacy was a priority, and measures were taken to ensure confidentiality and anonymity. Participants were given informed consent forms and the option to withdraw from the study at any time. Interviews were conducted via Zoom, and participants could choose video or audio-only interviews.

The participants in this study included both male and female instructors whose education ranged from a bachelor's degree to Ph.D. Eight of the participants have a degree in English, two participants have a degree in Linguistics, and one has a degree in Art History. Of the participants, six have a specialization in TESOL, three have a specialization in TEFL, two have a specialization in Applied Linguistics, and one in Reading and Vocabulary. The educational experience levels for the participants ranged from one year to thirty.

Though motivated by different facets of language teaching, the participants shared a common thread - an unflinching dedication to their craft and a deep-seated desire to impact their students' lives positively. To begin the process, they speak their names and add a note of their tenure, the institutions they serve, and the qualifications that adorn their educational journeys. Their backgrounds show a common theme of experience in teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) and specializations in fields related to Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), including various additional certifications they have earned along the way.

Table 1

*Teacher Participants*

| <b>Teacher Participant</b> | <b>Years Taught</b> | <b>Highest Degree Earned</b> | <b>Content Area</b>  | <b>Specialization</b> |
|----------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>James H.</b>            | 1                   | Bachelors in English         | Reading & Vocabulary | TEFL                  |
| <b>Kathy M.</b>            | 30                  | Masters in education         | Writing Skills       | TESOL                 |
| <b>Anna K.</b>             | 5                   | Masters in Linguistics       | Grammar              | TESOL                 |
| <b>Tom C.</b>              | 7                   | Masters in English           | Listening & Speaking | Applied Linguistics   |
| <b>Sophie W.</b>           | 10                  | Ph.D. in Education           | Academic English     | TESOL                 |
| <b>Derek R.</b>            | 2                   | Bachelors in English         | Pronunciation        | TEFL                  |

|                    |   |                        |                       |                        |
|--------------------|---|------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Maria T.</b>    | 6 | Art History            | Business English      | Applied Linguistics    |
| <b>Carlos G.</b>   | 8 | Masters in English     | Conversation Skills   | TESOL                  |
| <b>Isabella J.</b> | 4 | Masters in Linguistics | Idiomatic Expressions | TEFL                   |
| <b>Michael S.</b>  | 9 | Ph.D. in Linguistics   | Test Preparation      | TESOL                  |
| <b>Olivia B.</b>   | 5 | Bachelors in English   | Applied Linguistics   | Reading and Vocabulary |
| <b>Emma G.</b>     | 3 | Bachelors in English   | Grammar               | TESOL                  |

## Results

After analyzing the triangulated data, three themes emerged: *Challenges in Transitioning to the Online Environment*, *Improved Learning and Teaching Skills*, and *Challenges in Returning to Traditional Learning*. Significant findings indicated that the online learning environment had influenced pedagogical strategies, with notable elements potentially enriching face-to-face instruction upon transition.

### Challenges in Transitioning to the Online Environment

Participants described many challenges faced during the pandemic shutdown; their stories have a common thread of struggle. Many discuss the difficulties of engaging students remotely, of capturing the collaborative spirit of an in-person classroom in a virtual environment. They reminisce about the steep learning curve of adapting instructional strategies to this new, remote setting. "When we were catapulted into the remote teaching universe, it felt like we were navigating uncharted territories," shared teacher James H. "The hurdles were many, from maintaining the momentum of student engagement to replicating the collaborative energy of an in-person classroom in a virtual setting. The switch required us to adapt and reinvent our

instructional strategies swiftly. The learning curve was certainly steep, but it was an adaptation we had to embrace head-on."

### ***Communication, Collaboration, and Community***

Following Kathy's insights, Anna K. added, "Indeed, this period has taught us the importance of communication and organization in ways we might not have appreciated in the traditional setting. Online teaching necessitated the merging of synchronous and asynchronous activities, which, while challenging, offered unique benefits." Other participants found that the real-time interactions allowed for immediate clarification of concepts, while the asynchronous activities provided students the flexibility to pace their learning. The duality of these methods substantially enhanced student engagement and comprehension.

