THE EXPERIENCE OF UNIVERSITY ACADEMICS WITH EMERGENCY REMOTE TEACHING DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC OF 2020: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

by

Judith Marie Peterson

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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APPROVED BY:

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Abstract

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to explore the experiences of academics at the university level with emergency remote teaching during the 2020-2021 COVID-19 pandemic. The theory guiding this study was Milheim, K. L. (2012) application of Maslow, A. H. (1943) hierarchy of needs. The central research question was: How did academics at the university level experience transitioning their course and teaching online during emergency remote teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020-2021? Eleven lecture academics were selected from six universities from the University of Wisconsin System who transitioned their residence courses to online during the pandemic. I used three methods to collect data: semi-structured individual videoconference interviews, e-journals, and videoconference focus group interviews to provide triangulation of evidence and validate data accuracy. The themes that emerged were overtime, relationships, burnout/stress, technical struggles, digital divide, and outliers. The study found that the universities and participants were not prepared to transition online causing academics to burnout. The first recommendation was to continue studying the experiences of university academics with emergency remote teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic 2020 from other parts of the United States. The second recommendation was to study the lived experiences of instructors who taught hands-on type of courses such as art, music, and science labs. The third recommendation was to study what consequences the COVID-19 pandemic had on higher education. The fourth recommendation is to study the phenomenon of students becoming quiet for two years after being in isolation and wearing masks during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Keywords: Emergency remote teaching, COVID-19 pandemic, online pedagogy, crisis plan, burnout, and online education.

Copyright Page

Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to God, my creator, from whom all good things flow! To my Family. My husband, Michael, who has always supported me and gave me the space I needed to work. Our children, April, and Melissa, may you pursue knowledge throughout your lives, and in loving memory of our son, Michael who we miss dearly. Finally, to our grandchildren, I hope I have set a good example.

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my patient and supportive committee chairperson, Dr. Quindag, for whom I could not have undertaken this journey without. I am also extremely grateful for my committee member, Dr. Woodbridge. My committee members have provided me with extensive professional guidance. I am thankful for all my instructors at Liberty who I have had the pleasure of working with.

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List of Abbreviations

Desire2Learn is a learning management system (D2L)

Emergency remote teaching (ERT)

High Efficiency Image File Format (HEIC)

Swine influenza (H1N1)

Learning management system (LMS)

Megabits per second (Mbps)

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)

Universal design for learning (UDL)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

Increased pressure to integrate educational technology without training and support has added to the educators' workload, apprehension of the unknown and academic burnout (Fernández-Batanero et al., 2021). Therefore, academics need online professional development to reduce stress, anxiety, and frustration when meeting educational technology challenges, especially during emergency situations (Fernández-Batanero et al., 2021). The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to explore the experiences of academics in midwestern universities with emergency remote teaching during the 2020-2021 COVID-19 pandemic. Chapter One presents the background of the research on educational technology between 1970 to 2021, provides the research problem and the purpose statement, the significance of the study, the introduction of the research questions, and definitions for relevant terms used in the study.

Background

To study how the problem has evolved, Bond et al. (2019) reviewed the themes and concepts in The *British Journal of Educational Technology* between the years 1970 to 2018. They found that educational technology advanced faster than knowledge of how it needs to be used for education. Educational technology evolved from correspondence, TV, and radio to 3D worlds, simulations, mobile learning, social media, and serious games. However, there needed to be more focus on learning theories or problems educational technology could solve. (Bond et al., 2019). During the pandemic, academics needed more training and time to prepare before transitioning online. Without training, academics experienced technostress. Many of these transitioned courses did not use active, engaging activities and collaboration, all critical aspects

of quality online learning. The consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic is that people need to prepare for a future crisis and many have mistaken emergency remote teaching for quality online education.

Historical Context

Bond et al. (2019) reviewed literature from the *British Journal of Educational Technology* to identify key concepts and themes between 1970 and 2018. Between 1970-1979, there were high expectations for an open university-- a university with minimal entry requirements (Bond et al., 2019). Students could gain certificates by completing coursework by watching TV or listening to the radio. It was developed to allow individuals who could not attend residential classes to obtain an education. Then, the focus changed from the open university to computer-based learning. At that time, school leadership struggled to obtain software for the hardware. Many academics did not have appropriate technical training; therefore, much of the technology was stored and not used for instruction (Bond et al., 2019). Furthermore, during this time, school leadership had not considered differentiation or appropriate teaching methodologies when using technology for instruction (Mishra et al., 2019).

According to Bond et al. (2019), in the 1980s research, microcomputers, multimedia databases, and resource centers were commonly used in education. The themes mentioned most often in the research that was published in the 1980s were learning, followed by educational design, training, problems, and schools. Also, distance learning appeared for the first time in literature and became part of the educational jargon; it was accepted as a legitimate teaching method. Bond et al. found that literature focused on the role of educational technology, its integration into higher education, student-centered approaches, and instructional design. Although an instructional design model did not exist, researchers agreed on course development;

course objectives and essential learning processes needed to be planned during the design process, expressly for higher education. However, this did not occur; academics were first considered the materials available (Bond et al., 2019).

Between 1900-1999, learning was again the focus of research, followed by software and courseware topics (Bond et al., 2019). Television was used for distance learning; however, researchers no longer investigated the effects of television on learning. Collaborative courseware was used for collaborative and constructivist approaches. Interactive multimedia (CD-ROMs), computer conferencing, and online tutoring became new topics among academics. Academics could e-mail students to provide video feedback on assignments. Bond et al, found that researchers inquired about ways students could reflect, self-assess, and provide multiple delivery methods for course materials to accommodate different learning styles and needs. Individuals could download courseware from the internet. Furthermore, universities with limited instructional technologists used computer-mediated training for professional development (Bond et al., 2019). Because of rapid changes, instructional designers needed more professional development on learning theories, media selection, and technology integration to write course modules.

Between 2000 to 2009, information and communication technology were implemented, and online collaboration resulted in numerous studies on online and blended learning (Bond et al., 2019). Bond et al. said studies explored assessment, e-portfolios, and the process of student learning. With the emerging collaboration tools and Web 2.0, individuals could develop and share knowledge online (Bonk & Wiley, 2020). Furthermore, researchers investigated how 3D virtual worlds, the internet, information, and communication technology could help students learn during this period. Although effective online pedagogy integrates interactive multimedia

that engages cognitive learning, academics needed more time to learn the technology. In addition, a lack of IT support constrained computer uses and internet access. Consequently, instructional design was refined, and academics and designers used instructional models to create learner-centered environments making it an acceptable medium of delivery (Bond et al., 2019).

After 2008 there was a 17% increase in research on distance learning (Bond et al., 2019). However, academics experienced problems integrating and implementing technology within their classroom instruction. The research focused on improving teaching and learning in the online environment. Topics such as technology integration, discussion forums, instructional design, blogs, wikis, and collaborative learning frequented academics' conversations as they grappled with curriculum and maintenance issues. Thus, distance learning became a reputable alternative teaching method (Bond et al., 2019). There was a focus on emerging learning technologies; unfortunately, they did not provide information on their use, the theories they exemplify, or the problems they could solve (Bonk & Wiley, 2020).

Bond et al. (2019) concluded that learning analytics and mobile collaborative learning were the primary themes that captured academics' attention between 2010 and 2018. Researchers used data to determine what tools could best improve student learning, and evidence-based assessment included self-reflection. There were concerns about ethics and privacy issues related to the use of student data. Furthermore, researchers explored how online collaboration communities could be used with 3D worlds and simulations in higher education to improve student learning. There was also an interest in learning to integrate various technologies to improve learning, including mobile learning, social media, and games. Finally, researchers recognized a greater need for technical support for academics and students (Bond et al., 2019).

Social Context

Distant learning was developed to address socioeconomic and political conditions by providing education for students who could not attend resident schools (Bozkurt, 2019). It makes more socioeconomic sense that all citizens have access to quality education to build a strong nation (Arman et al., 2020). Online education can provide quality education to all (Alqahtani & Rajkhan, 2020).

Grenon et al. (2019) contended that many academics had received inferior technology professional development that focused on teaching them how to use the technology and replicating traditional teaching methods rather than developing online pedagogy, selecting appropriate technology tools, integrating technology, or how technology tools facilitate learning. However, academics' beliefs regarding their pedagogical ideologies of how people learn will determine how they use technological tools (Amhag et al., 2019; Asamoah, 2019; Berry, 2019; Bhagat & Kim, 2020; Grenon et al., 2019; Jääskelä, et al., 2017; Kebritchi et al., 2017; Marcelo & Yot-Dominguez, 2019; Mishra et al., 2019; Şahin et al., 2021; Treve, 2021). These beliefs take time to change (Burke & Larmar, 2021; Cabero-Almenara et al., 2016; Jääskelä et al., 2017; Kebritchi et al., 2017). After academics received training on integrating educational technology within their curriculum, they overcame these obstacles (Harper & Neubauer, 2021; Marcelo & Yot-Dominguez, 2019; Müller et al., 2021).

Over 70% of higher education academics prefer face-to-face teaching (Boyer-Davis, 2020). In addition, Jääskelä et al. (2017) stated that "traditionalists do not typically recognize the need to change the prevailing education culture and feel extrinsically pressured to use ICT [information and communication technology] in their teaching" (p. 199-200). As a result, many academics have continued using traditional teaching methods, such as lecturing and substituting PowerPoint for the chalkboard (Marcelo & Yot-Dominguez, 2019; Tartavulea et al., 2020).

Furthermore, the lecture captures (recorded audio and visual of a lecture saved as a file) the academics created did not provide needed cognitive teaching strategies such as reflection, discussions, exploration of new perspectives, or social presence (connection with instructor and students) applying what they have learned to a new situation or solve a new problem rather than memorization, (Wood et al., 2021).

Research from 2005 to 2019 has shown that academics are overwhelmed by the long work hours required to prepare educational technology for teaching. Núñez-Canal et al. (2022) found that academics who lack technological knowledge refuse to leave the security of familiar practices and need to maintain their teacher image, which has contributed to their resistance to learning new teaching methods. As a result, they feel technostress when pressured to use educational technology without training. Fernández-Batanero et al. (2021) contended that technostress has increased exponentially within the last decade.

Emergency Remote Teaching

The members of the National Council for Online Education Include the Online Learning Consortium (OLC) (2022). are concerned that emergency remote teaching has been confused with high-quality online learning. "In distinguishing between the two, we sometimes use the lifeboat analogy-the lifeboat is great if the ship is sinking, but the onboard experience cannot be compared to that of a luxury cruise liner" (DiMaggio, 2022). Online learning carries a stigma of being lower quality than face-to-face learning, despite research showing otherwise (Hodges et al., 2020). When planning quality online instruction, a team of professionals carefully considers nine dimensions of the online learning design. It requires six to nine months for a team of professionals to plan, prepare, and develop a fully online university course before launching.

Emergency remote teaching differs from online teaching (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2023; Iglesias-Pradas et al., 2021; Schlesselman, 2020; Usher et al., 2021). Emergency remote teaching was an attempt to continue education during the pandemic in 2020. Courses that were designed for the traditional face-to-face classroom were quickly transferred online. Synchronous class meetings were conducted using collaboration tools like Zoom with the intent to replicate the face-to-face experience by academics who did not have the appropriate training or time needed to develop a quality online course (MNCO, 2022). Academics had to instantaneously transfer their course content online during emergency remote teaching. It was a chaotic, overwhelming measure to continue student learning mid-semester-- a significant liability in preparation and training (Usher et al., 2021). This hurried attempt to transfer online reinforced an idea among some academics that online learning is an inadequate mode of education (Hodges et al., 2020).

Hodges et al. (2020) explain that during emergency remote teaching, support teams who helped train faculty with online teaching could not support the entire faculty on such short notice. During interruptions, academics had to be creative and improvise; they experienced stress. During the pandemic, untrained academics hastily transferred their course materials onto the learning management system for emergency remote teaching. Without training, academics did not implement active, engaging activities or encourage a collaborative community, all critical aspects of online learning (Barak & Green, 2021; Berry, 2019; Kebritchi et al., 2017; Usher et al., 2021).

A Paradigm Shift

Kuhn's (2012) theory on the structure of scientific revolutions claims that the 2000s experienced a crisis where researchers began challenging current research paradigms causing scientific advances that led to a change in basic assumptions. Kuhn argues that it is time for e-

learning to become the default education mode. The 2000s experienced emerging technology, enormous learner demand, enhanced pedagogy, and erased budgets like four storm systems converging into the perfect e-storm (Bonk, 2004). Then, in 2020 a fifth storm system arrived, a deadly, long-lived pandemic that forced education online during the spring semester to avoid spreading the virus (Alqahtani & Rajkhan, 2020). Scientists predict that continued global warming will increase flooding, wildfires, tornados, earthquakes, hurricanes, tsunamis, and pandemics which will disrupt education (Frankenberg et al., 2013; Joe, 2022; Mahanama et al., 2022; National Academies Sciences Engineering Medicine, 2021) Before the COVID-19 pandemic's arrival, there was little research about the devastation these natural disasters inflict on education and how long it takes to recover (Alqahtani & Rajkhan, 2020; Frankenberg et al., 2013). However, research has shown that people feel a need to make improvements after a crisis to fix the problem (Bennett & McWhorter, 2021; Darling-Hammond & Hyler, 2020; Green et al., 2020). The consequence of the crisis is providing lessons to better meet the future needs of students and academics (DiMaggio, 2022).

Theoretical Context

Four seminal articles have had the most significant impact on shaping distance learning between 1916 and 2018 (Bozkurt, 2019). The concepts from these articles work together in the online environment. Vygotsky's (1978) article, "Mind in Society: Development of Higher Psychology Processes," is about the importance of social interaction, culture, and the relationship between language and cognitive development; it is one of the turning points for distant learning. He also introduced the zone of proximal development (ZPD) and scaffolding, all concepts used in distance education practice, instructional design, and learning. His contribution is significant to education overall.

Moore, M. G. (1989) “Three Types of Interaction” is the second of the four pivotal articles for remote learning. He expressed the importance of interactions between student to content, student to student and, student to educator in the online environment. Text is the oldest method of instruction; today, Web 2.0 interactive educational technology can be used to deliver content. Moore and Kearsley’s (1996) “Distance Education: A System View” described distance learning through a systems lens and research-based principles used during distance education (Bozkurt, 2019). Moore and Kearsley (1996) presented a model for distance education.

In the third pivotal article by Wenger (1998), “Communities of Practice: Learning as a Social System,” he proposed that learning takes place within communities, social practice, student participation, and interaction (Bozkurt, 2019). The community of practice consists of a network of individuals who share an interest in a problem or topic. They work together to solve problems by learning from others’ mistakes and successes. These communities are not defined by tasks but rather knowledge and grow through stages of development (Wenger, 1998).

Finally, Garrison et al (2001), wrote the fourth most pivotal article on distance learning, “Critical Thinking, Cognitive Presence, and Computer Conferencing in Distance Education.” They discussed the importance of community inquiry, cognitive presence, social presence, and teaching presence in online education. They suggest that cognitive presence in distance education can be achieved through computer conferencing and appropriate social presence (Garrison et al., 2001).

According to Moore and Kearsley (1996), and Otto Peters, a German professor, published an organizational theory in 1967 using industrial techniques stating that distance education fit their industrial and technical age; the English translation became available in the 1980s. Charles Wedemeyer designed the first formal distance course at the University of

Wisconsin-Madison in the 1970s. Michael Moore, his research assistant, liked Wedemeyer's idea of the independent learner and was influenced by humanistic psychologists and their concepts of andragogy and self-directed learning. In 1986, Charles Wedemeyer retired, and Michael Moore took over the seminar. In 1972, Michael Moore (1996), the father of distance education, was responsible for defining distance education and proposed a distance education pedagogy at the World Conference of the International Council for Correspondence Education held in Virginia. His pedagogy was a combination of Peter's Industrial Method and Wedemeyer's more learner-centered and learner-to-teacher dialogue approaches, known as the theory of Transactional Distance since 1986.

Moore and Kearsley (1996) explain that one of the most important constructs of distance education is the dialogue between the student and teacher and student to student. Dialogue accomplishes the lesson's objectives, installs a pleasurable sense of community that lessens the distance between individuals, promotes motivation, and draws on the Vygotskian concept of handover. (Vygotsky’s zone of proximal development concept states that the teacher slowly "hands over" learning control to the student.) The social constructivist perspective is that students take control of their learning by assimilating new knowledge with their existing knowledge. The internet made collaborative constructivist approaches possible for distance education.

Problem Statement

The problem was that during the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020-2021, academics did not have appropriate online professional development to facilitate and prepare for emergency remote teaching during COVID-19 pandemic 2020-2021 (Bonk & Wiley, 2020; García-Morales et al., 2021; James, 2021; Montenegro-Rueda et al., 2021; Oliveira et al., 2021; Pandya et al., 2022).

When the COVID-19 pandemic arrived, education worldwide was forced online within days (Alqahtani & Rajkhan, 2020; Armstrong-Mensah et al., 2020; Bennett & McWhorter, 2021; Carpenter et al., 2020; Carrillo & Flores, 2020; Christian et al., 2021; Cutri et al., 2020; Garcia & Weiss, 2020; Tartavulea et al., 2020). Academics experienced techno-overload as they grappled with meeting deadlines even if they had the correct online course design and online teaching experience (Boyer-Davis, 2020). Female academics also had the added childcare and house chores responsibilities, leaving them less time for research than their male colleagues (VanLeeuwen et al., 2021). Without preparation, academics struggled with the stress of becoming severely ill, isolation, and losing work and personal boundaries (Boyer-Davis, 2020; Christian et al., 2021; Serralta et al., 2020).

A Weak National Strategic Plan

President George W. Bush released the *National Strategic Plan* in 2005 that was the nation's most comprehensive pandemic plan. It included a distance learning plan to ensure that education continues with only a brief interruption (Lehmann & Chamberlin, 2009). However, the plan was designed to teach online for a few days, that might occur during inclement weather rather than an extended period such as the COVID-19 pandemic (Garcia & Weiss, 2020). Oliveira et al. (2021) state that after the 2009 H1N1 swine flu pandemic, the research found that higher education was not prepared for online education. However, they had not created a more comprehensive plan at that time. Omidire and Aluko (2022) found that "most of the emergency plans put in place by many institutions could not cope with the magnitude of the impact of the pandemic has had on education, while most institutional LMSs were inadequate for fully online classes" (p. 74). As a result, the national education plan was not robust enough for the COVID-19 pandemic (Garcia & Weiss, 2020).

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was explore the experiences of academics at the university level with emergency remote teaching during the 2020-2021 COVID-19 pandemic. At this stage in the research, emergency remote teaching will be defined as teaching and transitioning a course online without previous training and preparation during the COVID-19 shutdown (Hodges et al., 2020; Karakaya, 2021). Milheim's (2012) application of Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs was used for this phenomenological study's theoretical framework. This study provides information on lecture academics' deficiency needs and the growth academics experienced while transitioning their course online and teaching online during emergency remote teaching.

Significance of the Study

This section describes the theoretical, empirical, and practical significances of this study. Online course design and teaching require different pedagogy than traditional methods to be effective (Kilgour et al., 2019). However, many academics had not received appropriate online teaching training and preparation before transitioning.

Theoretical Significance

Although Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs is over 70 years old, Milheim's (2012) application of Maslow's theory is ten years. Consequently, more researchers have applied Maslow's theory in their studies, Milheim used her application of Maslow's theory to study students' needs in their online courses. Therefore, my study determined the viability of Milheim's application of Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory in the context of investigating the academic's needs during emergency remote teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Empirical Significance

The literature review has shown a gap in the literature about how lecture academics experienced emergency remote teaching (Zhang et al., 2022). However, some information was gleaned from related research regarding what and how educators experienced emergency remote teaching. Al Shlowiy et al. (2021) research was conducted to determine why teachers and students had miscommunications during the pandemic, and Boyer-Davis (2020) conducted a study to compare academics' technostress before and during the pandemic. Kulikowski et al. (2022) used Hackman and Oldham's job characteristics theory to determine the possible consequences of COVID-19 forced emergency remote teaching. Santos et al. (2021) and Serralta et al. (2020) did studies to determine how emergency remote teaching affected the university professor's mental health. Burke and Larmar's (2021) study suggest that the beliefs the academics hold concerning their pedagogical ideologies determine what and how they use technological tools.; Núñez-Canal et al. (2022) studied academics' technostress when pressured to use educational technology without training. Rapanta et al. (2020) did research on memory and learning. Tzafilkou et al. (2021) studied students' anxiety levels during COVID-19. This study helped fill the gap between what and how academics experienced emergency remote teaching.

Practical Significance

Understanding what and how the academics experienced while transitioning their courses online provides information for academics, administration, the public, and the government. It identified online education barriers that must be addressed and inform online course design to facilitate online course and intuitive technology navigation. The information from this study provides information for appropriate professional development design and provided information of when and how to provide technical support. Furthermore, the findings demonstrated a need to

adjust educator scheduling to improve academic performance and mental health. This study also provided evidence to inform a future crisis plan to meet the needs during long-lived pandemics or other crises. The information provided by this study will help academics experience greater job satisfaction, student satisfaction, and improve student and academic retention.

Research Questions

The researcher is the instrument used to collect data in qualitative research. The researcher crafts open ended questions to learn about the social problem. To learn what and how the university academics experienced emergency remote teaching, the researcher interviewed the participants and collected e-journals to study the phenomenon from the participants perspectives. These research questions guided this qualitative phenomenological study:

Central Research Question

How did academics at the university level experience transitioning their course and teaching online during emergency remote teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020-2021?

Sub-Question One

What professional training did the academics have before and during emergency remote teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020-2021?

Sub-Question Two

What pedagogical changes do academics associate with the experience of emergency remote teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020-2021?

Sub-Question Three

How do academics describe their emotional needs during emergency remote teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020-2021?

Definitions

1. *Academic* – Higher education course professor, instructor, and adjunct instructor.
2. *Burnout syndrome* - academics who have stressful, threatening situations at work that cause anxiety and fear over extended periods result in feeling exhausted. These feelings may affect their mental health, teaching ability, and relationships. In addition, pressuring academics to use educational technology without proper training causes some academics extreme stress and burnout (Fernández-Batanero et al., 2021).
3. *Emergency remote teaching* - During the COVID-19 pandemic, schools shut down to avoid spreading the contagious and deadly virus, and academics had to transition and teach their course online within a brief period even if they had not had training (Hodges et al., 2020; Karakaya, 2021).
4. *Face-to-face* – Learning in a traditional brick and mortar classroom with other students and an academic.
5. *Learner* – an individual who is taking an online course or learning how to design and teach one.
6. *Technostress* - Technostress is the term given for the stress academics feel when pressured to use educational technology without training (Fernández-Batanero et al., 2021).
7. *Threshold concept* - The threshold concept is a phenomenon in which troublesome knowledge clashes with personal beliefs that make current ideas inaccessible. Once understood, it opens a new way of thinking where the individual cannot resort to previous ways of thinking (Kilgour et al., 2019).

8. *Traditional academics* - Higher education face-to-face educators who use teacher-centered lecture delivery while students passively listen, take notes, and absorb knowledge. Collaboration is discouraged, and students work on assignments independently (Jääskelä et al., 2017).

Summary

Between 1970 to 2020, research has focused on how educational technology can improve students' learning. Many technology tools exist for academics to lessen their workload and improve student learning; however, budget cuts and a lack of educational technology knowledge and skills have obstructed implementation (Bonk, 2004; Bonk & Wiley, 2020). Educators have not received adequate training in online pedagogy, integrating technology in their curriculum, and selecting technology to obtain the desired outcomes (Berry, 2019; Kebritchi, et al., 2017; Marcelo & Yot-Dominguez, 2019; Mishra et al., 2019). Academics have experienced pressure to utilize educational technology as part of their evaluations which has significantly increased over the last decade. As a result, many academics have experienced high-stress levels resulting in burnout syndrome (Fernández-Batanero et al., 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic has intensified the situation by forcing education online to avoid spreading the highly contagious deadly virus. As a result, academics endured elevated levels of stress from heavy workloads, inadequate educational technology skills, job security, fear of contracting COVID-19, isolation, lack of technical support, lack of educational technology training, lack of work and home boundaries, and added homeschooling responsibilities (Carpenter et al., 2020; Serralta et al., 2020).

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to explore the experiences of academics at the university level with emergency remote teaching during the 2020-2021 COVID-19 pandemic. Academics had to transition their courses and teach online; many academics did not have online training before the transition. The theoretical framework was Milheim's (2012) application of Maslow's hierarchy of needs to online learning. Following the discussion of the theoretical framework, the related literature will be presented.

Theoretical Framework

This study applied Milheim's (2012) application of Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs as the theoretical framework. Milheim used the model to study the needs of students in their online courses. Abraham Maslow was concerned that there was no motivational theory, therefore in 1943 he introduced a motivation model of needs that explained five goals individuals needed to reach self-actualization (Milheim, 2012).

The first level of Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs is physiological needs, in which an individual requires air, food, water, sleep, and clothing before approaching the second need level. The second level is the individuals' need to feel safe and have personal security, employment, resources, health, and property before approaching the third level. The third level is the individual's need to belong. They need friendship, love, family, and a sense of connection before approaching the fourth level. The fourth level is that the individual needs prestige and feelings of accomplishment, respect, self-esteem, recognition, status, strength, and freedom. Finally, in the

fifth level, the individual desires to become the best they can be. The individual must sustain the previous levels before they can advance to sequential levels (Maslow, 1943).

Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs model was used to study human motivation in various fields, including psychology, staff development, healthcare, and education. Milheim (2012) applied Maslow's hierarchy of needs to explain learners' motivation and satisfaction with online learning. In Figure 1, Maslow's description of the levels is written on the left of the hierarchy, and Milheim's description of the levels is written to the right of the hierarchy. The first level in Milheim's (2012) application of Maslow's hierarchy of needs to online learning are their physiological needs. The first level of needs must be met in an online course before learning can occur. Learners need access to the internet, computer, and subject matter content; otherwise, learners will not be able to advance to the next level. The institution should provide these needs before the first day of class.

For the second level of needs, Milheim (2012) applies safety, shelter, familiarity, and comfort to the online environment. Learners (and academics as learners) need to feel safe in their online course environment otherwise; they become anxious. Learners need to know how to communicate, navigate the course (ability to move through the course easily), and be allowed time to acclimate to the unfamiliar environment during the first week. The academic needs to provide an online course orientation to help learners become comfortable with the new course. Also, for the second level of needs, when designing the online course, the academic needs to maintain a consistent format to help learners know what to expect as they navigate the course. Delivery of course material needs to be varied to maintain learner interest; however, it should be like what the students are familiar with. When applying Maslow's hierarchy of needs model to adult education, the highest threat to adult education is losing a job. An equivalent in the online

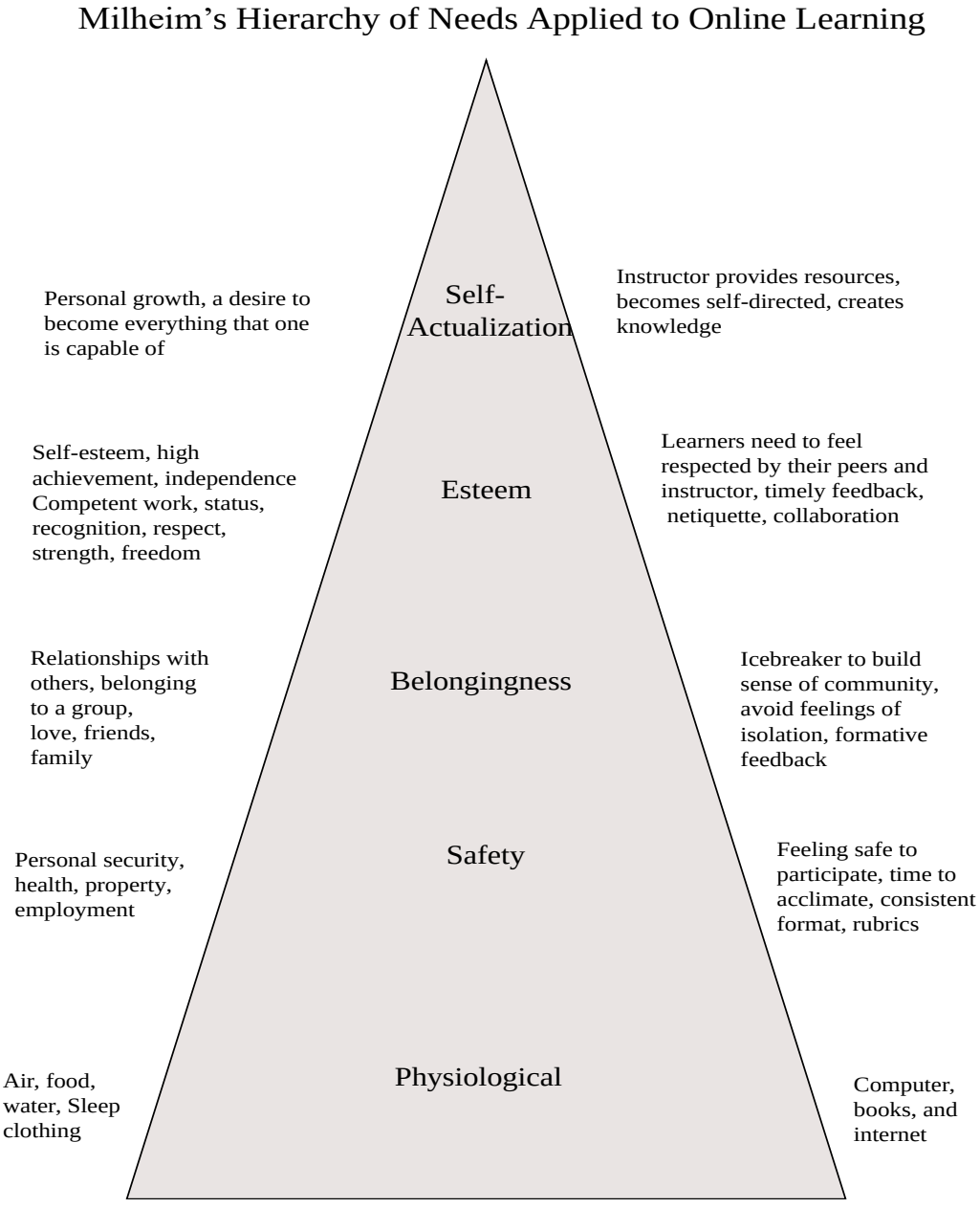
course would be the failure of an assignment or course that would lead to not graduating or delaying their graduation. Rubrics delineate the specific information about how assignments are graded to relieve grading uncertainty. Rubrics can provide clear information about expectations of timely posting, assignment criteria, and reference usage. Identifying and attending to potential stressors before and during an online course will lessen negative emotions.

For the third level Milheim (2012) contended that learners (and academic's as online learners) need to feel a sense of community to avoid feelings of isolation in the online environment. Consequently, collaboration is a crucial part of online learning. Learners develop relationships with their instructors and peers when discussing assignment prompts in online forums. An introductory post and an icebreaker assignment help build a sense of community at the onset of the course. Besides posting in the forums, academics can provide formative feedback and e-mail learners to ensure instructor presence. The academic needs to set clear expectations for learners' participation in the forums.

The fourth level of Maslow's hierarchy of needs is self-esteem. Milheim (2012) applies this level to the online course by contending that learners (and academics as learners) need to feel respected by their peers and academics in the online course. The academics' instructions about how learners are expected to participate also include information on proper netiquette in the online course. Other learners avoid participating when a peer posts insults or uses offensive language to attack others online (flaming in the forums). Learners who lack self-esteem often avoid initiating discussions. Timely positive feedback helps learners to feel respected. Student-centered collaboration, as opposed to teacher-centered transformative methods, work best in the online environment.

Figure 1

Diagram Illustrating Milheim's Hierarchy of Needs Applied to Online Learning



Note: Milheim's (2012) application of Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1943) to online learning.

For the fifth level Milheim (2012) says learners are intrinsically motivated to master a skill, they want to become self-directed, they are focused on accomplishing something of personal meaning, and they learn because it is pleasurable. Their instructor provides resources

for the students to help them personalize their learning. Learners can create e-portfolios with artifacts they created when working on assignments that are relevant to them.

Related Literature

Since the COVID-19 pandemic is recent, researchers are investigating its effects (Singh et al., 2022). Academics experienced a steep learning curve under the unprecedented constraints of transitioning their course online in record time under the duress of the pandemic (Schmidt-Crawford et al., 2021; The Chronicle of Higher Education. (2020). The related literature section presents online pedagogy, how teaching beliefs help or hinder academic performance, reasons why academics were not appropriately trained to teach online, educational psychology demonstrating how people learn under stress, and a look at that moment in time of the insurmountable issues academics faced during emergency remote teaching. Finally, Hackman and Oldham's job characteristics theory to determine the possible consequences of COVID-19 forced emergency remote teaching on the academics' desire to return to work (Kulikowski et al., 2022).

Online Pedagogy

Online course design differs from face-to-face course design. Online teaching requires pedagogy and specific strategies to engage students (Núñez-Canal et al., 2022; Rapanta et al., 2020). Online course design utilizes student centered active learning including integrative, constructivist, collaborative, reflective, and inquiry-based learning (Moore, 2019). Online pedagogy model is a combination of technological, pedagogical, and content knowledge (Amhag et al., 2019; Asamoah, 2019; Berry, 2019; Grenon, et al., 2019; Marcelo & Yot-Domingguez, 2019; Mishra et al., 2019). The pedagogical phenomenon of geographic separation between teachers and learners is the fundamental idea of the transactional distance theory. The distance

between the teacher and the student can create communication gaps that cause misunderstandings. To lessen the gap and increase a social presence, increase dialogue (Kulikowski et al., 2022; Moore & Kearsley, 1996). Moore and Kearsley explain that dialogue between the student and their academic is fundamental to online education. Therefore, Vygotsky's (1978) social constructivist approach is advantageous for online education. A social constructivist approach to online education requires changing attitudes and delivery from traditional methods. Course content is delivered to students using various online tools. Using the social constructivist approach, the instructor facilitates discussions in an asynchronous or forum by asking questions that require critical thinking; the instructor monitors their progress, scaffolds the content, and provides constructive feedback (Ballard & Butler, 2011; Chanpet et al., 2020; Donham et al., 2022; Hung & Chen, 2001). During class discussions, students are exposed to new perspectives that may cause them to question their assumptions, cross-examine concepts, shift their understandings, and make real-world connections (Sobko et al., 2020). It is not a teacher-centered approach where the teacher transmits knowledge and students passively listen (Chanpet et al., 2020; O'Connor, 2022). The instructor must provide a safe environment for the students to participate. That is done by modeling appropriate behavior and setting rules for discussions. Students are active learners as they build knowledge on what they know while collaborating on assigned topics with their peers and sharing experiences and ideas. They work on real-world relevant projects that require higher-order cognitive thinking (Ballard & Butler, 2011; Barak & Green, 2021; Chanpet et al., 2020). Students can display what they have learned by posting their artifacts in an e-portfolio (Chanpet et al., 2020). Students can learn more from other students' shared experiences and perspectives than from working independently (Barak & Green, 2021; Vygotsky, 1962).

Some elements remain the same as constructivist face-to-face course design. For example, during course design, assignment outcomes are aligned with assignment objectives (Barak & Green, 2021). Open-ended, relevant activities are planned to help students achieve the desired outcomes, and rubrics are used to identify what students are to learn and how students will be evaluated (O'Connor, 2022). The academic needs to know what the students know about the topic to better prepare and provide appropriate background knowledge and scaffolding. If students do not have prior knowledge, it would be challenging and tiring for them to build new knowledge (Song & Kidd, 2010). Bloom's taxonomy is also used in an online course and assignment design to plan critical thinking by starting learning activities on the low end of the taxonomy pyramid and progressing to the highest levels (Lehmann & Chamberlin, 2009). The Padagogy Wheel incorporates Bloom's taxonomy, action verbs, and the corresponding educational technologies used to facilitate the desired level of critical thinking for each assignment to integrate online pedagogy, technology, and content knowledge (Carrington, 2016). Research suggests that exclusive use of synchronous instruction may be problematic because it requires training for the academic to have a high degree of technological knowledge and student collaboration management (Grenon et al., 2019).

Secore (2017) asserts that social constructivism is a learner-centered theory. Online andragogy requires an effectual facilitator to achieve expected learning outcomes. Based on social constructivist theory, an online facilitator must demonstrate conscientious course design and delivery (Secore, 2017). Secore (2017) explains that when using social constructivism in online teaching, the facilitator provides multiple representations of relevant content, provides learners with opportunities for social negotiation and mediation, and provides formative feedback. The facilitator is a mentor, consultant, and coach rather than a traditional instructor

(Secore, 2017). The online facilitator organizes the course's rules, objectives, and timelines (Secore, 2017). They must provide a positive, friendly, and safe environment that helps to motivate their learners. The online facilitator provokes critical thinking by asking questions and emphasizing essential concepts and themes to help students grasp the relevance of unfamiliar information (Secore, 2017). Hence, learners practice skills that will improve their performance within their environment, extending beyond the traditional convention (Secore, 2017). Adult learners are self-directed and have acquired job and life experiences. Therefore, they are motivated to learn relevant real-world skills (Secore, 2017). Adult learners are motivated by their need for self-esteem, achievement, and a sense of accomplishment; the social constructivist model addresses these needs. In other words, online learners not only learn course content but also practice collecting data and analyzing a problem to act appropriately. Social constructivism mirrors the real world outside school (Secore, 2017).

Constructivist Learning Models

Instructional designs that increase the online learning experience are rooted in constructivist learning theory (Moore, 2019). For this theory, students are active learners rather than passive recipients of subject content. Students actively build new knowledge and skills by collaborating with their peers to solve problems and create artifacts (assignment products). They compare new knowledge gained from course materials, shared peer ideas, and experiences with previous knowledge to build new knowledge (Chanpet et al., 2020; Moore, 2019; O'Connor, 2022; Ouyang et al., 2020). Students create artifacts that solve real-world problems that are relevant to them. Moore provides four constructivist learning models: scenario-based learning, problem-based learning, critical incident-based learning, and design-based learning.

Scenario-based learning is an online pedagogical design that uses real-life scenarios where learners use their skills and knowledge to solve a problem (Moore, 2019). This model allows students to learn by doing and from their mistakes in a safe environment when combined with timely feedback. Problem-based learning is like scenario-based learning; except problem-based learning activities can be a problem situation, an event, or a legislation issue the students need to solve. Learners can work independently and work in a group to solve a problem (Moore, 2019). Critical incident-based learning is like scenario-based and problem-based learning; however, with critical incident-based learning, learners reflect on their lives to change their perceptions of something. The purpose is to teach learners to recognize these moments in their lives and learn from them (Moore, 2019). Design-based learning is used to provide design practice for engineering students. Students practice gathering information, identifying problems and constraints, generating ideas, creating prototypes, and evaluating. They practice procedures they will use as practitioners. The instructor becomes the facilitator, providing formative feedback and scaffolding learning to guide students to their desired goals (Moore, 2019). The online facilitator becomes the guide on the side rather than the sage on the stage (Foley-McCabe & Gonzalez-Flores, 2017).

Negative Emotions and Cognitive Overload

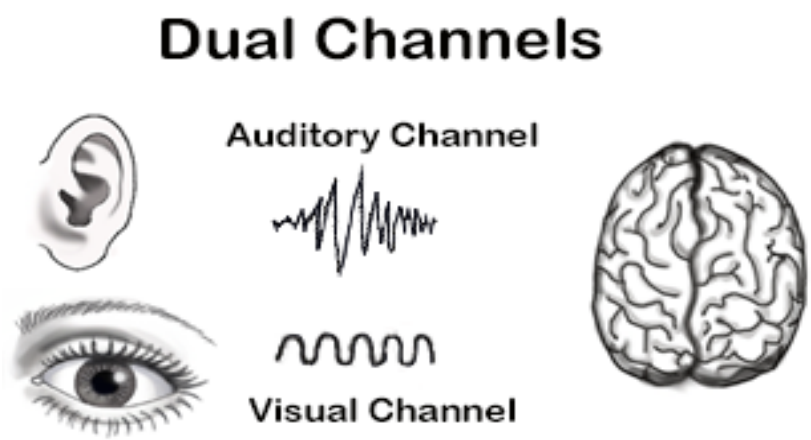
Trained academics and designers understand that cognitive load, anxiety, and emotions can affect learning quality (Kilgour et al., 2019; Marcelo & Yot-Dominguez, 2019; Naismith et al., 2015). The cognitive load theory states that information enters through the eyes and ears (see Figure 2), is processed in the short-term (working memory), and then stored in the long-term memory. When too much information exceeds the working memory compacity, some information is not stored in the long-term memory and is forgotten (Schunk, 2016). Learners

who experience high anxiety have reduced memory span, loss of concentration, lack of confidence, and insufficient reasoning power (Mamolo, 2022; Spinks et al., 2023). The COVID-19 pandemic has increased anxiety levels significantly (Wong et al., 2021). Furthermore, academics were provided with an overabundance of resources in a brief time, adding to their cognitive overload (Singh et al., 2022).

Collaborative learning provides *just-in-time learning;* learners receive the information needed for the current challenge [chunking] rather than all the information at once. When information is subdivided between peers and provided when requested, it avoids cognitive overload (Schunk, 2016). Video conferences and unnecessarily rich multimedia increases cognitive overload, called mental fatigue (Song & Kidd, 2010). When too much information is taken in through visual channels, the working memory cannot process and send it to the long-term memory; some information is forgotten (see Figure 3) (Schunk, 2016; Song & Kidd, 2010). The working memory becomes overloaded when text is included with the video that has audio. The working memory cannot process all the information, so some information is forgotten (see Figure 4) (Song & Kidd, 2010).

Figure 2

Digital Drawing Illustrating Dual Channels

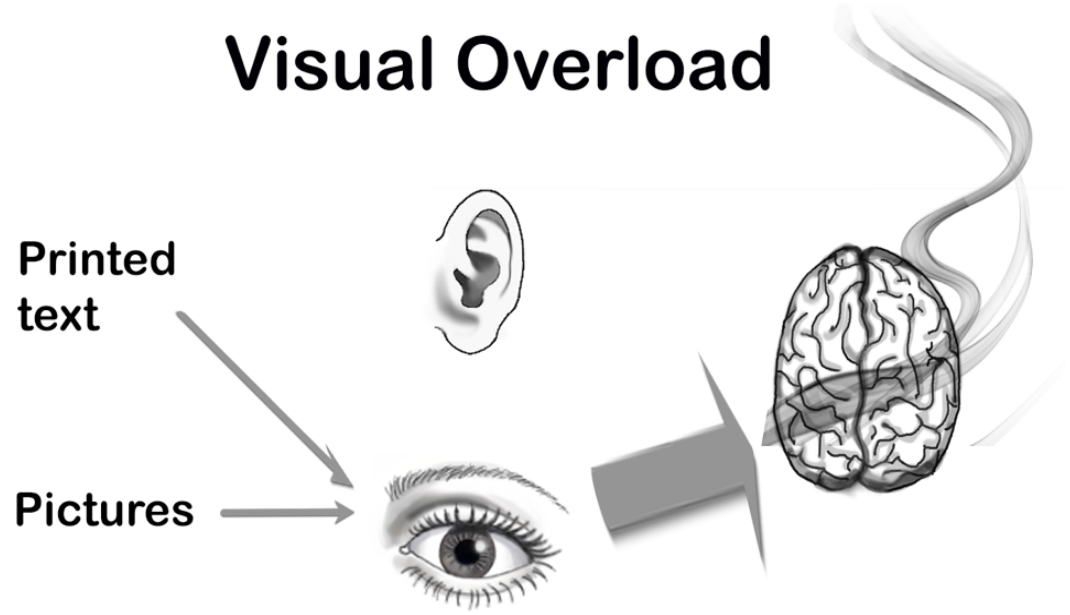


Note. Audio and visual information enters through *Dual Channels* to the working memory, processed, and sent to the long-term memory.

Tzafilkou et al. (2021) argue that trained academics and course designers consider students' emotional needs when designing remote learning. Their study has shown that students have experienced severe anxiety levels during COVID-19 and argue that online courses need to be designed to require student effort, attention, and constructive activities to reduce feelings of boredom. These educational components increase positive emotions, engagement, and performance. A moderate level of anxiety improves academic achievement. Students become bored when exposed to low anxiety levels, while higher levels increase cognitive load.

Figure 3

Digital Drawing Illustrating Visual Overload

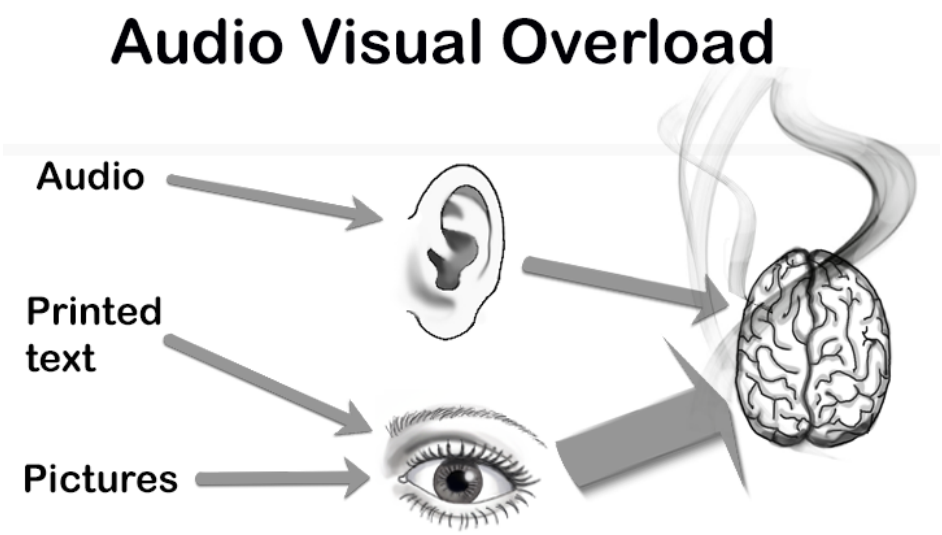


Note. Image and text information entering through the visual channel to the working memory. causing a *Visual Overload*.

The working memory cannot process the large amount of information and send it to the long-term memory. Some information is forgotten. The working memory creating an *Audio-Visual Overload*. The working memory is not able to process the large amount of information and send it to the long-term memory, and some information is forgotten.

Figure 4

Digital Drawing Illustrating Audio Visual Overload



Note. Images, text, and audio information entering through both the visual and audio channels to the working memory creating an *Audio-Visual Overload*. The working memory is not able to process the large amount of information and send it to the long-term memory, and some information is forgotten.

Threshold Concepts

Kilgour et al. (2019) identified threshold concepts related to online pedagogy that challenge face-to-face academics' preconceived teacher beliefs. They identified six threshold concept themes from previous research: online pedagogy, technology, educational resources, preparation time, online strategies, and techno fear. These threshold concepts make online

pedagogy challenging for some traditional lecture academics to comprehend but are essential to mastering online teaching, engaging online learners, and designing online courses. Kilgour et al. found that traditional face-to-face academics who encounter barriers to successful online learning often believe that technology is not required to teach online successfully, or they believe that they need to be technology experts. Two central threshold concepts they struggle with when transferring online are a shift to collaboration and inquiry-based approaches rather than using transmission of knowledge methods. Initial research suggests that quality online teaching requires academics to provide a safe, flexible, collaborative environment and select the appropriate technology to facilitate desired learning outcomes (Kilgour et al., 2019). While earlier research has focused more on online pedagogy issues and effective course design, recent research suggests that educators who accept the conceptual change demonstrate greater readiness than those with more experience (Kilgour et al., 2019). Lehmann and Chamberlin (2009) stated that effective online facilitators need to know the difference between constructivist (student-centered) and instructivist (teacher-centered) practices and their purpose in developing knowledge. They both have their place in online pedagogy. Academics need to understand social learning to differentiate instruction to meet various learning styles, and a thorough grasp of andragogy and Gardener's multiple intelligences theories.

Kilgour, et al. (2019) concluded that the learning management system needs synchronous and asynchronous communication, monitoring, and learner feedback capabilities. Furthermore, they stipulate that learning activities, assessments, and feedback must align to ensure learner engagement. Online course design is critical for successful online teaching and learning (Kilgour et al., 2019). The online course requires a new mode of interaction and relationships that include learner to content, learner to learner, and learner to teacher. Online course design takes longer

than face-to-face courses. Educators need to understand that learners can learn without the academic's presence. The academic's presence is different from the face-to-face presence; the academics need to facilitate collaboration between students and present content.