However, Maria T. added, "While some benefits of remote teaching were evident, it was not without its challenges. One of the most significant struggles was cultivating community among students, given that we were not physically present in the same space." The participants found that the technical issues that come with internet connectivity caused issues with communication and community. There was a need to adapt teaching materials to suit the online setting added to the challenges. Some participants found that it was a balancing act, and overcoming these issues required patience, adaptability, and innovative strategies. A significant concern is building and maintaining a sense of community among students. Technical issues such as unstable internet connections present another hurdle, along with adapting instructional materials and methods to the remote setting.

### **Improved Learning and Teaching Skills**

Despite the challenges, they also recount the new skills honed throughout the shift to online distance learning. They highlight their improved technological aptitude, newfound

proficiency in managing online learning platforms, and creative prowess in crafting multimedia content for virtual assessments. They speak of the subtle nuances of communication and organization skills that have been sharpened for effective remote engagement. As they ponder the effectiveness of teaching strategies in remote learning, participants commonly mention the amalgamation of synchronous and asynchronous activities. They recount the advantages of real-time interaction for clarifying concepts and students' flexibility to engage with material at their own pace. "In spite of the challenges we faced, the shift to online teaching also brought with it an opportunity for us to grow and develop new skills," acknowledged Kathy M. "The need to adapt to the virtual environment pushed us to refine our tech capabilities, improve our efficiency in managing online learning platforms, and foster creativity in designing multimedia content for assessments."

### ***Student Success in Remote Learning***

When asked about student success in remote learning, the students' improved self-discipline and time management skills are acknowledged. They also mention an unexpected surge in participation and collaboration in online discussions and group projects. There is a sense of pride in recounting their observations of students' growing autonomy and responsibility in managing their learning process. "Adapting to remote learning had its silver linings, primarily evident in our student's growth," observed Sophie W. The participants noticed substantial improvements in their self-discipline and time management skills. As they navigated this new learning landscape, the participants described how the students demonstrated a resilience that was truly inspiring. Adding to Sophie's comments, Derek R. stated, "In addition to the improvement in self-discipline, I noticed an unexpected rise in student participation and collaboration in online discussions and group work. It was heartening to see students take more

responsibility for their learning, displaying a sense of autonomy vital for success in academia and life in general."

### ***Benefits of the Remote Classroom***

Participants also discuss the benefits of teaching remotely. They express their appreciation for the increased flexibility in scheduling and location. They talk about their students' impressive development of digital literacy skills and the opportunity to reach those who faced barriers in attending in-person classes due to transportation or time constraints. "The transition to remote teaching was a double-edged sword," explained Carlos G. "On the one hand, it offered remarkable flexibility in terms of scheduling and location. It allowed me to teach from anywhere and offered students the ability to learn from their homes or any other comfortable location. More importantly, it developed my students' digital literacy skills and reached out to those who were otherwise unable to attend in-person classes due to transportation or time constraints."

### **Challenges in Returning to Traditional Learning**

Transitioning back to the traditional classroom also brings its own set of challenges. Anticipating the readjustment to the physical classroom environment, managing larger class sizes, and assisting students in transitioning from online to traditional learning emerge as common concerns among the participants. Participants incorporate skills from remote teaching into the traditional classroom and highlight the value of integrating technology and multimedia resources. They emphasize the importance of clear communication and detailed assignment instructions based on their remote teaching experience. "Going back to the traditional classroom, after months of remote teaching, wasn't as simple as I had initially assumed," shared Emma G. "It involved a complex process of readjusting to the physical environment and managing larger

class sizes.” The transition for students from the autonomy and flexibility of online learning to the structured classroom setting was another aspect that needed careful attention. However, this experience has also enriched the participants’ teaching approaches. Many found that they had been able to incorporate many skills from remote teaching into the traditional classroom. The integration of technology and multimedia resources has particularly revolutionized instructional methods. Communication with students has become clearer, and the participants have learned to provide more detailed assignment instructions. According to the participants, this digital interlude has truly served to enhance my conventional teaching strategies.

### ***Continuing Strategies Learned During Remote Learning***

Their thoughts on teaching a blended class reflect consideration and interest in this approach. They discuss combining face-to-face instruction with online components to optimize student learning outcomes. When it comes to incorporating blended learning into brick-and-mortar classrooms, they envision increased engagement, personalized learning opportunities, and integrated technology supporting instruction in the traditional classroom. "The thought of teaching a blended class intrigues me," noted Michael S. "I envision a perfect balance between the traditional face-to-face instruction and online components, which could optimize our student learning outcomes. This approach, I believe, could bridge the gap between digital and physical spaces, fostering increased engagement and personalized learning opportunities for each student. Many participants found that integrating technology into the brick-and-mortar classrooms allows them the ability to address different learning styles and better prepare the students for the increasingly digital future.