Learners and academics are familiar with learning and teaching in a traditional brick-and-mortar classroom, and face-to-face academics have knowledge and experience that they can apply to online teaching (Itow, 2020). When academics had their institutions' support when they transitioned to online teaching, they were less likely to resort to the transmissive teaching methods (teacher-centered methods) they used when teaching face-to-face. In addition, they were less likely to feel inadequate, frustrated, exhausted, and hold feelings of resentment toward their institution (Naylor & Nyanjom, 2021). Itow (2020) explained that academics design their online courses to scaffold learning to facilitate learner transformation from information consumers to co-authors of knowledge. Learners who apply their understanding to relevant real-world assignments practice specific skills as developing experts (Itow, 2020).

Providing formative feedback can be laborious when learners want detailed feedback of what the academics want instead of how the concept relates to their understanding or situation (Itow, 2020). Academics must teach learners what to expect when taking an online course. When learners assume that online courses are basal and insubstantial, they find the online transition challenging because they must autonomously schedule their time and workload (Itow, 2020). Almazova et al. (2020) argued that academics must remember that online learning is new to some learners, and they need time to adjust to their self-regulation challenges.

Self-Efficacy

Taufiq-Hail et al. (2021) argued that learners' positive beliefs in their cognitive resources, and confidence in their capabilities to perform the required skills to handle complex situations

successfully, are motivated and more likely to persist in achieving their objectives. In contrast, individuals with negative beliefs about their abilities are less motivated to commit themselves to reaching goals. They may view the challenge as threatening and avoid the situation, reducing their performance. However, individuals with a supportive network help them feel optimistic, improving performance is the major considerable influence on increasing positive feelings and enabling academics to perform required tasks during the COVID-19 lockdown. Taufiq-Hail et al. (2021) suggest that universities use strategies to promote positive feelings that raise morale and train technical skills and psychological well-being, to retain work stability during COVID-19.

Nodding's Framework of Moral Education

Burke and Larmar (2021) stated that learners enrolled in online courses could feel isolated and disempowered; therefore, Nodding's framework of moral education is incorporated into online course design to promote transformative learning. Burke and Larmar (2021) recommend a four-component framework to establish caring relationships.

1. Academics need to demonstrate caring behavior and show their personality.
2. The academics engage in genuine dialogue with learners to demonstrate empathy, appreciation, and understanding.
3. Learners must have opportunities to practice caring in a supportive environment.
4. The academics promptly acknowledge and affirm caring responses from learners and confirm them with encouraging feedback (Burke & Larmar, 2021).

Facilitators need to remind learners of assignment deadlines, communicate course expectations, provide information about technical support, how to navigate the online

environment, and give suggestions for time management. These improve learner satisfaction and attrition (Brown et al., 2022). Learners must understand that they must follow proper netiquette during discussions and know the consequences of these non-negotiable conditions (Lehmann & Chamberlin, 2009; Vai & Sosulski, 2022). It is essential for academics to communicate the value of online course engagement; they need to monitor learner engagement and affirm positive engagement (Brown et al., 2022). At the beginning of the course, an icebreaker assignment helps learners experience and practice participating in a caring, collaborative community and begin building a kinship with their peers and facilitator.

Discussions help academics learn about students' knowledge, skills, attitudes, and experiences, essential information that provides the academics with the learner's zone of proximal development (Boettcher & Conrad, 2016). Burke and Larmar (2021) stated that the tone used in asynchronous discussion forums is essential. Learners cannot hear the reflection in the facilitator's voice or see facial expressions or body language when using text to communicate. Therefore, it is essential for the facilitator to use a caring, friendly tone when providing feedback to learners. They must avoid using humor and sarcasm; they do not translate well (Lehmann & Chamberlin, 2009; Vai & Sosulski, 2022).

Whittet's (2021) study of lecture academics with experience working online has shown that work overload can have catastrophic effects on academics, students, institutions, families, and friends. Furthermore, work overload exhausts academics, and they may become disengaged, distance themselves emotionally and cognitively, and become less responsive to learner needs and work demands. Work overload can result in their becoming disillusioned with teaching in the online environment. Whittet's study of academics' work overload showed that although the academics felt a need to maintain a sense of community, demonstrate care, and provide

constructive feedback, it was extremely stressful as they tried to complete quality work on time. As a result, they sometimes had to sacrifice quality feedback and the creation of new course materials. In addition, academics suffered from working through weekends, poor nutrition, lack of physical activity, diminished physical and mental health, and guilt from missing family events. These academics said they did not realize how much time online teaching required and did not have time for self-care. The Members of the National Council for Online Education (2022) explained that when a team of professional online course developers design quality online courses, they carefully plan academics and students' workload and try to ensure that they receive proper training.

Universal Design for Learning

Federal legislation recommended universal design for learning (UDL) for higher education (Authenticated U.S. Government Information GPO., 2008; CAST, 2015; Ed Tech Developer's Guide: A primer for software developers, startups, and entrepreneurs., 2022; Kluth, 2020; Song & Kidd, 2010). All courses designed using UDL comply with two civil rights laws, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (Authenticated U.S. Government Information GPO., 2008; CAST, 2015; Ed Tech Developer's Guide A primer for software developers, startups, and entrepreneurs., 2022; Kluth, 2020; Song & Kidd, 2010). UDL was initially intended for learners with disabilities; however, it is also implemented for general education (Authenticated U.S. Government Information GPO., 2008; CAST., 2015; Ed Tech Developer's Guide A primer for software developers, startups, and entrepreneurs., 2022; Kluth, 2020; Song & Kidd, 2010). UDL benefits all learners because the flexibility of how course content is delivered, multiple methods of engagement, and multiple methods on how learners can demonstrate what they have learned (Authenticated U.S. Government Information

GPO., 2008; CAST., 2015; Ed Tech Developer's Guide A primer for software developers, startups, and entrepreneurs., 2022; Kluth, 2020; Song & Kidd, 2010). When designing face-to-face and online courses using UDL, academics remove curriculum instruction and assessment obstacles to facilitate learning. Online facilitators incorporate best practices to recruit interests, sustain learner effort and persistence, self-regulation, expression, communication, language, and comprehension. Websites need to be uncluttered and utilize white space to provide appropriate readability to enable learners to use text readers. The text needs to be scalable, in high contrast with the background, and avoid colors that individuals with color blindness have difficulty seeing. An accurate script needs to be provided for videos (Authenticated U.S. Government Information GPO., 2008; CAST., 2015; Ed Tech Developer's Guide A primer for software developers, startups, and entrepreneurs., 2022; Kluth, 2020; Song & Kidd, 2010).

Pre-COVID-19 Online Teaching Challenges

Many academics hold teacher-centered beliefs that they experienced as students and do not believe they need to integrate technology into their curriculum; they teach the way they were taught (Jääskelä et al., 2017; Marcelo & Yot-Dominguez, 2019; Mishra et al., 2019; Schlesselman, 2020; Torres Martín et al., 2021). After the National Council of Educational Technology emphasized the need for teacher training, professional development became essential. However, before the pandemic, academics' schedules did not allow enough time for them to become proficient. In addition, academics were suspicious that they would be forced to teach online and were unwilling to attend training (Bond et al., 2019). Many academics were unsatisfied with their online professional development claiming that it was impractical and often did not attend training (Berry, 2019). In the early 2000s, many academics who did not have online training when designing their course did not include active learning components, allow

collaboration, achieve elevated levels of learning, or provide student satisfaction (Lehmann & Chamberlin, 2009). Research has shown that academics with high access to technology did not teach better than academics with less access; therefore, the access to technology did not improve teaching, they need training to ensure effective online instruction (Grenon et al., 2019). According to the Distance Learning Statistics (2021), in 2019, only 38% of academics had taught online, and 67% had online professional development. Educational technology has been a point of discussion, but there is little research on tools to reach desired educational outcomes; the theories exemplify or suggest the problems they can solve (Bonk & Wiley, 2020; Mishra et al., 2019). There may be an issue with not knowing how to teach academics to transition from face-to-face to online (Kebritchi et al., 2017).

COVID-19 Pandemic

Garcia and Weiss (2020) assert that few academics had online training and had little technology support during the pandemic. As a result, the traditional teacher-centered methods they continued to use did not achieve desired outcomes (Garcia & Weiss, 2020). Academics had difficulties developing skills using technological tools, learning management systems, and online methodological strategies before the pandemic (Santos et al., 2021). During the pandemic shutdown, academics did not have time for training and planning; they could not build and guide effective courses in a brief time. During the COVID-19 pandemic, experienced online academics were essential to support their colleagues transitioning online (Toner et al., 2022).

Donham et al. (2022) stated that emergency remote teaching was the best solution universities had to continue teaching mid-semester during the pandemic. Emergency remote teaching provided a way for academics to continue teaching during the crisis, aiding their willingness to make the transition. Traditional academics were not qualified to deal with learning

new skills while teaching under arduous duress (Donham et al., 2022). However, for some, the transition may have provided a sense of normalcy during a time inundated with tension and anxiety. The COVID-19 crisis intensified academics' anxiety and distorted their ability to cope, which contributed to feelings of failure. Whether they will continue to teach face-to-face or online in the future depends on their situational experiences (Meishar-Tal & Levenberg, 2021).

Müller et al. (2021) conducted a qualitative study in Singapore to explore academics' online transition experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. They found that academics were stressed as they transitioned into online teaching. However, their stress was reduced as they gained confidence. Some found value in online delivery and considered teaching their course as a blended course after the pandemic (Tartavulea et al., 2020). Parte and Herrador-Alcaide (2021) found that during the pandemic, academics who received online training and experienced teaching online before the pandemic experienced less stress, burnout, and depersonalization compared to academics who were not experienced teaching online the pandemic. In addition, trained academics who used online pedagogical methodologies experienced an enhanced sense of well-being, providing them with their psychological and social needs (Cohut, 2018; García-Álvarez et al., 2021; Parte & Herrador-Alcaide, 2021).

Bergart et al. (2023) shared their experiences forming a supportive virtual group of academics during the COVID-19 pandemic. Most academics benefited from resources to support their online transition during the pandemic shutdown; however, some adjunct educators had little to no support and were left to work independently. As a result, 12 adjunct academics formed a virtual group to provide each other with mutual support and share ideas and resources (Bergart et al., 2023). Most of the members did not have experience teaching online. Members of this support group were from the United States, New Zealand, Canada, and Australia. They described

pivoting to online teaching without adequate time to prepare, without their university's support, and their lack of technological skills. The themes of the adjunct academics' weekly one-hour meetings focused on their successes and failures of teaching online, feelings of isolation, and anxiety. They also discussed the difficulty of keeping their learners engaged. Members sent caring e-mail messages to each other that extended outside of their meetings which helped them to feel respected by their peers, feel a sense of belonging, and be emotionally connected without judgment. As a result, their confidence in their abilities to teach online quickly increased. The collaboration gave them a global perspective as they learned how the pandemic affected education in other countries and the different opportunities they had to teach and learn. That experience established the importance of life-long learning. Furthermore, they recognized that some institutions are highly competitive, making it challenging to admit vulnerability to their colleagues, unlike their group experience (Bergart et al., 2023).

COVID-19 and Mental Health

The full consequences of the pandemic are unknown; however, individuals under similar conditions suffered from a persistent mental health issue called peritraumatic psychological suffering (Boyer-Davis, 2020; Santos et al., 2021; Serralta et al., 2020) People who experience trauma may develop emotional and physiological distress. Depending on the perceived intensity of the experience, individuals can develop permanent posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Trauma overwhelms the brain causing it to shut down the body and reasoning to protect itself. Symptoms include anxiety, depression, fear, sweating, shaking, flashbacks, and insomnia. Triggers can evoke symptoms decades later. In the United States, Serralta et al. (2020) found that every day since March 10, 2020, the crisis has caused an 11% increase in individuals' stress levels. In addition, individuals who experience exceptionally threatening, terrifying, or

traumatizing events have developed post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms (Bonsaksen et al., 2020). Research conducted in the United States has shown that 307 academics experienced a significant level of technostress before COVID-19 and experienced even higher technostress during the COVID-19 pandemic (Boyer-Davis, 2020). A study by Souza et al. (2020), revealed that out of 115 academics, 46% suffered a high degree of anxiety during the pandemic. A study in Norway suggests that 19.5% of women and 12.5% of men suffered PTSD symptoms during the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic (Bonsaksen et al., 2020). According to Bonsaksen et al. (2020), emerging research has shown that 7%-54% of the public show PTSD symptoms after experiencing exceptionally threatening events.

Female academics were more likely to seek mental health treatment during the pandemic; unless they had someone to talk to (Carpenter et al., 2020). Many academics worked from home while homeschooling their children, sharing space and technology with their children and spouses (Carpenter et al., 2020; Górska et al., 2021; Ramlo, 2021; Santos et al., 2021). Guy and Arthur (2020) studied female academics and found they also had additional house chores and childcare responsibilities, leaving less time to research during the pandemic than their male colleagues. A study of 1122 academics conducted by The Chronicle of Higher Education found that more than half considered retiring or leaving higher education and changing careers during the pandemic (Schmidt-Crawford et al., 2021). They understood the challenges their institutions were facing; however, they suffered burnout from the stresses of working untold hours supporting their students and colleagues, the loss of work and life balance, faculty evaluation and tender concerns (Schmidt-Crawford et al., 2021). Academics experienced the digital divide based on inadequate internet access and poor technical skills during the COVID-19 pandemic (Donham et al., 2022; Stewart et al., 2021). Many academics not on a tenure track did not receive

informative e-mails intended for the university's faculty concerning campus closure and transitioning online; however, they were resilient and networked on social media to share news, tips, and resources. Networking between professionals helps mentees persist through the isolation and stress they experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic; however, those without those relationships become particularly vulnerable (Sellers et al., 2021).

COVID-19 and Performance Pressures

During the 2020 summer semester, the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in 15%-35% of learners withdrawing from their studies, demanding tuition and room and board refunds. In addition, Beck et al. (2022), referring to the Distance Learning Statistics (2021), stated that 11% of learners delayed their education during the pandemic and did not plan to return to school in the fall of 2020, especially first-year students and international learners. Many universities laid off adjunct and tenured faculty due to lowered income, adding to the stress of heavy workloads (Edwards et al., 2021). Faculty experienced burnout, causing productivity loss and detached attitudes, significantly impacting learners' sense of inclusion. Faculty at many research universities experience performance pressures to regularly publish to maintain their teaching position (Holtfreter et al., 2020).

Because online teaching requires more time for course development, instruction, and providing learners with emotional and technical support during the pandemic, the academics' workload increased from 32.5 hours - 45 hours a week to 24/7, far beyond the contractual workload (Górska et al., 2021; Santos et al., 2021; Steinberger et al., 2021). The ideal online class size is 15 learners; however, during the pandemic, many academics had to transition large classes of several hundred learners to the online environment (Buckley et al., 2021; Tomei, 2006; Tomei & Nelson, 2019). Fifty-six percent of learners said they participated in live online

discussions, which may not allow a sufficient opportunity for learners and their academics to engage (Buckley et al., 2021). Furthermore, academics could not create the caring and supportive community learners needed (Aladsani, 2022; Burke & Larmar, 2021). Buckley et al. (2021) found that 47% of their learners sometimes turned on their cameras, while 30% never turned them on. Consequently, academics experience increased isolation and perception of speaking alone when learners turn off their cameras and audio during videoconferences (Buckley et al., 2021; Santos et al., 2021). Mpungose (2023) said that frustrated academics who lacked training and online teaching strategies became anxious, unmotivated, and rebellious. Furthermore, 62% of academics felt irritated because of low learner attendance (Gupta et al., 2022).

COVID-19 and Systemic Inequalities

Since the pandemic, the digital divide has become alarmingly apparent (COVID-19 and Disparities in Education: Collective Responsibility Can Address Inequities, 2020; Garcia & Weiss, 2020; Nicola et al., 2020). During COVID-19, the digital divide widened, hindering education, and inhibiting underprivileged learners from escaping poverty (The Lancet, 2021; Müller et al., 2021). Many of them lost their jobs during the pandemic resulting in internet disconnection. As a result, 53% of college learners have experienced a decreased income, while 60% had their hours cut, 35% were laid off or furloughed, and 27% applied for unemployment (Beck et al., 2022). Underprivileged learners were also more likely to have family members who had fallen ill from the virus, adding to their stressful conditions (Distance Learning Statistics, 2021; Gonzales et al., 2020; Pelosi & Vicars, 2020). As a result, learners fell behind in their studies (Garcia & Weiss, 2020).

Although 97.8% of underprivileged learners of modest means had laptops, they experienced more than 21% a month of technical failures and could take two to four weeks to

replace (Distance Learning Statistics, 2021). Sixteen percent of the learners said replacing them would take six months, while 12% said they could not replace them. In addition, 53% of learners said COVID-19 had affected their family's financial situation resulting in Wi-Fi disconnection (Distance Learning Statistics, 2021). Learners who experienced technology maintenance problems also suffered lower grades (Gonzales et al., 2020). However, privileged learners who could afford to maintain their technology could cope with transitioning online (COVID-19 and Disparities in Education: Collective Responsibility Can Address Inequities, 2020; Donham et al., 2022; Frankenberg et al., 2013; Garcia & Weiss, 2020; Nicola et al., 2020; Torres Martín et al., 2021).

Learners and academics living in rural areas also suffered from poor internet coverage during the pandemic (Cullinan et al., 2021; Lai & Widmar, 2021). In 2018, only 51.6% of rural individuals in the United States had internet access of 250/25 megabits per second broadband speed, compared to 94% of urban individuals. According to the Federal Communications Commission, 250/25 Mbps is moderate usage that supports four devices. A broadband of fewer than 25 Mbps can only support one or two devices simultaneously. These lower bandwidth internet connections could not support the multitasking needs of homeschooling and adults working online; a family using multiple devices needed over 50 Mbps. As a result, these individuals staggered their internet use, making it challenging to keep scheduled online meetings. In addition, many rural residents often had access to only one service provider and could not access reliable internet service regardless of price (Lai & Widmar, 2021).

Furthermore, when individuals have access to only one service provider, they must accept their coverage even if it is weak (Lai & Widmar, 2021). Students and academics experienced limited internet services and videoconference challenges (Itow, 2020). Consequently, rural

students and academics had to travel long distances to use public hot spots or fail to meet their educational responsibilities during the pandemic (Lai & Widmar, 2021).

Courses needed to be designed using Universal Design for Learning to remove barriers to learning; however, academics did not use universal design for learning in the abrupt transfer of their courses online during the pandemic. Consequently, learners with disabilities struggled with accessibility issues. (Bartz, 2020; Garcia & Weiss, 2020). In addition, the most vulnerable students have experienced increased technology-related issues as the pandemic widened the digital divide. Some of the issues the students with disabilities experienced: study materials needed to be adapted for students who have visual and hearing issues, flexible scheduling for students who are chronically ill, students who suffer from anxiety when under stressful situations, students who have motor disorders, and students who had relationship issues with their lecturers (Bartz, 2020). The challenges that individuals who have disabilities and the underprivileged experience intensified during the pandemic and derailed their ability to continue their education as students who had the means were able to cope (Bartz, 2020; Bhagat & Kim, 2020; COVID-19 and Disparities in Education: Collective Responsibility Can Address Inequities, 2020; Donham et al., 2022; Frankenberg et al., 2013; Garcia & Weiss, 2020; Gonzales et al., 2020; Nicola et al., 2020; Torres Martín et al., 2021).

Overwhelmed Parents

Touloupis (2021) found that the COVID-19 pandemic left parents in a vulnerable low resilient emotional state. Besides the fear of contracting COVID-19, parents grappled with digital literacy, technical issues, financial concerns, and added technology purchases (Touloupis, 2021). To avoid the spread of the COVID-19 virus, all day-care and senior centers were closed. As a result, children were at home, and grandparents could not help to care for them due to the risks of

catching and spreading the virus (The Chronicle of Higher Education, 2020). Consequently, parents could not always assist their children with homework because they needed the necessary technological skills or educational knowledge (Touloupis, 2021). These parents became more controlling and demanding when participating in their children's homework. Children with learning disabilities need more supportive and personalized homework guidance. In addition, parents needed instruction on how to help their children with their online homework.

Teacher-Student Miscommunication

During the pandemic, academics suddenly had to transfer their face-to-face courses online and did not know how long they would be teaching online before returning to face-to-face teaching (Al Shlowiy et al., 2021). Administrators recognized that academics did not have adequate training prior to the transition and began to inundate them with email, tutorials on how to use their learning management system, conference technologies, and other resources, adding to the confusion and teacher-student miscommunication (Al Shlowiy et al., 2021). The sudden transfer online may have had a negative effect on students' and academics' self-confidence, attitudes, and anxiety. Classroom climate depends on the teacher supporting students' academic, emotional, and mutual respect. If the students do not perceive that their teacher cares about their well-being, they could become less willing to communicate. These issues may have diminished the perceived usefulness and ease of online learning (Al Shlowiy et al., 2021).

After conducting their study on emergency remote teaching during COVID-19, Al Showy et al. (2021) offered suggestions on how to avoid teacher-student miscommunications when teaching online. Academics play an essential role in the classroom climate by providing learners with academic, emotional, and mutual support (Al Shlowiy et al., 2021). A positive classroom climate provides learners with three psychological needs: autonomy, relativity, and competence.

A positive academic-learner relationship increases participation and motivation. Furthermore, online academics must provide their learners with more than support and resources. They need to provide clear instructions and information on what learners should do in their online courses; it saves the learners and academics time and frustration from addressing nonexistent issues (Al Shlowiy et al., 2021). For example, learners need information about what technical skills they will need, the tasks they will perform, and a detailed description of academic dishonesty. In addition, the academics' approval and passion for technology will be a crucial influence on how their learners perceive it. When academics do not have the necessary training or confidence in technology, their attitude gets passed on to their learners (Al Shlowiy et al., 2021).

Hackman and Oldham's Job Characteristics Theory

Kulikowski et al. (2022) used the theoretical framework from Hackman and Oldham's job characteristics theory to determine the possible consequences of COVID-19 forced emergency remote teaching. They considered six-core motivational job characteristics: "task identity, task significance, skill variety, feedback from the job, autonomy, and social dimensions," (Kulikowski et al., 2022, p. 176) to predict how forced emergency remote teaching may have influenced academics who previously had not learned how to teach online and lack online pedagogy competencies.

Many academics felt they had not provided their learners with their entire planned curriculum and the needed knowledge their students needed, leaving academics unable to meet their perceived task identity needs (Kulikowski et al., 2022). Academics gauge their effectiveness from finished assignments, exams, and student course evaluations. However, the evaluations were not required, and most students did not spend the extra time providing course feedback. Consequently, academics were required to provide evidence that they had provided

exceptional services during emergency remote teaching, which diminished task significance. Academics claimed they could have been more effective if they had the skills and technology required to transition and teach online. During emergency remote teaching, the academics did not have the autonomy to make pedagogical decisions, they were required to use unfamiliar methods, and emergency remote teaching did not provide the academics with their social needs.

Kulikowski et al. (2022) concluded that the academics who aimed to increase their technology skills may have experienced a positive effect, while academics who lacked instructional technology skills may have experienced a negative skill variety need. The study has shown only one positive indicator out of six from Hackman and Oldham's job characteristics theory. The results suggest that academics experienced an overwhelmingly negative impression of forced emergency remote teaching.

Academic Publications During COVID-19

Zhang et al. (2022) conducted a bibliometric review of 1061 research documents from 103 countries conducted on online learning between January 2020 to August 2021 during COVID-19 to explore new knowledge and practice trends in higher education. The journals with the most publications were not the most prestigious, peer-reviewed publications because they take more time to process and have fewer issues and articles than those with more articles on the topic. Open-access publishing allowed for quick publications of research during COVID-19.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, there was more research on medical and chemistry than education (Zhang et al. (2022). The education topics they investigated the most were emergency online education (remote teaching, distance learning, online teaching), collaborative learning, hands-on learning, and inquiry-based learning. In addition, they investigated answers for the unexpected challenges related to their experiences of emergency remote teaching. They

encountered issues of lack of student motivation and digital skills, mental health, internet infrastructure, and inequity concerns. Zhang et al. (2022) also noted that technological advances had overtaken educational research.

Zhang et al. (2022) recommended that academics focus on online pedagogy rather than technology. However, the research conducted during the pandemic was to determine the effectiveness of various technologies before understanding how they are used to facilitate online teaching. Student learning needs to be at the center of online learning. Collaboration between students and their instructor builds trust and online communities. In addition, the facilitator needs to plan critical thinking activities and strategies to help students manage their time. More research needs to be done on student educational and mental needs (Zhang et al., 2022).

Future Crisis Readiness

Before the pandemic, many higher education academics needed to be adequately trained to teach online (Bond et al., 2019). Professional development and preservice teacher education issues have been recurring over the past five decades. Singh et al. (2022) state that as the result of academics transferring their courses online without proper training during the pandemic, they struggled to integrate effective technology. Some had yet to use technology for teaching, and their discussions and assignments seldom contributed to learning, confusing students about the course objectives. In addition, academics did not know the importance of social, cognitive, and teaching presence when teaching online, which caused student performance issues, feelings of isolation, frustration, and anxiety. Singh et al. contended that post-vaccine and pandemic, there is a need to reexamine and provide effective online education. Singh et al. provided a model for a community of inquiry using research-based pedagogy, which academics can use to design their online curriculum to augment learning. The community of inquiry is a model where the

community cultivates teaching presence, social presence, and cognitive presence (Singh et al., 2022).

The academic builds social presence before the course begins by sending welcome letters to their students (Singh et al., 2022). They provide students with an introduction and course overview. Adding a video or photograph helps to personalize the introduction. An icebreaker assignment at the beginning of the course where the academic and students share personal stories helps to create trust and open dialog, which is essential for students to feel free to express themselves during collaboration. The facilitator models and frequently communicates with their students by posting announcements, messages, and expectations to the students. Timely responses and constructive feedback help students avoid feeling isolated. Researchers of online pedagogy acknowledge that social presence help lessens the distance between students and their facilitator and feelings of isolation (Singh et al., 2022).

The cognitive presence phase using the inquiry model involves four phases: First, the students are made aware of added information (Singh et al., 2022). Then the students explore the information, share perspectives and experiences with the information, and then finally, the resolution. The facilitator designs the online course by aligning the course objectives with the evaluations. A clearly written rubric and an outline of assignment objectives must be provided to the students at the start of the semester. The facilitator designs learning activities that require critical thinking where students reflect, brainstorm, and discuss problems. Student examples help students to understand the assignment. Students can select relevant topics they are interested in to explore, analyze, and discuss. It ensures that they make the connection between their assignment and their field of work. Finally, students can take turns leading discussions and summarizing important points brought up in the discussions (Singh et al., 2022).

The online facilitator builds a teaching presence by sharing information about themselves (Singh et al., 2022). Students need to be provided with office hours and scheduled virtual meetings; they need to know they can reach their facilitator when they need help. The facilitator needs to request that students turn on their cameras so students and the facilitator can see each other during the meetings. Praise students for their work and encourage them to support their peers (Singh et al., 2022).

The learning management system has tools to help build a presence (Singh et al., 2022). The facilitator can upload assignments, relevant videos, links, and other course content using the content feature. The course content can be chunked into modules to progress through the course objectives. The calendar feature allows students to see when assignments are due. There can be a frequently asked questions section to help students to troubleshoot problems and get feedback from their facilitator and peers. The discussion tool can be used for group class discussions. The drop box tool is where students can submit their assignments. The grade book helps students monitor their progress, where the facilitator provides a rubric and timely assignment feedback. The user progress tool allows the facilitator to monitor student login history. Furthermore, the library allows students access to resources needed for assignments (Singh et al., 2022).

Summary

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study is to explore the experiences of academics at the university level with emergency remote teaching during the 2020-2021 COVID-19 pandemic. This study used Milheim’s (2012) application of Maslow's hierarchy of needs to study the academics’ needs at the university level during the COVID-19 pandemic. Milheim's (2012) application of Maslow's hierarchy of needs was used to study student’s online needs but has not been used to study higher education academics' needs during the COVID-19

pandemic. The theory will help to identify the academics' needs during emergency remote teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many academics experienced increased stress that could impact mental health (Boyer-Davis, 2020; Serralta et al., 2020). Working from home, they experienced technostress, homeschooling, and sharing technology with family members. When academics transitioned their course and taught online during the COVID-19 pandemic, they experienced a steep learning curve in an abbreviated period while under the duress of the pandemic. Educational psychology has shown that learners experience cognitive overload when they are exposed to too much information at a time, and anxiety makes it even more challenging to remember and learn added information. After being under duress for extended periods, academics can become frustrated. However, if their institution is supportive and the academics possess elevated levels of self-efficacy, they are more likely to persist (Taufiq-Hail et al., 2021). Studies have shown that trained academics experienced greater well-being while transitioning online (Cohut, 2018; García-Álvarez et al., 2021; Parte & Herrador-Alcaide, 2021).

The pandemic disrupted higher education in several ways besides having to transfer online. Many first year and international students withdrew and delayed their education during the pandemic, which lowered the university's income that resulted in needing to lay off adjunct and tenured faculty (Edwards et al., 2021). Furthermore, academics' workload increased beyond the contractual workload (Santos et al., 2021). The digital divide became alarmingly apparent when academics and students struggled with numerous technical and internet issues (COVID-19 and Disparities in Education: Collective Responsibility Can Address Inequities, 2020; Garcia & Weiss, 2020; Nicola et al., 2020). Academics with families became overwhelmed with technical issues, financial concerns, concerns about contracting COVID, and homeschooling (Touloupis,

2021). Because of not having online training and the time to prepare before transitioning online, some academics needed to provide their students with clear instructions and information about what was expected of them. As a result, they experienced miscommunications that frustrated academics and students (Al Shlowiy et al., 2021). Singh et al. (2022) suggested that academics use the community of inquiry model to cultivate teaching presence, social presence, and cognitive presence to address student performance issues, feelings of isolation, frustration, and anxiety.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to explore the experiences of academics at the university level with emergency remote teaching during the 2020-2021 COVID-19 pandemic. Chapter Three describes the research design, the research questions, and the setting and participants. In addition, the researcher positionality section articulates my reason for conducting this study and the interpretive framework I used to study the phenomenon. Finally, the procedures section explains my steps to conduct this study and to collect and analyze data. Additionally, I discussed my procedure for establishing trustworthiness for this study.

Research Design

I used a qualitative transcendental phenomenological research design to explore emergency remote teaching during the 2020-2021 COVID-19 pandemic from the perspectives of academics at the university level. Qualitative research is a method used to study the nature of a phenomenon to gain a detailed understanding from the participants' first-hand accounts of the phenomenon (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Moustakas, 1994). Through qualitative research, I interpreted the feelings and meaning of the participants attributed to their experiences. Furthermore, I explained the relationships of theories, such as the processes, participants' experiences, the circumstances that directed their thoughts, and how they responded (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Qualitative researchers are the key instrument, they observe, conduct interviews, and examine documents to collect data from the participants in their natural setting to determine what and how participants experienced the phenomenon (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Moustakas, 1994). As the qualitative researcher, I collected data and analyzed it by using inductive and deductive methods to categorize patterns and themes to write the final interpretive description of

the phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I used the transcendental phenomenology approach. The phenomenological study was developed from the fields of philosophy and psychology and can be classified as hermeneutically or transcendental. It is an inquiry design that allows participants who have experienced a specific phenomenon to describe its essence (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The transcendental phenomenology method described by Moustakas (1994) focuses less on the researcher's interpretations and more on the participant's description of their experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Moustakas (1994) applies Husserl's concept of *epoche*—the process a researcher uses to bracket their experiences with the phenomenon as much as possible to become receptive to a fresh perspective (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994). Next, the researcher interviews several participants to collect "what" and "how" they have experienced the phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994). The experiences the participants have in common are categorized into codes and themes to describe what and how the participants experienced the phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Finally, relevant quotations and the data on what and how the participants experienced the phenomenon are combined to describe the essence of the phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I used Moustakas's transcendental phenomenological approach and bracketed my idea of emergency remote teaching to understand the participants' experiences.

Research Questions

According to Creswell and Poth (2018), the purpose of qualitative research questions is to focus on what and how the phenomenon is studied. The researcher crafts an open-ended central research question, and sub-questions that further delineate the central research question to find

meaning from the participant's interpretation of their experience. The following questions were used to study what and how the academics experienced emergency remote teaching.

Central Research Question

How do academics at the university level describe their experience of transitioning their course and teaching online during emergency remote teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020-2021?

Sub-Question One

What professional training did the academics at the university level have before and during emergency remote teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020-2021?

Sub-Question Two

What pedagogical changes do academics at the university level associate with the experience of emergency remote teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020-2021?

Sub-Question Three

How do academics at the university level describe their emotional needs during emergency remote teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020-2021?

Setting and Participants

The purpose of the setting section is to provide detailed information about the site. The participant section describes the criteria for the selection of the participants. The information provides the reader with information that can be compared to similar research on the topic.

Site

Eleven participants from six universities were recruited from within the University of Wisconsin System. The purpose for selecting this site is that it is accessible, and it can provide a large enough sample for my study. Furthermore, I relate to the university system because I am a

graduate of the University of Wisconsin System and have earned their E-learning and Online Teaching graduate certificate.

Madison University has been a leader in distance education since 1958 by the pioneer Charles Wedemeyer and the University of Wisconsin (Moore, 2019). The University of Wisconsin System has 13 universities statewide with over 160,782 students enrolled, and awards over 37,000 degrees annually and employs about 41,000 faculty and staff. According to Pitsch (2022), the University of Wisconsin began implementing a new online learning platform in the summer of 2017. “Now nearly 5,000 faculty, instructional staff, and graduate assistants have published nearly 17,460 courses online as of 2020, April 8” (Pitsch, 2022).

Participants

I used a criterion sample of 11 lecture academics who have taught for at least one year prior to the pandemic and transitioned their course or courses from residence to online and taught online during the 2020-2021 COVID-19 pandemic. I did not consider other participants’ factors, such as gender, age, race, and professorship ranking for my criteria for this study. Faculty at the universities can enroll in two free summer courses: planning and designing online course modules using the Canvas learning management system and facilitation and management courses. The plan and design modules for these courses focus on course design, objectives, alignment, assessment, instructional materials, and learner interaction. The facilitation and management course focuses on workload management, student collaboration, learning communities, creating a student orientation, and facilitating student participation. The 20–24-hour courses are delivered in person or via webinars, and participants earn badges after completion (*Learning Community to Design and Teach Quality Online Courses*, 2022).

Researcher Positionality

The researcher positionality section of the study explains what has motivated me to research the topic I have chosen, the interpretive framework, and the philosophical assumptions that guided my study. I hold a Christian/systems worldview. Actions have consequences that affect or integrate with humans and the natural world; solutions are complex. Holding a Christian worldview, I am concerned with doing what is moral and ethical, not harming others or our world.

To study the problem of what and how higher education educators have experienced emergency remote teaching, I needed to determine the stance that best fits the study's purpose. I used Milheim's (2012) application of Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs to study what and how traditional educators experienced emergency remote teaching. To understand emergency remote teaching, I collected data by interviewing educators who experienced the phenomenon firsthand. Considering my systems stance, I have shown evidence that Milheim's (2012) application of Maslow's hierarchy of needs model and other educational theories can be applied to study educators' needs while undertaking emergency remote teaching during the COVID-19 lockdown.

I have not experienced emergency remote teaching; however, I have talked with friends and relatives who are high school and elementary teachers who have experienced this phenomenon. They told me their horror stories of struggling with insurmountable issues during emergency remote teaching. Dedicated educators braved meeting with their students at their homes to teach them how to use the technology, contracted the virus, and infected loved ones causing permanent paralysis. Then I wondered what and how university academics who have not had training experienced emergency remote teaching. Learning from the COVID-19 crisis is

essential to build a better future. A positive work environment improves academic productivity and retains talented academics and students.

Interpretive Framework

According to Creswell and Poth (2018), an interpretive framework is an inquiry approach used to design qualitative research. When using the social constructivist approach, the researcher attempts to understand a phenomenon by studying things in their natural setting and interpret the subjective meaning the participants give to their experiences. The researcher finds patterns using inductive methods to understand a social problem (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). I used social constructivism for this study's interpretive framework to explore and gather information by interviewing the participants, and observation of their natural setting. I asked open ended questions to collect data using interviews and e-journals for the participants to describe their experiences of emergency remote teaching. Then I analyzed data inductively and deductively to find patterns that participants shared to learn the essence of emergency remote teaching from the participants' perspectives (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Philosophical Assumptions

All individuals have philosophical assumptions. It is essential to present them to the reader of the study because they determine how the researcher formulates the problem and the research questions, which influences how the researcher conducts a study and interprets the findings. My assumptions are rooted in my training in different disciplines and my collaboration with those academic communities (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Ontological Assumption

Ontological assumptions ask what can be known and what is reality. My ontological assumption is that all individuals have different experiences, knowledge, and perspectives;

therefore, they have different realities. People create multiple realities from their experiences and collaboration with others. With more experiences and often greater age, individuals gain a deeper and broader understanding of reality. Consequently, I explored and discussed the experiences and perspectives of different participants' realities in their words to describe their shared experiences of the emergency remote teaching phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Through studying the participants' realities, the understanding will inform future e-learning, teacher education, professional development, academic scheduling, and emergency remote teaching.

Epistemological Assumption

Epistemological assumptions address how we know what we know. My epistemological assumption is constructivism. My knowledge is based on a combination of my subjective experiences, my senses, collaboration with others, education, and rational thought. Reality cannot be known through the senses alone because things are not always what they appear. I have scrutinized added information to gain knowledge and compared it with my experiences, prior knowledge, social interaction, and senses. I used reason to determine if it makes sense and if it can be trusted before adjusting my understanding or accepting new knowledge. I asked for clarification when in doubt.

Axiological Assumption

My education, professional communities, teaching experiences, and Christian instruction have shaped and influenced my axiological assumptions. I value education and believe that learning should be interesting and satisfying. I value compassion. It is wrong and counterproductive to force individuals to transition courses and teach online (Grenon et al., 2019). Additionally, it is unethical to force them online without proper training. Furthermore, it is demoralizing to evaluate their performance after that. As an instructional design and

technologist and instructional technologist with ethical values, I put the needs of the participants foremost. Before the pandemic, I was researching a troubling concern: many traditional academics were forced to transition online, often without appropriate training and practice. Then these academics experienced increased performance pressures when they were evaluated for their performance after that. The indifference to educator "care" has motivated me to study the problem, advocate awareness that educators need training before transitioning online and justify the need to fix the problem (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Therefore, academics need training to avoid the stress academics have felt when transitioning from face-to-face teaching to teaching online, and during emergency remote teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic.

My axiological assumption influences my social constructivist stance, individuals construct knowledge by scrutinizing added information and combining it with prior knowledge and experiences, literature, and the perspectives of others. Therefore, I value my participants' perspectives and needs, I listened to what they said about what and how they have experienced the phenomenon of emergency remote teaching. Furthermore, I want to exemplify the concept of "care" in my research, future professional development, and course designs.

Researcher's Role

During this qualitative study, I was the human instrument to collect data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2018). I collected data by interviewing participants using open-ended questions I developed. I took notes in NVivo to record my musings, hunches, and intuitions while I observed, interviewed the participants, and examined e-journals, unlike quantitative researchers who use one form of data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Creswell & Poth,2018). Qualitative researchers develop their instruments consisting of open-ended questions, while quantitative researchers use instruments created by other researchers (Creswell

& Creswell, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2018). While conducting qualitative research, I collected data at the natural site where the participants experienced the phenomenon to understand what effect contextual elements have had on the participants. I did not create a contrived situation like quantitative research laboratories; qualitative research is not a cause-and-effect quantitative study (Creswell & Poth 2018; Moustakas, 1994). Instead, I bracketed my biases and previous assumptions of the phenomenon by writing memos of my thoughts (Moustakas, 1994).

Procedures

My role began with gaining permission from Liberty University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) to access the research site (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994). After the IRB approval, I asked permission from the Associate Dean for Social Sciences, College of Letters & Sciences at a university in the system asking permission to recruit participants for my qualitative study. I used the form the IRB has provided for this purpose. Host institutions wanted to know why they were chosen for the study. They wanted to know how long the study would take and if it would be disruptive. They also wanted to know what they will gain from the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). After gaining approval to recruit participants, I asked the Associate Dean for Social Sciences, College of Letters & Sciences at the university for the department heads' email addresses. Then I used the snowball method to recruit participants by asking the department heads to forward my invitation to other academics. I did not recruit any participants; therefore, I emailed all academics listed on the 11 university directories to invite them to participate in my study.

All individuals who wanted to participate signed consent forms. The consent form included information explaining the purpose of the study, procedures used during the study, and how confidentiality would be protected (Creswell & Poth, 2018). It also explained the benefits

the participants would gain from participation, known risks during their participation, and they may withdraw from the study at any time. I told the participants I had no power over them (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Ethical considerations were the focus during data collection and building rapport with the participants, which helped to collect appropriate data (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I collected data by interviewing participants using open-ended questions I developed. I took notes to record my musings, hunches, and intuitions while I observed, interviewed the participants, and examined e-journals, unlike quantitative researchers who use one form of data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Permissions

I sent an email (see Appendix A) to the Associate Dean for Social Sciences, College of Letters & Sciences at a university within the system, asking if the university allows outsiders to recruit participants for a qualitative study. The Vice-Chancellor forwarded the question to the Office of Research Compliance and Graduate Education. The director stated that they do not have a process to manage how individuals from the UW system are invited to participate in studies that their university employees do not conduct (see Appendix B). However, they said that after Liberty University's IRB reviews and approves my recruitment method, I should contact the university to ask permission to recruit their staff for my study.

For Liberty University, I needed to include the written approval letter to recruit participants at my proposed site with my proposal to my chairperson, who reviewed my manuscript. After she approved it, she sent it to my committee member to read my proposal. After they approved my proposal, they sent it to be formally reviewed by the Director of Review. After the Research Director approved my proposal, my chairperson allowed me to defend my

proposal to my committee. My committee decided to approve my proposal with minor revisions. After successfully defending my proposal, I applied for IRB approval.

After Liberty University's IRB reviewed my recruitment method and approved it, (see Appendix M) I used the email recruitment form (see Appendix C) provided by Liberty University's IRB to ask the Associate Dean for Social Sciences, College of Letters & Sciences at their university to ask permission to recruit participants at their College of Letters & Science. Liberty University's IRB provided a form used to call a university to ask permission to recruit study participants (see Appendix D). To request contact staff, I used the form (see Appendix E) provided by Liberty University's IRB. After a week, I emailed a Recruitment Follow-up to remind academics to read and sign a consent form and email it back to me within a week if they would like to participate in my study (see Appendix K). Finally, before I collected data, I checked that the participants signed consent forms provided by Liberty University's IRB (see Appendix F).

Recruitment Plan

I used a criterion sample by selecting 11 lecture academics who taught online during the pandemic shutdown. I emailed the College of Letters and Science department heads, inviting them to participate in my phenomenological study using Liberty University's recruitment informed consent form (see Appendix F). The email stated the criterion for my study. I also used the snowball method to collect data by requesting the heads of the departments to forward my email to their faculty members. Academics who wanted to participate in my study signed the consent form and emailed it back to me within two weeks (see Appendix L). After a week, I emailed a Recruitment Follow-up (see Appendix K) to remind academics to read, sign, and email the consent form back to me within a week (Gall et al., 2007). The consent form described the

purpose of the study, the participant criterion, how long it would take, any risks associated with their participation, and how I would keep their identity confidential. Then I told the academics that I have no power over them and that they do not have to answer any questions they are uncomfortable answering. They could drop out of the study at any time. I told them in the email that they must return the consent forms within two weeks if they want to participate.

Data Collection Plan

I used three methods to collect data: semi-structured individual videoconference interviews, email e-journals, and videoconference focus group interviews to provide triangulation of evidence and validate data accuracy. Eighteen participants signed the informed consent forms. I invited them to semi-structured individual videoconference interviews and emailed the participant's the semi-structured individual interview questions so they could review them before the meeting. Fifteen participants participated in the Zoom semi-structured individual interviews. At the beginning of the semi-structured individual videoconference interviews, I read an opening statement to the participants to establish the purpose of the meeting and to ensure that all participants received the same introduction.

I started the interviews by asking for demographic information, then proceeded to ask questions I prepared in advance and asked for clarification as needed. After the semi-structured interview, I emailed their e-journals to them and asked them to return their e-journals within two weeks. The e-journal included directions. Eleven participants returned their completed e-journals. After recruiting enough participants, I sent email invitations to focus group meetings and sent them the focus group questions so they could review them before the meeting. I held three Zoom focus group interviews. I had nine participants give their responses in the focus groups. After the interviews I thanked the participants for their participation and told them that I

would keep identifying information separate from the recordings and replace identifiers with pseudonyms. Data were protected by passwords and locked in a file cabinet to keep information secure. After use, I deleted the recordings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Semi-structured Individual Interviews

The interview is one of the most used methods to collect data for qualitative research (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Interviews are a social-based form of data collection where knowledge is created between the interviewer and participants' interaction. I wrote open-ended interview questions that focused on the phenomenon. Traditionally interviews are conducted at the site where the participants experienced the phenomenon; however, observation of the phenomenon may not be possible due to scheduling and the shutdown is over. Therefore, I used Zoom for the semi-structured individual interviews. Using Zoom for interviews allows non-verbal communication like face-to-face interviewing, and the interviewer and interviewee can work from their environment and not impose on each other's space (Kara et al., 2020). I read an opening statement (See Appendix H) from a prepared interview guide to the participants to establish the purpose of the meeting and review their rights. During the interview (See Appendix G), I asked the participants to clarify their statements to better understand their experiences. I memoed my thoughts in NVivo and respectfully kept my opinions and suggestions to myself. At the same time, I bracketed my previous knowledge about the phenomenon to better "hear" the new knowledge and meaning the participants communicated. I used my laptop and Zoom to record the interviews accurately. Emotional triggering could occur when asking individuals to recall a traumatic experience. Participants became saddened with questions during the interview, I apologized and asked if I should discontinue asking questions. They reassured me they were alright, and I could continue to ask the following questions (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). After their

interview, I asked the participants if they had any questions and I thanked them for their participation.

Semi-structured Individual Interview Questions

1. What is your name, what course(s)/subject(s) do you teach, and how long have you taught? **(Demographic ice breaker question)**
2. What course or courses did you transfer online during the 2020-2021 COVID-19 pandemic shut down? **(Demographic ice breaker question)**
3. Describe where you taught emergency remote teaching during the 2020-2021 COVID-19 pandemic shut down. Example: At home, at the university, the local hot spot, etc. **CRQ**
4. Describe your thoughts when you first learned you would transition to the online environment during the 2020-2021 COVID-19 pandemic shut down. In what way did your thoughts change or not change with time? **SQ2**
5. What are your opinions of online security during emergency remote teaching during the 2020-2021 COVID-19 pandemic shut down? **SQ3**
6. What are your opinions of job security during emergency remote teaching during the 2020-2021 COVID-19 pandemic shut down? **SQ3**
7. How do you describe the effect of emergency remote teaching on your personal and colleague relationships during the 2020-2021 COVID-19 pandemic shut down? **SQ3**
8. How do you describe the amount of time emergency remote teaching demands compared to traditional teaching during the 2020-2021 COVID-19 pandemic shut down? **SQ1**
9. What technological preparations did you need to make for emergency remote teaching during the 2020-2021 COVID-19 pandemic shut down? **CQ**

10. Describe the most successful experience you had during emergency remote teaching during the 2020-2021 COVID-19 pandemic shut down. **CQ**
11. Describe your competency in using technology and online pedagogy during emergency remote teaching of the 2020-2021 COVID-19 pandemic shut down. **SQ3**
12. What professional networks or mentorships did you participate in to share ideas and provide moral support during emergency remote teaching of the 2020-2021 COVID-19 pandemic shut down? **SQ3**
13. Describe the most challenging emergency remote teaching experiences you had during the 2020-2021 COVID-19 shutdown. **SQ2**
14. Describe the most satisfying emergency remote teaching experiences you had during the 2020-2021 COVID-19 shutdown. **SQ2**
15. Describe any feelings of isolation and/or sense of belonging, during emergency remote teaching during the 2020-2021 COVID-19 pandemic shut down. **SQ3**
16. Describe how you evaluated student learning during the 2020-2021 COVID-19 pandemic shut down? **SQ1**
17. How do you describe your professional training with online teaching you had before, during, and after the COVID-19 online transition during the 2020-2021 COVID-19 pandemic shut down? **SQ1**

Questions 1 and 2 are icebreaker questions (Lehmann & Chamberlin, 2009). It is an excellent way to set the participants at ease for the interview. They also provide basic demographic information. Question 3 asks where they taught during the shutdown and answers the central research question of how traditional educators describe their experience transitioning their course and teaching online during emergency remote teaching. Some educators taught from

home, and some had to work where there was a Wi-Fi hotspot or from campus (Spinks et al., 2023). Question 4 answers the central question (Ironsi, 2022). Questions 5 and 6 answer the question about their feeling of safety, which answers sub-question 3 (Spinks et al., 2023). Question 7 answers the central question (Spinks et al., 2023). Questions 8, 9, 10, and 12 answer sub-question one and may provide information about the digital divide, negative emotions, and cognitive overload (Lai & Widmar, 2021; Naismith et al., 2015; Spinks et al., 2023). Questions 11, 13, and 15 answer sub-question three and provide information about Maslow's hierarchy of needs of isolation, belonging, and training (Milheim, 2012; Spinks et al., 2023).