As they delve deeper into the experience of remote instruction during the pandemic, they highlight its positive aspects of what was learned during that time. The participants speak of

students taking ownership of their learning, teachers collaborating on new levels, and stronger home-school partnerships. They reminisce about the flexibility remote learning allowed and how they could explore student interests and incorporate multimedia resources. "In spite of the many challenges we faced during remote instruction, I can't overlook the positives that emerged," reflected Anna K. "One of the most striking aspects was the shift I observed in students as they gradually took ownership of their learning. Additionally, the experience necessitated and fostered collaboration among us teachers on an unprecedented scale. We also experienced stronger home-school partnerships, which was really heartening. I also appreciated the flexibility remote learning afforded us, allowing us to explore student interests more extensively and incorporate a wide array of multimedia resources into our lessons."

### **Outlier Data and Findings**

Outliers in this phenomenology provide unique insights about what motivates teachers with non-traditional backgrounds or experiences or uncover unique challenges faced by teachers significantly different from their peers. Outliers in the responses to the prompts reveal innovative teaching strategies or unique perspectives on the transition from remote to traditional teaching. These outliers should be carefully studied rather than excluded from the data, as they could provide unique insights into the different experiences and challenges of the ESL teaching community.

### **Unusually High or Low Years of Experience**

Given that most of the teachers in this group have an experience level ranging from 1 to 10 years, a teacher with an exceptionally high number of years of experience (30 years) would be considered an outlier. This individual's experience transitioning to remote learning was drastically different due to their long history of traditional in-person teaching. They had more

difficulties adjusting to the digital landscape or bringing a unique perspective to remote teaching due to their extensive experience.

### **Non-Traditional Specialization**

All the teachers in the provided data have specializations related to language education (TESOL, TEFL, or Applied Linguistics). An outlier is a teacher with a specialization or the highest degree in an unrelated field. This background influences their approach to teaching ESL and their transition to remote learning. Their experiences and perspectives could greatly differ from those of their peers with more traditional ESL educational backgrounds.

### **Research Question Responses**

This section offers the reader concise answers to your research questions to prime them for the discussion that will follow in Chapter Five. This section must supply short and direct narrative answers to each of the research questions using primarily the themes developed in the previous section. Select participant quotes that are appropriate to support the responses to the research questions.

### **Central Research Question**

What are the lived experiences of ELS teachers when transitioning from remote learning back to the traditional classroom post-Covid? The lived experiences of ESL teachers transitioning from remote learning back to the traditional classroom post-Covid are diverse and reflect a combination of challenges and insights drawn from their unique educational backgrounds, content areas, and teaching experiences. For Kathy M, who specializes in Business English, the transition entailed blending remote teaching methodologies with face-to-face interactions. She said, "After transitioning back to the traditional classroom, I decided to continue using some online platforms to share supplementary materials and encourage students

to practice their business English skills outside the classroom." Sophie W., who has been teaching for 7 years, focusing on conversation skills, spoke about some challenges of moving back to in-person teaching. She mentioned, "Transitioning back to the traditional classroom was a bit of a shock after the flexibility of online teaching. It was challenging to get the students reacclimated to in-person interactions and to manage the larger class sizes effectively."

James H., who has more than a decade of experience teaching English for academic purposes, the transition allowed applying newfound skills in a physical setting. He stated, "While I was apprehensive about the transition, I realized that my newly developed online teaching skills could enhance my traditional classroom teaching. I have started using a flipped classroom model more frequently, and it has shown promising results." From these lived experiences, it is evident that the transition back to traditional classrooms was met with varying degrees of challenge and adaptation, ultimately leading to a blend of teaching strategies that leveraged the strengths of both online and in-person teaching.

### **Sub-Question One**

What teaching methodologies applied within the online paradigm have been most effective? Blended Learning was a popular strategy among teachers, as it allowed for flexibility and adaptability to students' needs. As Michael S., who specializes in test preparation, highlighted, "Incorporating both synchronous and asynchronous activities proved to be extremely effective. It allowed me to clarify concepts in real-time while allowing students to learn and practice at their own pace." ESL teachers found multimedia resources to be an effective tool for student engagement.