Semi-structured Individual Interview Data Analysis Plan *(Data Collection Approach #1)*

According to Moustakas (1994), the researcher transcribes the interview recordings, organizes data by reading the transcripts, and horizontalizes the data (meaning all relevant statements are of equal value). I created pseudonyms for each participant and the university as soon as possible to protect their identities. Next, I transcribed the recorded semi-structured individual interviews into text data verbatim using Dictate on Microsoft Word, I edited the script and made backup copies of computer files. None of the participants wanted to read my transcriptions to check for accuracy (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019).

I created my codebook using Microsoft Excel and NVivo. The codebook is a "compilation of the codes, their content descriptions, and a brief data example for reference" (Saldaña, 2013, pp. 24-25). First, I created codes from my research questions, and then I coded meaning chunks from the semi-structured interview transcripts (Saldaña, 2013). I used a hybrid method using both deductive and inductive coding methods. First, I used deductive coding by coding my interview questions. Then I created codes inductively from the data to find added

information from the transcripts. The coding process is cyclical rather than linear. After coding several categories, I created themes for the data (Saldaña, 2013).

E-Journal Question Prompts

The e-journals helped the participants reflect on their experiences and prepare them to share details for data saturation (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The participants were asked to write about their experiences of emergency remote teaching using an e-journal with open-ended questions, answering the research questions. The e-journal form had three sections, before, during, and after the pandemic. Each section had open-ended question prompts that asked what they experienced during that time. The sections expanded as they typed in their responses. The participants started their e-journals after their Microsoft Teams semi-structured personal interview, and I asked them to e-mail the e-journals to me within two weeks after that virtual meeting.

E-journal Question prompts:

Pre COVID-19

1. Describe what your day was like teaching before the COVID-19 pandemic shutdown. **CRQ** Include a description of the educational technology professional development you received or what was available. **SQ1**

During COVID-19

2. Describe what your day was like teaching online during the COVID-19 shutdown. **CRQ** What education technology professional development did you receive during the pandemic? **SQ1** What would you recommend for future educational technology professional development? **SQ2**

Post COVID-19

3. How did the emergency remote teaching during COVID_19 affect you? **SQ3** What positive take-a-ways can you identify? **SQ3** How did you create a sense of community for your online classes? and **SQ2**

Question one labeled **SRQ** answered the central research question: How do academics in the School of Letters and Science describe their experience of transitioning their course and teaching online during emergency remote teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020-2021? It provided information about the academics' preferred teaching style before the pandemic (Harouni, 2021). Questions one and two labeled **SQ1** provided information about what professional development they received before and during experiencing emergency remote teaching (Cutri et al., 2020).

Question two labeled **CRQ** provided information about how their teaching style had changed or remained the same during transitioning online during the pandemic (Kulikowski et al., 2022). Question two labeled **SQ2** provided information about professional development improvements for the future (Kulikowski et al., 2022; Singh et al., 2022). Questions two and three labeled **SQ2** answered sub-question number two.

Question three labeled **SQ2** answered how the academics made their students feel respected, cared about, and valued as contributing members of their class (Aladsani, 2022). Question three, the first labeled **SQ3** provided information about the level of stress they felt during emergency remote teaching (Naylor & Nyanjom, 2021). It provided information about what they had learned about themselves, their ability to cope with stress, and their understanding of their needs when teaching (Alqahtani & Rajkhan, 2020). Question three the second labeled **SQ3** answered sub-question three. It provided information about the academics' needs during

emergency remote teaching participants believe they will need in the future (Quezada et al., 2020).

E-Journal Prompts Data Analysis Plan

The e-journal data did not need to be transcribed as it is already digital text. While analyzing the data, I bracketed my experience and preconceived ideas of the phenomenon to focus on the participant's story (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994). I read over the data several times before I began to organize my data. All data were equally valued during horizontalizing (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994). I considered data management by comparing multiple e-journal data to find evidence for each category, simultaneously organizing ideas from reading and memos, I coded the data, chunked information into themes, and organized the data into files to manage the data (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994; Saldaña, 2013). Then I coded the data by hand, chunking, labeling, and placing them into matching categories, then I provided a descriptive heading for the themes (Saldaña, 2013). I thought of explicit descriptive words (what) or phrases as categories, and themes are descriptive processes (how). I placed the codes into categories and subcategorized them, and then merged the categories into thematic concepts (Saldaña, 2013). I eliminated data that did not contain relevant information that could be labeled. I used a NVivo data analysis software program to help store, organize, and retrieve data. The program helped me to manage data and reconfigure it (Saldaña, 2013). The participants' answers to the questions identified what and how the participants experienced the phenomenon of emergency remote teaching. I considered the participants' answers and used imaginative variation to write a composite description of how the participants experienced the phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I also wrote memos in

NVivo as I worked, it created a retrievable paper trail, evidence that I thoughtfully analyzed the data (Saldaña, J., 2013).

Focus Groups

Focus group interviews can be used to collect data from four to six participants who have shared perceptions of a phenomenon (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). Focus group interviews are helpful when there are abbreviated time constraints and participants are reluctant to share their experiences (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). In addition, the interaction between the participants in the focus group interviews can produce useful information when the participants are cooperative and similar.

I used two recording devices (Zoom and laptop), ready and working before the focus group meeting. I was friendly and respectful of the participants, not interjecting my perspectives. Then I introduced myself and read the opening statement about the purpose of the focus group meeting (See Appendix I). How long the interviews would take, reviewed their rights, ensured that I do not have authority over them, and encouraged discussions about their shared experiences of the phenomenon. I asked all participants to take turns speaking and to identify themselves at the beginning of the interview, preventing one participant from dominating the conversation (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). It helped with my memoing, transcription, and acquiring valuable data. Finally, I read the opening statement and asked the participants open-ended questions that I prepared about what and how they experienced emergency remote teaching. These discussions helped participants explore and reflect on their experiences of emergency remote teaching. During that time, I asked the participants if I could contact them to schedule future correspondence or interviews if more data is needed to fill gaps (Moustakas,

1994). After the meeting, I asked the participants if they had any questions and thanked them for their participation.

Focus Group Questions

I conducted a focus group meeting to allow participants to share their experiences with the members. The discussions during the meeting helped the participants to remember details of what and how they experienced emergency remote teaching. I began the meeting by reading the opening statement (See Appendix H) and asked icebreaker questions to set the participants at ease for the interview. Then I asked nine questions about their emergency remote teaching experience (See Appendix J). The participants could have felt unnatural and not go into much detail; however, richer information was collected when approaching the interview as a discussion, allowing them to share their perspectives freely. It was essential to ask the participants to clarify their statements.

1. How would you describe your workload during emergency remote teaching? **CRQ**
2. How would you describe your access to the technology needed to transition and teach your course online? **SQ3**
3. Describe your feelings of personal achievement and ability to do competent work during emergency remote teaching? **SQ3**
4. Describe any technology issues your students experienced and how did you help them. **SQ1**
5. Describe how much of your curriculum you were able to cover during emergency remote teaching. **SQ1**
6. Describe what has caused emergency remote teaching to be more effective than face-to-face instruction or not as effective as face-to-face instruction during the pandemic. **SQ2**

7. Describe the level of autonomy you had while transferring our course online and teaching. **SQ3**
8. How would you evaluate the quality of education your students received during emergency remote teaching? **SQ1**
9. What level of stress or burnout did you experience during emergency remote teaching? **SQ3**

Question 1 answered the research sub-question three. Academics needed to have a workable workload and have their emotional needs met to achieve their goals (Whittet, 2021). Question two answered the research sub-question three. Participants needed to have the necessary tools to meet their needs (Amhag et al., 2019). Question three answered research sub-question three. Academics needed to feel competent and achieve their goals before they were motivated to advance to the next level of needs (Milheim, 2012). Question four answered the central research question. This question allowed the academics to elaborate on their individual experiences and could reveal unexpected added information. Question five answered the research sub-question one. It provided information on the participants' training before and during the pandemic (Amhag et al., 2019). The answers have shown how much information these academics were inundated with in a brief time (Kulikowski et al., 2022). Question six answered the research sub-question two. The answers to this question provided information about the academics' perceived effectiveness or ineffectiveness during emergency remote teaching (Donham et al., 2022). Question seven answered sub-question three. Adults need freedom to make decisions in their work to feel motivated (Milheim, 2012). Question eight answered the central research question. The answers to this question provided information on the academics' ability to evaluate their students (Montenegro-Rueda et al., 2021). Question nine answered sub-

question three. The answers provided information about how safe they felt during emergency remote teaching (Bartkowiak et al., 2022).

Focus Group Data Analysis Plan

Data analysis for focus group data required the researcher to transcribe and organize the recorded interviews. I kept the participants' and university's names separate from the data to protect them from harm. I analyzed the focus group data in the same manner as the semi-structured individual interview data.

Data Synthesis

Data analysis does not follow steps; it is more of a spiral process rather than a linear one (Creswell & Poth, 2018). While analyzing the data, I bracketed my experiences and preconceived ideas of the phenomenon by writing memos to myself and recorded them in NVivo to allow me to focus on the participant's story (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994). I considered data management by comparing multiple interviews to find evidence for each category, simultaneously organizing ideas from reading and memos, I coded data, chunked information into themes, and organized the data into files to manage the data (Creswell, J. W. & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994; Saldaña, 2013). Then I coded the data by chunking, labeling, and placing them into matching categories. Afterward, I wrote descriptive headings for the themes (Saldaña, 2013). I also memoed as I worked. That created a retrievable paper trail, evidence that I thoughtfully analyzed the data (Saldaña, 2013). Next, I used explicit descriptive words (what) or phrases for categories, and themes for descriptive processes (how). I placed the codes into five categories and, as needed, subcategorized, and merged the categories into thematic concepts (Saldaña, 2013). I eliminated data that did not contain relevant information that could be labeled. The themes were then interconnected to write a description to answer how the participants

experienced emergency remote teaching to help understand the phenomenon's essence. The essence description also includes the multiple participant perspectives and quotations (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994; Saldaña, 2013).

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness includes credibility, dependability, transferability, and conformability. The purpose of trustworthiness is to underpin the argument that the research findings are valid and convincing. The findings are based on the participant's responses, not the researcher's personal bias or motivations. It requires ensuring that the researcher's bias does not skew the interpretation of what the research participants said to fit the researcher's assumptions. The purpose of trustworthiness is to support the argument that the researcher's findings are significant.

Credibility

Before collecting data, I obtained permission from Liberty University, the IRB, the university system, and the participants. I provided a brief study proposal to the gatekeeper to state why that site was chosen, what activities would occur, assure that the study would not be disruptive, described how the results will be reported, and what value they would gain from the study. I followed my plan during the interview to ensure I had asked all the questions, provided information about the purpose of the study, and told the participants that they do not have to answer any questions. Furthermore, they may drop out of the study at any time without consequences and still receive compensation for participating in the study. When drafting the report, I included information about myself that could inform bias in the analysis. I recorded interviews to facilitate accurate transcriptions, took memos as ideas and questions developed for reflective self-analysis and provided a paper trail. While analyzing data, I triangulated the data

by looking for matching evidence between semi-structured individual interviews, e-journals, and focus group interviews. Next, I checked to ensure my theoretical framework justified my research. Finally, I validated the findings by returning with an interview abstract to verify that I had correctly understood the meaning participants intended. I asked my committee to debrief my manuscript (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Transferability

I included enough detail about the participants, the site, and the time, to enable replication using different participants who work and live in other locations. When the research findings in my study can be replicated, the study may be valid. A replication that validates the findings shows that the study can be applied to different populations. I recorded interviews to ensure accurate transcription and took copious notes during the interviews, of the site, participants, and fleeting thoughts during the interviews. Then I compared data to look for patterns between participants. I understand my interpretation will not be able to capture how and what was experienced perfectly (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Dependability

To facilitate the study replication by other researchers, I recorded the interviews to ensure accurate transcription. During the inquiry, I wrote detailed descriptions of the participants and the site and memo other thoughts to show my decisions during data collection and analysis. While interviewing the participants, I bracketed my understanding of the phenomenon and documented the philosophical framework that guides my research. Liberty University requires the dissertation committee and the qualitative research director to review dissertations to determine if the procedures are effectively described to allow the study to be repeated. During the review, I was asked questions about the methods (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Confirmability

To ensure that the findings accurately described the participant's experiences, I bracketed my prior understanding and used relevant statements and quotations from the participants' interviews and e-journals. To gain the trustworthiness of my study while interviewing participants for a phenomenological study, I recorded the interview to ensure accurate transcription at the site where the phenomenon occurred. I recorded memos in NVivo during the interview and while analyzing the data to help remember fleeting thoughts, provide evidence that I had carefully thought about the data and how my ideas evolved during the process, and I gathered information until saturation and no gaps remained. Then I transcribed the data, coded, and analyzed the data. After the study, I asked the participants to read an abstract of the study and I asked them if it accurately described their intended meaning of their experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Creswell & Guetterman, 2019).

Ethical Considerations

When researching, I was mindful of three ethical principles of the Belmont Report (The National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979): respect for persons, justice, and beneficence. Ethical principles guided my research. I respected their autonomy by telling the participants the purpose of the study. They did not have to answer any questions that made them feel uncomfortable, and they could decide whether they wanted to participate in the study. I collected data after the participants had signed their informed consent forms. I told them I have no authority over them. Beneficence includes protecting participants from physical and psychological harm. I protected all information identifying individuals and institutions by replacing their identities with pseudonyms, I kept their names separate from their interview data, passwords protected the data files, and recordings were

deleted after use. Justice in research means that the benefits and burdens are equally distributed between participants. Individuals who dropped out of the study received the same compensation as those who participated fully. Moreover, during focus group meetings, all participants participated. After collecting data, I debriefed to allow participants to ask questions to relieve anxieties and misconceptions and ensure they had contributed valuable knowledge.

Summary

This transcendental phenomenological study aimed to explore what and how lecture academics experienced emergency remote teaching during the 2020-2021 COVID-19 pandemic at midwestern universities in the United States. This phenomenological study uses three methods of collecting data: virtual semi-structured individual interviews, emailed e-journals, and in person focus group interviews. The data were analyzed by transcribing, coding, combining, and identifying themes to answer the research questions.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to explore the experiences of academics at the university level with emergency remote teaching during the 2020-2021 COVID-19 pandemic. Chapter Four begins with the study explaining when and how data were collected and the 11 participants' demographics. Table 1 provides the participant demographics. Table 2 shows the placing of codes in matching categories and given descriptive names for the emergent themes. The research question response area includes the central research question, sub question number one, two, and three. Lastly, the summary of the chapter is presented.

Participants

A criterion sample of 11 academics who taught online during the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020-2021 were recruited for this study. Recruitment began in April of 2023, targeting the College of Letters and Science department heads to invite them to participate in a phenomenological study using Liberty University's recruitment letter and informed consent form. None of the department heads responded. Recruitment letters with the attached consent form were emailed to all the academics listed in the university's directory. One participant volunteered to participate in the study. A Microsoft Teams meeting was scheduled, but the participant could not attend the meeting. A semi-structured individual interview was scheduled and conducted immediately using Zoom. Recruitment letters were emailed throughout that spring and summer to all academics at eleven universities in the Midwest United States using their university's directories. Twenty-seven academics responded to the recruitment emails, 18 signed

the consent form, 15 participants began the study, 11 completed the study. All participants were emailed their $30.00 gift card.

Table 1 presents the participants' demographics. Pseudonyms were given to the participants to protect their identity. The table shows 11 participants, their gender, the number of years they taught, the degree they hold, the subjects they taught, and their university.

Table 1

Participants' Demographics

Teachers' Pseudonym	Gender	# Years Teaching	Degree	Subject	Universities' Pseudonym
Linh	Female	18	Ph.D.	Computer Science	1
Betty	Female	18	Ph.D.	English, Philosophy, Communication	2
Bryce	Male	5	MBA	Business	3
Emma	Female	15	Ph.D.	Literature, Languages	3
Dylan	Male	33	Ph.D.	Physical Geography	5
Helen	Female	8	Ph.D.	Rec Mgmt., Therapeutic Rec	6
Erin	Female	23	Ph.D.	Chemistry, Physics	2
Alain	Male	17	M.S.	Video Production	2
Linda	Female	44	Ph.D.	Business	2
Ingrid	Female	9	DNP	Nursing	5
Matteo	Male	10	M.B.A.	Business	5

Note: Participants and universities are given pseudonyms to protect their identity.

Linh

Linh has a doctoral degree and has taught at her university for 18 years. She teaches Database and Artificial Intelligence and transferred an undergraduate database and Artificial Intelligence, Big Data, and Data Mining courses during the shutdown. She had been teaching online for a while prior to the pandemic. She taught online at home during the spring of 2020 and then at home and the university during the fall semester. She was also the department chair, so she was also responsible for her colleague's courses.

Betty

Betty has a doctoral degree in communications, a Master of Science in Communication and Theater, and a bachelor's degree in public relations. She transferred her Public Speaking and Intercultural Communication courses online during the shutdown. Betty had some training and taught online courses before the pandemic and was not concerned about the transition. She decided to teach asynchronously because she had students in different time zones since they had not returned to campus from spring break.

Bryce

Bryce has a master's degree in business and has taught undergraduate and graduate courses since 2018. He transferred four courses online during the shutdown. Bryce felt panicked after learning they were transitioning online because he had not taught online, even though he had taken courses on developing an online course and then putting it through the audit process.

Emma

Emma has a doctoral degree in urban education with a concentration in curriculum and instruction and a minor in linguistics, and she has taught for 15 years. She is a senior lecturer and is not on tenure track. Emma transferred two courses online during the shutdown and then taught them from home. Emma realized it would be a challenge when she first learned she would

transfer online, but she is always positive toward challenges. She taught two courses in-person and one online before the pandemic.

Dylan

Dylan has a doctoral degree and has taught for 33 years. He was a campus administrator and taught half-time. Dylan transferred his Physical Geography Landforms and Natural Disasters online and taught online at home during the pandemic. Before the pandemic, he had taken an extensive online program using D2L to learn to teach online; the university later switched to Canvas. However, he said, “I was not using Canvas in any way a person would online, I was using it really as a big bulletin board, here’s all the information.”

Helen

Helen has a doctoral degree and has been teaching for eight years. She teaches 50 – 75% of the recreational therapy courses at her university. Helen never took a course on how to teach online before the shutdown. She knew they had LMS and Microsoft Teams but never used them before the pandemic.

Erin

Erin has a doctoral degree in science education and has taught for 23 years. She transferred her Physics course and the first semester of the algebra-based course online, from home during the spring and fall terms. Erin's first reaction to the transition was terror because she had never taught online before, and she did not feel confident because she heard lab courses did not work well online.

Alain

Alain has a master’s degree in video production. He worked from home during the shutdown and transferred three of his courses online: Visual Storytelling, Production

Management, and a capstone course. Two were lecture-based, and the self-guided capstone was where the students checked in with him on their progress. Sometimes during the pandemic, he taught from the campus because he could not get home in time. Some of the courses he had taught online before, so he had no problems switching to online teaching during the pandemic. He was more concerned about his colleagues who had hands-on courses.

Linda

Linda has a doctoral degree and has taught for 44 years. She transferred three business courses online: Principles of Innovation and Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurship Senior Thesis Capstone, and Survey of International Business, and she taught Strategic Management courses asynchronously. During the pandemic she taught from home but sometimes from the university; she felt secure because no one was there. When she learned they would transition online, she thought, "Oh cool, how's this going to work?" Linda taught her Strategic Management course asynchronously before the pandemic. She was accustomed to working with learning management systems, she said she had used 12 learning management systems since 2006.

Ingrid

Ingrid has a Doctor of Nursing Practice degree and has taught for nine years. She transferred her clinical course online from home during the shutdown. Ingrid was a curriculum coordinator and helped lead a level of the undergraduate program. She needed to ensure all her instructors knew how to use the technology, provide resources, and ensure they could use the tools they had yet to use. When Ingrid first learned that they would transfer online, she was overwhelmed and wondered how students would learn effectively, progress to the next level with adequate knowledge, and become competent. Ingrid had some training but taught face-to-face.

Matteo

Matteo has a master's degree and has taught for ten years. Before joining his university, he had 16 years of industry experience. Matteo transferred two courses online from home during the shutdown, a large supply chain class of 300 students and a Logistics and Transportation class with 45-55 students. During the shutdown, some of the academics from the Business School who taught online came together and hosted an online training presentation. He thought it was extremely useful. He also took a mix of online and in person training during the summer.

Results

Data were collected using Zoom semi-structured interview meetings, Zoom focus group meetings, and e-journals. During each interview, an opening statement was read to the participants to communicate the purpose of the study, how their identity would be protected, and to ensure all participants received the same information. Their interviews were recorded by Zoom and transcribed using Microsoft Dictate and edited for accuracy.

The mp4 recordings, interview transcriptions, and e-journal files were uploaded to NVivo. All data was valued equally. The data were first deductively coded using the interview questions, memos were annotated, and data were inductively coded to find added information from the participant's perspectives. The researcher bracketed preconceived ideas of emergency remote teaching, recorded memos in NVivo, and compared the data from the interviews and e-journals. The researcher chunked meaning, found patterns, placed data into five matching categories, and then given descriptive names for five emergent themes (See Table 2). The researcher eliminated data that did not provide relevant information that could not be labeled. The themes were interconnected to write a description to answer what and how academics experienced emergency remote teaching. The description includes participant's quotations.

Table 2

Data Theme Synthesis

Codes	Instances of Code Within Raw Data	Themes	Subthemes
Time ERT Took	460	Overtime (2,095 Codes)	
Courses Transferred Online	459		
Work Overload	289		
Professional Development	241		
Recorded lectures	214		
Technology Needs and Issues	166		
Canvas	132		
Technology Preparation	55		
Student Evaluation	48		
Wi-Fi Issues	31		
Students	668	Relationships (1,031 Codes)	Family Students Colleagues
IT Department	129		
Colleagues	79		
Isolation	62		
Family	39		
Mentorships	30		
Networks	24		
COVID-19	413	Burnout/Stress (844 Codes)	
Effects of ERT on Them	163		
Frequent Changes	114		
Quiet Students	108		
Work Overload	27		
Consequences	19		
Canvas	132	Technical Struggles (718 Codes)	Frequent Changes Asynchronous issues
Frequent Changes	114		
Zoom	96		
Grading	69		
IT Support	61		
Microsoft Teams	58		
Tech Prep	55		

Cameras Turned Off	40		
Tech Competency	34		
Wi-Fi	31		
Cheating	28		
Tech Devices	156	Digital Divide (629 Codes)	
Canvas	132		
Constant Changes	144		
Zoom	96		
Tech Competency	34		
Online Pedagogy	33		
Wi-Fi	31		
D2L	18		
Blackboard	9		
Skype	6		

Note. Code instances are matched and placed into matching categories, and the emergent themes are given descriptive names.

Overtime

The Overtime theme had the most frequency of codes. The theme includes all instances that took extra time to complete tasks above traditional face-to-face teaching creating a work overload. Codes were grouped from courses transferred online, professional development, student evaluation, technology preparation, recorded lectures, Canvas, Technology needs and issues, time emergency remote teaching took, Wi-Fi issues, and work overload.

Linh said there was no technology infrastructure, they had to start from scratch. She had to record her lectures and she worked 24 hours a day, seven days a week during the pandemic. All participants said they needed to teach themselves how to use their learning management system.

Faculty were encouraged to use the numerous, time-consuming training videos housed in Canvas, or they could use the training videos on LinkedIn. During his interview, Dylan said that

because D2L would crash his university switched from their D2L learning management system requiring them to spend more time learning their new Canvas LMS. Participants also needed to learn how to use various technologies to conduct virtual conferences to more robust platforms because they would crash. Helen said she had to quickly learn to use Microsoft Teams and the Vice Thread discussion platform. It took extra time to learn the upgraded technology making the transition within the time constraints more stressful. The participants who had experience using their previous LMS and conference tools, had to learn how to use the upgraded technology that replaced them. Alain said, "I used Google Chat, FaceTime, and Skype, but Zoom was a little bit more user friendly and you could do a few more things with it."

Many of the participants used their PowerPoint slide decks they used while lecturing to their face-to-face classes to teach online. Those who taught online asynchronously spent much time recording their PowerPoint lectures and then uploading them to Canvas. Linda said she had to make many retakes when recording her lectures and was working until 2:00 a.m. on a lecture that would have taken much less time face-to-face. Matteo taught online for the first time during the pandemic. He said it took him more time trying to record perfect 45-minute lecture videos. He said if he misspoke during his face-to-face class, he could correct himself; he did not feel he could do that in his recorded lectures. Matteo described his struggles and stated during the interview,

> Maybe I'm too much of a perfectionist, but you get into five slides in and you kind of stumble over the slide, or you don't say it maybe how you wanted, or I didn't need that long of a pause. So, I find myself starting over multiple times during the recording. I'm like, that wasn't good, let me try it again.

The participants needed to rewrite their syllabus, find resources, and provide alternative assignments for practical assignments that they could not use during the shutdown. During the interview, Ingrid described the amount of time she spent during emergency remote teaching,

> The time just was not comparable to our normal workload. There was so much more time spent because not all our resources supported going virtual. So, trying to either create workarounds or alternative learning for something we did face-to-face and making sure it was to the right level for our students. Some of it wasn't successful and some of it was. It was a little bit of a trial and error, but it took a lot of time to find appropriate resources.

Bryce said, "It took at least five times more work to convert a face-to-face course online on the fly." Dylan said he worked all day until it was time to sleep at 10:00 pm, up to the final exam. Erin said it took her much time to transition online; she had never imagined she would ever teach online, so she had to create everything. Alain said he did not think there was a big difference in the time used for teaching because he recorded his lectures while teaching asynchronously. Besides learning the upgraded technologies, the participants needed to set up studios in their homes and borrowed technology from their school, bought technology, and made what they needed to teach online from home. During the 2020-2021 COVID-19 pandemic there were participants who decided to teach from their university rather than at home or other locations. Linda described her daily time-consuming duty during her interview,

> Maybe 60% of us decided to go ahead and come into the classroom. Some put in for leaves of absence for the entire year, and others didn't get permission to teach from home. The university was trying to keep some semblance of normalcy on campus. We were assigned rooms double and triple the size of normal to allow students to spread out.

> I had 30 students spread out over 250 seats. Faculty were required to spray down and wipe all the desks coming in and going out. We were cleaning crew first and foremost.

After transitioning online, the participants experienced Wi-Fi issues. Both the participants and their students suffered a lag time when watching videos, and conference platforms buffered because they did not have fast enough internet service. Most of the participants worked all day until it was time to sleep, while participants who lived in rural areas had to work after midnight to gain fast enough Wi-Fi. Betty said she struggled the most with the many hours spent trying to access Wi-Fi and grading. Betty used her cell phone hotspot with a booster to work after midnight to upload her lecture videos and view her students' videos. Betty shared her experience,

> It was horrible! I would say that I probably put in 10 times more work during that time just trying to switch everything over, trying to communicate with students, trying to grade assignments, trying to record lectures, and just trying to figure out how to get stuff uploaded! It just spun and spun and spun with lag time in the Wi-Fi!

Alain had experience teaching online and expressed concern for what his colleagues experienced during the online transition: "From an administration standpoint, no one ever quite grasped that concept. Anybody that was doing that for the first time was really really challenged, and they were not properly compensated for that amount of time they spent doing that."

Relationships

The theme, Relationships, is the second largest code instances. The theme includes codes from isolation, networks, mentorships, family, students, colleagues, and the IT department. Relationships were negatively affected during the COVID-19 shutdown as participants were in isolation to avoid spreading the virus. Many students and educators could not return home or to campus during the shutdown. Parents and their children needed to work online in the same space.

The educators experienced technical issues while instructing their students online. Faculty sought help from colleagues and social media to solve teaching and technical issues.

Family

The subtheme, Family, is under relationships theme. Some of the participants had family members who required exceptional care. After undergoing major surgeries, they could suffer serious illness or death if they contracted COVID-19. After the shutdown, other individuals could socialize in public by wearing masks and exercising social distancing; Bryce could not. Bryce's wife had a lung transplant, and as a result, she was immune suppressed, and they had to be incredibly careful about not getting exposed to COVID-19, expressly before the vaccine was available. He said, "It was just me and the students and I don't think that was at all helpful in building stronger bonds within the school, with faculty, and administration."

During the shutdown, Betty could not return home from her spring break trip, and she needed to teach her courses asynchronously. Betty and her daughter were together in Kansas while her husband and son were in Minnesota. She said, "So, for three months we couldn't leave the state lines. He would lose his job. We were just stuck in Kansas they didn't want us leaving the borders, so the isolation was just being apart." Betty's sister is also an educator, and her school used a better Zoom program than Betty's university, and they shared it with their family. Betty's mother had a heart issue and was immune compromised; she felt isolated and lonely. Betty recalled, "Being able to zoom with her was great."

Dylan said he was at home with his wife and his teenage daughter. He had to try and be quiet when he worked because his wife was sitting in a chair in the same room doing her work online. He said, "The high school had shut down and gone online. During that time, between anxiety and depression, it was not a great experience for my daughter, probably for none of us."

Students

The subtheme, Students, is under relationships theme. The participants enjoyed teaching their face-to-face classes; they liked building relationships with their students. They could better determine their student's zone of proximal development (ZPD) when teaching their courses face-to-face. The participants depended on their student's facial expressions and body language to determine if they needed to clarify their lecture or if students wanted to ask a question.

During the shutdown, however, the participants experienced challenges collaborating with their students. Many students did not turn on their cameras during virtual class meetings and did not ask questions. During his interview, Dylan expressed his frustration when trying to contact his students,

> Some people are just difficult to communicate with because they would disappear, and I would bug and bug and bug them. ‘You know this is gonna close soon. You need to do this now. Here’s the final. This is your last chance.’

There are studies that claim that higher education instructors use traditional teaching methods because that is how they were taught (Jääskelä et al., 2017; Marcelo & Yot-Dominguez, 2019; Mishra et al., 2019; Schlesselman, 2020; Torres Martín et al., 2021). However, these participants said they prefer to teach face-to-face because they enjoy interacting with their students. Erin said, "To me, being a teacher is the connection to the students that gives me joy and what gives me energy."

Linh said during the shutdown, students could not leave their country and return to campus, so she taught her courses asynchronously from home during the shutdown. Linh teaches computer science courses, and she enjoys interacting with her students. She looked forward to

the first day of class after the shutdown, and this is how Linh described her feeling of isolation during the pandemic:

> Usually, you have all the students show up on the first day of class. I remember no one showed up in my face-to-face class. It's just all online because I gave them that option. So, I printed out, I still have them in my office, I printed out four of my favorite show characters from Criminal Minds, Grey's Anatomy, Person of Interest, what else… yeah, NCIS. I printed them out and laid them out in my first rows, pretending that they were my students or at least invited speakers to my classes.

After the shutdown and returned to class, Erin observed a difference in her students' behavior that concerned her. She said, "When we got back into the classroom students didn't talk in class. They didn't talk at all; there was none of the little chatter or raising hands; it was like pulling teeth to get an answer. That lasted two full years!" Dylan agreed with Erin and added, "They came from high school, and they were dead silent, and it was for two years."

Linh expressed her concern, "We had a lot of things to take into consideration not just transfer of knowledge. Whether students in quarantine are getting food to eat. We also monitored our student's mental health."

Colleagues

The subtheme, Colleagues, was under the relationships theme. The participants sought networks and mentorships during emergency remote teaching to learn how to solve issues and gain emotional support. Some of the participants interacted with social media groups; however, some found the information inconsistent and unreliable. In contrast, others lurked (individuals who observe rather than participate in a social media community) on sites to gain information from colleagues with more online teaching experience. Some of the participants were

professional membership members that focused on teaching their subjects online during the pandemic.

The academics who collaborated online with their department members believed COVID had made their staff and department grow closer. In contrast, others thought the COVID shutdown made virtual collaboration between colleagues more difficult. Betty described her perspective,

> Everybody was getting really sick of Zoom meetings. Everybody was sitting in their homes trying to maintain those relationships with meet ups. One thing I appreciate is now we have Teams faculty meetings, and I don't have to be on campus. The disadvantage is there's more attendance, but less attention is being paid. There is a lot of monologuing in those meetings which is harmful for our interpersonal relationships with our colleagues. There isn't much active participation. It's easier just to turn off the cameras and do something else.

Ingrid explained that she needed to remain connected with her coworkers just to be able to unwrap everything they were experiencing. She needed to unwind from it and try to process everything, because there was so much going on. During the interview she said,

> There were not only changes in our work environment, but there were also changes in our homes, and changes in how we went out into the public. There was so much uncertainty that I needed someone to talk to. Over time we got so inundated with the extra workload, I think that kind of went to the wayside, and you started to feel more isolated. It was so much to take in and I was not sure how to process it.

Technical Struggles

The theme, Technical Struggles, had the third most code instances. The theme includes a wide variety of codes from cameras turned off, Wi-Fi, Canvas, Technology preparation, technology competency, IT support, grading, cheating, constant changes, Microsoft Teams and Zoom. The university system experienced deep budget cuts making it more difficult to provide quality education. However, in the spring of 2020, the university system received a $2 million-dollar anonymous donation to be used for online teaching professional development and technical improvements. 60% of the academics in the university system completed formal online teaching training before the pandemic. The remainder who was not interested in teaching remotely had not used their LMS until the COVID-19 shutdown. After the shutdown, most of the participants expressed that they prefer teaching face-to-face even more so after experiencing emergency remote teaching.

Alain said Canvas could be more user-friendly; some features are difficult to figure out, and it takes much time to complete tasks. Canvas is complicated, and there are voluminous, time-consuming training videos on how to complete tasks in which they did not have time to watch. Alain explains what it is like to transfer course content to Canvas,

> There was a great deal of frustration largely because it's tedious. You can't just upload stuff, and have it go where you need it to go. You have to put it here and then change this setting, and it's all these sorts of micro steps for every little thing. There isn't just a button you can push, and it's done.

Erin had to get creative after discovering that their Canvas quiz was not designed for physics. Erin said her students had issues taking their online quizzes when their photographs showing their work on how they solved their physics problems would not upload, and their online quiz timed out. She had her students email their work to her. Apple has a High Efficiency

Image Container (HEIC) format photograph that cannot be uploaded to Canvas. She learned it needed to be converted before it could be uploaded. Other than that, she had few technological issues.

Even though some academics had online experience, they still found the transition challenging. Bryce had some advanced online training before the pandemic but had yet to transfer his courses online and teach online before the pandemic. Bryce talked about his experience with transitioning his course to Canvas:

> I had some advanced training in online teaching that made it a little easier. However, I was calling an instructional designer probably every couple of days trying to find out how to do this or that, because sometimes the things we use in Canvas, I don't know if you're familiar with Canvas, but there are little things in Canvas that are really hard to figure out.

Frequent Changes

The universities needed a feasible crisis plan before the pandemic. Their existing technologies were not robust enough to handle the load, and as a result, the universities made frequent technological changes to meet the heavy educational needs. The participants needed to learn upgraded technology making the transition more difficult for the academics. Ingrid explained her frustration:

> It was stressful during COVID-19; it was filled with constant changes. Sometimes, the changes didn't make sense, and I could not keep up with them. It was overwhelming to keep students up to date on changes. I was in an information overload, I had to step away from social media and news outlets in order to maintain some sanity.
>
> Linda agreed, saying, "They kept shifting the tools on us from semester to semester,

and those were a bit abrupt."

Asynchronous Issues

Academics who taught asynchronously prepared recorded lectures for students who lived in different time zones. Academics were exasperated when trying to create clean lecture videos. Matteo felt drained after recording course content videos that met his standards, "During the shutdown most of my day was spent recording and re-recording lecture videos." Erin also agreed with Matteo, "I think for me the most challenging was just creating videos."

Without preparation before the shutdown, the participants had not informed students of what would be expected of them and did not tell them they were required to turn on their cameras during virtual meetings. In some cases, the participants were told not to require their students to turn on their cameras. Traditionally, the participants relied on their student's facial expressions and body language to determine if their students were confused and had a question. They also determined their student's understanding and zone of proximal development (ZPD) when talking to them. Matteo had a class with 300 students and two other courses with 45 and 55 students, far above the ideal number of 15 students for an online course. Many students had difficulty accessing Wi-Fi, so the participants gave up trying to hold synchronous meetings with their students. Bryce said some foreign students went home to their home country during spring break and could not return. They experienced significant bandwidth problems so the students could not use their cameras. When students did not turn on their cameras, the academics missed seeing their student's faces when teaching online. Matteo describes his struggle with maintaining student attention:

> I couldn't get them to turn their cameras on that first semester and that fall semester. It's very isolating if you can't see how people are responding, and then some of the people who did turn on their cameras, I saw them pick up their cell phones and make a call.

Linda said she had difficulty getting students to turn on their cameras. After the synchronous class meeting was over and students said their goodbyes, there would be four students who had not turned on their cameras and had not left the meeting. She would wait 15-20 minutes for them to say goodbye and leave the virtual meeting.

Burnout/Stress

The theme, Burnout/Stress, has the fourth most code instances within the study data. While the participants were in isolation, they dealt with the uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic, spent hours learning unfamiliar technical programs, dealt with unsurmountable technical issues, cared for family members, and became concerned about their and their student's wellbeing. The consequences of prolonged stress and isolation caused the participants to become burned out, and they felt the effects for months afterward.

Matteo said recording lecture videos was time-consuming and frustrating; doing the fifth, sixth, or seventh take on slides one through ten, burned him out. He would record his voice-over PowerPoint videos multiple times until he created videos that he was comfortable showing his students. He said if he misspoke when teaching face-to-face, he could correct himself and be more human. He did not feel like he could do that with his recordings.

Emma said teaching synchronously was intense. Her back hurt. After a couple of hours of screen time, it felt like at least four or six hours. Before the shutdown, Emma was getting physical therapy, and after spending many screen hours, her condition worsened. She woke up one morning and could not feel either of her arms. She made adaptations by getting new

technical tools to make herself more comfortable. According to clinical research done in 2021, stress and burnout can cause physical symptoms such as numbness in their extremities. An individual who suffered short-term stress usually recovers within three months; however, more severe cases may take longer than a year to recover. Several studies have found that individuals who experienced severe burnout had not recovered after four years. (Geng, C., 2023). Ingrid said she experienced stress on a level of 8 or 9 on a scale of 1-10 during emergency remote teaching. She describes her experience:

> I was pushing down on my own emotions and my coping and putting it to the wayside so that I was there for my students and even as a nurse, being there for my family and friends and supporting them through the uncertainty of this infection. So, we didn't know a lot about it, and so I didn't allow myself to process a lot of information internally. It came probably a month or so later. Then it was just getting through the semester and finishing that up, and then I could allow myself to open up and feel things; otherwise, I think I was just numb.

Ingrid added, “Well, then there’s PTSD; there’s a lot of that out there.” The participants were concerned about how long it would take before things got back to normal. Linh shared her thoughts on burnout and stress:

> I think the biggest challenge is dealing with the student's mental health and our own mental health. It is still like it is the pandemic. It is already over for one year, like completely over for one year! But it's still, I mean we're dealing with the consequences right now. So, that is my biggest challenge. When people are confined into a very small space for a long time, use online teaching and online learning, and lose the face-to-face

> human touch, this can be very lonely and desperate. If you already have some mental health issues and are put in that environment, it is going to get worse.

Dylan worked hard to set up his online courses that spring, fall, and the following spring, and he felt burned out by the following summer. He describes his experience, "That next summer was the most useless of my life. I got very little done. I didn't want to do anything. I would kind of drag through. It was about a year later; I was unproductive for months!"

Erin said her university had massive budget cuts during the COVID pandemic because their enrollment was down. They had less tuition money and got less money from the state; therefore, they had fewer resources, adjuncts were cut, and teacher loads went up. She said she and her colleagues are still experiencing burnout. Erin said she is a project manager for a grant and is having difficulty recruiting colleagues because they are still burned out. This spring she drafted an essay on how faculty are still burned out; she was disappointed that the higher education website newspaper did not accept it. She had been experiencing stress and depression issues until the fall of 2023, when she finally felt excited about starting the semester again.

Helen described her thoughts and said, “The things I had to deal with in the fall were very stressful, and I really questioned if I wanted to continue.” She added, “If this were going to be my life from here on out, I would have dipped out at the end of that year for sure if we stayed where we were for the 2021-2022 school year.” Linh expressed a similar position:

> For the first few weeks, we all had the video on and everything, and then we realized, oh my God! We have to do this forever! We lost interest, and we were really depressed. I said that if I have to do it another semester, I'll go psycho!

Digital Divide

The theme, Digital Divide, had the fifth most code instances. The digital divide includes people who do not have hardware, software, or adequate internet, do not know how to use the technology, or need the knowledge required for online teaching and learning. Betty said she had taken a four-week course to learn how to teach online before she taught two online courses before the pandemic. However, before the pandemic, she kept her grades on spreadsheets, used a paper syllabus, and never used the Canvas calendar. During the shutdown, she needed to learn how to use Canvas, Teams, Zoom, and Screencast.

Erin's first thought of transitioning online was terror. She had never taught a physics course online and had heard that physics and lab courses did not do well online. She never intended to teach online, so she had never learned how to use Canvas. She was on sabbatical at the time, and for four weeks she put aside the projects she was working on to learn how to teach online and build her online course.

Helen said she did not have any training prior to the pandemic. She knew about the learning management system, Zoom, and Microsoft Teams but has yet to use them. She had only taught online during the pandemic. Her university recognized that the academics needed training, so they offered many trainings to teach them how to teach remotely and flip their face-to-face courses to a virtual platform. She said, "So I took as many of those trainings as I could in the summer so that I was prepared for fall."

After the participants learned how to use the upgraded technologies and transitioned their courses online, they discovered issues with Wi-Fi. The participants stated that everyone assumed that everyone had fast internet. Dylan describes his experience:

> It wasn't so much technology issues as human problems mixed with technology issues. People would drive over and sit outside the library to get a hold of their Wi-Fi, or they

were in odd places to access Wi-Fi. In many cases, they did not have it at home. Some people dropped out because they tried to do these classes using their cell phone hotspots.

Academics and students who lived in rural areas had spotty or nonexistent Wi-Fi. Some students did not turn on their cameras during virtual meetings because it would pull on their bandwidth, causing Zoom to freeze. Betty was staying in a rural area with spotty internet. She teaches public speaking and interpersonal communication. She explains her challenges of trying to view student videos and post her video lectures using her cell phone hotspot,

> We didn't have very good internet out there. I was very tired because the only time that I could get my grading done and get my lectures posted, and all of that kind of stuff, was in the middle of the night. So, I was up until 4:00 AM - 5 AM. I'd sleep until about noon.

Ingrid said that the transition to online learning during the shutdown was difficult for students because they may not have had the personal interaction they needed; they may have had only one laptop at home, which five people had to share between those who needed it for grade school, college, and for work, some struggled with Wi-Fi issues as well.

Betty agreed, adding that some students could not make it back to the university and they left their laptops in their dorm room. Some had to do their work using their cell phone hotspot. Those who lived in rural areas experienced dead Wi-Fi spots and other connectivity issues. When students turned on their cameras, some were still in bed! She said they did not need to see that. Betty said teaching synchronously was a challenge; they quickly learned they had to teach their courses asynchronously and find ways to be creative and still accomplish what they needed to get done.

Dylan said the shutdown was a challenge; the time students were free during their normally scheduled classes were no longer free, and many of his students were taking care of

kids all the time. Some worked and had to do their work at 2:00 or 3:00 in the morning. He would have done things differently if they had to do it again. However, he could not at the time because he did not have the time; he was doing it on the fly.

Erin said she did not experience the laptop issues because their university is a laptop campus; the university provides their students with laptops. She gave her students a quiz the first week to ensure they had newer computers, current software, and consistent internet. Her students had reliable laptops with current software, and only a couple of students had some internet issues.

Alain said he taught online before, so the transition was not a problem for him. He was more concerned about his colleagues who had never learned to teach online, and who had hands-on types of classes. He thought he was lucky because his classes were more lecture based.

Outlier Data and Finding

The theme, Outlier Data and Findings, section includes unexpected findings and themes. The data does not align with specific research questions or themes. The section consists of new data the participants were passionate about and warrants the reader's attention. There are three Outlier findings within the data, self-actualization, quiet students, and introverts and extroverts.

Outlier Finding #1

Bryce may have experienced self-actualization even though he needed help from the instructional designers every few days. The universities offered a series of online training for academics to take at their discretion. Bryce took as many courses as he could before the pandemic. He felt he was lucky to have taken them before the pandemic and was pleased with their effectiveness. He approached the transition with a positive attitude. Bryce expressed his perspective:

> I'm a businessperson. Right? I'm not a teacher, so I didn't have any of that educational background, and that program was absolutely fantastic for me. I went on and got the advanced credential, too. It really changed how I approached teaching, what I included in my courses, and how I got students to interact with the material. Really, COVID allowed me the freedom to do that. Right? Because I was working from home, my calendar was my own. I could participate in that program fully. Anyway, it worked out well for me from a teacher's perspective. Going through that program enabled me to incorporate what I learned into my classes. Consequently, I developed a tool that turned out to be really, really effective in causing students to learn more and then retain it longer, so for me the whole thing turned out to be pretty wonderful.

Outlier Finding #2

The participants observed their students had become quiet and were concerned about the pandemic's effects on them. During the shutdown people had to stay at home to avoid spreading the virus; all schools transitioned online. People were gradually allowed to go into the public but needed to stay 6 feet apart and wear masks. The vaccine became available on December 14, 2020, and the public was encouraged to get vaccinated. The prolonged isolation and separation had unexpected effects on the students. The participants noticed that their students became quiet during the COVID shutdown and remained quiet for two years afterwards.

Outlier Finding #3

Some participants referred to themselves as introverts or extroverts and believed it made a difference in how they perceived the shutdown. The introverts were not bothered by isolation saying their social lives had remained the same and they did not see anything different other than the stores and the roads were not filled with people. The shutdown did not have a negative effect

on Alain. He said he joked about staying six feet away from other people. He describes his thoughts:

> I remember joking about this when the shutdown started. I'm pretty introverted, so I was like, well doesn't everyone normally interact this way? So, it did not negatively affect me. I was already used to not having a lot of face-to-face connections with people to begin with. So, it was probably a lot easier for me. Not having to commute was a huge plus for me, I got to see my wife more often, and I got a lot of yard work done that I wouldn't ordinarily be able to do.

The participants who called themselves extroverts suffered, saying they missed their friends and colleagues. Not having a vibrant social life was detrimental to their wellbeing. Erin enjoyed getting together with her friends and colleagues. She said, "I miss my friends. We're usually the social hub. I'm usually having people over every other week and so that was very stressful as well."

Research Question Responses

This section provides answers to the research questions using the themes developed during data analysis. The themes are Overtime, Technical Struggles, Digital Divide, Relationships, and Burnout/Stress. Participant quotations support the research questions.