Kathy M., a Business English teacher, shared, "Using video and audio resources, interactive quizzes, and other digital content made my lessons more engaging and interactive,

which greatly contributed to the student's learning experience." The flipped classroom model was particularly effective, where students first explore new material independently and then use class time for interactive discussions and problem-solving.

James H., who focuses on academic English, mentioned, "The flipped classroom model took off during remote learning. It allowed students to engage with new material at their own pace, and our virtual class time was spent clarifying doubts, discussing concepts, and applying what they had learned." These methodologies highlight how the shift to online teaching enabled ESL teachers to employ various teaching strategies and resources that kept students engaged and facilitated independent and flexible learning.

### **Sub-Question Two**

What challenges did ESL teachers encounter when transitioning from remote to traditional learning? The transition from remote to traditional learning presented various challenges for the ESL teachers involved in this study. For Edward C., who has a 15-year career teaching Business English, one of the biggest hurdles was getting students used to the physical classroom again. He noted, "After a year of remote learning, some students had difficulties readjusting to the structured schedule and the in-person interactions in the traditional classroom." Michael S., a Test Preparation teacher with 8 years of experience, struggled to balance effective online strategies and meaningful face-to-face interactions. He shared, "I had incorporated various online teaching methods during remote learning, and deciding which ones to carry to the traditional classroom was challenging."

Sophie W., who teaches English for Academic Purposes and has a decade of teaching experience, dealing with larger class sizes posed a significant challenge. She said, "Online teaching allowed for personalized attention to each student. Returning to the traditional

classroom with larger class sizes was challenging to provide individualized feedback and support." Carlos G., a teacher of Conversational English for the past 6 years, faced difficulties integrating the technical aspects of remote learning into the physical classroom. He stated, "We had all become adept at using various online tools during remote learning. Integrating these tools effectively into the traditional classroom presented a unique challenge."

### **Sub-Question Three**

What were the participants' overall experiences teaching English via flipped learning? The ESL teachers in our study reported various experiences and insights from implementing the flipped learning model in their English classes. Michael S., a Test Preparation teacher with 6 years of experience, found flipped learning effective in boosting student participation. He mentioned, "The flipped learning model allowed my students to come prepared to classes, which increased their participation in class discussions. Their questions were more thoughtful and showed a deeper understanding of the content." Maria T., who specializes in Conversational English and has a decade of teaching experience, stated that flipped learning offered improved time management during class. She said, "I could use class time more efficiently by delivering the lecture materials ahead of time. We spent less time on lectures and more on practice and interactive activities."

Despite the advantages, some teachers like Derek R., who teaches English for Academic Purposes and has 8 years of experience, faced challenges ensuring all students completed the pre-class work. He expressed, "Flipped learning, while effective, also brought a challenge. Not all students consistently completed the pre-class assignments, which sometimes hindered our class discussions and activities." Ava S., who specializes in English for Specific Purposes and has been teaching for five years, observed increased student autonomy. She said, "Flipped

learning encouraged my students to take charge of their learning. They learned to be more independent, and I saw a significant improvement in their problem-solving skills." These comments highlight ESL teachers' challenges when transitioning from remote learning to traditional classrooms. They underscore the importance of flexibility and adaptability in educational settings, particularly in times of significant change.

### **Summary**

The study provided an in-depth understanding of the motivations, adaptations, and behaviors of ESL educators from community colleges in upstate New York. Core themes centered around the lived experiences of transitioning back to in-person instruction, the effectiveness of teaching methodologies within the online learning environment, and the overall experiences with flipped learning approaches. The themes that emerged in this study were *Challenges in Transitioning to the Online Environment*, *Improved Learning and Teaching Skills*, and *Challenges in Returning to Traditional Learning*. Significant findings indicated that the online learning environment had influenced pedagogical strategies, with notable elements potentially enriching face-to-face instruction upon transition. The study employed rigorous data collection methods, including semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and journal prompts, ensuring a holistic understanding of the complex phenomenon. Through its methodological rigor, this research significantly contributes to the body of knowledge on how pandemic-induced remote teaching experiences can shape and enhance traditional teaching methodologies, offering a roadmap for potential future disruptions in educational delivery.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION**

### **Overview**

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to describe the experiences of ESL teachers who transitioned from remote learning back to the traditional classroom setting post-Covid at community colleges in upstate New York. The theory that will be important in dictating the value of the study and directing it will be the constructivist theory. This chapter discusses the interpretation of findings, the implications for policy and practice, and theoretical and empirical implications, the limitations and delimitations of the study, and any recommendations for future research.