Central Research Question

How do academics at the university level describe their experience of transitioning their course and teaching online during emergency remote teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020-2021? The Overtime and Digital Divide themes addressed the Central Research Question. The universities were not prepared to transfer online, which made the transition more difficult for the academics. The academics said regardless of experience, the transition was

stressful, complicated, and time-consuming. The participants who taught online before the shutdown and or had online training knew what to expect when transitioning their face-to-face course online during the shutdown. The academics who did not have experience were on their own to figure out how to make the transition online. Helen shared her perspective, "Just trying to navigate the mixed messaging during the shutdown was very challenging. No one knew what to do."

Sub Question Number One

What professional training did the academics at the university level have before and during emergency remote teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020-2021? The Overtime and Technical Struggles themes addressed Sub Question Number One. Some participants had some training prior to the pandemic. During the transition, the participants were on their own to figure out how to make the transition online, and they did not have time to take online training. Betty described her experience,

> As you know, there was not a lot of training. We were all learning as we went. It was a lot of baptism by fire going through that whole process. Since then, I think it's just been figuring it out what's working and what doesn't work for everybody else and for me.

Sub Question Number Two

What pedagogical changes do academics at the university level associate with the experience of emergency remote teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020-2021? The Technical Struggles and Digital Divide themes addressed Sub Question Number Two. The academics said the experience had improved their teaching. They now have their course content on their LMS, learned how to use Canvas, and could teach their course online again in an instant. Ingrid shared her thoughts:

> It encouraged the university to move forward with some technology they needed to catch up or were resistant to change. For instance, switching from paper testing to online in a secure environment was something we needed to have done a long time ago, but we didn't have the option.

Sub Question Number Three

How do academics at the university level describe their emotional needs during emergency remote teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020-2021? All five themes (Overtime, Relationships, Burnout/Stress, Technical Struggles, and Digital. Divide) addressed Sub Question Number Three. All the participants said they experienced isolation during the shutdown. They could not have face-to-face meetings with their colleagues during the shutdown; they had to meet virtually. They met online with the speaker who did all the talking and little collaboration. Erin expressed her emotional relationships:

> My relationships with my department colleagues took a severe hit. I was missing them so badly. Department meetings on Zoom, blah! There's like a year of my colleagues' lives that I just don't feel like I have any input on. I don't have any idea what they were doing. Really, even though we were all in this pandemic shutdown together, I really don't know how they were handling things.

Summary

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study is to explore the experiences of academics at the university level with emergency remote teaching during the 2020-2021 COVID-19 pandemic. Twenty-seven academics responded to the recruitment emails, 18 signed the consent form, 15 participated in the research, and 11 completed the study. This chapter presents five themes that emerged during analysis. The Overtime theme had the most code

instances. The theme included all occurrences requiring more time to complete a task than face-to-face teaching. Participants needed to learn current technologies, create course content, find resources, and record lectures before transferring their courses to their LMS. The participants had to complete their course prep within two weeks before their students returned online after the extended spring break. Then they needed to solve Wi-fi issues as students returned to their online courses.

During the preparation, the participants believed they needed to retain a sense of normalcy during the crisis by designing their online courses as close to their face-to-face courses as possible and recording their lectures. They spent countless hours recording and rerecording their lectures to create perfect lecture videos. They discovered that uploading their videos to Canvas was complicated and time-consuming. The universities made frequent technological changes to address educational needs, making the transition more challenging for the participants. The participants who were living in rural areas had inconsistent or nonexistent Wi-Fi. Their work had to be done after midnight to have a fast enough Mbps to watch student videos and upload lecture videos to their LMS using their cell phone hotspots.

Participants endured this crisis under mandatory isolation to avoid spreading the virus. Participants relied on social media networks for moral support and technical help. Some of the participants were caring for family members with health needs. Many students are also new to online learning and suffered pandemic-related difficulties, which the participants helped their students cope. The participants worked long, stressful hours over a prolonged period that caused burnout, and they continued to feel the effects into the fall of 2023.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Overview

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to explore the experiences of academics at the university level with emergency remote teaching during the 2020-2021 COVID-19 pandemic. Chapter Five presents the interpretations of the findings in Chapter Four. There are also five discussion subsections: interpretation of findings, implications for policy and practice, theoretical and methodological implications, limitations and delimitations, and recommendations.

Discussion

Eleven participants from six universities shared their shared lived experiences, emotions, attitudes, and perspectives during their online transition and emergency remote teaching during the 2020-2021 COVID-19 pandemic. Five themes were identified from eleven e-journals, eleven Zoom semi-structured individual interviews, and three Zoom focus group interviews. The discussion section presents interpretations to explain what and how the participants experienced the phenomenon, and what caused their experiences, challenges, and the consequences. The discussion section presents five subsections: interpretation of findings, implications for policy, or practice, theoretical and empirical implications, limitations and delimitations, and recommendations for future research.

Interpretation of Findings

This study focused on exploring the experiences of academics at the university level with emergency remote teaching during the 2020-2021 COVID-19 pandemic. Because the universities were not prepared and the participants did not have training or direction, the participants experienced stress and burnout as they struggled with online course design, online

pedagogy, evaluation, and teaching during the COVID-19 shutdown and pandemic. This section presents a summary of the thematic findings and interpretations: pedagogy, digital divide, and mental health.

Summary of Thematic Findings

This phenomenological study identified five themes during data analysis: overtime, relationships, burnout/stress, technical struggles, and digital divide. Participants said the transition increased the time they spent working far beyond their contractual agreement in which they were not compensated. They described their experiences of emergency remote teaching as stressful, complicated, and time-consuming which over time caused burnout. The relationship theme had three subthemes: family, students, and colleagues. The participants were working in isolation, and they often got incorrect information. Participants who had family members with health issues had to take strict precautions to avoid exposure to the virus which diminished face-to-face opportunities to communicate with students and colleagues. The third theme, technical struggles, had two subthemes: Canvas and constant changes. Their universities kept changing the technologies they needed to learn to teach online, and Canvas was not as user friendly as they would have liked. The theme digital divide became more apparent as they encountered slow, spotty, or nonexistent internet and poor cell phone service.

Pedagogy. Online pedagogy is different than face-to-face lecture, direct teaching, and transfer of knowledge methods. This study agrees with Lehmann and Chamberlin (2009), that academics who do not have appropriate online training when designing their online courses, do not include active learning components, allow collaboration, achieve elevated levels of learning, or provide student satisfaction. Kilgour et al. (2019), study found that academics struggled with two central threshold concepts when transferring online are a shift to collaboration and inquiry-

based approaches rather than using transmission of knowledge methods. Kilgour et al. stated that the online course requires a different mode of interaction and relationships that include learner-to-content, learner-to-learner, and learner-to-educator. The training the participants had focused on how to use technology and not online pedagogy and best practices. For example, Matteo believed he needed to record perfect 45-minute lecture recordings for his students to try to create a sense of normalcy during the shutdown. The participants also struggled with miscommunications, keeping their students engaged, and evaluation. This study also agrees with literature because of emergency remote teaching, many have confused it with quality online teaching. As a result of their poor experiences, they have no desire to teach online again (Meishar-Tal & Levenberg, 2021; Schmidt-Crawford et al., 2021). In contrast, Bryce had online training before the pandemic. He used online pedagogical methodologies and experienced an enhanced sense of well-being, providing him with his psychological and social needs (Cohut, 2018; García-Álvarez et al., 2021; Parte & Herrador-Alcaide, 2021).

Digital Divide. This study agrees with literature that the participants experienced the digital divide based on inadequate internet access and poor technological skills during the COVID-19 pandemic (Cullinan et al., 2021; Donham et al., 2022; Lai & Widmar, 2021; Stewart et al., 2021). The participants and students who lived in rural areas had inconsistent Wi-Fi service. The participants needed to work late at night when they could get faster Mbps to view videos, upload recordings and grade assignments. Students who did not have internet at home traveled in their cars to hotspots so they could access class content. Students who had low internet speed needed to turn off their cameras while attending class virtual meetings so they could hear the meeting and avoid having their meeting freeze. This study agrees with Buckley et al. (2021), that about half of the students participated in live online discussions, which may not

have allowed a sufficient opportunity for learners and their academics to engage. While the participants experienced an increased sense of isolation when students turned off their cameras (Buckley et al., 2021; Santos et al., 2021). Furthermore, poor internet connectivity and students needing to turn off their cameras may have caused unnecessary miscommunications (Al Shlowiy et al., 2021).

Mental Health. All participants expressed how stressed they were during emergency remote teaching and after a long time they were burned out. Because the participants were not prepared to teach online, they exhausted themselves working untold hours doing things they did not need to do. The study by Serralta et al. (2020), warns that, depending on the perceived intensity of the experience, individuals can develop posttraumatic stress disorder. Triggers can evoke symptoms decades later. Erin was experiencing physical numbness in her arms due to prolonged screen time and the stresses of emergency remote teaching. A study by Schmidt-Crawford et al. (2021), agree with this study saying that their participants suffered burnout from the stresses of working untold hours supporting their students and colleagues, the loss of work and life balance. Erin, Linh, and Dylan experienced burnout that lasted for months. This study agrees with Sellers et al. (2021), their study shown networking between professionals helps mentees persist through the isolation and stress they experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic; however, those without relationships become particularly vulnerable to stress related health issues.

Implications for Policy or Practice

The implications for the policy and practice section includes recommendations for faculty and their universities. Policies at the university level include implementing online training, teletherapy, pedagogy of care, a laptop program, and providing their faculty with opportunities

for socialization. Implications for practice include taking online training and departments need to create a detailed contingency plan.

Implications for Policy

Higher education needs to create a crisis plan to provide appropriate information quickly to all stakeholders with a budget for professional development and technology upkeep. The universities have already updated their technology needed for online education during the pandemic and prepared for power outages. Faculty can communicate with colleagues and students using a special mass notification system using SMS technology with their cell phones. Most institutions own generators that activate quickly after a power outages.

Educational students need online training focusing on pedagogy and best practices as part of their teaching licensures requirements. Faculty need to have online training that focuses on online pedagogy and best practices before they teach online. Past online training focused on technology and not online pedagogy. The participants stated that during the pandemic, they did not have time to take training courses and resorted to asking colleagues for quick answers to problems. The participants in this study who had taken many online training courses still did not know that online teaching requires a different pedagogy than they use when lecturing face-to-face. One participant who had taken several online training courses said there may be strategies to keep students engaged, but he had yet to find them. Therefore, faculty members should design one of their online courses during professional development. Experienced instructors in their field could demonstrate how to design their online courses and provide them with appropriate resources and Quick Source Learning Canvas Instructor guides (The guide is a trifold six page

reference guide with step by step instructions and full color screen shots showing how to use Canvas' basic features.).

Universities need to provide teletherapy for students and faculty 24/7. This study has shown a need for mental health care for students and faculty, especially during a crisis. Everyone was isolated at home during the shutdown and were required to wear masks and practice social distancing while in the public until the COVID-19 vaccine was made available. Participants in this study observed and were concerned that their students who became quiet for two years during and after the pandemic avoided participating in class discussions. Teletherapy may have helped traumatized students and instructors during the pandemic. The participants suffered burnout that lasted months after the pandemic before they felt motivated again.

This study agreed with literature that when the participants had caring relationships, they had emotional support that helped them persevere through their stressful situations. Universities need to practice a pedagogy of care that includes trauma, cultural, and feminist pedagogy. In an online pedagogy of care, instructors demonstrate caring behaviors and foster the pedagogy of care in the classroom. The participants in this study showed a pedagogy of care by monitoring student mental health and monitoring that students got enough to eat while isolated in their dorm rooms. Adjuncts often work in isolation and need the support of their colleagues.

Universities should allow students to check out laptops. Some of the participants worked at a university where the university owns and maintains laptops and students can check them out. The laptop lending program provides their students with program specific laptop and software. The program ensures that students and faculty have the educational tools they need to succeed. Students can keep their laptop after graduation. A laptop lending program would help close the digital divide.

The universities need to provide their faculty with opportunities for socialization. A participant in this study stated that her university provided many opportunities for their faculty to continue socializing during the pandemic which had a positive effect on their mental health. She said she belonged to the university's choir, and they continued to meet while wearing masks and socially distancing twelve feet. Adjunct professors need opportunities to socialize with their colleagues to feel a sense of community.

Theoretical and Empirical Implications

The theoretical framework for this study was Milheim's (2012) application of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. According to Maslow, individuals fluctuate between levels as they are motivated to advance to the next level to meet their needs (Maslow, 1943). According to Milheim's application, the first level of needs (physiological) includes access to the internet, computer, and subject content. In the second level (safety needs) the academics need to feel comfortable, familiar, safe in their online environment and have job security. In level three (belongingness needs), the academics need to feel a sense of community, friendship, love, and family to avoid feelings of isolation. The fourth level (esteem needs) academics need to feel respected by their peers, administration, students, and the public. They need to believe they are doing competent work and achieving superior standards. During the fifth level (self-actualization), the academic is intrinsically motivated to master the task. They are self-directed, focused on accomplishing something of personal meaning, they learn because it is pleasurable. According to Maslow, individuals fluctuate between levels as they are motivated to advance to the next level to meet their needs (Maslow, 1943). This theory is viable for this study because the study shown how participants fluctuated between levels as they struggled to have their needs met. Milheim's application of Maslow's hierarchy of needs has shown that participants could not

advance to higher levels before they needed to have lower needs met again. Ingrid describes her experience, “It felt like you’re just putting out fires.”

Physiological Needs

The first level of needs includes access to the internet, computer, and subject content. The participants experienced technological issues that increased their challenges of transitioning their course online. All the participants said their university used Blackboard or D2L then changed to Canvas because they were experiencing problems with those LMS programs crashing. All universities provided volumes of time-consuming training videos the participants did not have time to view to teach themselves how to use the LMS features and teach online. Some of the participants were able to get technological tools they needed from their university to transfer their courses online; others bought or made the equipment they needed. Participants who lived in rural areas had nonexistent or inconsistent Wi-Fi. They had to work after midnight to have fast enough Mbps to view student videos and upload recorded lectures using their cell phones. The administration assumed everyone had fast internet and it was easy to flip their face-to-face courses online. Canvas is not user friendly; some tasks are difficult to figure out and it requires many clicks to complete tasks. Recording lectures was time-consuming as participants spent many hours recording and rerecording lectures before they were happy with their results. Participants expressed their frustration as to how to transfer knowledge to their students for their labs and hands-on courses. Some classes had as many as 300 students, far larger than the ideal online class size of fifteen students. Students would not have enough student-to-student and student-to-teacher interaction to avoid miscommunications. The participants experienced problems using Skype with large classes, so their universities switched to Zoom or Microsoft Teams. Constant changes created an added obstacle for the participants. The two-week time

constraint to transfer their courses online added to the participant's stress. The amount of screen time overwhelmed both students and participants. The universities experienced deep budget cuts which resulted in less resources and some adjuncts lost their jobs. When the participant's physiological needs were not met, they were motivated to meet their needs.

Safety Needs

This study has shown that the physiological needs overlap with safety needs, the second level of needs. Milheim (2012) applies safety, shelter, familiarity, comfort with the online environment, and job security to the second needs level. The participants need to feel safe in their online course environment otherwise they become anxious. The participants needed to know how to communicate, navigate the course (ability to move through the course easily), and have time to acclimate to the unfamiliar environment during the first week. D2L experienced outages while participants were teaching online courses and tried to figure out how to contact their students. Skype could not handle larger classes and would fail so their universities switched to Zoom. The participants experienced frequent changes and did not know what programs they would be using day by day. Participants who lived in rural areas delt with inconsistent Wi-Fi access and had to work after midnight. The universities experienced huge budget cuts from the state and low student enrollment which led to fewer resources, adjuncts losing their jobs, and participants received larger teaching loads. Participants worried about contracting the virus and their mental health. Participants said they are still dealing with the consequences. When the participant's safety needs were not met, they were motivated to meet their needs.

Belongingness Needs

For the third level, Milheim applied the need to feel a sense of community, friendship, love, and family to avoid feelings of isolation. During the shutdown, the participants worked

from home, and they attended virtual meetings where they were spoken to and enjoyed minimal collaboration. Participants complained that they no longer felt like they were part of a department and missed visiting with their friends. When the participant's belongingness needs were not met, they were motivated to meet their needs.

Esteem Needs

The fourth level of Maslow's hierarchy of needs is self-esteem. Milheim (2012) applies this level to the online course by contending that the participants need to feel respected by their colleagues, administration, students, and the public. The participants take pride in their craft and needed to believe they were doing exceptional work. Students panicked, went home, and demanded to get their dorm intuition returned. Parents sued the universities saying their children were not getting a quality education. The participants believed they did their best; it was the circumstances of the situation that caused them to not be happy with their teaching and student learning. Participants said that they were still suffering burnout and do not feel motivated to do anything. When the participant's esteem needs were not met, they were motivated to meet their needs.

Self-Actualization

For the fifth level Milheim (2012) says learners are intrinsically motivated to master a skill, they want to become self-directed, they are focused on accomplishing something of personal meaning, and they learn because it is pleasurable. One participant who had taken advanced training to design and teach online prior to the pandemic believed the pandemic allowed him to grow and he experienced a sense of wellbeing; however, his needs dropped to the lower level when he was told he did not have a teaching job in the fall of 2023. However, most of the participants did not experience self-actualization, they said they were in survival mode as

they continuously tried to solve problems at all levels. The tumultuousness pandemic did not allow the participants to enjoy achieving any level for long causing anxiety.

Empirical Implications

This study has concurred with literature found on emergency remote teaching stating that before the pandemic the academics needed to be adequately trained (Bond et al., 2019). This study also found that many participants did not have appropriate online training prior to transitioning their face-to-face courses online during the pandemic. Helen said, “I didn’t have any training in regard to, like I knew our learning management system, I knew of things like Zoom, Microsoft Teams, things like that, but we never used them.”

When the pandemic arrived, the administrators recognized that the academics did not have adequate training and started to inundate the participants with email and tutorials on how to use their learning manage system, conference technologies and other resources (Al Shlowiy et al., 2021). Erin said, “Just dealing with all the emails and all the Canvas stuff, way more work than normal.” Administration was not trained for online education, and they did not realize the participants did not have time for training during the shutdown.

This study agreed with Schmidt-Crawford et al., 2021, and The Members of the National Council for Online Education Include the Online Learning Consortium (OLC). (2022). the participants needed to learn how to use their learning management systems, videoconference platforms, and learn how to record their lecture and upload it to their learning management system. The participants experienced a steep learning curve (Schmidt-Crawford et al., 2021; The Members of the National Council for Online Education Include the Online Learning Consortium (OLC). (2022). Ingrid said, “It was a steep learning curve for some of them.” However, because

they were not appropriately trained, they spent a great deal of time recording lectures they did not need to do.

Donham et al. (2022) stated that emergency remote teaching was the best solution for universities to continue teaching during the shutdown. The participants in this study recognized that they needed to transition online during the COVID-19 pandemic as well. Alain said, “Well personally, had they not been able to go online, I probably would have been out of work. So, it was good for me.” Education needed to transition online to avoid further damage to the system; however, there would have been less damage if they had been prepared.

In a study that explored higher education during the COVID-19 pandemic, Kulikowski et al. (2022), found that the academics did not have the authority to make pedagogical decisions during emergency remote teaching and they were required to use unfamiliar methods, and emergency remote teaching did not provide the academics with their social needs. This study had a partial contradiction, the participants in this study did not have authority to choose the learning manage system they preferred, but they were given full authority of how to design and teach their online courses. The participants were not aware of what they did not know, they needed formal online training to avoid online pitfalls and struggles.

Singh et al. (2022), states that as the result of academics transferring their courses online without proper training during the pandemic, they struggled to integrate effective technology. In addition, academics did not know the importance of social, cognitive, and teaching presence when teaching online, which caused student performance issues, feelings of isolation, frustration, and anxiety. This study agrees with Singh, J., et al. Erin describes her experience, “It was all prep! It was all videos, make videos, make videos, make videos, make homework, make all these things, and then the online office hours! So, just the time I put in was intense!” Many of the

participants had a negative experience with emergency remote teaching. Their idea of online teaching and learning is not accurate and may keep them from wanting to learn otherwise. Without training they continued to use traditional teacher centered methods when teaching their online courses (Garcia & Weiss, 2020).

The participants in this study spent their time recording their lectures and did not have time to watch training videos. This study agrees with Toner et al. (2022) found during the pandemic, the academics did not have time for training and planning; they could not build and guide effective online courses in the brief time before students returned to class. Linda explained, "There's always a kind of paradox I think, when you're the most needy, you're so busy, you don't have time to get the help that you need." Bergart et al. (2023), stated, their study found that during the pandemic, academics formed virtual supportive groups to share their experiences and support. This study agreed with Bergart et al. (2023) study. The participants in this study saved time by networking with their colleagues and professional memberships to learn how to solve their online teaching problems rather than watching training videos. This study agreed with Bergart et al. (2023), in that academics formed supportive social groups to share experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. Helen stated:

> The American Therapeutic Recreation Association really came together. Not only for their practitioners, but they also had practitioners submit ideas for online therapy, and they broke them up into different categories. There were links to virtual water parks, links to virtual symphonies, and links for expressive art drawings.

Grenon et al. (2019) said their study had shown the academics needed training to ensure effective online instruction. This study agrees with Grenon et al. in that during the pandemic the participants struggled to find ways to meet their student's needs. For example, the participants

knew they needed to provide captioning for their videos but struggled to find tools that could deliver quick and accurate results. Bartz (2020) and Garcia and Weiss (2020) found that during the abrupt transfer of their courses online, the academics did not utilize universal design for learning (UDL) and learners struggled with accessibility issues. Bryce said, “I ignored captioning when we first went into the COVID environment because I didn't know how to do it.”

This study agrees with literature that the participants worked from home sharing space and technology with their spouse and children (Carpenter et al., 2020; Górska et al., 2021; Ramlo, 2021; Santos et al., 2021). This study found that after the participants transitioned their face-to-face courses online, they discovered that not everyone had fast internet agreeing with studies done by Cullinan et al. (2021) and Lai and Widmar (2021). This study agrees with studies done by Lancet (2021) and Müller et al. (2021) that the digital divide became more apparent. Donham et al. (2022), Lai and Widmar (2021), and Stewart et al. (2021) studies found that rural residents often had access to one service provider and suffered inconsistent connection. This study agrees with literature on the digital divide. There needs to be a standard internet infrastructure. There are participants who live in areas without internet and cellphone coverage. Betty explained, “I invested in a hotspot hoping that that would help boost my capacity. I was using my hotspot on my phone.” This study agrees with Itow (2020) that slow Mbps caused the participants and their students to experience videoconference challenges. Betty said, “Students won't turn on their cameras, but if they do, it also pulls all the bandwidth.” Students needed to turn off their cameras during videoconferencing to keep their meeting from freezing. Buckley et al. (2021) stated that only 45% of their learners sometimes turned on their cameras, while 30% never turned them on. The participants in this study did not give a percentage of how many students did not turn on their cameras. Furthermore, in many cases, COVID affected family’s

financial situation resulting in students Wi-Fi disconnection (Distance Learning Statistics, 2021). The participants in this study said many students worked in retail and lost their jobs during the COVID-19 pandemic. Also, those sickened by COVID may have found it too challenging to keep up with schoolwork. This study agreed with Beck et al. (2022) who found in their study that the lack of technical skills and internet connection may have caused learners to withdraw from their studies and demand to have their tuition refunded. This study agreed with Edwards et al. (2021) stating with less revenue from tuition and government budget cuts, the universities laid off adjuncts which in turn increased the participants' workload. Even though Bryce had prior online training and experienced a sense of wellbeing during the COVID pandemic, he was an adjunct and discovered he did not have a teaching job for the fall of 2023 as the result. Bryce said, "I'm not teaching this fall as a consequence of that." This study agrees with Górska et al. (2021), Santos et al. (2021), and Steinberger et al. (2021) that the participants spent many hours working beyond their contractual workload. This study also agrees with Holtfreter et al. (2020) and Song and Kidd (2010) study stating that the participants experienced mental fatigue after working long hours under stressful conditions and eventually burned out.