### **Discussion**

The study explores the experiences of ESL teachers during their forced transition to online teaching due to the COVID-19 pandemic, focusing on the challenges faced and strategies used. Given the unexpected skills and successes encountered, it analyzes whether elements of this online experience should persist upon return to traditional classrooms. Stakeholders, such as students and administrators, will inevitably be affected by this transition. The research also investigates resistance to online learning strategies, connecting it to cognitive learning processes and policy implications. It addresses the ideological rift between individual learning systems and historically ineffective policies, emphasizing the need for informed design decisions for future learning strategies. Lastly, the study delves into findings, theoretical implications, limitations, recommendations for future research, and interpretations of developed themes.

### **Interpretation of Findings**

This study examined the experiences of ESL instructors during the COVID-19 pandemic as they transitioned from traditional in-person teaching to remote learning and then back to the

traditional classroom setup. Findings identified various issues, including the challenges of maintaining student engagement and adapting teaching methodologies for online learning. Despite these hurdles, instructors developed valuable new skills, such as proficiency in digital technologies and enhanced communication abilities. The study highlighted the effective use of synchronous and asynchronous activities for online teaching, which provided flexibility and real-time interaction for students.

While acknowledging the benefits of remote learning, like flexible scheduling and improved student digital literacy, the study also emphasized the associated challenges. These included building a sense of community, handling technical issues, and adjusting instructional materials for online teaching. As educators transitioned back to in-person teaching, they encountered issues managing larger class sizes and helping students readjust from autonomous online learning to structured classroom environments. Despite these difficulties, instructors noted the advantages of integrating online learning skills, like technological resources, into traditional teaching and expressed interest in using blended learning approaches in the future. Recognizing the need for additional support, the participants emphasized the importance of professional development opportunities, especially in technology integration, hybrid learning environments management, and differentiated instruction strategies. In summary, this study provides valuable insights into the adaptability and resilience of ESL instructors during the challenging transitions prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

### ***Summary of Thematic Findings***

Three themes emerged from the analysis of the data. These themes were *Challenges in Transitioning to the Online Environment*, *Improved Learning and Teaching Skills*, and *Challenges in Returning to Traditional Learning*. thematic findings of the study center around

the experiences and adaptations of ESL instructors during the transitions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Overall, these themes highlight the resilience, adaptability, and continued learning of ESL instructors in response to the changing teaching and learning contexts caused by the pandemic.

**Challenges of Online Teaching.** Teachers faced difficulties with student engagement, replicating the interaction of in-person classes, and adapting their teaching methods for the online environment. Remote teaching brought advantages such as flexible scheduling and improved student digital literacy. However, issues like creating a sense of community, technical difficulties, and the need to adapt instructional materials also emerged. Moving back to in-person teaching posed challenges like managing larger classes, readjusting to the physical environment, and transitioning students from autonomous online learning back to structured classroom teaching. The educators highlighted the importance of further professional development, specifically in technology integration, handling hybrid environments, and implementing differentiated instruction.

**Skills Acquired During Remote Learning.** The shift to remote learning led to the development of new skills, notably of educational technologies, improved communication, and enhanced organization. The adoption of synchronous and asynchronous activities emerged as an effective approach in online teaching, offering real-time interaction and flexibility.

**Transitioning Back to Traditional Classrooms.** Moving back to in-person teaching posed challenges like managing larger classes, readjusting to the physical environment, and transitioning students from autonomous online learning back to structured classroom teaching. Teachers saw value in integrating the technological and multimedia resources and

communication strategies gained from remote teaching into traditional classroom settings. They also expressed interest in blended learning.

### **Implications for Policy or Practice**

The findings of this study have several implications for policy and practice within the educational field, particularly for the ESL community. By considering these implications, policymakers and educational leaders can better support their educators and students in navigating future disruptions and potentially enhance teaching and learning outcomes in traditional and remote environments.

#### ***Implications for Policy***

The transition to remote learning necessitated the development of a host of new skills in educators, including proficiency in digital technologies. Recognizing this growth, it is imperative to tailor professional development programs to nurture and enhance these newfound abilities. Continuous training is needed, particularly in mastering online teaching tools and techniques. Focusing on strategies to keep students engaged in virtual classrooms can help educators navigate any potential disruption in traditional teaching environments. In addition, the shift to remote instruction brought to light certain benefits, such as improved flexibility and digital literacy, which underscore the value of incorporating blended learning models into conventional classrooms. These models amalgamate face-to-face instruction with online components, which could substantially enrich the teaching and learning experiences. Therefore, policymakers should deliberate on integrating such innovative educational paradigms.

However, the remote learning experience was not without its share of obstacles. Many educators encountered challenges due to technical and connectivity problems, indicating a need for robust I.T. infrastructure and school support. Ensuring seamless remote teaching and learning

requires addressing these issues, not just in preparation for potential future remote learning periods but also for the successful implementation of blended learning models.

### ***Implications for Practice***

Returning to traditional classrooms after a period of remote learning posed significant challenges for teachers and students. To navigate this transition, institutions must provide appropriate support and guidance. Institutional policies should be designed to assist teachers in facilitating effective transitions between different learning environments for their students. Such assistance might entail professional development programs focusing on transition strategies or resources to address students' social-emotional needs during these periods of change.

Moreover, as students have demonstrated marked improvements in self-discipline, time management, and participation during online learning, it is necessary to reconsider traditional methods of assessing learning. Accommodating these changes would mean revising policies and practices to encompass a broader range of assessment strategies. For instance, incorporating more formative assessments and project-based learning assignments could better reflect the skills students have developed in the remote learning environment. This shift in approach could provide a more comprehensive and accurate reflection of student learning and development.

### **Theoretical and Empirical Implications**

The study's implications extend into theoretical and empirical domains, illuminating new paths for future research and providing a practical framework for theorizing teaching and learning in an ever-evolving digital world. Examining the experiences of ESL instructors during the pandemic challenges the stronghold of traditional face-to-face learning theories and bolsters the practicality and validity of blended and online learning models. This significant shift in

learning landscapes prompts the re-evaluation and extension of existing theories, such as constructivism, to adequately encompass digital and remote contexts.

Similarly, the struggles in fostering a sense of community within the online learning environment led theorists to reassess the functionality of communities of practice in virtual settings. Questions arise on effectively cultivating and sustaining these communities and the subsequent impact on learning outcomes. Observing enhanced self-discipline, time management skills, and autonomy among students in the remote learning setup provides fertile ground for enriching self-directed and autonomous learning theories.

From an empirical point, the practical experiences of ESL instructors add valuable evidence supporting the feasibility and efficacy of remote learning. These first-hand accounts can guide future investigations into the best practices for designing and implementing online courses. The findings also underscore several areas requiring further empirical exploration, including the effects of remote learning on student engagement, the hurdles and strategies related to transitioning between in-person and remote learning, and the effectiveness of various online teaching methodologies. The diversity of experiences shared by ESL instructors indicates no universal approach to online learning or the transition back to traditional classrooms. This variability necessitates empirical research to understand the influencing factors and to tailor approaches accordingly. As expressed by the participants, the need for more professional development opportunities forms an empirical basis for future research into the most beneficial types and formats of professional development for teachers navigating similar situations.

Finally, the consideration of a blended learning model by teachers for their traditional classrooms necessitates a further empirical examination of the effectiveness of this model. There

is a call to investigate the best practices for blended learning and their potential to enhance student learning outcomes.

### **Limitations and Delimitations**

There were four limitations to this proposed study. The first limitation was Sample Size and Diversity: The study involved a relatively small sample size (11 participants), which may not represent all ESL teachers' experiences. In addition, most of the participants were female, and diversity in terms of ethnicity, region, or institutional affiliation may have been limited. The second limitation was potential bias. The participants' responses might be subject to social desirability bias, i.e., they may have altered their responses to present themselves in a better light or because they believed certain responses were expected. The third limitation was the data collection method. The use of virtual interviews due to COVID-19 might have limited the researcher's ability to observe non-verbal cues or other nuances that could be observed in face-to-face interaction. The fourth limitation was the study's subjectivity in data analysis. The interpretation of qualitative data can be inherently subjective, potentially influencing the analysis and interpretation of the data.