This study agrees with Buckley et al. (2021), Tomei (2006) and Tomei and Nelson (2019) study that many academics transitioned large classes of several hundred learners to the online environment during the pandemic. In this study, Matteo had a lecture class with 300 students, far above the ideal online class size of 15 students, which may not have allowed a sufficient opportunity for learners to engage with their instructors. This study agreed with Al Shlowiy et al. (2021), the participants did not know how long they would be teaching online before returning to face-to-face teaching. This study agrees with Schmidt-Crawford et al. (2021) that the participants considered retiring or leaving higher education during the pandemic. Erin said, "Knock on wood

that I never have to teach online again. It's like, how soon can I retire?" This study agrees with the studies done by Cohut (2018) García-Álvarez et al. (2021) and Parte and Herrador-Alcaide (2021) who found when academics have had appropriate online training prior to the pandemic, their psychological and social needs were satisfied, and they experienced a sense of wellbeing. This study had one participant who had advanced online training and experienced a sense of wellbeing during the pandemic. Even though the participants did not have appropriate online training prior to the pandemic, by the fall of 2020 the participants had gained more confidence in their technical skills agreeing with the study done by Müller et al. (2021).

In 2008 the Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) were developed to teach large groups of students online. Thousands of students enroll in the course with only one instructor and at times, no instructor, which limits student to student and student to teacher interaction (Alemayehu & Chen, 2023; Littlefield, 2020). MOOCs are impersonal and do not diversify to meet student needs. They do not encourage sharing ideas and experiences and students lose motivation. MOOCs had a 3.13% retention rate in 2017, so the design has been largely abandoned (Lederman, 2019). Quality online courses are designed differently due to the lessons learned from MOOC experiences. Many of these participants designed their courses like MOOCs by recording their lectures and not including student-to-student and student-to-teacher activities, and as a result they experienced the same motivation issues as MOOCs.

Limitations and Delimitations

The first limitation for this study was that there was a lack of previous research on what the academics experienced during emergency remote teaching. This is most likely because the COVID-19 pandemic is relatively recent. The second limitation is the participants' self-reported data. I recruited participants in the fall of 2023 and the participants may not have recalled

fragments of their experiences even though I provided them with the questions before their meetings. The third limitation is that this is not a random sampling because only participants who wanted to volunteer and participate in my study were chosen. Other academics may not have been interested, did not have time, or were still burned out from the pandemic. The fourth limitation: It would have been ideal if all 11 participated in a focus group.

The first delimitation was the criteria for the study. I originally wanted to study academics from one university in the University of Wisconsin System but had to recruit from six universities. The second delimitation was I wanted to study academics who had no prior experience teaching online before the pandemic but needed to change my criteria. I delimited by using a purposeful sampling of 11 academics who taught online during the COVID-19 pandemic (See Appendix M). The third delimitation was I used Zoom video conferencing to interview my participants to work around scheduling and my participants were more comfortable with the platform. I was able to record the Zoom meetings making it easier to transcribe the interviews. The COVID-19 pandemic was still active during that time, Zoom provided a safe medium in which to interview participants.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study provided the lived experiences of emergency remote teaching from a sample of academics in universities in Wisconsin. The participants were male and female, had diverse ethnic backgrounds, diverse online teaching skills, and subjects taught. The participants were from a Midwest state university system and served the middle working-class population (A median household income between $67,125 to $73,913 depending on location).

My first recommendation is to replicate this study using participants from other parts of the United States and with a population from different income groups. Phenomenological studies

require small samples to reduce the time and effort it takes to analyze the voluminous data; therefore, more studies are required. More studies would provide a greater understanding of the emergency remote teaching phenomenon.

My second recommendation is to study the lived experiences of instructors who taught hands-on type courses such as art, music, and science labs during the COVID-19 pandemic. These courses are hands-on courses rather than lecture courses. Research in that area would provide information as to how to use remote teaching that does not involve lectures. My third recommendation is to study what educational consequences the COVID-19 pandemic has had on higher education. The participants in this study said that their students writing skills did not improve during the pandemic because the participants were too busy to work on writing skills. There is little research on how long it takes to recover from a crisis.

My fourth recommendation is to study the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on students who experienced being in isolation during the shutdown and then wearing masks and maintaining social distancing during the pandemic. The participants in this study observed that their students did not speak for two years. The participants were concerned that the students were depressed or suffered trauma. Understanding the phenomenon would be the first step in helping those students and avoid it happening again.

Conclusion

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to explore the experiences of academics at the university level with emergency remote teaching during the 2020-2021 COVID-19 pandemic. The theoretical framework guiding this transcendental phenomenological study is Milheim's application of Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Milheim, 2012). Eleven participants were recruited from six universities located in the University of

Wisconsin System. The data were collected using semi-structured individual interviews, e-journals, and focus group interviews using Zoom and email. The data collected from this study has shown that the participants experienced an unexpected immediate transfer of their face-to-face courses to online during the COVID-19 shutdown. The participants experienced various time-consuming technological issues, isolation, and burnout. The participant's physiological, safety, belongingness, and esteem needs were not met, except for one participant who had advanced online teaching training prior to the pandemic, who may have experienced self-actualization during the pandemic.

This study has identified what the participants experienced when forced to teach online without proper training. All educators need appropriate online training prior to teaching online. When the educators were left on their own to teach themselves how to teach online, they focused on learning the technology and most were not aware of online pedagogy. The participants thought they needed to replicate their face-to-face courses as close as possible to maintain a sense of normalcy and recorded their lectures. They spent untold hours doing things they did not need to do in the attempt to deliver an exceptional course. The participants needed training to learn how to design their online courses for their subject, be provided with resources, and use online pedagogy when teaching online. Emergency remote teaching was the best alternative to face-to-face teaching during the crisis, but not being prepared intensified the crisis. This study has shown that academics experience high levels of stress and eventually burnout when forced to teach online without the appropriate training.

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Appendix A

This is a screenshot of the email I sent to a gatekeeper at my research site asking if they allow outsiders to recruit participants for research and if they had a procedure I would need to follow.

On 2022-02-09, at 11:08 AM, petersonjm3650@gmail.com wrote:

[redacted]

Hi, I'm Judith Peterson and I live in Milwaukee. I am an Instructional Design and Technology Ph.D. candidate at Liberty University online. I am currently writing my dissertation proposal and I need information to complete my chapter three.

Would the University of Wisconsin system allow me to recruit research participants for my phenomenological study? I would interview instructors to understand their experience of emergency remote teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic shutdown. If possible, what would the procedures be?

Thank you,

Judith M. Peterson

(414) 852-3610

petersonjm3650@gmail.com

Appendix B

This is a screenshot of an email from a gatekeeper at the host site. They do not have a process to manage how participants are invited to take part in a study that is not conducted by their university. I would use Liberty University's procedures and IRB review to complete my study.

[redacted]

Feb 11, 2022, 12:17 PM

Hi Judith-
Your question was forwarded to me.
It doesn't appear that you are asking an investigator from the [redacted] to be engaged with this research (ie be part of your study team). Given that- it does not appear that anyone from the [redacted] would be engaged, but would only be participants in your study. We do not have a process to manage how individuals from the [redacted] are invited to participate in studies that are not conducted by [redacted] employees.

I'm assuming that this research has been reviewed or assessed as to whether it needs IRB review at Liberty University. As you are not at the [redacted] we cannot make any decisions or determinations about IRB review.
Additionally, it would be your local IRB that would review your recruitment method (ie how you will contact the individuals you want to complete your survey and how you will get the information needed to contact them).

I hope that answered your question.

Thanks-

[redacted]

[redacted]

Have you visited the [redacted]
Stay up to date on all UW-Madison IRBs changes like the new [redacted] and [redacted]
Questions on the new site? Email: [redacted]

Name
Judith Peterson
Please let us know how we can help you, who you are trying to find, or a question that you need answered.
I'm Judith Peterson and I live in Milwaukee. I am an Instructional Design and Technology Ph.D. candidate at Liberty University online. I am currently writing my dissertation proposal and I need information to complete my chapter three. Would the [redacted] allow me to recruit research participants for my phenomenological study? I would interview instructors to understand their experience of emergency remote teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic shutdown. If possible, what would the procedures be?
Let us know if you have a deadline.
2-16-'22
Email
petersonjm3650@gmail.com

Appendix C

This is a screenshot of an email from the Associate Dean for Social Science, College of Letters & Science at the host site saying after I gain approval from Liberty University's Institutional Review Board, I would contact a leader at their university to recruit participants for my study.


[redacted]

Fri, Feb 11, 3:40 PM

Hello Judith. Quick advice: For any study which would involve [redacted] faculty, staff, or students as potential research subjects, you would start with your university's own research ethics office — their Institutional Review Board -- to get approval for conducting a human subjects study. Once you have that formal approval from your home institution, you would then contact the [redacted] leadership or the individual [redacted] to ask permission to recruit. I hope that helps. Be well,

[redacted]

Associate Dean for Social Sciences, College of Letters & Science [redacted]
Evjue-Bascom Professor, Information School [redacted] and Journalism School [redacted]
Faculty Director, L&S Career Development Courses [redacted]

[redacted]

Appendix D

This is the recruitment email script that Liberty University provides.

Date

[redacted]
Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Education
[redacted]

Dear Dr. [redacted],

As a graduate student in the department of education at Liberty University Online, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Ph.D. degree. The title of my research project is, *The Experiences of University Academics with Emergency Remote Teaching During The COVID-19 Pandemic of 2020: A Phenomenological Study* and the purpose of my research is to explore what and how traditional academics experienced emergency remote teaching during the 2020-2021 COVID-19 pandemic at a midwestern university in the United States.

I am writing to request your permission to contact members of your staff to invite them to participate in my research study.

Participants will be asked to contact me to schedule a Microsoft Teams semi-structured interview, complete an e-journal email template, and participate in an in person focus group meeting. Participants will be presented with informed consent information prior to participating. Taking part in this study is completely voluntary, and participants are welcome to discontinue participation at any time.

Thank you for considering my request. If you choose to grant permission, respond by email to [redacted]. A permission letter document is attached for your convenience.

Sincerely,

Judith Marie Peterson, MA, MEIT
Instructional Design and Technology Ph.D. candidate
Liberty University Online

Mobile: [redacted]
Email: [redacted]

Appendix E

This is the Recruitment Letter Email Script form Liberty University's IRB for candidates to use to recruit participants for their study.

Dear Dr.

As a graduate student in the department of education at Liberty University Online, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Ph.D. degree. The title of my research project is, *The Experiences of University Academics with Emergency Remote Teaching During The COVID-19 Pandemic of 2020: A Phenomenological Study.* The purpose of my research is to explore what and how traditional academics experienced emergency remote teaching during the 2020-2021 COVID-19 pandemic at universities in the United States, and if you meet my criteria and are interested, I would like to invite you to participate in my study.

Participants must be an instructor who has taught for at least one year prior to the pandemic, have transitioned their course(s) from resident to online and taught during the 2020-2021 COVID-19 pandemic. Participants, if willing, will be asked to take part in a Microsoft Teams or Zoom semi-structured audio- and video-recorded interview (No longer than 90 minutes), submit an emailed three question e-journal (complete within two-weeks), and participate in an in-person audio- and video-recorded focus group meeting (No longer than 90 minutes). Participants will also be asked to review their interview and focus-group transcripts for accuracy. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but the information will remain confidential.

To participate, please complete the attached consent form and return it to me by email. The consent document contains additional information about my research. If you choose to participate, you will need to sign the consent document and return it to me via email.

Participants will receive a $30 gift card.

Sincerely,

Judith Marie Peterson, MA, MEIT
Instructional Design and Technology Ph.D. candidate
Liberty University Online

[redacted]
Mobile: [redacted]
Email: [redacted]

Appendix F

This is the Informed Consent Letter: General form Liberty University's IRB provides for their candidates to use to inform participants about their study and for gaining a signed consent to take part in a study. An example of a completed form is below the template.

Dear [name],

I am a doctoral candidate at Liberty University online, currently working on my Instructional Design and Technology education degree. This study is required research and the culmination of my program. I am particularly interested in online program design and the development of meaningful and engaging online courses for university faculty and students. Consequently, I want to understand how instructors have experienced the unexpected transition from teaching face-to-face courses to the online environment to avoid spreading the COVID-19 virus. Therefore, I am seeking participants for my research, and I hope you will volunteer.

There have been many studies on how the transfer has affected student learning. However, there is very little information about how the transition has affected the educators. I hope this study will add to the literature and provide information for future crisis plans and online instruction. I will need 12-15 participants for my research. I will use three methods for collecting data: individual semi-structured videoconference interviews, in person focus group interview, and an emailed e-journal. I will use Microsoft Teams for the virtual meetings. I will record the interviews to ensure accurate transcription. The focus group interview should not take longer than 90 minutes. During the semi-structured interview, I will check that consent letters were signed, provide information about the purpose of the interviews, and offer directions to the e-journal, and arrange a focus group meeting. Interviews will take 90 minutes. I will ask if future

correspondence can be arranged if more information is needed to fill gaps. The completed e-journals will be due two weeks after the semi-structured interviews.

Your participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw participation without penalty. Participants will receive a $30 gift card whether they participate in the study or withdraw. According to the American Psychological Association, I will use pseudonyms to protect names and identifying information and keep them confidential. Only individuals in the focus group interview will know you have participated in the study. Providing your digital signature indicates that you have read the information and consent to participate in the study. If you know of other lecture instructors you think would be interested in taking part in this study, please forward my e-mail. I will select participants from the applicants and notify you if you have been selected by _____(date)_____. Please e-mail this consent letter to Judith Peterson before ___(date)___. If you have any questions, my e-mail is [redacted] (Gall, Gall, and Borg, 2007).

Name: _____ Date _____

Thank you,

Judith M. Peterson, MA, MEIT

Instructional Design and Technology PH.D. candidate

Liberty University Online

Appendix G

This is the semi-structured individual interview and protocol.

(Test recording devices before meeting and read the opening statement to the participants.)

Project: *The Experiences of University Academics with Emergency Remote Teaching During The COVID-19 Pandemic of 2020: A Phenomenological Study*

Interviewer: Judith M. Peterson

Site:

Date:

Time of Interview:

Interviewee:

Gender:

Race:

What degree(s) you hold:

Professor ranking:

1. What is your name, what course(s)/subject(s) do you teach, and how long have you taught?
2. What course or courses did you transfer online during the 2020-2021 COVID-19 pandemic shut down?
3. Describe where you taught emergency remote teaching during the 2020-2021 COVID-19 pandemic shut down. Example: At home, at the university, the local hot spot, etc.
4. Describe your thoughts when you first learned you would transition to the online environment during the 2020-2021 COVID-19 pandemic shut down. In what way did your thoughts change or not change with time?

5. What are your opinions of online security during emergency remote teaching during the 2020-2021 COVID-19 pandemic shut down?
6. What are your opinions of job security during emergency remote teaching during the 2020-2021 COVID-19 pandemic shut down?
7. How do you describe the effect of emergency remote teaching on your personal and colleague relationships during the 2020-2021 COVID-19 pandemic shut down?
8. How do you describe the amount of time emergency remote teaching demands compared to traditional teaching during the 2020-2021 COVID-19 pandemic shut down?
9. What technological preparations did you need to make for emergency remote teaching during the 2020-2021 COVID-19 pandemic shut down?
10. Describe the most successful experience you had during emergency remote teaching during the 2020-2021 COVID-19 pandemic shut down.
11. Describe your competency in using technology and online pedagogy during emergency remote teaching of the 2020-2021 COVID-19 pandemic shut down.
12. What professional networks or mentorships did you participate in to share ideas and provide moral support during emergency remote teaching of the 2020-2021 COVID-19 pandemic shut down?
13. Describe your most challenging emergency remote teaching experiences you had during the 2020-2021 COVID-19 shutdown.
14. Describe your most satisfying emergency remote teaching experiences you had during the 2020-2021 COVID-19 shutdown.
15. Describe any feelings of isolation and/or sense of belonging, during emergency remote teaching during the 2020-2021 COVID-19 pandemic shut down.

16. Describe how you evaluated student learning during the 2020-2021 COVID-19 pandemic shut down?
17. How do you describe your professional training you had before, during, and after the COVID-19 online transition during the 2020-2021 COVID-19 pandemic shut down?

(Thank the educators for their participation. Ask if I can arrange future correspondence if more information is needed to fill gaps. Remind participants that their identification will be kept confidential. Ask participants to forward my invitation to other lecture academics who would be interested in participating who have experienced emergency remote teaching.)

Appendix H

This is the opening statement for my study.

This study aims to understand what and how traditional lecture instructors have experienced emergency remote teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic. I will collect data by using semi-structured individual videoconference interviews, email e-journals, and in person focus group interview(s), and I will record the meetings to help ensure accurate transcription. The interviews will last 90 minutes. You will also complete an e-journal where you will provide information about your teaching experiences before, during, and after transitioning your course to the online environment. The information will be used to write a description of what and how you have experienced emergency remote teaching. There is little literature on how instructors have experienced transitioning their courses online and teaching online during the COVID-19 pandemic. The information will contribute to the literature and may inform future crisis planning, online course design, and professional development. In addition, there are no known risks associated with the study, I will keep personal and institutional identification confidential. Identifiers will be replaced with pseudonyms, data will be protected by passwords, locked in a file cabinet to keep information secure, and the recordings will be deleted after use. I have no power over you. You may decide not to answer any question you do not feel comfortable answering, and you may withdraw from the study at any time without consequences and still receive a $30 gift card for participating. All participants may have a summary of the study and benefit by knowing you have contributed to research on emergency remote teaching that will inform future crisis planning, online education, and professional development. Thank you all for your time and participation if you choose to participate.

Appendix I

This is my e-journal form and protocol.

(Send the opening statement with this e-journal to the participants.)

Project: Instructor's Emergency Remote Teaching Experiences: A Phenomenological Study

Interviewer: Judith M. Peterson

Site:

Date:

Time of Interview:

Interviewee:

Gender:

Race:

What degree(s) you hold:

Professor ranking:

E-journal Questions:

Pre COVID-19

1. Describe what your day was like teaching before the COVID-19 pandemic shutdown. Include a description of the educational technology professional development you received or what was available.

During COVID-19

2. Describe what your day was like teaching online during the COVID-19 shutdown. What education technology professional development did you receive during the pandemic? What would you recommend for future educational technology professional development?

Post COVID-19

3. How did the emergency remote teaching during COVID_19 affect you? What positive take-a-ways can you identify? How did you create a sense of community for your online classes?

Appendix J

This is my focus group interview and protocol.

Project: Instructor's Emergency Remote Teaching Experiences: A Phenomenological Study

Interviewer: Judith M. Peterson

Site:

Date:

Time of Interview:

Interviewees:

Gender:

Race:

What degree(s) you hold:

Professor ranking:

(Test recording devices before meeting and read the opening statement to the participants.)

1. How do you describe your workload during emergency remote teaching?
2. How do you describe your access to the technology needed to transition and teach your course online?
3. Describe your feelings of personal achievement and ability to do competent work during emergency remote teaching?
4. Describe any technology issues your students experienced and how did you help them.
5. Describe how much of your curriculum you were able to cover during emergency remote teaching.
6. Describe what has caused emergency remote teaching to be more effective than face-to-face instruction or not as effective as face-to-face instruction during the pandemic.

7. Describe the level of autonomy you had while transferring our course online and teaching.
8. How do you evaluate the quality of education your students received during emergency remote teaching?
9. What level of stress or burnout did you experience during emergency remote teaching?

(Thank the educators for their participation. Ask if I can arrange future correspondence if more information is needed to fill gaps. Remind participants that their identification will be kept confidential. Ask participants to forward my invitation to other lecture academics who would be interested in participating who have experienced emergency remote teaching.)

Appendix K

This is the Recruitment Follow-up letter to remind academics to read, sign, and return the consent form to me through email within a week.

Date

[redacted]

Dear Dr. [redacted]

As a graduate student in the department of education at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Ph.D. degree. Last week an email was sent to you inviting you to participate in a research study. This follow-up email is being sent to remind you to respond if you would like to participate and have not already done so. The deadline for participation is [redacted].

Participants, if willing, will be asked to participate in a Microsoft Teams semi-structured interview (90 minutes), submit an emailed three question e-journal, and participate in an in person focus group interview (90 minutes). I will return the results to the participants to check for accuracy. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but the information will remain confidential.

To participate, please complete the attached consent form and return it to me by email. The consent document contains additional information about my research. If you choose to participate, you will need to sign the consent document and email it back to me. Doing so will indicate that you have read the consent information and would like to take part in the study.

Participants will receive a $30 gift card.

Sincerely,

Judith Marie Peterson, MA, MEIT
Instructional Design and Technology Ph.D. candidate
Liberty University Online
Mobile: [redacted]
Email: [redacted]

Appendix L

This is the participant's consent form.

Title of the Project: THE EXPERIENCE OF UNIVERSITY ACADEMICS WITH EMERGENCY REMOTE TEACHING DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC OF 2020: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

Principal Investigator: Judith M Peterson, Doctoral Candidate, School of Education, Liberty University

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be a lecture academic from the College of Letters and Science who has taught full-time for at least five years. You need to be currently teaching, have transitioned your course from residence to online and taught online during the 2020-2021 COVID-19 pandemic, but have not taught online before the pandemic. 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 this transcendental phenomenological study is to explore the experiences of academics in the School of Letters and Science at a midwestern university with emergency remote teaching during the 2020-2021 COVID-19 pandemic.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following:

1. First task: Participate in an individual Microsoft Teams, audio/video recorded semi-structured interview that will take no more than 90 minutes.
2. Second task: Fill out an e-journal and return it using email within two weeks.
3. Third task: Participate in a Focus Group meeting that should not take longer than 90 minutes.
4. Fourth task: Review the interview transcript to check for accuracy.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

The direct benefits participants should expect to receive from taking part in this study include a feeling of satisfaction to know they have taken part in a study that will give academics a voice, provide information that will add to literature on emergency remote teaching, future crisis planning, online professional development, and educator information. Participants may receive a copy of the results if they desire.

Benefits to society include an understanding of what quality online education is and what emergency remote teaching is, and the difference. Society will learn what the educators experienced during emergency remote teaching. The information could help policy makers decide how to improve online education.

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. The risks involved in this study include triggering of emotional thoughts and feelings of psychological stress from being asked to recall and discuss experiences during the COVID-19 shutdown. To reduce risk, I will monitor participants and discontinue the interview if needed.

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 kept confidential by replacing names with pseudonyms.
- Interviews will be conducted online where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in focus group settings. While discouraged, other members of the focus group may share what was discussed with persons outside of the group.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked laptop in a locked cabinet. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted, and all hardcopy records will be shredded.
- Recordings will be stored on a password locked laptop for three years until participants have reviewed and confirmed the accuracy of the transcripts and then deleted. The researcher and members of her doctoral committee will have access to these recordings.

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

Participants will be compensated for participating in this study. At the conclusion of the study, participants will receive a $30 gift card. Any participant who chooses to withdraw from the study after beginning but before completing all study procedures will receive a $30 gift card. Email addresses will be used for compensation purposes.

What are the costs to you to be part of the study?

There are no costs to participate 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. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time.

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

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

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

The researcher conducting this study is Judith Peterson. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her at [redacted] and/or [redacted]. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Susan Quindag, 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, **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.

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

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

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

_____
Printed Subject Name

_____
Signature & Date

Appendix M

This is the modification approval letter from Liberty University's IRB.

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

July 18, 2023

Judith Peterson
Susan Quindag

Re: Modification - IRB-FY22-23-1665 THE EXPERIENCE OF UNIVERSITY ACADEMICS WITH EMERGENCY REMOTE TEACHING DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC OF 2020: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

Dear Judith Peterson, Susan Quindag,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has rendered the decision below for IRB-FY22-23-1665 THE EXPERIENCE OF UNIVERSITY ACADEMICS WITH EMERGENCY REMOTE TEACHING DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC OF 2020: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY.

Decision: Exempt - Limited IRB

Your request to include participants who taught for at least one year prior to the pandemic as opposed to five and who may have previously taught online has been approved. Thank you for submitting your revised study documents for our review and documentation. **For a PDF of your modification letter, click on your study number in the My Studies card on your Cayuse dashboard. Next, click the Submissions bar beside the Study Details bar on the Study Details page. Finally, click Modification under Submission Type and choose the Letters tab toward the bottom of the Submission Details page. If your modification required you to submit revised documents, they can be found on the same page under the Attachments tab.** 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.

Thank you for complying with the IRB's requirements for making changes to your approved study. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions.

We wish you well as you continue with your research.

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, PhD, CIP
Administrative Chair
Research Ethics Office