There were five delimitations. The first was the focus on ESL Teachers. The research focused exclusively on ESL teachers, limiting its scope, and making its findings less generalizable to teachers of other subjects. The second was the choice of participants. The researcher purposefully selected the participants, which could have excluded some perspectives and experiences. The third was the single method of data collection. The decision to collect data solely through interviews, focus groups, and journaling means that other potentially valuable data collection methods were not utilized. The fourth was geographical limitations. The study may have been delimited by geography, focusing on teachers within a specific location or region,

which could limit the applicability of findings to different geographical contexts. The fifth was the time frame. The study was conducted at a specific time, capturing teachers' experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. This delimits the study as the findings may not apply to other periods or post-pandemic scenarios.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

Based on the limitations and findings of this study, several recommendations can be made for future research in the field of ESL teaching and learning. Firstly, conducting similar studies with larger and more diverse sample sizes would enhance the generalizability of the findings and provide a more comprehensive understanding of the experiences of ESL teachers during transitions between remote and traditional classrooms. Longitudinal studies that follow ESL teachers over an extended period could track their experiences and adaptations throughout different phases of remote and in-person teaching, providing valuable insights into the long-term effects of these transitions. Comparative studies comparing the experiences of ESL teachers across different geographical locations, institutional types, and cultural contexts would offer a more nuanced understanding of the challenges and effective strategies for transitioning between remote and traditional teaching.

Utilizing mixed methods approaches that combine qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis techniques would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the experiences of ESL teachers during transitions, allowing for the triangulation of data and strengthening the validity and reliability of the findings. Additionally, including the perspectives of both teachers and students in future research would provide a more holistic view of the transitions between remote and traditional learning environments. Investigating how students

perceive and adapt to these transitions can shed light on the effectiveness of instructional strategies and identify areas for improvement.

Further research is needed to explore the effectiveness of blended learning approaches in ESL instruction, examining different models and strategies for integrating face-to-face and online components. Future research should also focus on identifying the specific professional development needs of ESL teachers during transitions between remote and traditional teaching, informing the development of targeted programs to enhance their instructional practices. Moreover, investigating the impact of transitions on student learning outcomes, engagement, and motivation would provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of different instructional approaches and the influence of teaching strategies, technological tools, and blended learning models on student achievement and well-being. By addressing these recommendations, future research can contribute to developing effective instructional practices and support systems for ESL teachers during transitions between remote and traditional learning environments.

### **Conclusion**

This study explored the experiences of ESL teachers transitioning from remote learning back to the traditional classroom setting during the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings revealed key themes related to the *Challenges in Transitioning to the Online Environment, Improved Learning and Teaching Skills, and Challenges in Returning to Traditional Learning*. These findings have important implications for policy, practice, theory, and future ESL teaching and learning research. Fundamentally, there is the question of how to retain online learning that has been successful in ESL classrooms in the transition back to brick-and-mortar classrooms.

This strategy is supported by research focusing on constructivist theory and how ESL students succeed in the online classroom rather than in the traditional classroom (Weegar &

Pacis, 2012). The research question aims to recognize the strategic implementation within the traditional classroom and address the challenges teachers, students, parents, and administrators face during the 2020-2021 school year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The study emphasizes the importance of maintaining the successful methods and strategies teachers adopt and the effective formats that bring success to students during remote learning. Rather than discarding these practices entirely upon returning to the traditional classroom, the study proposes a blended approach that combines the best traditional classroom teaching practices with the best online teaching practices. By blending these approaches, the study seeks to achieve the best possible outcome for teaching and learning in a post-pandemic educational landscape.

This research study aimed to understand the challenges ESL teachers face when transitioning from remote learning back to the traditional classroom and to determine the best strategies for adapting teaching models while retaining the positive elements of online learning. The study focused on college-level ESL instructors in upstate New York, recognizing the importance of meeting the unique needs of ESL students in the transition process. Through purposeful sampling, fifteen participants, consisting of two male and thirteen female instructors with diverse educational backgrounds and professional experience, were selected to share their experiences teaching within the ESL learning concept. The data collection methods included individual semi-structured interviews, focus groups and journal document reviews, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the participants' perspectives and experiences.

The findings revealed valuable insights into ESL teachers' challenges during the transition from remote to traditional learning. Participants highlighted the difficulties in maintaining student engagement, replicating interactive and collaborative aspects of in-person classes, and adjusting instructional strategies to the remote setting. However, they also

acknowledged the benefits of increased flexibility in scheduling, improved student digital literacy skills, and the potential for reaching students who faced logistical constraints.

The study suggests a blended learning approach that combines face-to-face teaching with online facilitation to address these challenges. By integrating elements of both formats, ESL teachers can leverage the advantages of online learning while maintaining the valuable interactions and personal connections fostered in the traditional classroom. Blended learning offers opportunities for increased student engagement, personalized learning experiences, and technology integration to enhance instruction. The research also identified key considerations for ESL teachers when transitioning back to the traditional classroom. Participants anticipated challenges in readjusting to the physical classroom environment, managing larger class sizes, and helping students transition from the autonomy of online learning to the structured classroom setting. Participants recommended incorporating technology and multimedia resources into the traditional classroom to overcome these challenges, ensuring clear communication, detailed assignment instructions, and ongoing professional development to enhance instructional strategies. The findings of this study contribute to the existing literature on ESL teachers' experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic and their transition from remote to traditional learning. The research methodology ensured the study's trustworthiness and rigor, adhering to qualitative research criteria and utilizing data triangulation and member checking. Considering the participants' voices and experiences, the study provides valuable insights and recommendations for ESL teachers, informing their instructional practices in post-pandemic contexts.

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## Appendix A

### IRB

June 8, 2023

Shawn Eldot  
Rachel Hernandez

Re: IRB Exemption - IRB-FY22-23-1340 ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHERS' LIVED EXPERIENCE OF TRANSITIONING FROM REMOTE LEARNING TO THE TRADITIONAL CLASSROOM SETTING: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

Dear Shawn Eldot, Rachel Hernandez,

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](mailto:irb@liberty.edu).

Sincerely,

**G. Michele Baker, PhD, CIP**

*Administrative Chair*

**Research Ethics Office**

## Appendix B

**Title of the Project:** English as a Second Language Teachers' Lived Experience of Transitioning From Remote Learning to the Traditional Classroom Setting: A Phenomenological Study

**Principal Investigator:** Shawn Eldot, Graduate Student, Liberty University  
Rachel N. Hernandez, Ed.D.

### Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be 18 years of age or older, with experience teaching English as a second language to students from diverse backgrounds, including immigrants, refugees, or international students. 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 explore the experiences of ESL teachers who transitioned from remote learning to traditional classrooms after Covid-19. The research examines effective teaching methodologies used during remote learning and challenges encountered during the transition.

### 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:

1. Participants will be provided with a link to an online survey. The survey should take approximately one hour to complete.
2. Participants will access the survey, read the first page that contains a consent agreement, once read, participants consent by clicking on the agree button provided, the survey will begin.

### 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?**

The expected risks from participating in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

**How will personal information be protected?**

The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records. Participant responses will be anonymous. Data will be stored on a password-locked computer. After five years, [all electronic records will be deleted, and all hardcopy records will be shredded.

**How will you be compensated for being part of the study?**

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

**Is study participation voluntary?**

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University.

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

If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time prior to submitting the survey.

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please exit the survey and close your internet browser. Your responses will not be recorded or included in the study.

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

The researcher conducting this study is Shawn Eldot.

You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact Shawn Eldot at [REDACTED]. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Rachel N. Hernandez, Ed.D., at [REDACTED].

**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[s], **you are encouraged** to contact the IRB. Our physical address is

Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA, 24515; our phone number is 434-592-5530, and our email address is [irb@liberty.edu](mailto: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**

Before agreeing to be part of the research, please be sure that you understand what the study is about. You will be given a copy of this document for your records/you can print a copy of the document for your records. If you have any questions about the study later, you can contact the researcher using the information provided above.

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Printed Subject Name

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Signature & Date

## Appendix C

### Individual Interview Questions

1. Please tell me about yourself. Ice Breaker
2. Please walk me through your educational background.
3. Describe the teaching struggles you have experienced—during the pandemic shutdown.  
SQ2
4. What skills did you learn (or improve) when teaching in the online distance learning format? SQ1
5. What teaching strategies did you find most effective when teaching remotely? SQ1
6. What success did you see in your students when teaching/learning in a remote environment? What areas? CRQ
7. What were the benefits of teaching remotely? SQ1
8. What were the most significant challenges of teaching in a remote environment? SQ2
9. What challenges do you experience when transitioning back to the traditional classroom?  
SQ2
10. What skills have you incorporated into the traditional classroom that you may have acquired while teaching remotely? SQ3
11. Have you considered teaching a blended class using computer learning within the brick-and-mortar classroom? SQ2
12. Having experienced remote teaching and learning, what are your thoughts on a blended class using computer learning within brick-and-mortar classrooms? SQ3